

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Dave C. Novotney for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
presented on October 23, 2000. Title: The Impact of Youth Gang
Awareness Training on School Personnel.

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Joanne B. Engel

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of youth gang awareness training on school personnel. Middle and high school level teachers, counselors, and school administrators in a rural Oregon school district were the focus of this study.

Six specially designed modules were created by the researcher and used to train school personnel (N=122). Subjects received four hours of gang awareness training conducted by the researcher and participants completed a questionnaire administered at the conclusion of the training session. From this pool of subjects, ten individuals were selected to participate in in-depth interviews conducted eight to twelve weeks following the initial gang awareness inservice training. Data obtained from the questionnaire and in-depth interviews were analyzed and organized to address the primary question of the study: Will inservice training based on

specially designed modules improve an educator's awareness or understanding of youth gang issues?

The results of this study led the researcher to conclude that gang awareness training was effective in increasing the level of awareness and understanding of youth gang issues for school personnel in a rural school district. It was further concluded that training modules which contained a significant amount of information posed a challenge for school personnel to effectively retain the information and that their understanding of the material diminished in the weeks following the initial training session. The results indicated that some subjects may have experienced difficulty in transferring their new skills into practice and were in need of direct coaching on how to apply their new skills.

Specific recommendations made by the researcher to help guide future research in this important area include the need to: identify the risk and protective factors for gang involvement in the three phases of social development for youths (elementary, middle, and high school), address the research of Joyce and Showers (1980) and identify the most effective combination of training methods to inservice school personnel, deliver gang awareness training at the elementary and middle school level before youths are involved in gangs, and encourage teacher preparation institutions to include youth gang awareness training in their programs for aspiring teachers, counselors, and school administrators.

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The Impact of Youth Gang
Awareness Training on School Personnel

by

Dave C. Novotney

A DISSERTATION

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

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Dave C. Novotney, Author

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This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Beverly Novotney,
and to the loving memory of my father,
Gary Novotney.
(1935 – 1997)

Thank you for the encouragement, support,
and love that you have always
given me.

THE IMPACT OF YOUTH GANG AWARENESS TRAINING ON SCHOOL PERSONNEL

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

During the past two decades, the number of youth gangs and youth gang members in the United States increased at an alarming rate. Since 1980, the number of cities with youth gang problems increased from an estimated 286 with more than 2000 gangs and nearly 100,000 gang members (Miller, 1992) to about 4,800 cities with more than 31,000 gangs and 846,000 members in 1996 (National Youth Gang Center, 1998). Youth gangs have migrated away from traditional large urban areas into suburban and rural areas and are presently active in every state including Alaska and Hawaii. Few large cities are gang free, and many cities and towns with populations under 25,000 are reporting gang problems (Curry, 1996). With the expansion of youth gangs in the United States, gang activity has become a serious and growing problem in public schools (Boyle, 1992; Burnett & Walz, 1994; California Department of Education, 1994; Howell, 1998; Lal & Lal, 1993; National Youth Gang Center, 1998; Spergel & Alexander, 1992; Thornberry, 1998; Trump, 1993).

Far from remaining neutral learning environments, schools not only suffer from gang-related violence “spilling over” from the streets, but are rapidly becoming centers of gang activities (Arthur & Erickson, 1992; Boyle, 1992; Burnett & Walz, 1994). Schwartz (1996) stated that:

An overwhelming majority of [gang] members wanted to stay in school because they could congregate and discuss their activities in a social arena, uphold their reputation as an established gang, flaunt their accouterments, display their strength of membership, provide protection for their members, intimidate other students, recruit potential members, and sometimes engage in criminal or violent acts. (p. 4)

Boyle (1992) reported that for many gang involved youths, schools are an important place for socializing with fellow gang members and conducting illegal or violent activities. Boyle found that even those gang members who had been suspended or had dropped out of school could often be found on campus using the school as a gang hangout. Additionally, Boyle reported the tendency for gang activity to spread unexpectedly from school to school as students transfer from gang-impacted schools to gang-free schools.

Because gangs are often actively involved in violent activities and drug and/or weapons trafficking, the mere presence of youth gangs in schools tends to foster the perception from non-gang involved students that their schools are less safe. Trump (1993) reported that students in schools with a gang presence are twice as likely to report that they fear becoming victims of violence than their peers at schools without gangs. The U.S.

Department of Education (1998) found that the percentage of students reporting gangs in their schools increased dramatically from 15.3% in 1989 to 28.4% in 1995. Increases were reported in inner cities, suburban and rural areas. And where students reported the presence of gangs, they were approximately three times more likely to be victims of violent crime.

The percentage of adolescents in the United States who are gang members is unknown, therefore it is not possible to estimate the actual number of school age adolescents who are involved in gangs. Lal (1991) revealed that school administrators were usually reluctant to acknowledge the existence of gang activity in their schools, so accurate gang statistics have not been available to researchers. However, an eleven-city survey of eighth graders found that 9% were currently members of a gang, and 17% said they had belonged to a gang at some point in their lives (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993). Similarly, the California Student Substance Use Survey, conducted by the State of California (California State Office of the Attorney General, 1994) revealed that an average of 17% of students from grades 7 to 11 were involved in gangs at one time or another during their life.

Studies of large urban samples of middle and high school level students show comparable percentages, and also show that gang members were responsible for a large portion of violent offenses. For example, in Rochester, New York, gang members (30% of the sample) self-reported committing 86% of all serious delinquent acts, 69% of the violent delinquent

acts, and 70% of all drug sales (Thornberry, 1998). Youth gang members in Seattle (15% of the sample) self-reported committing 58% of all serious delinquent acts, 54% of felony thefts, 62% of drug-trafficking offenses, and 85% of the robberies in the entire sample (Battin et al., 1998). Esbensen and Huizinga (1998) reported that 7% of Denver adolescents said they were gang members and self-reported committing 55% of all criminal offenses (violent offenses, theft, and drug sales).

In a study conducted by Bastion and Taylor (1991), 10,000 secondary school students throughout the United States were surveyed. They were asked to report their perceptions regarding the availability of drugs at their school, the presence of juvenile gangs, fear of crime at school, the school environment, victimization, and their efforts to avoid becoming a victim of crime in schools. The results of this study revealed that an estimated 9% of the students were crime victims in or around their schools (2% were victims of violent crime and 7% were victims of property crime). Fifteen percent of the students reported their schools had gangs and 91% reported drugs could be obtained at their school. In addition, 16% indicated that they had witnessed gang members engaging in threatening acts against a teacher. Bastion and Taylor made the following conclusions: illegal drugs are readily obtainable for students in most schools, the presence of gang members in schools increase the perception among students that their schools are less safe, youth gangs are increasing in

numbers, and gangs play a greater role in promoting juvenile delinquency than previously thought.

In a 1993 study, Bjerregaard and Smith conducted face-to-face interviews with 969 students in the seventh and eighth grade from Rochester, New York. They were investigating gender differences in youth gangs, delinquency, and substance use among juvenile gang members. The results of this study revealed that for both males and females, gang involvement was associated with substantially increased levels of delinquency and substance use (a significant amount of which occurred in or around their schools). Allen (1993) also arrived at similar conclusions based upon his study of 374 youths involved in gang activity. He concluded that youth gangs were involved in a number of violent crimes (many involving weapons) and that drugs were an integral part of gang life (personal use and as a source of income).

Furthermore, drug trafficking makes traditional gang turf battles more violent by providing the money for gang members to purchase weapons. This is a significant point considering the fact that, nationally, one in four high school students reported carrying a weapon at least once while on school property and, in Oregon, every eighth high school student carried a gun, knife, or club to school at least once during the previous 30 days (Center for Health Statistics, 1999). Because students are frequently arming themselves, traditional gang turf battles can quickly escalate into

violent drug territory wars and contribute to gangs spreading out geographically (McKinney, 1988).

Ironically, schools provide a key means by which gangs spread when students transfer from gang-impacted schools to gang-free schools (Boyle, 1992; Moriarty & Fleming, 1990). Families often move out of the inner city in search of better economic opportunities, or send children to live with relatives in a deliberate attempt to remove them from the danger of gangs and urban crime. Insecure in their new environment these children may fall back on learned gang behavior to gain acceptance and impress their new peers. Moriarty and Fleming (1990) found that "marginal students who are established residents of the suburban community are likely to be intrigued by the new student who flaunts gang symbols" (p.15).

A review of the literature underscores the fact that youth gangs are having a negative impact on school systems (Arthur & Erickson, 1992; Boyle, 1992; Burnett & Walz, 1994; Lal, 1993; Stephens, 1993; Trump, 1993). Schunk (1996) summarized the problem best when he stated:

If students are afraid that they may be physically harmed or often must deal with pressures to join a gang, concentrating on academic tasks may be impossible. Teachers and administrators must work with students, parents, members of the community, and law enforcement individuals to develop effective strategies for eliminating the safety concerns. These issues must be addressed to create an atmosphere conducive for learning. (p. 291)

In order to help minimize the negative impact gangs are having on school systems, school personnel need to be trained in youth gang

awareness issues. "Being alert to the early warning signs of gang activity and being knowledgeable about gang patterns are essential to successful school prevention efforts" (California Department of Education, 1994).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of youth gang awareness training on school personnel. Middle and high school level teachers, counselors, and school administrators in a rural Oregon school district will be the focus of this study.

This study is important because youth gangs pose a serious challenge to schools. Their presence on campus interrupts the learning process, often instills fear in students and staff, and introduces certain criminal practices (California Department of Education, 1994). Even though gangs are a reality in many neighborhoods, their growth and influence in schools must be prevented in order to maintain an atmosphere conducive for learning. A crucial participant in the effort to prevent youths from becoming involved in gangs is the school. Educators and parents, joining with law enforcement officials and community members, can make a difference. Before they do so, however, educators and others must learn to detect the early warning signs of gangs.

According to the California Department of Education (1994), Spergel and Alexander (1992), and Stephens (1993), teachers and staff members

need inservice training to recognize gang activity. School personnel must become aware of the early warning signs of gang activity in order to maintain a safe and positive school environment where all students can learn. School personnel, particularly classroom teachers, are in a unique position to identify students who exhibit gang-related behavior and refer them to appropriate prevention/intervention programs. Early intervention in the lives of youths who exhibit gang-related behavior is critical.

Research Questions

Six specially designed modules were created and used in this study to train school personnel in a rural school district about youth gang issues. Each of the six modules emphasized critical elements of youth gang awareness training as outlined by the California Department of Education (1994) and Spergel and Alexander (1992). From the six training modules, six questions emerged and became the questions to be assessed in the post-evaluation questionnaire used in the training session and as focus questions for in-depth interviews. These six questions were:

- 1) To what degree do school personnel know the indicators of youth gang activity?
- 2) To what degree do school personnel know the factors that cause gang formation and why youths join gangs?

- 3) To what degree can school personnel identify local gangs:
including gang symbols, language, attire, graffiti, and methods of
gang recruitment?
- 4) Do school personnel understand patterns of gang activity:
including gang rivalry, gang crime, violent activity, and drug use
and trafficking?
- 5) Do school personnel know what steps they should take to
establish appropriate communication and productive relationships
with gang involved youths?
- 6) Do school personnel know what steps they should follow to refer
a gang involved youth to an appropriate gang
prevention/intervention program?

The answers to each of these six questions provided data to assist in addressing the primary question of this study: Will inservice training based on these specially designed modules improve an educator's awareness or understanding of youth gang issues?

Background and Setting

Conducting research in this rural school district presented a unique opportunity to study the impact of youth gang awareness training in a school district where gang activity is a relatively new occurrence. Although neither the police department nor the school district maintain an accurate

record of gang related incidents or activities, youth gang activity in the community and the school system has only surfaced within the last four years. Law enforcement officials and school administrators describe the local gang activity as mild compared to other cities and towns located nearby.

Interestingly, a major metropolitan area, which is located only 13 miles from the research site, has experienced significant gang related activity and acts of violence for several years. Six miles south of this site, two smaller communities have also experienced serious gang related activity in their communities, yet the research site reports relatively mild activity. The public school systems in these nearby cities and towns have had comparable problems with gang related activity on or near their school campuses.

Since serious gang related activity is geographically very close to the research community and gang activity is beginning to surface in the town and the school system, youth gang awareness training is appropriate for school personnel.

The target district, renamed "Greenville" for the purposes of this study, is nestled at the base of a mountain range in a fertile farming valley. This semi-rural community is home to over 12,870 people and has maintained an annual growth rate of 4.1% for the last ten years (Oregon State Employment Department, 1999). Agriculture, forest products,

technology manufacturing, and education are the primary industries in this county seat.

The school system is comprised of five elementary schools, three alternative programs, one middle school, and one high school. The district serves almost 3,100 students (K-12) with a student/teacher ratio of 19 to 1. All of the schools in the district received a rating on the Oregon Report Card of satisfactory, strong, or exceptional by the Oregon Department of Education in February of 2000.

The ethnic composition of the student population is approximately 95% Caucasian, 3% Hispanic, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, .5% African-American and .5% American Indian. The ethnic population has remained stable for the past five years. The drop out rate is 4.5% (well below the state average), student mobility rate near 18% and approximately 15% of the students are enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program.

The ethnic composition of the licensed personnel in the school district is approximately 98.4% Caucasian with a 1.6% minority population. Approximately 54% of the licensed personnel have earned a masters degree or higher and average 12.9 years of professional experience in education. The licensed employees are almost equally represented by gender.

The school district is committed to staff development and two additional inservice days have been added to the school district calendar.

The superintendent of the school system has expressed an interest in using one of the inservice days to educate school personnel concerning youth gang activity and indicators for appropriate identification of gang involved youths. This research project has received approval from the superintendent and four hours was devoted to training school personnel about youth gang awareness issues.

Definitions of Terms

- 1) Adolescence: The developmental period in an individual's life between childhood and adulthood (Rice, 1999).
- 2) Delinquent Group: A less-organized, more transient group of juveniles whose law-violating behavior is less serious, violent, or persistent than that displayed by gang members (Goldstein & Kodluboy, 1998).
- 3) Educator: Any licensed person who is authorized to be engaged in the instructional program including teaching, counseling, administering, and supervising (Oregon Administrative Rule, 584-005-0005).
- 4) Gang: A gang is a group that identifies itself through the use of a name, unique appearance or language, including hand signs, the claiming of geographical territory or the espousing of a

distinctive belief system that frequently results in criminal activity (Oregon Revised Statute, 336.109).

- 5) Gang Migration: The movement of gang members from one city to another (Maxson, 1998).
- 6) Gang Proliferation: The increase in communities reporting the existence of gangs and gang problems (Knox et al., 1996).
- 7) Graffiti: Graffiti are writings or drawings on public or private surfaces that can be classified as petty annoyances by juvenile vandals, attempts at artistic expression, or signs that gangs have moved into a neighborhood (Goldstein & Kodluboy, 1998).
- 8) High School Level: Includes licensed personnel who are authorized to teach in integrated subjects and departmental assignments in grades 7-12 (Oregon Administrative Rule, 584-005-0005).
- 9) Inservice: Conferences, workshops, or meetings which help practicing educators improve their professional skills.
- 10) Juvenile: One who is not yet considered an adult in the eyes of the law (Rice, 1999).
- 11) Juvenile Delinquency: A broad range of child and adolescent behaviors, including socially unacceptable behavior, status offenses, and criminal acts (Santroch, 1998).

- 12) Juvenile Delinquent: A juvenile who violates the law (Rice, 1999).
- 13) Law Enforcement Agency: A law enforcement agency can be defined as a local police department, county sheriff's office, county juvenile department, or state police agency.
- 14) Middle Level: Includes licensed personnel who are authorized to teach in grades 5-10 (Oregon Administrative Rule, 584-005-0005).
- 15) National Youth Gang Center: Often abbreviated as NYGC, the National Youth Gang Center was established in 1995 by the United States Department of Justice and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Center was created to expand and maintain a body of critical knowledge regarding youth gangs and effective responses to them.
- 16) School Dropout: An individual who has left school before completing the requirements for high school graduation.
- 17) School Personnel: An employee of a public educational institution or program including teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, and others directly associated with the delivery of educational services.
- 18) Self-Esteem: A person's impression or opinion of himself or herself (Rice, 1999).

- 19) Youth Gang: A group comprised of both juveniles and young adults who engage in a range of social, antisocial and/or criminal behaviors. The youth gang may be loosely or well organized with established rules of conduct and, typically, will have a name, turf, colors, signs, symbols, and distinctive dress. The youth gang often promotes mutual support among members and conflict with competing gangs or established authority (Goldstein & Kodluboy, 1998).
- 20) Youth Gang Member: A juvenile or young adult who belongs to a gang and engages in a range of social, antisocial, and/or criminal behaviors. Most gang participants are in the age range of 12 to 24 years (Howell, 1998).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The problem of youth gang activity is becoming increasingly widespread. Recent research reveals that youth gangs are found not only in large cities, but also in the suburbs and in many rural areas – where they did not exist a few years ago (National Youth Gang Center, 1998). Gangs are also present in many school systems, although they are usually more of a problem around than inside schools (Boyle, 1992; Burnett & Walz, 1994; Lal, 1993; Trump, 1993). Studies also suggest that gang activity is becoming increasingly violent. Although youth gangs have always engaged in delinquent activities, the gangs of today are more frequently involved in serious delinquent and violent offenses than ever before (Battin et al., 1998; Thornberry & Burch, 1996). Recent studies have found that gangs are becoming more involved with drug distribution, possess greater numbers of sophisticated weapons, and are responsible for a significant number of drive-by shootings and homicides (National Youth Gang Center, 1998).

Since schools reflect the communities of which they are a part, it was inevitable that school systems across the United States were negatively impacted by youth gang activity. According to Goldstein and Kodluboy (1998):

The time is long past when students and others viewed school as neutral turf, exempt from crime, violence, and gang-banging.... As the number of gangs and the level of gang violence grew on our streets, our parks, and in our back alleys, it was inevitable that the same would happen in the place our youth gather most frequently: our schools. (p. 17)

However, it is the responsibility of school personnel to protect students from the intimidation, violence, and criminal activities associated with gang activity. To achieve this, school personnel should receive inservice training that focuses on an awareness of gang behaviors, the identification of gangs, the reasons youths join gangs, risk and protective factors, staff behaviors that enable gangs to exist on school campuses, and prevention strategies (California Department of Education, 1994).

This literature review covers a wide range of issues related to youth gang activity, risk and protective factors for gang membership, and youth gang awareness inservice training. This chapter is organized to review the relevant research focusing on the following categories:

- Gang Proliferation
- Gangs and Delinquency
- Risk and Protective Factors
- Why Youths Join Gangs
- Inservice Education
- Summary

Gang Proliferation

National Statistics. Although a number of national studies dating back to the 1970's have documented an increase in the number of cities and smaller communities reporting youth gang activity, the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey is considered by gang researchers to be the most extensive and authoritative in the field. The 1996 National Youth Gang Survey, developed and implemented by the National Youth Gang Center, is a research instrument designed to ascertain the extent of the youth gang problem in the United States. The research design utilized randomly selected representative samples to obtain an extensive national picture of youth gangs and is comprehensive in regard to the types of data collected.

The survey was mailed to police and sheriffs' departments throughout the nation. The sample consisted of the following:

1. A randomly selected representative sample (n = 1,216) of police departments serving cities with populations of more than 25,000 (large cities).
2. A randomly selected representative sample (n = 664) of suburban-county police and sheriffs' departments (suburban counties).
3. A randomly selected representative sample (n = 399) of police departments serving cities with populations between 2,500 and 25,000 (small cities).

4. A randomly selected representative sample (n = 745) of rural-county police and sheriffs' departments (rural counties).

A total of 2,629 agencies responded to the survey (an 87% response rate) with approximately 53% of the respondents reporting youth gang activity in their jurisdictions in 1996. Respondents in large cities reported the highest level of gang activity (74%), followed by suburban counties (57%), small cities (34%), and rural counties (25%). From this data, it was estimated that 4,824 cities were experiencing gang problems and that nationwide there may be as many as 31,000 street gangs with a total membership of 846,000. These numbers reflect a significant increase over the previous national survey results, due in large measure to the greater scope and representativeness of the 1996 sample.

The 1996 survey reported the ethnicity of gang members as follows: Hispanic/Latino (44%), African-American (35%), Caucasian (14%), Asian-American (5%), and other (2%). Respondents also indicated that 90% of youth gang members were male and 10% were female.

Youth gang members were also placed into the following age groups by respondents: Under 15 years old (16%), 15 to 17 years old (34%), 18 to 24 years old (37%), and over 24 years old (13%). This indicated that more than 50% of all reported gang members in 1996 were of school age which was approximately 423,000 youths.

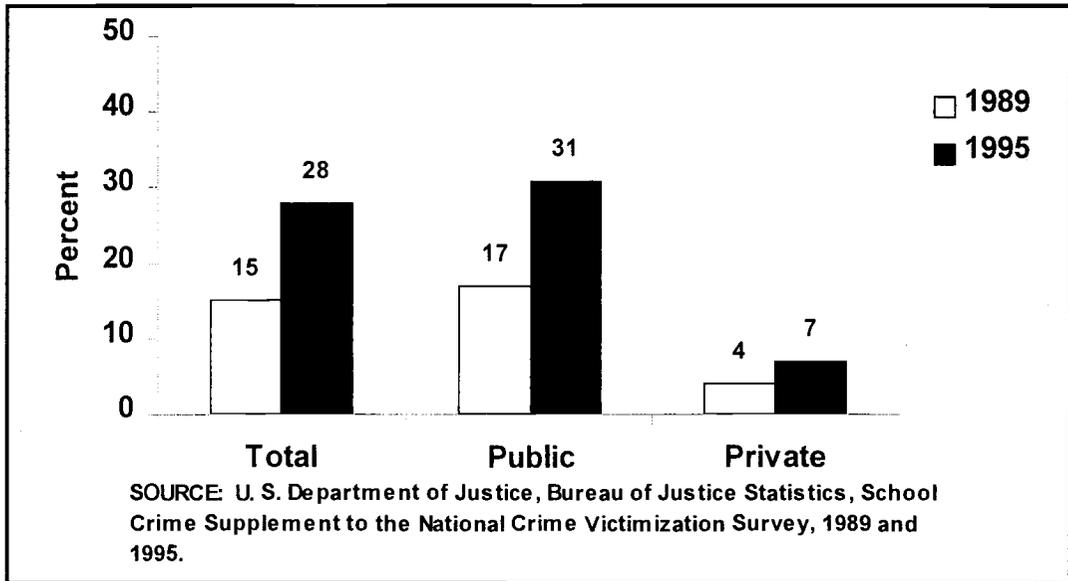
The 1996 National Youth Gang Survey revealed that the youth gang problem in this country was more extensive than previously estimated. In addition, the survey results also indicated that no state was gang-free, few large cities were gang-free, and that youth gangs were emerging in new localities, especially in smaller cities and rural areas.

School Statistics. The U. S. Department of Education (1998) documented the proliferation of gangs in schools from 1989 to 1995. In a six year study involving more than one million public and private school students, the following findings were reported:

- Between 1989 and 1995, the percentage of students who reported that gangs were present in their schools increased. In 1989, 15% of students reported gangs being present in their schools. By 1995, this percentage had risen to 28%. See Figure 1.
- Gangs were more likely to exist in public schools than in private schools. In 1989, 17% of students in public school reported that gangs were present in their school compared with 4% in private school. By 1995, the percentage of public school students reporting that gangs were present in their school almost doubled (from 17% in 1989 to 31% in 1995) as well as the percentage of private school students reporting a gang presence (from 4% to 7%). See Figure 1.

Figure 1

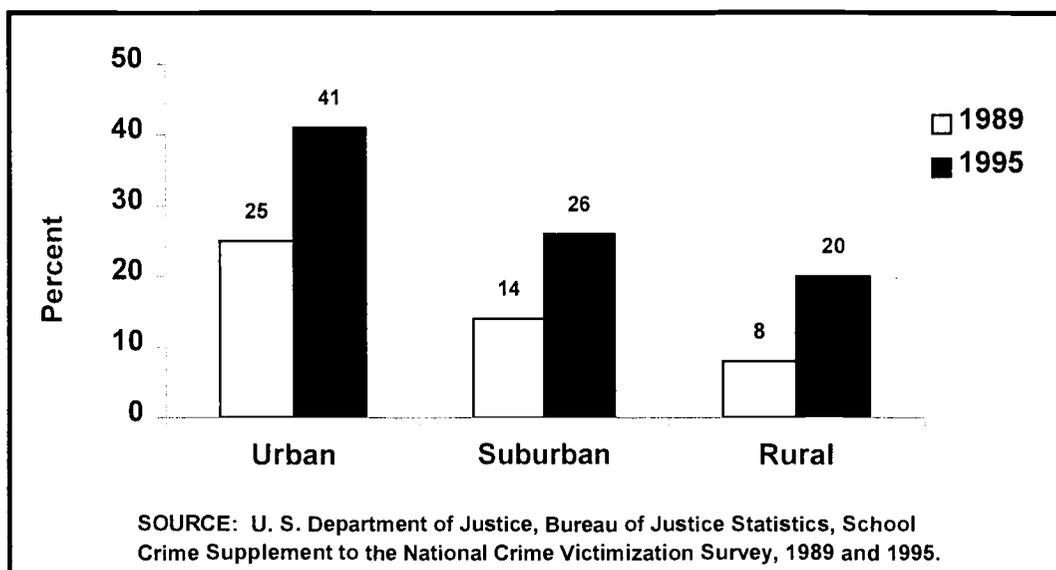
Percentage of students ages 12 through 19 who reported that street gangs were present at school, by control of school: 1989 and 1995.



- In 1995, urban students were more likely to report that there were street gangs at their school (41%) than were suburban students (26%) or rural students (20%). Between 1989 and 1995, reports of a gang presence in schools increased in all three categories. See Figure 2.
- In both 1989 and 1995, Hispanic students were more likely than African-American or Caucasian students to report the existence of gangs in their schools. Caucasian students were the least likely to report gangs in their schools. Between 1989 and 1995, reports of a gang presence increased for all major ethnic groups.

Figure 2

Percentage of students ages 12 through 19 who reported that street gangs were present at school, by urbanicity: 1989 and 1995.



Gangs and Delinquency

The association between gang membership and delinquency has been well documented from the earliest gang research to the most recent. Research has clearly demonstrated that youths who join gangs are more involved in delinquent acts than are youths who do not join gangs. This is especially true for serious and violent delinquency (Thornberry & Burch, 1996).

Despite this uniform finding, however, there have been few longitudinal studies to determine the proportion of all delinquent acts for which gang members are responsible. This is an important issue because

if gang members are responsible for a large proportion of all delinquent acts, efforts to improve school climate and reduce school related crime will not be successful unless those efforts include effective gang prevention and intervention programs (Goldstein & Kodluboy, 1998; Thornberry & Burch, 1996). Of the few longitudinal studies that have been conducted in this arena, the findings of two of the most extensive and authoritative will be reported.

The Rochester Youth Development Study (Thornberry & Burch, 1996) was a longitudinal study that is concerned with investigating the portion of delinquency and criminal behavior in American society attributed to youth gang members. The study followed a sample of 1,000 adolescents initially selected in 1986, when they were in either the seventh or eighth grade in the Rochester, New York, public school system. The subjects have been followed for ten years and the sample, composed primarily of minority group members, consisted of 729 male students and 271 female students. Approximately 68% of the population were African-American, 17% Hispanic (mostly Puerto Rican), and 15% Caucasian. Although the sample over selected youth at-risk for serious delinquency, the results were statistically adjusted to represent the entire population of seventh and eighth grade students in the Rochester school system.

Each subject was interviewed at six-month intervals over the course of ten years. Researchers also collected data from interviews with parents

and a variety of Rochester agencies including the schools, police, courts, and social service agencies. An analysis of the data revealed that 30% of the sample population reported being a member of a street gang at some point prior to the end of high school. In contrast, 70% of the subjects reported never having joined a gang.

Results of the Rochester Youth Development Study clearly indicate that gang members account for a disproportionate number of delinquent and criminal acts in American society. For example, gang members (30% of the sample) self-reported committing 86% of all serious delinquent acts, 69% of violent acts, 68% of property offenses, 60% of public disorder offenses, and 70% of all drug sales. The data also revealed that gang members accounted for 63% of the instances of alcohol use and 61% of the instances of other drug use.

In addition, Thornberry and Burch controlled for five additional risk factors (poverty level, lack of parental supervision, lack of commitment to school, negative life events, and association with delinquent peers) to ascertain their level of impact related to gang membership and delinquency. The results indicated that even when these five risk factors were held constant, gang members self-reported committing violent and delinquent acts at a significantly higher rate (t-test, $p < 0.05$) when compared to non-gang members who also reported a high level of delinquency. Clearly, the

data revealed that gang membership exerted a strong influence on the rate of delinquent behavior among gang involved youth.

The Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP), as reported by Battin et al. (1998), is a longitudinal study concerned with investigating the question, "Does gang membership contribute to delinquency above and beyond the influence of associating with delinquent peers?"

The researchers followed a sample of 808 students since 1985 when they first entered the fifth grade in the Seattle, Washington, public school system. The sample included 412 male students and 396 female students. Approximately 46% of the sample population were Caucasian, 24% African-American, 21% Asian-American, 6% Native American, and 3% were from other ethnic groups. Forty-six percent of the subject's parents reported a maximum family income under \$20,000 per year in 1985 and 52% of the sample participated in the National School Breakfast/Lunch Program at some point in the fifth through seventh grades, indicating that they came from families in poverty.

Each subject was interviewed once each year since the research project started in 1985. Sample sizes varied slightly for each year based on the number of respondents who completed the interview. Nonparticipation was not related to gender, use of drugs or alcohol, ethnicity, or participation in delinquency. Data was also collected annually from interviews with parents and records obtained from the King County Juvenile Department.

To determine whether gang membership contributed to delinquency above and beyond associating with delinquent peers, the SSDP sample was divided into the following three groups:

1. Gang members: Respondents who self-reported membership in a gang in the past year and who identified the gang by name.
2. Youths with delinquent peers: Respondents who were not members of a gang in the survey year but who reported that at least two of their three best friends had been arrested or done things that could get them in trouble with the police.
3. Youths with non-delinquent peers: Respondents who were not members of a gang in the survey year and who reported that only one or none of their three best friends had been arrested or done things that could get them in trouble with the police.

These three groups were compared according to various measures of delinquency and substance use to determine whether there were significant differences in their rates of offending. The results from the Seattle Social Development Project revealed a consistent pattern of offending across the three status groups for all measures of delinquency and substance use. On all measures, rates of offending were lowest for youths with non-delinquent peers, higher for youths with delinquent peers, and highest for gang members. For example, youths at age 15 with non-delinquent peers committed an average of 1.6 self-reported acts of violence

in the past year, while youths with delinquent peers committed an average of 5.1 violent acts and gang members committed more than 11 violent acts.

Researchers used the t-test to determine whether observed differences in offending between gang members and youths with delinquent peers were statistically significant. The self-reported rates for gang members, on nine of the eleven measures of delinquency and substance use, were significantly higher than those for youths with delinquent peers (t-test, $p < 0.05$). Similar patterns were also found for court-recorded delinquency (t-test, $p < 0.05$).

Clearly, the data revealed that gang membership exerted a strong influence on the rate of delinquent behavior among gang involved youths.

Risk and Protective Factors

Risk Factors. Hawkins and Catalano (1993) reviewed over 30 years of existing work on risk factors from various fields and completed extensive research of their own to identify risk factors for drug abuse, delinquency and violence, all of which are associated with youth gang activity. Their research was primarily concerned with “risk-focused prevention” which is based on a simple premise: “to prevent a problem from happening, we need to identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to reduce the risks in ways that enhance protective or resiliency factors” (Hawkins & Catalano, 1993, p.3). They identified risk

factors in five important areas of daily life: the family, the school, the community, peer groups and within individuals themselves. See Table 1.

Table 1

Risk Factors for Engaging in Delinquency, Drugs and Violence.

Domain	Risk Factors
Individual/Peer Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebelliousness • Have friends who engage in the problem behavior • Have favorable attitudes toward problem behavior • Early initiation of the problem behavior • Constitutional factors (e.g., Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, Anti-Social Personality Disorder, biological factors)
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family history of the problem behavior • Family management problems • Family conflict, including partner and/or child abuse • Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in the problem behavior
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early and persistent antisocial behavior • Academic failure beginning in elementary school • Lack of commitment to school
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of drugs • Availability of firearms • Community laws and norms favorable toward drug use, firearms and crime • Media portrayals of violence

Table 1 (Continued)

Community (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions and mobility • Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization • Extreme economic deprivation
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Note. From Risk-Focused Prevention Using the Social Development Strategy (p. 17), by J. D. Hawkins and R. F. Catalano, 1993, Seattle, WA: Developmental Research and Programs, Inc.

The California Department of Education (1994) applied the research findings of Hawkins and Catalano (1993) to the youth gang problem in order to create a system to identify youths at-risk of becoming gang members.

"The perpetuation of youth gangs can be overcome if school staff members identify the risk factors that increase the vulnerability of youths to join gangs and work collectively to reduce those risk factors" (California Department of Education, 1994, p. 3). They identified several risk factors that often exist before a person becomes involved in youth gang activity. "Youths who experience one or two risk factors do not necessarily become gang members or become addicted to drugs or alcohol, but they do face greater risk. The larger the number of risk factors present, the greater the risk becomes" (California Department of Education, 1994, p. 3). The identified risk factors related to gang involvement include factors in four main areas in young peoples' lives: family, school, peer groups, and community. See Table 2.

Table 2

Risk Factors Leading to Gang Involvement.

Domain	Risk Factors
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A family history of gang involvement • Problems in the management of the family, including lax parental supervision, physical abuse, and high levels of conflict • Siblings who are gang members • Excessive use of alcohol or drugs in the home
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early antisocial behavior, especially in the elementary grades • Poor academic performance, especially in the elementary grades • Performance at least one grade behind grade level in mathematics and reading • Little or no commitment to school • Involvement in thefts, robberies, or extortion committed at school
Peer Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alienation, rebelliousness, and a lack of bonding to society • Fighting and general aggressiveness in early adolescence • Friends who are gang members • Favorable attitudes toward gangs • A lack of positive social experiences
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families living in social and economic deprivation • Neighborhood and community disorganization • A history of gangs in the community

Note. From On Alert! Gang Prevention: School In-Service Guidelines (pp. 3-6), by California Department of Education, 1994, Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

In his important meta-analysis, Howell (1998) summarized the “risk factors for youth gang membership that have been identified in studies using many types of research methods, including cross sectional, longitudinal, and ethnographic studies” (p. 5). Howell’s work suggests that the present state of knowledge of risk factors for gang membership is not precise. Because so many risk factors have been identified, it is difficult to determine priorities for gang prevention and intervention programs. See Table 3.

However, additional research has been conducted in an attempt to refine the present state of knowledge of risk factors for gang membership. Longitudinal studies of large samples of urban youths in Rochester, New York (Thornberry, 1998), and Seattle, Washington (Hill et al., 1999) have identified “casual” risk factors for gang membership. Both studies measure risk factors in the community, family, school, peer group, and individual domains. Because both studies have been collecting data on their respective samples for over a decade, risk factors measured in early adolescence can be used to predict gang membership at points later in life.

In the Rochester study, Thornberry (1998) found that the most important community risk factor was growing up in neighborhoods in which the “level of social integration” (attachment) is low. Among family variables, poverty, absence of biological parents, low parental attachment to the child,

Table 3

Risk Factors for Youth Gang Membership.

Domain	Risk	Sources
Community	• Social disorganization, including poverty and residential mobility	Curry and Spergel, 1988
	• Organized lower class communities	Miller, 1958; Moore, 1991
	• Underclass communities	Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Hagedorn, 1988; Moore, 1978, 1985, 1988, 1991; Moore, Vigil, and Garcia, 1983; Sullivan, 1989
	• Presence of gangs in the neighborhood	Curry and Spergel, 1992
	• Availability of drugs in the neighborhood	Curry and Spergel, 1992; Hagedorn, 1988, 1994a, 1994b; Hill et al., in press; Kosterman et al., 1996; Moore, 1978, 1991; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991; Taylor, 1989
	• Availability of firearms	Lizotte et al., 1994; Miller, 1992; Newton and Zimring, 1969
	• Barriers to and lack of social and economic opportunities	Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1960; Fagan, 1990; Hagedorn, 1988, 1994b; Klein, 1995; Moore, 1990; Short and Strodtbeck, 1965

Table 3 (Continued)

Community (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of social capital • Cultural norms supporting gang behavior • Feeling unsafe in neighborhood; high crime 	<p>Short, 1996; Sullivan, 1989; Vigil, 1988</p> <p>Miller, 1958; Short and Strodbeck, 1965</p> <p>Kosterman et al., 1996; Vigil 1988</p>
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family disorganization, including broken homes and parent drug/alcohol abuse • Troubled families, including incest, family violence and drug addiction • Family members in a gang • Lack of adult male role models • Lack of parental role models • Low socioeconomic status • Extreme economic deprivation, family management problems, parents with violent attitudes, sibling antisocial behavior 	<p>Bjerragaard and Smith, 1993; Esbensen, Huizinga, and Weiher, 1993; Hill et al., in press; Vigil 1988</p> <p>Moore, 1978, 1991; Vigil, 1988</p> <p>Curry and Spergel, 1992; Moore, 1991; Moore, Vigil, and Garcia, 1983</p> <p>Miller, 1958; Vigil, 1988</p> <p>Wang, 1995</p> <p>Almost all studies</p> <p>Hill et al., in press; Kosterman et al., 1996</p>

Table 3 (Continued)

School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic failure • Low educational aspirations, especially among females • Negative labeling by teachers • Trouble at school • Few Teacher role models • Educational frustration • Low commitment to school, low school attachment, high levels of antisocial behavior in school, low achievement test scores, and identification as being learning disabled 	<p>Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993; Curry and Spergel, 1992; Kostermal et al., 1996</p> <p>Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993; Hill et al., in press; Kosterman et al., 1996</p> <p>Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Esbensen, Huizinga, and Weiher, 1993</p> <p>Kosterman et al., 1996</p> <p>Wang, 1995</p> <p>Curry and Spergel, 1992</p> <p>Hill et al., in press</p>
Peer Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High commitment to delinquent peers • Low commitment to positive peers 	<p>Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993; Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Vigil and Yun, 1990</p> <p>Esbensen, Huizinga, and Weiher, 1993</p>

Table 3 (Continued)

Peer Group (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gang members in class • Friends who use drugs or who are gang members • Friends who are drug distributors • Interaction with delinquent peers 	<p>Curry and Spergel, 1992</p> <p>Curry and Spergel, 1992</p> <p>Curry and Spergel, 1992</p> <p>Hill et al., in press; Kosterman et al., 1996</p>
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior delinquency • Deviant attitudes • Street smartness; toughness • Defiant and individualistic character • Fatalistic view of the world • Aggression 	<p>Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993; Curry and Spergel, 1992; Esbensen and Huizinga, 1993; Kosterman et al., 1996</p> <p>Esbensen, Huizinga, Weiher, 1993; Fagan, 1990; Hill et al., in press; Kosterman et al., 1996</p> <p>Miller, 1958</p> <p>Miller, 1958; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1991</p> <p>Miller, 1958</p> <p>Campbell, 1984a, 1984b; Cohen, 1960; Horowitz, 1986; Miller, Geertz, and Cutter, 1962</p>

Table 3 (Continued)

Individual (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher levels of normlessness in the context of family, peer group, and school • Illegal gun ownership • Early or precocious sexual activity • Alcohol and drug use • Drug trafficking • Desire for group rewards such as status, identity, self-esteem, companionship, and protection • Problem behaviors, hyperactivity, drinking, lack of refusal skills, and early sexual activity 	<p>Esbensen, Huizinga, Weiher, 1993</p> <p>Bjerregaard and Lizotte, 1995; Lizotte et al., 1994</p> <p>Kosterman et al., 1996; Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993</p> <p>Bjerregaard and Smith, 1993; Curry and Spergel, 1992; Esbensen, Huizinga, and Weiher, 1993; Hill et al., in press; Thornberry et al., 1993; Vigil and Long, 1990</p> <p>Fagan, 1990; Thornberry et al., 1993</p> <p>Curry and Spergel, 1992; Fagan, 1990; Horowitz and Schwartz, 1974; Moore, 1978, 1991; Short and Strodbeck, 1965</p> <p>Hill et al., in press; Kosterman et al., 1996</p>
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Note. From Youth gangs: An Overview (pp 6-7), by J. C. Howell, 1998, Washington DC: U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

and lax parental supervision all increase the probability of gang membership. Three school variables were significant risk factors: low expectations for success in school, low student commitment to school, and low attachment to teachers. In addition, associating with delinquent friends and unsupervised “hanging around” with these delinquent friends proved to be a significant factor. Important individual risk factors were low self-esteem, numerous negative life events, depressive symptoms, and easy access to drugs or drug use. To summarize:

Youth who grow up in more disorganized neighborhoods; who come from impoverished, distressed families; who do poorly in school and have low attachment to school and teachers; who associate with delinquent peers; and engage in various forms of problem behaviors are at increased risk for becoming gang members. (Thornberry, 1998, p. 157)

Similarly, the Seattle researchers discovered risk factors for youth gang membership that closely “mirror” the factors identified in the Rochester study. Hill et al. (1999) summarized the results as follows:

The most important community factor identified in the Seattle study is growing up in neighborhoods where drugs are readily available. Several family variables are important: family instability, extensive economic deprivation, family management problems, parents with violent attitudes, and sibling antisocial behavior. Numerous school factors have been identified, including low educational aspiration, low commitment to school, low school attachment, high levels of antisocial behavior in school, low achievement test scores, the identity of being learning disabled, and low grades. The most important peer group factor is associating with law-violating peers. Individual risk factors are the early use of alcohol and marijuana, prior delinquency, hyperactivity, externalizing behaviors (hostility, aggression, and rule breaking), poor skills

in refusing offers to engage in antisocial behavior, and early sexual activity. (p. 8)

The Seattle study also discovered that children who experience 7 or more risk factors at ages 10 to 12 were 13 times more likely to join a gang in adolescence than children who experience only one risk factor (Hill et al., 1999).

Although significant progress is being made in identifying the major risk factors for youth gang involvement, much more information is needed to specify the developmental sequence by which these risk factors operate. This knowledge will be very useful in the development of successful prevention and intervention programs.

According to Hawkins, Arthur, and Catalano (1995), another important finding from the research on risk factors lies in the overlap among problem behaviors and the use of some common factors for predicting multiple outcomes. For example, a number of risk factors for drug abuse are also predictors of delinquency, teen pregnancy, gang membership, and school dropout. "This suggests that prevention efforts focused on risk reduction may have a direct effect on diverse disorders that are predicted by these common risks" (p. 369).

There is increasing evidence that the effects of exposure to risk can be mitigated by a variety of individual and social characteristics known as protective factors. Protective factors may directly decrease dysfunction,

interact with a risk factor to buffer dysfunction, or prevent the initial occurrence of a risk factor (Hawkins, Arthur, & Catalano, 1995).

Researchers have sought to identify protective factors that enhance the resilience of those exposed to high levels of risk and protect them from undesirable outcomes. Hawkins and Catalano (1996) have identified the following general categories of protective factors against stress in children: (a) individual characteristics, including resilient temperament, positive social orientation, and intelligence; (b) family cohesion, warmth, and bonding during childhood; and (c) external social supports (norms, beliefs, behavioral standards) that help an individual resist participating in undesirable activities.

Hawkins, Arthur, and Catalano (1995) suggest the following basic principles for designing research based prevention/intervention programs that will reduce youth exposure to risk and enhance protective or resiliency factors:

- Focus on Reducing Known Risk Factors. The goals of prevention may be accomplished by direct efforts to reduce exposure to risk factors or by enhancing protective factors that moderate or mediate the effects of exposure to risk. Prevention efforts should specify what risk factors are targeted and should specify the mechanism or process through which these risk factors are thought to operate.

- When Reducing Risk, Enhance Known Protective Factors.

Prevention/intervention efforts can be strengthened by enhancing protective factors that moderate risk. For example, efforts that focus on reducing family management problems should do so in ways that enhance family bonding and the traditional belief structure in the family. In this way, not only is the negative risk reduced, but bonding is strengthened to improve family unity and help provide motivation for the youth to obey family rules.

- Address Risk and Protective Factors at Appropriate

Developmental Stages. Some risk and protective factors appear to be relatively stable predictors across the life span, while others appear to predict problem behaviors at specific developmental periods. For example, lack of parental supervision appears to predict conduct disorders across childhood, while association with peers who use drugs is predictive of drug use only in adolescence. If children experience academic problems in grades 4 through 6, this is a predictor of drug abuse risk and potential youth gang membership. Early intervention is needed. Tutoring and academic enrichment programs would be appropriate for this developmental stage.

- Intervene Early – Before the Target Behavior Stabilizes. Early

involvement in gangs is a predictor of a prolonged course of

involvement with criminal youth gang activity. This suggests that prevention/intervention efforts should be delivered at the elementary and middle school level before youths are involved in gangs.

- Include Those at High Risk. It is important to design prevention/intervention programs to reach those exposed to multiple risk factors. This may be accomplished by selecting schools or identifying individuals exposed to multiple risks for special attention.
- Address Multiple Risks with Multiple Strategies. Because risks are present in several social domains and cumulate in predicting undesirable activities (i.e., drug abuse, teen pregnancy, gang membership, school dropout, etc.), prevention efforts focused on reducing multiple risks and enhancing multiple protective factors may be required. These efforts would be designed to build up protection while reducing or moderating risk exposure.

To summarize, the research on risk and protective factors suggests a need for a developmentally appropriate, multi-component risk reduction strategy that includes health, education, and human service agencies. Strategies must be directed at youths who are exposed to the highest number of risk factors in order to reduce risk and, where possible, increase protection.

Why Youths Join Gangs

Youths join gangs for numerous reasons that are varied and complex. According to Goldstein and Kodluboy (1998), belonging, pride, self-esteem, identity enhancement, excitement, resources, and removal of peer pressure are the most commonly cited reasons in the research literature for youths joining gangs. In addition, other motivations for seeking gang membership have been cited in the literature. For example, Spergel (1995) suggests the need for recognition, status, safety, power, money, and new experiences. Jankowski (1991) cited the desire for material incentives, recreation, refuge, physical protection, and the need for adolescents to “rebel, resist, and seek paths different from those urged upon them by the adults in their lives” (p. 14).

Joining a gang may be viewed by some youths as normal and respectable even when the consequences are a series of delinquent and violent acts. Stealing, aggression, and vandalism may be secondary to the excitement of interacting with peers who have similar interests, needs, and wishes (Spergel, 1993). In addition, the consequences of joining a gang and participating in delinquent acts may not be fully realized, or simply ignored, by a significant number of gang involved youths (Goldstein & Huff, 1993).

Some youths indicate that they join and stay in gangs for financial reasons. Many gangs provide safety, contacts, and preparation for a variety of profitable criminal activities. Youth gangs have become a place to make contact with drug dealers and prepare for “employment” as a drug dealer, drug manufacturer or enforcer (Goldstein & Huff, 1993).

According to Spergel (1993), gang membership may meet the social and psychological needs of youths:

Joining a gang may meet social and psychological developmental needs of troubled and deprived youth. It provides a way of achieving status and self-importance. The gang member can “control” turf, schools, parks, and prisons often when he cannot perform adequately in these settings and achieve respect for himself through legitimate means. (p. 56)

Decker and Van Winkle (1996) view joining gangs as consisting of both “pushes” and “pulls.” The push-pull perspective implies that joining a gang is the result of a “pull” (perceived attractive alternative to an individuals’ current lifestyle) or a “push” (social, cultural, or economic deprivation that forces gang membership). Examples of the attractive aspects of gang membership that entice or “pull” individuals into the gang are as follows:

- Enhanced prestige or status among friends
- Opportunity to belong to a group
- Chance for adventure or excitement
- Opportunity to make money by selling drugs

Thus, many youths see themselves as making a rational choice in deciding to join a gang. They see personal advantages to gang membership (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996). In addition to the attractive aspects of gang membership, there are strong social, economic, and cultural forces that may “push” adolescents in the direction of gangs:

- Protection from other gangs
- Gang recruitment or coercion
- Neighborhood tradition of gang activity
- Family participation in gang activity
- Poverty or limited life options

According to Sanders (1995), two major factors contribute to young people joining a gang: the alienation and breakdown of traditional structures, and the drive to fulfill basic human needs. The family, school, and other institutions or structures that have traditionally played an important part in human growth and development are constantly eroding, causing youths to feel more alienated (Clark, 1992; Sanders, 1995). Clark (1992) states that such alienation increases the risk of an adolescent joining a youth gang. Spergel (1993) reports that the weakening of the family structure is a causal factor in the increase of gang crime. In essence, adolescents are attracted to gangs because they believe gangs can do for them what schools, communities, and families cannot.

The drive to fulfill basic human needs was outlined by Abraham Maslow (Ewen, 1988) and culminated in his theory that most human action represents a striving to satisfy needs and that needs are hierarchical. Sanders (1995) applied Maslow's theory to the question of "why do children seek membership in street gangs?" He discovered that adolescents join youth gangs in order to fulfill one or more of the following needs:

- Physiological Needs. These are the most basic of needs: food, water, clothing, and shelter. Money garnered from illegal gang activity enables some individuals to feed and clothe themselves and often their entire families. Likewise, gangs provide food, clothes, and housing for members who need it (i.e., youths who runaway from home, individuals who want to avoid contact with the police, etc.).
- Security Needs. Everyone, especially children, need to feel protected and safe. Often, children turn to gangs to find that security. Some children join a gang for protection from abusive situations at home. Others may join a gang for protection from rival gangs. Recent immigrants to the United States may join a gang to protect themselves from the discrimination and violence some minority groups experience.
- Belonging Needs. According to Maslow, human beings have a need to belong to a group, to feel that they are accepted (Schunk,

1996). When children have a difficult time fulfilling that need within their families, school, or community, they are more vulnerable to joining street gangs. Research conducted by Sanders (1995) suggests that children who had positive group experiences were less likely to join gangs and that early positive group experiences decrease the need for children to seek negative group experiences (i.e., gang membership).

- Rites of Passage Needs. Rites of passage are culturally prescribed rituals that symbolically transfer a child into adulthood (Sanders, 1995). When older males and females, in particular, mothers and fathers, are not present to take children through their traditional cultural rites of passage, gang leaders often are. Unfortunately, gang rituals or rites of passage, can be very negative or dangerous (i.e., selling drugs, stealing, fighting, performing a drive-by shooting, etc.).

Lacking the support of traditional institutions and feeling driven to fulfill basic human needs, many young people become easy recruits for gang membership. Research conducted by the California Department of Education (1994) suggests the attraction for youths to join a gang may include the following:

- Gangs can provide teenagers with friendship, social bonding, shared experiences, tradition, and feelings of belonging. Youths

who experience failure in traditional systems, especially in school, often experience success in gangs.

- Affiliation with a gang can be a lucrative means of obtaining economic resources, which are acquired through selling drugs and committing thefts and burglaries. Youths who lack formal education or viable employment skills are left dependent on the gang and its illegal activities for economic survival.
- Gangs provide protection and safety. Youths may believe that their personal survival depends on joining a neighborhood gang in order to receive protection from the physical attacks of other local gangs.
- Gangs provide status and prestige. Gang membership fulfills the need youths have for self-esteem, social interaction, recognition, and economic and psychological survival.

In addition, Klein (1995) reports that the characteristics of those who join gangs, as opposed to those who do not, include the following:

- A group of substantial personal deficiencies, such as low self-esteem, poor school performance, inadequate impulse control, and undeveloped social skills.
- A marked tendency to employ defiance and violence, accompanied by pride in physical prowess.

- An above-average desire for power, status, and companionship.
- A boring, unexciting, often isolated life-style.

According to an extensive survey of former gang members conducted by Spergel (1995), the reasons youths give for joining gangs relate to availability, fun, friendship, protection, lack of home supervision, having an older brother in a gang, ignorance of the negative aspects of membership, status and power.

Clearly, the research literature reveals that the reasons associated with joining a youth gang are, for many individuals, complex, diverse, and often very powerful.

Inservice Education

Stabile (1991) reports that most school administrators, teachers, and parents are not gang literate, that is, they are largely unaware of the early warning signs for youths at-risk of becoming involved in gang activity.

According to Stabile, the challenge facing school personnel and parents is to stay current and learn to recognize the signs of gang activity.

The school and community must become aware of the myriad of gang symbols and paraphernalia. Street gangs have a language all their own, and they will test your ability to understand it. The greatest victory a gang member can score in a school is to walk by a teacher or administrator flaunting gang colors, hand signs, or even gestures and come away unnoticed or unscathed. This type of ignorance sends a clear message. It tells gang members your school is vulnerable to their territorial battles. The problem of denial and gang

illiteracy must be addressed before schools are jeopardized by multiplying gang influence. (Stabile, 1991, p. 6-7)

A review of the literature clearly indicates the need for school personnel to receive inservice training so they can recognize the early warning signs of youth gang activity (California Department of Education, 1994; Spergel & Alexander, 1992; Stephens, 1993; Trump, 1993).

According to the California Department of Education (1994), gang awareness training should include the following educational components:

Essential to any comprehensive plan to prevent the presence of gangs in schools is an inservice training program that focuses on an awareness of gang behaviors, the identification of gangs, staff behaviors that enable gangs to exist on school campuses, and classroom prevention strategies. (p. 5)

School personnel, particularly classroom teachers, are in a unique position to identify students who are involved in gangs and refer them to appropriate prevention/intervention programs. However, the quality of the inservice training school personnel receive will have a direct impact on their ability to identify and assist gang-involved youths in a positive manner.

The components of effective inservice training or staff development are well researched. Joyce and Showers (1980) analyzed more than 200 studies in which researchers investigated the effectiveness of various kinds of training methods. They were able to identify a number of training components that, either alone or in combination, contributes to the impact of a training activity. Joyce and Showers (1980) identified the following major components of effective training:

- Presentation of Theory. Effective inservice training should provide the theoretical base and rationale for the training activity. Readings, lectures, films, and discussions are typically used to describe the theoretical base.

Level of Impact. The presentation of theory can raise awareness and increase conceptual control of the training activity to some extent. Alone, the presentation of theory is not a very powerful training component, but when it is used in combination with other training components, it significantly increases the level of conceptual control, skill development, and transfer.

- Modeling or Demonstration. Modeling involves the enactment of the desired skill or strategy either through a live demonstration or through television, film, or other media.

Level of Impact. Modeling appears to have a considerable effect on awareness and some effect on knowledge. Training participants seem to better understand what is illustrated to them and many can imitate demonstrated skills with relative ease. Research appears to indicate that modeling is very likely to be an important component of any training program.

- Practice Under Simulated Conditions. Practice involves trying out new skills or strategies. Simulated conditions are usually achieved by carrying out the practice with peers under

circumstances which do not require the management of an entire class or large group at the same time.

Level of Impact. Practice is a very efficient way of acquiring skills and strategies and an effective way to develop competence in a wide variety of classroom techniques.

- Structured and Open-Ended Feedback. Feedback can be formal (structured) or informal (open-ended) and involves providing information to training participants after they have practiced a new skill or strategy. Feedback can be provided by trainers, peers, professors, or supervisors.

Level of Impact. Research indicates that feedback alone does not appear to provide permanent changes to training participants and that structured feedback is more effective than open-ended feedback. Research also indicates that modeling followed by practice and feedback can be very powerful in achieving skill development and transfer.

- Coaching for Application. When the other training components are used in combination, the level of impact on most training participants is considerable. Some participants, however, may have difficulty in transferring their new skill into practice. Direct coaching on how to apply the new skill may be necessary for those individuals experiencing difficulty. Coaching for application

involves helping the training participant implement the new skill into practice or adapt to the new instructional approach.

Coaching can be provided by trainers, peers, professors, or supervisors.

Based on their review of the literature, Joyce and Showers (1980) concluded that for maximum effectiveness of most inservice activities, it is best to “include several and perhaps all of the training components discussed.” If any of the training components are not used, the impact of the training will be weakened in the sense that fewer individuals will be able to progress to the transfer or application level (which is the only level that has significant meaning for school improvement).

In a comparison of five different approaches to staff development, Lauro (1995) reports that the use of “in-house” trainers can be very effective. The term “in-house” refers to using teachers or school administrators, who have a level of expertise in an area, to conduct the training of other educators in their school. This approach is effective because a qualified and trained person is consistently available to answer questions, resolve concerns, and to provide constant feedback and coaching to educators who are implementing the material learned in the staff development activity (Lauro, 1995). Furthermore, Lauro reports that “in-house” trainers can increase the effectiveness of their staff development activities if they demonstrate dedication to improving education, provide

guidance in addition to directions, and are viewed by their peers as knowledgeable resources of information in the school.

Storer and Crosswait (1995) report the pressing need to help rural educators meet the needs of their students at-risk of becoming involved in negative life activities. "Rural schools are faced with a changing student population, making the dissemination of new ideas, techniques, and attitudes critical... and staff development is the primary vehicle for this dissemination" (p. 24). The use of "in-house" trainers can be very effective in this situation if the trainers possess a complete knowledge base in the specific workshop topic and broad knowledge of the fields of prevention and the at-risk child (Storer and Crosswait, 1995). According to Lauro (1995) and Storer and Crosswait (1995), "in-house" trainers are effective for rural schools because they can deliver staff development activities that (a) overcome cost and distance barriers, (b) provide opportunities for collegiality for teachers with similar needs and interests, (c) provide face-to-face training, and (d) make follow-up support available.

The organization and presentation of staff development activities will largely determine their success. An effective trainer must be knowledgeable about the specific topic and possess a facilitation style that will enhance learning. According to Heffington and Christensen (1995), an effective workshop style is a convergence of two elements: educational style and personal style. An effective trainer will be aware of the current

theories of adult learning and implement the following concepts into the workshop design. These concepts are labeled as “educational style” by Heffington and Christensen (1995):

- Be aware of different learning styles: visual, reflective, active, and experimental.
- Utilize interactive, hands-on activities.
- Include both group and individual learning opportunities.
- Build concepts around a unifying theme.
- Incorporate two-way learning. Value and use participants’ expertise.
- Model behavior and activities.
- Allow time for absorbing, processing, and reflecting.
- Help participants reach their own potential.

The other element of an effective workshop style, referred to as “personal style,” consists of the trainer possessing the following attributes (Heffington and Christensen, 1995):

- Relaxed and confident
- Friendly and respectful
- Knowledgeable and curious
- Positive and enthusiastic
- Warm and humorous
- Open to questions, comments, discussion

Burke (1997) cites oral communication, presence in front of groups, sensitivity to people, being a good listener, adaptability, native intelligence, sense of humor, and warmth of personality as key qualities of a successful trainer.

Speck (1996) identified the following key points in adult learning theory that should be considered when designing inservice training or professional staff development activities:

- Adults will commit to learning when the goals and objectives are considered realistic and important to them. Application in the “real world” is important and relevant to the adult learners’ personal and professional needs.
- Adults want to be the origin of their own learning and will resist learning activities they believe are an attack on their competence. Thus, professional development needs to give participants some control over the what, who, how, why, when, and where of their learning.
- Adult learners need to see that the professional development learning and their day-to-day activities and problems are related and relevant.
- Adult learners need direct concrete experience, in which they apply the learning in real work.

- Adult learning has ego involved. Professional development must be structured to provide support from peers and to reduce the fear of judgment during learning.
- Adults need to receive feedback on how they are doing and the results of their efforts. Opportunities must be built into professional development activities that allow the learner to practice the learning and receive feedback.
- Adults need to participate in small-group activities during the learning to move them beyond understanding to application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Small-group activities provide an opportunity to share, reflect, and generalize their learning and experiences.
- Adult learners come to learning with a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, self-direction, interests, and competencies. This diversity must be accommodated in the professional development planning.
- Transfer of learning for adults is not automatic and must be facilitated. Coaching and other kinds of follow-up support are needed to help adult learners transfer learning into daily practice so that it is sustained.

Summary

This review of the literature has covered a wide range of issues related to youth gang activity, risk and protective factors for gang membership, and youth gang awareness inservice training. School personnel have the responsibility to protect their students from the intimidation, violence, and criminal activities associated with youth gangs. To achieve this, school personnel must receive effective inservice training that focuses on an awareness of gang behaviors, the identification of gangs, the reasons youths join gangs, risk and protective factors, and prevention strategies. This study is designed to investigate the impact of youth gang awareness training on school personnel in a rural school district.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The focus of this qualitative study is to examine the impact of youth gang awareness training on school personnel in a rural Oregon school district. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 17) define qualitative research as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification.” According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998, p. 38), the qualitative researchers’ goal “is to better understand human behavior and experience. They seek to grasp the processes by which people construct meaning and describe what those meanings are.”

The methodology for this study reflects the five characteristics of qualitative research as identified by Bogdan and Biklen (1998).

- Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.
- Qualitative research is descriptive.
- Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products.
- Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
- “Meaning” is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.

Systematic procedures were developed to determine if training sessions based on six specially designed training modules will improve an educator's awareness or understanding of youth gang issues. The training modules focused on training middle and high school level teachers, counselors, and school administrators about youth gang awareness issues.

Study Sample

Subjects for this qualitative study were from a convenience sample of middle and high school level teachers, counselors, and school administrators from the Greenville School District. These subjects were chosen because of their proximity to the researcher, their availability for the study, the district superintendent's willingness to allow them to participate in the study and the need for the gang awareness training in the district due to the relatively recent occurrence of gang related activity in the school system.

A copy of the letter seeking approval from the district superintendent to conduct this study is included in Appendix A.

Research Questions

Six specially designed modules were created and used in this study to train school personnel in the Greenville School District about youth gang issues. Each of the six modules emphasized critical elements of youth gang awareness training as outlined by the California Department of

Education (1994) and Spergel and Alexander (1992). With the assistance of a panel of experts, six questions emerged and became the primary questions that were assessed in the post-evaluation questionnaire and the in-depth interviews. The six questions are as follows:

- 1) To what degree do school personnel know the indicators of youth gang activity?
- 2) To what degree do school personnel know the factors that cause gang formation and why youths join gangs?
- 3) To what degree can school personnel identify local gangs: including gang symbols, language, attire, graffiti, and methods of gang recruitment?
- 4) Do school personnel understand patterns of gang activity: including gang rivalry, gang crime, violent activity, and drug use and trafficking?
- 5) Do school personnel know what steps they should take to establish appropriate communication and productive relationships with gang involved youths?
- 6) Do school personnel know what steps they should follow to refer a gang involved youth to an appropriate gang prevention/intervention program?

The answers to each of these six questions provided data to assist in addressing the primary question of this study: Will inservice training based

on these specially designed modules improve an educator's awareness or understanding of youth gang issues?

Research Instruments

Two research instruments were designed to gather data from the subjects who participated in this study: a questionnaire and a set of interview questions.

- The questionnaire (see Appendix B) was designed to be administered to all participants in the study and was developed through a Delphi Process (Courtney, 1988; Just, 1996; Samahito, 1984). The results of the questionnaire were used to assess the quality of the inservice training and to identify areas of the training that need refinement.
- The interview questions (see Appendix C) were also developed through a Delphi Process (Courtney, 1988; Just, 1996; Samahito, 1984) and designed to be used with ten individuals selected using a purposive sample as outlined by Borg and Gall (1989, p.386). According to Seidman (1998), "The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to 'evaluate' as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience." The answers to the interview questions

provided data to ascertain the level of impact inservice training had on school personnel and their understanding of youth gang issues.

The subjects' responses on these research instruments were used to assess the quality of the inservice training and their knowledge of youth gang issues. Both instruments were developed using a Delphi Process as well as information from the literature on youth gang activity. The Delphi Process (Courtney, 1988; Just, 1996; Samahito, 1984) consisted of a panel of twelve local professionals who have expertise in working with gang involved youths. These professionals provided significant input into the development of both instruments and, ultimately, reached consensus on the six questions that were assessed in this study.

Research Procedures

The research procedures for this study were designed to maintain strict standards of confidentiality since the researcher is employed as an administrator in the school district where the study was being conducted. The researcher acknowledged the inherent difficulties associated with conducting a research study within one's school district. Individuals may perceive a difference in power if the researcher is the direct supervisor of those who participate in the research study. This perceived difference in power may create a stressful situation in some research participants and

cause them to respond to survey or interview questions in a cautious or misleading manner.

One of the principles of an equitable interviewing relationship is that the participants not make themselves unduly vulnerable by participating in the interview. In any hierarchical school system, no matter how small, in which a principal has hiring and firing power and control over other working conditions, a teacher being interviewed by the principal may not feel free to talk openly. That is especially the case when the teachers know that the interviewer has an investment in the program. The issue in such cases is not whether the principal can achieve enough distance from the subject to allow for full exploration of the interview topic, but rather whether the teachers feel secure in that exploration. If they do not, the outcomes of such interviews are not likely to be productive. (Seidman, 1998, p.35)

In order not to contaminate this research project, a research associate (neutral third party) was used to contact all participants and conduct all interviews throughout the study to maintain internal validity.

This research project included the following procedures:

- 1) The researcher developed six specially designed training modules to inservice school personnel about youth gang awareness issues. Each of the six modules emphasized critical elements of youth gang awareness training as outlined by the California Department of Education (1994) and Spergel and Alexander (1992). Middle and high school level teachers, counselors, and school administrators from the Greenville School District received four hours of gang awareness training conducted by the researcher. The instructional methods used to present the

information was varied to include lecture, discussion, overhead presentations, Power Point presentation, commercial videotape, and journal articles. A variety of instructional methods were used with the intent to provide information about youth gang awareness in several different learning modalities to enhance the learning opportunities for the subjects. Participants also received a copy of a training manual written by the researcher which contained a significant amount of written information and illustrations related to youth gang activity.

- 2) At the conclusion of the training session, a questionnaire was administered to all participants. The questionnaire was comprised of 20 short-answer, selection-type items, or attitude scales. Although participants were informed that their responses to the questionnaire would be kept confidential, critical demographic information was solicited and all questionnaires were pre-coded to allow participant responses to be compared with information obtained in subsequent interviews.
- 3) A pilot study was conducted which consisted of in-depth interviews with four individuals who were not involved in the main research study. The four participants were selected from the pool of school personnel who received the gang awareness training. They were selected using a purposive sample as outlined by

Borg and Gall (1989). The sample included one school administrator and three teachers. The school administrator was a first year assistant principal from the high school. Of the three teachers, one was an entry-level educator (less than two years experience), one was a mid-career educator (more than ten years in the field), and one was an educator late in their career (within five years of retirement). Participants were selected so gender equity was maintained as well as parity between the number of middle and high school level educators. Interview questions were refined, as needed, during this phase of the project. The research associate conducted all interviews.

- 4) From the pool of subjects who received the youth gang awareness training, ten individuals were selected using a purposive sample as outlined by Borg and Gall (1989). The sample included one school administrator, two counselors and seven teachers. Of the two counselors, one was a mid-career counselor (more than ten years in the field) and the other was a counselor late in their career (within five years of retirement). Of the seven teachers, two were entry-level educators (less than two years experience), three were mid-career educators (more than ten years in the field), and two were educators late in their careers (within five years of retirement). Participants were

selected so that gender equity was maintained as well as parity between the number of middle and high school level educators. Consent of subjects was obtained by the research associate using an informed consent document. See Appendix D.

- 5) The research associate (neutral third party) conducted in-depth interviews with each of the ten subjects selected for this study. All interviews were conducted eight to twelve weeks following the initial gang awareness inservice training. The duration of the interviews ranged from 48 minutes to one hour and 14 minutes. The research associate used a semi-structured interview format (see Appendix C) that was developed through a Delphi Process (Courtney, 1988; Just, 1996; Samahito, 1984). This format provided the research associate with a general framework for conducting the interviews and ensured that all subjects were asked the same questions. The research associate was given the flexibility to ask probing questions or questions that would elicit complete responses. Follow-up interviews were used to clarify subject responses to questions that were asked during the initial interviews and averaged 24 minutes in length. The research associate took notes during all interview sessions and, when appropriate, made notations concerning major themes, possible discrepancies, and areas that needed probing.

- 6) In order not to contaminate this research project, the research associate was the only person who knew the names of the subjects. All interviews were recorded using a high quality tape recorder. The research associate delivered all audiotapes directly to a transcriptionist to transcribe the interviews. The research associate delivered the written transcribed interviews to the researcher, without subject names, for data analysis. After each interview was transcribed and delivered to the researcher, the research associate destroyed all audiotapes that pertained to the interview. These procedures ensured the anonymity of the subjects.
- 7) The research instruments utilized in this study (questionnaires and transcribed interviews) and the research associates interview notes were pre-coded to allow the researcher to triangulate subject responses.

The researcher recognized that conducting a research study within the school district where one is employed as an administrator can be a threat to the internal validity of the study. However, by utilizing a research associate (neutral third party) and maintaining strict standards of confidentiality, it is believed that these threats have been minimized and that the internal validity will be greater in this study.

Delphi Process. The Delphi Process (Courtney, 1988; Just, 1996; Samahito, 1984) is a technique used to survey experts to obtain an opinion based upon consensus. The Delphi Panel members who were chosen to participate in this process were local professionals who possessed expertise in working with gang involved youths.

A list of potential panel members was compiled from a variety of agencies that deal with youth gang issues, state and local law enforcement agencies, and school personnel. Potential members were contacted by telephone and by letter explaining the process and requesting their participation. Involvement in the process was strictly voluntary and a total of 12 individuals agreed to participate in the study.

The Delphi Process was utilized to develop the two research instruments for this study: the questionnaire and the interview questions. The following ten steps in the Delphi Process were adapted from Courtney (1988), Just (1996), and Samahito (1984):

- 1) A systematic plan to monitor the process was developed by the researcher. It was determined: (a) that the experts would be identified and contacted by telephone and written communication to request their participation in the process, (b) that two rounds of questioning would be used to survey the Delphi Panel, (c) that the results from each round of questions would be used to revise the research instruments.

- 2) Experts who were willing to participate in the process were selected to serve on the Delphi Panel. These individuals were local professionals who possessed expertise in working with gang involved youths, indicated their willingness to be flexible and open-minded, and were willing to revise their thinking in the interest of consensus. According to Courtney (1988), Just (1996), and Samahito (1984), there should be between 10 and 25 participants on the Delphi Panel. There were 12 participants in this study.
- 3) A questionnaire and a set of interview questions relating to youth gang awareness issues was developed for the first round of questioning. In the original questionnaire, some of the items were open-ended, short-answer, supply-type questions which allowed for more general responses. Other items were closed-ended, selection-type questions including checklists and attitude scales. The original set of interview questions consisted of 15 open-ended questions that were designed to elicit a substantial amount of information from respondents.
- 4) The original research instruments were based on the literature and presented in an open-ended format to allow panel members to provide additional questions and comments if needed. The intent was to determine if the right questions were being asked in

the area of youth gang awareness and to ascertain that the questions were worded in a manner that was clear and easy to understand.

5) The original questionnaire and set of interview questions was distributed to the 12 experts on the Delphi Panel. The panel members were asked to respond to each question with one of the following comments:

- I agree that this question is critical and approve of the wording.
- I believe this question is critical, but would reword it.
- I do not believe it is important to include this question.
- I would recommend rewording or revising the question in this manner.

Panel members were also asked to identify additional questions that they believed should be included in the research instruments.

6) The results of the first round were analyzed by the researcher. In this round, no panelist was told the identity or the responses of any other panel member.

7) A second round of questions was developed using the responses from the panelists to make necessary modifications, to narrow the focus of the questions, to make the questions more precise, and

to expand the number of questions contained in the research instruments.

- 8) The revised instruments were disseminated to all participants to elicit further feedback. Panelists were asked to reconsider their own responses in an effort to reach consensus.
- 9) The results of the second round were analyzed by the researcher. Items in which consensus was reached were retained and additional questions were added through consensus.
- 10) The Delphi Process resulted in the development of a 20-item questionnaire and a set of 24 interview questions. The questionnaire was administered to all subjects who participated in the youth gang awareness training. The interview questions were used with the ten subjects who were chosen for this study.

Specific criteria for evaluating and retaining a trial question was used to determine when consensus had been reached. Panel members were asked to review each question for validity based on the following criteria (Just, 1996):

- a) How appropriate is the content?
- b) How comprehensive is the question?
- c) Does it logically get at the intent of the question?

- d) How adequately does the question sample the domain of content?
- e) Is the format appropriate?

When 80% of the experts had rated a revised question as critical information about youth gang issues, and when the revised wording of a question was approved through consensus, the question was retained in the final research instrument. According to Courtney (1988), Just (1996), and Samahito (1984), a consensus level of 80% is considered to be an acceptable level.

The Delphi Process was designed to get reliable answers from experts. By completing the above steps, the final research instruments for this study were based on a consensus of youth gang experts. Consensus in this process is recognized to be valid because (a) the respondents were chosen for their expertise in the area of youth gang issues, and (b) an opinion reached through a group process is likely to be more valid than the opinion of one person alone (Courtney, 1988; Just, 1996; Samahito, 1984). The Delphi Process is recognized as a valid and logical method of developing a survey instrument.

The final questionnaire, shown in Appendix B, included demographic data questions and 20 questions pertaining to youth gangs and gang awareness training. The questionnaire required various types of responses from the subjects: (a) some questions were open-ended, short-answer,

supply-type questions which allowed for more general responses and (b) other questions were selection-type items including checklists and attitude scales. Specifically, the final questionnaire included:

- Six items of demographic information.
- Four questions requiring selection responses.
- Two questions requiring specific numerical responses.
- Fourteen attitude questions requiring responses on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

The final questionnaire was disseminated to the 122 subjects (N=122) who participated in the youth gang awareness training session.

The questionnaire data were reviewed and used by the researcher to assess the quality of the inservice training and to identify areas of the training that needed refinement.

The final set of interview questions, shown in Appendix C, included 24 open-ended questions designed to elicit a significant amount of information from respondents. The interview data were reviewed by the researcher to ascertain the level of impact inservice training had on school personnel and their understanding of youth gang issues.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of youth gang awareness training on school personnel. Middle and high school level teachers, counselors, and school administrators in a rural school district were the focus of this study.

Six specially designed modules were created and used to train school personnel in the Greenville School District about youth gang issues. Each of the six modules emphasized critical elements of youth gang awareness training as outlined by the California Department of Education (1994) and Spergel and Alexander (1992). With the assistance of a panel of experts, six questions emerged and became the primary questions that were assessed in this study. The six questions were:

- 1) To what degree do school personnel know the indicators of youth gang activity?
- 2) To what degree do school personnel know the factors that cause gang formation and why youths join gangs?
- 3) To what degree can school personnel identify local gangs: including gang symbols, language, attire, graffiti, and methods of gang recruitment?

- 4) Do school personnel understand patterns of gang activity:
including gang rivalry, gang crime, violent activity, and drug use
and trafficking?
- 5) Do school personnel know what steps they should take to
establish appropriate communication and productive relationships
with gang involved youths?
- 6) Do school personnel know what steps they should follow to refer
a gang involved youth to an appropriate gang
prevention/intervention program?

The answers to each of these six questions provided data to assist in addressing the primary question of this study: Will inservice training based on specially designed modules improve an educator's awareness or understanding of youth gang issues?

In order to investigate this question, data were collected using two research instruments developed through a Delphi Process: a questionnaire and a set of interview questions. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the results of the answers to the questionnaire. Interview quotes were derived after the written transcripts were repeatedly reviewed and analyzed to ensure a thorough understanding of the subject's experience with or understanding of youth gang issues.

Demographic Results

A total of 122 subjects (N=122) completed the youth gang awareness inservice and responded to the questions contained in the questionnaire. The following tables provide the demographic data for the sample population used in this study. See Appendix E for the detailed results from the questionnaire.

Gender. Table 4 shows the distribution by gender of the 122 participants who completed the demographic information and responded to the 20 questions contained in the questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered to the subjects at the conclusion of the youth gang awareness inservice. Approximately half of the sample population were male (50.8%) and half were female (49.2%).

Age. The subjects were categorized in age groups clustered in five-year increments. These groups ranged from *Under 30* to *Between 51-55*. Forty-three and one-half percent of the group were under the age of 46 and 56.5% were 46 or older. The median age group for both the males and females was between 46-50. Males in this study tended to be slightly younger than their female counterparts. See Table 4 for a detailed listing of the various age groups.

Ethnicity. The ethnicity of the subject group was overwhelmingly white with 120 of the respondents, or 98.4%, classifying themselves as *White*. Only two of the subjects in the study classified themselves as

Table 4

Gender, Age, and Ethnic Categories of Subjects Who Responded to the Questionnaire (N = 122)

Age Categories	Gender Groups		Total Group		Ethnic Group	Total Group	
	Male	Female	<u>n</u>	%		<u>n</u>	%
Under 30	11	6	17	13.9%	African American	0	.0%
Between 30-35	6	7	13	10.7%	Asian	0	.0%
Between 36-40	5	5	10	8.2%	Latino	2	1.6%
Between 41-45	7	6	13	10.7%	Native American	0	.0%
Between 46-50	15	17	32	26.2%	White	120	98.4%
Between 51-55	18	19	37	30.3%	Other	0	.0%
<u>n</u>	62	60	122			122	
Total %	50.8%	49.2%		100.0%			100.0%

representative of another ethnic group. The two subjects indicated a *Latino* nationality which represented only 1.6% of the overall sample population. No other ethnic categories were represented. See Table 4 for an itemized listing of the race categories in this sample population.

Years in Education. Table 5 shows the number of years each of the subjects reported for their years of experience in education. The number of years in education ranged from 0 years to 31 years. Seven of the respondents who reported 0 years of experience in education were student teachers from local universities who participated in the youth gang awareness inservice and completed the questionnaire process.

For male subjects, the mean number of years in education was 14.5. For female subjects, the mean number of years in education was 11.2. For the group as a whole the mean number of years in education was 12.9 years. See Table 5 for the number of respondents in each category.

Years in Current Position. Subjects were asked to report the number of years in their current educational positions. For the group as a whole, 55.7% had been in their current positions between 1 and 10 years. Thirty-three subjects, or 27.1% of the sample population, reported more than 20 years of experience. The mean for the group was 11.1 years.

For male subjects, the mean number of years in their current positions was 13 years. Twenty-four of the male respondents reported more than 20 years experience in their current positions which was the

Table 5

Number of Years in Education and Number of Years in Current Position for Subjects Who Responded to the Questionnaire (N = 122)

Number of Years	Years in Education				Years in Current Position			
	Male	Female	<u>n</u>	%	Male	Female	<u>n</u>	%
Less than 1 year	5	2	7	5.7%	5	2	7	5.7%
Between 1-5 years	12	14	26	21.3%	18	23	41	33.6%
Between 6-10 years	8	17	25	20.5%	9	18	27	22.1%
Between 11-15 years	7	11	18	14.8%	3	5	8	6.6%
Between 16-20 years	5	7	12	9.8%	3	3	6	4.9%
More than 20 years	25	9	34	27.9%	24	9	33	27.1%
All	62	60	122	100.0%	62	60	122	100.0%
<u>M</u>	14.5	11.2	12.9		13	9.1	11.1	

largest category for this gender group. For female subjects, the mean number of years was 9.1. Twenty-three of the female respondents reported being in their current educational positions between 1 and 5 years which was the largest category for this gender group. See Table 5 for additional information related to the sample population.

Current Position. The majority of the subjects (77.1%) identified *Teacher* as their current educational position on the questionnaire. The second largest group was *Teacher Assistant* which comprised only 6.6% of the overall sample population. The third largest group (5.7%) was *Other* which was comprised of seven student teachers from local universities that participated in the youth gang awareness inservice. All other categories combined were responsible for the remaining 10.6% of the sample population. See Table 6 for additional information related to the current positions of the sample population.

Table 6

Current Position for Subjects in the Study (N = 122)

Current Position	Male	Female	All	Percentage
Building Principal	2	0	2	1.6%
Assistant Principal	1	2	3	2.5%
Athletics or Activities	1	1	2	1.6%

Table 6 (Continued)

Counselor	4	2	6	4.9%
Teacher	47	47	94	77.1%
Teacher Assistant	2	6	8	6.6%
Other	5	2	7	5.7%
All	62	60	122	100.0%

Questionnaire Results and Perspectives from Select Personnel

The questionnaire was developed with input from 12 local professionals who possessed expertise in working with gang involved youths. These professionals, who served on a Delphi Panel, assisted with the validation of the content of the questionnaire and the interview questions used in this study. The Delphi Panel of Experts also assisted in identifying the six critical questions to be assessed in this research project.

Six training modules were developed by the researcher and used to inservice school personnel from the Greenville School District about youth gang awareness issues. The questionnaire was administered to the subjects (N = 122) at the conclusion of the four-hour gang awareness training session. Subjects were informed that their responses to the questionnaire would be kept confidential and that they should not write their names on the questionnaire or identify themselves in any specific manner.

From the pool of subjects who received the youth gang awareness training, ten individuals were selected for in-depth interviews using a purposive sample as outlined by Borg and Gall (1989). The research associate (neutral third party) conducted in-depth interviews with each of the ten subjects between eight to twelve weeks following the initial gang awareness inservice training.

The questionnaire and interview data were analyzed and organized in a manner to address the six critical questions of this study and to address the primary research question: Will inservice training based on specially designed modules improve an educator's awareness or understanding of youth gang issues? These six questions serve as the organizational thread for the remainder of this chapter.

Question 1: To what degree do school personnel know the indicators of youth gang activity?

Questionnaire Data. Thirty-six percent of the subjects reported that, prior to the inservice, they were somewhat or very confident in their ability to recognize the indicators of youth gang activity. The majority of the subjects (41.8%) reported feeling neutral on this question while 22.2% indicated they were somewhat or totally lacking in their ability to recognize the indicators of youth gang activity.

After the youth gang awareness inservice, however, 95.1% of the subjects reported they were very confident and the remaining 4.9% of the

population indicated they were somewhat confident in their ability to recognize the indicators of youth gang activity. No respondents indicated feeling neutral or lacking in confidence on this question after they participated in the training session.

These results indicate that the subjects increased their level of confidence in being able to recognize the indicators of youth gang activity after participating in the training session. See Table 7.

Interview Data. An analysis of the interview data for Question 1 yielded substantially different information when compared to the results obtained from the questionnaire. The interview data indicates that the subjects' confidence in their ability to recognize the indicators of youth gang activity diminished in the eight to twelve weeks following their involvement in the youth gang awareness inservice. Interview responses ranged from those subjects who expressed confidence in their ability to recognize the indicators of youth gang activity to those who expressed a total lack of confidence. The following two interview quotes are indicative of subjects who were able to express multiple indicators of youth gang involvement.

Interviewer: How can you tell an individual is involved in a gang? Give me as many examples as you can think of.

Mary: Well, I guess the obvious one is dress, and tattoos or markings on their skin, hand signals or some sort of sign language, and the language – the words that they use are kind of descriptive phrases where, you know, they have their own kind of jargon, I guess. Beyond that would be things that

Table 7

Subject Confidence In Recognizing the Indicators of Youth Gang Involvement (N = 122)

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	8	6.6%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	19	15.6%	0	.0%
Neutral	51	41.8%	0	0.0%
Somewhat confident	31	25.4%	6	4.9%
Very confident	13	10.6%	116	95.1%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

perhaps most school personnel wouldn't be aware of which might involve drug and alcohol involvement, or kind of different hours, like kids who sleep all day and they're out all night. Obviously, involvement with the police. Maybe – well, probably an anti-authority attitude, confrontational, secretive, is that enough?

Frank: Well, I mean we've been kind of educated on certain types of dress and other things. Go to the local shopping mall and you'll get an education in gang membership. But like I mentioned before, long belts, certain tattoos, colors, red and blue associated with certain gang members. Also gang-type graffiti. We ban things like Old English writing, all sorts of saggy pants. We've been taught to recognize gang hand signs. Also some phrases and other things that are associated with gang membership, and the kinds of things people would put on their binders and backpacks, and all that stuff. Also, I think part of the -- part of the graffiti and stuff that people write on their personal belongings, is being able to recognize acronyms and things like that. I didn't know, like for example, Brown Pride (BP) or Westside Mafia (WSM), those kind of things. What the symbols meant and what the letters meant, and now whenever I see them, you know, on someone's fence or wall, or wherever, you know, that would probably be in the community, I go, "Well that means" or at least think I do. I think also gang membership has to be identified with a particular group of people, and a lot of times I think it's an attitude too, that it isn't just that we have these symbols, it's that we're together and we're going to portray a sense of intimidation on those people around us.

Some subjects identified several indicators of youth gang activity only to, ultimately, admit that they were not confident in recognizing youth gang involvement. They expressed their understanding of specific indicators but failed to move beyond the indicators of dress, body marks, graffiti, and hand signs. Apparently, they were unable to communicate the level of understanding that is necessary to prevent the misidentification of youth as being gang involved.

Interviewer: How can you tell an individual is involved in a gang, and you've kind of touched on that and--

John: I think, like I said, dress is one, but and I think the key is, you know, people get on one side and say, oh, he's a gang member, he's got those baggy pants and a stocking cap, which you know, I mean I see tons of kids wearing baggy pants and stocking caps, and I'm pretty sure they're not in a gang. You know, some other signs I think are tattooing, body marks, graffiti on their notebooks, backpacks, and you even have to be careful with that now days, because I mean every kid writes on their backpack and folder.

Interviewer: So how would you really tell? Would you approach him and talk to him?

John: I probably wouldn't, to be honest with you. I mean unless I saw something that I knew was a gang sign or a gang-related symbol, if I knew that then I probably would or make a note to the administrator that hey, you know, Johnny here has got some gang signs, or something on his notebook. Then I would, but I don't think I'm familiar with too many gang signs. I might be able to pick out a few, but not a whole lot.

Another subject who displayed some confusion in identifying the indicators of youth gang activity responded as follows:

Interviewer: How can you tell if an individual is involved in a gang?

Dorothy: You can tell -- they flash signs, they wear certain colors, they talk a certain way and certain words mean certain things, and they -- I would imagine they somewhat stay together. They might all shave their heads, as in the skin head thing, and there's -- I don't know a lot about other gangs. The one that I really know about are the skin heads. I'm just so upset by what they stand for, and I think probably other gangs stand for the same things, and it's just that I've not been exposed to any of this stuff where I have the skin head stuff. And so -- let me see, they have signs, I said that. Oh, and they wear certain clothes, like their belts hanging too long and their pants being drooped a certain way, and certain brand names, I think, are a big thing, and it's amazing how everybody knows

this, because at an assembly I had to dress as a gang member, and I was talking to my class about it, and they knew exactly what I had to wear to be a gangster. . . Everybody knew the brand, where I should go to get the clothes, and you know, . . . they know everything. So anyway, it's kind of interesting I think. So obvious -- it's very obvious to everyone -- to the kids who belong to gangs and those who don't, and I think teachers are learning, but we probably still need to know more, because I'm sure they'll get more subtle as we become more aware. I would think, anyway. Maybe not.

Two subjects expressed a total lack of confidence in recognizing the indicators of youth gang activity even though they participated in the gang awareness inservice:

Interviewer: How can you tell an individual is involved in a gang?

Kathy: Well, to be honest, even though I've had training, I still don't know for sure. I guess a kid would have to sit down with me and just show me or tell me, because it's still not personal to me. It's still textbook stuff. So I don't really know. I could tell you all the stuff from the book, what -- you know, you look at their clothes, you look at their actions, etc., but I really -- first of all I don't have time for that. We're so busy and rushing all the time. I never pay attention to that stuff, we're just going.

Interviewer: How can you tell an individual is involved in a gang?

Michael: To be honest with you, when I have students in my class, we had a little philosophical thing earlier, I try very, very hard not to judge students in terms of how they dress, how they behave, etc. I do not tolerate certain behaviors in my classroom, etc., but I would have to say I have to be very careful in terms of looking at a student these days, and the symptoms, or the characteristics of a gang member and be judging, because a lot of the students today are trying to emulate a gang-members wear, with no desire to be a gang member, but they're dressing like them, etc., and so to be honest with you, I wouldn't be able to tell. The only way I could really tell that somebody's a gang member, is I've had a

few students that have had tattoos, and most students have not gone far enough yet to put a tattoo on, a gang symbol. And so I would say, yeah, if they have a tattoo that's obvious, I would assume that they are a gang member or have been, but other than that I couldn't tell you for sure. And most tattoos are covered up anyway, so there could be quite a few and I wouldn't know it.

Overall, the interview data is in sharp contrast to the 95.1% of the subjects who, at the conclusion of the youth gang awareness inservice, reported they were very confident in their ability to recognize the indicators of gang activity. This data indicates that the subjects had a higher level of confidence in their ability to recognize the indicators of gang activity immediately following the gang awareness inservice and that their confidence diminished in the weeks that followed.

Question 2: To what degree do school personnel know the factors that cause gang formation and why youths join gangs?

Questionnaire Data. Forty-six percent of the subjects reported that, prior to the inservice, they were somewhat or totally lacking in their ability to understand why youths join gangs. The majority of the subjects (47.5%) reported feeling neutral on this question while only 6.5% of the sample population indicated they were somewhat confident in their ability to understand why youths join gangs. No respondents indicated feeling very confident on this question.

After the youth gang awareness inservice, however, 84.4% of the subjects reported they were very confident and the remaining 15.6%

somewhat confident in their ability to understand why youths join gangs. No respondents indicated feeling neutral or lacking in confidence on this question after they participated in the training session. These results indicate that the subjects increased their level of confidence in being able to understand why youths join gangs after participating in the gang awareness inservice. See Table 8.

Interview Data. A review of the interview data for Question 2 indicates that all of the subjects were confident in their ability to express the reasons why youths join gangs. Subjects were able to articulate multiple reasons why youths join gangs eight to twelve weeks after they received the information during the initial gang awareness inservice. The majority of the subjects also tended to elaborate more while answering this question than they did while answering other interview questions.

The interview data also supports the results derived from the questionnaire indicating that subjects who participated in inservice training were able to increase their level of confidence in understanding why youths join gangs.

Interviewer: What reasons do you think youths have for joining gangs?

Mary: I think one of the reasons why it's so attractive is because it gives people a sense of purpose, it gives them something to do, it makes them feel like they belong, it gives them status, maybe, and depending on the activity of the gang, it might give them money. And it gives them stability that maybe otherwise doesn't exist in their family. I think -- I think anybody can become a gang member, but I think the really

Table 8

Subject Confidence In Understanding Why Youths Join Gangs. (N = 122)

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	17	14.0%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	39	32.0%	0	.0%
Neutral	58	47.5%	0	.0%
Somewhat confident	8	6.5%	19	15.6%
Very confident	0	0.0%	103	84.4%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

at-risk kids are targeted by it because usually they're at-risk economically, or educationally, or socially, or you know, run down the list. They're just vulnerable to it, and it's going to look real attractive. It looks attractive to anybody. I mean, why do we join clubs?

A follow-up interview with this subject ten days after the initial interview yielded similar information.

Interviewer: Could you give me as many reasons as you can think of, of why youths join gangs?

Mary: Yeah, a need to belong, a sense of purpose or something -- I don't know, something to work toward. Stability in terms of a place to go, a schedule, expectations. I think there's a -- I think that the thrill and the excitement of being bad is sometimes real attractive. Money, I think sometimes, depending on the gang. It could be a big enticement. Not going to college here, I gotta make some money. I think with girls it might be in part to be with boys. To feel like they have a partnership of some kind. There could be, and probably is, but it seems like it gets kind of mutated into something else and it's depending, again, on the gang, but a sense of pride or nationalism, or it's a little broad, but territoriality that might be related to their race or their nationality.

One subject responded to this question by concentrating on family issues that may cause youths to join a gang and, when prompted further, he expanded upon many of the other reasons covered during the initial gang awareness inservice.

Interviewer: You mentioned family issues, as far as why youths join gangs, but it seems that there are many people who are gang members who come from good, caring families. Why do you think this happens?

Frank: Oh, I think there's -- you know, a misconception about what a good family is. You know, sometimes we look at kids who come from families whose parents are professionals and who are probably financially secure and stable, but that

doesn't necessarily mean that the child is getting the kind of love and attention and direction at home. Also, we have a pretty permissive society that says you can make your own way, and if there aren't a lot of family rules that you have to follow, you know, a lot of hard and fast things that you have to do, sometimes kids who are searching for something somewhere to help fulfill themselves or gain acceptance, they'll tattoo themselves. There's also active recruiting, . . . drug involvement, alcohol, you know, substance abuse, lots of gangs do that and people can engage in activities that they wouldn't normally do.... So, I don't know if that answers your question.

What about good families, right? Well, yeah, some of them do come from good families, and not every parent/child relationship is successful. You know, and sometimes there are simply kids who go a different direction, and start seeking independence from their parents. Sometimes I think, though, that even good families, parents, and for that matter teachers, are the people who are responsible, that the adults don't ask enough of kids and don't believe that they have to do what's responsible, and be as productive as maybe they were in the past. I mean, we've always had people who would deviate from a normal path, and gangs just sort of fill a void that, you know, maybe disappeared after the 60's. Every generation has at-risk kids, so -- I guess they're still seeking acceptance and still seeking identity. I think there's an identity crisis. I know every generation is supposed to exceed the previous generation's accomplishments, and I think sometimes kids look at their parents and say, "I'm not going to be able to go where they are and do what they've done, so why worry".

Interviewer: You mentioned one reason young people join gangs is because the family is not fulfilling their needs. Can you think of any other?

Frank: Why people join gangs?

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Frank: I think -- I don't know. I suppose it's possible that there are cultural links that other family members, other friends, that there's a certain peer pressure that could go along in it, and if you were unfulfilled in both your family or in your social or peer group at school, or wherever you happen to be, that the

gangs give kids that sense of belonging. Other reasons, certainly -- I think economics has something to do with that. That sometimes kids who come from a background, or are themselves economically unstable and have desires beyond what they have, might engage in criminal activity and -- in gang-related things. I think lack of success in maybe the school environment. Lack of a personal identity, personal self-identity. I don't know. I'm not a counselor or anything like that, so I don't know if kids have a low opinion of themselves, if they don't have a sense of esteem about who they are, they might be able to find that, or at least believe they found that by belonging to a group.

I think also just the necessity of some of the kinds of activities that gangs engage in requires that it be a group effort. Lions hunt in a pack for a reason. Not that they're hunting people, but I mean patterns of behavior that, you know, that some gangs involve in, drug trafficking, extortion, prostitution, those sort of things, that require a network to be successful. And again, it goes back to whether or not maybe -- I mean if you can't get the money one way by being successful, by being educated, by getting a good job and being, you know, the traditional track in society, that if we take a parallel track, we're going to engage in behaviors which are not socially acceptable, which are illegal, which are -- whatever you can achieve, or at least think you can achieve the same ends. You can get what you want, you can get women and the money and the drugs, and whatever else by going a different direction.

Another subject viewed gang activity as, primarily, a natural extension of youth moving through adolescence and a period in life where most youths have a certain amount of rebellion against authority.

Interviewer: What reasons do you think youths have for joining gangs?

Michael: Oh, the number one reason is they're going through adolescence, and when between the ages of 11 to 18, approximately, girls and boys go through a period of life where for some reason they have a certain amount of rebellion against authority, and no matter what their background is, no matter what family situation they have, I think that's the

number one reason. Now, when they're going through that period of time, that's where the family situation has a lot of influence. If they're in a family situation, whether it be a separated family, divorced family, permissive parents, there's a hundred different reasons, where the child is not getting the love and attention, the care, that they should be having during that period of time, which should be more than normal because of that, or hasn't had the foundation at a younger age in terms of discipline and so on, then they're going to be looking for some group to accept them, and that's how the gangs get people in there. They'll accept them and give them the identity that they've been looking for. Now, a lot of this is based on what we call self-esteem, and most gang members probably have a real problem with self-esteem and self-worth, and that could be related to the family situation, success in school, lots of things, anything that would create a negative feeling towards themselves. The gangs feed on that and fill that void, and that's what brings the students in, or the young people into the group. Once they get into the group, then fear is what keeps them there.

Overall, the interview data supports the results derived from the questionnaire indicating that subjects who participated in inservice training were able to increase their level of confidence in understanding why youths join gangs. This data also reveals that subjects were able to retain the information they received from the inservice for eight to twelve weeks and, ultimately, communicate the information in an interview format.

Question 3: To what degree can school personnel identify local gangs: including gang symbols, language, attire, graffiti, and methods of gang recruitment?

Questionnaire Data. Prior to the gang awareness inservice, 45.9% of the subjects reported that they were somewhat or totally lacking in their ability to identify local gangs. Subjects who reported feeling neutral on this

question comprised 36.9% of the sample population while 17.2% of the subjects indicated they were somewhat or very confident in their ability to identify local gangs.

However, after the youth gang awareness inservice, 75.4% of the subjects reported they were very confident and 23% somewhat confident in their ability to identify local gangs. Subjects who indicated feeling neutral on this question comprised 1.6% of the sample population. No respondents reported feeling lacking in confidence on this question after they participated in the training session. See Table 9.

In addition, subjects were asked to respond to a second question that gauged their level of confidence in identifying gang symbols and/or graffiti. Prior to the gang awareness inservice, 44.2% of the subjects reported that they were somewhat or totally lacking confidence in this area. Subjects who reported feeling neutral on this question comprised 23.8% of the sample population while 32% of the subjects indicated they were somewhat or very confident in their ability to identify gang symbols and/or graffiti.

After the inservice training, 92.6% of the subjects reported they were very confident and 7.4% somewhat confident in their ability to identify gang symbols and/or graffiti. No respondents indicated feeling neutral or lacking in confidence on this question after they participated in the training session. See Table 10.

Table 9

Subject Confidence In Identifying Several Local Gangs. (N = 122)

Responses	<u>Before The Inservice Training</u>		<u>After The Inservice Training</u>	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	15	12.3%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	41	33.6%	0	.0%
Neutral	45	36.9%	2	1.6%
Somewhat confident	13	10.7%	28	23.0%
Very confident	8	6.5%	92	75.4%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

Table 10

Subject Confidence In Identifying Gang Symbols And/Or Graffiti. (N = 122)

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	23	18.8%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	31	25.4%	0	.0%
Neutral	29	23.8%	0	.0%
Somewhat confident	25	20.5%	9	7.4%
Very confident	14	11.5%	113	92.6%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

These results indicate that the subjects increased their level of confidence in being able to identify local gangs after participating in the youth gang awareness inservice.

Interview Data. An analysis of the interview data for Question 3 yielded substantially different information when compared to the results obtained from the questionnaire. The interview data indicates that the subjects' confidence in their ability to identify local gangs diminished in the eight to twelve weeks following their involvement in the youth gang awareness inservice. Interview responses ranged from those subjects who expressed confidence in their ability to identify local gangs to those who expressed a total lack of confidence.

The following interview quote is indicative of those subjects who were able to identify several local gangs by name and comment on various gang symbols and graffiti.

Interviewer: Can you identify any of our local gangs, symbols, attire or graffiti, and you've mentioned Brown Pride and West Side Mafia?

Mark: Uh-huh, Vatos Locos, Brown Pride, Brown Pride Raza, and I don't know, I don't recall which -- I know the -- Vatos Locos, a few years ago there was a big problem in a nearby school district, on their west side. They had a big controversy over whether or not they could wear their drama mask symbols, because those were directly associated with a local gang, and I know that those things are here. I also know that the few really hard-core members that we have around here, maybe from the L.A. area, have -- you know, tattoos on their hands and back and forearms, so local gangs -- I used to live in a small community near Greenville, and there's a fairly big Hispanic population there, and we

occasionally saw gang graffiti. It was cleaned up pretty regularly, though, and we'd have graffiti on fences and stuff like that, and those were local gangs. And that would be the West Side Piru, West Side Mafia, or 13th Street -- one of those teen streets.

The majority of subjects demonstrated a lack of confidence in identifying local gangs or simply admitted they did not retain the information related to this topic, when it was presented in the youth gang awareness inservice. Several subjects mentioned that they would refer to the training manual written by the researcher which contained a significant amount of written information and illustrations related to local gang activity. Others reported they would consult with the researcher or other professionals if they felt there was a need for additional information.

Interviewer: Can you identify any of our local gangs?

Kathy: Well, according to the, you know, the book, there's the 18th Street, whatever, and there's -- I don't know. I don't remember their names. That's not something that I key around. I'm sorry.

Interviewer: I don't think we need to be sorry.

Kathy: I can read the list a hundred times and I -- but I do know where the book is to find the list if I need it. That's kind of my old librarian days. Why memorize it when you know where to find the resource.

Interviewer: This question is connected. Can you identify any of our local gang symbols, attire or graffiti?

Kathy: It's in the book.

Interviewer: It's in the book.

Kathy: And I tell you now that I -- as a publications advisor, I'm using that book a whole lot more.

Another subject who displayed a substantial amount of confusion in identifying local gangs and, ultimately, admitted she was unable to distinguish the difference responded as follows:

Interviewer: Can you identify any of our local gangs?

Donna: Here?

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Donna: Currently active? Oh no, the quiz question. I know that they talked about, you know, the different street numbers and the hand signals, but you know, I never see any evidence of those things. I know they're here, but I don't see them. I really don't, and I know they're also different in Greenville, because we don't have any of the Asian gangs here, but I know other teachers that teach in other school districts, and they have some of that. And this -- what are we talking about the real west side, or the west side wanabe's, are we talking about people who think they know what west side is? It all depends, you know, so anyway, go ahead.

Interviewer: Well, I just think that -- I was trying to lead into that question.

Donna: Oh.

Interviewer: How can you tell the difference between a wanabe and a gang member, if you're not exposed to them all the time?

Donna: There are ways, and I know that was covered in our workshop. Do I remember all of them? No, I really don't, but I know. I know that there's -- there are clear indicators of -- well, somewhat as clear as can be, indicators of people who are dabbling, people who are pretty serious wanabe's, people who are totally in "the hard core gang members", but no, I don't know the difference, and I suppose it's because I don't think I need to know, because if I sense there's a problem, I can go to somebody who knows more than me.

Similarly, another subject displayed a significant amount of confusion and a lack of confidence in identifying local gangs. Initially, the subject indicated that he was unable to identify local gangs and expressed his view that gangs of any significance probably did not exist in Greenville. Soon after making these statements, however, the subject did report being able to identify gang symbols if he saw them on a desk in his classroom or on a wall.

Interviewer: Can you identify any of our local gangs?

Michael: No. I don't know -- to be honest with you, I don't even know if we have any local gangs. I certainly haven't seen it in the paper, or read about it. I'm sure there are, or at least people that live in Greenville that are members of gangs in other cities. They probably go elsewhere more than they go here, like you know, because -- but I couldn't tell you. If I -- if you were to ask me, then I'd probably say there are not gangs in Greenville, or any gangs of any significance at all in Greenville, but I could be wrong.

Interviewer: Can you identify any of our local gang symbols or attire or graffiti?

Michael: I could if I saw it. The problem is, I couldn't -- to be honest with you, because of the intelligence God gave me, and the way I do things, I could identify it if I saw it, but I couldn't really describe it to you. Does that make sense?

Interviewer: Sure does.

Michael: Okay, but when I see it on a desk in my room, or if I see it on a wall, I can tell you pretty well what it is, you know, from the alphabet the gangs use, and the different symbols that they have, but I couldn't tell you what the 7th Street Gang is, or any of the others.

Overall, the interview data is in sharp contrast to the 98.4% of the subjects who, at the conclusion of the gang awareness inservice, reported they were very confident or somewhat confident in their ability to identify local gangs. This data indicates that the subjects had a higher level of confidence in their ability to identify local gangs immediately following the gang awareness inservice and that their confidence diminished in the weeks that followed.

Question 4: Do school personnel understand patterns of gang activity: including gang rivalry, gang crime, violent activity, and drug use and trafficking?

Questionnaire Data. Fifteen and one-half percent of the subjects reported that, prior to the inservice, they were somewhat or totally lacking in their understanding of the types of activities associated with gang membership or gang involvement. Subjects who reported feeling neutral on this question comprised 23.8% of the sample population while 60.7% of the subjects indicated they were somewhat or very confident in their understanding of the activities associated with gang membership.

These results indicate that the subjects had a higher level of confidence in their knowledge on this question before participating in the inservice than they had on any of the other questions, however, approximately 40% of the subjects still reported feeling neutral or lacking in confidence on this question.

After the youth gang awareness inservice, 91.8% of the subjects reported they were very confident and 8.2% somewhat confident in their understanding of the types of activities associated with gang membership. No respondents reported feeling neutral or lacking in confidence on this question after they participated in the training session.

These results indicate that the subjects increased their level of confidence in understanding the types of activities associated with gang membership or gang involvement after participating in the youth gang awareness inservice. See Table 11.

Interview Data. A review of the interview data for Question 4 indicates that all subjects maintained a thorough understanding of the activities associated with gang membership in the eight to twelve weeks following their participation in inservice training. All of the subjects were able to articulate multiple examples (five or more) of the types of activities associated with gang membership. However, the majority of the subjects tended to respond less while answering this question than they did while answering other interview questions.

The interview data also supports the results derived from the questionnaire indicating that subjects who participated in inservice training were able to increase their level of confidence in understanding the types of activities associated with gang membership.

Table 11

Subject Confidence in Understanding The Types Of Activities That Gang Members Are Involved In. (N = 122)

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	7	5.7%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	12	9.8%	0	.0%
Neutral	29	23.8%	0	.0%
Somewhat confident	48	39.3%	10	8.2%
Very confident	26	21.4%	112	91.8%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

The following two interview quotes are indicative of all subject responses and their ability to articulate multiple (five or more) gang-related activities.

Interviewer: What type of activities, specifically, do you think gang members are involved in, and you've given me some of those before.

Frank: Oh, yeah, I think certainly the drug trade is the bread and butter for a number of the gangs. It's a way that they make money. And I also think they engage in other things, including, everything from theft to graffiti, which is certainly not okay. I also think they engage in physical attacks and abuse of people who are either inside or outside their gang. They may also engage in extortion where they're asked to -- you know, people are forced to cough up money. Other than that, I don't know if gangs are involved in prostitution, or if they may be -- I'm sure I could safely say that some gang out there is involved in prostitution. I know that they engage in illegal trafficking of things like firearms and weapons, that the typical gang member doesn't own a gun which is properly registered.

Ken: Activities? Well, the primary activity that they're involved in is recruitment. I think that's the number one activity. They're trying to get more people in the gangs, because the more they have in gangs, the more power they have, the more recognition they get. The number two activity is doing things to pay for the things that they want to do, and that activity usually involves some kind of crime that gets them money. Probably the number one way to get money is selling drugs. I would guess. And the second way they get money is through stealing, that kind of stuff, are probably the two obvious things. But recruitment's probably the number one activity. That involves many other crimes too, assault and even homicide, because a lot of gangs, part of their recruitment is for somebody to assault or shoot at somebody, so you'll see that happening....

Overall, the interview data supports the results derived from the questionnaire and indicates that subjects were able to retain the information

they received from the inservice for eight to twelve weeks and, ultimately, communicate the information in an interview format.

Question 5: Do school personnel know what steps they should take to establish appropriate communication and productive relationships with gang involved youths?

Questionnaire Data. Prior to the gang awareness inservice, 27.1% of the subjects reported they were somewhat or totally unfamiliar with the steps they needed to follow in order to establish appropriate communication and productive relationships with gang-involved youths. Subjects who reported feeling neutral on this question comprised 25.4% of the sample population while 47.5% of the subjects indicated they were somewhat or very familiar with the steps they needed to follow.

However, after the youth gang awareness inservice, 73.8% of the subjects reported they were very familiar and 14.8% somewhat familiar with the steps they needed to follow in order to establish positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths. Subjects who indicated feeling neutral on this question comprised 11.4% of the sample population. No respondents reported feeling unfamiliar with the steps they needed to follow after they participated in the training session.

The questionnaire results indicate that, after participating in inservice training, subjects increased their level of familiarity with the steps needed to

work with gang-involved youths in a positive, productive manner. See Table 12.

Interview Data. An analysis of the interview data for Question 5 yielded a variety of interesting and insightful responses on how best to establish positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths. Subject responses ranged from comments on the need to develop personal relationships with at-risk youths and engage them in positive school-related activities to comments that gang members should not be treated differently than other students. Frustration in working with gang-involved youths also surfaced during the interviews when several subjects commented on the difficulty associated with building positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths when they were frequently absent from school.

Interviewer: What steps would you take to develop positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths?

Mary: Well, I think as a general rule, you just have to use the phrase "get them involved," keep them involved in the school culture, don't isolate them, don't let them isolate themselves. Whatever it takes. You're not going to turn somebody around in the space of a day, or a week, or anything like that, but if people can function within a system, and they feel like the system supports them and pays attention to them, and even if their world-view is completely different from yours. I mean we have – we have like supremacists wandering around our halls, masquerading as sophomores. You know, we've got all kinds of kids, but they've still integrated into this system, and they do all right in spite of this other world view that they have. I mean I think the more you can involve gang kids in school activities, the more you pay attention to them, and the more you don't ignore them, don't pretend like they're not there, don't be afraid of them, they're kids just like anybody else. Yeah, they can slash your tires and maybe kill your parents, but – no, I'm kidding

Table 12

Subject Familiarity With Steps Needed To Take To Develop Positive And Productive Relationships With Gang-Involved Youths. (N = 122)

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally unfamiliar	5	4.1%	0	.0%
Somewhat unfamiliar	28	23.0%	0	.0%
Neutral	31	25.4%	14	11.4%
Somewhat familiar	41	33.6%	18	14.8%
Very familiar	17	13.9%	90	73.8%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

about that. Well, maybe not. But that would be my – I guess, you know, in a perfect world, that's what I would be trying to do if I could.

Another subject discussed the need to engage gang-involved youths in school-related activities in an attempt to replace the negative gang lifestyle with something that is positive and socially acceptable.

Interviewer: What steps would you take to develop positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths?

Dorothy: I always like to think that you can find a space or a spot in your school climate or school environment for these people, and then they find other interests besides their gangs. They have other areas where they can be successful, and I think if we can tap into that other interest, and get them to see that there are good things in life and there are positive things that they can get involved in, then maybe they can leave that negative form of life.

Interviewer: So you would involve them with more school activities?

Dorothy: Right, right. You know, choir, drama, your student councils, your athletics. Find something, some other group, that they can belong to, and get that security that they need, because as I say every student needs some place to belong and feel as if they are connected to school.

Interviewer: Do you have before and after school functions that help build?

Dorothy: We have our after school athletic program. We have -- before school we have our music, choir and band programs. After school we also have drama and a number of student clubs that meet. And then during the school day, we have a class somewhere that they can get into.

Two subjects responded by commenting on how they would build positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths by treating them the same as other students.

Interviewer: What steps would you take to develop positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths?

Michael: Don't treat them differently than anybody else. Show them respect. Teach them just like you teach everybody else. Tell them no just like you do everybody else, and yes. Just don't treat them any different. To me that's the only philosophy you can have with any student, or even another person.

The other subject responded as follows:

Interviewer: What steps would you take to develop positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths?

Beth: Oh, boy. I think it's important to be able to communicate with them, to not alienate them, and as far as -- is the question, like, within the school, you think, or?

Interviewer: On a personal level, if you had a gang member in your classroom, how would you approach them? What would you do?

Beth: Well, probably no different than I would any other student. I think that a gang member can be a pretty normal kid in a classroom, but I also would not accept any kind of gang behavior in the classroom, or any kind of intimidation, just like I wouldn't accept from any other student.

Interestingly, four subjects commented on the frustration they felt concerning the difficulty in developing or maintaining positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths.

Interviewer: What steps would you take to develop positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths?

Donna: One thing that I find to be a barrier is that whenever I've worked with one, I never have time to build a relationship with them. They're in, they're out, they're not here, they're tardy, and so I'm lucky if I know their name. And I think that for anybody to make a difference, it has to come from an intimate relationship, and a relationship of trust. And I don't know how you do that with someone who's largely not here at school. I don't know. I think you have to start with the relationship.

Interviewer: Like we do with most of our students?

Donna: Uh-huh. But the other ones are easier to access because they're here and they're involved in activities.

Another example follows of a subject's insight into working with gang-involved youths and the frustration experienced in not being able to maintain the relationships that were developed.

Interviewer: What steps would you take to develop positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths?

Kathy: Well, what I've done with most at-risk kids, and I would hope it would work with gang-involved youths, is to validate their intelligence and their talents, and try to give them positive outlets for those. What I've found in working with at-risk youths is I will do that, we will be successful, we will have a relationship and then boom they're gone. So they're either gone to alternative school or in the past they were kicked out for something totally unrelated to our relationship. That's very frustrating to me. So I can develop a relationship, but I've never been able to maintain one.

Interviewer: Because of the circumstances?

Kathy: Because they're always gone.

In general, the interview data provided information into the methods used by school personnel to establish positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths as well as insightful information into the

frustrations experienced by school personnel when working with gang members. However, the interview data is inconclusive and neither supports or contradicts the questionnaire data.

Question 6: Do school personnel know what steps they should follow to refer a gang-involved youth to an appropriate gang prevention/intervention program?

Questionnaire Data. Forty-one percent of the subjects reported that, prior to the inservice, they were somewhat or very familiar with the steps they should follow to refer a gang-involved youth to an appropriate prevention/intervention program. Subjects who reported feeling neutral on this question comprised 35.2% of the sample population while 23.8% of the subjects indicated that they were somewhat unfamiliar with the steps that needed to be taken. No respondents reported feeling totally unfamiliar with the content of this question.

After the youth gang awareness inservice, 74.6% of the subjects reported they were somewhat or very familiar with the steps that needed to be taken. Subjects who indicated feeling neutral on this question comprised 25.4% of the sample population. No respondents reported feeling unfamiliar with the steps they should follow to refer a gang-involved youth to a gang prevention/intervention program.

The questionnaire results indicate that, after participating in inservice training, subjects increased their level of familiarity with the steps needed to get assistance for gang-involved youths. See Table 13.

Interview Data. An analysis of the interview data for Question 6 indicates that all of the subjects were able to communicate an appropriate method for referring a gang-involved youth to an appropriate prevention/intervention program. Subjects were able to articulate a clear rationale for the process they would follow to get assistance for gang-involved youths eight to twelve weeks following the gang awareness inservice. All of the subjects relied on the traditional avenues that exist in schools (i.e., referrals to counselors, school administrators, or the school resource officer) to refer at-risk youths for appropriate prevention/intervention program. Nine out of the 10 subjects indicated they would refer a gang-involved youth to a school counselor or administrator first. One subject reported they would make a referral to the school resource officer if they thought a student was involved in a gang. None of the subjects indicated a desire to refer a gang-involved youth to an agency or program outside of the school system.

The interview data supports the results derived from the questionnaire indicating that subjects who participated in inservice training were able to increase their level of familiarity with the steps needed to get assistance for gang-involved youths.

Table 13

Subject Familiarity With Steps Needed To Take To Refer A Gang – Involved Youth To An Appropriate Gang Prevention/Intervention Program. (N = 122)

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally unfamiliar	0	.0%	0	.0%
Somewhat unfamiliar	29	23.8%	0	.0%
Neutral	43	35.2%	31	25.4%
Somewhat familiar	35	28.7%	29	23.8%
Very familiar	15	12.3%	62	50.8%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

Interviewer: What steps would you take to refer a gang-involved youth to an appropriate gang prevention/intervention program?

Kathy: I think that I would send them to the counselors here at Greenville High School, or to the assistant principal.

Interviewer: That's why they make the big bucks.

Kathy: That's right. Well, the counselors don't, but the administration, yeah. I definitely would use our assistant principal as a resource. I did have a student in class who was a known drug dealer, and I talked to him about that, and also talked to the student's counselor, and now the kid's gone, so they must have taken care of it.

Interviewer: Have you referred a gang-involved youth to our school resource officer?

Kathy: No. I -- I don't think it's necessarily a good idea to go with the police first if I don't know all the facts, and usually I don't. I'm real uncomfortable with it, because I'm not in the loop. So I try to go with the front line people and let them deal with the other problems.

The following two interview quotes are indicative of the majority of subject responses shared during the interview process:

Interviewer: What steps would you take to refer a gang-involved youth to an appropriate gang prevention/intervention program?

Frank: I think in our building, the first steps that you go through are referring them to counselors since gang membership sometimes comes along with other behavioral problems in the process. It's important -- you may have indications already that someone is involved, so I guess referring directly to counselors, who might then be able to contact the proper intervention. Before, too, our school resource officer would be notified at this point and to have direct police involvement can help. I mean, sometimes you're more likely to go to the police officer in the building if you suspect a gang member might become violent.

Beyond that, I mean, direct referral to someone outside of school who would intervene?. Probably not. It would have to be through counselors and administrators.

John: I think -- me personally, if I thought a youth was in a gang, I'd probably direct them to a counselor or administrator. I don't have the qualifications to sit down and talk with this person. I mean I could talk to them and, you know, tell them maybe we're not making the best choices, but I -- I'm not qualified to sit down and, you know, tell them this is wrong, this is right. You know, that kind of thing. I prefer to pass the ball to somebody who knows a little bit more about it.

Only one subject responded with a variation to the referral method that was articulated by the majority of subjects in the interview process. This subject communicated her intent to by-pass the use of school counselors and refer suspected gang-involved youths to the school resource officer or the building principal first.

Interviewer: What steps would you take to refer a gang-involved youth to the appropriate gang prevention/intervention program?

Donna: Depending on who was free at the time, when I was free I would go to the principal, or I would go to a police officer, and I believe our officer's name is Chase?

Interviewer: I don't know.

Donna: I just met him last week. I think it's Chase. Anyway, or I would go there, because I don't believe it to be a counseling issue.

Interviewer: Do you know of any place like in town you could phone, what would be an intervention/crisis center for something like that?

Donna: I think there are some, but to be honest with you too, this is one of those areas that -- I don't know it off the top of my head because I know I can look it up. I can go to the officer and I would say, "Hey, I'm having trouble, where do I call?" and

there are people who have the responsibility to do those things, to access that information for me so I erase that from my memory banks.

Interviewer: You said something interesting in this question. You said you would check with the principal or police officer, but it's not a counseling issue? What do you mean by that?

Donna: In this building I don't perceive it to be treated that way, even though it does seem to stand directly in opposition to what I say about relationships, it seems as though we deal with things from a more legal issue, you know, harassment, vandalism, theft, those types of things as opposed to, oh, how's your family. You know? While both probably are necessary, I would not go to a counselor, because if I have a concern about a student being dangerous, I'm going to want to go to the big guns first, you know. To make sure that everything's fine, then I suppose they can try and remediate or help with the other parts of it, the emotional parts of it, the gang involvement. But no, I don't think initially it's a counseling issue for me.

Overall, the content of the interview data is very consistent between respondents and supports the questionnaire results indicating that subjects, after participating in gang awareness inservice training increased their level of familiarity with the steps needed to get assistance for gang-involved youths.

Perceptions of School Personnel Concerning Inservice Education

The interview data yielded a substantial amount of valuable information regarding the perceptions that school personnel have concerning inservice education. An analysis of this data revealed that 9 out of 10 subjects considered a significant number of their past inservice experiences to have been less than effective or not relevant to their work. Most subjects reported a fairly high level of skepticism when participating in inservice education.

Frank: I usually am fairly skeptical as to whether or not an inservice is going to have direct application to my program, or my job, or my students, especially if it comes from the state, because oftentimes they are like -- they're there and we're here and they haven't been in a classroom for awhile. But occasionally they provide some good inservice. For instance I went to a reading workshop that was great, and some past stuff has been good also, but we've also had some really crummy inservices before that.... those things, which we had already heard in college, and hoped to forget about. That wasn't very helpful. Sometimes the most helpful workshops are from those people who work here in our building and have expertise with our kids and our curriculum.

Notwithstanding this level of skepticism, all subjects communicated that the youth gang awareness inservice they participated in was effective and relevant to their work as professional educators. The following excerpt is from the only subject who reported that her past inservice experiences were positive and relevant to her work.

Interviewer: What is your perception of the quality of inservice training you have received as an educator?

Kathy: Just in general? I think over the years I'd say that every workshop I've gone to I've been able to get something out of it. I think that often something can be gotten quickly and then we still have to sit there for three or four hours. So I really feel that they've all been good, except some of them have been way too long, and they sort of brow beat you into submission.

Interviewer: Do you think that the inservice training you've received in the past has been relevant to your work as an educator?

Kathy: Oh, yeah, because whatever the going thing is, that's what we have inservice about, so it's all been relevant.

Interviewer: What is your perception of the quality of the youth gang awareness training workshop provided for educators in the Greenville School District?

Kathy: Yeah, that was very good, because first of all there was no time wasted, and I like that. It was, here's the information, this is what you need to know, here's the resources, here's visual examples of it, boom, out of there. And I thought that was very good because I needed to know the information and I needed to have the resource, because I'm not going to remember because I don't deal with it ever day. So I like having the resource I think it is the best thing. The notebook is the most helpful thing, but the pace with which the information was given, and the variety of learning, you know, different approaches was excellent. I was pleased.

Interviewer: And this question asks, was the workshop experience relevant to your work?

Kathy: Oh, yeah, especially for me as a publications advisor. So much of that stuff I hadn't even thought about. I mean, I do think about it, but it made me much more aware, and now I have a resource to use to check things out.

Interviewer: And this is building on the last question, did you gain practical or useful information regarding youth gangs? You've already answered "yes."

Kathy: Oh, yeah. And I was able to teach my publications kids a few things, or at least make them aware of it, and yesterday a girl came up and she had a question about a picture where some kids were flashing some signs, and she said, "Are these okay?" So I thought that was cool, because that was my publications kids being aware.

Interviewer: Prior to this youth gang awareness workshop, how much specific information had you received regarding youth gang activity?

Kathy: Absolutely none.

Interviewer: Which portion of the workshop experience did you find more valuable, the audio/visual presentation or the training manual?

Kathy: Oh, the manual. I mean, the audio/visual was great, but the manual is the best, because now I've got it and I can keep looking at that.

Interviewer: If you could make one suggestion to improve the gang awareness workshop, what would it be?

Kathy: Maybe spending a little more time on the reasons why kids get into gangs. I know that that was touched on, but that might be, you know, something to delve into a bit more.

Another subject who had previously received youth gang awareness training while employed in another school district shared her perceptions of inservice education.

Interviewer: You said you had about 16 years of personal experience. What is your perception of the quality of the inservice training you've received during that time?

Beth: So much of it depends on the presenters. Not even necessarily the material, but how they can get it across, and I always think that a person can present it in a way that you feel you're going to be able to take it back and use it. So many times when you hear presenters on certain subjects, it's like -- you know, it all sounds great, but have you been in a classroom lately? Do you know that this won't work in a classroom, you know.

Interviewer: Would you say that the inservice training you've received in the past has been, the majority of it, relevant to our work as an educator?

Beth: Yeah, I'd say the majority of it.

Interviewer: What is your perception of the quality of the youth gang awareness training workshop for educators in the Greenville School District?

Beth: I thought it was very good. It was better than my previous school district had done.

Interviewer: And why do you think it was better?

Beth: It was very well organized and visually really good. I think the hardest audience you could probably present something to is teachers, and so you've got to keep us interested or else, you know, we'll start criticizing.

Interviewer: Like the students?

Beth: Yeah. And so, I thought his media presentation was really good, and I also liked the fact that he didn't take us through it step-by-step, like we're totally ignorant, that you know, when somebody does that to a bunch of educators they put up on the overhead exactly what is on your paper and go through it word for word, it's kind of an insult. And so I was impressed with that, but you know, he covered things really well with his visual presentation. Had students there that had fun dressing up in gang clothing and that was very educational. And the videos that he showed were really good.

Interviewer: Was the workshop experience relevant to your work?

Beth: Yes.

Interviewer: And why do you think so?

Beth: Well, it was kind of interesting because he told us when he gave us the manual, "Now don't put it out on your desk because you don't want kids to pick it up and get a how-to manual on how to be in a gang" you know, "but put it in your desk somewhere" and then it wasn't too long after that I was teaching health and one of my students -- they were taking a quiz and I said, "If you want to doodle when you're done with the quiz, turn your paper over and doodle on your paper, but don't talk until everybody's done." I just wanted them to know they could doodle so that they wouldn't talk and we could just wait for everybody to get done with the test. And I'm correcting the tests and this girl that definitely, you know, walks to the beat of a different drum, I looked at the back of her paper and all of her doodle work, and I'm thinking, "I've seen this before." And I opened the training manual up to the section on satanic cults, and everything that was in there practically, she had on her paper. She was displaying

everything. So that was good because we knew that this girl was involved in some things that we were concerned about, and I think to be able to have this information, like for her parents to see, you know,was good because it was like, "Oh, okay, here's this on this page, and it's got them all in here."

Interviewer: Prior to this workshop, you had received inservice on youth gangs?

Beth: Yeah, and some of them were similar where they had a lot of pictures and things for us to look at and know what to look for, but never a manual like this....it was more thorough.

Interviewer: Which portion of the workshop did you find more valuable, the audio/visual or this desk reference?

Beth: Well, I think they're both good. The audio/visual kind of piques your interest and gives you that sense that there's a lot of information out there you need, but the desk manual's something you can take with you and refer to later where a lot of the audio/visual stuff, you know, you're going to forget. At least I would.

Several subjects responded similarly during their interviews regarding their perception of inservice training, the relevance of the youth gang awareness training, and the need to identify students in the early stages of gang activity.

Interviewer: What is your perception of inservice training, the quality of inservice training you've had in your career?

Mary: There have been some good, and there's been some not so good, but it seems like the ones that are mandated, sometimes, are not as good as the ones you elect to attend and want to get more information on.

Interviewer: Have you found the inservice training you've received in the past to be relevant to what you are doing?

Mary: Uh-huh. For the most part, here in Greenville, we try to spend our time on items that are relevant, and that do have pertinence to an area.

Interviewer: And I guess that pertinence is what determines whether we think it's good or bad?

Mary: That's right.

Interviewer: Okay. What is your perception of the quality of the youth gang awareness training workshop provided for educators in the Greenville School District?

Mary: I thought it was great. It had a lot of information that we in this district need to recognize and learn. If we're aware, then again, we're just raising the level of awareness for all the adults here in school, we can identify students early and be intelligent talking to them about their gang affiliation.

Interviewer: Was this workshop experience relevant to your work as an educator?

Mary: Oh, absolutely. It gave me -- first of all, the booklet that was put out had a lot of information on gang signs and identification and markings, so we could go through the halls and recognize the indicators of gang activity.

Interviewer: Did you gain practical or useful information from this. And can you tell me one or two things you can remember that you learned from this?

Mary: Well, the markings, you know, the different kinds of symbols. The hand signals, the hand signs, and the illustrations of the kids and what they wore.

Interviewer: Have you -- I have to think how to say this. Have you heard any positive or negative feedback from the staff on this workshop?

Mary: They were all very surprised about the information that they got, and I think felt like there was a lot more gang activity and then they saw the information and really knew our kids aren't doing gang stuff, and so I think they were relieved, you know, for the most part, to know that we have very few kids

that are gang-involved right now. The way I feel right now is they're more involved with drugs.

Interviewer: Prior to the youth gang awareness workshop, how much specific information have you received regarding youth gang activity?

Mary: Not much. I used our police officers as a source, and on occasion they would go and attend workshops and they shared information with me. So I was somewhat aware.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything from college that -- in education classes, that might have touched on this problem?

Mary: On gangs? I don't think so. I don't remember.

Interviewer: Which portion of the workshop experience did you find more valuable, the audio/visual presentation, or the training manual entitled Youth Gang Awareness for Oregon Educators?

Mary: I can't say. I liked both of them. I like the hands-on -- the piece I can take back with me and refresh and go through and share with parents. I've used that booklet a couple times in the past to show them markings and different kinds of symbols so that they can better understand what we're seeing, and that there really is a basis to what we're saying. I also liked the audio/visual part of it.

Interviewer: If you could make one suggestion to improve the gang awareness workshop, what would it be?

Mary: I think that you could bring in a panel of kids and you can have them tell the adults what it is that they're searching for in their own words. That would open some eyes of the educators, and administrators as well....

Overall, the interview data supports the conclusion that all subjects benefited from their participation in youth gang awareness training regardless of their initial perceptions concerning inservice education. Even though the data indicates that most subjects were skeptical of inservice

education (i.e., lack of relevancy, poor presentation, etc.), all subjects reported that the youth gang awareness training they participated in was effective and relevant to their work as professional educators.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of youth gang awareness training on school personnel. Middle and high school level teachers, counselors, and school administrators in a rural Oregon school district were the focus of this study.

Six specially designed modules were created and used to train school personnel in the Greenville School District about youth gang issues. Each of the six modules emphasized critical elements of youth gang awareness training as outlined by the California Department of Education (1994) and Spergel and Alexander (1992). With the assistance of a panel of experts, six questions emerged and became the primary questions that were assessed in this study. The six questions were:

- 1) To what degree do school personnel know the indicators of youth gang activity?
- 2) To what degree do school personnel know the factors that cause gang formation and why youths join gangs?
- 3) To what degree can school personnel identify local gangs:
including gang symbols, language, attire, graffiti, and methods of gang recruitment?

- 4) Do school personnel understand patterns of gang activity:
including gang rivalry, gang crime, violent activity, and drug use
and trafficking?
- 5) Do school personnel know what steps they should take to
establish appropriate communication and productive relationships
with gang involved youths?
- 6) Do school personnel know what steps they should follow to refer
a gang involved youth to an appropriate gang
prevention/intervention program?

The answers to each of these six questions provided data to assist in addressing the primary question of this study: Will inservice training based on specially designed modules improve an educator's awareness or understanding of youth gang issues? These six questions also served as the organizational thread for this study.

Subjects for this study consisted of 122 middle and high school level teachers, counselors, and school administrators from the Greenville School District who received four hours of gang awareness training conducted by the researcher. From this pool of subjects, ten individuals were selected to participate in in-depth interviews using a purposive sample as outlined by Borg and Gall (1989). Data were collected for this study using two research instruments developed through a Delphi Process: a questionnaire and a set of interview questions.

The data obtained from the use of these two research instruments were analyzed and organized to report the results of the research and to address the primary question of this study: Will inservice training based on specially designed modules improve an educator's awareness or understanding of youth gang issues?

Conclusions

The conclusions that have been drawn from an analysis of the data from the six critical questions of this study are as follows.

Question 1: To what degree do school personnel know the indicators of youth gang activity?

Prior to the youth gang awareness inservice, only 10.6% of the subjects reported they were very confident in their ability to recognize the indicators of youth gang activity. Compared to 95.1% of the sample population who reported this level of confidence after the inservice. This was the most significant improvement and the highest score achieved by this group on any of the six questions assessed using the questionnaire. Comparison of these results with the other questionnaire results show that school personnel were more confident of their knowledge level in this area than they were in any of the other five training areas. These results indicate that the subjects increased their level of confidence in being able to recognize the indicators of youth gang activity after participating in the training session.

However, an analysis of the interview data for Question 1 yielded substantially different information when compared to the results obtained from the questionnaire. The interview data indicates that the subject's confidence in their ability to recognize the indicators of youth gang activity diminished in the eight to twelve weeks following their involvement in the youth gang awareness inservice.

Overall, the interview data is in sharp contrast to the 95.1% of the subjects who, at the conclusion of the inservice, reported they were very confident in their ability to recognize youth gang indicators. Clearly, the results show that the subjects had a higher level of confidence in their ability to recognize the indicators of gang activity immediately following the gang awareness inservice and that their confidence diminished in the weeks that followed. These data also indicate that some subjects may have experienced difficulty in transferring their new skill into practice and, perhaps, were in need of direct coaching on how to apply the new skill.

Question 2: To what degree do school personnel know the factors that cause gang formation and why youths join gangs?

Prior to the youth gang awareness inservice, none of the subjects reported they were very confident in their ability to understand why youths join gangs compared to 84.4% of the sample population who reported this level of confidence after the inservice. This was the second most significant improvement achieved by this group on the six questions assessed using the questionnaire. These results indicate that the subjects increased their

level of confidence in being able to understand why youths join gangs after participating in the gang awareness inservice.

An analysis of the interview data for Question 2 indicates that all of the subjects were confident in their ability to express the reasons why youths join gangs. Subjects were able to articulate multiple reasons why youths join gangs eight to twelve weeks after they received the information during the initial gang awareness inservice.

Overall, the interview data supports the results derived from the questionnaire indicating that subjects who participated in inservice training were able to increase their level of confidence in understanding why youths join gangs. These data also show that subjects were able to retain the information they received from the inservice for eight to twelve weeks and, ultimately, were able to communicate the information in an interview format.

Question 3: To what degree can school personnel identify local gangs: including gang symbols, language, attire, graffiti, and methods of gang recruitment?

Prior to the youth gang awareness inservice, only 6.5% of the subjects reported they were very confident in their ability to identify local gangs compared to 75.4% of the sample population who reported this level of confidence after the inservice. In addition, a second item on the questionnaire attempted to ascertain subject confidence in identifying gang symbols and/or graffiti. Prior to the youth gang awareness inservice, 11.5% of the subjects reported they were very confident in their ability to identify

gang symbols and/or graffiti compared to 92.6% of the sample population who reported this level of confidence after the inservice. These results indicate that the subjects increased their level of confidence in being able to identify local gangs after participating in the youth gang awareness inservice.

However, an analysis of the interview data for Question 3 yielded substantially different information when compared to the results obtained from the questionnaire. The interview data shows that the subjects' confidence in their ability to identify local gangs diminished in the eight to twelve weeks following their involvement in the youth gang awareness inservice. The majority of subjects demonstrated a lack of confidence in identifying local gangs, gang symbols, and graffiti or simply admitted they did not retain the information. Several subjects mentioned they would refer to the training manual written by the researcher or consult with the researcher or other professional if they felt there was a need for additional information.

Overall, the interview data is in sharp contrast to the subject responses on the questionnaire who reported a level of confidence on two questions ranging from 75.4% to 92.6%. Clearly, the results show that the subjects had a higher level of confidence in their ability to identify local gangs, gang symbols, and graffiti immediately following the gang awareness inservice and that their confidence diminished in the weeks that followed. These data also indicate that some subjects may have

experienced difficulty in transferring their new skill into practice and, perhaps, were in need of direct coaching on how to apply the new skill.

Question 4: Do school personnel understand patterns of gang activity: including gang rivalry, gang crime, violent activity, and drug use and trafficking?

Prior to the youth gang awareness inservice, 21.4% of the subjects reported they were very confident in their understanding of the types of activities associated with gang membership compared to 91.8% of the sample population who reported this level of confidence after the inservice. This was the second highest score achieved by this group on the six questions assessed using the questionnaire. These results indicate that the subjects increased their level of confidence in understanding the types of activities associated with gang membership or gang involvement after participating in the youth gang awareness inservice.

An analysis of the interview data for Question 4 indicates that all subjects maintained a thorough understanding of the activities associated with gang membership in the eight to twelve weeks following their participation in the inservice training. All of the subjects were able to articulate multiple examples (five or more) of gang-related activities.

Overall, the interview data supports the results derived from the questionnaire indicating that subjects who participated in inservice training were able to increase their level of confidence in understanding the types of activities associated with gang membership. These data also show that

subjects were able to retain the information they received from the inservice for eight to twelve weeks and, ultimately, were able to communicate the information in an interview format.

Question 5: Do school personnel know what steps they should take to establish appropriate communication and productive relationships with gang involved youths?

Prior to the youth gang awareness inservice, 13.9% of the subjects reported they were very familiar with the steps they needed to follow in order to establish positive and productive relationships with gang involved youths compared to 73.8% of the sample population who reported this level of familiarity after the inservice. This was the second lowest score achieved by this group on the six questions assessed using the questionnaire. Even though the subjects achieved the second lowest score on this question, the results still indicate that they increased their level of familiarity with the steps needed to work with gang involved youths in a positive, productive manner.

An analysis of the interview data for Question 5 yielded a variety of interesting and insightful responses on how best to establish positive and productive relationships with gang members. Subject responses ranged from comments on the need to develop personal relationships with at-risk youths and involve them in positive school-related activities to comments that gang members should not be treated differently than other students.

A substantial amount of frustration surfaced during the interviews related to the difficulty in building positive relationships with gang involved youth.

In general, the interview data provided information into the methods used by school personnel to establish positive and productive relationships with gang involved youths as well as insightful information into the frustrations experienced by school personnel when working with gang members. However, the interview data is inconclusive and neither supports or contradicts the questionnaire data.

Question 6: Do school personnel know what steps they should follow to refer a gang involved youth to an appropriate gang prevention/intervention program?

Prior to the youth gang awareness inservice, 12.3% of the subjects reported they were very familiar with the steps they should follow to refer a gang involved youth to an appropriate prevention/intervention program compared to 50.8% of the sample population who reported this level of familiarity after the inservice. This was the lowest score and the least amount of improvement achieved by this group on any of the six questions assessed using the questionnaire. Even though the subjects achieved the lowest score on this question, these results still indicate that, after participating in inservice training, subjects increased their level of familiarity with the steps needed to get assistance for gang-involved youth.

An analysis of the interview data for Question 6 indicates that all of the subjects were able to communicate an appropriate method for referring

a gang-involved youth to a prevention/intervention program. Subjects were able to articulate a clear rationale for the process they would follow to get assistance for gang-involved youths eight to twelve weeks after they received the information during the initial gang awareness inservice.

Overall, the interview data strengthens the results derived from the questionnaire indicating that subjects who participated in inservice training were able to increase their level of familiarity with the steps needed to get assistance for gang-involved youths. These data also show that subjects were able to retain the information they received from the inservice for eight to twelve weeks and, ultimately, were able to communicate the information in an interview format.

In summary, the results of this study lead the researcher to conclude that gang awareness training was effective in increasing the level of awareness and understanding of youth gang issues for school personnel in a rural school district. It can be further concluded that training modules which contained a significant amount of information (i.e., gang indicators, identification of local gangs, etc.) posed a challenge for school personnel to effectively retain the information and that their understanding of the material diminished in the weeks following the initial training session. The results indicate that some subjects may have experienced difficulty in transferring their new skills into practice and were in need of direct coaching on how to apply their new skills. It also appears that the use of high-quality reference

materials that participants take home after the training session may help improve the subjects' understanding of youth gang issues.

Discussion

A review of the research literature and data from of this study reveals that, in general, school personnel may lack sufficient knowledge related to youth gang issues to adequately protect students in their schools from joining gangs. This study provides relevant data to conclude that gang awareness training was effective in increasing the level of awareness and understanding of youth gang issues for school personnel. Armed with this knowledge, school personnel may be able to intervene early in the lives of students who exhibit gang-related behavior and, ultimately, reduce the number of youths who join gangs.

The results of this study suggest several implications for school districts, staff development personnel, gang awareness trainers and teacher preparation institutions. The following paragraphs contain a discussion of the implications that have been drawn from this study.

School districts may better fulfill their legal and ethical obligations to maintain safe schools and to protect their students from joining gangs by providing youth gang awareness training for all their school employees. This training may help school personnel recognize the early warning signs of gang activity and give them the skills to intervene early in the lives of gang-involved students. The end result is that school districts may be able

to reduce the number of students who join gangs and curtail the spread of youth gangs in their school systems.

The interview data from this study supports the assertion that youth gang awareness training helped school personnel recognize the early warning signs of gang activity. All subjects reported that the youth gang awareness training they participated in was effective and relevant to their work as professional educators. The following interview quote is indicative of all subject responses regarding the relevance of the youth gang awareness training.

Interviewer: What is your perception of the quality of the youth gang awareness training workshop provided for educators in the Greenville School District?

Mary: I thought it was great. It had a lot of information that we in this district need to recognize and learn. If we're aware, then again, we're just raising the level of awareness for all the adults here in school, we can identify students early and be intelligent talking to them about their gang affiliation.

Interviewer: Was this workshop experience relevant to your work as an educator?

Mary: Oh, absolutely. It gave me -- first of all, the booklet that was put out had a lot of information on gang signs and identification and markings, so we could go through the halls and recognize the indicators of gang activity.

Although the interview data supports the assertion that youth gang awareness training helped school personnel recognize the early warning signs of gang activity, the results also show that subjects experienced difficulty in retaining the critical information related to youth gang indicators and the identification of local gangs in the weeks following the initial training

session. Table 14 provides a summary evaluation of the retention of information demonstrated by subjects eight to twelve weeks following the initial training session. See Table 14.

Table 14

Summary Evaluation of the Retention of Information Demonstrated by Subjects Eight to Twelve Weeks Following the Initial Training Session

Evaluation	Research Question	Question Content
-	Question 1	Indicators of youth gang activity
+	Question 2	Factors that cause gang formation and why youths join gangs
-	Question 3	Identification of local gangs
+	Question 4	Patterns of gang activity
0	Question 5	Communication and relationships
+	Question 6	Referral process

Table 14 shows that subjects effectively retained the information they received from the initial youth gang awareness training (as indicated by a “+” sign) for the following content areas: factors that cause gang formation, why youths join gangs, patterns of gang activity and the referral process. Table 14 also shows that the subjects’ retention of the information diminished in the weeks following their involvement in the inservice training (as indicated by a “-” sign) related to the indicators of youth gang activity and the identification of local gangs. Subject retention of the information

related to communication and relationships was deemed inconclusive by the researcher (as indicated by a “0” sign).

It is important to mention, however, that the potential problem of poor subject retention (related to the indicators of youth gang activity and the identification of local gangs) was anticipated by the researcher due to the significant amount of information that needed to be shared with the inservice participants. In order to mitigate this anticipated problem, an effort was made by the researcher to improve participant retention in these two critical areas by distributing high-quality reference materials to all school personnel who attended the initial youth gang awareness training. Participants in this study received a copy of a training manual written by the researcher which contained a significant amount of written information and illustrations related to the indicators of youth gang activity and the identification of local gangs.

The interview data supports the assertion that reference materials helped reinforce participant learning and retention in this study. All of the subjects responded favorably to questions related to the training manual that was distributed to participants during the initial training session. The following two interview quotes are indicative of all subject responses:

Interviewer: Which portion of the workshop experience did you find more valuable, the audio/visual presentation or the training manual?

Beth: Well, I think they're both good. The audio/visual kind of piques your interest and gives you that sense that there's a lot of information out there you need, but the desk manual's something you can take with you and refer to later where a lot of the audio/visual stuff, you know, you're going to forget. At least I would.

Kathy: Oh, the manual. I mean, the audio/visual was great, but the manual is the best, because now I've got it and I can keep looking at that.

The interview data also supports the assertion that school personnel were able to develop the skills to intervene early in the lives of students who exhibited gang-related behavior. Six out of the ten subjects who attempted some form of intervention, however, preferred to use an informal approach (i.e., consulting with an expert, talking with the student's parents, etc.) rather than complete a formal referral to a school counselor or administrator. The following interview quote is from a subject who reported using the training manual with parents when intervening in the lives of youths who exhibited gang-related behaviors.

Interviewer: Which portion of the workshop experience did you find more valuable, the audio/visual presentation, or the training manual titled Youth Gang Awareness for Oregon Educators?

Mary: I can't say. I liked both of them. I like the hands-on -- the piece I can take back with me and refresh and go through and share with parents. I've used that booklet a couple times in the past to show them [parents] markings and different kinds of symbols so that they can better understand what we're seeing, and that there really is a basis to what we're saying. I also liked the audio/visual part of it.

Another subject reported a similar intervention.

Interviewer: Was the workshop experience relevant to your work?

Beth: Yes.

Interviewer: And why do you think so?

Beth: Well, it was kind of interesting... I'm correcting tests and this girl that definitely, you know, walks to the beat of a different drum, I looked at the back of her paper and all of her doodle work, and I'm thinking, "I've seen this before." And I opened the training manual to the section on satanic cults, and everything that was in there practically, she had on her paper. She was displaying everything. So that was good because we knew that this girl was involved in some things that we were concerned about, and I think to be able to have this information, like for her parents to see, you know, ... was good because...it helped her parents understand what was going on.

In this study, the anticipated problem of poor subject retention (related to the indicators of youth gang activity and the identification of local gangs) may have been mitigated by the fact that high-quality reference materials were provided for participants to take home after the initial training activity. Although the interview process did not specifically delve into subject use of the reference materials when they intervened in the lives of gang-involved youths, sufficient information was provided by the subjects for a conclusion to be drawn by the researcher. Therefore, it can be concluded that youth gang awareness training is more effective if high-quality reference materials are provided for participants. Such materials may help reinforce participants' learning and retention of the material.

The issue of identifying youths who exhibited youth gang behaviors was an emotionally laden one for most school personnel. During the course of this research study, the researcher developed a sense that most of the subjects were extremely cautious of identifying youths who exhibited gang-related behaviors. School personnel seemed to be out of their comfort zone and were reluctant to submit a formal referral to a school counselor or administrator.

In this study, six different educators consulted the researcher in the three months following the youth gang awareness training. Educators expressed a reluctance to move forward with a formal referral unless they confirmed their suspicions with an expert. In each case, educators wanted confirmation of their observations and opted not to formally refer a youth suspected of gang-involvement to a counselor or administrator using a written referral. In essence, although school personnel relied on the traditional avenues that exist in schools (i.e., school counselors, administrators, or the school resource officer) to provide assistance for at-risk youths, it was apparent that a number of subjects did not want the responsibility of submitting a formal referral. Rather, school personnel seemed more comfortable in discussing the indicators they observed with a school official and then allow the school official to make the decision to intervene and formally refer the youth to an appropriate intervention program.

Since six different educators were reluctant to use a formal process to refer suspected gang-involved students, it can be concluded that records related to the number of school personnel who were actually involved in some form of intervention were inaccurate. The fact that six educators suspected individual students of gang involvement but chose not to use the formal referral process seems to be an indication that referrals were not a reliable indicator of educator awareness. Furthermore, this seems to be a strong indication that specific structural or organizational changes (i.e., new

and less threatening referral/consultation processes) may be needed for school personnel to feel comfortable with and fully utilize a referral process.

According to data from this study, only eleven educators reported using a formal process for referring gang-involved youths to an appropriate intervention program. The researcher, however, obtained first hand knowledge that at least six additional educators attempted some form of intervention apart from the formal referral process. Therefore, it is probable that school personnel were more involved in intervening in the lives of suspected gang-involved youths than indicated by the official number of referrals in this study.

Considering the contact time that educators have with students, school personnel are in a unique position to identify students who exhibit gang-related behavior and refer them to appropriate prevention/intervention programs. Additional training related to the referral process, combined with small-group activities during the inservice activity and coaching for application (Joyce & Showers, 1980), should increase the number of referrals that are made by school personnel.

For maximum effectiveness of most inservice activities, Joyce and Showers (1980) concluded that it is best to include several and perhaps all of the following training components identified in the literature: presentation of theory, modeling or demonstration, practice under simulated conditions, structured and open-ended feedback, and coaching for application. The youth gang awareness training utilized in this study emphasized the

following three training components: presentation of theory, modeling or demonstration, and structured and open-ended feedback. Two training components, practice under simulated conditions and coaching for application, were not utilized due primarily to the insufficient amount of time provided by the local school superintendent for the researcher to conduct the training activity.

According to Joyce and Showers (1980), "if any of the training components are not used, the impact of the training will be weakened in the sense that fewer individuals will be able to progress to the transfer or application level (which is the level that has significant meaning for improving schools)." The effectiveness of the youth gang awareness training may have been improved in this study if time was devoted for small group activities and coaching for application.

The research on adult learning theory (Speck, 1996) supports the assertion that adults need to participate in small group activities when involved in inservice training and that adults will benefit from coaching or other support activities. Speck (1996) identified nine key points in adult learning theory that should be considered when designing inservice training or professional staff development activities. The following two key points are pertinent to this discussion (Speck, 1996):

- Adults need to participate in small-group activities during the learning to move them beyond understanding to application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Small-group activities

provide an opportunity to share, reflect, and generalize their learning and experiences.

- Transfer of learning for adults is not automatic and must be facilitated. Coaching and other kinds of follow-up support are needed to help adult learners transfer learning into daily practice so that it is sustained.

It is important to mention, however, that the researcher originally designed the youth gang awareness inservice to include all five of the training components specified by Joyce and Showers (1980) in order to maximize the effectiveness of the inservice activity. The original training activity was designed to be conducted in a six-hour session, which allowed for all five training components to be emphasized. However, none of the twelve school superintendents consulted by the researcher were willing to provide the six hours requested to conduct the training activity in their respective school districts. Out of the twelve school superintendents, one superintendent offered the researcher four hours in which to conduct the training, nine superintendents offered two hours and two superintendents declined to participate in the study. Since four hours was the maximum amount of time provided by a school superintendent to inservice school personnel, the decision was made to modify the training activity and to proceed with training that emphasized three of the five components of effective inservice training. Although the four-hour period allowed the researcher time to effectively disseminate the essential information,

additional time was needed to conduct small group activities and allow participants to practice their newly acquired skills.

Securing adequate inservice time was a significant problem experienced by the researcher when requesting permission from school superintendents to conduct this study in their districts. School superintendents were reluctant to provide more than four hours in which to conduct the training activity. Reasons cited by school superintendents for not providing additional time included: needing to spend inservice time on K-12 curriculum articulation, implementing the Oregon school reform measures (i.e., the Certificate of Initial Mastery and Certificate of Advanced Mastery), improving student assessment scores, and honoring collective bargaining agreements that specified the right of educators to use inservice time to work on individual Professional Growth Plans. In essence, mandated school reform measures and contractual obligations created a situation where less than the ideal amount of time could be devoted to training school personnel in the area of youth gang awareness issues.

Time may be the most significant variable in conducting effective inservice training (Joyce & Showers, 1980). In order to maximize the effectiveness of youth gang awareness training, future researchers must attempt to secure adequate inservice time to be able to implement training activities that include all five components of effective inservice training (Joyce & Showers, 1980). With precious little time available in public schools for professional development activities, researchers must attempt

to identify the most effective combination of training methods to maximize participant learning within the time constraints that exist in the “real world” of public education.

Teacher preparation institutions may find it important to include youth gang awareness training in their programs for teachers, counselors, and school administrators. The questionnaire results from this study confirm that school personnel have received little or no formal education or training related to this topic during their teacher preparation programs. The following questionnaire data shows that almost 78% of all respondents reported receiving no formal training during their teacher preparation programs. See Table 15.

Table 15

Amount of Formal Training Related to Youth Gang Issues for Subjects Who Responded to the Questionnaire (N = 122)

Parts of College Courses	Frequency	Percent
0 Courses	95	77.9%
1-2 Courses	23	18.8%
3-4 Courses	0	.0%
5-6 Courses	0	.0%
No Response	4	3.3%
All	122	100.0%

School personnel would benefit from youth gang awareness training during their student teaching experiences or, for aspiring counselors and

school administrators, during their specialized practicum experiences. Training educators in youth gang awareness issues at this stage in their professional preparation programs would allow individuals to apply newly acquired skills in the “real world” which is important and relevant to adult learners. The following two key points from the research on adult learning theory supports this assertion (Speck, 1996).

- Adult learners need to see that the professional development learning and their day-to-day activities and problems are related and relevant.
- Adult learners need direct concrete experience, in which they apply the learning in real work.

In essence, training in the area of youth gang awareness provides future educators, counselors, and school administrators with increased knowledge and is a viable method to reduce the spread of youth gangs in school systems throughout our state.

Youth gang awareness training may be more effective if an “in-house” trainer conducts the inservice training. The term “in-house” refers to using school personnel, who have a level of expertise in an area, to conduct the training of other educators in their school. This approach is effective because a qualified and trained person is consistently available to answer questions, resolve concerns, and to provide constant feedback and coaching to educators who are implementing the material learned in the staff development activity (Lauro, 1995). The use of “in-house” trainers is

very effective in providing staff development activities if the trainers possess a complete knowledge base in the specific workshop topic and broad knowledge of the fields of prevention and the at-risk child (Storer & Crosswait, 1995). According to Lauro (1995) and Storer and Crosswait (1995), "in-house" trainers are effective for rural schools because they can deliver staff development activities that (a) overcome cost and distance barriers, (b) provided opportunities for collegiality for teachers with similar needs and interests, (c) provide face-to-face training, and (d) make follow-up support available.

According to Hawkins, Arthur, and Catalano (1995), early involvement in gangs is a predictor of a prolonged course of involvement with criminal youth gang activity. This suggests that prevention and intervention efforts should be delivered at the elementary and middle school level before youths are involved in gangs. In this study, youth gang awareness training was provided for school personnel who worked with students in the 6th through 12th grade from a rural Oregon school district. Future youth gang awareness training should also include school personnel who work with students in the 4th and 5th grade since research indicates that risk factors begin to manifest in the lives of children as early as the 4th grade (Hawkins, Arthur, & Catalano, 1995). Armed with this knowledge, elementary level teachers, counselors, and school administrators will be able to develop successful early intervention and primary prevention programs for children.

It should also be mentioned that the six primary questions assessed in this study as well as the two research instruments (a questionnaire and a set of interview questions) were developed based on the research literature related to youth gang awareness training and with the assistance of a panel of twelve local professionals who have expertise in youth gang issues. This collaborative process is known as a Delphi Process (Courtney, 1988; Just, 1996; Samahito, 1984). The Delphi Process is a technique used to survey experts to obtain an opinion based upon consensus. In this process, consensus is recognized to be valid because (a) the respondents were chosen for their expertise in the area of youth gang issues, and (b) an opinion reached through a group process is likely to be more valid than the opinion of one person alone (Courtney, 1988; Just, 1996; Samahito, 1984).

In this study, when 80% of the experts had rated a question as critical information about youth gang issues, and when the wording of a question was approved through consensus, the question was retained in the final research instrument. This is important to mention because 100% consensus was not achieved on the wording or content of several questions assessed in this study or included in the research instruments. For example, of the six primary questions assessed in this study, several were exclusive (meaning the questions were worded in such a way as to assess subject understanding of a select or restrictive body of knowledge) while others were non-exclusive (meaning the questions were worded in such a way as to assess subject understanding of a more inclusive body of

knowledge). This occurred because the knowledge base related to youth gang activity is more refined and complete in certain areas than others. For example, Thornberry (1998) and Hill et al. (1999) have identified “casual” risk factors for gang membership. Since both researchers have been collecting data on their respective subjects for over a decade, risk factors identified in early adolescence can be used to predict gang membership at points later in life. Armed with the research data from these longitudinal studies, members of the Delphi Panel approved, through consensus, questions that were worded in such a way as to assess subject understanding of a select or exclusive body of knowledge related to the risk factors for gang membership.

In short, the content and wording of the questions contained in this study accurately reflect the research literature on youth gang awareness training at the time this study was conducted as well as the consensus of twelve local professionals (at the consensus level of 80% or higher). According to Courtney (1988), Just (1996), and Samahito (1984), a consensus level of 80% is considered to be an acceptable level.

Future researchers must be aware, however, that youth gang activity is fluid and the results from ongoing longitudinal research related to the indicators of youth gang activity and risk and protective factors may necessitate a revision of the questions assessed in this study or contained in the research instruments.

Recommendations

Although the effectiveness of this study was previously discussed in this chapter, it is important to acknowledge the inherent limitations that arise from this study and to suggest specific recommendations to help guide future research in this important area. The following recommendations are based on the results of this study.

- 1) The training modules used in this study were designed by the researcher to be presented in a four-hour inservice. This was the maximum time allotted by the school superintendent for the purpose of training school personnel regarding youth gang awareness issues. Although the four-hour period allowed the researcher time to effectively disseminate the essential information, additional time was needed to conduct small group activities and allow participants to practice their newly acquired skills (Speck, 1996). It is recommended that this training process be repeated allowing for a six-hour training session to determine if the effectiveness could be increased beyond that which was reported in this study. There is significant room for improvement in the retention of information by subjects, especially concerning the identification of local gangs and understanding the indicators of youth gang activity. Additional training time may be a significant variable in providing for improvement.

- 2) It is recommended that future research on youth gangs attempt to identify the risk and protective factors in the following three phases of social development: elementary school, middle school, and high school. Armed with this information, trainers could develop highly effective and specific training modules to inservice school personnel at each educational level. This research would provide vital information for school and community officials in developing effective gang prevention and intervention programs for youths.
- 3) It is recommended that future research on youth gang awareness training address the research conducted by Joyce and Showers (1980) and attempt to identify the most effective combination of training methods to inservice school personnel. This would allow trainers to develop research-based training activities to optimize the conditions that help school personnel learn and retain information.
- 4) According to Hawkins, Arthur, and Catalano (1995), early involvement in gangs is a predictor of a prolonged course of involvement with criminal youth gang activity. This suggests that prevention and intervention efforts should be delivered at the elementary and middle school level before youths are involved in gangs. Therefore, it is recommended that future youth gang awareness training include elementary school

personnel, especially those educators who work with students in the 4th and 5th grade since research indicates that risk factors related to youth gang involvement begin to manifest in the lives of children as early as the 4th grade (Hawkins, Arthur, & Catalano, 1995). Armed with this knowledge, elementary level teachers, counselors, and school administrators will be able to develop successful early intervention and primary prevention programs for children.

- 5) It is recommended that teacher preparation institutions include youth gang awareness training in their programs for teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Future teachers would benefit from youth gang awareness training during their student teaching experiences and, for aspiring counselors and school administrators, during their specialized practicum experiences. Training educators in youth gang awareness issues at this stage in their professional preparation programs would allow individuals to apply newly acquired skills in the “real world” which is important and relevant to adult learners (Speck, 1996). In essence, training in the area of youth gang awareness provides future educators, counselors, and school administrators with increased knowledge and is a viable method to reduce the spread of youth gangs in school systems throughout our state.

- 6) It is difficult to determine if the results of this study can be generalized to other populations. Since the subjects for this qualitative study were from a convenience sample of middle and high school level teachers, counselors, and school administrators from a rural Oregon school district, it is not appropriate to generalize the results to other populations. Therefore, it is recommended that this study be replicated in other school districts to determine if the findings are generalizable.
- 7) Because the school district selected for this study experienced relatively low level gang activity, it is recommended that the study be replicated in districts with a history of gang activity to determine if the results are generalizable to those professionals who work with more established youth gangs.
- 8) Because the sample population for this study was 98.4% Caucasian, it is recommended that the study be replicated in districts with greater ethnic diversity to determine if the results are generalizable to other ethnic groups.
- 9) Follow-up information was collected from subjects eight to twelve weeks following their participation in the youth gang awareness inservice. This information was used to determine if subjects retained the information they learned during the inservice and to gain insight into the meaning or value the

participants placed on the inservice experience. No additional follow-up information was collected from the participants in this study. It is recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted to ascertain the impact youth gang awareness training has on school personnel and to verify whether this type of training is effective over a span of several years.

The results of this study lead the researcher to conclude that gang awareness training was effective in increasing the level of awareness and understanding of youth gang issues for school personnel in a rural Oregon school district. It can be further concluded that research related to gang awareness training and youth gang prevention/intervention is important and should continue. This study will be validated as important and worthwhile if school personnel learn the indicators of youth gang activity in order to assist students and, ultimately, reduce the number of students who join gangs.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

**LETTER SEEKING APPROVAL
FROM THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT**

<< First Name, Last Name >>

<< School District >>

<< Address >>

<< City, State, Zip Code >>

Dear Mr./Mrs. << Last Name >>:

As part of my doctoral program, I am conducting a research study to determine the effectiveness of a specially designed training program related to youth gang awareness in the school setting. This training program will provide school personnel with information concerning the indicators of youth gang activity, factors that cause gang formation and why youths join gangs, local gang identification, patterns of gang activity, and how to establish productive relationships and effective communication with gang involved youths.

With an estimated 846,000 documented gang members in the United States and their desire to use schools as a place to conduct their anti-social or criminal activities, it is apparent that a significant problem exists and that there is a growing need for school personnel to receive youth gang awareness training.

I am asking all school personnel in your school district, who have contact with students in grades 6-12, to voluntarily participate in the study to assist me in determining the effectiveness of the training program. By participating in the research study, school personnel will receive high quality inservice training and a handbook that includes information that can later be used at their work sites.

From this pool of school personnel, ten individuals will be selected using a purposive sample and asked to voluntarily participate in two in-depth interviews. They will be asked questions that will help me in determining the effectiveness of the training program. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Strict standards of confidentiality will be maintained and special precautions taken to protect the confidentiality of their responses.

I am requesting your approval to provide this training session and to conduct the in-depth interviews during the 1998-99 school year. I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss my research project further.

I am looking forward to obtaining your permission to conduct this research study. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Dave Novotney

**APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE**

QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- Gender: Male Age: Under 30
 Female Between 30 - 35
 Between 36 - 40
- Race: African American Between 41 - 45
 Asian Between 46 - 50
 Latino Between 51 - 55
 Native American
 White
 Other _____

Total years in education: _____

Years in current position: _____

Current position:

- Building Principal Teacher
 Assistant Principal Teacher Assistant
 Athletics or Activities Other _____
 Counselor

1. How much **formal** training have you had relating to youth gang issues? (Please check one choice in each column that most closely matches your training level.)

PARTS OF
COLLEGE COURSES

WORKSHOPS
OR INSERVICES

0 courses

0 hours

1-2 courses

1-2 hours

3-4 courses

3-4 hours

5 courses or more

5 hours

2. How much **formal** training have you had relating to the **identification** of youth gang members? (Please check one choice in each column that most closely matches your training level.)

PARTS OF
COLLEGE COURSES

WORKSHOPS
OR INSERVICES

0 courses

0 hours

1-2 courses

1-2 hours

3-4 courses

3-4 hours

5 courses or more

5 hours

3. What is the approximate date of your most recent formal training session, if any?

_____ / _____ / _____
MONTH DAY YEAR

4. How effective do you believe your training has been in the past related to youth gang issues? (Circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

_____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____
Totally Ineffective Somewhat Ineffective Neutral Somewhat Effective Highly Effective

5. How effective do you believe this inservice training has been related to youth gang awareness for educators? (Circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally Ineffective	Somewhat Ineffective	Neutral	Somewhat Effective	Highly Effective

6. How effective do you believe your training has been in the past related to youth gang issues? (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

7. I am confident that I understand the growth and development of youth gangs in Oregon. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

8. I am confident that I can recognize several of the indicators of youth gang involvement. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

9. I am confident that I understand why youths join gangs. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

10. I am confident that I can identify several of our local gangs. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

11. I am confident that I can identify gang symbols and/or graffiti. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

12. I am confident that I understand the types of activities that gang member are involved in. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

13. I am confident I can tell if an individual is involved in a gang. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally lacking In confidence	Somewhat Lacking in Confidence	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident

14. I am familiar with the steps I need to take to develop positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unfamiliar	Somewhat Unfamiliar	Neutral	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar

After the inservice training:

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unfamiliar	Somewhat Unfamiliar	Neutral	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar

15. I am familiar with the steps I need to take to refer a gang-involved youth to an appropriate gang prevention/intervention program. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unfamiliar	Somewhat Unfamiliar	Neutral	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar

After the inservice training:

1	2	3	4	5
Totally Unfamiliar	Somewhat Unfamiliar	Neutral	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar

16. Have you ever had experience working with gang-involved youths? (Circle the correct response.)

Yes

No

17. Have you ever referred a suspected gang-involved student to a counselor, administrator, or a gang prevention/intervention program? (Circle the correct response.)

Yes

No

18. How many gang related referrals would you estimate that you have made?

_____ Number of referrals this year

_____ Number of referrals in the last three years

19. I am familiar with the school district's policy related to youth gangs. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally Unfamiliar	Somewhat Unfamiliar	Neutral	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally Unfamiliar	Somewhat Unfamiliar	Neutral	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar

20. I am familiar with my building's policy related to youth gangs. (In each situation, circle the number that most closely matches your belief.)

Before the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally Unfamiliar	Somewhat Unfamiliar	Neutral	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar

After the inservice training:

_____ 1 _____	_____ 2 _____	_____ 3 _____	_____ 4 _____	_____ 5 _____
Totally Unfamiliar	Somewhat Unfamiliar	Neutral	Somewhat Familiar	Very Familiar

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please tell me about your background and training as an educator.
2. Why did you choose to become a (teacher, counselor, or administrator)?
3. Why did you decide to become an educator in this school district?
4. Have you ever had experience with gang-involved youths? If so, please tell me about your experience.
5. What is your general perception about youths who are gang-involved?
6. What is your general perception about gang-involved youths attending public schools?
7. When you hear faculty members talking about gang-involved youths, what do you hear? What do you hear students say about gang members?

8. How can you tell an individual is involved in a gang? Give me as many examples as you can.

9. Why do youths join gangs? Give me as many reasons as you can.

10. Can you identify any of our local gangs? Please provide examples.

11. Can you identify any of our local gang symbols, attire, or graffiti? Please provide examples.

12. What type of activities are gang members involved in? Please give me as many examples as you can think of.

13. What is your perception of the impact gang-related activity has on our society, local community, and school climate?

14. What steps would you take to develop positive and productive relationships with gang-involved youths?

15. What steps would you take to refer a gang-involved youth to an appropriate gang prevention/intervention program?

16. Excluding your most recent gang awareness workshop, what is your perception of the quality of inservice training you have received as an educator? Please explain.

17. Has the inservice training you received in the past been relevant to your work as an educator? Why or why not?

18. What is your perception of the quality of the youth gang awareness training workshop provided for educators in this school district? Please explain.

19. Was the workshop experience relevant to your work as an educator? Why or why not?

20. Did you gain practical or useful information regarding youth gangs because of the workshop experience? If so, please share one or two examples of what you learned.

21. Prior to the youth gang awareness workshop, how much specific information had you received regarding youth gang activity?

22. Which portion of the workshop experience did you find more valuable, the audio-visual presentation, or the training manual titled Youth Gang Awareness for Oregon Educators: A Desk Reference? Why?

23. If you could make one suggestion to improve the gang awareness workshop, what would it be?

24. If you could make one suggestion to help prevent local youths from joining gangs and improve our school climate, what would it be?

** Thank you for your participation in this research project! I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to be involved in this interview. I value your input! This concludes our interview.

APPENDIX D
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Dave C. Novotney

Title of the Research Project:

The Impact of Youth Gang Awareness Training on School Personnel

Investigators:

Joanne (Jodi) B. Engel, Ph.D.
Dave Novotney, Doctoral Student

Purpose of the Research Project:

The purpose of this research project is to investigate the impact of youth gang awareness training on mid-level and secondary level teachers, counselors, and school administrators in a rural school district, located in Oregon.

Procedures:

I understand that as a participant in this study the following things will happen:

1. Participants will receive inservice training concerning youth gang awareness issues in the form of a multi-media presentation and comprehensive training manual titled Youth Gang Awareness for Oregon Educators: A Desk Reference.
2. Participants will complete a questionnaire at the conclusion of the inservice training.
3. Participants will be interviewed to determine their perceptions of the quality of the training and the impact the training had on their understanding and perceptions of youth gang issues.
4. Interviews will be recorded using a tape player and the interviews will be transcribed for use in data analysis.

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Dave C. Novotney
Page Two

Confidentiality:

I understand that any information obtained from me will be kept confidential. Strict standards of confidentiality will be maintained and procedures established to ensure anonymity. No names will be used in any data summaries or publications.

Voluntary Participation Statement:

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.

If You Have Questions:

I understand that any questions I have about the research study and/or specific procedures should be directed to:

Dave C. Novotney
2447 Exmoor Court SE
Salem, Oregon 97301
(503) 371-9258 (h)
(503) 623-8336 (w)

Joanne (Jodi) B. Engel, Ph.D.
School of Education
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon 97331
(541) 737-5989 (w)

If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I should call Mary Nunn, Director of Sponsored Programs, OSU Research Office, (541) 737-0670.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the procedures described above and give my informed and voluntary consent to participate in this study.

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Dave C. Novotney
Page Three

Signature of Subject

Name of Subject

Date Signed

Subject's Present Address

Subject's Phone Number

Researcher's Signature

Date Signed

APPENDIX E
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Demographic Data

GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	62	50.8%
Male	60	49.2%
All	122	100.0%

AGE

Age	Male	Female	All	Percentage
Under 30	11	6	17	13.9%
Between 30-35	6	7	13	10.7%
Between 36-40	5	5	10	8.2%
Between 41-45	7	6	13	10.7%
Between 46-50	15	17	32	26.2%
Between 51-55	18	19	37	30.3%
All	62	60	122	100.0%

RACE

Race	Frequency	Percentage
African American	0	.0%
Asian	0	.0%
Latino	2	1.6%
Native American	0	.0%
White	120	98.4%
Other	0	.0%
All	122	100.0%

CURRENT POSITION

Current Position	Male	Female	All	Percentage
Building Principal	2	0	2	1.6%
Assistant Principal	1	2	3	2.5%
Athletics or Activities	1	1	2	1.6%
Counselor	4	2	6	4.9%
Teacher	47	47	94	77.1%
Teacher Assistant	2	6	8	6.6%
Other	5	2	7	5.7%
All	62	60	122	100.0%

YEARS IN EDUCATION

Years in Education	Male	Female	All	Percentage
0 years	5	2	7	5.7%
1 year	6	4	10	8.1%
2 years	1	2	3	2.5%
3 years	2	3	5	4.1%
4 years	3	1	4	3.3%
5 years	0	4	4	3.3%
6 years	0	3	3	2.5%
7 years	0	3	3	2.5%
8 years	3	3	6	4.9%
9 years	3	1	4	3.3%
10 years	2	7	9	7.4%
11 years	0	3	3	2.5%
12 years	2	3	5	4.1%
13 years	2	2	4	3.3%
14 years	1	0	1	.8%
15 years	2	3	5	4.1%
16 years	0	1	1	0.8%
18 years	2	2	4	3.3%
19 years	1	1	2	1.6%
20 years	2	3	5	4.1%
21 years	8	1	9	7.4%
22 years	1	3	4	3.3%
23 years	5	2	7	5.7%
24 years	2	0	2	1.6%
25 years	1	1	2	1.6%
29 years	4	2	6	4.9%
30 years	3	0	3	2.5%
31 years	1	0	1	0.8%
All	62	60	122	100.0%

YEARS IN CURRENT POSITION

Years in Current Position	Male	Female	All	Percentage
0 years	5	2	7	5.7%
1 year	8	8	16	13.5%
2 years	3	4	7	5.7%
3 years	4	3	7	5.7%
4 years	3	4	7	5.7%
5 years	0	4	4	3.3%
6 years	0	2	2	1.6%
7 years	3	3	6	4.9%
8 years	2	6	8	6.6%
9 years	3	3	6	4.9%
10 years	1	4	5	4.1%
11 years	0	2	2	1.6%
12 years	1	1	2	1.6%
13 years	0	1	1	.8%
14 years	1	0	1	.8%
15 years	1	1	2	1.6%
18 years	1	0	1	.8%
20 years	2	3	5	4.1%
21 years	7	1	8	6.6%
22 years	1	3	4	3.3%
23 years	5	2	7	5.7%
24 years	2	0	2	1.6%
25 years	1	1	2	1.6%
29 years	4	2	6	4.9%
30 years	3	0	3	2.5%
31 years	1	0	1	.8%
All	62	60	122	100.0%

Questionnaire Responses

QUESTION 1

HOW MUCH *FORMAL* TRAINING HAVE YOU HAD RELATING TO YOUTH GANG ISSUES?

Parts of College Courses	Freq.	Percent	Workshops or Inservices	Freq.	Percent
0 courses	95	77.9%	0 hours	24	19.7%
1-2 courses	23	18.8%	1-2 hours	40	32.9%
3-4 courses	0	.0%	3-4 hours	44	36.0%
5 courses or more	0	.0%	5 hours or more	12	9.8%
No response	4	3.3%	No response	2	1.6%
All	122	100.0%	All	122	100.0%

QUESTION 2

HOW MUCH *FORMAL* TRAINING HAVE YOU HAD RELATING TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF YOUTH GANG MEMBERS?

Parts of College Courses	Freq.	Percent	Workshops or Inservices	Freq.	Percent
0 courses	88	72.1%	0 hours	22	18.0%
1-2 courses	21	17.2%	1-2 hours	39	32.0%
3-4 courses	0	.0%	3-4 hours	44	36.0%
5 courses or more	0	.0%	5 hours or more	11	9.0%
No response	13	10.7%	No response	6	5.0%
All	122	100.0%	All	122	100.0%

QUESTION 3

WHAT IS THE APPROXIMATE DATE OF YOUR MOST RECENT FORMAL TRAINING SESSION?

Dates	Freq	Percentage	Dates	Freq	Percentage
04/92	1	.8%	10/95	2	1.7%
05/93	1	.8%	03/96	2	1.7%
07/93	1	.8%	07/96	2	1.7%
08/93	1	.8%	08/96	4	3.3%
09/93	1	.8%	09/96	8	6.6%
10/93	1	.8%	10/96	2	1.7%
05/94	1	.8%	11/96	1	.8%
06/94	1	.8%	04/97	1	.8%
08/94	1	.8%	06/97	2	1.7%
09/94	2	1.7%	08/97	11	9.0%
10/94	1	.8%	09/97	19	15.5%
11/94	1	.8%	03/98	1	.8%
02/95	1	.8%	04/98	1	.8%
04/95	1	.8%	06/98	1	.8%
05/95	1	.8%	08/98	1	.8%
06/95	1	.8%	09/98	1	.8%
07/95	3	2.5%	No Response	41	33.6%
09/95	2	1.7%			
			All	122	100.0%

QUESTION 4

HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR TRAINING HAS BEEN IN THE PAST RELATED TO YOUTH GANG ISSUES?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Totally ineffective	17	14.0%
Somewhat ineffective	39	32.0%
Neutral	47	38.5%
Somewhat effective	16	13.1%
Highly effective	3	2.4%
All	122	100.0%

QUESTION 5

HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU BELIEVE THIS INSERVICE TRAINING HAS BEEN RELATED TO YOUTH GANG AWARENESS FOR EDUCATORS?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Totally ineffective	0	.0%
Somewhat ineffective	0	.0%
Neutral	12	9.8%
Somewhat effective	17	14.0%
Highly effective	93	76.2%
All	122	100.0%

QUESTION 6

**I AM CONFIDENT THAT I UNDERSTAND THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH GANGS
IN THE UNITED STATES.**

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	21	17.2%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	42	34.4%	0	.0%
Neutral	34	27.9%	14	11.5%
Somewhat confident	21	17.2%	20	16.4%
Very confident	4	3.3%	88	72.1%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 7

I AM CONFIDENT THAT I UNDERSTAND THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH GANGS IN OREGON.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	19	15.6%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	41	33.6%	0	.0%
Neutral	37	30.3%	9	7.4%
Somewhat confident	22	18.0%	18	14.8%
Very confident	3	2.5%	95	77.8%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 8

I AM CONFIDENT THAT I CAN RECOGNIZE SEVERAL OF THE INDICATORS OF YOUTH GANG INVOLVEMENT.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	8	6.6%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	19	15.6%	0	.0%
Neutral	51	41.8%	0	0.0%
Somewhat confident	31	25.4%	6	4.9%
Very confident	13	10.6%	116	95.1%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 9

I AM CONFIDENT THAT I UNDERSTAND WHY YOUTHS JOIN GANGS.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	17	14.0%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	39	32.0%	0	.0%
Neutral	58	47.5%	0	.0%
Somewhat confident	8	6.5%	19	15.6%
Very confident	0	0.0%	103	84.4%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 10

I AM CONFIDENT THAT I CAN IDENTIFY SEVERAL OF OUR LOCAL GANGS.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	15	12.3%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	41	33.6%	0	.0%
Neutral	45	36.9%	2	1.6%
Somewhat confident	13	10.7%	28	23.0%
Very confident	8	6.5%	92	75.4%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 11

I AM CONFIDENT THAT I CAN IDENTIFY GANG SYMBOLS AND/OR GRAFFITI.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	23	18.8%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	31	25.4%	0	.0%
Neutral	29	23.8%	0	.0%
Somewhat confident	25	20.5%	9	7.4%
Very confident	14	11.5%	113	92.6%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 12

I AM CONFIDENT THAT I UNDERSTAND THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES THAT GANG MEMBERS ARE INVOLVED IN.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	7	5.7%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	12	9.8%	0	.0%
Neutral	29	23.8%	0	.0%
Somewhat confident	48	39.3%	10	8.2%
Very confident	26	21.4%	112	91.8%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 13

I AM CONFIDENT THAT I CAN TELL IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS INVOLVED IN A GANG.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally lacking in confidence	21	17.2%	0	.0%
Somewhat lacking in confidence	40	32.8%	17	14.0%
Neutral	36	29.5%	39	32.0%
Somewhat confident	20	16.4%	40	32.7%
Very confident	5	4.1%	26	21.3%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 14

**I AM FAMILIAR WITH THE STEPS I NEED TO TAKE TO DEVELOP POSITIVE AND PRODUCTIVE
RELATIONSHIPS WITH GANG-INVOLVED YOUTHS.**

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally unfamiliar	5	4.1%	0	.0%
Somewhat unfamiliar	28	23.0%	0	.0%
Neutral	31	25.4%	14	11.4%
Somewhat familiar	41	33.6%	18	14.8%
Very familiar	17	13.9%	90	73.8%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 15

I AM FAMILIAR WITH THE STEPS I NEED TO TAKE TO REFER A GANG INVOLVED YOUTH TO AN APPROPRIATE GANG PREVENTION/INTERVENTION PROGRAM.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally unfamiliar	0	.0%	0	.0%
Somewhat unfamiliar	29	23.8%	0	.0%
Neutral	43	35.2%	31	25.4%
Somewhat familiar	35	28.7%	29	23.8%
Very familiar	15	12.3%	62	50.8%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 16

HAVE YOU EVER HAD EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH GANG-INVOLVED YOUTH?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	82	67.2%
No	40	32.8%
All	122	100.0%

QUESTION 17

HAVE YOU EVER REFERRED A SUSPECTED GANG-INVOLVED STUDENT TO A COUNSELOR, ADMINISTRATOR, OR A GANG PREVENTION/INTERVENTION PROGRAM?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	11	9.0%
No	111	91.0%
All	122	100.0%

QUESTION 18
**HOW MANY GANG RELATED REFERRALS WOULD YOU ESTIMATE
THAT YOU HAVE MADE?**

Number Of Referrals This School Year:

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1 referral	7	63.6%
2 referrals	2	18.2%
3 referrals	1	9.1%
4 referrals	1	9.1%
All	11	100.0%

Number Of Referrals In The Last Three Years:

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1 referral	1	9.1%
2 referrals	2	18.2%
3 referrals	3	27.2%
4 referrals	2	18.2%
5 referrals	1	9.1%
7 referrals	1	9.1%
9 referrals	1	9.1%
All	11	100.0%

Note: Only 11 individuals who answered YES to Question 17 needed to respond to this question.

QUESTION 19

I AM FAMILIAR WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S POLICY RELATED TO YOUTH GANGS.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally unfamiliar	8	6.6%	0	.0%
Somewhat unfamiliar	33	27.0%	0	.0%
Neutral	52	42.6%	24	19.7%
Somewhat familiar	21	17.2%	13	10.6%
Very familiar	8	6.6%	85	69.7%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%

QUESTION 20

I AM FAMILIAR WITH MY BUILDINGS POLICY RELATED TO YOUTH GANGS.

Responses	Before The Inservice Training		After The Inservice Training	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Totally unfamiliar	0	.0%	0	.0%
Somewhat unfamiliar	13	10.7%	0	.0%
Neutral	22	18.0%	0	.0%
Somewhat familiar	30	24.6%	4	3.3%
Very familiar	57	46.7%	118	96.7%
All	122	100.0%	122	100.0%
