



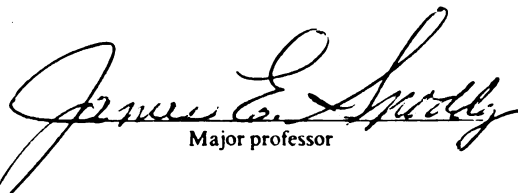
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Educational and Life Experiences
as Reported by
Inmates Confined to a County Jail

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Matthew J. Myers

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EDUCATIONAL AND LIFE EXPERIENCES AS REPORTED
BY INMATES
CONFINED TO A COUNTY JAIL

By
Matthew J. Myers

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

1996

a sample population of 12 inmates. Inmates were selected from those attending classes at the jail. Structured interview questions were developed to conduct the research. The questions were designed to allow the inmates to respond in an open-ended manner.

Data analysis revealed that personal life experiences contributed significantly to the educational development of the inmates. Life experiences during the educational experiences had a direct impact how inmates progressed or failed to progress through the educational systems they encountered. Parents, teachers, principals, and friends significantly impacted the lives of the inmates and these individuals served as positive or negative role models. While there were individuals who attempted to provide a positive learning opportunity for the inmates, the negative experiences had an overwhelming effect on how education was eventually viewed by the inmates. Patterns of negative life experiences began at an early age in most cases. Basic values and ethics, personal relations, and at times a lack of self discipline, greatly impacted the educational experiences of the inmates. The inmates reported a clear understanding of their belief in how the life experiences effected their performance in school.

Dedicated to my parents,

Gene and Margie Myers.

You have always been there
when I needed your guidance;
I am proud of who I am because
of the love and encouragement
you have always given to me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals participated in the success I have achieved, both professionally and personally. Earning a doctorate degree and completing this dissertation was a tremendous challenge for me. I am proud to have achieved this goal, and I wish to recognize the individuals who made it possible for me to accomplish my goal.

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influenced my career and provided me with an unbelievable opportunity; I appreciate his continued support and friendship.

Several friends and professors have been very supportive of me over the years; there were times when I needed their encouragement and I am grateful.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted with inmates confined in the Ingham County Correctional Facility, located in Mason Michigan. This facility houses over 500 inmates on a daily basis. Inmates housed at the Ingham County Correctional Facility have a status of either sentenced or non-sentenced. This study was confined to sentenced inmates, primarily because most non-sentenced inmates do not have access to the Educational Department. This study was an investigation into the educational and life experiences of inmates who have been sentenced at the Ingham County Correctional Facility. More specifically, this study focussed on inmates who attended educational classes at the jail. Inmates attending classes are eligible to do so as a result of not completing high school and obtaining a high school diploma or the equivalency certificate. Focusing on inmates attending classes at the jail provided information as to the reasons why some individuals did not complete their high school education.

The educational opportunities for inmates, while incarcerated at the Ingham County Correctional Facility, are provided by the Lansing Public School System. Instructors are

Michigan Department of Education certified teachers, employed by Lansing Public Schools. Inmates currently have the opportunity to study several courses, with mathematics, English, and computer applications the more popular courses. While it is not possible to obtain a high school diploma through the education department at the jail, the courses are offered and can be credited toward high school completion. It is also possible, for an incarcerated inmate to prepare for the General Education Development high school diploma equivalent exam and take this exam through the education department at the correctional facility.

Research which examines various educational programs in prisons does exist. There are also numerous writings by incarcerated individuals and their experiences in prisons and jails. The focus of this study was to report the life and educational experiences of incarcerated individuals. The researcher believed the life experiences of inmates contributed significantly to their educational development.

Statement of the Problem

Inmates appear to attend classes at the jail for numerous reasons, which will be discussed in later chapters. In a review of the literature, it appears that limited research has focused on self reported educational experiences of inmates in county jails. Much of the research has focused on teaching

inmates while incarcerated in jails (Martin, 1981). There are studies which report on the experiences of inmates while incarcerated, as in the research conducted by Caron (1978). This study was designed to compare the perceptions of the high school learning experiences of inmates to their educational experiences in a county jail. While the motivating factors for the inmates may differ, one common factor among the inmates is the lack of a high school diploma. The results of this study might assist in identifying the reasons inmates were unable or possibly unwilling to complete their high school education. By comparing and contrasting the methods and environment of high schools to the education setting at the jail, as perceived by the inmates, some of the inmates' perceptions of the two educational systems might suggest reasons why high school programs were unsuccessful and why the inmates are now willing to study at the jail. Further insights reported by the inmates might suggest some inadequacies of the educational system at the jail.

This study presented a unique opportunity to interview inmates and glean from them their perceptions of the educational system at the jail. This study allowed for comparisons of the inmate's perception of the jail educational system and the educational systems previously experienced by the inmates. This research also allowed for the direct observation of these same inmates and their progress through the educational program at the jail, and to gain a first hand

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look at the progress or lack of progress made by the inmates in the jail.

Little is known as to why many inmates did not complete their high school education. A review of the current available literature reveals information concerning educational programs in prisons and life experiences of inmates incarcerated in prisons. It appears little or no data exists of life and educational experiences of inmates confined to a county jail. Data have not been collected from inmates which might suggest those life experiences which may have impacted their educational experiences. The researcher believes it might be useful to know the perception the inmates have of their high schools and high school teachers and also what "outside" factors influenced their ability to study.

From initial interviews with instructors in the educational program at the jail, it seems clear the inmates are participating in the program for a variety of reasons. Some inmates only participate because of their sentences. Therefore, instructors must have the ability to cope with individuals who are participating as a result of a requirement from the judicial system. Jail educators of inmates should recognize that previous educational programs may not be seen as appropriate by the inmates and new challenges may be a daily occurrence (Pellegrini, 1992). If documented successfully in this research, other instructors may benefit from the recognition of the challenges of educating inmates

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and perhaps better approaches can be developed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of selected inmates, regarding the reasons they believe the educational system they experienced might have been successful or unsuccessful. This study also compared and contrasted high school educational experiences with jail educational experiences, as seen by the inmates. In addition, other life experiences and their influences were reported. This information also influenced the inmates as they progressed through the educational programs.

This study was conducted to identify and explain those events reported by the inmates and to classify the key events into themes, if themes could be identified. Inmates were asked to identify experiences that made a significant impact on them and were perceived by them as being factors in their success or failure in high school, and then comparing those experiences with the adult education program at the jail.

Studies report inmates' inability to cope with the educational environment of a typical classroom setting (Bjork, 1981). Still other research suggests many inmates did not possess the maturity to learn in a high school classroom (Beadle, 1965).

This study asked inmates to compare and contrast high school experiences with the education experiences at the jail and asked what other factors influenced the inmates ability to learn in high school. The lessons learned could be helpful in identifying alternative teaching methods or alternative education environments.

Numerous theorists of adult education indicate that a learning environment must be provided for adults that is different than that provided for children (Evan, 1987). It would seem to be the consensus that to teach adults in the same way we instruct children is inadequate. It has been theorized, that adults learn differently than children and we therefor must teach them differently (Karmos, 1989). Participatory learning has been widely accepted as an effective method of learning for adults.

This study was conducted to determine if the inmates believe they were unable to learn because of the methods that were used in high school were inadequate, or if the inmates were simply unwilling or possibly unable to learn. Because a majority of students entering high school actually graduate, it would appear most people who initially experience difficulty in a learning environment usually have the ability to adapt in some manner, with varying degrees of success. Hopefully, this study will reveal, why the inmates believe they left high school.

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Research Questions

The data collected in this study and the analysis may suggest educational approaches that are helpful in reaching persons whose life experiences are different or unusual to most students. It is important that educators constantly remind themselves, not all students have the ability to adapt to the teacher and it is necessary that the teacher adapt to the student (Johnson, 1990). It was important during the interviews of the inmates, to discover an understanding of the perception the inmates had about their educational experiences and how those experiences were influenced by their life experiences. Did the teachers play a major role in influencing the students? What factor did the classroom setting have on the educational process? What "outside" factors impacted the learning process? Was the educational setting at the jail different than the high school?

Based upon the concerns expressed above, the major research questions of the study included the following:

1. What school related experiences do inmates report as significant in their lives?
2. What factors or experiences do inmates report as significant influences on their school experiences?
3. What are the inmates perceptions of the educational

experiences in the jail?

4. What aspects of the educational experiences in the jail do inmates report as applicable to other jail education programs?

Limitations of the Study

The study involved an interview process based on perceptions and self reported experiences of inmates confined to the Ingham County Correctional Facility. The sample included 12 inmates out of a population of 500 inmates who attend the adult education program annually. The 12 inmates were not selected randomly. As a result, several limitations exist. The limitations are presented to provide the reader some guidelines for interpretation of the data. The study limitations include the following:

1. The study included 12 inmates out of a population of 500 inmates. As an ethnographic study this research was not designed to develop large numbers of statistics. Thus, generalizations of the study are affected.
2. Inmates were not selected on a random basis. Inmates were selected to participate based on recommendations from the teachers in the adult education program at the jail, willingness to participate in the study, and the availability of the inmates.

3. The study reflected the perceptions of the inmates who chose to participate. Inmates who did not choose to participate may have had different perceptions.
4. The length of time since an event took place could have influenced the lesson learned. Perhaps the lesson remembered could have changed over years. The inmate may have needed time away from the experience before he or she could have identified the experience as a learning opportunity. In addition, some lessons may have occurred without the inmate being able to determine the triggering event.
5. The memory of the subjects, the choice of emphasis of the researcher when reporting data, and the selective perceptions of the subjects are limitations of the study. Readers of the study may not agree with the interpretations of the researcher.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in the context in which they are used in the dissertation:

Inmate. A person incarcerated at a county jail, as a result of having been accused of committing a criminal offense.

Key events/experiences. Occurrences that affected the educational process of the inmate: interactions with specific

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people; hardships; or personal experiences.

Lessons learned. Patterns of thinking as perceived to be acquired as a result of the events/experiences --in other words, the information and attitudes gained as a result of having experienced the event or interaction.

Ingham County Correctional Facility. The jail located in the County of Ingham, City of Mason, Michigan. One of over 83 jails located in the state of Michigan, responsible for the safety and security of both sentenced and non-sentenced inmates. Daily population exceeds 500 inmates.

Respondents. The inmates from the Ingham County Correctional Facility who participated in the study by granting the interviews.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation includes five chapters. Chapter I introduces the study providing the purpose and basic concepts for the project. Chapter I includes the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, limitations of the study, definition of terms, and organization of the dissertation.

Chapter II contains a review of literature and research pertinent to the topic under investigation. The literature review includes two sections. The first section pertains to educational programs in jails and prisons. The second section

explores the literature regarding the study of inmates confined to correctional facilities.

Chapter III provides specific information about methodology and procedures of the study. Chapter III includes an introduction, sample population, project design, data collection, the interview process, data analysis, and summary of methodology.

The results of the data analysis are included in Chapter IV. The specific groups of experiences and lessons learned are categorized and identified. Frequency tables and lists of examples are utilized to answer the research questions presented in Chapter I.

Chapter V contains results, conclusions, discussion of results and conclusions, implications for future research and reflections.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter consists of a review of literature and research pertinent to the topic under investigation. The literature review includes two sections. The first section pertains to educational programs in jails and prisons. The second section is related to the literature regarding the study of inmates confined to correctional facilities.

Educational Programs in Jails and Prisons

Most of what has been written concerning the education of prisoners was a result of studies reviewing the educational programs in prisons. This section will provide a review of literature of educational programs for inmates and will examine the reported effectiveness of inmate educational programs.

Reagen (1976) observed that a descriptive overview of correctional education in the United States does not exist. A review of related literature would conclude Reagen's assessment was especially true for Michigan.

The impetus for introducing an educational program at the

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State Prison of Southern Michigan in Jackson, Michigan, was similar to that which led to the establishment of schools in early New England. In 1846, the Michigan legislature enacted a bill that decreed:

The agent shall furnish at the expense of the State, a Bible to each of the convicts who can read, and such convicts as cannot read, he shall cause to be instructed in the principles of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Early reports from Jackson State Prison indicate the seriousness of prisons officials concerning those inmates who refused to attend school. The following two quotations from Captain Purves (1800's) demonstrates the attitudes of prison officials toward education of inmates:

June 29--I report No. 255, Fitch for refusing to attend school. He is determined not to go, but I believe a touch of the "bat" (a leather strap that was applied to the bare back) might change his mind in this regard. For a man who can neither read nor write he is singularly obstinate. (p. 16)

In a similar incident of a inmate's refusal to attend school, another type of punishment was administered:

September 30--Mascivell is still his old defiant self despite a bit of "treatment". When I took him down from hanging by his handcuffed wrists last evening he growled, "I'll hang here till hell freezes over and my arms are ten feet long before I'll agree to attend your screwy school." This convict is determined to remain uneducated, and is the most stubborn and rebellious man I have encountered in a long time. He wants no part of our attempts to bring him intellectual aid. It is apparent that the recalcitrant rebel does not hunger for the other things of life. (p. 46)

State historical records reveal that in 1880 the school was taken out of the chaplain's office, where it had been for 35 years, and was placed under the leadership of a certified

teacher.

Educational programs for inmates developed slowly in Michigan. In fact, reviewing reports from 1916 - 1930, there is no evidence of educational programs in the annual reports. It is believed that programs did exist, however the authorities' lack of interest in such programs seems apparent. In 1930, MacCormick observed, "No education programs presently exist in the Marquette Branch Prison and the Michigan Reformatory in Ionia, Michigan. The only education program for prisoners in Michigan is at the State Prison of Southern Michigan."

In 1940 MacCormick commented that the Jackson Prison should undoubtedly be ranked among the best in the country on several points. Commenting on the school program, he wrote:

The educational program is extensive and varied with excellent classrooms, a staff of well trained directors and a variety of courses in which over 800 men are enrolled on a full-time basis with several hundred others taking extension courses. (pp. 4-5)

MacCormick observed that the Michigan Branch prison in Marquette and the Michigan Reformatory, "the only other prisons in the state, have mediocre education programs."

The available literature did not reveal any significant changes in Michigan prisons or prison education until the mid-1950s, when a new medium-security institution for youthful offenders was constructed. It was at this time when education programs in Michigan prisons began to grow extensively. Administrators realized the key to making productive citizens

out of inmates prior to release was education. Also realized was the need to provide education to youthful offenders with the goal of providing high-school-diploma-oriented classes.

After years of struggling to provide education to inmates with the goal of high school completion, a shift in the focus on how best to educate inmates was realized. It was decided in 1974 to appoint a "Director of Education" who would work with prison school administrators to develop a coordinated prison school curriculum that would be individualized and could provide for an open entry/open exit delivery system. This major change in the educational philosophy of the Michigan Department of Corrections created a shift from the lock step, high-school-diploma-oriented classes to completely individualized, self-paced high-school-equivalency programs.

While many involved believed in the need to educate inmates, funding for these programs has not been a high priority. MacCormick (1931) concluded that prison education has failed for many reasons, but the chief reason for failure is lack of funds. In spite of MacCormick's observation and possible lack of despair concerning the poor performance of corrections education, Roberts (1971) stated that the year 1929 has been considered the beginning of the modern trend in prison education. He wrote:

The year 1929 has been selected by some criminologists as the date of the beginning of the modern trend in correctional education, and efforts made prior to this time are viewed as scarcely worth mentioning, except possibly for the reformatory developments. This period of history has been appraised by many criminologists as

the point at which education began to be recognized and developed as an essential element in a program of correctional treatment. (p. 6)

However, according to Roberts, the decade from 1961 to 1971 marked the beginning of more effective and innovative programs in corrections education.

More recent authors have agreed with MacCormick that a lack of funding is the single greatest deterrent to the success of corrections education programs. Ryan (1970) wrote that a major incentive to corrections education was the 1966 legislation that provided funds for Adult Basic Education programs, including those in corrections. Ryan stated:

Never before in the history of corrections has there been such an opportunity for positive change, and a change for continuing improvement. The climate today, inside and outside the criminal justice system, supports the idea of change. (p. 1)

Ryan's optimistic attitude, which identified the 1970s as a time for positive change in corrections education, was similar to McPherson's (1976) statement about the challenges of the 70s. He wrote:

Educators of the 70's have opportunities and challenges that are unprecedented in history. The climate for educational research and curriculum experimentation is highly favorable. After a decade in which "innovation" has been the password in education circles, individual citizens as well as public and private institutions have developed a keen interest in education and the effects of change in education. (p. 18)

The public attitude toward change, and in particular the changes that were taking place in public education, undoubtedly had a positive effect on corrections. According

to Ryan (1970), a wide variety of educational programs was functioning in numerous correctional settings in the United States. She wrote:

Many of those programs, like their institutional counterparts, provide a wide diversity of instructional services. Many have philosophies, complete with goals and objectives, that provide a worthwhile gain to their learners. (p. 5)

Ryan continued, stating:

Many institutions provide inadequate services with unrealistic goals, and no meaningful evaluation; and some state institutions have no education programs available for their students. (p. 5)

Supporting Ryan's claim of the lack of educational programs in some correctional facilities are statistics provided by Reagen (1976). His Research revealed that educational programs were provided in all of the federal prisons, whereas only 81 percent of the state prisons provided academic education for their prisoners. Reagen reported that:

In some prisons or systems, prisoners participate in at least one, and often more than one, of the several formalized institutionalized school programs which include Adult Basic Education, High School Equivalency preparation, and miscellaneous opportunities for personal enrichment and self improvement. (pp. 60-61)

While no statistics are available concerning educational programs at the county level, the perception exists that even fewer jails are funded for educational programs.

Conrad (1981) believed that the increased status of education was evident throughout the country, although the increase in enrollments and the augmentation of services hardly kept pace with the rhetoric. Reagen (1976) contended

that there has been an ascendance of education, particularly academic education, in the corrections process:

Prisons emerged two hundred years ago as industrial centers, with opportunity for penitence. They are gradually transforming themselves into education institutions. (p. 95)

Several forces were at work during the mid-1960s and 1970s that motivated the evolution from penitence-oriented prisons to educational institutions. According to McCollum (1971),

While education and training programs in the federal prison system are admittedly in a dynamic state of flux, educators and other staff are trying to work as a team to create an institutional tone that communicates to the inmate population that the purpose of the federal correctional system is not punishment but help. (p. 37)

Although McCollum was discussing the attitude in the federal system, the rehabilitation model appeared to be gaining acceptance in many state prisons systems and local jails as well.

President Johnson's Task Force on Corrections reported that:

In several senses, corrections today may stand at the threshold of a new era, promising resolution of a significant number of the problems that have vexed it throughout its development. At the very least, it is developing the theory and practical groundwork for a new approach to rehabilitation. (p. 2)

According to the Task Force, the increasing focus on rehabilitation found widespread acceptance among members of the general public. The public was beginning to see the benefits of educating inmates and making them productive

members of society, instead of punishing them and turning their backs to them.

The challenge was to decide which was the best method for educating inmates. Ryan's (1970) definition of correctional education, delineates the broad goals of correctional education, giving consideration to academic, vocational and social skills designed to enhance the offender in his preparation for taking his place in society as a contributing member. In agreement with this, a report from the U. S. Bureau of Prisons' (1971) education and training programs are designed to prepare offenders for employment. These programs are based on three assumptions:

1. That satisfactory post-release employment will reduce recidivism.
2. That chances for satisfactory post-release employment will be enhanced if offenders are more employable at release than they were at intake, and
3. That increased employability will result from effective education and training programs. (p. 1)

The three goals of education and training for the 1970's in federal correctional institutions are:

1. All inmates leaving the federal prison system will be able to read at least at the sixth grade level.
2. All capable inmates will have a high school equivalency certificate upon release.
3. Every inmate with the need will have been trained in a marketable skill. (p. 1)

The above mentioned goals also agree with Ryan's (1970) goals of adult basic education in corrections which are:

economic efficiency, civic responsibility, social relationships and self-realizations. From these stated goals, one can observe that correctional education is designed to assist an inmate in becoming educated and to be self sufficient. While these goals are stated at the federal level, states and local governments have adopted similar philosophies. Even though these goals may not be stated at every level, educational programs in jails and prisons appear to be aimed in similar directions.

One of the most significant mistakes made by correctional institutions in the past, and is still being made by many institutions is that of patterning their schools after public schools. Straight (1972) indicated public schools have not done a very good job keeping people in school. The drop-out figures are alarming and a great percentage of these young adults are not returning to schools. When these people are convicted of crimes, it is necessary to provide educational opportunities that will have an impact. By placing these same people in educational settings similar to the one they voluntarily left, it would appear they have little hope of being successful. Straight (1972) believed it is necessary to become innovative with educational opportunities that have a greater chance for success. Those mentioned by Straight (1972) include, computer assisted instruction, dial access retrieval systems, games and simulations, audio equipment, radios, various types of projectors, and teaching machines.

Along with the innovative media, numerous correctional institutions have developed innovative philosophies that differentiate their programs greatly from traditional schools. An example is the Robert F. Kennedy Youth Center in Morgantown, West Virginia. Straight (1972) cites that the following innovative approaches are used in his program: individual learning systems, individualized instruction, personalized instruction, industrial literacy, and performance objectives linked with contractual agreements. The contractual agreements lead to pay off points that can be exchanged for privileges, goods and services. This approach changes the teacher's role from that of instructor to that of education manager.

Many of these ideas continue today in jails and prisons. In a 1991 article, Stupak writes:

Corrections and education are two public policy areas with a lot in common: They are experiencing crises and they will play vital roles in the United States' future. Now is the time to start seeking policy solutions that address them both.

Stupak continued to explain how corrections has a tremendous opportunity to provide inmates with self-improvement programs that prepare them for release. With nearly 200,000 offenders leaving prison and returning to their communities each year, the system needs to ensure that every offender has accomplished three things before release:

1. Released offenders should have the skills needed for entry-level service and manufacturing work. Basic literacy is a requirement in the corporate world, hence it should also become a standard in

corrections.

2. Released offenders must receive work experience in an environment resembling the private sector. Correctional institutions should tailor work programs to reflect private sector jobs, giving inmates real life work experience.
3. Released offenders must develop basic work skills.
(p. 160)

Many states have developed programs which make it mandatory for inmates to participate in educational programs. Oberst (1988) noted several states including, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, Ohio and Texas, and the federal prison system mandate participation in basic literacy programs. Inmates are tested for basic education skills as they enter the prison system. If they score below a specified literacy level, which varies from state to state, then participation is mandatory. (p. 2)

Roberts (1971) described other programs to assist inmates in their return to society, such as: "Guide to Better Living Program", sponsored by the Stone-Brandel Foundation of Chicago, and the "Dale Carnegie Courses", set up at a number of correctional institutions throughout the United States. Both of these educational programs are designed to improve the inmate's ability to have satisfactory interpersonal relations, and toward facilitating his adjustment to family relationships as well as problems of employment upon release.

Conrad (1981) noted the preparation for the GED examination constitutes a large share of the correctional

education effort. This observation implies that the successful completion of the GED examination is the terminal objective of many prison secondary education programs. According to Conrad:

Although many corrections teachers place high value on the GED examination in lieu of the traditional diploma, not everyone agrees that the benefits of the GED are unmixed with disadvantages. Skeptics point to its similarity to a cram course." (p. 36)

Beadle (1965) cited numerous examples of the need for quality educational programs in prisons. Roucek was quoted:

At one time the common explanation of crime was "education" or its lack." (p. 22)

Also noted by Beadle was a quote in a newspaper article by a warden of a prison:

In my opinion education is one of the key things in the rehabilitation of a man who gets into a place like this. (p. 22)

Cuthbertson (1964) commented in a publication of the United States Prison at Leavenworth, Kansas:

One of the universal factors common to all men in prison is their inability to understand the need to recognize and control the various circumstances that are a great part of each of our lives. Education is an avenue down which we can arrive at a better understanding of ourselves and the world about us, and as a result of this understanding better equip ourselves, in a positive sense, with the circumstances of life.

He continues:

Education is a debt which we owe ourselves. When we fail to pay this debt we cheat ourselves, and the man who would cheat himself is the biggest cheat of all. (p.1)

Beadle noted this expression of faith in education seems to reiterate the general American faith in education and would

indicate the necessity for making every possible effort to present and promote a functional program of correctional education in every correctional institution.

In a report of The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standard and Goal, the following statement is made:

Each institution should re-examine immediately its educational and vocational training programs to insure that they meet the standards that will individualize education and training. The programs should be directed to the reintegration of the offender into the community. (p. 368)

Roberts (1971) noted correctional education has progressed a long way from the dark ages of penitence and the "Sabbath Schools" to its present innovative stage. (p. 25) A review of related literature revealed most educational programs are aimed at rehabilitating the inmate through education into becoming a self-supporting, responsible member of a free society. Financial support was cited as a key element in the continued development and improvement of the correctional educational programs.

Inmates Confined to Correctional Facilities

Being confined to an institution immediately draws attention to the rights which are enjoyed by members of society. Questions are raised about the rights of inmates. Many persons believe inmates' rights are diminished if not completely abolished. However, it is important to understand

that even as prisoners under the care and custody of the federal, state or local government, inmates retain many rights which must be preserved. We should remember most of these individuals will return to society and will be expected to honor the rights of others. Huffman (1964) infers the preservation of certain concepts:

1. Every individual (inmate) has certain inalienable rights which should be respected.
2. We must believe in the worth and dignity of the individual (inmate). (p.12)

While respecting the rights of inmates, it could be determined this respect will have a positive influence on the inmates when they return to society. In turn, we could conclude it is equally important to society as a whole, that the rights of inmates should be protected. Beadle (1965) concluded there was no appreciable difference between the characteristics of inmates and those of the general public. Beadle surveyed inmates confined to prison and determined inmates were anxious to participate in programs which would have a positive influence on the inmates and make them productive members of society upon release. The following responses were recorded by Beadle (1965) concerning the inmates beliefs on their participation in educational programs:

- make all inmates participate
- encourage all to participate
- make it part of regular assignments for inmates
- utilize space for longer hours
- enlarge the full-time program
- help those who want help

- help others get solutions to their problems
- set up parole and post release school

Beadle believed these responses could be considered as expressing a feeling for the well being of inmates. Along with the above responses, Beadle asked the inmates if they would be willing to help achieve improvement in educational programs by participating in a reorganizational movement. The following responses were recorded:

- the program helped me - I want to help others
- my experience would be able to help others
- I want to provide educational opportunity for all
- I want to help those incarcerated to prepare for adjustment to society (p. 90)

Beadle concluded:

"These two sets of responses point out a sensitivity for others and a factor of responsibility to society that one cannot deny. They are highly indicative that the participating inmates have established a place for themselves in society." (p. 90)

Thomas Osborne (1961) asked: "Do you wish to produce good prisoners, or to prepare good citizens?" He further indicated the successful prison system must approach the problem from the spiritual side, aiming to solve it by making men feel right. (p. 212)

Huffman (1964) indicated it was important to appraise the social, academic and vocational lacks that the inmate has and then strive toward the development of socially accepted attitudes to supplant either the anti-social attitudes or the general haphazard attitude toward life that has allowed delinquent behavior. Huffman continued:

A rationale for the democratization theme is that the

legitimation of inmate participation in correctional planning helps to improve communication and keep alive relevant social norms outside the prison. Another rationale for democratization is that many inmates, though negatively oriented toward "Square John" authority figures, are observed to be positively influenced by their "good-con" peers. To the extent that treatment is thought of as a process involving interpersonal influences in which there is an attempt to get inmates to give up one set of values for another, the task of correctional education is seen as working with whatever channels of influence will be most effective. It is believed that the democratization measures help direct socializing influences through the collateral channels of inmates to inmates relationship by encouraging "constructive" inmates to function as effective surrogates of the staff. (p. 25)

Vukceovich (1964) studied inmates confined to prison and indicated social re-education must be aimed at the integration of the poorly developed personality into his milieu for the first time. Vukceovich classified the poorly developed personalities as delinquents, in four categories:

1. Those who fear not to control their impulses.
2. Those who are ashamed to appear different from their peers.
3. Those whose feelings of guilt generate serious feelings of inferiority.
4. Those who view themselves overwhelmed by the disgust and rejection of others and try to appear blase. (p. 32)

If the above personalities exist as indicated by Vukceovich it would appear a plan for re-education is imperative if prison rehabilitation hopes to impact the previous mind set of many inmates. Roucek (1961) spoke about

the attitude of inmates toward work when he concluded, inmates must learn a sense of responsibility. (p. 264)

Wallack (1956) through his interviews with inmates confined in prison, outlined social education activities which would positively impact the development of inmates.

1. To bring the inmate to adopt goals and attitudes which are in accord with those of society and which will further the improvement of society.
2. To show the inmate the desirability of furthering the interests and standards of worthwhile social groups. Social education must bring about a transfer of allegiance from anti-social groups and methods to socially desirable ways of achieving desired goals.
3. To develop points of view which will make apparent to the prisoner the futility of committing criminal acts, and the advantages of law-abiding, post-institutional living.
4. To stimulate and develop desirable interests which will enable the individual to live a worthwhile and yet interesting life. This has reference particularly to leisure-time interests and activities.
5. To stimulate and make possible sustained interest and effort toward self-improvement.
6. To develop skills, understandings, and knowledge which will enable the individual to perform the ordinary duties of every efficient citizen. (pg. 24-25)

Another view of offenders and their incarceration is expressed by Vukceovich (1964) when he described a program that could impact the attitude of inmates.

To motivate the offender to regard his stay at the institution as an opportunity to alter his thinking and to act in ways which will lead to socially acceptable choices. To convey to the offender the concept that energy expended in delinquent behavior is potentially positive and can be re-channelled into socially tolerable directions. To give the offender some awareness of those concepts which constitute the internal aspects of his

personality structure. To teach the offender those concepts which will enable him to understand better the reality of the overall structure in which he lives. To teach him ways of adjusting to the problems involved in the interaction between his personality structure and the structure of the society. To prepare him to face the problems peculiar to an offender upon release, and to equip him with information which will enable him to cope with the demands of every-day living. (p. 35)

Wallack (1956) in his assessment of inmates in prisons stated:

The prison inmate upon parole, if his period of imprisonment has been of any great length, faces an unfamiliar world. He must be trained to live successfully in that world... must be equipped to earn a living in a highly competitive and rapidly changing world if he is to use fair means in securing food, shelter, and clothing. The worker released from prison should have acquired not only usable skills but that pride in high-grade performance which enables one to "get a kick" out of doing a job well. He must be trained to the point where he gains more satisfaction from the performance of legitimate work than criminal activities. (pg. 28-29)

The Idaho Board of Corrections seems to indicate a similar expectation of their inmates, through an adopted policy statement: "It is the policy of the Board of Corrections to encourage and expect sincere efforts for self-improvement on the part of every inmate." (p. 1)

In a study conducted of the prison education system in Michigan by Clark (1954), a sobering observation was made.

As a rule the men and women who come to prison are badly equipped, academically and vocationally, to make their way successfully in free society. (p. 16)

The Clark study continued:

....it has been demonstrated that vindictive punishment serves no rational ends, either in prevention or reform. Meanwhile, as a result of religious or humane motivations, a new element became embodied in the theory

regarding the treatment of offenders, namely that of retribution. But at the same time ninety-nine percent of our prisoners return to the community that sent them away. There is the rub! All...agree that fifty percent, or more, of the inmates in penal institutions are repeaters... That being so, it is folly to talk of the deterrent or reformatory effect of prisons on their inmates. The fact of the matter is that so great is the failure of the prison system, except for temporary detention of troublesome or dangerous persons, that we are bankrupt in our thinking unless we can find some fresh innovating ideas.

Prisons do not deter; and as for reformation we have given it lip-service while our prisons have been wrongly constructed, inadequately staffed with trained personnel, poorly equipped with facilities for training, and generally neglected until catastrophe overtakes us... few of the recommendations of the American Prison Congress of 1879 have found general embodiment in our prisons today. (p. 8)

The study made another important observation about prison life, concerning the idleness which persists for many inmates.

Next to overcrowding, idleness is one of the most serious problems in the State's correctional system. The constructive full-time employment of able-bodied prisoners is a basic requirement for their social and economic rehabilitation and it is a mandate imposed upon the prisoner and upon the State under judicial laws and procedures. Until there is a satisfactory solution to this problem of idleness all efforts toward the rehabilitation of prisoners in the State correctional institutions will continue to be woefully inadequate. (pg. 36-37)

Education programs are seen as a way of eliminating some of the idleness that exists in prisons and a method of assisting inmates in their return to society. An article in the Detroit News (1965) identifies the feelings that a warden of an Illinois prison has concerning the program of education that functions in his institution:

Menard's educational program, Warden Randolph thinks, contributes greatly to prisoners' rehabilitation. There's no question that we have less returnees from men

who have been in the educational program than from those who haven't. "Most guys aren't only sincere, they are deadly serious and they don't want anybody throwing a monkey wrench into a good thing." (p. 11)

Morro (1964) observed educational programs were more than simply providing inmates with education.

In order to meet the needs of the inmates and society, the adult educator in prison relies on the cooperative efforts of his colleagues in practically every facet of his endeavors. Although his programs seem to be primarily concerned with developing a man's mind and vocational skill he is striving constantly to effect behavioral changes that will result in helping inmates to be more responsible and independent as a member of society. (p. 9)

In a national publication, serving as a guide for teachers, The National Association for Public School Adult Education, (1968) lists the following characteristics of undereducated adults: lack of self-confidence; fear of school; living in conditions of economic poverty; probably below average in scholastic aptitude; culturally deprived; values, norms and goals differing from upper and middle class norms; weak motivation; usually sensitive to non-verbal forms of communication; feeling of helplessness; varying levels of intelligence; "live for today" philosophy; unacceptable behavior; hostility toward authority; reticence; use of defense mechanisms; need for status; and tendency to lose interest. (pg. 4, 14)

These are the qualities of most prisoners and are the obstructions that must be dealt with by prison educators. Anderson (1984) described the general inmate population in

United States prisons and stated they can be divided into three major groups:

1. Those inmates who do not want to change and will not participate in any sort of retraining or counseling programs.
2. Those inmates who want to change, but must be motivated or challenged to participate in retraining or counseling programs.
3. Those inmates who want to change and are motivated to participate in challenging retraining or counseling programs. (p. viii)

Anderson observed it would be necessary to offer programs which would provide the inmates with the opportunity to uplift the destructive characteristics of those who desire personal change and are motivated to accept retraining. Cronin (1977) quoted the Honorable Claiborne Pell speaking about inmates and education:

"I see that a large population is passing through our society having never seen the advantage that a good education can bring. This is particularly obvious since the group I have in mind, prisoners, is a group that is a natural target for our efforts... Our work then is to bring these people back into the system and, as best we can, to give them an equal opportunity to enjoy life, to start a career, and to find hope."

We may have twice as far to go in dealing with prisoners as with normal students, but we must begin. It is shocking to me that the 280,000 men and women in our prison system, and the 250,000 in our jails have been so completely sealed off from the rest of society; denied not only the ability to work at a fair wage, to study or to train, but they are, on the whole, denied almost every opportunity of participating in everyday life.

I don't want to make any grand pronouncements about prisons. It does not take an expert, though, to see that our system has become unworkable; that too often it breeds crime, and that it does nothing to lower our rate of incarceration. I was alarmed to learn that between 215 and 220 per 100,000 citizens are in jail in America. (p. 3)

While it is important to provide training and education to inmates to assist in their return to society, Morris (1965) believes it is important to understand the inmate and his background. Findings of Morris relate a decline in the "family" and "family traditions" as a partial cause for "individualized" thinking and thus a tendency to commit crime. Peterson (1981) revealed many of the concerns of inmates through a series of interviews. Six areas were identified by inmates as contributing factors in their reasons for committing crime: 1) DHSS Department of Social Services, 2) Trouble and prison, 3) Personality, 4) Drinking, 5) Marital problems, 6) Police.

DHSS - Apart from general references to money, many men made particular reference to the thorny issue of claiming welfare benefits: getting social security, dealing with officials, and approaching SS for a clothing grant.

Trouble and prison - A number of men declared a problem about keeping out of trouble and avoiding imprisonment: Keeping away from old haunts, staying away from tricky types, and resisting being led astray.

Personality - Quite a few men also mentioned problems with themselves, with their own habits or personalities: hope to be able to get some confidence in myself, emotional instability, learning to cultivate reliability, consideration to others, and changing my social behavior.

Drinking - Alcohol problems were reported by a number of

men: booze, staying away from alcohol, living without alcohol, giving up drinking, a few drinks instead of too many, and control my drinking habits.

Marital Problems - Family problems in which specific mention was made of marriage: speaking to my wife, resuming a relationship with my wife, dealing with my wife's infidelity before I was sentenced, making up to my wife, and sorting out my marriage situation.

Police - Dealings with the police and being a subject of their attention were reported by most men: police harassment, police distrust in me, distrust in police, dishonest police, and police assuming of my guilt because of my past. (pg. 55-56)

These feelings are pieces of the puzzle which contribute to the picture viewed by prison officials and prison educators. Inmates themselves reported a lack of confidence which creates further problems in dealing with inmates. Public mistrust and the lack of community acceptance must be dealt with if inmates are to be successful in their return to society. Published by the AFL-CIO was the labor unions' point of view relating to community acceptance of returning rehabilitated inmates:

The acceptance, or rejection, of another person is a personal thing. Each individual must decide whether or not he is willing to speak to, welcome and, if the opportunity arises, help another person. Chances are that most people never have direct personal contact with a paroled or released person, A man or woman who has spent time in a correctional institution may never live next door, or work on the same job.

While most people may not be in a position to give a job or to direct help to a released person, it is important to build more positive attitudes and to promote a wider understanding of the importance of community acceptance of released persons.

Unhappily, the public attitude toward the treatment of offenders has been unduly influenced by sensational motion pictures about prison life, television crime programs, and the level of crime reporting in major newspapers. Some day these same powerful molders of public opinion may present a more objective story on the need to make prisons into treatment centers.

In the final analysis, acceptance remains an individual choice. (publication no. 63 pg. 4-5)

Chapter Summary

Two areas of study were reviewed in this chapter. The areas of study in the review of literature and research were pertinent to the topic under investigation. The review of literature pertaining to educational programs in prisons revealed an extensive amount of literature, however, little literature specifically addressed educational programs in jails. The literature provided a review of the history of educational programs in prisons. The literature concluded the need to provide educational opportunities for incarcerated persons.

The second section of the literature review was the study of inmates confined to a prison or jail. Again, little literature revealed a study of inmates confined to a jail. The literature provided a review of inmates as reported by researchers and some self reported information as seen by the inmates themselves. This section revealed the concerns and issues related to the prisoners and the obstacles which will be necessary to overcome for successful re-entry to society by the inmates.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The design of this study was descriptive and exploratory, relying primarily on qualitative procedures for data collection and analysis. The interview process was used to accomplish this task.

The population from which the sample was taken were inmates confined to the Ingham County Correctional Facility. The researcher conducted the study with a sample of 12 inmates. Respondents were selected from those persons attending adult education classes at the jail. Instructors of the adult education classes made recommendations to the researcher, on the basis of which inmates they believed would be the most forthcoming. Inmates who were interviewed also were asked to recommend other inmates who they believed would be willing to participate in the study.

Structured interview questions were developed to guide the interviews. The questions were designed to allow the inmates to respond in open-ended ways. Follow-up questions were utilized in an effort to collect as much pertinent data as possible.

Inmates were advised of the study during normally scheduled classes by the researcher. Inmates were asked to volunteer for the study by contacting the adult education instructors. The inmates were then contacted in person by the researcher. If the inmate agreed to participate in the study an interview was scheduled at a date and time convenient to both. Each interview was scheduled for about one hour. A total of three interviews were scheduled for each inmate who participated in the study. The interviews were tape recorded with permission of the respondents. The researcher took notes during the interviews. The interviews were conducted in a professional and confidential manner. The identities of the inmates were not disclosed.

This chapter includes the following topics: project design; sample population of the study; data-collection procedures, the interview process, and the data-analysis procedures utilized in the study.

Project Design

This research project titled, Educational and Life Experiences as Reported by Inmates Confined to a County Jail, should be considered a qualitative study. The study was conducted through observations of and interviews with inmates.

Putnam (1986) indicated that the qualitative method is an umbrella term covering many different interpretive

techniques, most of which describe, translate, or otherwise enhance the meaning, not the frequency, of natural occurring phenomena in the social world.(pg.98) Mintzberg (1979) expressed his concern about research designs that are significant only in the statistical sense of the word. Mintzberg (1979) feels it is important to get out into the real organizations and interact with the people within the institutions and organizations. He believes qualitative studies are a valuable method of research design.

The focus of this study was to bridge the research of two major fields of study; The life experiences of inmates and the educational experiences of inmates. The qualitative method was selected to provide an in-depth investigation of the subject. Contained in this report is a protocol of questions asked of the inmates and their responses. The questions asked of the inmates and their responses provided the focus of this study.

Population and Sample

Approximately 500 inmates participate in the adult education program annually at the Ingham County Correction Facility. Of these, between 45 and 55 inmates successfully complete the tests of General Educational Development each year. The researcher conducted the study with a sample of 12

inmates. To allow for an adequate period of time to conduct this study, it was necessary to select those inmates whose sentences were a minimum of six months. The inmates were selected after being observed by the researcher while attending classes in the adult education program at the jail. This enhanced the familiarity between the researcher and the inmates prior to the interviews. Presentations were made to the inmates concerning the study during the normally scheduled classes. Inmates interested in participating in the study were then advised to register with the adult education instructors after class. The instructors were then interviewed to assist the researcher in the selection process of the inmates. The instructors were essential in the selection process to assist in determining which inmates would be the most credible for the study. During interviews with the inmates, they were asked to make recommendations for other inmates who were willing to participate in the study. Through a survey of inmates requesting participation in the study, a cross section of inmates were selected to include, male/female, and Caucasian/minorities. The sample included 10 males, 2 females of which there were 6 Caucasians, 3 African/Americans and 3 Hispanics.

Data Collection

Data collection began with observations conducted by the researcher of the inmates as they attended classes in the adult education program at the jail. These observations provided the opportunity to view the setting and experiences of the inmates in the adult education classes at the jail. Data were collected through observation and individual interviews. Casual conversations between the researcher and the inmates during the adult education classes also provided insight into the educational and life experiences of the inmates. Strauss (1990) referred to this type of research as qualitative research. The term "qualitative" refers to research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (p.17). This process assisted the researcher during the interview process to reduce inaccurate reporting of information from inmates regarding the adult education program at the jail. It was also the intent to use observations of the inmates, to gain their trust and build a relationship that allowed for sincere interaction during the interview process. Prior to the interview process the inmates were observed in class for approximately three months. The researcher attended a total of 25 classes with the inmates. The researcher

remained in class for approximately one hour, usually attending twice a week. This allowed sufficient time to provide familiarity between the researcher and the inmates.

Potential respondents were contacted in person at the jail, after the inmates had expressed an interest in participating in the study. During the initial contact, the researcher explained the purpose of the study. If the inmate agreed to participate in the study, an interview was scheduled at a date and time convenient to both parties. Three separate interviews were conducted with each inmate, of approximately one hour each. The gathering of the data through "one on one" interaction allows the flexibility to pursue other questions of interest as they unfold throughout the interview. Qualitative research allows this type of flexibility for the researcher that might not otherwise be discovered through quantitative methods (Kidder, 1981).

One advantage of qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to develop new questions during data collection and preliminary analysis. If new avenues of investigation were suggested during the early parts of data collection and analysis, if they appeared to be promising, they were then pursued.

All of the interviews were conducted in interview rooms, which will be described later in this report. The length of the interviews varied from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes. The interviewer reported to the inmates housing area

at the scheduled appointment time. The inmates were then escorted to the interview room by the interviewer.

At the start of the first interview, an Informed Written Consent Form was presented to the inmates, which contained a brief overview of the study and requested the inmates formal consent to participate in the study. (See Appendix A) A list of the questions that were used during the interview was also given to the inmates. (See Appendix B.)

Interruptions during the interviews were not a major distraction. Of the thirty-six interviews, only three were interrupted. The interruptions were minimal and did not cause the interviewer to discontinue the interview.

The interviews typically started with discussion about the inmate, the conditions at the jail, the research topic, the inmate's background, and the researcher's professional position and future plans after completion of the doctorate degree program. Following this the researcher asked if the inmate had any questions about the interview schedule. The researcher then provided a list of questions to the inmate, and read through the questions with the inmate. The inmate was then asked if he or she understood the questions. During each of the interviews the inmates stated they understood the questions as written.

Permission was requested to audio tape the interview to ensure that all responses were captured for future analysis. None of the inmates objected to the tape recorder. The tapes

were used to verify interview responses immediately following the interviews and during data analysis. Finally, inmates were assured that confidentiality would be maintained by not identifying persons in the dissertation or further research reports and not allowing anyone other than the researcher access to the tapes and written notes of the interview. At the completion of the study the tapes were destroyed.

After completing the final interview with each inmate, he or she was asked to assess the appropriateness of the questions asked during the interview. The questions were well received by the inmates, and they indicated they liked the interviews. The questions required the inmates to reflect on their prior educational and life experiences and make a comparison to the educational experiences at the adult education program at the jail.

Overall, the inmates were very candid. Most of the inmates spoke only to the questions directed to them. On occasion, the inmates needed guidance to redirect the conversation back to the interview questions. Ten of the inmates stated they enjoyed speaking with the researcher and thanked the researcher for the experience. The interview questions followed a logical order and were effective in gathering pertinent data for the study.

At the conclusion of each of the interviews, a letter was given to each inmate thanking him or her for participating in the study. (See Appendix C.)

The interviews were conducted during April, May, June, and July, 1995.

The Interview Process

The interview questions were designed to relate to the research questions presented in Chapter I. The interview questions were developed with the assistance of the researcher's guidance committee.

The interviews were conducted in rooms located in close proximity to the housing units at the jail. These rooms are usually reserved for inmates to confer with their attorneys. These rooms were selected because they were familiar to the inmates and would contribute to confidentiality and also provide for the comfort of the inmates. The following questions were used to guide the interviews:

1. What is your current educational level?
 - (a) How far did you go in school?
2. What led you to leave school?
 - (a) Did you drop out?
 - (b) Were you expelled?
3. How would you describe your school experiences?
 - (a) Which teachers did you like and why?
 - 1) What kinds of things did they do?
 - 2) Why did you like them?
4. Do you believe you were successful in school?

- (a) Did you make good grades?
 - (b) Did you have problems with teachers?
 - 1) What kinds of problems?
 - (c) Did you have problems with counselors, assistant principals, or principals?
 - 1) What kinds of problems?
 - (d) Did you have problems with other students?
 - 1) What kinds of problems?
 - (e) If you had problems when did they occur?
5. What led to your leaving and not completing high school?
6. After you left high school, did you ever consider going back to high school, or attending alternative education programs, or adult education programs?
- (a) Why?
 - (b) Why not?
 - (c) At what times?
7. Were there people that affected your decisions...?
- (a) to drop out
 - (b) to return
 - (c) not to return
 - (d) Who were they?
8. Were there things that teachers, counselors and principals could have done to help you stay in school?
- (a) Spend more time with you?

- (b) Listen to you?
 - (c) Talk to you more?
 - (d) Been more fair with you?
 - (e) Other things?
9. What led you to enroll in the educational program at the jail.
- (a) Part of a sentence given to you by a judge?
 - (b) To obtain early release from jail by completing your G.E.D.?
 - (c) Make better use of your time?
 - (d) Better than sitting in your jail cell?
 - (e) To obtain a G.E.D.?
 - (f) Do you believe the program will help you?
10. How were you spending your time between the time you left high school and when you entered this educational program?
- (a) Have you attended any other educational programs?
 - (b) Have you attended any job training programs?
11. Tell me about the educational program here?
- (a) What do you think of the teachers?
 - (b) What do you think of the courses?
12. Tell me about the differences between high school and the jail educational program.
- (a) the setting
 - (b) the teachers

- 1) the style of the teachers
 - (c) type of instruction
 - (d) What did you like in either or both?
13. Could you tell me about some of your successes in the educational program at the jail?
- (a) Have there been any less successful experiences in the jail program?
14. What are your educational plans when you are released from jail?
- (a) Will you complete your G.E.D. if you do not finish in the jail?
 - (b) Will you complete high school?
 - (c) Will you go to college?
15. Do you think there are things you could or should have done differently in high school?
- (a) If so, what are they?
 - (b) Do you think you could have completed high school?
16. What particular things are done in the jail program which are particularly helpful.....?
- (a) to you
 - (b) to other inmates

The interview schedule was developed to be used in a flexible way. Follow-up questions were utilized to collect as much pertinent data as possible. The open-ended questions utilized also assisted with the collection of as much

pertinent data as possible. Merriman and Simpson (1984) state that open-ended questions require that the researcher remain free of preconceived notions of when an appropriate answer might be given. Questions must be carefully formulated in such a manner as to avoid leading the respondent in any particular direction. Therefore, the open-ended question "has the advantage of eliciting a wider latitude of possible responses from participants, and consequently information may result that is unanticipated by the researcher" (p. 128-129)

Isaac and Michael (1982) state that the interview process can help establish rapport and effective communication between the respondent and the interviewer. Kerlinger (1973) suggested that questions which are open-ended "supply a frame of reference for respondents' answer, but put a minimum of restraint on the answers and their expression" (p. 483)

The interview questions initiated discussion about the research questions. Follow up questions were utilized to collect as much pertinent data as possible. The interviews were tape recorded with permission of the interviewee. The researcher also took notes during the interview. The inmates were told they might end the interview any time they desired.

Data Analysis

The data were collected by the researcher through the taping of the interviews and by taking notes. As a result of questions asked and answers received in the first interview with inmates, the researcher found it necessary at times to ask follow-up questions in subsequent interviews to clarify responses.

Upon completion of the data collection, the researcher began to analyze the data. The researcher began to review the questions asked of the inmates and record the responses. The responses were used to collectively answer the research questions. As a result of the responses, major themes developed. The researcher was able to identify through the responses received from the inmates the significant factors and experiences which were significant in the lives of the inmates. The researcher was also able to identify those factors and experiences which the inmates reported as having a significant influence on their school experiences.

The researcher noted that these factors and experiences occurred both inside and outside the home. These responses are reported in Chapter IV. Tables were also developed by the researcher to assist in the reporting of the responses. These tables will list responses and will show comparisons between the various responses.

As a result of the responses received from the inmates

the researcher was able to report the perceptions of the educational experiences in the jail. Responses received from the inmates also allowed the researcher to report the aspects of the educational experiences in the jail which the inmates report as applicable to other jail education programs. These responses are reported in Chapter IV.

As a result of the responses received from the inmates, the researcher chose to report on several topics which were not included in the research questions. These topics will be reported in Chapter IV, under the title "Subsidiary Analysis". These data report the responses from questions: 1) What did you do during the time between high school and the time you entered the jail education program? 2) Why did you enter the jail education program? 3) Will you continue your education when you are released from jail?

The researcher believes the inmates were open and honest during the interviews. The inmates spoke directly to the questions asked and did not refuse to answer any of the questions. The openness of the inmates allowed the researcher to record data and contrast and compare the responses among the inmates. The researcher believed the interview process was successful gathering pertinent data which allowed for the analysis of the data.

Summary of Methodology and Procedures

The descriptive and exploratory design of the study was discussed in this chapter. The sample population of inmates was presented as well as the project design. The data-collection procedures, the interview process, and data analysis procedures were presented. The reasons for the use of the qualitative methodology and procedures were briefly discussed.

In Chapter IV, the data obtained through the interview process will be presented. Since the data were qualitative, the data analysis is appropriate to qualitative data.

Qualitative data appear in words rather than in numbers. They may have been collected in a variety of ways (observations, interviews,...tape recordings) and are usually "processed"...before they are ready for use (via dictation, typing up, editing or transcription), but they remain words, usually organized into an extended text. (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 21)

CHAPTER IV

Results

Little research has focused on the life and educational experiences of inmates confined to county jails and the lessons learned as a result of those experiences. Few data have been collected which collate experiences and lessons learned by inmates who attended high school, left high school and attended an adult education program at a county jail. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of life experiences and educational experiences and compare and contrast those experiences with the experience of attending an adult educational program at the county jail. Self-reported procedures were utilized to identify experiences and lessons learned that the inmates felt contributed to their success or failure as a high school and adult education student.

The following research questions were studied:

1. What school related experiences do inmates report as significant in their lives?
2. What out of school factors or experiences do inmates

report as significant influences on their school experiences?

3. What are the inmates' perceptions of the educational experiences in the jail?
4. What aspects of the educational experiences in the jail do inmates report as applicable to other jail education programs?

An analysis of the collected data is presented in this chapter, organized around the research questions. Relevant data and results are discussed.

Research Question 1

What school related experiences do inmates report as significant in their lives?

The 12 inmates identified 37 school related experiences that they believed had a significant affect on their lives. Every inmate reported at least one school related experience he or she believed had a significant affect in his or her life. Three inmates reported two experiences. Five inmates reported three school related experiences, with one inmate reporting four, one reporting five, and one reporting six school related experiences. Later in this chapter, tables are used to compare the various number of responses of the inmates. To protect the identities of the inmates a letter of the alphabet is used to designate each inmate throughout

the study.

The inmates were told early in the interviews that school related experiences were those events that occurred while the inmate was attending school (K-12).

Experiences reported by the inmates included events involving teachers, principals, other students, the school environment, and the school conditions.

Positive experiences with teachers were reported. Also, some inmates identified that they were motivated by teachers. However, more inmates reported that they believed teachers were often uncaring and uninterested in the development of the inmate as a student. The experiences reported by inmates relating to teachers included the following:

Most of my teachers looked at their job as a paycheck and did not care about the students.

I had some teachers that cared but many of my teachers didn't care very much.

Most of my teachers didn't even know my name.

My teachers just did their job- nothing more.

I didn't like school very much so I guess I didn't think too much of my teachers either.

I had a teacher that called me "stupid" and told me I would never learn.

I had teachers that would never spend extra time helping me if I didn't understand.

I tried to tell my teachers my classes were too hard, but they didn't listen.

Teachers would let the students run the class and there was no control in the classroom.

Several of the inmates described their feelings toward their teachers. One inmate indicated he never felt as though his comments made in classes were ever seriously listened to by his teachers. This same inmate indicated it was his teachers and their lack of concern for him as a person and as a student that was one of the factors that caused him not to care about school. Other inmates told the researcher teachers should take a keen interest in their students and when this does not happen, students will become less interested in school. One inmate reported feeling isolated and not as smart as most students due to the attitude expressed by his teachers.

Several inmates reported on the experiences they had with their high school principals:

We only saw the principal when someone got in trouble.

The principal would hit kids who were in trouble. We knew it was wrong, but we were afraid to tell anyone.

I never knew who the principal was.

I didn't like our principal. All he ever did was go around our school yelling at the kids.

I guess our principal was o.k. I didn't know him very well.

My principal told my friend he should leave school, before he got kicked out.

The responses received from the inmates about their principals gave the impression that the inmates clearly saw the principal as an authority figure. One inmate clearly indicated his principal was not well liked by most students and students simply wanted to avoid the principal. Another inmate indicated this was just another person who probably left her with a negative attitude toward school.

Inmates also reported experiences with other students as being significant. Their responses are as follows:

I did not have any friends in school. Other students made fun of me.

In our school unless you belonged to a gang, you had no friends.

I was one of only a few Hispanics in our school and other students made fun of me and called me names.

Many of the students in our school were always trying to prove how tough they were.

I kept to myself much of the time and I guess I didn't have many friends.

I had some friends I liked to hang with but they didn't have many friends.

I had one friend who was a very good student but he moved away and I got in with some bad kids.

I had some really cool friends in school and they were more important than my classes.

My friends and I skipped school all the time, just to hang out together.

Those inmates who reported that experiences with other

students were significant believed the people who they were friends with influenced their attitudes toward school. One inmate indicated his friends were clearly more important to him than school was. Another inmate reported peer pressure affected most decisions kids made, including decisions about school.

Several inmates reported on the conditions of their schools that they believed were significant. The conditions reported as significant are as follows:

The building always seemed too hot or too cold.

Gangs roamed the hallways in the schools and nobody controlled the gangs.

There was too much violence in our school and I was always afraid.

Our school was old and run down. I told this to our principal one day, and he said there was nothing he could do about it.

The food they served was bad.

Our school was o.k. I don't think the building was the problem.

Our school was very old and needed repairs.

Our school must have been bad they tore it down two years after I dropped out.

Our school was too small for the number of students we had. All of the classes were crowded.

Drugs and alcohol were being used in the school and all around the building. Kids would sit in class "stoned" or drunk.

Guns and knives were carried by many students and everyone was afraid. A friend of mine was shot during gym class.

The inmates who responded on the condition of their

school were generally dissatisfied with the school. One inmate told the researcher the lack of care for the school was a message being sent to the students. Several inmates indicated while they knew their school was in poor condition, they did not believe their community could afford to improve the school and the state should have done more to improve the condition of the school.

A list of all responses related to the first research question are provided in Appendix D. The responses are categorized based on the type of experience. The number of school related experiences reported by inmates as significant in their lives ranged from one to six. Inmates reported experiences relative to; a.) teachers, b.) principals, c.) other students, and d.) conditions of their schools.

Based on the data presented in response to Research Question 1, it is believed that the school related experiences reported by the inmates were felt to be significant in their educational development. Inmates' responses were predominately negative toward school, to include their teachers, principal, and the school building itself. Other students also impacted the attitudes of the inmates toward school, in that fear of gangs and violent students was a negative force. Other students who were friends of the inmates were able to further influence the attitudes toward

school. These factors as reported by the inmates are believed to have had a significant impact on the educational development of these students.

Research Question 2

What out of school factors or experiences do inmates report as significant influences on their school experiences?

The inmates identified 75 out of school factors or experiences as significant influences on their school experiences. The factors or experiences as reported by the inmates occurred in connection with the home as well as outside of the home. Factors or experiences occurring in the home were identified 33 times. Factors or experiences occurring outside the home were identified 42 times. The factors or experiences reported by the inmates that occurred inside the home included, the living conditions, family members, and economic status.

Each of the inmates reported multiple factors or experiences that occurred inside the home. The range of factors or experiences as reported by the inmates included six inmates reporting two factors, four inmates with three factors, and one inmate reporting four and one inmate reporting five factors or experiences.

Factors or experiences inside the home included single or no parent families, low economic status, and abusive

parents. Several inmates reported favorable experiences relating to family members as having a positive influence on their school experiences. By and large most of the factors or experiences reported by the inmates had a negative influence on their school related experience. Following is a complete list of factors or experiences reported by the inmates occurring inside the home and identified as significant influences on the inmates school experiences:

My father did not live at home. (six responses)

I did not live with my parents. I lived with my aunt.

My father was an alcoholic and was abusive toward my mother and the children.

My father was arrested for selling drugs, and drugs were frequently used in our house, by my father, mother and their friends.

There were eight children and our parents living in our house and it was very difficult to study.

My mother was very helpful to me and encouraged me to go to school and do well.

I lived with my grandmother and she was always willing to help the children with their schoolwork.

There was never anyone at home to help me or encourage me to go to school.

My mother worked three jobs and was rarely home.

My mother was only interested in her boyfriends.

I was an only child and had no friends to play with.

I was embarrassed to go to school because of the clothes I had.

I needed glasses, but my mother told me we could not afford to buy them.

I needed to work to bring money home for the family. My father was gone and my mother raised the other children.

My father always told me it was important to get a good education.

I had an older brother that went to college and my parents told me I should be like my brother.

We lived in a bad neighborhood and I was afraid to leave our apartment.

My father never went to work so I figured I didn't have to go to school. I pretended I was sick just like my dad.

My father always told me I was stupid so one day I decided there was no need to go to school.

I needed to stay home and take care of my brothers and sisters.

My older brother helped me with my homework and always told me to stay in school.

My mother didn't make me go to school so I quit.

These responses are those factors and experiences inside the home that the inmates felt had a significant influence on their school experiences. Six of the inmates indicated a lack of their father in the home had significantly influenced their school experience. Several of the inmates noted dealing with drugs, alcohol, and violence. Large families and insufficient income was also noted by several inmates. A list of all responses are provided in Appendix E.

Three inmates stated the lack of a father figure played a significant role on their attitude toward school. They reported that those friends who had a father who was interested in the education of the children influenced the

children in a positive manner. The fathers took interest in what their children were accomplishing in school and provided an incentive for the student to remain in school. One inmate expanded this by indicating he wanted his father to be proud of him, but his father was never around. This inmate eventually dropped out of school when he believed nobody cared.

Several inmates made clear indications of drugs and alcohol in the home as having a negative influence. These inmates noted the focus was toward drug dealing and abuse of alcohol and little attention was given to the children and their education.

As one inmate spoke of the large family in his home he indicated the focus was to simply pay the bills and making it from one day to the next. The large family made it difficult to receive input from his mother toward school and classes. Simply put, "my mom was spread too thin".

Another inmate spoke of the violence in his home and the lack of true concern for family. This inmate was reluctant to ask his father for assistance with his classes because of his father's violent temper.

In many of the above experiences the lack of attention from the inmate's father or mother was reported to have had a significant impact on the inmates school experiences. Many of the inmates seemed to lack the proper guidance from their parents, which might have assisted the inmates in developing

a more positive view toward school.

As stated previously, inmates reported 42 factors or experiences outside the home as significant influences on the inmates school experiences. Every inmate reported at least two experiences, with one inmate describing a high of six experiences. Appendix E includes the responses from inmates regarding experiences both inside and outside the home which had a significant influence on their school experience. Violence in the neighborhood was reported by several of the inmates as having a significant influence. A number of inmates also reported on the influence from friends and gangs as being significant. Following is a list of factors or experiences outside the home reported as significant influences on the inmate's school related experience:

I became pregnant in the eleventh grade and dropped out of school.

Many of my friends were dropping out of school and I wanted to be with my friends. (six responses)

I was kicked out of school for fighting.

I was kicked out of school after I was arrested for selling marijuana in the school parking lot.

I did not like school or anything about it.

I often spoke with a priest in our church who always told me to stay in school.

Girls were important to me and I didn't have time to mess with school.

I was too busy selling drugs and stealing to be bothered with school.

I wanted to be a member of this gang and you had to drop out of school to join.

My boyfriend wanted me to quit school. At the time I thought he was more important than school.

I was always getting "high" so I decided school was not for me.

I was so far behind in my classes I would not have graduated my senior year, so I quit.

My boss at the grocery store told me I should stay in school and was always telling me to do the right thing.

I had more fun hanging out with friends and getting drunk all the time.

There was so much violence near our school I was afraid to walk on the streets.

Me and some friends got caught breaking into a house and I went to jail. I never went back to school when I got out of jail.

I had a friend that was so smart and he told me to stay in school. The next year his family moved away and I got in with some bad kids.

I thought it was "bad" to leave school.

I was sent to prison at 17 years old. (declined to say why) I got out of prison after two years but never went back to high school.

A retired teacher down the street would always talk to the kids in the neighborhood and tell us how important it was to finish high school.

I had more fun hanging out at the malls and playing video games.

My girlfriend kept putting pressure on me to be with her during the day.

I didn't like walking to school during the winter, it was too cold.

Some friends told me I should stay in school.

My godfather told me school would be the only way I would go to college.

I ran away from home several times, the last time a cop picked me up and told me I should stay in school. I stayed at home and in school for two more years.

I had one very cool girlfriend who was smart and kept me going to school while we were dating.

None of the people I knew in the neighborhood finished high school.

I liked cruising around in my car.

I knew I wouldn't go to college so I figured high school wouldn't be important either.

One of my friends was killed on his way to school arguing about a girl. I quit soon after that.

In tenth grade I broke my leg and stayed home for two weeks. After I went back I decided school was not worth the effort of getting around with a broken leg.

Several inmates elaborated on their responses concerning the factors or experiences outside the home reported as significant influences on their school experiences. The focus was not school. Girls, boys, friends in general, drugs, and violence impeded the desire for many of the inmates to do well in school. Similar to the experiences inside the home, the experiences outside the home were mainly of a negative nature and did not provide support for the inmates high school education. As the inmates continued to described their worlds the prevailing forces were negative toward school and education.

One inmate described the need he experienced to impress his friends by dropping out of school. This inmate indicated he was not performing poorly in school, however peer pressure

was so strong he eventually decided to drop out of school.

Positive and Negative Aspects of Experiences

Inmates identified sixteen factors or experiences which were positive significant influences on their school experiences. Of those factors or experiences six were inside the home and ten were outside the home. Inmates reported twenty seven factors or experiences inside the home as negative significant influences on their school experiences. Inmates also reported thirty two factors or experiences outside the home as negative significant influences on their school experiences. Table 4.1 is the number of experiences, as reported by the inmates, inside the home and the comparison of the positive/negative significance of the experience.

**Table 4.1.--Distribution of Positive/Negative Experiences
Inside the Home as Reported by Inmates.**

Inmate	Significant Experiences		Total
	Positive	Negative	
A	0	2	2
B	0	2	2
C	1	1	2
D	1	3	4
E	0	2	2
F	1	4	5
G	1	2	3
H	0	3	3
I	0	2	2
J	2	1	3
K	0	2	2
L	0	3	3
Totals	6	27	33

Table 4.2 is the number of experiences, as reported by the inmates, outside the home and the comparison of the positive/negative significance of the experience.

Table 4.2.--Distribution of the Positive/Negative Experiences Outside the Home as Reported by Inmates.

Inmate	Significant Experiences		Total
	Positive	Negative	
A	1	4	5
B	0	3	3
C	1	3	4
D	0	3	3
E	1	5	6
F	1	1	2
G	2	3	5
H	0	3	3
I	1	1	2
J	0	3	3
K	2	2	4
L	1	1	2
Totals	10	32	42

Five of the respondents reported that there were factors or experiences inside the home which had a significant positive influence on their school experience. (see Table 4.1) All respondents reported there were factors or experiences inside the home that had a significant negative influence on their school experience. (see Table 4.2)

The five respondents that reported positive experiences inside the home, spoke about family members who encouraged them to stay in school. The respondents who reported on negative experiences inside the home, spoke about family members who were either not home at all, or when they were home presented a negative attitude toward school or society in general.

Eight of the respondents reported factors or experiences outside the home that had a significant positive influence on their school experiences. (see Table 4.2) All of the respondents spoke about factors or experiences outside the home that had a significant negative influence on their school experience.

Of the respondents who reported on experiences inside the home which had a significant positive influence on their school experiences, only one respondent reported more than one positive influence. (see Table 4.1)

Of the respondents who reported on experiences outside the home which had a significant positive influence on their school experiences, two respondents reported 2 experiences

having a positive influence. (see Table 4.2)

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate the large disparity between the positive and negative experiences both inside and outside the home. These tables assist with the explanation as to why these inmates dropped out of school. Inside the home negative experiences outnumbered positive experiences by a ratio of four to one. Outside the home negative experiences outnumbered positive experiences three to one.

When comparing positive experiences reported by inmates both inside and outside the home, of the respondents who reported positive experiences, 3 respondents reported positive experiences both inside the home and outside the home. Table 4.3 shows the comparison of respondents reporting positive experiences.

Table 4.3.--Comparison of Respondents Reporting Positive Experiences.

Inmate	Positive Experiences	
	Inside the Home	Outside the Home
A	0	1
B	0	0
C	1	1
D	1	0
E	0	1
F	1	1
G	1	2
H	0	0
I	0	1
J	2	0
K	0	2
L	0	1
Totals	6	10

Table 4.3 shows only two respondents did not report a positive experience occurring either inside or outside the home.

Negative experiences reported by the respondents both inside and outside the home were compared and illustrated in Table 4.4. All respondents reported negative experiences both inside and outside the home. Of the respondents reporting negative experiences inside the home, all but two of the respondents reported more than one negative experience. Of the respondents reporting negative experiences outside the home, all but three of the respondents reported more than one negative experience.

Table 4.4 shows a comparison of negative experiences inside and outside the home as reported by the respondents. A total of twenty seven negative factors or experiences inside the home were reported to have significantly influenced the inmates school experiences. Respondents also reported thirty two negative experiences or factors outside the home, as significantly influencing their school experiences.

Table 4.4.--Comparison of Respondents Reporting Negative Experiences.

Negative Experiences		
Inmate	Inside the Home	Outside the Home
A	2	4
B	2	3
C	1	3
D	3	3
E	2	5
F	4	1
G	2	3
H	3	3
I	2	1
J	1	3
K	2	2
L	3	1
Totals	27	32

Inmates reported more negative factors or experiences outside the home (32) as significant influences on their school experiences, than negative factors or experiences inside the home (27). Inmates also reported more positive factors or experiences outside the home (10) as significant influences on their school experiences, compared to positive factors or experiences inside the home (6). Of the total number of factors or experiences reported outside the home, 76% were negative influences on the inmates school experiences. Of the total number of factors or experiences reported inside the home, 82% were negative influences on the inmates school experiences.

Table 4.5. reflects the total number of factors or experiences reported by inmates as significant influences on their school experiences.

Table 4.5.--Factors or Experiences of Inmates Having a Significant Influence on the School Experience.

Type of Experience	Negative	Positive
Inside the Home	27	6
Outside the Home	32	10
Totals	59	16

Based on the responses which relate to Research Question 2, it appears factors or experiences reported by the inmates were perceived to have significantly influenced their school experiences. The difference between the number of positive and negative experiences appear to be a key factor in the inmates decisions and largely provided a negative influence on their school experiences.

Research Question 3

What are the inmates perceptions of the educational experiences in the jail?

Inmates described their experiences with the adult education program offered at the Ingham County Correctional Facility. As the inmates described their experiences, common themes were identified from their responses and are presented in response to Research Question 3. Each theme includes examples of quotations stated by the inmates. Appendix F provides a complete list of the quotations in response to Research Question 3.

Three topic areas or themes were identified in the responses comments of the inmates. Those themes were: Teachers, Class Setting, and Classes Taught. The inmates, produced a total of 91 responses. Of the responses by the

inmates, 43 were directed toward the perceptions the inmates had of the teachers. Twenty-eight of the responses received from the inmates discussed the setting. Finally, 20 responses received from the inmates concerned their views of the classes taught. Each of the themes will be discussed. Each of the inmates provided a minimum of one response to the three themes.

The inmates appeared to be very open in their discussions of the teachers, the classroom setting, and the classes taught at the jail.

Examples of the inmates perceptions of the "teachers" at the jail include:

The teachers in the adult education program are very good.

The teachers at the jail care about me as a person and not just a number.

The teachers at the jail take time to explain the lesson they are speaking about.

The teacher I have teaches at a pace I can keep up with.

My teacher took the time to listen to my concerns.

The teachers know what they are talking about.

The teachers make sure they are in control of the class and do not let the students run the class.

The teachers do not put up with any "B.S." from the students.

The teachers are used to working with criminals - you can't con them.

Unlike many of my teachers in high school, the teachers in the jail don't yell at you.

The teacher was always willing to work with me.

My teacher honestly wants me to succeed.

The teacher spends too much time with some students who just want attention and are not here to learn.

My teacher is interesting to listen to and wants us to learn the stuff he is teaching.

I like the way the teacher runs his class. He teaches part of the time and we work by ourselves part of the time. This way if we have questions we can get answers from the teacher.

The teacher doesn't push pass things he teaches just to get it over with. He waits until we understand everything he is teaching.

We only take tests when we are ready to take them.

The teacher is always willing to listen to other problems I am having.

The teacher has a positive attitude.

You can tell that our teacher really wants to be there. That wasn't always that way in high school.

The teacher expects too much from me. I don't think I am as smart as my teacher thinks.

The teacher treats us like adults in the class.

The teacher gives us practice tests so we can have a good idea what to expect when we take the real test.

You can tell people who like there job. Our teacher likes his job and it made me feel good about being in his classroom.

Perceptions of the teachers in the adult education program at the jail were largely positive. Very few comments made by the inmates were negative. The inmates seemed pleased

with their teachers and the methods by which they taught.

Examples of the inmates perceptions of the "setting" at the jail include:

There are no windows in our classroom, I feel like I am in a cave.

Classrooms are too small. They need more room.

We need more computers. I only get to use the computer once a week.

The computers are very slow and not very new.

The equipment in the classroom is old and broken. My guess is they won't fix it because who we are.

They don't need a deputy standing outside the classroom to baby sit us.

I like knowing there is a deputy near us, that way nobody does anything stupid.

There are no distractions in class at the jail- like girls, drugs, alcohol, and friends. That's good.

The size of the classes are small. I think this is good because you have a better chance of getting help from the teacher with less students.

The building is usually too hot or too cold. They need to make it comfortable if they expect us to study.

There are no guys in my classes. I think this is good because this was a problem for me in high school. I was always talking with the guys.

Classes should only be given in the evening or at night.

Everything about the classroom sucks- I only stay because my judge told me I had to go.

Classes are too early in the morning.

I like sitting at the table instead of the desks we had in high school. It makes me feel more like an adult.

I think they should mix the women and guys together.
It would make it more like it is on the outside.

Nobody knows me at the jail, so I don't have to try and impress nobody.

In response to the setting at the jail, comments varied. Inmates reported they felt improvements in instructional technology would be helpful. Several inmates also complained about the building environment, and the need to have a deputy present. However, several inmates did make positive comments about the classroom setting, indicating the lack of distractions and the security of the environment. Comments were also mixed on the idea of teaching with men and women in the same class.

Examples of the inmates perceptions of the "classes" at the jail include:

They need to have more classes taught at the jail.

The classes are not too hard.

I have an opportunity to talk about what is taught in the classes and I think I learn more this way.

I like it when we discuss the subjects as a group.

The tests we take are taken from the information we learn in class. It wasn't always this way in high school.

The books we use are helpful.

It is hard to learn very much some days because of the different students in the class.

The classes need to be more challenging.

I enjoy the classes and I want to learn.

I like the computer class. I wish I could spend more time working on the computer.

You are able to learn at your pace.

I guess it beats sitting in my room.

Responses from the inmates regarding classes were generally positive. Inmates did have some criticisms of the classes, including not enough time in the computer class, the classes need to be more challenging, and the variety of students made it difficult to learn during some classes.

Summary of Educational Setting at the Jail

In response to Research Questions 3, a variety of perceptions of the educational experiences in the jail were reported. A total of 91 responses were reported by the inmates. Three main themes emerged- teachers, setting, and classes. Generally, the perceptions of the teachers and the classes were positive, with several suggestions requesting improvements in the setting.

The researcher noted a difference in the tone of the inmates as they discussed the educational setting at the jail. When the inmates spoke about their experiences during high school, not only were the reported experiences negative, but the researcher could detect a negative tone in the voice of the inmates. However, when the inmates spoke about their

educational experience at the jail, the inmates were generally positive even when they were indicating an experience at the jail which they believed needed improvement. When most of the inmates spoke of the teachers at the jail, the researcher detected a sincere attitude on the part of the inmates that they enjoyed the teachers and the manner in which they were taught.

While the equipment and the setting at the jail were noted by the inmates as needing improvement, the responses by the inmates appeared to have a positive tone when articulating their concerns.

Research Question 4

What aspects of the educational experiences in the jail do inmates report as applicable to other jail education programs?

This question was addressed, in part, in the analysis of the results of Research Questions 1, 2, and 3. Research Question 1 led to a discussion of school related experiences which were significant in the lives of the inmates. Research Question 2 provided factors or experiences inmates stated as significant influences on their school experiences. Research Question 3 focused on the educational experiences in the jail. While responses varied and many of the responses focused on the negative aspects of the inmates' educational experiences, many of the responses received from the inmates reported on

the positive factors or experiences related to the educational background of the inmates. To address Research Question 4 the types of experiences in the jail which are applicable to other jail education programs were categorized into one of three areas. Those areas are as follows: teachers, classroom setting, and classes.

Teachers

In responding to Research Question 1 inmates reported teachers from high school with negative attitudes. One inmate reported experiencing a teachers who would call him "stupid" and told him he would never learn. Other inmates reported teachers did not appear to be interested in spending extra time to assist students. One inmate reported the belief that most of his teachers looked at their job as a paycheck and did not seem to care about the students. Another inmate reported how some teachers did not seem to have control over the students while in the classroom.

In responding to Research Question 3, inmates reported on their perceptions of the educational experiences in the jail. The perceptions of the educational experiences in the jail relating to teachers were very positive, as reported by the inmates. Inmates reported about teachers who cared about the students, and had a positive attitude toward the students. Inmates also reported the teachers at the jail

treated them like adults and did not yell at the students.

When the researcher analyzed data relating to Research Question 4, as it relates to teachers, it became obvious the data was a review of those common perceptions of teachers who presented a positive attitude toward the inmates. Inmates responded positively to teachers who cared, presented the information at a pace acceptable to the student, had a positive attitude, expected and wanted the inmates to learn, and treated the inmates like adults. Inmates discussed with the researcher how the positive attitude displayed by teachers at the jail might have made a difference to the inmates if this same attitude would have been displayed by their high school teachers. As it relates to educational programs at other jails, teachers need to analyze the factors that brought the students (inmates) to them. Recognizing past failures from high school and displaying a positive educational attitude, could have an impact on the jail educational experience.

Classroom Setting

In responding to Research Question 1 inmates reported on the classroom setting from high school. The inmates comments relating to the classroom setting from high school were generally negative. Inmates reported the building always seemed to hot or cold and in some cases inmates reported the

building was old and needed repairs. Other inmates reported on the violence in high school and the presence of knives and guns.

In responding to Research Question 2 inmates reported on the classroom setting from high school. Several inmates reported distractions which they experienced in high school. One inmate reported that girls were important to him and school was not as important. Another inmate reported joining a gang and the pressure from the gang to drop out of school. Several other inmates reported they had more fun "hanging out" with friends and getting drunk.

In responding to Research Question 3 inmates reported on the classroom setting in the jail. Inmates reported the lack of windows in the classroom as a negative experience. Inmates also reported they believed classrooms should be enlarged. One inmate also reported the computers were very slow and old. Several inmates did report the lack of distractions as positive- no gangs, girls, or violence was seen as helpful.

When the researcher analyzed the data for Research Question 4, the data revealed inmates responded positively to environments which controlled the distractions of their previous school experiences. Violence, drugs, and relationships with persons of the opposite sex were reported as distractions from previous experiences. The elimination of these distractions provided a setting where inmates were able to concentrate on learning.

Inmates did discuss concerns with building temperature, larger classrooms and updated equipment. Inmates reported the need to keep equipment current to maximize results. The elimination of distractions and the use of current technology would be applicable to other jail education programs.

Classes

In responding to Research Question 1 inmates discussed their classes from high school. Comments reported by inmates were generally negative about their classes. Inmates reported on teachers who didn't care if the students learned and would not listen to the concern of the classes being too hard for the student.

In responding to Research Question 2 inmates reported on classes from high school. Again the responses from inmates were generally negative. Some inmates reported they simply did not like school or anything about it. One inmate reported he was so far behind in his classes he would not have graduated his senior year so he dropped out of school.

In responding to Research Question 3 inmates discussed their classes in jail. Several inmates reported they liked having the ability to discuss subjects as they felt they learned more doing this. Other inmates reported the classes were not too hard for them. One inmate did indicate he believed more classes should be offered at the jail.

Classes offered in which inmates had the ability to offer input and ask questions were important to inmates. As students, if the inmates did not receive assistance or were categorized as non learners, they felt they were labeled. Given the opportunity to learn and respond in classes that were at their level, inmates responded favorably. It was also reported that a greater variety of classes should be offered at the jail, and there was some difficulty in learning in the class due to the various levels of students being taught. These factors should be considered and would also be applicable to other jail education programs.

The respondents provided valuable information in response to past and current educational experiences which would be applicable to other jail education programs.

Subsidiary Analysis

In this section, three additional categories of data are presented. The researcher chose to include additional categories of data that were not included in the four research questions. The data emerged as a result of the interview questions. The researcher felt the supplemental data were pertinent to the research. The interview question, "How were you spending your time between the time you left high school and when you entered this educational program? a) Attended

any educational programs? b) Attended any job training programs?" will be presented. The second category will come from the interview question, "What led you to enroll in the educational program at the jail? a) Part of a sentence given to you by a judge? b) To obtain early release from jail if you complete your G.E.D.? c) Make better use of your time? d) Better than sitting in your jail cell? e) To obtain a G.E.D.? f) Do you believe the program will help you?" The third category resulted from the interview question, "What are your educational plans when you are released? a) Will you complete your G.E.D. if you did not finish in the jail? b) Will you complete high school? c) Will you go to college?

How Were You Spending Your Time Between the Time You Left High School and When You Entered this Educational Program?

There were 14 responses to this interview question. Common responses indicated the inmates had not thought about going back to school or being too busy to go back. Several inmates reported receiving minimal training through various educational programs. Two inmates indicated they never liked school and did not consider going back. Appendix F provides a complete list of quotations from this interview question.

Examples of responses to this interview question include the following:

My jobs have kept me pretty busy.

I have had a family to take care of and no time to go back to school.

I took a computer class at Lansing Community College but it was too hard.

I had some classes at the Wayne County Jail for about 2 months.

When the researcher interviewed the inmates concerning this interview question, the inmates seemed to struggle to answer this question. It appeared the inmates had not given serious consideration about where they were in life and the time spent since high school. While each inmate was able to respond to this question, the researcher did not detect a concern from the inmates about not being in school. Several inmates sat for a few seconds before responding and some reported that their jobs had kept them busy.

Based on the responses received from the inmates the researcher believes the inmates responded to this question believing the researcher was inquiring why the inmate had not gone back to school. Several inmates answered this question in a defensive manner to include why they did not have time to go to school. In several cases it seemed clear that the inmate had not thought about going back to school.

What Led You to Enroll in the
Education Program at the Jail?

There were 13 responses to this interview question. A variety of responses were made but the major theme that emerged involved the inmates being ordered by a judge to attend or given some incentive by a judge for early release

if a G.E.D. was obtained. Several inmates reported wanting to better themselves. A complete list of the responses for these interview questions is provided in Appendix F.

Examples of what led inmates to enroll in the education program at the jail includes the following:

I was told if I got my G.E.D. in jail I could get out early.

I want a good job when I get out of jail.

My mother asked me to go so I could get my G.E.D. and then go to Lansing Community College.

I want a better life for me and my family.

In responding to this question the researcher noted the jail education program provided an opportunity for several inmates who decided to either improve themselves or improve their way of life. Not all inmates indicated that the jail education program was an opportunity for self improvement. One indicated he was ordered to attend by a judge, and a second indicated the belief that going to class was better than sitting in his room. Most inmates did indicate going to class was by choice, which the researcher interpreted as maturity on the part of the inmate.

What are Your Educational Plans
When You are Released from Jail?

There were 12 responses to this interview question. Seven of the inmates indicated they had either not given any thought to going to school upon release from jail or were not planning on going back to school. Several inmates expressed an interest in continuing their education when they were released from jail. A complete list of the responses for this interview question is provided in Appendix F.

Examples to the future educational plans of the inmates include the following:

I hope to finish high school when I get out of jail.

I want to complete my G.E.D. and maybe go to college in Lansing.

Definitely not! School is not for me.

I don't think I will go back to school when I get out of jail.

While seven of the inmates did not have plans to attend school upon being released from jail, five inmates expressed definite plans to attend school after they were released. In responding to this question, most of the inmates did indicate the school experience at the jail was beneficial to them and seemed appreciative of the teachers. The inmates who indicated they planned to continue their education after being released from jail, appeared to have matured. The researcher also detected a desire on the part of several inmates to make a commitment to make life better for themselves and in some

cases their families.

Chapter Summary

The findings of the study were presented in Chapter IV. The research questions were restated, then addressed. Subsidiary analysis were provided based on additional data obtained from the research. Beyond the responses of the inmates, additional data was stated which provided some clarification for the responses and some insight into the views on education from the inmates. Chapter V includes a summary of the results of the study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

Chapter V includes a Summary of the results of the study, conclusions, discussion of results and conclusions, implications for future research, and reflections.

Summary of Results of the Study

Research Question 1: What school related experiences do inmates report as significant in their lives?

School related experiences were reported by all twelve inmates as being significant in their lives. A total of 37 school related experiences were reported by the inmates. Experiences were identified in four categories. They were: a) experiences with teachers, b) principals, c) other students and, d) conditions of their schools. Each of the inmates identified at least one school related experience that he or she felt was significant in their lives. All but one of the inmates identified multiple experiences as significant.

Most of the school related experiences reported were perceived to have negatively impacted the educational development of the inmates.

Research Question 2: What factors or out of school experiences do inmates report as significant influences

on their school experiences?

Factors or out of school experiences were reported by all twelve inmates as having significant influences on their school experiences. A total of 75 experiences were reported by the inmates. The experiences were separated by those experiences inside the home and experiences outside the home. Experiences inside the home were identified 33 times, while experiences outside the home were identified 42 times. Experiences were then categorized as positive and negative. Of the experiences reported inside the home, six were identified as positive, while ten outside the home were identified as being positive. Only five inmates reported positive experiences inside the home. Eight of the inmates reported positive experiences outside the home. Two of the inmates did not report any positive experiences. 82% of the experiences inside the home were identified as negative experiences. 76% of the experiences outside the home were identified as negative experiences.

Single parent families and no parent families were identified as having a negative influence on the inmates school related experiences. Violence, drugs, alcohol, and gangs were also identified as negatively impacting the school experiences of the inmates. A clear majority of the experiences reported were negative and were believed to have negatively affected the inmates school experiences.

Research Question 3: What are the inmates perceptions of the educational experiences in the jail?

Perceptions of the educational experiences were reported by all 12 inmates. A total of 91 perceptions were reported by the inmates. The perceptions were categorized into three main topics: a) teachers, b) setting and, c) classes. Perceptions of teachers were identified 43 times. Perceptions of the setting were identified 28 times and perceptions of the classes were identified 20 times.

Perceptions of the educational experiences related to teachers were overwhelmingly positive. Inmates reported on the concern, knowledge, commitment, and willingness to assist the inmates, demonstrated by the teachers at the jail.

Perceptions of the educational experiences related to the classes were positive. The inmates reported enjoying the classes and the material contained in the classes. A greater variety of classes was a concern as reported by an inmate.

Perceptions of the educational experiences related to setting appeared to have a negative tone. Inmates were concerned the size of the classroom was too small, there were no windows, and equipment was outdated and in particular to computers, not always available.

In general the perceptions of the educational experiences at the jail were positive. Improvements in setting were the topic of several negative comments.

Research Question 4: What aspects of the educational experiences in the jail do inmates report as applicable to other jail education programs?

This research question was addressed in the analysis of the results of Research Questions 1, 2, and 3. Educational experiences in the jail applicable to other jail education programs were categorized in three areas: a) teachers, b) classroom setting, and c) classes.

Inmates identified experiences in Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 which would be applicable to other jail education programs. In direct response to this question, inmates provided responses which highlighted earlier answers.

Inmates indicated teachers who were willing to assist the students, provide encouragement, and generally positive in nature would provide the greatest educational opportunity for inmates. Settings which were free of distractions, controlled the students, and comfortable to work in were identified by inmates as a necessary learning environment. Classes offered which allowed the inmates the opportunity to provide input and ask questions were identified as those which should be incorporated in other jail education programs.

Subsidiary Analysis

Responses to three questions were presented as subsidiary analysis. These responses provided significant data, however

were not reported in the four research questions. The inmates responded to what they had been doing between high school and the educational program at the jail. The inmates did not appear to have given this question much thought prior to it being asked by the researcher. The inmates were also asked why they had enrolled in the educational program at the jail. The majority of inmates reported an order from a judge was the main incentive. Finally, the inmates were asked about their educational plans upon release from jail. Several inmates reported they would be continuing their education, while several others stated they had no plans for further education.

Findings

Based on the data collected and analyzed in this study, the following findings are supported and hopefully contribute to the understanding of inmates in a county jail and their educational development.

1. School related experiences were perceived to have negatively contributed significantly in the educational development of these inmates.

2. Experiences relating to teachers, principals, and other students, while attending school, were perceived to have had a negative significant impact on the educational development

of these inmates by serving as role models.

3. Poor conditions of the schools were perceived to be significant in the diminished educational process of these inmates.

4. Earlier negative experiences inside the home were perceived to be significant to the lack of educational development of these inmates.

5. Negative experiences outside the home were perceived to have been significant to the educational development of these inmates.

6. Positive experiences with teachers at the jail were perceived to be significant to the educational development of the inmates.

7. Positive experiences with classes at the jail were perceived to be significant to the educational development of the inmates.

8. Educational experiences in the jail may be applicable to other jail education programs.

9. All of the inmates interviewed appear to have specific

attitudes toward educational programs as a result of events experiences and lessons learned.

10. Having been sentenced to jail and ordered to attend classes at the jail appear to be significant in the positive educational development of the inmates.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study indicated that school related experiences, life experiences, and educational experiences at the jail affect the educational development of inmates confined to a county jail. A detailed review of the data gathered, identified various events that contributed in the educational development of the inmates. The events include experiences with teachers, principals, conditions of schools, other students, experiences inside and outside the home, and experiences with teachers, setting, and classes in the jail.

School related experiences with teachers in high school were generally reported as negative experiences. Inmates did indicate there were some teachers who were willing to assist them at times, however most of the comments relating to high school teachers indicated inmates were not satisfied with the teachers. Inmates reported about teachers who were uncaring and not interested in the growth of the inmate. One inmate reported about a teacher who called him "stupid", and others who refused to spend extra time with the inmate when

requested.

The comments about the principals were negative. Principals were reported as the person seen when an inmate was in trouble, and one principal who hit students. Some inmates reported they did not have contact with the principal.

Conditions of the schools were reported as significant factors. Of those inmates who responded in this area, most comments were negative, indicating schools were in need of repair, violence was present in the schools, and alcohol and drugs were common.

Several inmates reported on experiences with other students as significant. Inmates reported having few friends, racial discrimination, and interacting with friends who were part of gangs and generally disinterested in attending school.

Experiences both inside and outside the home were reported as significant influences on the school experiences of the inmates. Few inmates reported positive experiences from either inside or outside the home. A lack of parental guidance or encouragement was sighted by most of the inmates. Drugs, alcohol, gang violence, and low economic status was noted by numerous inmates as affecting school experiences. Inmates reported on the pressure from friends to leave school. Inmates did indicate there were some individuals who provided encouragement to continue their educational development, however negative factors outnumbered positive factors by about three to one.

Experiences with teachers at the jail were reported as having a positive influence on the inmates. Very few negative comments surfaced when speaking of teachers at the jail. Most responses indicated teachers at the jail were willing to assist the inmates as needed. Teachers at the jail provided students with the ability to succeed in class and were supportive. Inmates reported teachers at the jail worked at a pace equal to the learning ability of the inmates and were even willing to listen to other concerns addressed by inmates.

Classes at the jail also were perceived to have provided growth and development experiences for the inmates. Classes taught provide the inmates an opportunity to respond during the learning experience. Group discussions also assisted inmates in their educational development. Some inmates noted the importance of computer classes and the need to have more learning opportunities with computers.

Educational experiences at the jail were perceived to be applicable to other jail education programs. Inmates noted the educational deficiencies of previous experiences and made a comparison to those experiences that were positive. Inmates realized the need to expand on the positive experiences and attempt to eliminate the negative experiences. Teachers who were willing to work with inmates in class, control the educational environment, modern equipment, and classes which allow the inmate to interact, were perceived as important elements of a successful jail educational program.

Many of the factors or experiences reported by the inmates served as a basis for the development of specific attitudes toward educational programs. Most of the experiences of the inmates relating to school or affecting school were generally negative. Teachers, principals, classes, and classroom settings generally provided a negative foundation which affected the attitude displayed by the inmates toward educational programs. Even though positive experiences were reported with teacher and classes in the jail, years of negative attitudes toward education are there to be overcome.

The inmates talked openly about the perceptions of educational programs and seemed willing to accept the notion that many educational experiences can have a positive outcome.

The inmates did not appear to have given much thought about what they had been doing with their lives after high school and before the education program at the jail. The attendance at the jail education program, while in some cases ordered by a judge, was viewed by several inmates as a positive experience. This positive experience may be the incentive for several inmates to continue their education upon release from jail.

The information that was gathered as a result of this study sometimes fits into a pattern which can be categorized. However, the researcher feels the statements made by the inmates exists on its own merit as a quotation in a list. The

reported events experienced by the inmates increases one's understanding of the individuals who are attending educational programs at a county jail.

Implications for Future Research

The current study included detailed interviews of twelve inmates of a county jail from a stratified sample. Inmates representing male and female as well as Caucasians and minorities were included in the research. Factors and experiences were identified which were perceived to significantly influence the education experience of the inmates.

Future research could include enlarging the sample size to include a larger number of inmates from various jails throughout Michigan and the country. With a larger sample it may be possible to establish more specific patterns identified by, gender, race, economic status, and age. A larger sample would permit statistical analysis and allow for generalization of results. Similarities and differences could be determined for individual inmates and groups of inmates. However, by increasing the sample size a considerable increase in the time allowed to collect the data would be necessary to retain the comprehensiveness and depth of the study.

A qualitative study which focuses on the same topic but includes fewer inmates might provide useful insights. The

researcher might conduct numerous interviews with a few inmates. The researcher could also use extensive observations to determine if the inmate functions in the manner in which he or she describes. Data could be obtained which are very detailed and complete.

A study similar to the current study, could be conducted with a sample which is exclusively female or of ethnic minority. Both groups of individuals exist in jail populations which would make the study possible. As a result it would be interesting to learn of key factors and experiences in their lives which have significantly influenced their educational experiences.

Each of the inmates identified teachers with whom they interacted. A future study might focus on the teachers at a jail and their perceptions of the inmates in the educational program. It might be helpful to learn how teachers in jail education programs deal with the many complex issues pertaining to inmates and previous educational experiences.

Each of the inmates has a personality which affects his or her attitude toward educational programs. Assessing inmates and looking for patterns in personality type might be useful. Identifying personality traits along with experiences would provide comparison data.

Future research could include an examination of the differences in experiences and lessons learned by inmates from communities of varying sizes. Perhaps inmates from larger

cities are exposed to different experiences and factors than inmates from smaller cities.

Research which further explores the nature of and particularly the significance of the factors and experiences of the inmates might yield interesting and useful results. Such a study might attempt to determine those factors and experiences which were the most powerful in shaping the educational attitudes of the inmates.

Reflections

I wish to take this opportunity to reflect upon how I became interested in this research project, the inmates who participated in the study, the results obtained, and my personal opinions about the study.

I became interested in conducting this research after discussions with my academic advisor and reflecting on assignments completed in my adult education courses at Michigan State University. Discussions centered on the Adult Education Program at the Ingham County Correctional Facility. Further discussions began to focus on the study of selected inmates in the adult education program at the jail.

As an administrator at the Sheriff's Office in Ingham County I had the opportunity to conduct the research project. I felt the project would be interesting and would provide with me with insight into a program which operates in our building. I was pleased with the encouragement I received to conduct

this project from my guidance committee.

I conducted my research project with twelve inmates. Teachers in the education program at the jail recommended inmates who they felt would be willing to participate and would be credible respondents. I found the inmates to be very willing to participate in the study and were interesting to interview.

The research was an interesting experience for me because I had the opportunity to meet and listen to inmates who I had seen regularly but had interacted with briefly. I had the unique opportunity to listen to key factors and experiences which contributed to the educational experiences of the inmates. Occasionally I had to redirect the conversation back to the interview questions.

Throughout their responses the inmates reported a lack of support from family members. The inmates also indicated teachers and principals did not seem to be personally concerned with the educational growth of the inmates. The results of this study lead me to believe support and guidance are key elements which are necessary to insure success for any individual. One can only wonder what the fate of these inmates might have been with greater support from home, school, and community. Several inmates expressed they have benefitted from the jail education program. I believe financial support of these types of programs needs to be given a high priority if we hope to have an impact on the success

of inmates confined to county jails.

I believe the most important findings of the study were the personal experiences of the inmates, both in the school and outside the school. Further, the experiences inside the home and outside the home provided insight into the educational attitudes displayed by the inmates and the significant influences on their school experiences. It was also important to receive information on the perceptions of the educational experiences in the jail education program. The study provided an opportunity to gather data which could be applicable to other jail education programs.

Overall, I was very pleased with the study. There were times when the amount of time needed to complete an interview was problematic for me, but I appreciated the opportunity to meet with the inmates and becoming familiar with their various educational and life experiences. I believe that administrators of any sheriff's office, and teachers of education programs in jails would benefit by becoming familiar with the data obtained in the study. Finally, I am truly grateful to the inmates who participated in this research project and their open and honest responses.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Informed Written Consent Form

Informed Written Consent Form

Matthew Myers requests your permission to participate in the study, "Educational and Life Experiences as Reported by Inmates Confined to a County Jail"

The Study is Designed to investigate the life experiences of inmates who are participating in the "Adult Education Program" at the Ingham County Correctional Facility and to investigate the educational experiences as seen by the inmates. Those who agree to participate will be asked to discuss their life and education in three interviews with the researcher.

If there are any questions or concerns by participants about the study, contact - Matthew Myers. phone number 517-676-8201

Informed Written Consent

I voluntarily agree to participate in the study as presented in the above paragraph. I understand that my identity and the identity of schools I attended will not be disclosed. I understand that Matthew Myers will be the only person who has access to the tapes and written notes of our interview, and that the tapes and written notes will be destroyed after completion of the data analysis. I also understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I understand the total amount of time required to participate in this study will be three, one hour interview sessions.

_____ I give my consent to participate in the study.

Signature of inmate

date

APPENDIX B

The Interview Questions

The Interview Questions

1. What is your current educational level?
 - a) How far did you go in school?
2. What led you to leave school?
 - a) Did you drop out?
 - b) Were you expelled?
3. How would you describe your school experiences?
 - a) Which teachers did you like and why?
 - 1) What kinds of things did they do?
 - 2) Why did you like them?
4. Do you believe you were successful in school?
 - a) Did you make good grades?
 - b) Did you have problems with teachers?
 - c) Did you have problems with counselors, assistant principals, or principals?
 - d) Did you have problems with other students?
 - e) If you had problems when did they occur?
5. What led to your leaving and not completing high school?
6. After you left high school, did you ever consider going back to high school, or attending alternative education programs, or adult education programs?
 - a) Why?
 - b) Why not?
7. Were there people that affected your decision...?

- a) to drop out
 - b) to return
 - c) not to return
 - d) Who were they?
8. Were there things that teachers, counselors and principals could have done to help you stay in school?
- a) Spend more time with you?
 - b) Listen to you?
 - c) Talk to you more?
 - d) Been more fair with you?
9. What led you to enroll in the education program at the jail?
- a) Part of a sentence given to you by a judge?
 - b) To obtain early release from jail if you complete your G.E.D.?
 - c) Make better use of your time?
 - d) Better than sitting in your jail cell?
 - e) To obtain a G.E.D.?
 - f) Do you believe the program will help you?
10. How were you spending your time between the time you left high school and when you entered this educational program?
- a) Have you attended any educational programs?
 - b) Have you attended any job training programs?
11. Tell me about the educational program here?

- a) What do you think of the teachers?
- b) What do you think of the courses?
- 12. Tell me about the differences between high school and the jail educational program.
 - a) the setting
 - b) the teachers
 - 1) the style of the teachers
 - c) type of instruction
 - d) What did you like in either or both?
- 13. Could you tell me about some of your successes in the educational program at the jail.
 - a) Have there been any less successful experiences in the jail.
- 14. What are you educational plans when you are released from jail?
 - a) Will you complete you G.E.D. if you did not finish in the jail?
 - b) Will you complete high school?
 - c) Will you go to college?
- 15. Do you think there are things you could or should have done differently in high school?
 - a) If so, what are they?
 - b) Do you think you could have completed high school?
- 16. What particular things are done in the jail program

which are particularly helpful....?

a) to you

b) to other inmates

APPENDIX C

Letter of Appreciation

Date

Name

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear _____:

Thank you for allowing me to interview you for my study regarding inmates life and educational experiences. I appreciated your honest and sincere responses.

I will be completing the data collection portion of my study in July. I hope to have the summary of the studies' findings completed by August or September. If you are interested I will be happy to send you a copy of the summary at that time.

I enjoyed our interviews and found them to be very interesting. I hope you enjoyed the experience as well.

Thank you once again.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Myers

APPENDIX D

Responses to Interview Questions Regarding School Experiences

RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS REGARDING SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Experiences with Teachers

I tried to tell my teachers my classes were too hard but they didn't listen.

Most of my Teachers looked at their job as a paycheck and did not care about the students.

I had a teacher that called me "stupid" and told me I would never learn.

I had teachers that would never spend extra time helping me if I didn't understand.

Teachers would let the students run the class and there was no control in the classroom.

I had some teachers that cared but many of me teachers didn't care very much. (2 responses)

Most of my teachers didn't even know my name.

My teachers just did their job- nothing more.

I didn't like school much so I guess I didn't think too much of my teachers either.

Experiences with High School Principals

We only saw the principal when someone got in trouble.

The principal would hit kids who were in trouble. We knew it was wrong, but we were afraid to tell anyone.

My principal told my friend he should leave school before he got kicked out.

I never knew who the principal was. (3 responses)

I didn't like our principal. All he ever did was go around our school yelling at the kids.

I guess our principal was o.k. I didn't know him very well.

Experiences with the Conditions or the School

The building was always too hot or too cold.

Gangs roamed the hallways in the schools and nobody controlled the gangs.

There was too much violence in our school and I was always afraid.

Our school was old and run down. I told this to our principal one day, and he said there was nothing he could do about it.

The food they served was bad.

Drugs and alcohol were being used in the school and all around the building. Kids would sit in class and were "stoned" and drunk.

Guns and knives were carried by many students and all everyone was afraid. A friend of mine was shot during gym class.

Our school was o.k. I don't think the building was the problem.

Our school was very old and needed repairs.

Our school must have been bad they tore it down two years after I dropped out.

Our school was too small for the number of students we had. All of the classes were crowded.

Experiences with Other Students

I did not have any friends in school. Other students made fun of me.

In our school unless you belonged to a gang, you had no friends.

I was one of only a few Hispanics in our school and other students made fun of me and called me names.

I had some really cool friends in school and they were more important than my classes.

My friends and I skipped school all the time, just to hang out together.

Many of the students in our school were always trying to prove how tough they were.

I kept to myself much of the time and I guess I didn't have many friends.

. I had some friends I liked to hang with but they didn't like school either.

I had one friend who was a very good student but he moved away and I got in with some bad kids.

APPENDIX E

**Responses to Interview Questions
Regarding Experiences that Influenced School Experiences**

**RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS REGARDING EXPERIENCES THAT
INFLUENCED SCHOOL EXPERIENCES**

Experiences Inside the Home

My father did not live at home. (6 responses)

I did not live with my parents. I lived with my aunt.

My father was an alcoholic and was abusive toward my mother and the children.

My father was arrested for selling drugs, and drugs were frequently used in our house by my father, mother and their friends.

There were eight children and our parents living in our and it was very difficult to study.

My mother was very helpful to me and encouraged me to go to school and do well. (3 responses)

I lived with my grandmother and she was always willing help the children with their school work.

There was never anyone at home to help me or encourage me to go to school. (2 responses)

My mother worked three jobs and was rarely home.

My mother was only interested in her boyfriends.

I was an only child and had no friends to play with.

I was embarrassed to go to school because of the clothes I had.

I needed glasses, but my mother told me we could not afford to buy them.

I needed to work to bring money home for the family. My father was gone and my mother raised the other children. (2 responses)

My father always told me it was important to get a good education.

I had an older brother that went to college and my parents told me I should be like my brother.

We lived in a bad neighborhood and I was afraid to leave our apartment. (2 responses)

My father never went to work so I figured I didn't have to go to school. I pretended I was sick just like my dad.

My father always told me I was stupid so one day I decided there was no need to go to school.

I needed to stay home and take care of my brothers and sisters.

My older brother helped me with my homework and always told me to stay in school.

My mother didn't make me go to school so I quit.

Experiences Outside the Home

I became pregnant in the eleventh grade and dropped out of school.

Many of my friends were dropping out of school and I wanted to be with my friends. (6 responses)

I was kicked out of school for fighting.

I was kicked out of school after I was arrested for selling marijuana in the school parking lot.

I did not like school or anything about it. (2 responses)

I often spoke with a priest in our church who always told me to stay in school.

Girls were important to me and I didn't have time to mess with school.

I was too busy selling drugs and stealing to be bothered with school.

I wanted to be a member of these gang and you had to drop out of school to join.

My boyfriend wanted me to quit school. At the time I thought he was more important than school

I was always getting "high" so I decided school was not for me.

I was sos far behind in my classes I would not have graduated my senior year, so I quit. (2 responses)

My boss at the grocery store told me I should stay in school and was always telling me to do the right thing.

I had more fun hanging out with friends and getting drunk all the time.

There was so much violence near our school I was afraid to walk on the streets.

Me and some friends got caught breaking into a house and I went to jail. I never went back to school when I got out of jail.

I had a friend that was so smart and he told me to stay in school. The next year his family moved away and I got in with some bad kids.

I thought it was "bad" to leave school.

I was sent to prison at 17 years old. (refused to say why) I got out of prison after two years but never went back to high school.

A retired teacher down the street would always talk to the kids in the neighborhood and tell us how important it was to finish high school.

I had more fun hanging out at the malls and playing video games.

My girlfriend kept putting pressure on me to be with her during the day.

I didn't like walking to school during the winter, it was too cold.

Some friends told me I should stay in school. (3 responses)

My godfather told me school would be the only way I would go to college.

I ran away from home several times, the last time a cop picked me up and told me I should stay in school. I stayed at home and in school for two more years.

I had one very cool girlfriend who was smart and kept me going to school while we were dating.

None of the people I knew in the neighborhood finished high school. (2 responses)

I like cruising around in my car.

I knew I wouldn't go to college so I figured high school wouldn't be important either.

One of my friends was killed on his way to school arguing about a girl. I quit soon after that.

In tenth grade I broke my leg and stayed home for two weeks. After I went back I decided school was not worth the effort of getting around with a broken leg.

APPENDIX F

Responses to Three Interview Questions:

How Were You Spending Your Time Between the Time You Left
High School and When You Entered the Education Program?

What Led You to Enrol in the Education
Program at the Jail?

What are Your Educational Plans When
You are Released from Jail?

RESPONSES TO THREE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How Were You Spending Your Time Between the Time You Left High School and When You Entered the Education Program?

The 12 inmates provided 14 responses to this question.

My jobs have kept me pretty busy.

Not much, I spent some time in prison and when I got out I never went back to school.

This is the first class I had since I dropped out of high school.

Hanging out mostly, school has not been part of me for over 10 years.

I had some classes at Wayne County Jail for about 2 months.

I went to night school for about 6 months.

I never liked school so I never went back. (2 responses)

I never thought about going back to school until I went to jail.

I have been too busy working to go back to high school. (2 responses)

I have had a family to take care of and no time to go back to school.

I took a computer class at Lansing Community College, but it was too hard.

I haven't gone back to school - mostly working.

What Led You to Enroll in the Education Program at the Jail?

The 12 inmates provided 13 responses to this question.

A judge ordered me to attend. (2 responses)

I was told if I got my G.E.D. in jail I could get out early. (3 responses)

I am getting tired of getting locked up. I want to get a job when I get out.

This is better than sitting in my room.

I want a better life for me and for my family.

I want a good job when I get out of jail. (3 responses)

I was told the classes were not like high school.

My mother asked me to go so I could get my G.E.D. and then go to Lansing Community College.

What are Your Educational Plans When You are Released From Jail?

The 12 inmates provided 12 responses to this question.

I really didn't think about it. (3 responses)

I don't think I will go back to school when I get out of jail.

Definitely not! School is not for me.

I want to complete my G.E.D. and maybe go to college in Lansing. (3 responses)

I will get out in one month and will go to night school to complete high school - maybe college after that.

I hope to finish high school when I get out of jail.

I should have my G.E.D. when I get out - no plans after that. (2 responses)

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