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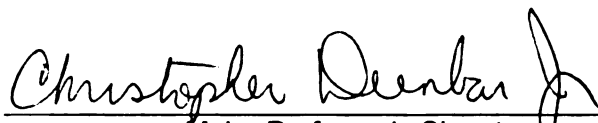## Vincent James Dean

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THE EXPERIENCE OF RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES IN A
JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY

By

Vincent James Dean

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

THE EXPERIENCE OF RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES IN A JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY

By

Vincent James Dean

The experience of receiving special education services within a juvenile detention facility was investigated. Interviews conducted with six students and six staff members were analyzed along with record reviews and observations. The results indicated that while special education services look different in the detention facility visited, the experience was a positive one in regard to emphasis on education, developing relationships with adults, and meeting health and safety needs of students. Recommendations included developing stronger, more efficient means of communication and improving assessment practices.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the present study was to answer questions regarding the educational experiences of juvenile delinquents who had been identified as disabled within the context of a detention facility. Specifically, I was interested in determining: *What were the experiences of special education eligible youths in a juvenile detention facility, and what consideration had been given to individual disabilities?*

Following this question a list of narrower ones were developed, that were intended to form interview protocols used to seek an understanding of this phenomenon. Interview responses were supplemented with observations, reviewing the literature, and examinations of records. The list was as follows:

- To what did incarcerated juveniles attribute their current status/situation?

- Did due process rights and protections under IDEA 1997 clash with the idea of placing students in a facility without consideration of disability?

- How proficiently were disabled, incarcerated youth able to discuss the implications of their disabling condition?

- What data was available that documented the impact for students who had served time in a detention facility?

- How was special education at a detention facility different from that in a public school?

- How adequately were special education service needs addressed in a detention facility?

- What programs and services were available, and what were the treatment foci in the hopes of preventing recidivism?

- What did having a disability and trying to get an education mean in a detention facility?

The purpose of the study was to find these answers by exploring what the experiences of adjudicated juveniles with disabilities were, primarily within the environment of a classroom in a juvenile detention facility. Interviewing students and staff at the facility was the primary means of data collection. Gathering information directly from the participants of the experience provided accounts that have been largely overlooked in the literature, as noted by the President's report from the National Council on Disability's (NCD) submitted in 2003, a document further explored in the review of literature.

In the state of Michigan, many youths who have committed a crime are placed in a detention facility that is responsible for continuing their education; with sentences of variable duration. Within Angel County, the primary placement meeting those needs is Camp Haven, which houses the Woods School. The names of the county, facility, and the school have been changed for purposes of confidentiality. This institution has forty-eight beds, and a full complement of teachers, support personnel, and administrators.

Statement of Problem

The study examined the situation of youths classified as both juvenile delinquent and disabled who received special education services in a detention facility. Research has strongly suggested that juvenile detention facilities often do not have adequate assessment practices, treatment programs, or personnel who are appropriately trained

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(Howell and Wolford 2002; Garfinkel et. al., 1997). This lack of proper resources may make recidivism more likely, and appropriate, individualized services based on the juvenile's disability difficult to provide. The definition provided by the federal Juvenile Delinquency Act of 1974 to describe these minors states, "A juvenile delinquent is a person under the age of eighteen who commits an act that would be a violation of United States law if committed by an adult" (Martin, 2002, p. 79). Students with disabilities are over-represented within the juvenile justice system and delinquent population. For the purpose of this study, having a disability meant that the youth had been found eligible for special education services under the federal Individual's with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Leone, et al., (1995) found that as many as 70% of confined youth may have some form of disabling condition. Manifested disorders include learning and emotional disabilities, attention deficit disorder, depression, and cognitive impairment. Additionally, these conditions often presented with a high degree of co-morbidity, further handicapping many juvenile offenders. Due to the co-morbid aspect, a relatively high number of these youths were eligible for services under more than one IDEA classification. For these students, the lack of appropriate staff training and resources had even more serious ramifications.

Participant and Site Selection

I became well acquainted with a special education teacher at Camp Haven, a juvenile detention facility that houses juveniles from urban areas around the state in addition to Angel County. Over the past four years, we have had numerous conversations regarding the challenges and joys inherent in her position. From these discussions, I

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learned that half of the beds in the facility are reserved for delinquents who come from the same county where I have been a practicing school psychologist for the past four years. I chose this facility for several other reasons. I was highly interested in educational programming for students with significantly disabling conditions. A key component of this is the application of proper assessment techniques to students in order to accurately identify their unique challenges, and also to guide their educational and mental health services. Through my school psychologist training and other areas of research interest, I considered assessment to be an area of personal expertise. Another reason was that I am quite familiar with the delivery of special education services to students in the public school systems of this county, and was intrigued by the idea that they might be quite different in the setting of a detention facility.

I was interested in getting a picture from several perspectives of what it meant to have a disability and be a juvenile delinquent. My primary participants were six juveniles with a variety of disabilities, but I also sought an understanding of the experiences and perceptions of staff, including counselors, teachers, administrators, and officers of the court. This provided me with a wide array of perspectives that I explored and compared in detail during the data analysis phase of the study. The facility itself had forty-eight beds, and had always been filled to capacity or nearly so since opening. Half of the students were sentenced to short-term incarceration of not more than ninety calendar days, and the long-term sentences ranged from eight to possibly more than eighteen months in duration. The age of the delinquents ranged from twelve to eighteen. They had been placed in the facility for offences ranging from assault to truancy. The

special education classroom that was the fulcrum of this study contained both short and long-term students throughout each day.

Methodology and Theoretical Perspective

I intended to explore my research questions through the use of a qualitative research design, which has become an increasingly acceptable means of inquiry in the field of special education (Bogdan & Lutfiyya, 1996). I utilized a psychological phenomenological approach, through interviews, observations, and reviews of documentation as my tools of inquiry. This method allowed me to interpret and draw conclusions about the experiences of disabled juvenile delinquents.

Viewing any research experience through a theoretical lens was an important means of guiding the inquiry, in that it provided a lexicon with which to describe what was observed. For this study, I chose to apply a social learning perspective from the field of psychological personality development. This theory dealt with what factors individuals, in their interactions with other people and their environment, attributed positive or negative events. I believed that this theory would assist in shedding light on the experiences of these youths and staff in a manner and with a language that had not previously been applied to this population.

This theoretical perspective applied within a qualitative paradigm helped address some areas of need identified by the NCD report, and some areas which, based on my review of the literature, I believed the report did not call for strongly enough. The authors of this document called for a significant increase in the amount of research in this field, but appeared to primarily address policy, law, and programming factors. These things were critical in developing a consistent, useful infrastructure for disabled youths, but I

was interested in looking at more intra-personal factors. I believed examining the experiences of students and practitioners could provide useful information in developing more comprehensive policy initiatives, in that it could provide guidance for the types of guidelines might find acceptance at the level of the individual.

Significance of Study

The proposed study was designed to provide insight into the experiences of adjudicated youths with disabilities in a way that had not been addressed in the research literature. Using the gathered data, I attempted to understand what it meant to have a disability which significantly impacts one's capacity to learn, and be sentenced to a facility for juvenile delinquents. From this inquiry, I learned how well informed students are regarding their condition and circumstances. For example, most were unable to express what impact their disability might have on their progress in school.

Summary

In the present study, I interviewed six students and six staff members in a juvenile detention facility. The students were selected based on variety of disability and duration of sentence to provide as wide an array of student experience as possible. The students were observed in their primary classroom, and in other daily interactions within the facility. The interview data was transcribed, coded, analyzed, and triangulated with observations and reviews of student records. Common themes and experiences were described, as well as findings that are divergent from previously discovered patterns.

Chapter Contents

In Chapter II, a brief history of how the juvenile justice system in the United States came to look as it does today is presented. This history was developed with some consideration of how education has been incorporated into the remediation of delinquency. The second component discussed some of the important due process issues involved with delinquent adjudication, and how those rights are presently observed. The next section discussed characteristics which have been found to serve as predictors or risk factors for at-risk youth. Two subsections of this heading dealt with prevalence of disabled youth and to a lesser extent minority youth, as they were both groups of juveniles who have been significantly over-represented.

These pieces were followed by information regarding how education has been delivered in the juvenile justice system. Next, a summary of how important consideration of disability is for disabled youth is followed by a look at treatment strategies and recommendations from the literature on how to reduce recidivism were presented. The last section provided some details into the current state of the research on disabled juvenile delinquents and concludes with a brief summary.

In Chapter III, I discussed further how I explored my research questions through the use of a qualitative research design. In the following pages, I elucidated further why this methodology was chosen. First, I described the specific qualitative perspective I have selected, phenomenology. Next, I described how social attribution theory provided a framework by which the research questions were developed into a means of collecting data and guiding my analysis. This was followed by a section

providing specific information about what data was collected and by what manner. I concluded this section by describing how the data was analyzed.

Chapter IV consisted of a detailed description of the research site and participants. I began with describing Camp Haven and the Woods School, as giving the reader a rich depiction of the environment of the participants is called for by the chosen methodology. That was followed by a section describing the primary programs and services available at the facility. The third section is a narrative presentation of observations within the classroom. Next is a brief overview of the staff interviewees, where I described them for the reader to further understand the experience of the students at Haven. The final portion of Chapter IV was an introduction to the six student interviewees. I included information taken from their school and court records, all of which was found on-site.

In Chapter V I presented the results gleaned from analysis of the data. The data was organized into six themes based on what I believed were important aspects of the educational experience of these juveniles. The themes included what I learned about the design of Haven's programming, how special education is structured in the facility, and how students there had certain needs met that most public school children took for granted.

Finally, Chapter VI consists of the culmination of the study. The first section reviewed my goals for the study. Second, I described what I learned and how this meshed with the literature presented in Chapter II. These lessons are followed by recommendations for providing services to this population based on what I learned, and directions for future research. Below, I have included a list of acronyms that commonly appear throughout the following chapters.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

Special Education
MET-Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team
IEP-Individualized Education Plan
CI-Cognitively Impaired
EI-Emotionally Impaired
LD-Learning Disabled
SLI-Speech and Language Impaired
OHI-Otherwise Health Impaired
IDEA-Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Staff Interviewees
Classroom Teacher-CT
School Principal-SP
School Social Worker-SW
Probation Officer-PO
Family Counselor-FC
Residential Director-RD

Interviewer
Vince Dean-VD

START-STabilization, Assessment, Reintegration, and Treatment
LABS-Learning, Accepting, Building, Sharing (Camp behavior management level system)

Literature Review

History of Juvenile Adjudication and Education in the U.S.

Juvenile delinquency has been a phenomena present in our society since its inception. In Colonial America, education and apprenticeship systems were the main tools used to control delinquency (Clement, 1993). Olson-Raymer (1993) noted that starting in the 1600's Puritanical ideas (strong, moral adult examples, punishment for transgressions, responsibility for one's actions) guiding the roles held by families, religion, and communities for the raising of children played a key role in how the juvenile justice system was developed in this country. Little changed until the 1820's, when some cities on the eastern coast of the United States established institutions to combat the rising tide of delinquency that accompanied an influx of immigrant and rural young people seeking employment. These places were often built, "in anticipation of an increase in juvenile delinquency rather than in response to already existing juvenile crime" (Clement, p. 463). They often served children who had no other place to live in addition to juveniles who had committed a crime. This development also marked a shift from punishment and sentencing for juveniles as if they were adults towards, "...recognizing the special needs of youths to be saved and reformed" (Olson-Raymer, p. 493).

Clement also documented an evolution in what these facilities were named through the 19th century: "First, United States asylums for juvenile delinquents were called houses of refuge, then reform schools, training schools, vocational or industrial schools, and eventually, just schools" (p. 469). Krisberg (1996) reported that by 1876

there were fifty-one reform schools nationwide, and they continued to spread quickly, albeit significantly slower through the South.

The student population was different in these reform schools as opposed to the public school system. The adjudicated youths were typically older, described as resistant to instruction, attended these schools for a shorter period of time than they would have attended a public school, and had a greater emphasis placed on learning a trade as opposed to reading and writing. The students in reform schools spent the better part of each day working for contractors and were not paid. A few changes occurred near the end of the 19th century. As the demand for labor (in particular farm workers) declined with the rise of industrialization and wage labor, juveniles remained in the institutions longer, vocational programs were improved, and most youths were sent home to their families after being released (Clement, 1993).

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court, in 1838, established that individual states had the right to take children from their families and place them in institutions (Granello & Hanna, 2003). In 1899, Illinois became the first state to design and implement statutes which differentiated how the criminal justice system would deal with minors as opposed to adults (Martin, 2002). This system was designed to be less formal than adult justice operations and meet the needs of juveniles from a treatment perspective as opposed to a punitive one designed around delivering and enforcing punishment. The goal of all early juvenile justice systems was to create a paternalistic atmosphere, where everyone involved was working to help each child (Williams, 1999). Another interesting concept was the idea that the length of sentence would be open-ended in order to allow state

officials who knew and worked with the delinquent to decide when they were ready for release (Olson-Raymer, 1993).

The federal government passed the Juvenile Delinquency Act of 1974 in an effort to meet the needs of minors who committed crimes. The Act provided a working definition to describe these minors, stating, "A juvenile delinquent is a person under the age of eighteen who commits an act that would be a violation of United States law if committed by an adult" (Martin, 2002, p. 79). It also established the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to oversee delinquency regulations, recommend alternatives to incarceration, and establish standards for promoting the consistent administration of juvenile justice nationwide (Olson-Raymer, 1993). This organization has supported research into best practices for remanded juveniles, including those with disabilities.

In the 1980's, despite a large increase in expenditures on juvenile justice and reform efforts, it became increasingly evident that juvenile crime rates and recidivism were not abating. Since then, the juvenile justice system has become increasingly punitive and more concerned with protecting the public, and less emphasis has been placed on rehabilitation (Krisberg, 1996; Sullivan, 1996; Olson-Raymer, 1993); Krisberg noted that in 1995 alone, over 700 bills were introduced in state legislature to transfer more juvenile delinquents to adult prisons, and Sullivan wrote that a societal demand has emerged, in response to juvenile crime, for more secure juvenile facilities.

Another fairly recent development that has impacted how juvenile offenders are treated has been the implementation of zero tolerance policies. These are designed to be one method of providing a safe school environment by perpetuating an atmosphere where

violence of any sort is not endured by staff or students. There is some concern in the literature, however, regarding the impact that such unbending strategies may have on a student's rights under the Constitution of the United States (*Ratner v. Loudoun County Public Schools*, 2001). Specifically, the concept of due process under the law and potential violation of this protection has come under scrutiny as examples of students being removed from school begin to mount (Martin, 2001).

Presently, over 125,000 juveniles are in custody and serving time in almost 3,500 correctional facilities in the U.S. (Snyder, 1998). In 1993, nearly one-third of arrests for major crimes had a juvenile participant (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). In 1997, this equated to 2,838,000 juvenile arrests, or just over 9% of the U.S. population whose age falls between 10 and 17 (Osher, et al., 2002). The facilities housing these youths range from day-treatment to settings very much like adult prisons and may be publicly or privately owned and operated.

Due Process and Adjudication

Special education students do not fall under the same discipline guidelines as students without disabilities. These students have certain federal due process protections that should supercede zero tolerance policies and other discipline practices; however, some students still end up in detention facilities with little or no consideration of their disability. The line where educational protections for special education students falls in the adjudication process is not clear.

The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees equal protection and due process under the law; however, this guarantee has not always been provided to juveniles. Williams (1999) noted that the result of refraining from the development of

the traditional, adversarial legal proceedings of adult courts led to juveniles having fewer legal rights. Olson-Raymer (1993) documented three court cases between 1905 and 1964 establishing that juveniles were not entitled to the same constitutional due process protections or procedural safeguards as adults who were on trial for criminal offenses. This was changed in 1967, and through two subsequent cases in 1970 and 1974, when the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that juveniles should have Fourteenth Amendment and Bill of Rights protections. These rights, previously not held by delinquents include: (1) Notice provided to juveniles and parents of specific charges; (2) the right to counsel; (3) protection against self-incrimination; (4) the right to confront and cross-examine a witness; (5) protection from double jeopardy; (6) and the idea that a classification of delinquency must come from proof beyond a reasonable doubt as opposed to the lesser burden of a preponderance of evidence.

Some zero tolerance opponents argue that these types of broad policies do not allow for consideration of the unique circumstances involved in each apparent violation (Ratner v. Loudoun County Public Schools, 2001). This argument may be particularly salient in Michigan, as the zero tolerance policies in this state contain no provisions for the guarantee of due process (Polakow-Suransky, 1999). Since zero tolerance practices differ by location, it is likely that the due process protections vary as well. The literature appears to contain significantly fewer resources that include a consideration of due process in the context of zero tolerance. Many scholars who broach the topic of due process are concerned with special education rather than school violence.

Authors who have addressed the legal issues involved with zero-tolerance policies noted that there are many levels of security involved in the school setting, including zero

tolerance, and that school districts may need a significant amount of guidance in formulating legally correct policies (Yell & Rozalski, 2000). More philosophical authors have contended that the idea of justice itself is not well served from zero tolerance policies, as it removes the concept of having the punishment fitting the crime (Kauffman & Brigham, 2000). They further stated, "Zero tolerance is often implemented clumsily, vindictively, and with horrendous results that undermine social justice" (p. 277).

Types of research on due process seem to be somewhat more limited. The literature contains some articles that look at how courts have interpreted and applied zero tolerance in the context of school violence Zirkel, 1999; Zirkel & Gluckman, 1997). Others have explored the dilemma in how schools, while legally obligated to provide a safe educational environment, may tread on students' constitutional rights of free expression, searches and seizures, and due process (McCarthy & Webb, 2000). At the time of the present literature search, there appeared to be no references that included any sort of quantitative analysis of due process protection policies across states or local agencies.

Garfinkel et al. (1997) noted that under the 1997 re-authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that, "…in any instance the provision of special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities requires the full implementation of all substantive and procedural requirements set forth in IDEA" (p. 41). This statement suggests that any discipline procedures conducted with disabled students should contain full consideration of the disability. Burrell and Warboys (2000) wrote that releasing a juvenile from custody might in some cases be appropriate to

maintain the delivery of appropriate special education services. Many detention facilities may not be able to meet the needs of a significant portion of their population.

The literature cited above is useful in exploring what research problems exist between due process rights, adjudication, and examples such as zero tolerance policy. Some authors seem to agree that while zero tolerance may tread on constitutional rights, it is a necessary evil for maintaining a safe school environment. The problem is that there is little research exploring the after-effects of the lack of due process for students who have been adjudicated. A qualitative analysis based on interviews of students who have been placed in a detention setting could shed some light on their feelings of self-efficacy after going through that type of experience, for example. If practices such as zero tolerance policies could be shown to have serious long-term, detrimental effects, then support for modifying them to better secure individual rights could be mustered.

Characteristics of Juvenile Delinquents

Scott, Nelson, and Liaupsin (2001) conducted a manner of qualitative meta-analysis where they summarized and compared interview data from other studies dealing with administrators, teachers and students. They concluded that violent behavior can many times be traced to academic failure, and recommend that any school violence prevention efforts contain a push for more effective instruction. Natalucci-Persichetti (1996) summarized several well-documented characteristics of juveniles likely to commit violent offenses. These factors included (1) less attachment to parents, teachers, and school; (2) higher likelihood of having delinquent peers; (3) more likely to live in impoverished areas with higher rates of crime; (4) more likely to engage in physical fighting, and (5) at greater risk for experiencing childhood abuse and neglect.

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Bullying, or engaging in the victimizing of others, has also been identified as a risk factor for many juvenile offenders (Palmer & Farmer, 2002). Herrera and McCloskey (2001) found that children who were exposed to marital violence were at a significantly higher risk for later referral to juvenile court. Johnson (1999) wrote that characteristics of juveniles sentenced in public facilities include low academic skill, come from racially isolated areas, and have a learning or mental disability. Archwamety and Katsiyannis (2000) also noted the correlation between low academic achievement and delinquency, in addition to substance abuse and early pregnancy.

Morrison and D'Incau (1997) have looked at the individual characteristics of students who have been expelled from school based on zero-tolerance policies. They found that most students who were expelled had not demonstrated a pattern of behavior that would generally be considered dangerous, and that a higher than expected percentage of the cases were students who had been identified as eligible for special education services. Zabel and Nigro (2001) examined the scores of 130 adjudicated adolescents in reading, language, and math, and found that students who had a special education designation generally scored lower. Vavrus and Cole (2002) looked at teacher suspensions based on zero-tolerance policies and concluded that removing students is often a very subjective decision. They further stated that subtle gender and racial interaction provides a context for student discipline that practices like zero-tolerance cannot adequately address.

Huizinga, Loeber, Thornberry, and Cothern (2000) presented the results from a study called the Program of Research on Causes and Correlates of Delinquency. They suggested that while problems in school, drug use, and mental health status are

significant risk factors, many serious delinquent offenders have not had a history of serious drug use or persistent school and mental health challenges. The authors suggest that treatment foci should be individualized to the unique needs of offenders. Two specific sub-groups appear to be particularly over-represented in the juvenile justice system. These categories are youth with disabilities and those of minority status.

Prevalence of Disabilities

In the United States, the number of school-age students classified as disabled is approximately 9% (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). This percentage is dramatically higher within the population of children classified as juvenile delinquent. While there is some variability in the literature regarding the percentage of adjudicated youth who have disabilities, all agree that it is substantially higher than within the public school system. The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2000) has estimated that between 50% and 75% of youth in detention facilities have serious mental health problems. Leone, et al., (1995) found that as many as 70% of confined youth may have a disability. Rogers, Pumariega, and Cuffe (2001) found in their study of 240 court-involved youth that 69% of incarcerated youth and 96% of juveniles who were referred by a court for mental health evaluation met criteria for a psychiatric diagnosis.

The results of a national survey of state agencies and both public and private detention facilities conducted by Quinn, Rutherford, & Leone (2001) suggested that 32% of youth in the juvenile court system have a disability. In addition, juveniles with emotional or learning disabilities were more likely to be placed in adult or juvenile correction facilities than peers without disabilities. Most respondents to the survey indicated that they were prepared to identify youth with disabilities. These authors

suggested that disabled youth, "...may be more vulnerable to involvement in the juvenile or criminal justice system when poorly developed reasoning ability, inappropriate affect, and inattention are misinterpreted by professionals as hostility, lack of cooperation, and other inappropriate responses" (p. 4).

The most prevalent types of disabilities that comprise this over-representation are emotional impairments or disturbances, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, learning disabilities, and mild cognitive impairment (Rutherford, Bullis, Anderson, & Griller, 2000). These students may have challenges understanding social cues and rules, with impulse control, and regulating their emotional responses or behavior. With the current trend away from rehabilitation towards increasingly punitive sentencing, youth with disabilities may be at higher risk now than ever before.

Minority Status

While juveniles of minority status are not the focus of this paper, some parallels can be drawn between them and children with disabilities. Incarcerated minority youth have a significantly higher literature base from which to draw, which may be of assistance when considering how best to serve other groups who are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system. Poe-Yamagata and Jones (2000) suggested that minority over-representation in the juvenile system appears to be a result of actions early in the system, such as arrests. For example, African-American youth were over-represented in records for 26 out of 29 crime classifications kept by the Federal Bureau of Investigations. Additionally, more minority youth are incarcerated after court proceedings than Caucasian offenders.

Rogers, Pumariega, and Cuffe (2001) noted that Caucasian youth were referred for mental health evaluation and services significantly more often then were African-American juveniles. Taking the above information into account, minority youth who have a disabling condition may be at a substantially higher risk for juvenile incarceration than their peers. This combination of risk factors is supported by other research in special education, which suggests that minority students are more likely to receive a special education classification in the first place.

Special Education Within the Juvenile Justice System

Johnson (1999) wrote that while education is not a specified, constitutional right, the court system has consistently ruled that in states where compulsory school attendance is the law, incarcerated juveniles must have educational programming available. Quinn, Rutherford, & Leone (2001) found in their survey that 84% of youth in short-term facilities were involved in an education program as opposed to 48% of juveniles in long-term facilities, and only 29% of youth who have been sentenced to adult prisons.

Garfinkel et.al., (1997) noted that the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has found that most juvenile detention facilities do not provide the necessary health or mental health services that they are required to supply by IDEA, Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and state laws. Federal law continues to define special education as specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability (Pub. L. No. 105-17 § 602, 111 Stat. 45-46, 1997). Disabled youth are entitled to special instruction and any related services which are needed for the student to benefit from it. This problem is further compounded by Quinn, Rutherford, & Leone's finding that only 17% of the teaching

staff in the facilities who responded to their survey were fully certified special education teachers. Counseling and speech and language services were the most commonly offered types of individualized service.

Howell and Wolford (2002) described a few common practices regarding the delivery of special education services in detention facilities. They found that areas where significant improvement was needed included using instructional time to provide a variety of opportunities to learn, evaluations of student progress that did not match consequent instruction, teachers and other staff did not have adequate supervision or support, and not enough classroom time being provided to meet the goals of the IEP.

There have been some efforts to improve the quality of education within this system. Brooks and White (1999), in conjunction with the National Juvenile Detention Association (NJDA) and the OJJDP, developed a curriculum for training staff working in detention facilities. It was designed to help teachers identify the needs of their students, to improve behavior management skills, and to promote the development of students' social skills. Muse (2001) examined the benefits of teaching to individual learning styles in residential facilities for delinquents, but did not find that this type of instructional differentiation had significant benefits.

Larson and Turner (2002) noted that at least one state (Nebraska) has developed a specific plan to address the needs of students with developmental disabilities, including significant transition, community, and due process considerations. Recommendations included individualized, team planning as a best-practice approach to meeting all of a disabled student's needs, including academics. However, a variable which complicates the resources available to support such detailed supports is how these institutions receive

funding. Rutherford, Bullis, Anderson, and Griller-Clark (2002) found that funding for special education services is generally tied directly to the number of students classified as disabled. Without comprehensive evaluation systems in place to correctly identify all eligible students, enough resources might not be available to support necessary educational programming.

Other educational best practices include setting high expectations for student performance, strengthening the role of families in the education process, improving the quality of professional development, and spending more resources on teaching and learning opportunities and less on paperwork (Howell & Wolford, 2002). The instruction of students with disabilities requires a detailed understanding of the cognitive and affective challenges faced by these students. A key component to designing effective instruction must be appropriate assessment, that includes measuring the child's strengths as well as weaknesses (Osher, et al., 2002), and determining specific academic skill and transition needs (Rutherford, Bullis, Anderson, & Griller-Clark, 2002).

Consideration of Disability

Public school students identified as having disabilities, which by definition means they are unable to make academic progress in the general education curriculum without special education support, fall under different discipline rules. If the student commits an infraction that would, through a zero tolerance policy for example, result in automatic expulsion for a non-disabled student, the district is required to engage in a review process. This *manifestation review* involves convening a team of school staff and parents to determine whether or not the infraction was a manifestation of the student's disability.

If it is determined that the offence is a manifestation, then the student stays put, and appropriate interventions are plotted out. If the team finds that the event is not a manifestation, the district may remove the student from the school setting but must continue to provide for the student's academic needs to enable the student to make progress towards academic and/or behavioral goals. This protection, which is written into the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), is presently interpreted as extending to the student only when on school grounds. Several authors have called for a consideration of disability throughout the adjudication process regardless of how the student's case ends up in the juvenile justice system (Burrell & Warboys, 2000; Osher, et al., 2002; Howell & Wolford, 2002).

All students are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). IDEA and other special education laws and procedures are designed to make sure that students with disabilities are not denied FAPE due to some mental or physical condition. There have been some instances where failing to consider a disability has been ruled to be illegal. In a U.S. Supreme Court case in 1966, *Kent v. United States*, three mental health professionals found a juvenile to have serious mental disturbance. A juvenile court judge did not hold a hearing into the youth's mental state and had his trial moved to adult court. The Supreme Court ruled that not having a hearing violated his constitutional rights (Olson-Raymer, 1993).

Katner (2000) recommended a full exploration of a student's school history during the adjudication process to determine if there are any mental health factors that would be relevant to his or her defense. Burrell and Warboys (2000), in a document published by the OJJDP, wrote that knowledge about a juvenile's disability may be

helpful in deciding to proceed with formal delinquency proceedings, in guiding investigations and defense strategy, in directing intervention, "…and it is essential to arriving at a disposition that will both meet the youth's rehabilitative needs and comply with IDEA requirements" (p. 1). In addition, facilities are required to evaluate any students suspected of having a disability.

The Local Education Agency (LEA), which serves the area where the detention facility is located, or another agency designated by the State Education Agency (SEA) bear the responsibility of implementing special education programs and services for students with disabilities who are incarcerated as delinquents (Garfinkel et. al, 1997). These authors also identified several needs within the juvenile justice system that are specific to students with disabilities. Important factors are disseminating information about individuals' disabilities and their impact to court personnel; a consistent disability evaluation system or criteria; effective collaboration among service agencies and families; consideration of gender, race, mental health, disability, and culture; a means of evaluating long-term outcomes for both recidivism and transition success; comprehensive community aftercare programs; transition planning; and a comprehensive plan for evaluation and treatment for first-time offenders.

Michigan special education laws provide guidelines for providing educational services to students who have been placed in juvenile detention facilities. They require services to commence within five calendar days after admission, and all special education teachers to be certified to teach students with emotional impairments. They do not address entrance criteria, IDEA protections, or manifestation considerations.

Treatment and Recidivism

There is a substantial amount of literature examining the treatment outcomes for adjudicated youth. Burrell and Warboys (2000) noted that recidivism has been clearly reduced and employment prospects have been positively impacted by providing educational services within juvenile correctional facilities, and emphasized that meeting a student's special education needs is very important in maximizing the potential benefits of any services delivered. Granello and Hanna (2003) reported that the research regarding students with disabilities served within the juvenile justice system has been calling for a multi-systemic, ecological approach that involves the courts, families, and other social and community systems. However, they noted that currently most juveniles receive a minimum of basic counseling efforts, much less a cohesive multi-faceted effort, that appears to be resulting in these minors ending up in prison as adults. This idea is supported by Katsiyannis and Archwamety (1999), who determined that while improving the academic skills of delinquents had a positive effect on recidivism, there are many other co-morbid factors that needed to be addressed.

Larson and Turner (2002) noted that many disabled, court-involved youths are likely to have deficits in social skills and a variety of other conditions that may make intervention difficult. They identified eight effective interventions which include: (1) individual juvenile planning; (2) skill-based interventions (including counseling, social skills training, academic and vocational interventions, and life skills/multimodal approaches; (3) medical interventions (including medication and substance abuse treatment); (4) behavioral systems; (5) family involvement; (6) the use of individualized transition planning (such as wrap-around planning and supports); (7) effective staffing;

and (8) the ongoing assessment of program effectiveness (p. 1). There exists some support for this type of comprehensive service delivery, which should give those working with these youths some cause for optimism. The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2000) suggested that intensive mental health support, including working to rebuild the family structures of delinquent youths, may reduce recidivism by as much as 80%.

As a preventative strategy in public schools, Hanson (2002) advocated for the teaching of our legal system, referred to as law-related education. Various activities could be included, such as mock trials or bringing in police officers or other volunteers to talk with students. The goal of this intervention is to reduce delinquency by encouraging students to think about their rights, responsibilities, and privileges in a democracy. Williamson (2000) described how a law-related education program adopted into the state of Kentucky's court system has been evaluated positively by school and alternative education locations. The focus of the program is on building skills regarding social norms, providing opportunities for positive reinforcement, and allowing students to practice what they have learned in real situations.

Nessel, P. A. (2002) described how youth courts can promote law-related education in a realistic setting with real consequences. These courts involved using juveniles to sentence other juveniles after a judge has determined guilt. Sentences often range from community service time to apologizing to victims. In 1991, there were 50 of these courts across 14 states, numbers which grew to 850 youth courts in 46 states and the District of Columbia in 2002. The most common model involved having an adult act as judge for purposes of clarifying legal terminology and facilitating procedures, with peers acting as defense and prosecuting attorneys, jurors, bailiffs, and clerks. In 1998 the

OJJDP funded a study of national youth courts, the results of which indicated that they had a positive effect on participating juveniles.

Some authors have examined how remediating language deficits may have some positive utility for this population. Mclin (2002) studied the ability of violent juvenile offenders to describe and manage their emotional state in different social contexts with a quantitative instrument, as this has been found to be an important construct to assess for guiding treatment. Smith and Griffin (2002) attempted to teach incarcerated students with learning disabilities strategies designed to improve their conversational skills. The results of their study indicated that this type of instruction may have positive benefits, such as helping the individual to keep from escalating situations where the typical response could be aggression.

Other interventions have included such practices as outdoor adventure therapy (Bruyere, 2002) and other ways of using recreation as a means of promoting group and community involvement to facilitate communication with families and improve self-confidence (Howard and Peniston, 2002). These treatment strategies attempt to reach the goal of being ecological by considering the many, unique factors involved with each delinquent.

Recidivism rates for youth remanded into custody are quite high. Osher, et al. (2002) reported that approximately 46% of males and 27% of females will recidivate. Archwamety and Katsiyannis (2000) found that delinquents who participated in remedial academic programs while incarcerated were twice as likely to be recidivists or violate their parole. This suggests that delinquents classified as disabled may be significantly more likely to be repeat offenders.

A significant portion of these youths have difficulty re-integrating into their communities and families. An important component for treatment that is specific to delinquents identified as special education eligible under IDEA is the transition component of the Individualized Educational Program (IEP). Transition planning, to ensure a smooth re-integration of the student back into the LEA after the completion of a sentence, should begin well ahead of a release date and should include the ecological considerations mentioned above (Garfinkel, et.al, 1997; Larson & Turner, 2002; Rutherford, Bullis, Anderson, & Griller-Clark, 2002).

Recent Research on Delinquents with Disabilities

In May of 2003, the National Council on Disability (NCD) presented a report to the President, President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate, and Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives regarding the state of research on disabled youth within the juvenile justice system. Major findings of the report are not unexpected and show: (1) current and proposed legislation will not meet the research calls for greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention; (2) a lack of resources and training regarding disabilities in the juvenile justice system increases the challenges of consistent implementation of disability laws; (3) the gap between needs and services appears to be significantly higher in juvenile detention facilities than in public schools, and documentation of the extent of these gaps is sparse or non-existent; (4) there is evidence to suggest that policies such as zero-tolerance and public school failures to adequately implement special education laws, such as IDEA, have led to an increase in the number of juveniles with disabilities in the justice system.

Additional findings from the NCD that are equally viable as those noted above included: (1) record-keeping regarding funding, expenditures, and service provision for disabled youth are inadequate; (2) prevention and early-intervention efforts are not widespread, despite research evidence which suggests that these efforts may be the only effective way to reduce disabled youth involvement in the juvenile justice system; (3) racial and ethnic minority youth are over-represented both in the juvenile justice system and within groups classified as disabled, but little specialized programming to meet these students' needs is being provided; (4) some intervention strategies are becoming popular, such as positive behavioral support, alternative education programs, and youth courts, but they generally focus on treating behavioral problems. The authors of the NCD report observed, "Researchers have not systematically identified and assessed interventions or practices that focus primarily on youth with disabilities who are at risk of delinquency or are involved in the juvenile justice system. As a result, there remains little scientific basis for recommending specific programs for these youth" (p.6).

The NCD also made several recommendations regarding research, which included studying exactly how many youth with different disabilities are at some stage in the juvenile justice system, examining how well special education and disability laws are complied with, and determining which interventions are truly the most effective. The report concluded by noting that there are many unanswered questions about this population, which range from philosophies regarding the law, what works in helping these students, and how their rights and needs are addressed. They noted that, "The most consistent theme emerging from this report's review and discussions with individuals is the lack of reliable, accurate, empirically based data on almost every dimension relevant

to increasing and improving services for youth with disabilities at risk of entering the juvenile justice system or already involved in it" (p. 80).

Summary

The result of reviewing and presenting the literature above has been to demonstrate that most of the components comprising the present study's research question have no concrete answers. The process of adjudication and all that is entailed within it may not differ at all between disabled and non-disabled youth with any degree of consistency despite frequent calls for consideration of disability at every stage. While there are well-documented instances of several kinds of disabilities (learning, mental, behavioral) being over-represented in the juvenile justice population, less evidence exists on how this knowledge has translated into disability-specific treatment and/or educational strategies. Regarding any 'best practice' strategies impacting recidivism, there are some which have supported verification, but again, according to the NCD, nothing that is widespread or conclusively established, save perhaps, for the benefits of a multi-systemic, resource intensive, individualized approach to treatment.

Chapter III

Methodology

Research Questions

Studying the topic of adjudicated special education youths required a significant amount of narrowing down the scope of what is to be examined. For example, looking at zero tolerance opened up an entire spectrum of research areas in regards to school violence and its prevention. Considering constructs like due process and special education as separate entities, and making sure each research question developed addressed the overall focus of the study, were ways to begin restricting the field of inquiry. The next step was to try and ask questions to which some degree of resolution could be attained. The guiding research question I used to frame the rest of the study reads: *What were the experiences of special education eligible youths in a juvenile detention facility, and what consideration had been given to individual disabilities?*

Following this two-pronged question, a list of questions narrower in scope were developed into a semi-structured interview protocol. I intended to supplement interview responses with observation, reviewing the literature, and examinations of records.

- To what do incarcerated juveniles attribute their current status/situation?

- Do the due process rights and protections under IDEA 1997 clash with placement of students in a facility without consideration of disability?

- How proficiently are disabled, incarcerated youth able to discuss the implications of their disabling condition?

- What data is available that documents the impact for students who have served time in juvenile detention facilities?

- How is special education at a detention facility different from that in a public school?

- How adequately are special education service needs addressed in the detention facility?

- What programs and services are available and what is the treatment focused around in the hopes of preventing recidivism?

Methodological Rationale and Paradigm

Phenomenology

The purpose in choosing the qualitative methodology of phenomenology was to try and discover something tangible about the essence of special education services in a juvenile detention facility. Does actually having a disability, or simply being labeled as such, have a significant impact on these youth in the context of courtrooms and fences. A second goal was to discover if the objectives behind legislation passed to protect students with disabilities, making sure they have educational programming that meets their unique needs, had come to pass in the lives of these juveniles as they drifted in and out of incarceration. Garfinkel et al. (1997) noted that under the 1997 re-authorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that, "…in any instance the provision of special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities requires the full implementation of all substantive and procedural requirements set forth in IDEA" (p. 41). This statement suggested that discipline procedures, adjudication processes, or transitions from the facility back to the local school district with disabled juvenile delinquents should contain full consideration of the disability and due process protections.

I sought to understand whether there existed a common essence to the experiences of the youths, which superceded their many differences, including severity of disability and criminal offense. There was little research that explored the after-effects of lack of due process for students who had been adjudicated. The National Council on Disability's report on the current state of knowledge regarding disabled, incarcerated youths noted that there was not much information about what variables contributed to disabled students ending up in the juvenile justice system. The report also called for more research about how these young people were perceived by law enforcement and court personnel in terms of understanding the impact of different disabilities. One means of gathering this information was from the mouths of the disabled youths themselves. Exploring consistencies within the common experiences of them and the staff who served them must not be overlooked as part of the inquiry into what may be done to improve the operations of the systems involved in this field.

A qualitative, psychological- phenomenological analysis based on the experiences of students who have been placed in a detention setting and the staff charged with their care could shed some light on feelings of self-efficacy from being involved with that type of experience. If practices such as adjudication without proper consideration of disability could be shown to have serious long-term, detrimental effects then support for modifying them to better secure individual rights and more appropriate educational services could be mustered. In the next section I described some tenets of phenomenology as a school of inquiry, and then illustrated the specific methodological requirements of psychological phenomenology.

Moustakis (1994) noted that phenomenological inquiry was typically involved with describing an experience. He wrote that the phenomenological researcher was trying to figure out what a given experience means for a participant in that environment, who was able to supply a detailed account of the phenomena. The cornerstone of phenomenology was the philosophical perspective that all knowledge and all definitions of reality were products of our subjective experience. A key difference between phenomenology and more traditional quantitative inquiry was that the latter dealt with studying the environment (realism), and the former accepted that there was no evidence to support the existence of anything in the environment other than our personal, subjective experience of it (idealism). Moustakis wrote, "The issue of idealism versus realism is resolved through phenomenological methods in which the meanings and essences of phenomena are derived, not presupposed or assumed" (p. 46).

The application of this was supported by van Kaam (1969) who commented that, "Relevant research is that which explores, describes, and empirically tests human behavior while preserving a 'lived' relationship with it in the reality of life" (p. 26-27). My thought processes regarding the proposed study became centered on this type of perspective. The idea of having a lived relationship with the object of study, in its natural context, was the key. The complex, ethereal nature of so much that humans experience demands description from within the sphere of reality provided by a given time and place. This was essential if any common understanding was to emerge about a phenomenon.

"The phenomenologist views what people say and do as a product of how people define their world" (Bogdan & Lutfiyya, 1996, p. 229). The idea of searching for the

essence of a phenomenon appeals to this researcher on a level that was professionally primal. That is, I thought that the methodology's mandate of acknowledging, discussing, and framing one's own experiences and context then attempting to look at some event with those things in mind as a partially separate entity, provided the researcher with a chance at cutting through some degree of the schematic quagmire of our training and experience. The researcher engaged in self-reflection as data were collected, regarding how what was being revealed about the phenomena under investigation was impacting his or her personal schema. Merriam (1998) wrote that the job of the phenomenological researcher was to portray the essence or fundamental structure of an experience. An underlying assumption to this perspective was that all shared experiences had an essence that could be identified and described.

An important part of getting to the essence of what may be going on in the lives of the individuals living and working in juvenile detention facilities involved spending time talking to actual, incarcerated students with disabilities about what having a condition which makes learning challenging meant to them. As noted in the National Council on Disabilities (NCD) report on the state of research within the field, "Rarely are self-reported data or longitudinal designs employed, approaches that would provide a better research foundation for specifying the relationship between disability and delinquency and how some youth with disabilities enter the juvenile justice system" (2003, p. 34). Spradley (1979) articulated a point that supported the use of directly asking individuals what their experiences were. While discussing the conduction of ethnographic studies, another qualitative methodology, he noted that learning from people, as opposed to about them, involved being able to describe the subject's reality in

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their own terms. This description could then be applied to the researcher's theoretical perspective.

Van Kaam (1966) provided some rationale for using a phenomenological perspective when there is a weak research foundation in a given area of inquiry. He described how one of the goals of employing a phenomenological perspective was to describe and classify phenomena. "Research performed in this way is pre-empirical, pre-experimental, and pre-statistical; it is experiential and qualitative. It sets the stage for more accurate empirical investigations by lessoning the risk of a premature selection of methods and categories" (van Kaam, 1966, p. 295). He also wrote how phenomenological inquiry complemented quantitative methods in the early stages of exploration in a given field by having the phenomena of interest be the center of study as opposed to a single, more restrictive methodology.

An important concept in phenomenological inquiry was *bracketing*. Moustakis (1994) described a key part of the phenomenological researcher's viewpoint, which was to refrain from making suppositions based on personal knowledge and experience. The idea behind this was to permit the researcher to identify and describe personal assumptions and experiences that would lead to an inability to view the phenomenon in a way that is as unsullied and raw. Merriam (1998) wrote that the goal of bracketing was to temporarily suspend beliefs about a certain topic, so that they did not interfere with, "... seeing or intuiting the elements or structure of a phenomenon" (p. 16). An example of one personal assumption I attempted to extricate from my research was in regards to the intent of the legislation passed for students with disabilities. I believed that the laws governing the education of disabled students, in particular the IDEA of 1997, were

passed with ideological good intentions. In order to view the interaction of these laws with the context of the participants in a manner consistent with phenomenology, I needed to take the interplay of the law and their lives as I found it, as opposed to crafting questions or looking for evidence of my presuppositions about the intent of the law. The last portion of this chapter contained the bracketing I articulated before beginning the research.

Phenomenological Psychology

At Duquesne University in the 1960's and 70's a group of faculty, primarily within the psychology department, began applying the principals of phenomenology to psychological research. One of the primary engineers of this marriage of perspective, Amedeo Giorgi, listed several reasons for this development. Giorgi (1985) noted that traditional psychological methods, while advanced in their quantitative methods, did not provide adequate explanations for complex human experiences. A descriptive methodology was required, in order to answer questions of *why* a given phenomena occurs, as opposed to quantitative measurements such as frequency or intensity. Traditional psychology also did not allow for the expression and exploration of a given circumstance as it was lived and experienced by those moving within that context.

Wertz (1985) also described the problem with over-reliance on quantitative methods and noted, "The outcome is that human sciences, lacking their own methods, have fallen out of contact with their subject matter, and thus their rightful status as truly rigorous science is in jeopardy" (p. 159). My training and experiences as a school psychologist have led me to similar conclusions. The experiences of people cannot be studied in a meaningful manner without proper consideration of their ecology. The

perspectives and schemas which they have developed were critical in understanding why they existed in their given status and how their circumstances might be changed.

As it developed, phenomenological psychology was applied to social, clinical, and experimental research. Through this, it was appropriate to utilize a theory from social psychology for the present study. Attribution theory, described in the following section, provided much of the language used in analyzing the data, and describing emergent themes of the experiences shared by the participants.

Theoretical Perspective

DeCompte and Preissle (1993) wrote that, "Theories are statements about how things are connected" (p. 118). This simple, but poignant definition fit well with research conducted through a qualitative perspective. These authors noted that when looking at individual instances or experiences, the role of theory was not to assist in facilitating generalization in terms of prediction for future cases of the same phenomenon. Rather, theory in qualitative research could help investigators discover themes or actions which might apply to similar cases under different circumstances. Viewing an experience through a theoretical lens serves additional purposes. Creswell and Miller (2000) noted that in qualitative inquiry a lens equated to a point of view by which the researcher established the validity of the study. It also provided the researcher with a frame of reference and a lexicon with which to describe the phenomena being examined.

My disciplinary perspective was somewhat diverse, as I was serious about both looking at things as a psychologist, and also as someone interested in examining things from an educational administration perspective. In my thinking about the population I was to study and the types of questions to ask, I continually returned to psychological

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theories of personality development. In particular, the social learning perspective first

defined by Julian Rotter in the 1960's. Ryckman (1993) articulated the basic tenet of this

theory as human learning and behavior acquisition occurring through experiences with

other people. This school of thought flowed well with constructivism and qualitative

inquiry, and because of this was ideally suited for exploration through phenomenological

psychology. I believed that when describing the experiences I observed, I would be able

to pair these ideas from social psychology with my own perspective as a special

education professional, which would lead to a description other special education

practitioners would find useful and familiar.

Part of social learning theory dealt with the tendency of people to attribute

causality to events or situations in which they found themselves. This has been termed

locus of control and was described as people's attributions being to either internal or

external factors. Internal factors included such constructs as motivation, intelligence, and

practiced skill, while external factors could be chance, fate, or other the actions of other

people. (Ryckman 1993; Rotter 1966). For example, if my dog died of unknown causes,

did I attribute that to my inherent, poor animal care skills, or did I think it was because he

contracted some extrinsic illness, over which I could have had no possible control? This

theory was applied to the present study in the exploration of different experiences and

perspectives of inmates and employees regarding how they felt about the delivery of

special education services. An example of this was developing some interview questions

designed to assess student understanding of their disability to determine if they attributed

their current circumstances to it rather than being placed there by the legal system.

An interest in locus of control (often used interchangeably in the literature as *attribution* or *attribution theory*) and social learning theory could be found in the research examining at-risk youth and juvenile delinquents. Glaser, et. al (2001) explored differences between parents and delinquents who each completed a quantitative measure rating the youth's behavior. Fifty-one parent/child pairs completed the scale, and the results indicated that parents were more likely to attribute their child's behavior to individual, inherent traits. Miller, Fitch, and Marshall (2003) compared locus of control variables between 234 high school and middle school regular and alternative education students using a formal instrument. The alternative education student's scores indicated that their locus of control was significantly more external. Many of these students had chronic behavior and/or attendance problems.

Locus of control has also been a topic of inquiry with students who have disabilities. Tabassam and Grainger (2002) examined attribution characteristics of 172 elementary school students, of which 86 had been diagnosed as either Learning Disabled (LD) or as having both LD and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The students with disabilities scored significantly lower than non-disabled peers on measures of academic self-concept, self-efficacy, and attributional style. Specifically regarding attribution, the disabled students had significantly more negative scores, which meant that they were more likely to attribute academic successes to external causes, and view accomplishment as unstable and only applicable to one instance.

This theoretical perspective had utility for another reason: To look at student rights and determine whether their disabilities were considered when placing them into a detention center. However, I desired to spend the bulk of my research time studying

people's experiences not poring over court documents. Employing this type of theory was a more manageable project, and still allowed for themes in the data regarding disability consideration to emerge.

An example of one potential theme I thought I would find based on my public school experience was that many of the students I talked with would not be able to concretely discuss what their disability means for them. I have found that most conversations regarding the impact that the disabling condition has for the student, do not include the student until relatively late in their K-12 experience. This problem was paired with the lack of training on school disability categories in many court systems noted by Garfinkel et.al, 1997. From this information, it did not seem that it would be difficult to demonstrate that throughout the court placement and other legal proceedings, the ramifications of the disabling condition were neither presented nor discussed.

A study examining the variables described above would make a contribution to the literature on disabled juvenile delinquents. The gathering of poignant, qualitative data, directly from this population and the professionals who serve them had been sparse at best. As agencies like the NCD attempted to move the federal government towards positive programming and procedural steps, their efforts would benefit from having some recorded, personal experiences to help guide policy development.

Data Collection

Method

The framework that seemed most appropriate for the type of exploration into this issue was a case study model. More specifically, the case in question will be a special education classroom in a juvenile detention facility. The plan was to utilize semi-

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structured interviews to gather some of the data, combined with observations in the classroom and reviews of comprehensive student records, which should include special education evaluations, Individualized Educational Program (IEP) forms, background/family information, and documentation of court proceedings. This design seemed to fit the main goal of the study, which was to expand the types of information gathered on this population, as noted in the NCD report. The positive and negative effects on students could potentially vary quite widely, and a case study allowed for a more in-depth look at these from the perspective of the students and adults serving them. The case study will be limited to the classroom at the facility. Any comparative statements made between my own experiences and those observed at Haven are reflective and not to be construed as indicative of a comparative case analysis between public school experiences and those at the detention facility.

Participants

In the selection of participants, the best match for the research questions was to purposefully choose a variety of people who had experience with providing special education services in this setting. Information was gathered from six adjudicated students who had active IEPs and were assigned to a special education certified teacher. Consideration was given to the percentage of the student's day that they spent with that staff member. For example, I selected students whose basic skills were low enough to warrant placement in that setting for much of the day, and others who had more advanced skills and were mainly with other teachers.

Another major difference between the students was the length of their sentence based on the severity of their offending behavior. Half of the students were considered

short-term and were from Angel County. These students were sentenced to no more than 90 calendar days and typically arrived at the facility for violating truancy policies of local districts. The other half of the students were long-term, and these youths had sentences ranging from 8 to 18 months, with an average of 14 months. These juveniles had committed more serious crimes that included such things as weapons or drug violations. They came from across the state, mainly from urban areas such as Grand Rapids, Benton Harbor, and Detroit. Obtaining as wide a variety as possible within the psychological phenomenological framework was important as the greater the degree of variation within the subject pool, the better chance the researcher had of seeing what essential components existed across the phenomenon shared by the participants (Giorgi, 1985).

The other primary interviewees were the classroom teacher, the building administrator, school social worker, family counselor, probation officer, and director of the residential component of Haven. The juveniles asked to participate in this study would need to be eligible for special education services and have current Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) documenting their need for service. The services for all the students took place within the same classroom, with the same special education teacher. Variables that made each respondent unique in regards to their experiences in the facility included length of sentence, disability classification, amount of special education services listed, and what types of ancillary services (social work, speech and language, etc.) they received.

Triangulation

An important concept in qualitative data collection mentioned by Yin (1994) was the gathering of information from multiple sources. Merriam (1998) referred to this as

'triangulation', and noted that it was important when seeking to establish some reliability and validity in gathering qualitative data. This was supported by Creswell and Miller (2000) who wrote that, "Triangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (p. 126). Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) wrote that triangulation of data through sources such as interview responses, analysis of documentation, and observation serves to reduce bias which may be present in only one data source and could significantly improve the validity and reliability of the collected data.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) noted that the issue of inadequate reliability and validity in traditional positivist terms has been a consistent criticism of qualitative research, which should be addressed. However, they noted that while triangulation was an effort by the researcher to understand the object of study in more depth, it was more accurately described as an alternative to traditional means of securing improved validation. "The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 4). Since validity in the traditional, quantitative sense often did not find a home in qualitative research, an alternative means of establishing the credibility of the inquiry must be used.

In the present study, information from the literature to establish the rationale and what is already known about the topic was a source of information, but not data. Semi-structured interview responses were the primary source of data, but there were others beneficial to the study. Documents that contained a record of the procedures used to carry

out the adjudication and describing the student's disabilities were useful, as they shed light on how the process differed across settings, and were official notations of how a student's rights (i.e. due process) were considered. The third line of the triangle was observations within the classroom at the detention facility. The following sections contain details regarding how these three sources of data were collected.

Interviews

Yin (1994) provided a great deal of guidance with regard to skills that interviewers should possess or develop and in the construction of interviews, such as the ones required for the present study. The *focused interview* method made the most sense for probing the effects felt by students. Yin noted that this method was useful for corroborating certain facts or assumptions that the researcher might have. Along these lines, I planned to use the method to assist in the bracketing and separating of my own assumptions from the experience I will study, which was a requirement of phenomenological inquiry. The interviews were semi-structured, and had open-ended questions designed around the research questions.

Most of the interviews with students and staff took place within the Woods School or the administration building at Camp Haven. The interview with the school social worker was at her home and the meeting with the probation officer was at the county courthouse. The staff was interviewed first, in conjunction with three weeks observing in the classroom, before spending time individually with the students. The initial interviews were completed in approximately forty-five minutes. Follow-up interviews were conducted with two students, the classroom teacher, the residential director, and the building principal, and took approximately ten minutes each. Follow-up

interviews would have been conducted with more of the students, but they had been released from the facility soon after initial data collection.

Observations

Three school weeks observing in the special education classroom and interviewing staff before interviewing students. This provided an opportunity to interact with many of the juveniles and assisted in selecting the ones I thought might provide significant insight into their experiences. One of the main variables looked for was the student's ability to advocate for themselves, such as how well they seek help when faced with a difficult academic task. I knew that some of the students would be pulled from the class at times to spend time with a special education provider such as the school social worker. I wanted to find out how receptive these students were to those services, and if they could express their feelings on whether they thought the interventions were needed.

Record Reviews

The examination of the student's records took place after I had spent four days in the classroom. The records of all the students who were eligible for special education services in the facility were perused, and initial selection involved finding juveniles whose sentences would likely last through the duration of the observation and interview periods. From the record reviews, the selection was made of three short and three long term juveniles, representing as wide an array of disabilities as possible. As noted above, seeking as diverse a group of participants as possible was important, as a greater degree of variation across subjects enhanced the researcher's ability to observe what essential components existed in the context of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1985).

This enabled the gathering of data on students who have had significantly different experiences both in terms of severity of crime and therefore criminal proceedings, and severity of academic challenge. I looked for details on how early the juveniles were identified as having a disability, the comprehensiveness of their evaluations, and the subsequent appropriateness of their Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs).

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed in preparation for further analysis. The transcripts were coded numerically and by pseudonym in order to identify the responses from each participant. Giorgi (1985) described the four essential stages to analyzing interview and observation data in the psychological phenomenological method. The steps are described as follows:

1) The researcher reads the entire set of transcripts or description of observations with the goal of getting a general sense of the whole response.

2) After obtaining a sense of the whole, the researcher reads through the documentation again with the goal of discriminating 'meaning units' with a psychological perspective in mind, focusing on the phenomena that was the focus of the research.

3) After establishing the meaning units, the researcher rephrases and expresses them with psychological language and insight, continually emphasizing the phenomena being researched.

4) Finally, the researcher synthesizes the meaning units with their altered language into a consistent account of the participant's experiences.

Bracketing

As noted above, bracketing involved the development of a list of assumptions that the researcher needed to put aside, to have a chance of viewing the phenomena of incarcerated youths receiving special education services with a degree of objectivity. The task was to define personal beliefs and assumptions about this type of experience so that they would not interfere with the researcher's ability to determine the essence of the phenomena (Merriam, 1998). The assumptions comprising this list came from my background and experiences, as well as several conversations with the classroom teacher. After generating the following list, I reviewed it prior to conducting interviews and analyzing the data.

1) I was raised in a strict, nurturing home environment with consistent discipline and a strong religious background. From this, I assumed that the juveniles at Haven had been lacking in these respects, therefore many of their problems were caused by environmental concerns.

2) From my work as a school psychologist, I believed that many students with behavior problems receive a special education label, even though little intervention has been attempted to correct their behavior. I suspected this was the case for many of the students at Haven.

3) I believed that special education, when correctly implemented by proper assessment and instruction, could remediate academic and behavioral deficits in students like the ones at Haven. This in my mind was the promise of special education that the legislators and parents who developed and passed these laws, believed was possible.

4) I believed that with a special education population of approximately fifty percent, compared to the county average of fourteen percent, a detention facility could not possibly meet the special education service needs documented by evaluation teams in local districts based on what I knew about the number and type of staff working there.

5) I believed the disabled youths' right to specialized instruction could not be guaranteed given the high percentage of students with special education needs and the huge range of academic skills they exhibited.

6) I believed there was a serious lack of communication between local districts and Haven regarding the transition needs of the youths as they entered and exited, that impacted the likelihood of success in the program.

7) I believed that the Woods School staff should have a great degree of input regarding when a student was ready to be released from the program, as they would have the best idea of how the student was faring regarding his skills necessary to be successful in a public school.

8) I believed that the court personnel would have very little knowledge about special education, and that consideration of disability would be a low priority in the adjudication process.

9) I believed that the students would be organized into tight cliques, either based on academic level, where they came from, or what type of offence they had committed. I thought that these cliques would have a substantial impact on students' experiences, as social groups are a major defining force of a public school experience.

10) I believed that most students would attribute their situation to external factors that they had no significant degree of control over. I thought most of them would feel as if they had been put in Haven by someone or some thing, as opposed to being there as a result of their own choices.

11) I believed that education and success at the Woods School was a low priority for these students and that they would be posturing for social status and not very interested in the academic components of the program.

12) I believed that a student's sentence was static. I thought once the adjudication process had been completed and a sentence determined that the student would be released upon a certain date, as opposed to being ready for release as determined by a team at the facility.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to help illuminate some of the experiences of juvenile delinquents with disabilities, who have part of their educational experience within the confines of a detention facility. The research with youths in this field had not adequately addressed their unique educational needs. The plan was to help remedy this by exploring their experiences through the qualitative methodology of phenomenology paired with a theoretical perspective gleaned from social psychology. The hope was that results from this study would be valuable in policy development and curriculum considerations for incarcerated disabled youths.

Chapter IV

Research Site and Participant Description

"Qualitative researchers believe that rich descriptions of the social world are valuable" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 10). Towards this end, the following chapter was designed to provide the reader with a depiction of the research site and participants. It was focused on describing the place where these juveniles with disabilities spend their sentences, the staff charged with their care and education, and the students themselves. The goal of this was to assist the reader in understanding the experiences of these juveniles and staff members in order to equip them with the necessary tools to understand the challenges involved with their education and rehabilitation.

The following data were gathered across a ten week period with the chapter organized into the following portions.

1. A physical description of Camp Haven and the Woods School.

2. A section outlining the program structure and services of Haven.

3. Observations made while in the facility, primarily within one of the classrooms. The observations are presented in a narrative format of what I saw happening over the course of a typical day. The noted topics, teaching styles, personnel involved in the classroom, and other information, are included in the one day snapshot as they are representative of common occurrences throughout the observation period. Other observations will be presented in the fifth chapter as evidence in support of themes.

4. An introduction to each of the staff interviewees. The descriptions are provided to enhance the reader's understanding of the professional experience

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and physical characteristics of the staff which are responsible for the juveniles.

5. Introduction to the six students. To familiarize the reader with some of the familial and educational experiences of these juveniles, Summaries of their records are included. All records used to compile the information in this chapter were held by the Woods. For the majority of these students, this was all the documentation ever received on them by the professionals at Camp Haven.

The Research Site

The Layout of Camp Haven

Camp Haven was located about a mile from a tiny town with only one intersection large enough to warrant a blinking yellow caution light. Off one of the county roads leading from the town was the camp, near a small lake. It bordered many acres of forest and several old farms. The driveway was paved but unadorned with painted lines, and barely wide enough for oncoming vehicles to pass each other. Its full length was about half a mile, winding from the county road to the parking lot adjoining the school building. The campus was picturesque, with large trees, lawns, and wildflowers.

On the left-hand side of the drive, near the lake, there were four cabins. These cabins now served family members who came for weekend visits, but used to be where the juveniles lived. A few yards down from these cabins was the administrative office building. It was a two-story brick structure with the second floor at ground level and a walk-out lower floor which could be accessed from a sidewalk along one side. Directly across from the administration building was one of the houses for short-term students.

Farther down the drive, the school was on the left with the other short term house facing it across the road. The road ended in a circle drive, where the two long term houses were located. A parking lot adjoined the circle drive, and at one end was a large maintenance shed where three full-time maintenance staff worked. Many of these buildings were named after significant financial contributors to the camp.

The Woods School

This was a single story brick building with gray doors that had been painted over many times. The doors bore several dents and the paint on the frames was chipped. The principal remarked that this damage were due to the doors being punched, kicked, and slammed almost daily. Upon entering, a familiar odor was encountered, the smell of generic pine cleaner and old metal. A slight mustiness that reminded me of a building I had worked in that needed to be closed due to mold also struck me. One wing smelled distinctly of new paint and carpet glue, as it had been recently remodeled. The lighting in most of the building was dull from the gray cinderblock walls, but in the remodeled wing with freshly painted white walls, it was significantly brighter. There was a small gym on one side of the building, which had two basketball hoops and a newly installed rubberized composite floor. Along the halls were several display cases featuring student work. This was mainly artwork, and colorful representations of goals. One was a poster with several students names presented with each letter representing a word. A student named Mike had written Mature, Intelligent, Kind, Excellent worker.

As I entered the building, there were two sets of twenty-six metal lockers, one on each side of the main entrance. The lockers were taupe colored, and were in a battered condition similar to the doors. Outside the gym entrance was the graphics classroom, an

elective course where students learned graphic design using computers. This classroom and the gym comprised one direction from the main entrance. Going the other way, the first classroom I encountered was the homeroom for one of the long-term houses, whose teacher primarily taught language arts throughout the day. Next to this room was a display case featuring student point sheets, showing how students were progressing in the behavioral system which, during the school day, was based on preparation, respect, independence, daily clean-up, and effort. Across from the case was a storage closet filled with file cabinets, construction paper, old computers, and remnants of past 4-H projects.

Next to the storage room was the main office, a place stuffed with paper, machines, and file cabinets. The building secretary worked alone here, and her station reminded me of the first office I had been assigned to in a school. It had doubled as the changing room for referees, and the audio/visual equipment storage room. Across from the office was a room where the teacher taught earth science, math, and a few vocational skills. In this classroom students had the opportunity to learn how to change oil, rotate tires, and fix lawn equipment. The back wall of the classroom was largely comprised of a large bay door where vehicles could be brought in. In the past, this vocational classroom had been used to teach students woodworking and automotive repair, but due to state curriculum requirements and safety, this aspect of the program was discontinued.

Across the hall from the old vocational classroom and next to the office were the only bathrooms in the school, with the exception of those in the gym. The bathrooms were painted in a faded pink, and many of the fixtures were rusty. There was some graffiti, and the soap had been removed from the boy's bathroom after several incidences of inappropriate use. At the end of this hallway was the other homeroom for long-term

students. The lower level language arts students were taught here, and this class contained a full kitchen. This room served as the staff lounge, where staff meetings were held. It had never served as an official home economics room, but students had some opportunities to cook and work on 4-H projects.

The intersecting hall contained another entrance to the gym on the left and to the right there were more classrooms. The first room was a short-term homeroom, where the teacher primarily taught social skills, reproductive health, language arts, substance abuse, and one basic skills math class. Past this classroom was where Michelle taught, a description of which can be found in the observation section below. Next was the resource room, where students went if they were having trouble in the regular classroom, and where meetings such as IEPs were held. The ancillary staff, such as social workers and psychologists, typically met with students in the resource room. The room was slightly larger than most of the classrooms, with a big square table and several chairs. Along one wall was a row of couches, often covered with newspapers discarded from students or residential staff. After the resource room was the principal's office, which comprised the end of the hall, and was the last room in the school. The principal's office was small, and the walls were covered in fishing paraphernalia and family pictures. There was just enough room for his file cabinets, desk, and a computer cart.

The Residential Staff Administration Building

A tour of the administration building revealed a small library, several offices and cubicles, and a couple of conference rooms. Student artwork was displayed along with framed newspaper articles featuring Haven. The employees who had offices here included the chief administrator for the camp, the residential director, the supervisors of

the residential staff, and the family counselors. Their dress code ranged from jacket and tie for the chief administrator, to jean shorts and t-shirts for the residential supervisors. There were three female secretarial staff, two with desks near the front entrance. At the back of this building, on the side closest to the school, was the cafeteria where the students ate all their meals. The cafeteria/kitchen was reached by short sidewalks that lead to the lower floor.

Inside One of the Houses

The "houses" were the four buildings that each housed twelve students at Haven. After school one day, Michelle took the student teacher and I on a tour of one of the houses. The building reminded me of a large cabin from the outside, and appeared to be well maintained. Inside, there was a large central room, surrounded by six small bedrooms. Each bedroom was equipped with two bunks, two desks, and a dresser, all made of pine. After the bedrooms, there was a room with a couch and recliner, a television and pool table, and the washer and dryer were near the front entrance. Each house had a residential staff person who stayed all night. Each house had a staff office surrounded by plexi-glass windows, a metal door, and a locker. Each house had a bathroom set up like a locker room, with two entrances, four sinks, a large shower area with several heads, two urinals, and three toilets. A distinct smell of urine was evident as one approached within several yards of the bathroom. All the walls in the house were cement blocks painted off-white.

Programs and Services

When students arrived at Haven they were given two manuals, one describing the overall residential expectations, and one outlining the school component. The mission statement in the residential manual read as follows:

> The YOUTH OPPORTUNITY CAMP is a unique residential care placement that exists to provide opportunities that engage young men and their families in strengthening relationships through guidance, self-awareness and the identification of resources necessary to return them to their community as productive citizens.

The manual went on to describe how long the students would be there, what the staff hoped to get from families or guardians, discipline requirements, case reviews, the behavioral level system, privileges, program opportunities (4-H, counseling, etc.), school requirements, rules for dining, recreation, personal hygiene, and family visitation. It also described the no smoking policy, rules for behavior in camp vehicles, and telephone privileges.

The school student handbook opened with a list of the staff, then had a description of the vision for the students to become lifelong learners, adequate communicators, users of information technology, self-directed achievers, and good citizens. The manual described how students could earn credit towards graduation at his home school, how grades would be assigned and reported, behavioral expectations, and rules regarding attire, personal belongings, lockers, supplies, and moving through the building. An example of the last topic was that there would be no using the bathroom during class changes at the end of each hour, only teacher-signed passes could be used, and only three students could be in the bathroom at any given time.

Short Term vs. Long Term

Half of the students were sentenced to short-term incarceration of not more than ninety calendar days, and long-term sentences ranged from eight to eighteen months. Whether they were short or long-term depended on what offence had been committed and from where they came. Delinquents had been placed in Haven for offences ranging from aggravated assault to truancy. All of the short-term students were local, which meant that they came from somewhere in the county where Haven was located. Nearly all of the long-term students came from urban areas in Michigan, such as Grand Rapids, Benton Harbor, and Detroit. The short-term students were all part of the Stabilization, Assessment, Reintegration, and Treatment (START) program. At the time this study was conducted, The START program was in its fourth year, and was designed to be an intensive experience for students, lasting no more than three months.

Both short and long term students had structured sets of activities they went through. These included group experiences to teach them skills like anger management and how to avoid substance abuse, access appropriate recreation, and learn basic behaviors which are important to exhibit while employed. A key difference between the two programs was that for short term kids, what they experienced and how long they would be there was more clearly defined during the entrance process. The focus was on intensive rehabilitation and family/guardian involvement. Also, the school staff seemed to have more input on whether or not the short term kids were ready for reintegration into the community and their local schools.

It seemed as though sentences for the long-term students were undefined, and they would remain at Haven until they completed the goals of the program, primarily as

determined by the residential staff and probation officer. This was complicated by the fact that for at least half of the long term students who were at Haven while I was there, parental rights had been terminated. Some of these youths would stay at Haven, perhaps even past the completion of their goals, until an appropriate placement could be found.

Behavioral System-LABS

The residential component of Camp Haven had a behavioral level system that was also applied during the school day. The acronym LABS stood for Learning, Accepting, Building, and Sharing, from lowest to highest in terms of responsibilities and privileges earned. Youths were required to have a card with them at all times that told what level they were on and what their personal goals were. The residential staff manual noted that there was a wide degree of latitude on what privileges could be earned or revoked depending on a kid's movement up or down in the system. Some things were required for all students in the program and could not be revoked, such as opportunities for recreation, family contact, and participation in certain clubs or groups. The hourly wage students earned was also impacted; for example, those at the Learning level earned a dollar an hour, while students at Sharing earned three dollars and fifty cents. Students were informed that raising their level occurred through an 'adjustment committee' who would meet and decide if the youth's effort was sufficient to warrant an upgrade, or if problem behaviors would result in loss of a level. Students or staff were allowed to call these meetings.

At the beginning of each school day, students were given a yellow sheet of paper to take with them to each class. The paper had a section for each class, where teachers awarded up to five points, one each for being Prepared, Respectful, Independent, Daily

Clean-up, and Effort (PRIDE). The total points earned from these daily sheets were tallied weekly and displayed in the hallway near the main office. This tally system was primarily used by the school staff to plan rewards and monitor student progress. Students also needed to record homework assigned from each class, and get each teacher signatures at the end of the hour.

The students were keenly aware of this system, and many of their conversations with each other and with staff revolved around what level they were on, and what they needed to do to advance. For most of them gaining a level appeared to be something they actively sought to do. Other students rarely spoke of it, or did not seem to care what level they were on. The following two excerpts are from students who described what the LABS system meant to them.

> BOBBY: The levels are called LABS, learning, accepting, building, and sharing. Learning is the entry level you basically don't really get to do too much in the houses, can't play pool, you basically just sit around and play board games and get to know people. Accepting you get to play pool, board games, and you get to stay up 'til 10:30 on the weekends. Learning, you go to uh bed at ten. Building, you get to play pool, computer, play station, and you get to go to other houses...and building shows maturity basically. And sharing is the last step, if you're on sharing usually you're about to leave.
> VD: Ok. How do you get from one level to the other?
> BOBBY: Signatures.
> VD: And where do those come from?
> BOBBY: Around and get the staff signatures that you, like the teachers signatures that you have, the staff signatures that work in your house.
> VD: What do those signatures mean?
> BOBBY: That staff thinks that you're ready to make your level.
> VD: Ok. Do you have to get signatures from everyone that you work with?
> BOBBY: Yeah, all the staff that work in your house.
>
> DEVON: If you're on building or sharing you can play PS2.
> VD: So those are the two highest levels?
> DEVON: Yes. Building and sharing can do anything, practically.
> VD: Ok.
> DEVON: They can get on the computer. Accepting can play pool, watch TV, if

you have to write a letter you can manage to get on the computer. Learning you can't do nothing, unless staff says that they can.

VD: Ok. So they have to mostly stay in their rooms and...?

DEVON: Yeah.

VD: Do homework or whatever?

DEVON: They don't have to stay in their rooms, they can come out, but they can't do nothing, without permission.

The behavioral system did not seem to be a determining factor in whether or not a student was released, as one student noted in this excerpt.

VD: Do you know how much longer you'll be here? How does that work?

ARNOLD: I got to stay here until I complete all my goals.

VD: How long do you think that might take you?

ARNOLD: Not much longer. I'm almost done with them.

VD: Well, that's good. Do you have to be like at the highest level...before you can go, or does that not matter as much?

ARNOLD: It doesn't really matter. I can be on, I can be on learning and still leave, if all my goals are complete.

VD: How long have you been here, did you say?

ARNOLD: A year and almost two months.

Groups

Students at Haven participated in groups to fulfill part of their rehabilitation requirements. The groups included substance abuse awareness, moral reasoning, anger control, and social skills. All of the students were involved in at least two groups, with some attending all four each week. Students were regularly assigned homework that was typically a scenario for them to think and write a paragraph about. Homework from the problem-solving group, for example, might have been reading about a kid facing peer pressure to take drugs, then writing a paragraph describing what could be done to avoid or resolve the situation.

The following piece of transcript came from the interview with one of the language impaired students, describing the groups in which he was involved. The student's reference to 'skillstreaming' was familiar to me as an off the shelf curriculum

designed to teach social skills that I have found in several of the public schools I have

worked in or visited.

> VD: I was going to ask you what kind of uh groups do they have you going to?
> DEVON: (pause) That...I do not have any groups.
> VD: You don't have like anger control or moral reasoning?
> DEVON: Oh, in the houses?
> VD: Yeah, those kinds of groups.
> DEVON: Oh, yeah, anger control, moral reasoning, skillstreaming, uh...problem solving.
> VD: Do you do each group once a week or how often?
> DEVON: Once a week.
> VD: Ok. Tell me about like, the anger control, what do you do in that?
> DEVON: There we like bring up situations, and like we do role plays and stuff like that.
> VD: What about the moral reasoning?
> DEVON: Moral, moral reasoning...like do papers and stuff. We have homework for each group.
> VD: How long does it take you to do the homework?
> DEVON: How long?...Like, the homework is due by the next week.
> VD: Ok. So you have a whole week to do the homework for each group.
> DEVON: Yeah.
> VD: Ok. What's skillstreaming?
> DEVON: Skillstreaming...there's one staff for each group. So there's only four, four staff that runs the groups...and...has some...skills.
> VD: What do you do in skillstreaming?
> DEVON: Skillstreaming, we like, we have a point system...like... let's say that...you get all your points for the six weeks that we do the group...the people that got their points can either go off camp, go to the movies, go out to eat, go to the zoo, anything. People that didn't get all their points for the six weeks...they stay back in camp.
> VD: Ok. So in skillstreaming you talk about those kinds of points and stuff?
> DEVON: We talk about problems...just like problem solving.
> VD: Problem solving, ok. And what was the other group? You said there were four groups.
> DEVON: Problem solving skills.
> VD: Problem solving was the last one, do you work on the same kinds of stuff?
> DEVON: Yeah.
> VD: Alright.
> DEVON: That's different.
> VD: Do you think those groups are helping you, or they're just not helping?
> DEVON: Yeah they're helping.
> VD: Are they? Can you give me an example of when the stuff you learned in those groups helped you?

DEVON: I learned that if...here you go, here's one of the stories that...I ain't going to tell the whole story but I'm just going to tell bits and pieces.
VD: That's fine.
DEVON: Um, it's called...Jim's problem, problem...and uh...in the story...Jim's like, Jim's friend is like...going on uh, AWOL, and like...uh, his friend is trying to talk him in to AWOLing with him but...Jim says no, and they got like questions at the end of the story... like should he do it, yes he do it, no should he not, shouldn't he, no should he do it.

Two other students also spoke about their experiences with the groups, and

whether or not they had found them useful.

BOBBY: So usually after dinner we have the possibility of having a group, so we could have anger control...skillstreaming, all this other...
VD: Tell me about the skillstreaming, what you learn in those? Or what do you do in those?
BOBBY: You learn steps to control your anger, like different situations that you have to control your anger in, and then moral reasoning is, moral reasoning like basically teaches how to reason morally...to figure out what's going to turn out better for you in the long run.
VD: Can you give me an example of what kinds of things you learn in that moral reasoning class or what was something that you, what was something you guys talked about in that group?
BOBBY: Alright one of the problems that we talked about there, in there was this guy...it was his birthday coming up, one of his friends stole a radio and they didn't know, he didn't know whose the radio was or if it was stolen or whatever, and then one of his other friends came up to him saying that his radio was stolen and what it looked like, and it was all what should he do, should he tell him, or should he keep it, and all these other questions.
VD: When you're answering those questions do you take turns or do you just...?
BOBBY: We all answer them and then see who got what answers.

VD: Ok. What kind of groups and stuff do they have you do in here?
ARNOLD: Anger control, moral reasoning...and...anger replacement.
VD: So three groups?
ARNOLD: Uh huh.
VD: What do you do in the anger control group?
ARNOLD: We write about what, like right know we're working on the three ABC's of anger. ABC's, um...what lead up to it, what did I do, and what was the outcome.
VD: Ok. Is that helpful for you?
ARNOLD: Sometimes it is.
VD: And the second group is a moral reasoning group?
ARNOLD: Yeah.

VD: What do you do in there, what do you talk about in there?

ARNOLD: Just like...usually we watch about the news and stuff. And we talked about biracial relationships is it right or wrong, and we watched a movie about it. And, basically we talk about, it's like should you do this, or should you do that.

VD: Is that helpful or...?

ARNOLD: It...sometimes it is.

VD: Can you give me an example of when that has helped you out?

ARNOLD: Like...there's a, that came, that came a point, that came a time, like a few weeks ago, I was playing pool and I got hit in the eye with a pool ball. I picked up a cue ball, no I picked up a pool ball and I was about to throw it at him but I decided not to.

School Programs and Services

As adjudicated youths entered Haven, they were assessed at the school. The teacher consultant, a special education teacher with graduate course work in assessment, gave them an achievement battery to place them into groups based on their reading and math skills. There were five of these academic groups, and placement in them was the primary factor in determining what classes the student was scheduled in throughout the day. The school curriculum manual defined this placement as being, "...based on their academic functioning level, *not* on specific grade levels" (p.2). Different State of Michigan curriculum benchmarks were applied to each of the five groups. For example, Group One students were functioning above grade level in most academic areas and were working towards high school benchmarks, while the curriculum for Group Five students was based on early elementary school benchmarks. The following excerpt was one student's response when asked about the testing process.

BOBBY: Well they, test you to see where you're placed at like, what kind of work they can give you. Like mine was 16.9 [standardized grade equivalent], which is like the last year of college or something, and...last, last three weeks of college or something like that, I don't know, and that was mine, and it goes down from there. You can't get high, any higher then that.

VD: So do they do like reading, and math, and...?

BOBBY: Yeah, they do it in reading and math and that's it.

VD: You mentioned that you were placed in certain groups because of that testing; tell me about what those groups mean, academic groups.
BOBBY: You have group one, which is the highest group, group two second highest, group three, kind of in the middle, group four is like, yeah group four and five are the kids that would be in special ed. because they learn slower then everybody else.

Even within the five academic groups, there was a high degree of variability in each class, even though the average number of students was ten. Each group of twelve students, divided by house, started their day with a homeroom. These homeroom teachers were responsible for monitoring the academic growth of their twelve students, and wrote case reviews at the end of each term, summarizing that student's progress and areas of continued concern. The homeroom teachers each taught something during this first hour that meets State of Michigan social studies curriculum goals. The teachers had a high degree of variability in terms of what they did to meet these goals, as some taught very traditional social studies classes utilizing maps and studying countries, while others discussed sex education and substance abuse. The school curriculum was based on the State of Michigan's Content Standards and Benchmarks. The curriculum was focused around four core subject areas: English, Mathematics, Science/Health Education, and Life Management/Career and Employability Skills. Social Studies was also taught each term and had been added when the state began assessing this area with the MEAP. Electives were also offered, and consisted of courses in Technology, Physical Education, Graphics, School Maintenance, and Food Service.

Other needs of the students, such as dental, medical, and grooming were handled exclusively through the residential staff. For special education students, Michelle said that having a current IEP and substantive records on an eligible student as he entered

Highfields was helpful, as the documentation sometimes noted needs that could then be met more expediently.

Observations

A Day in the Classroom

I arrived at the classroom at 8:00, and needed to be let in the building by a teacher. He showed me where Michelle's classroom was, and after a few minutes she arrived. A student teacher and the para-professional came soon after, and all the building's staff appeared to be present by 8:30. Michelle showed me the desk where she suggested I sit, and started to organize her lesson plans as I unpacked my materials. She noted that there would be four adults in the room that day including herself, a student teacher, a para-professional, and me. She would have a male para-professional in the morning and a female in the afternoon.

Against one wall of the classroom was a long table with four computers. Along the opposing wall were two teacher's desks, one for Michelle, and one shared by the para-professionals. At the front of the room was a large dry-erase board, a bookshelf, file cabinet, and overhead projector. Facing the board were twelve desks arranged in three rows. A large television, VCR, and radio stood on a cupboard in one corner. The walls had a few artwork prints, and a couple bulletin boards. One featured some motivational pictures and words, such as a photo of a mountain hiker with the word 'Perseverance' above it. Another had black and white photos of celebrities such as Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Amelia Earhart, with captions indicating their contributions. The walls were white, and the carpet was blue. This room had been recently re-modeled along with a couple others.

Michelle showed me her attendance book that documented how every week at least one student entered or left the program. She remarked that this was typical each term, and that it potentially made for some funding issues in terms of accounting for how full the program was. She noted that the same group started and ended their day in her classroom. We discussed programming, and she commented that they had no school social work or school psychological services available for the summer term. The social worker had been laid off at the end of the regular school year, and the coverage for Haven had not yet been worked out through the ISD. In terms of speech therapy, she said that she has seen students taken for speech therapy twice in the six years she has taught here. She told me about the regular contact she had with the parents of the short-term kids. She saw them in bi-monthly evening meetings where they discussed progress, goals, and home situations.

The students arrived at 8:45, and were escorted from breakfast in another building. There were twelve of them, and all were wearing unadorned green polo or sweat shirts. I asked about this, and she noted that green signified the students were from Elrond, one of the short-term houses. At the end of the day, I asked her about the dress code. Michelle told me that there didn't used to be one, but they were forced to develop a code for the short-term students a couple years ago. There was a local gang called the "Gear Mob" who required its members to steal clothes from one of the malls. Michelle asked one of the students if the "Mob" still existed and he replied that they did. He then appraised what Michelle, the student teacher, and I were wearing and noted that none of us would make it in the gang. Michelle said that both of the short term houses had a dress code, one green and the other gray, because of the gang's influence. The long-term

students had not had significant problems over clothes, so they were allowed to wear whatever they brought from home as long as it was appropriate.

As the students filed in, Michelle recognized a new one. After introductions, she learned that he had arrived the previous Friday, and his green shirt told her that he was assigned to Elrond. Another adult who appeared to be accompanying them came in and sat down, staying in the class for the first thirty minutes. This man was one of the residential staff, whose job it was to accompany students as they moved between buildings and activities during the day and to monitor them in the houses. Several students grabbed newspapers from a stack on a desk in the front row. Racially, the class appeared to be half Caucasian and half African-American. There was a moderate amount of talking, but they settled down as Michelle went to the front of the class. I was introduced as an MSU student who worked in Holt schools. One student had questions about exactly where in Holt I worked, as he used to live there. Michelle then introduced her student teacher to the class and proceeded to explain the point sheet system to the new student. She talked about how the sheets documented points, progress towards goals, and whether or not the student had homework.

During this introduction, the new student cursed at two other boys. Michelle gave him a verbal reminder that we don't swear in school, and he did not repeat the offense. Following this, the students went around the room and read their personal goals aloud to the class. The order in which they went was determined by one of the students whom Michelle called on. Referring to the house they came from, she called out a room and bunk number. The student who slept at those coordinates was asked to call on each person in turn to read aloud his goals for the day. After each student was called on, the

leader called on the adults to ask what their goal for the day was. I was a bit surprised by this, and when it was my turn, I said I hoped to learn what going to school was like here.

Some of the students were difficult to understand because of their articulation, but all of them had the same list of goals. They were as follows: "Complete my assignments"; "Accept responsibility for my actions"; "Be respectful to myself and others"; "Arrive prepared"; and "Interact with peers positively." Following the goal reading, the students stood for the pledge of allegiance which came over the building intercom. Next, they watched the "Today" show taped from NBC by Michelle earlier in the morning. They did not watch all of it, but saw the world news stories, which took about ten minutes. This was followed by a Geography lesson where the students looked at several different types of maps. Michelle explained that this was the typical routine for the homeroom hour.

When the second hour class came in, the student teacher and I were introduced again. It was a completely new group of eight students. After telling them who I was, one student came up to me and said, "You's a scientist, lookin' at how bad kids learn." He then laughed and took his seat, seeming to be in good spirits. During the instruction time the students seemed to be focused. After about thirty-five minutes they had some free time and discussed their situations. They talked about court dates, when they would be released, and visitations. The third hour class was math. The students entered in an orderly manner and participated well. Michelle kept a fairly rapid pace and most of the students appeared to care about keeping up as they hunched over their notes and looked at the board. Near the end of this class, one of the residential staff members came in, lined the students up, and took them to lunch.

I walked over to the cafeteria with Michelle and we arrived before the students. Each class came in with a residential staff member, sat down at a table, and then went to the lunch line after they had said grace. She and I went through the lunch line ahead of the students, then went back to the school and ate with the rest of the staff. The teachers briefly discussed which students had incidents in the morning, which ones might be problematic in the afternoon, and ones that had recently entered or exited the program.

After lunch, two hours of instruction remained. The first class was another math section, where the kids were learning some basic algebra material. It took noticeably longer for the students to settle down, and a couple students interrupted frequently. Halfway through the hour, a student from another class barged into the room followed by the school principal and two of the residential staff. The student said that the staff members were threatening him and that he did not want to be restrained. After a couple minutes, the adults were able to lead him out without physical contact. The rest of the class continued to work, making few comments. They worked on multiplication and basic algebra skills before being allowed to work on 4-H projects that would be displayed in the upcoming county fair. Later, I learned that the student who had come into the class inappropriately was a special education student who had refused to take his medication for the past five days.

Some of the students watched a Disney movie while the others worked on their math homework or 4-H projects. There was more conversation about court dates, and three students compared how much time they had spent in boot camp. Other topics included music, sports, and tattoos. There was some minor physical contact between the kids, but it appeared to be playful and did not require teacher intervention. One student

who was sitting near me told me, "Make sure you stay off meth, 'cause it costs too much and detox is bad." He did not seem to be looking for a response as he immediately turned and joined the boot camp conversation.

For the last hour of the day, the students watched a film about wildlife in Alaska. They made lots of commentary, but it was generally appropriate and they seemed interested. After the film, some students from another class came back and the first hour homeroom group was reconstituted. They had their point sheets checked by Michelle, and two residential staff joined the class for the last few minutes. During this time, the students wrote down and submitted their answers to a trivia question Michelle had posted first hour. Following this, they went around the room again reading their goals aloud and telling whether or not they had met them for the day. If they commented that they had not met a goal, one of the residential staff asked them why and what they could do better tomorrow. The students also reported if they had been assigned homework. After this recitation, Michelle went through and read positive comments from the point sheets. She explained to the new student that if all the homeroom students earned all possible points for a whole day, they would get a free day. After this, all students who had submitted correct answers to the trivia question received a piece of candy. Finally, the students were lined up and accompanied the residential staff to a recreation activity, and their school day was over.

Residential Staff Meeting

These meetings are held every week and do not include the school staff, unless there is a pressing behavioral concern which seems to be occurring primarily in the school setting. The meeting I attended was for the staff of the same house for which

Michelle was the lead teacher. I chose this meeting as I would be familiar with most of the residential staff who were present, and with all of the students they would be discussing. The house supervisor called the meeting to order about half an hour past its scheduled start time. They had been waiting for the family counselor and probation officer to arrive, but these men were hung up in court and no one was sure when they would be able to come. Those people who were present at the beginning included seven staff members who worked directly with the students, the supervisor, and me. The meeting lasted approximately one hour, and the family counselor arrived for the second half. The probation officer decided not to come to the meeting, and sent a message saying he would touch base with the staff members later that week.

The residential supervisor led the group in talking about the students in the house. The meeting was informal, and each staff member was asked if they had any students in particular they wanted to bring up, or any problematic interactions between students that they felt the group needed to address. One staff member talked about how a new student had come in the previous day and the first thing he said was, "Who runs this house?" None of the other students replied, so the new one said, "Well, I'll run it then." The staff people commented that they would need to watch him and seemed to think that he would be butting heads with a couple other students before long. They discussed another student who had left the program that week, including what he would be doing for the rest of the summer, where he would be attending school, and if he would be involved in sports.

A third student they discussed was going to be allowed to attend football practice at the school he would be attending once he was released. Since he would not be released until after the start of football season, they were talking about how they would be getting

him to practice. The district was about eight miles from Camp Haven, and there was uncertainty about how they would transport him, especially if there were two practices a day in the late summer. There seemed to be no question as to whether the student would be participating, only how they would be facilitating it.

After these conversations, they discussed scheduling for the next month, and which groups were scheduled to be run and facilitated by whom. For example, they determined who would be running the substance abuse group for the next two weeks. At this point the family counselor arrived and updated the staff on the court case he had just come from. They asked for his input on the student situations described above, and he mentioned that he would be meeting with all the students and then be able to update the staff. He talked about students on medication, and noted that this house had the fewest students currently medicated, which constituted three of the twelve juveniles. Following the counselor's input, the meeting adjourned, with a few staffers remaining to see if they could switch days in the schedule among themselves.

Overall, the meeting did not seem to be scripted or organized, although one of the overnight staffers commented that this one was unusually well attended. They followed no format for discussing students, and one loosely kept notes which were to be added to a running record kept by the house supervisor. The staff seemed comfortable with each other, and joked throughout the meeting. They appeared to range in age from mid-twenties to past fifty. Of the seven staff that had direct, daily contact with the juveniles, five were African-American. Two of the staff were African-American women, who struck me as particularly vocal about which students were trouble.

Daily Schedule

I asked the students to describe what a typical day was like for them. The following response was representative. As the student spoke, he rattled off the times and activities quickly, as did almost all the students who conversed with me. I noted how readily they could recite their schedules. As I worked with public school students as a psychologist trying to determine their need for services, I often asked them to tell me what classes they have, and who their teachers were. I am amazed at how long it takes them to express to me where they are each hour of the day, and who was instructing them. The students at Haven had this information almost instantly at their command.

> BOBBY: Weekdays are really, really structured...not really structured to where it's like boot camp or anything but we all know what we got to do and so we do that. And then the weekends, are kind of relaxed, we don't do as much.
> VD: Ok, take me through just the schedule of the day.
> BOBBY: Uh...seven o'clock wake up, seven thirty details, eight o'clock uh...breakfast...round eight thirty eight forty-five school, um school until eleven forty-five lunch, lunch until eleven thirty or twelve thirty, eleven thirty somewhere around that... then uh, school until two forty-five, two forty-five you get back to the house, you do shift change, shift change is where they change the staff, and uh...round three fifteen you have a cabin meeting talk about what's going to happen in a day, between three fifteen and five o'clock you can either have work session, go outside, or you can stay in the house play pool, video games, whatever, uh...five o'clock dinner, around five thirty details again, we got to clean up the house again from when we messed it up. Uh, throughout the week we have different groups. So usually after dinner we have the possibility of having a group, so we could have anger control...skillstreaming, all this other...

Staff Participants

The School Principal

The school principal was a Caucasian male about five foot eight, with a medium build and a shock of dark, but graying hair. He displayed a lot of energy and was quick to laugh, which could be heard from a fair distance away. He always seemed eager to talk, and I rarely saw him not engaged in conversation with a staff member or student. He

would tell me that he had been involved in education for nearly thirty years, the last twelve as principal of this building. Prior to taking over the principalship he had been a special education teacher at Haven. When interacting with students he appeared to have no reservations about confronting them about behavior deemed inappropriate, and would often do so in view of other students. For the most part, he spoke to students where he found them, but for the more serious behavioral offences, he would speak with them in the resource room or his office. He knew every student by name, and seemed to have an easy manner with all of the staff. My interview with him took place in his office within the school building.

The Residential Director

This African-American man probably would have stood six foot six, but typically walked slightly stooped over, and appeared to be around fifty years old. He had the build of a former basketball player with long arms and hands that enveloped most other peoples in a handshake. He wore a beard, glasses, and a Kufu, which was a small round hat made out of cloth with a colorful pattern. He was soft-spoken, and seemed to be moving slightly slower than those around him. I did not observe him interacting with any of the youths, but with the staff, he spoke with an easy manner and dry laugh. He had been working at this facility for quite a few years, first as a residential staff person, then a supervisor, and finally as the director of the residential portion of Camp Haven. We spoke in his office at the residential staff administration building.

The Classroom Teacher

This Caucasian woman was attractive, in her early thirties, about five foot six, and quite slender of build. She had refined features and light brown, shoulder-length curly

hair. With a ready laugh and direct manner, she seemed to connect easily with all of the students. Her walk struck me as purposeful, and it was rare to see her without a beverage nearby. She was quick to use sarcasm with students and staff, but in my presence it was always playful and taken well by others. Watching her, I learned that the students could expect flexibility in terms of teaching style and lesson planning, but expectations were consistently high and wavered little. The students respected her opinion and sought it on matters ranging from personal hygiene to test-taking. The present school year was her sixth teaching in the Woods School. Our main interview conversation took place in her classroom after school one afternoon.

The Family Counselor

Constantly joking with students and staff alike, this Caucasian man was stocky and approximately five foot seven. He appeared to be in his early fifties and had been doing this job for eighteen years. Before being the counselor, he had worked for the ISD as a para-educator at Haven. His voice carried notably and he seemed to be perpetually conversing with someone, to the point that if he was in your building, you were likely to know it. He had a cubicle at the residential administration building where he sometimes saw students, but mainly he was over at the school during the day. He informed students about when their court dates were coming up, family members who might be coming to visit, and concerns that had been brought to him by teachers and residential staff about their progress. My interview with him took place in a conference room at the residential administration building.

The School Social Worker

This young, Caucasian woman was in her late twenties, attractive, about five foot six, and of average build. She had dark brown, shoulder length straight hair and an easy smile. She was soft-spoken and somewhat hesitant to speak with me as she wasn't sure she had much to contribute based on how her role had been defined. She had been laid off only a few weeks before sitting down with me for the interview but had found another job closer to her home. The interview was conducted in her home, with her baby daughter present.

The Probation Officer

This Caucasian gentleman appeared to be in his mid-fifties, with thinning white hair and an average build; he stood at about five foot ten. His clothes were slightly rumpled every time I saw him, and he was usually moving from place to place at a near run. He spoke as quickly as he moved and stood quite close to those with whom he conversed. I observed him speaking with students in hallways, classrooms, and lunch tables. His eye contact was fleeting, and he gave the impression that when he was listening to you, he wanted you to finish so he could continue his thoughts. His office was twenty-five miles from Haven at the county court house and was where he spoke with me at length. He had been working in the juvenile justice system for twenty-seven years, and his official designation was senior juvenile court officer.

Student Participants

The following excerpt is from the interview with the school principal (SP) where he described the makeup of the student body in terms of how many students typically have special education labels.

SP: For a number of years we averaged 17 out of 48 students; we averaged 17 to 22 special ed students a year. This past year we peaked at 37 out of 48, which can make things busy. Most of the disabilities that our represented are easily your EI, LD, and Cognitively Impaired mildly, some moderate. We have had a couple of students over the years that fit into the old Trainable range which would be your... they've got the new ones now what is it mosey, not quite down to that was moderately impaired...

VD: CI levels.

SP: Yeah, but not quite there, they just tested in that range, you know you're talking IQ's you know 2%.

VD: In the 50's?

SP: Yeah, and a lot of those kids tested that way but they had some street smarts too, so it was kind of interesting to watch them function because you did see the inability to function socially.

VD: Right.

SP: But, there was this façade that was created that was probably a lot of splinter skills developed over the years, social splinter skills if you will, to survive. So but we haven't had any kids that have been really solidly, solidly in that range, so most of it is EI, LD, and the Cognitively Impaired.

The teacher whose classroom I spent time observing in gave me a list of all the students who were at Haven during the term I was there. All forty-eight beds were full, and the list showed that 26 of them were eligible for special education, 18 were not, and 4 had records that had not arrived, so their status was unknown. The breakdown of juveniles by disability classification was as follows, with several students having multiple labels:

Learning Disabled (LD)-4
Cognitively Impaired (CI)-4
Emotionally Impaired (EI)-13
EI and CI-1
EI and LD-1
EI and Speech and Language Impaired (SLI)-1
EI and Otherwise Health Impaired (OHI)-1
EI, LD, and SLI-1.

I asked if the list was typical for the population she served at any given time, and she remarked that it was very rare to have any kids with CI and/or SLI. From this pool, I selected the following six students, and assigned each a pseudonym.

Billy

The first student I interviewed had incomplete school records. I went to the building secretary to find what the Woods School and Haven had been sent, and was told that all they had was some special education paperwork and some court placement documents. Billy, age 15, attended a local school district and was involved in the short-term program. The district where he was most recently going to school was the sixth he had attended. The first page when I opened up the file was known as a "face sheet" to the staff. It listed his name, had a black and white picture, noted that he was bi-racial, and listed any identifying marks on his body. Court documents in his file noted that his first offence was breaking and entering in 2002. This was followed by a string of arrests and tickets issued for disturbing the peace, probation violation, retail fraud, minor in possession-alcohol, creating a disturbance, and petty theft. A school social worker's report noted that he was court placed at Haven for "incorrigible school behaviors". Billy's father had recently been released from prison after serving fourteen years on drug charges. Billy was in a fight with his mother's boyfriend, removed by Child Protective Services, and placed with his father before coming to Haven. The court documentation also indicated that Billy had been diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and an "Anger Disorder."

There were also assessment results from an evaluation Billy had completed before being sent to Haven. The testing was part of the triennial cycle that all special education students receive as part of their services under federal and state law. The purpose of the testing is for program evaluation and to determine if the student continues to be eligible for services. Intelligence (IQ) testing noted that Billy's overall score was below average.

Academic testing indicated that his skills in reading, math, and writing were consistent with his IQ scores. A social/emotional assessment indicated that hyperactivity, aggression, and attention problems were areas of clinical significance.

Billy's only other documentation sent by either the court or his local school district was a copy of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that had been completed upon his placement in Haven. It was attended by Billy, his mother, a general education teacher, a special education teacher, the Woods principal, the school social worker, a school psychologist, and the teacher consultant. It noted that his disability was Emotional Impairment (EI). Specific areas of concern that fell under the EI classification included a documented inability to build and maintain relationships, and displaying inappropriate behaviors and feelings under normal circumstances. The participants wrote that Billy had used foul language excessively, threatened and fought with others, and "failed to respond rationally to stressful situations." The IEP listed some of Billy's future goals, which included owning a home, owning a lawn-care business, and getting a high school diploma. It also noted that he enjoys hunting and fishing.

The IEP had a section about transition activities and services in which he would be participating at Haven that would help him when he returned to the community. These activities included how he would have opportunities to earn money at Haven, volunteer at a center for grade school students with severe disabilities, attend substance abuse sessions, and attend academic classes at Woods. His specific IEP goals were involved with helping him express frustration appropriately, use available staff support, ignore negative peers, accept responsibility for his actions, be truthful about his behaviors, and exhibit leadership skills. Under the section describing services provided, the IEP

committee wrote "Basic Classroom Program" and "Secondary EI", and wrote that he would be attending this program for 27.5 hours per week at the Woods school.

Dave

The second student I interviewed had records similar to the first in terms of volume. Dave, a sixteen year-old Caucasian, had court papers documenting a series of juvenile offences starting in 2000. His list included assault, resisting and obstructing a police officer, having an unregistered bicycle, minor in possession-alcohol, curfew violations, and last, home invasion and larceny, the offences for which he was sent to Haven. The documentation included a reference to his being removed from home for not being, "controlled by parents and gotten to school on a regular basis." Incidents of substance abuse, gang-related activity, and concerns that he was subject to physical abuse were also noted. Dave has a diagnosis of ADHD, and at one time took Ritalin to combat the symptoms but had not taken it for a few years. His court papers indicated a history of parental substance abuse, depression, and anxiety.

His entrance IEP was in the file, and the meeting where it was crafted was attended by him, a parent, the teacher consultant, general education teacher, special education teacher, and the Woods principal. His areas of eligibility for special education included a Learning Disability (LD) in basic reading skills and a secondary label of EI. It was noted that Dave enjoyed working on cars and construction and would like to go to college and play football.

The transition activities and services section noted how he could earn money while at Haven, participate in volunteer activities in the disabled children's center, attend substance abuse prevention group, and attend class five periods per day. His goals

included reading skill development, completing assignments on time, ignoring negative peers, seeking adult guidance to help resolve issues or when angry. His services section listed the Basic EI classroom program for 27.5 hours per week.

There was evaluation data present from testing that had been completed in 2002. These records indicated that Dave also qualified for special education services as a student with a Speech and Language Impairment (SLI) and had qualified in this area for several years. The speech and language pathologist who tested him wrote, "It is recommended that Dave continue to receive speech and language services for a severe oral language impairment." Attached to the IEP described above was a sheet completed by the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) that documented the SLI, but the IEP itself contained no speech and/or language goals, services, or mention of eligibility.

Other data noted from the 2002 evaluation included intelligence test scores in the low average range and achievement scores in reading and math which ranged from below average to low average. The reports indicated a brother who was also classified as EI, and that there had been concern regarding Dave's behaviors since he entered school in kindergarten.

Joe

The records for Joe included his entire cumulative file that had been sent by the district he was attending prior to being sent to Haven. Joe had special education records indicating that he had been receiving services since age three or four under the Pre-Primary Impaired (PPI) classification due to speech and language deficits. He was of Native American descent and had changed schools four times. Good attendance was noted in elementary school, but became dramatically worse after he entered middle

school in grade six. When I met him, Joe was sixteen years old, and was going through the short-term program at Haven for the second time.

His court papers spoke of assault and battery, and assault with a dangerous weapon, and noted that the incidents involved conflicts within his family. He was suspended several times from school for fighting. He was diagnosed with ADHD at age six, and medication was discontinued after a short while, as the side effects were thought to be worse than the symptoms of the disorder. Joe also went through counseling, but sessions were discontinued due to financial concerns. Joe was born prematurely and had not seen his biological mother for many years.

Earlier this year an assessment had been completed and noted that Joe had average reading scores, but below average writing and math scores. His current eligibility consisted of a primary classification of EI and a secondary label of SLI. Reports from the evaluators indicated that there was a long history of involvement from Child Protective Services, and that his parents lost custody for a time when he was in elementary school. These reports noted that Joe's IQ scores were in the well below average range and that several years ago he was evaluated to determine if he had Autism, but this diagnosis was not made. Joe had been sent to the Angel County Youth Home about six times before his initial detainment at Haven.

His IEP was attended by himself, a parent, the teacher consultant, a special education teacher, the Woods principal, and the school social worker. The EI and SLI classifications were noted in the eligibility section. The documentation of speech impairment contained statements on how it impacted his performance and requires, "continuous and frequent services from a speech and language pathologist." Other areas

of difficulty included his struggles with making friends, managing anger towards bullies, and accepting directions from adults. The services and activities section listed how Joe would accept responsibility for laundry, learn to maintain his hygiene, earn money working in the kitchen or doing lawn care, volunteer at the disabled children's center twice per month, attend substance abuse sessions, and earn credit towards his high school diploma. His services were categorized as Basic EI Classroom for 27.5 hours per week, and speech and language pathologist services one to two times per week for twenty minutes.

His specific goal pages listed the means by which he would improve his speech and language development, articulation, develop positive interpersonal relationships, identify positive peers to interact with, ignore negative peers, speak to adults respectfully, and "accept 'no' the first time."

Arnold

Arnold had a few school records, several court documents, and some materials from foster care placements. This amalgamation displayed slightly more information than most of the students had. Arnold was an African-American sixteen year-old, of average height, an athletic build, and a very dark complexion. He had bright eyes and a quiet demeanor, but staff warned me that he had some history of violence. He had been at Haven for just over a year and had been sent there for assaulting staff and peers at a residential program in another county. The first piece of documentation encountered in his file, after the face sheet, was a letter from the counselor at his prior placement. It noted that Arnold had been in "managed care" since he was two months old. Since that time, he had been placed in twenty-one different foster homes, and no members of any of

those families had any desire to be involved with him currently. The letter also indicated that no biological family members were involved.

Court documents noted that Arnold's offences included assault and battery and aggravated assault. Notes about his family were included and showed that both parents were in prison, his mother for second degree murder and his father for weapon and drug charges. Old interviews with him indicated that he believed he had three maternal half sisters, but he did not know the whereabouts of any and only knew the last name of one. The court had ordered psycho-therapy and anger management repeatedly, and listed the reasons as "emotional concerns" and possible abuse. Arnold's records indicated that he has been eligible for special education since at least 2000, but it was not clear if that was his date of initial eligibility.

Arnold's special education documentation included evaluation results which showed his IQ to be in the low average range. Tests of his academic achievement showed that his reading skills were average, with math skills considerably lower. His most recent IEP was attended by the special education teacher, principal, and teacher consultant of the Woods School. His eligibility classification was EI, and his services were listed as "Basic EI Program, 27.5 hours per week". His interests were noted to include being a narrator and rapping. At that time, he was unsure where he wanted to live as an adult, or what he would like to do after high school. His Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP) noted that he was at grade level in everything except math, but when he became upset he did not stay on task or complete assignments. Concerns included his tendency to take out his frustration on peers, and verbally provoking and disrupting the classroom. In the transition section of the IEP, it noted that he would have an opportunity to explore

career options. His goals included math skill improvement, peer relationships, and anger/behavior control.

Devon

"Devon's" records were far from complete, and mainly consisted of documentation that had been generated after he had arrived at Haven with a few court papers and old school paperwork. He had been there since September of 2003, just shy of one year. Sparse court documentation noted that parental rights had been terminated, he had been in foster care, and he had committed his first offence in 2000. His offences included assaulting family members and probation violation, and there was confirmation that he had been physically and sexually abused and abandoned. Other concerns included a history of bed wetting, temper tantrums, fighting at school, hearing voices and talking to himself, biting, and swearing at others. There was a note that his parents had a history of serious substance abuse that had resulted in three foster home placements. Devon had been placed on medication for mood swings and anger, but it was not clear how long he had been taking them, and how consistent his medical care had been regarding this issue.

Devon was fourteen and Caucasian, with blond hair and gray eyes. He was tall for his age, pushing five foot ten, and was of average build. His smile was quick, but his eye contact shifted regularly, which sent mixed signals about how comfortable he was speaking with me. Several times while we were talking, he did not seem to understand the questions, as his answers were sometimes wildly off topic.

His special education records displayed some inconsistency between those of school and court. In his most recent evaluation, which had occurred since he had come to Haven, the team recommended eligibility under the EI classification only. His court

documentation noted that his special education eligibility was LD. His school papers showed that the school team involved in his most recent IEP, which had taken place at Haven, found that EI was the primary classification with LD being secondary. Evaluation data showed his overall IQ was in the below average range, but he had significantly stronger non-verbal skills as opposed to verbal abilities. His achievement testing showed that he was well below average across the board in reading and math.

His most recent IEP was attended by the teacher consultant, special education teacher, principal, school social worker, and school psychologist, all of whom served the Woods school. Eligibility was listed as EI primary and LD secondary. His interests included bowling, hunting, fishing, and building things. They asked about future employment, and Devon responded that he was interested in becoming either a clerk or a security guard. Strengths for him were listed as being a good reader and friendly. His needs were noted to be a structured environment, social skill training, math support, and organizational skills. His PLEP noted that counseling and possible social work support to assist with peer relationships were concerns. His goals were designed to help him learn to form good peer relationships, and his services included the basic EI program 27.5 hours per week. The transition section described how he would be earning money by working in the kitchen and while doing lawn care, and how he would be attending five classes daily. Listed supplementary aids and services were small class size, positive behavioral supports, and extra assistance on assignments as needed.

Bobby

The final student, Bobby, had been at Haven since December of 2002. Bobby was an African-American, sixteen year-old with light skin and hair that he wore either as a

sizeable afro or in braids extending nearly to his shoulders. Bobby was easily the most articulate of the students interviewed and was of average height and thin. His teeth were far from straight, but he smiled readily and seemed to be constantly joking and talking. His records were significantly more complete than average, particularly in regard to documentation of his special education services, in the form of several old IEPs; he had been classified as EI since at least 1997.

Court documentation noted that parental rights had been terminated several years ago because of neglect, making him a ward of the state. He was first placed in shelter care in 1999, and had spent time in a city children's home and at least one foster home before coming to Haven. His offense list was short and seemed to include only a charge of breaking and entering of an occupied dwelling, although he was considered a high risk as a repeat offender. The court papers noted a history of family substance abuse, selling drugs, and violence. Bobby himself had been caught using cocaine and alcohol.

Evaluation records indicated that his IQ was in the high average range, and achievement scores were solidly average compared to other students his age. He had diagnoses of ADHD, ODD, and Anxiety Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified. Evaluation reports documented serious problems with relationships with peers and adults, refusing to follow directions, difficulty controlling emotions, and being disruptive. His most recent IEP was attended by the teacher consultant, special education teacher, a general education teacher, and the principal of Woods. His eligibility was noted to be EI, and strengths were listed as very articulate, helpful, and intelligent. Under the 'needs' section, involving some type of mentor was suggested, as well as concern about seeking out negative peers and immaturity. The transition portion indicated that Bobby had expressed interest in

becoming a writer and earning a doctorate in child psychology, and that he enjoyed comedy, writing, singing, reading, and writing poetry.

Transition activities and services included having him be responsible for daily chores and laundry, earn money by working, and attend classes daily. Supplementary aids and services were listed as small class size and positive behavioral supports. His goals were designed to assist him with exhibiting appropriate behavior in classrooms, developing positive relationships with peers and staff, and seeking staff support when stressful situations arise. His service plan was Basic EI program, 27.5 hours per week.

Getting permission to speak with these young men proved something of a challenge. For the three short-term juveniles, who came from local schools or placements, getting parental signatures on the consent forms was easy. In contrast, it took four weeks for the residential director to track down who had parental rights for the long-term students. He needed to contact their court case workers and probation officers to determine whether or not parental rights had been terminated, and who the court had named as guardian in their stead. As it turned out, he himself was considered their legal guardian while they were adjudicated to Camp Haven, and he was able to sign the consent forms. Through this I observed that something which struck me as a basic piece of information in regard to serving these students, particularly considering all the court and school paperwork that followed them around, that the solution to this issue was not already known.

The six students had a great degree of variability in terms of the length of their sentence. One student had been there for two weeks, while another had been there for just short of two years. One of the juveniles was at Haven for the second time. Before going

to the site and learning more about the population, I had been under the impression that all of the youths came directly from public school districts after committing a crime either at school or in the community. From reviewing records and conducting the interviews with staff and youths, it was evident that only about half came directly from public schools. The other half came from a variety of placements, including equally or less secure detention facilities in other counties, group foster homes, and alternative schools. As I selected the six students whom I would be interviewing, I considered this variety of sending institutions as well as area of disability and length of sentence.

Chapter V

Results

Several themes emerged from analyzing the collected data. Each of the themes presented below bears strongly on the educational experiences of the juveniles who are eligible to receive special education services. Provided in each of the themes are excerpts from the interview transcripts, and these in turn are presented as examples of the perceptions and experiences of the participants. These passages are included to allow the reader to develop a sense of the experiences at Haven from the words of this study's participants.

Theme 1: The experience of being at Camp Haven was designed to be educational to prevent recidivism.

Theme 2: Students at Haven experienced more academic success than they did at the public school they came from.

Theme 3: Special education looked different at Haven than in local school districts.

Theme 4: The trappings of special education did not mean much to the juveniles at Haven.

Theme 5: Students at Haven had many of their basic needs met in ways they had not before.

Theme 6: Even though students were placed with a group of individuals with similar circumstances, they remained isolated in many ways.

Theme 1: The experience of being at Camp Haven was designed to be educational to prevent recidivism.

Everyone at Camp Haven, school and residential staff alike, spoke in a language common to educators. They all communicated in terms and talked about their goals for the juveniles, in ways that were common in every school I had worked in. When speaking about a student's needs, they talked about what that individual needed to learn and how

the program was designed to teach them. Importantly, the focus of Haven seemed to be on remediation as opposed to punishment, on re-education as opposed to incarceration. The students affirmed this idea, as they talked about learning social and academic skills and being expected to perform better than they had in the public schools they came from. Below is an excerpt from this researcher's observation notes that highlights the philosophy of the school component, which I saw to be true.

OBSERVATIONS: After school one day, the staff met to discuss which students were having difficulty, and to look at the calendar for the rest of the term. The meeting was fairly informal; there was a bowl of candy and the mood seemed light. The principal passed out an agenda that contained the mission statement for the building at the top. It read, "We the staff of Haven School recognize the unique needs of each student. We are committed to providing a learning environment, which assures the student successful completion of his individualized goals in order to prepare him for constructive engagement in the community."

Social Skills

Both the residential and school components recognized that a crucial factor in preparing the youths to return to their communities was social skill development. The residential director spoke about how many of the students who entered the camp have weak interpersonal skills and have never learned to appropriately deal with stress or manage anger. A key focus of the residential programming that manifested in group experiences and the camp behavioral system was designed around the need to teach students these skills. The school staff in the camp did not seem to utilize any separate, defined social skills curriculum, but endeavored to incorporate the principles the student's were learning through their residential treatment plan. This response from the residential director (RD) highlighted how well the philosophies of the school and

residential components matched, although each was primarily concerned with different things.

> RD: I'd say the thing you're trying to do with the kids in terms of...teaching the skills that many of the kids are lacking. Whether it be the social thing, or stuff like problem solving, or moral reasoning, what you're really trying to teach is the skill so they become better in terms of how they cope with different things. So you try and go at things that are going to be issues when they go back to the community. So even in the groups that you're running you want the kid to come up with situations, so if you're working on certain skill, when might you use this skill, or can you think of a situation in the community that you might use this skill. Getting them to role play it here...it's not official, but at least you want to get them to role play it and as much as you can get them to...try and use some of that here. Hopefully it's transferred to the community. When you do send a kid home he's going to be confronted with those situations, so part of the groups is homework, so if a kid does go home and he has an assignment, it goes on to see how did he handle that situation.

The school principal (SP) spoke of the students needing to learn how to deal appropriately with authority figures. In his experience, appropriate community social skills were not taught in the homes many of these students were raised in, which caused problems when the students used behavior and language at school or in the community that was acceptable at home. He recognized that the need for social skill remediation was at least equal to teaching basic academic skills.

> SP: They just can't function socially very well. They have great difficulty dealing with authority figures. Sometimes that's based in reality. (laugh) They've had some difficult times. Our systems don't work real good for our kids that are on that edge. Our kids tend to challenge authority. They tend to challenge the status quo. The other group of them, they don't have the pragmatic skills. They're not taught in the home, i.e., respect. I've used that term to mean more a degree of politeness, if you will. When rough language is used in the home as a common place occurrence and, you'll excuse my language, but pass the fucking potatoes is OK in some of the rooms in some of the homes, but you use that language in the public school classroom, and you get chastised for it, and then you get angry because well, that's what we do at home, what are you talking about. I didn't do anything wrong, and you're just picking on me. So they get sent out of [the classroom]. I'm creating that scenario, but that happens a lot.

Despite the emphasis placed on interpersonal skill development, some students did not think they were learning much at Haven that would serve them after they returned to the community. I observed a few of them making fun of the groups they had to participate in, where they joked about what they would really do if faced with some of the scenarios they discussed in group. Joe spoke about participating in the groups for anger control and moral reasoning:

VD: Ok. Do you think that those groups help?
JOE: (deep breath) No.
VD: No. Why is that?
JOE: Because I always get mad.
VD: You just you keep getting mad? What kind of stuff makes you mad?
JOE: I don't know. Like mad that I'm back here.
VD: That you're back here?
JOE: You know I could be out there smoking, and um, repairing lawn mowers.

Despite some students being slow to warm up to the program, most eventually came around and did well according to the staff. I was curious about why they seemed to be so optimistic about the impact their work was having, and as I reviewed the data, came to see another piece of the experience these youths were having. The expectations placed upon them were significant, to conform to the behavioral interventions and complete their school work. The staff displayed a consistency of application and understanding in regard to what the students were supposed to do and how they were to accomplish assigned tasks.

High Expectations

Many educators are trained that high expectations are a key component of classroom management and academic success for students. This idea can be seen easily in federal legislation, such as the No Child Left Behind act, that holds schools to expectations such as having every student be proficient in math and reading in a

designated time frame. This principle of high expectations was present both in the school portion of Haven and the residential. The school principal spoke about the goal of holding the students to high academic and behavioral expectations and the success he had observed.

> SP: We're pretty intense. We really put a high focus on or present high standards for kids. I mean we expect them to perform and it's the high expectations that we have. I think kids perform pretty well in this program, mainly because they believe that expectation and high expectation that, given the opportunity, you know you're going to excel, and they do for the most part.

Most of the students were able to articulate behavioral and academic expectations, both while speaking in interviews and during my observations that led this researcher to believe that expectations had at some point been clearly defined and were often repeated. This was different than from similar experiences during interviews with special education students at a public school. When public school students were asked questions like, "What kind of notes does your teacher have you take?", or "What do you need to do to get an A in math class?", they were rarely able to relate what the teachers expected from them, and many had difficulty telling to what class they should return to after we had finished.

> When the family counselor (FC) was asked about preventing recidivism, he gave a response that spanned this theme and the next. He described how expectations were *individualized* based on student skill, and how this lead directly to increased success and *positive* self image, the next theme presented in this chapter.

> FC: The whole emphasis around school in terms of reinforcing some positive experiences, I think that's one of them for a lot of the kids. I'm not saying that grades are easy to get here, but I think the teachers here tend to measure individual success for a kid, and he gets graded based on his individual effort not what the other nine kids may have done in that classroom. Joey getting ten answers right out of the twenty for him that might be B or C work where, for

another kid, that wouldn't even be acceptable at that point. So, I think that there's an element of that in terms of trying to reinforce some positive experiences around school, not lessen the value of education but trying to look at how you measure that particular kid's success. I think the behavioral intervention in terms of, kids out of the classroom here, and/or the teacher or the teacher's aide going out of the classroom with that student and meeting with the residential staff, ok what is it that we need to do to get you back into the classroom. That's not what happens in public school environment, you and I both know that. You know, they're going to call the parents, you're out the door, see you in a couple of days kind of thing. So part of what we're trying to do is get the kid engaged, you know, how do you intervene in this kind of situation or problem so it doesn't happen again, or how do you intervene differently.

Recreation and Employment Skills

Several of the staff and students spoke about the virtues of recreation and work.

Those staff members who commented on it seemed convinced that teaching students the

skills necessary to seek out and participate in recreation and employment were critical in

preventing recidivism. When students were asked what types of things they needed to

help them be successful and not be re-incarcerated, most spoke of jobs, hobbies, and

sports. There were other prongs of treatment focus aimed at these students regarding the

prevention of recidivism. Strengthening family support, teaching interpersonal skills,

fostering a sense of academic success: Each of these factors were also mentioned by the

staff and were observable in the classroom or in student/staff interaction. The two factors

presented here, recreation and work, seemed to be special because they came across

clearly from both staff and youths.

The residential director described the purpose behind sports and recreation

opportunities which were designed into each student's day. By having them work they

were able to earn money for restitution or to spend on themselves on shopping trips. He

also discussed how involving the youth with sports could be a vehicle to identify specific

problems or issues of anger, and then work them out.

RD: We have recreation, and that's really when our kids turn some money and have fun. Also the recreation is used in many ways in terms of dealing with some of the behavioral issues that kids have. So a lot of this program is centered around activities, but a lot of time the activities are set up to deal with certain issues with the kid. So the kid who has a difficult time dealing with the anger or working together with his peer group, being on the softball team or basketball team is a positive treatment. So the activity itself helps us work with some of the issues with the kid. The activities are not just activity for the sake of activity, but it has a treatment focus behind it all, so a lot of the kids, they're involved in the community service projects.

Two student responses to questioning about what types of things they felt they would require in order to be successful and not return to a facility like Haven are given below.

VD: What are some of those things that you think you need to be successful?
BILLY: What I got to do to be...successful?
VD: Yeah. Like what do you have to do, so you wouldn't...
BILLY: Get in trouble.
VD: Yeah.
BILLY: Here or out in the community?
VD: After you leave here, well both, tell me both.
BILLY: Um...in here I'm improved. When I first got here I was bad but I improved, I listening and following directions and everything. When I leave I just got to keep doing what I'm doing here. Uh, doing it on the outs, so I won't get in trouble. Cuz I'm, I mean I'm ready, I'm going to have a job when I get out.
VD: What kind of work?
BILLY: My dad gots a lawn care business.
VD: So you think that will help you stay out of trouble and stuff?
BILLY: Yeah.
VD: What other kinds of things do you think would help you?
BILLY: Um, play basketball.
VD: Yeah?
BILLY: I'm good in basketball. I'm goin' to the YMCA with my dad though...the new one and um...oh yeah, and we going fishin'.
VD: You like fishing?
BILLY: Yeah.
VD: What kind of fish do you like to catch?
BILLY: Like we catch bass, um catfish...and I catch some big bluegills like the size of my hand.

BOBBY: Like go through my list of stuff, of what I think? First things first homework, second thing work, 'cause I got to get a job, and then any sport that I'm on and everything else comes after.

Asked about vocational assessment, the school principal commented that one of the teachers does testing, which he termed as "exploratory", and noted that he wished it could be an ongoing, comprehensive process. Michelle talked about how in the past there had been a much stronger vocational component to the school portion of Haven. Students had opportunities to study small engine repair, automotive care, and learn more lawn care and gardening skills. This was evident from looking at the classroom with the large bay door that was set up like a workshop.

By focusing on the areas presented in the first theme, the staff at Haven sought to equip the youth with tools they would need to make it in the community. As they acquired these skills, they often experienced greater accomplishment in the classroom. This idea comprised the second theme that is presented below.

Theme 2: Students at Haven experienced more academic success than they did at the public school from which they came.

Staff believed there was a strong connection between the overall design of the camp programming that included social skill development and high expectations, and student success. Analysis of the data revealed that this success often manifested in academic gains. Exit assessment of student skill levels in reading and math revealed that most gained significantly during their time at Haven. This growth contrasted sharply with the academic success the students had experienced in public school noted in their records. The classroom teacher (CT) noted issues of self-esteem that she felt were tied to improved academic performance.

> CT: Definitely I would say every day, every kid's potential isn't maximized at all, but I can say that every day every kid has something to feel really good about. Both academically and emotionally, whether it's happening in here or somewhere else. I think every kid feels important.

When asked to describe a typical student at Haven, the family counselor spoke about the experiences many of them had in public school. His words confirmed what the student records told me, that many of these youths had known failure in the schools they attended in their communities. He was an animated and jovial speaker, but during this portion of the interview he was significantly more quiet and serious.

> FC: It's not every kid who comes in here that has significant problems with school. Of the kids that do, I would say almost to a kid, they've been identified as a special ed. student in the community, probably a hundred percent of them. And since it's you and I in the room, a hundred percent of those kids that come out of Johnson Public School system that are actually special ed. kids, as far as I'm concerned, I would tell [the superintendent] if she was sitting in this room right now, that they are being treated as throw away kids by that school system.

The probation officer (PO) echoed the difficulties faced by many of these kids, describing how he thought about special education students, where some of them came from, and what they might gain from serving time at Haven. He was responding to a question about what a typical student at the facility looked like.

> PO: I'm not going to treat a special ed student the same as I'm going to treat an honors student who's committed the same offense. I'm going, in the course of my investigation, to learn if this kid's got some special or unique problems. I'm going to end up talking to special education teachers at whatever school he's gone to. I'm going to be made aware by family members that there are some…you know, he doesn't know any better, or he did this because he gets frustrated; he's got a low frustration tolerance. I mean, he loses his temper; he's hanging out with the wrong crowd; he won't take his medications; or there's a whole, whole series of things that could be going on with a young man or young lady like that. So, now…that's not to say that this young man might not be well-suited for the START program out at Haven also. Maybe because this young man has got some severe learning disabilities; he refuses to go to school; he hates being labeled special ed; he hates all of the stigma that goes along with that; he hates being in a self-contained classroom; he wants to be seen or treated like other kids in the school and he isn't. So he starts skipping school, and he starts smoking dope, and a bunch of that kind of stuff. Ninety days out at the START program might be a good opportunity for this young man to get back in the classroom and work on a one-on-one situation, or at least in a small classroom environment, in a situation where he's required to be in class every day, on time, coming prepared, and that

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he's got some supports in place. And a lot of young men who were severely truant and who have had a lot of learning disabilities have really had some good experiences out at Haven, in that educational environment.

Before school one day near the end of the term, the teacher spoke about the grading process. She noted that this would be a day with more behavioral challenges than most, where some students would be quite expressive in regard to their grades. Some would be upset, some exuberant, but most of the kids would be letting us know how they felt. I found her assessment to be accurate, as at least half the students commented openly when she passed out sheets with grades and a record of missing assignments. Several of the more vocal students came up to her at some point during the hour the grades were passed out and asked how they affect the report to the probation officer or their release.

> OBSERVATION: She told me about how grades work, mentioning that every week she gives them a progress report. She warned me that this would cause several of the students to be bent out of shape for the whole day. She noted how she liked seeing them get a little upset because it told her that they care, but indicated that they would be acting out more than usual. The report contained a cumulative grade for the term, missing assignments, and the grade earned for each assignment given up to that point in the term. Michelle told the student teacher and I that most teachers give these, and that copies are given to the parents when they come for weekend visits or if they attend a bi-monthly parent meeting.

Michelle also mentioned how nearly all the parents expressed satisfaction with the progress their child made academically while out at Haven. Many parents seemed more concerned with how their child was doing in respect to interactions with peers and adults and were pleasantly surprised when told about the academic success they were experiencing. Between each student's entrance and exit process when they were administered tests of academic achievement, it was common to see significant growth. Below, the school social worker (SW) talked about how she viewed the experiences of the students she worked with while at Haven.

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VD: Overall, how would you characterize the experience of special ed kids at Haven in terms of positive or negative?

SW: I like to think, I actually do think that in most of those kid's cases it's probably the most positive experience that they've had. Definitely the most positive experience that they've had in any type of residential, lock-up type of situation. I know just from when you ask kids during the evaluation process what their perspective is, most of them even will say that they feel like for the first time that they are reading and are excited about school for the first time, because...I mean if you noticed, some of the kids there don't even know what the honor roll is when they come there, and before you know it, they're trying to be on the honor roll. That's not your cool thing typically in some of the schools they come from. I think that they also see adults that truly care about them, and want them to succeed and want what's best for them. I can't really talk about any staff member there that really isn't truly invested in those kids. So I would say from my perspective as an adult working there, as well as from what the kids tell me, that it is very positive. I mean there's kids that leave and are still calling, I think part of that's due to, "Oh-my-God, I'm out now and I'm scared," and there's also been kids that purposefully screw up and lose their level so they don't get released because they want to stay. But I think it is positive...I think they do the very best with what they have there.

The students, for the most part, agreed with the staff perception that more learning was taking place at Haven than it did in the public schools they had attended. Most of the students, when asked about differences between going to school at Haven and attending public school indicated that it was harder but that they learned more. Only one student indicated that he had access to better learning opportunities in a regular school setting. The others indicated that they were challenged more and had additional support from the teachers. The two excerpts below were typical of the responses to questions about what school was like for them at Haven, and how it differed from their public school experience.

VD: What does it mean to you to be in special ed.? Like, they put you in special ed. in public school, what does that mean to you?

BILLY: Well I don't really like it.

VD: Ok. Tell me why.

BILLY: Cuz you only sit in like one of the class all day 'cept and I always like to move around, but in here you get to move around cuz they goin' to draw

somebody to a school like this; well they already got the school here it's in [local town] I'm trying to figure out what the name is like this school.

VD: Ok.

BILLY: And I got help. Soon as I came here I been, I'm um more respectful to staff and stuff and not giving no feedback, and listen better and…I'm getting good grades…

VD: Good.

BILLY: A's and B's

VD: Good.

BILLY: Lucky I'm do good 'til I get on the outs and go to school.

This student was one with ADHD, and understanding his answers was difficult at times due to the velocity and disjointedness of his words. From follow-up questions to the above answer, he expressed that he had been doing better at Haven academically and was hopeful that he would be able to continue to succeed when he returned to a public school. The excerpt below highlighted how one student had come to believe that at Haven he was given access to academic content that he would not have otherwise had. Answering additional questions, he indicated that he thought he learned more at Haven because he had to do more there and couldn't just get by without trying. If he did, then he wouldn't be able to leave because his probation officer would know he had not been working hard.

VD: What are some differences between here and public schools? You mentioned that when you get in trouble there's differences. What about the stuff you learn?

ARNOLD: It's like I think, I think I learn more stuff here than in public schools.

VD: More stuff here?

ARNOLD: Because half the stuff they teach here they'll probably never teach out in public schools.

VD: So you think they give you more information here than in public schools?

ARNOLD: Yeah.

VD: Ok. What are a couple of examples of stuff that you learned here that you don't think you would have been taught at public schools?

ARNOLD: I probably would have never known how to do algebra. At the public school they probably would have skipped me right over algebra.

Success at Haven was no guarantee of success when students made the transition back to their local schools as illustrated in a story told below by the principal. Following the story is a response from the residential director that showed his belief that students experienced success after being sent to the facility and gives his thoughts on why it did not necessarily translate when the kids were reincorporated back into their communities.

> SP: I've talked with superintendents before, I've had a call, we had a kid here a number of years ago that took the bulldozer and ran it into the front end of the high school. You know it caused a 100,000 dollars worth of damage. I'd talked to the superintendent about that boy. He did well in our program, I can't guarantee his behavior anywhere else, you know, anymore then you can guarantee the behavior of your school board (laugh). He did well here, and he [the superintendent] got a chuckle out of that. You know, kids that have had a history of fighting and stuff, they [the home school staff] want some assurances that he's not going to knock somebody out. I said, well, you know I can't guarantee that anybody pushed to a certain point's not going to... I said what we've seen is that he is able to use some of tools that we have given him in a problem solving situation. Whether he uses them in your environment, I can't guarantee any of that.

> RD: What I've found most of the kids...the label don't necessarily fit. I mean, they've been labeled because a lot of the kids didn't go to school, so when you don't go to school you get a label pretty soon. Usually kids are able to do quite well here...they still have some gaps in their learning, but for the first time they are able to slow down, settle down, they're not getting kicked out of school, and then they're getting a lot of the one on one, so a lot of them are able to excel quite well here. So when they go back to the public schools is where some of the difficulties I think kind of resurface because the schools probably are still not equipped to deal with the youngsters coming back in, and some of the schools don't necessarily want them back in there.

A thread that ran through several staff interviews that was touched on in the excerpt above, wound around the idea that these students were labeled in their local schools not because of a true disability but because of their behavior. Due to their home experiences, they either did not or could not conform to regular education expectations so were labeled in order to give them access to alternative programs and services.

Contemplating this staff perception, reviewing the data, and thinking about how special education looked in the public school settings I have worked in, the next theme emerged.

Theme 3: Special education looked different at Haven than in local school districts.

Difference in Residential Staff Perspective

Special education looked different on several different levels. The first difference was one that seemed to come from a fundamental difference in perspective. The residential director spoke of how many students at Haven earn special education labels because of truancy or behavior problems in public school. The school staff, when speaking about special education, talked about meeting the needs of the kid based on the disability. This type of language was familiar to this researcher and what was expected. For the residential director, family counselor, and probation officer, special education eligibility seemed to be something put on a youth to indicate a behavior problem. Because of this, the issue of special education eligibility did not seem to be of major concern as they spoke about serving the juveniles in their care.

Youth treatment plans created by the residential facility did not appear to incorporate special education considerations. For example, student participation in groups to combat substance abuse or teach anger management were based solely on whether or not these had been problem areas for the young man. There did not appear to be an assessment component that grouped them according to skill level, such as the academic testing that largely decided what classes a student would attend. This difference in perspective may also account for why delivery of ancillary services which often accompany special education eligibility in public schools did not seem to be a pressing matter.

Ancillary Service Delivery

As records were reviewed and interviews conducted, there seemed to be little

evidence of the traditional delivery system for ancillary special education services.

Students did not have scheduled visits from speech and language pathologists or social

workers, though this was expected based on the youths' disability classifications and

needs noted in their IEPs. Evaluations and reports were conducted and written as had

been expected, but looking at the IEPs from when the students had arrived at Haven, the

services from ancillary staff were not included. When the school social worker was asked

about her role and what she had observed about the delivery of services at the facility, her

response was recorded in the following excerpt.

> VD: First I would like you to tell me about yourself, and your role when you
> were out there, what you were asked to do, how you interacted with the kids,
> things like that.
> SW: Ok, I was just the school social worker when I was there. I actually came in
> for evaluation purposes only. I didn't do direct service, no therapeutic service, no
> therapy with the kids at all. So, my job was to go in, and reevaluate them, which
> normally took probably two, maybe three days time. Then write up the report and
> go to the IEP. That was pretty much it.
> VD: Describe special ed. at Camp Haven.
> SW: I would say...there's no basic classrooms, there's no special ed. rooms,
> there's not resource rooms in the traditional sense. I would say it's more the old-
> fashioned kind of...working with the students where they're at. All of the kids
> work...if modifications and adaptations are needed it's done by each teacher in
> the classroom and things like that. Direct service, from my perspective, as far as
> being written in for social work in the IEP isn't done, and I think the reason it's
> not done is because a lot of the kids are getting other services through
> their...substance abuse counselor that comes in, or there's a lot of support groups
> that are done by the personnel through the residential piece.
> VD: What about the more ancillary stuff, like you said a lot more of the mental
> health things are addressed by other people. What about stuff like speech and
> language, or OT (occupational therapy) PT (physical therapy)? How does that all
> work?
> SW: You know that's funny...this is the first time in the three years that I have
> been doing evals out there that that's been an issue. We had an evaluation,
> actually two, one for a kid that was...really had some speech issues, and some
> speech concerns, and because that was obvious, actually then a speech evaluation

was requested. In this case he was a short term kid, and we were literally under the wire because they wanted to get him out of there (Haven). His probation officer wanted to move him back. I think because it (Haven) was full, before we were done with the evaluation he left, and so in this case we really didn't have to address that. But, in my experience it seems that though that is the concern, that they go ahead and get the necessary person contractually in from the ISD to do the evaluation, and then I would assume actually to service. But, there's been no OT in my time out there. PT and speech evals, but not direct service.

The difference was echoed by students who were able to tell me about seeing an adult on a regular basis for assistance with speech and language or behavioral concerns in public school, but who had not had anyone interact with them in those capacities at Haven. When I asked them what people worked with them at Haven because they were in special education, their list included the psychiatrist, probation officer, and court assigned case worker. The only person they did mention that was expected was Michelle, whom a couple students identified as a special education teacher. The family counselor spoke about his understanding of the delivery of ancillary services.

> VD: What about ancillary services, the social work or the speech therapy that might be on an IEP, how does that work?
> FC: My understanding is that's a struggle. It's not a struggle necessarily in terms of identifying the need for those sometimes, but because of the limitations of the resources the intermediate school district has, it's tough. We have been able to get that for kids in the past, but it's not easy because of the time assignments that those people have with the intermediate school district, but I have seen them take place for kids.

The overall sense I had about traditional ancillary services from the staff was that while they would be a nice addition, they weren't an integral component to Haven's treatment plans. As such, neither residential nor school staff made much mention of working with the ISD or contracting with local school districts to arrange such services. There was not any frustration about this, as might be expected, just more of a resigned

attitude that these kids needed and were getting different experiences that were more important.

Perspective of the Teacher

The classroom teacher, who was responsible for meeting the student's IEPs on a day to day basis, was asked about special education service delivery. In the passage below, she spoke of her goals for her students, how she sought to meet the needs identified by the IEP team, and provided some comparison between her classroom and what a public school special education situation might hold for them.

> VD: Describe special education at Camp Haven.
> CT: We're considered a full-time special education placement. In terms of special education, I think that we literally, as classroom teachers just look at every kid uniquely, in their unique ways, and individually, and approach them differently, address their needs differently, and everything's just very individualized. I do my best to create a structure that will resemble your typical middle school or high school general education classroom because I believe the majority of the students will return to full time general education, if not full time, then general education with resource support, or team-taught classes, but then there are your students where it would resemble a far different environment within the school, where kids literally are getting one on one support the entire hour. However, based on my belief, I want them to develop many independent work skills. I want them to be able to sit in a seat and identify that they do not need help. And with our long term kids, I can often wait four to six weeks before I see those skills start to develop. And the students identify that it is my [the student's] job to ask for help. However, at no point do I ever let a kid just fall flat on their face and fail week after week after week. To describe special education, I...that's a good question, considering how much background I have in special education, but it's literally that, just providing every kid with what they need individually.

This language of individualization and helping the students develop skills for academic independence was familiar from the hundreds of IEPs this researcher had attended. Hearing her describe the setting as a full-time special education placement and listening to her describe the IEPs she assembled, some of the same language was expected from the students.

Difference in Student Perspective

Another way that special education looked different had to do with the way it was handled or seen by the students. This idea that spans this theme and the next is introduced here and further articulated in theme four. Most of those eligible for special education seemed to know they had a disability or some needs warranting special services, but there seemed to be less stigma attached. All the juveniles were in the same boat, and any comments about special education were not handled as though there was any negative connotation. In the public schools, special education students were often taken aside and quietly spoken to about their services, upcoming meetings, arranging accommodations, and similar activities, in order to reduce the potential stigma. At Haven, I saw students come into the class, march up to the teacher, and ask when their IEP was. Michelle incorporated upcoming IEPs into the morning announcements, which drew little or no comment from other students. The observation excerpt presented below supported this idea.

> OBSERVATIONS: One student wrote something about God on the board, and Michelle said half-jokingly that he needed to erase it because no religion was allowed in public schools. Three students started laughing and one said, "This ain't no public school!" Another said, "This is a special ed. school." Michelle said, "I am a public school teacher, so you are getting a public education." The mood during this conversation was light, and the students seemed to be in a playful mood.

This researcher believed this attitude stemmed, at least in part, from the homogenized entrance process and programming. A consistent response from staff when they were asked whether or not the entrance process was different for special education eligible juveniles indicated that apart from a single IEP meeting, it was not. Programming was nearly the same for all the youths adjudicated there. It was slightly individualized by

things like their academic skill level or history of substance abuse, but the options were the same for everyone in terms of recreation, groups, behavior planning, etc. The probation officer, the staff member most familiar with the adjudication process, had the most to say about this issue.

> VD: The entrance process, is that different at all for kids who are eligible or are suspected of being eligible for special education.
> PO: No. The process...Johnny's in special ed. classes at whatever high school, he's got learning disabilities, he's EI, whatever classification you want to give him. You can give him the most severe classification you can come up with. He goes out and commits home invasion and has those classifications. That is not going to enter into the process, unless, when he gets to that hearing, that preliminary hearing at the youth center, and there's an attorney there to represent him, or a parent there to speak on his behalf, the referee holding the hearing determines that there's really something wrong here. I'm not sure that this kid understands what he's done; I'm not confident that he understands right from wrong, and at that point, that person is going to be writing things down, and recording things that the judge or the chief referee of the court needs to be aware of. There seems to be some learning difficulties, or there seems to be some intellectual impairment...something doesn't sit right. But still, the court proceedings are going to continue. That young man's hearing is probably going to be set for a pre-trial. There's going to be an attorney appointed, and at that point that attorney who's appointed, is going to become aware, through talking to his client and the client's parents or family, that there's a unique situation here. Ok, this young man has these disabilities or these difficulties in learning, and we're going to be sensitive to those kind of things, but unless he's incapable of standing trial, and unless he's incapable of understanding right from wrong, that young man or young lady is going to continue through the court process to that dispositional stage. Unless they can show that they are incapable of standing trial, or incapable of understanding right from wrong, that they did something illegal and it was wrong to do. They're still going to be involved in the court process. And if they're found guilty or admit guilt, they're still going to find themselves at that dispositional stage.

The entrance process considered special education eligibility to a degree, but it appeared that only a major disability, such as severe cognitive impairment would impact the adjudication process. Through learning that the vast majority of youths were treated the same in the entrance process to Haven, and since many were not able to articulate much about their eligibility or services, the next theme became apparent.

Theme 4: The trappings of special education meant little to the juveniles at Haven.

This theme was evident both in the responses of the juveniles and staff, as well as this researcher's observations. In public school, many times when a student gets in a fight or damages property, the first question asked is, "Is he special ed?" If the answer is yes, then procedures swing into action to determine if the behavior was a result of the disability, and whether the student had a behavior plan that was appropriate based on his needs and goals. At Haven, the issue of eligibility did not seem to come up in regard to behavior. The first thing considered was the residential behavior plan, followed by the school behavior plan, in determining what should take place as a consequence.

The "trappings of special education", means the labels, procedures, meetings, services, evaluations, and paperwork that accompany eligibility. Staff and students alike were consistent in their responses and indicated that these accouterments bear little significance.

> VD: From your experience, what do you think the special ed. students at Haven would say that having a disability means?
> SW: Hmm, I would say that most of them think it just means that they get isolated and put in a different room [laughs]. Or that they're bad, or that…I don't think that they necessarily connect it with…maybe I have a reading problem or maybe a problem with math. A lot of the kids when I go and tell them what I do, and that they're in a re-evaluation process, and what that means, there's a lot of the kids that don't even know that they've been labeled emotionally impaired to begin with. So then you're kind of trying to explain that to them, and they'll say, "Well I used to have problems with that but I don't anymore." So I don't really think that they understand what it means, except for maybe they feel that they're in special classes, or that they're labeled emotionally impaired because they skipped school.
> VD: How many of the ones that you work with know that they are special ed, or are able to tell you about it at all?
> SW: Probably out of all the kids I've done, maybe twenty-five percent, and that would be more of the high functioning kids.
> VD: What do they tell you about it?

SW: They know they've had problems, or they have problems getting along with people, or they have anger problems, those types of things. And those types of kids normally can differentiate between it being a problem with law enforcement and a problem at school. Course then I've seen some of the kids that don't understand, who think maybe they're emotionally impaired because they've gotten in trouble, cause they stole a car or broke into the neighbor's house or something.

VD: From your experience, what do you think the special education students at Haven would say that having a disability means?
PO: Boy, I don't know, some of those kids are pretty sensitive about it. I've talked to a lot if kids who won't go to school because they hate being in special ed. I think it's a little easier for them at Haven than it is in their home school environment because all of the kids are in the same classrooms. Out at Haven, we don't have a special classroom where the regular education students go, and a regular classroom where the special ed students...they're not separated out there. They're kind of all in it together. I think that kids out at Haven are more supportive of one another in the school environment, than they are in their home school environments. There's more structure, teamwork is encouraged more, cutting on individuals is discour...you know what I mean in terms of that's [cutting], making fun of, or picking on other kids, is not tolerated out there. So a special ed. student can settle in, feel more comfortable asking for help, out at Haven than he can in his home school environment, I believe. So I think kids...I don't think we get a real good feel about how kids feel about being special education classified out there, as much as you probably do in their home environment.

In the student responses, there was a common thread in regard to their answers on the question, "What does it mean to be in special ed.?" They were able to tell what had happened to them in public school because of their eligibility, but not what the disability itself *meant*. For example, they told about things such as what classes they were placed in and that they met with a social worker or speech teacher, but not what areas of learning or speaking or behavior were so challenging for them that they required special services. On a couple of the interviews, I pressed the students a little to try and get at what special education meant to them. What they indicated was that it is something put upon them, and most of them were barely able to articulate why. Special education to them is a

phrase, a label, which is decidedly different from the voluminous construct encountered

by adults working in the field.

> VD: What does it mean to be in special ed, like what does that mean to you?
> DAVE: Um, I don't really know.
> VD: Yeah, like uh so they like put a label on you right?
> DAVE: Mmm.
> VD: So what does that does that...does that mean anything to you really, or is it just kind of something that somebody says to you?
> DAVE: It's just a word...special ed.

> VD: What does it mean to you to be in special ed.? Like what did that mean to you?
> ARNOLD: Really I don't, I don't, I don't think it means anything, like, you see when some other person in special ed. they think you're all retarded and stuff. When I hear special ed. I think it's just a regular school; it doesn't really matter.

> VD: What does it mean to you to be in special ed.? What does that mean?
> DEVON: Uh...it means that...you can break down...people can...that special ed. is...like... for people that are special...and like that's what...a lot of people think.
> VD: What do you mean by special?
> DEVON: People think that, people that are in special ed. are special because...they can't think...they can't...basically can't think or talk good.

Another student, when speaking about the differences between his school

experiences at Haven vs. public school brought up special education as an example.

> VD: What is different about a day here compared to a day at public school
> BOBBY: (long pause) Other then girls, the attention that you get from the teachers.
> VD: Explain that a little bit for me.
> BOBBY: Well...uh public schools teachers are paying less attention to you because there's more people in the class. People that need less help than you, even in special ed.; it's people that need more help than you. So they'll be paying more attention to them. Here it's kind of like you're doing your own thing and you see come up to a teacher and just sit with that teacher for how ever long 'cause the kids usually, well in my classes don't need help, 'cause I'm in the top class.

Bobby was speaking about more than just differences in class size. He had

expressed something that had been observed, which was that special education eligibility

very rarely came up in the classroom. If a student was having trouble with an assignment,

they would go to the teacher and sit with them until they completed it or understood, and that was the end of the matter.

> VD: From your experience, what do you think special education students at Haven would say having a disability means?
> CT: Well it's so interesting, because when you sit down with them, and start the IEP, the vast majority have no idea they have a learning disability or have an emotional impairment. So you're breaking news that you qualify for special education, and then you're trying to explain to them what it means to have a learning disability or an emotional impairment. I don't think it really is an issue for the most part here, unless you're a non-reader. Because, not to sound cheesy, but it's such a close-knit family environment that unfortunately you've probably noticed that kid's issues get thrown out, confronts are really blatant, you know, it's not true reality therapy, but it's just all out there [laughs]. You've put yourself here and people are gonna say things that you didn't want anyone to know. So, student A may be special education, and student B's high functioning, but let's talk about what his [student B's] issues are, and they are way worse than anything that has to do with being special ed. So, I think here they learn they have learning needs or emotional needs that are different than other people. But I don't think there's a stigma or a feeling of "I should be embarrassed" that I saw in the public schools. It's very evident in the public schools, but because we kind of all look the same here, except a few of us read better, is my perception.

Thinking about staff spending their efforts on things other than paperwork and procedure and finding that the students did not know or care much about the idea of special education led to the next theme. As Michelle and other staff spoke of meeting their needs and giving them a structure in which they could be successful, this researcher thought about the importance of the information that comprised the next portion of this chapter. In my experience with public school evaluations, IEPs, and other means of planning special education student progress, basic health and safety needs rarely must be considered. I have been involved with far too many children who have not had proper care, but the vast majority of public school students with special needs can have the parent and staff resources focused on helping them gain in academic skills as opposed to worrying about general wellbeing and protection.

Theme 5: Students at Haven had many of their basic needs met in new ways.

The data that comprised this theme involved how the students at Haven have

certain needs met that most people take for granted. After reading about the backgrounds

of deprivation from which most of these kids had emerged, I thought about their basic

physical and emotional care. Many of the records contained references to abuse and

neglect. At Haven, attempts were made to ensure that health and safety needs were met in

order to permit some energy to be spent on remediating areas of academic or behavioral

need. I observed a structured schedule, consistent discipline activity, and access to

medical care. Some of these students may not have had access to any or all of these

things at any point in their history. Below, excerpts from observation notes and interview

with the probation officer elucidated this theme.

> OBSERVATIONS: Another student was going to the dentist, and was being taken
> by a residential staff person. He asked several times when he would be going, and
> seemed to be looking forward to it as he told the other students what work he
> needed to have done. Several of the others seemed a bit jealous and asked if they
> could go along.

> VD: What components of the programs and services are designed to help prevent
> students from coming back repeatedly?
> PO: I think all of those programs are. These kids come out there, after having
> been doing the things they've been doing, unchecked They're fourteen or fifteen
> years old, they don't see eye to eye with their families, they've been struggling in
> school, they've been smoking, smoking marijuana, or using alcohol, come and go
> as they please, there's a lot of things [at Haven], that I think prepare these kids to
> come back to the community better than when they got there, and I think all of
> those things that we've talked about, the educational program, the work
> opportunities, the athletics, but more than that, I think it's just twelve kids living
> together in a house, being provided positive adult supervision during their day,
> and learning to accept no as an answer instead of just walking off and doing what
> they choose to do.

In many ways the Haven program and staff served a parental role. In a public

school, things like immunizations, dentist visits, and psychiatric care would be the

responsibility of the parent. Michelle commented how a major frustration she experiences revolved around how the Haven and MWS staff learned about and developed ways to meet the needs of students but have very little faith that their needs will continue to be met when they make the transition back to their communities.

> CT: I don't really know if I could say there's a typical student, because they are all so different and have really unique needs which you've probably seen. The typical student, once they are here, is a young man who probably has had a pretty difficult home life, with parents that are still involved, but who have had numerous issues of their own. I would say almost every single student has struggled tremendously in the public schools. School has not worked for the majority. Some days I could say one hundred percent of them...they have somehow failed in the public school system. Although I think that that's one of their major issues, an inability to function successfully in the schools, substance abuse affects almost all of them, and whether it's the sale of it or the use of it. They're usually about fourteen or fifteen years old, below grade level, and typically immature. I don't know if I said this already, but typically, the kids once they're here, you see their best side. Their best academic abilities, their personality which is usually pleasant, although you see anger and stuff too, you see their best side.
>
> VD: Why do you think that is?
>
> CT: I think all of the variables that cause so many problems in the community have been removed. Substances, they're sleeping normal hours, I mean some of them struggle probably with insomnia or medication-related sleep troubles. There's no violence that they're witnessing, they have a routine, and unfortunately a lot of their freedoms have been taken away so their choices are limited. And, from this academic environment...its very supportive, and all the expectations from classroom to classroom are very different. But, I believe every classroom is set up to make sure kids succeed.

Below, excerpts from the interviews with the school principal and family counselor added to what was learned from Michelle, and described how the youths' backgrounds led to needs for safety and structure. They also noted how the Camp endeavored to provide health services and keep connections made with doctors and counselors alive, even after the students returned to their communities.

> SP: Well obviously they have had some problems in their community. For the most part their home structure is not there for the kids kind of run the show. I

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guess one of the things if I had to look at the majority of our kids, they've had a hard time accepting no for an answer.

VD: Sure.

SP: So they pretty much kind of run their own lives in terms of not having an adult being viewed as the person that they get their guidance from. Usually a lot of conflict in their lives, usually pretty angry and a lot of times they have a lot to be angry about. I think after they are here for a bit they really enjoy the structure that the program offers for the most part, because they haven't had that in their lives and for a young person, that structure is pretty comforting. You know it's not...everyman for himself like out on the out on the streets and so forth. That's one of the things we try to focus on the most here safety and security and all that, and making sure kids feel comfortable.

FC: ...I'm not always doing that but one of the things we discovered with the short term program, we've got a gal who coordinates a lot of the eye and doctor and dental kind of stuff, but because these kids are here short term and we're keeping them connected with the family physician, the family dentist, mental health, that's a work for her. I've probably done a whole lot more of that than what was anticipated early on in the program, but we just discovered it was problematic to try and do it any other way than that. We have a behavioral psychiatrist who comes in here, it takes you two to three months to get on his schedule because he comes here once a month and his schedule is filled with the kids who are in the long term beds. So even trying to push, or put a short term kid, if we see a need for that we tell the family, hey you need to contact [County] Counseling Center and work with them in terms of getting that done. It just won't work here. The logistics won't work, even if we were keeping the kid here four, five, six months.

VD: If the parents do that does the counseling person come on site or do the kids go...?

FC: Well that's the other thing. We've had kids where they have been assigned a counselor, but with the behavioral psychiatrist seeing them for medications, we're going there, but when there's an assignment of a counselor to that kid and his family, we've had them coming here.

The structure and order imposed on these students seemed to wear on at least one. We were speaking about the routine the students followed each day, and when he gave the response presented below, he seemed to be half-joking, but genuinely exacerbated with at least some of his experience. This student spoke of how many of the other students looked up to him because of his intelligence and how long he had been there.

VD: Is there anything else you can tell me about what going to school is like here...or staying out here is like?

BOBBY: Boring! Really boring. Anybody who hears this, it's really boring.
VD: It's kind of the same stuff everyday?
BOBBY: I hate repetitive stuff, like repetitive questions...all that great stuff...so this place really makes me mad...a lot of the kids, everything repeats itself, like the kids always repeat themselves, behaviors, what they say, what they like.

Interestingly, this student insinuated that he did not get along with several of the other boys. Most students in the classroom seemed to work alone, even after they were given opportunities to pair up. This was different from my experience, where in the public schools, kids almost never seemed to miss opportunities to socialize and work together. During the free time at the end of each period at Haven, the students would often play cards or visit, but it was rarely with the same people every day. I did not see any relationships that I could have characterized as friendships.

Theme 6: Even though students were placed with a group of individuals with similar circumstances, they remained isolated in many ways.

OBSERVATIONS: My impression up to this point was that the students, even though they were always together, were more solitary than I expected them to be. They spoke with staff at least as much as they communicated with each other. I was not able to identify any strong buddy pairs, even though some students seemed to have most of their classes together. By the same token, I was not able to identify any students who were complete outcasts.

The residential director spoke of getting these kids involved in things like sports, Boy Scouts, and 4-H as part of teaching them how to function in a group. Several of the staff, including the principal, probation officer, and teacher, indicated how most of these kids have been alone for much of their lives, with no consistent relationships with adults, siblings, or peers. Each of the houses could earn trips or other rewards if they behaved well as a group, and Michelle had opportunities to earn free days set up if everyone in the house she was assigned to earned all their points in a day. Below, a student described his

perception of this treatment component, which serves to illustrate how it truly is an area

of need.

> BILLY: If we, if our house does good we can go like Chicago, or
> whole bunch of different places.
> VD: Do you ever go because you did well as an individual, or does the
> whole house have to do good before you get to do something like that?
> BILLY: The whole house.
> VD: Is it ever hard to get the whole house to do that?
> BILLY: Yeah.
> VD: Yeah? How often would you say that you get to do something special
> because the whole house is good?
> BILLY: Um...Have we ever went? Not yet.

The next excerpt comes from one of the long-term students who had been at

Haven for nearly two years, and had seen many other youths come and go. The

expectation was that his response would be different from what I had observed in

Michelle's classroom, where most of the time short-term students were present. It fit with

my schema that the short-term kids might not develop friendships as they were on site for

only three months, more or less. Some of the long term students had been there for

around two years, working on team-building activities, playing on sports teams, and

learning social skills in groups, so I thought that if any kids would have the time and

opportunities necessary to make friends, it would be them.

> VD: Are you pretty close with the other guys in your house or not really?
> ARNOLD: Not really.
> VD: Have you been with some of them for a long time?
> ARNOLD: I'm the only one left of the first two groups that came to my house.
> VD: Oh yeah?
> ARNOLD: I'm the first one. I'm the only one left.
> VD: Do all you guys get along pretty well?
> ARNOLD: Sometimes.
> VD: What kinds of stuff do you fight about when you get, when you're not
> getting along?
> ARNOLD: We get in argument over pool games, computer video games, kool-
> aid. We get, basically, we get in arguments over every little thing.
> VD: Oh yeah?

ARNOLD: Yeah.
VD: Pretty much everyday?
ARNOLD: Yeah.
VD: How do those get worked out?
ARNOLD: Um...sometimes I get in an argument, and I keep it going then I drop it. Sometimes I get in an argument, I tell staff to take, take over, they'll handle it.

Other observations brought this theme to light. During staff meetings, both residential and school, students were discussed individually with little mention of how they interacted with others, or with which students they were friendly. In my experience participating in team meetings, social relationships with peers are always discussed, as difficulty here may be contributing to problem areas. This researcher found this interesting due to the emphasis placed on social skill development at the camp.

The lack of close ties among the students further emphasized the need for social skill development, one of the first types of intervention employed after adjudication to Haven. It was one of the most salient differences between young men at Haven and those I had known in public schools, but was not the only one. A few other examples are presented below to provide the reader with additional instances of how the educational experience at the camp differed from a public school one.

Additional Results

Results that may shed some light on the experiences of these youths that do not necessarily constitute an entire theme, occupy impressions that struck this researcher while observing and interviewing. One set of impressions involves the differences noticed between the culture of a public school, based on this researcher's experience, versus that of Haven.

The first difference was in regard to how conflicts between staff and students were handled. In the public schools, if a student threatened or yelled at an adult, it could

very well dominate the conversations among the adult and student populations within the building for the next couple of days. At Haven, such verbal sparring or outbursts were handled differently. The following passage from personal observation notes displays how a student/staff conflict did not disrupt the flow of the classroom. The student mentioned below had gotten into a fight with another student the night before, and for quite a while had yelled at the staff member who broke up the fight. Even though this was the next day, the student came into the school building and had been yelling in other classes, not complied with staff requests, and had pushed other students.

> OBSERVATIONS: After lunch the second math class came in and reviewed percentages after Michelle explained that the class would be done with algebra, but might pick it up again next term. They played a bingo game with multiplication facts, and she used candy for prizes. A few minutes into the game, the building secretary's voice came over the loudspeaker and asked for all the residential staff serving one of the houses to come to the office. The students began talking about how they knew it was Jose and that they had seen him being taken into the office just before class began and that he was mad. This conversation did not disrupt the bingo game, and they seemed engaged in it. After six required rounds, Michelle allowed them free time while she explained their grades for the term.

Another difference had to do with the topics of conversations which were commonplace within the classroom. If some of these topics came up within a public school classroom, the students involved may very well be suspended or investigated. At Haven, commentary by students on a variety of topics such as drugs, violence, and gang activity were part of the culture of the classroom. I do not speak of lengthy conversations or the crafting of intricate plans but of one or two students making a comment with several others chiming in. An example is presented below.

> OBSERVATIONS: During the second hour class, the students came in and Michelle told them to get their books ready for starting a new chapter on biology. A couple students came up and greeted the student teacher and me, and asked how we were doing. Michelle asked the class how they were doing and needed to

remind a couple of them about appropriate language. One student talked about being drug tested, and a couple others asked him what he had been taking on the outside.

Another common characteristic among the student interview responses was their ability to surprise this researcher with some pat answers. Several of them were able to rattle off answers, most of the time in educational jargon or the language of the staff at Haven, to questions that I had expected would take some thought. Bobby answered the question about what types of things he needed to be successful in the following way. After hearing the question, he paused, and then spoke quickly:

> Bobby: Controllin' of my anger, that's why I'm still on meds. I'm on Wellbutrin for mood swings, so I don't flip out on people. Uh…controlling my anger, having positive peer interactions, it's usually, well I used to seek the negative ones, and make sure I get my stuff done. As long as I can get everything done, everything else will fall into place.

The themes and impressions presented above have much bearing on the construct of Locus of Control that was being explored. Most seemed to feel that factors outside of their control were responsible for their incarceration. This feeling that they were not in control of their destiny seemed to be something that the interventions at Haven endeavored to change by equipping them with skills to forge their own futures. Observation and interview excerpts that have bearing on this issue are presented in the next section.

Locus of Control

The juveniles were asked to tell the story of why they were at Haven. Their responses indicated that the majority felt external forces were responsible for their incarceration. A sample of these comes from Dave, one of the students with significant expressive language impairment.

VD: First I'd like you to just tell me the story of why you are here?
DAVE: Cause I (clears throat) I was at my cousins house one night, and um he did something at his uncle's house. He like went up and took his grandma's key, went and unlocked his uncle's room and took all his stuff. And then his uncle thought I did it, so he tried to press charges against me and then when I was in here I was in here for something I like cause I knew I didn't do it, so I AWOLed from here. They brought me back, then I went to court for it, and they dismissed it cause I didn't do it.

Another common thread in the student responses in regard to locus of control was that other students in public school were responsible for the lack of success these juveniles experienced in that environment. They phrased things as, "other kids would fight with me", or "the kids just picked on me, so I didn't want to go to school." There was some variety in the locus. A couple students took the blame for their incarceration when asked why they were at Haven.

VD: First I'd like you to just tell me tell me the story of why you are here.
ARNOLD: Well at my old placement I had a problem with staff putting their hands on me. So I would, I'd be physically aggressive if I saw staff.

Another student spoke of becoming tired of doing work, so he would swear at teachers and refuse to listen to them until he would be removed from the classroom. These two students demonstrated some internal locus that accounted for their presence at Haven. Working on this type of thinking was a focus of treatment. In the excerpt below, students were asked to think about themselves and their futures. They were asked to say something good about themselves and apply that to how it could impact them upon their release.

OBSERVATIONS: Michelle asked the students if one of the residential staff was coming to run "group". She mentioned to me later that she was referring to an interpersonal skills discussion that is led every couple weeks by the residential staff. After being told by the students that no one was coming to run group, Michelle led them in a discussion where each student took a turn, telling one thing they were doing well, and one thing they still needed to work on. She asked questions such as, "What do you think school will be like when you are

released?" Or, "Do you think you will stay in school when you are released?" A couple students could not come up with anything good they had done, so Michelle would ask the class if they could help him come up with something positive. Before starting the conversation, she told the class that no matter what people said about themselves, it was ok, even if they were lying. She said that anything said about another person needed to be positive. About half of the students said that they hate school and were not sure if they would stay in it after being released. Several students in this group had been placed in the program for truancy. She also asked them to think about and bring up what things might be the same or different at home after they were released. She asked them what types of things they could do differently in their communities. This discussion lasted about forty-five minutes.

Some students used language such as "making good choices on my own." Several mentioned that what they needed to work on was ignoring people who were picking at them and not retaliating. After the kids took their turns, Michelle mentioned a couple things that she needed to improve on.

The themes and additional results presented in this chapter demonstrated that many things were in place for students at Haven to help them succeed. The students had opportunities to learn many skills that could aid them after they returned to public schools and their communities. Areas of need were also identified and will be discussed in Chapter Six. The next chapter will consist of a summation of what was learned at Haven, recommendations for enhancing programs and services, and directions for future research with this population.

Chapter VI

Discussion

The data analysis from the interviews, observations, and record reviews were compiled into the results presented in Chapter V. This chapter presents conclusions drawn from conducting this study, organized into the following components:

- Section one of this chapter consists of a review of the goals of the study.

- The second section delineates what was learned, and compares and contrasts these lessons to the literature presented in Chapter II.

- The third section is comprised of recommendations for improving service delivery for students at Haven.

- The final portion lists directions for future research based on what was learned from this study followed by a summation.

Review of Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to learn about the experiences of juvenile delinquents with disabilities who have part of their educational experience at a detention facility. There are many students served in these types of settings, some for entire years of middle and high school. I sought to understand how special education services were delivered in this setting, and what efforts were being made towards remediation. The hope was that results from this study would assist in policy development and curriculum considerations for disabled youths served in these places.

The methodology was selected to determine if there existed a common essence to the experiences of these youths which superceded their many differences. The guiding research question that framed the study read: *What were the experiences of special*

education eligible youths in a juvenile detention facility, and what consideration had been given to individual disabilities?

Sub-questions that were narrower in scope were developed into the interview protocol.

- To what do incarcerated juveniles attribute their current status/situation?

- Do the due process rights and protections under IDEA 1997 clash with placement of students in a facility without consideration of disability?

- How proficiently are disabled, incarcerated youth able to discuss the implications of their disabling condition?

- What data was available that documents the impact for students who have served time in a detention facility?

- Is special education at a detention facility different from that in a public school?

- How adequately are special education service needs addressed in a detention facility?

- What programs and services are available, and what is the treatment focus to prevent recidivism?

Many of the goals of the study were achieved. In terms of the objectives and questions listed above, several things were learned about the experience of being an incarcerated juvenile with a disability. Several things were found to be consistent with prior research, and a few things that appeared either different or heretofore unexplored. What I took from Haven and how it matched up with the literature I reviewed prior to conducting the study is further elucidated in the following sections. The data described

in Chapter V, and discussed in this chapter should not be generalized to detention facilities in other locations. Rather, this study was an example of how one facility provided special education services, and should be taken as such when considering the operation of other places where disabled youth may be incarcerated.

Lessons Learned

From the themes identified in Chapter V, I have concluded that there is an overarching theme or premise inherent in the data. This premise is the essence of the experience undergone by the juveniles at Haven. Before conducting the study, I had thought that the essence would be a single, shared experience or a common answer to one of my research questions. After examining the data and thinking about the sum of the interview responses, record reviews, and observations, I came to the conclusion that the essence in this case is a *possibility of the experience*, not a facet. Through my eyes, the real meaning did not lie in what happened to the students on a daily basis or what language they used to describe it, but what their experiences as a whole *could* be. The essence is as much what the experience as a whole could be for these young men individually or as a group as how it manifested while I was there in routines, behavioral systems, and worksheets.

The essence was not a shared experience such as a connection with a teacher or common program. It was the potential of the facility and its staff to fulfill the promise of special education and provide the resources these youths needed as determined by their disabilities. The premise is:

For students with disabilities and backgrounds such as these, the promise

of special education has the potential to be realized in a juvenile detention

facility better than in a public school.

The themes presented in Chapter V supported this quintessential statement.

Theme 1: The experience of being at Camp Haven was designed to be
educational to prevent recidivism.

Theme 2: Students at Haven experienced more academic success than they
did at the public school from which they came.

Theme 3: Special education looked different at Haven than in local school
districts.

Theme 4: The trappings of special education meant little to the juveniles
at Haven.

Theme 5: Students at Haven had many of their basic needs met in
new ways

Theme 6: Though students were placed with a group of individuals with
similar circumstances, they remained isolated in many ways.

Taken individually, as interview answers or observations, these themes have

much in common with research reviewed in Chapter II. As a whole, they lead me to the

conclusion that when special education as I thought of it from my experience was set

aside, and the individual needs of the students were addressed, there was hope for saving

students who attend school bearing a massive load of risk factors. Special education, as I

learned about it through school psychology and special education administration training,

was designed to be specialized instruction with the purpose of remediating skill deficits

so that students could progress in the curriculum appropriate for their age.

I still believe this definition has merit, but now believe that it does so for students

with mild disabilities and adequate environmental support. I have known a continuum of

special education services, from teacher consultants who touch base with students twice a month, to categorical programs where the students spend nearly every moment in a very structured, involved setting. Prior to this study, I had thought that such a range could be adequate, and that as educators we could make great strides for all kids if we matched up their needs and services appropriately. I now think, that for students such as those who ended up at Haven, special education must be either altered into something more comprehensive and ecological than I have seen implemented in public schools, or set aside for a different model. For example, having the Woods School focus more on vocational skills as opposed to progress through the State of Michigan curriculum benchmarks.

One opportunity provided by the results of the present study is to open a discussion regarding what juvenile detention facilities should really be about. What business should they be in, when they have a unique chance to provide what many of these students have been missing in their lives? Should incarceration and punishment really be the focus, as the literature suggested our current legal trends are heading, or could it be something greater? The discussion below examined lessons learned at Haven that aligned with and were not congruent with the prior literature.

Lessons Congruent with the Literature

Consideration of Disability

In Chapter II, I cited the National Council on Disability's (NCD) report on the current state of knowledge regarding disabled, incarcerated youths. The report called for more research about how these young people are perceived by law enforcement and court personnel, in terms of understanding the impact of different disabilities. The interview

conducted with the probation officer was consistent with what I believe the authors of the NCD report suspected. Court personnel and law enforcement officials do not have adequate training in recognizing or appropriately dealing with minors with significant disabilities.

This problem was noted by several authors who noted that understanding how a student's disability may have impacted his or her actions is critical in determining effective placement and punishment (Burrell and Warboys 2000, Katner 2000, & Olson-Raymer, 1993). Part of my overall research question was whether or not an individual student's disability was considered. I learned that in the adjudication process it was considered very little, unless the disability was so massive or impairing that the student had no basic understanding of right or wrong. When they arrived at the school, they were grouped into instructional cadres based on academic skill as opposed to label. I went into this project thinking that disability should absolutely be considered at every step as it is in public schools, but left it realizing that for these young men it was often at best a tertiary component that did not necessarily need to drive their services.

High Expectations

Howell & Wolford (2002) spoke of the virtue of setting high expectations in this type of setting. The staff working at Haven clearly knew this lesson and practiced it in their academic and behavioral requirements for the young men. This feature was also consistent with how I had been socialized and trained to view public school education. Students and people in general responded to high demands. They rose to meet loftier expectations and at Haven this principle seemed to apply.

Transition Process

Without comprehensive transition planning and care, the positive experiences of students at Haven are in danger of not being transferred. Garfinkel, et. al (1997) noted that comprehensive transition and aftercare services as well as a means to evaluate their effectiveness are critical components of a successful program. A lack of a coherent plan between the courts, Haven, the Woods School, and districts who receive released juveniles was found to be a source of frustration for staff at Haven and of uncertainty for the young men. The school principal spoke of how he felt transition IEPs were useful in the process, but they had no means to evaluate what happened with the program developed at that meeting after it disbanded. This difficulty was noted in the literature on juvenile detention, and was certainly an area of concern at Haven.

Recreation and Employment Skills

Another finding consistent with prior research was that the juveniles did not have to be convinced of the virtues of work and play. That is not to say that they had all the requisite skills for success in these endeavors, but none of them needed convincing that these two factors would be key components in their success in the community. Larson and Turner (2002) wrote about the value of including these factors in a multi-modal approach to treatment. I learned that academics were an equal component to recreation and employment skills. When I first began this project I was convinced that maximizing their academic skill proficiency in reading, writing, and math should be the most important treatment component. Now, I believe an emphasis on providing them with the necessary skills to seek and hold employment should be paramount.

Over the past two years, my district has put forth a significant effort to develop and enhance services for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This disability manifests in a huge range incomparable to any other special education category. It may include cognitive, language, social, sensory, and behavioral challenges that can be extremely taxing on students, parents, and a school system. The best practices training program for students with ASD that I participated in discussed how for students with such broad and fundamental impairments, socialization and independence must drive all program decisions. Academics come later, after students are making progress towards what they need to someday hold a job and have as many self-care skills as possible. As I thought about the students at Haven and their huge ranges of disability and risk factors, the same ideas seemed to apply. Looking at the records of the youths at Haven, I thought that many of them were as globally involved as students with ASD.

Lessons Divergent from the Literature

I learned things at Haven that were not discussed in literature presented in the second chapter of this work. The topics below were either in contrast to what I found in prior research or were absent. Either way, the subject matter in this section is interesting as it has not been adequately explored and may have significant implications on service delivery and prevention of recidivism.

Relationships with Staff

I did not expect to find the strong relationships between staff and students. From the literature review, I expected to find a large inter-personal disconnect between students with significant needs and staff with too little training. Obviously there was a wide range in how well students and staff co-existed, but for several of the students there was a

comfort level with the adults I had not expected to find. For example, students in public schools who have emotional impairments and/or severe behavior problems often do not seem connected with anyone with whom they are required to interact. Many times they are quite hesitant or outright fail to initiate interactions that would help them complete work, earn school privileges, or succeed in the classroom. At Haven, I saw students constantly initiating with both residential and school staff. Not every kid did this regularly, but many consistently seemed eager to learn and do well in the behavioral system.

This certainly may be attributable to them wanting to accelerate their release or earn privileges at the camp. However, that begs a line of questioning about why these things were desirable now. Many of them were sent to Haven after failing to succeed in alternative schools, other detention facilities, or foster homes. All students at Haven had warnings that the paths of their behavior could end them up at a detention facility, so what made the difference in terms of engaging in these self-advocating behaviors? Strong role models and relationships developed with teachers and residential staff could have accounted for part of this observation. Seeing the student connections made me wonder if there was more happening than a change of location or desire for release accounting for the improved behavior. For example, did the student's who displayed increased self-advocacy have an alteration in their locus of control regarding their circumstances?

Service Delivery

Howell and Wolford (2002) described common practices regarding the delivery of special education services in detention facilities. They found that areas where significant improvement was needed included using instructional time to provide a variety of

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opportunities to learn; evaluations of student progress that did not match consequent instruction; teachers and other staff did not have adequate supervision or support; and not enough classroom time being provided to meet the goals of the IEP. These were some of the factors I looked at while observing and later while analyzing the data. This reference was salient because it was consistent with problems I observed in the public schools, that I suspected were only amplified in a detention facility.

The present findings are divergent from what Howell and Wolford outlined because of the transition IEP that occurred when students entered Haven. As can be seen in the record reviews presented in Chapter IV, the student's goals were altered to meet the program of the Woods School and Haven. No longer were the goals based on specific academic skill remediation but consisted of objectives by which the boys would progress through the program. Looking at their new IEP's and considering the grouping of students into the five academic strata, I thought that teachers and staff did have adequate supervision and support for what they were trying to do. They were able to have enough class time to meet the goals of the IEP because the IEP was now designed around what would be happening in their class.

From this observation I thought about the demands in public schools to have all students achieving at certain benchmarks in the general education curriculum. Special education, particularly as the movement for maximizing inclusion took hold, became designed around supporting students in general education, as opposed to remediating deficits in basic skills. This was particularly true for the post-elementary school experiences of special education students.

Quinn, Rutherford, & Leone (2001) noted that counseling, and speech and language services were the most commonly offered types of individualized service. Based on this and my experience, I expected to find these two forms of service present on all IEPs for students with such needs. At Haven, students received individual counseling intermittently through the family counselor, and their participation in groups also met some of these needs. Speech and language services were significantly rarer; even students with such needs indicated by eligibility label or IEP service, saw a speech and language pathologist intermittently if ever. My observations were consistent with the research where speech and language service was a significant area of need but diverged in terms of what the literature indicated I might find.

Meeting Basic Needs

Garfinkel et.al., (1997) noted that the OJJDP had found that most juvenile detention facilities do not provide the necessary health or mental health services that they are required to by IDEA, Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and state laws. Based on literature like this I expected to find students warehoused at Haven with little access to things most public school kids took for granted. This was not the case, as I saw students having consistent, regular access to dental care, being taken to a ready-care facility after a fight to ensure no injuries, having a psychiatrist visit to supervise proper medication, access to individual counseling services, and group problem solving experiences. This is not to say that room for improvement did not exist, as some students would likely benefit from regular psychiatric or psychologist therapeutic intervention.

Student Isolation

The final theme presented in Chapter Five dealt with how I observed the students to be socially isolated much of the time, even from those with whom they spent the vast majority of their time. In public schools, students are often separated by opportunity to participate, by socio-economic status, by race, or by academic ability. For example, some may have had parents able to pay for athletic equipment required for certain sports that allowed them to participate in that group. I thought these divisions of opportunity would be lessened at Haven, where all students had the same opportunity to participate in academic and leisure activities, had nearly identical schedules, and lived with a core group of fellow residents. I was surprised to find that the majority of them appeared to have developed no strong connections with peers. Based on their interview responses, most students seemed to internalize school failure but attribute their being at Haven to external causes. For example, Dave spoke about having trouble learning in school because of his speech problems, but was at Haven because of his cousin and uncle's actions.

I believed that this pattern of attribution had implications for programming. I noticed a couple student pairings that seemed fairly constant in terms of hanging out daily but no defined group of three or more. If much of their self-esteem was linked to internal loci of control, such as feeling that they were not successful in school because of low intelligence or speech problems, they may also feel that their isolation was due to internal factors. Their programs and services at Haven are primarily geared towards building individual skills for the students to be successful in their local schools. They have team-building opportunities, such as sports leagues, but may be missing a component on

friendship development. Some of the long-term students had been there for upwards of two years. These students in particular should have some increased opportunity to develop peer networks. I did not find any prior research that addressed this issue.

Contribution to the Literature

When considering what contribution this study has provided to the research on juvenile delinquents with disabilities, I thought back to Van Kaam (1966) who provided some rationale for qualitative phenomenology when there is a weak research foundation in a given area of inquiry. "Research performed in this way is pre-empirical, pre-experimental, and pre-statistical; it is experiential and qualitative. It sets the stage for more accurate empirical investigations by lessoning the risk of a premature selection of methods and categories..." (van Kaam, 1966, p. 295). He wrote how this type of research complemented quantitative methods in the early stages of exploration in a given field by having the phenomena of interest be the center of study as opposed to a single, more restrictive methodology.

I believe the contribution of this study was to give the reader a different perspective regarding the goals of a juvenile detention facility, and what such a place might be capable of under ideal circumstances, particularly for students with disabilities. Much of the prior literature that looked at this population described how under-trained staff would not be capable of helping students make progress in a curriculum similar to that in a public school, particularly for students with disabilities. Perhaps by considering different goals, such as socialization and independence, new treatment designs could be implemented. By considering the detention facility as an opportunity to foster success, rather than an awful situation that we should strive to end with all possible speed, and

looking at the potential to identify and address needs that might well surpass the capacities of a public school, I believe researchers can use this study as a new lens. As van Kaam (1966) suggested could happen when employing qualitative methods, I believe a new line of research questioning exists that might bear fruit for preventing recidivism and addressing special education needs.

This line might very well be answered best through quantitative means. For example, correlating standardized scales measuring locus of control to academic achievement might yield information about which students are ready to re-enter a local school and which still have some needs to be addressed. Quantitatively tracking recidivism rates and combining that data with locus of control scales, academic skill level, type of disability, and stability at home could yield helpful profiles to target students with a facility's limited resources.

From examining the data and comparing it to previous research generated on juvenile delinquents with disabilities, I have formulated additional recommendations for Haven. These suggestions are based on my training, what I have learned about special education service provision in a detention facility, and the review of literature. As the Haven community has considered opening a nearby facility for female juvenile delinquents, any opportunities for improvement should be considered as they may someday be responsible for twice as many students. Following this section I gave some directions for future research and a summary of this project.

Recommendations for Improving Services

I found several aspects of the program at Haven that could use improvement if the potential of the facility to meet more of these student's needs is to be fulfilled. While the

basic structure exists to provide students with constructs like health and safety, the success that many of them experience often does not translate into their lives when they return to their communities. The recommendations in this section are focused around how the program could better facilitate keeping local districts providing what Haven has identified that these students need. The recommendations are:

- Enhanced Communication

- Coordinated Process for Release

- Improved Assessment Practices

- Centralized Record Keeping

Enhanced Communication

The need for better communication has already been recognized at Haven, but room for improvement still exists. The school principal told me how Michelle had worked hard to organize some of the local school districts to facilitate smoother, more productive transitions between them and Haven. Michelle told me this has been partially successful, but she recognizes the need for something more. Below, the school social worker described her observations regarding communication between the residential and school components of Haven.

> VD: How coordinated do you think the residential and the school pieces are, and how closely do they work together...both staffs?
> SW: I really don't know that, but I guess there's an answer in that, since I don't know. I've had good luck with various personnel and counseling staff and stuff like that, cause I seek them out to be a part of the evaluation process, but I think sometimes when I do that, I do notice that there isn't as much free flow of information between the school staff and the residential staff. You know, that the right hand doesn't always know what the left hand is doing, as far as, something could happen over the weekend, and that would greatly impact what happened Monday in Mrs. Jonely's English class, and she may not know...and so I would say communication could be much better.

According to Michelle and other staff, two separate communication issues need to be addressed if the efficiency of special education service provision at Haven is to be improved. First, communication between the residential and school components must be examined. Recognizing ancillary staff as school staff, even though they are not present on a regular basis should be considered, at least for students whom they are evaluating. The primary means of daily communication is the daily, memorandum style report each teacher received and any conversation they had with residential staff who had accompanied the students to breakfast. This seems adequate for daily updates, but the improvement I refer to involved the overall well-being of the students and educating residential staff about the impact of disability. The school staff should compile an end of the day memorandum to be shared with evening residential staff. This might let them know about particularly salient issues that had emerged during the day. It could also serve as a vehicle by which the school staff could make recommendations based on their expertise.

Second, the Woods School and the districts that send and receive students should be on similar pages in terms of expectations and student needs. I recalled the principal's tale about talking with the superintendent of a student who had recently returned from Haven and crashed a bulldozer into the school. This reminded me of observations and conversations with staff, where I gained the impression that the school staff felt a significant degree of frustration that their input is not given adequate weight in determining when a student is ready for release.

Coordinated Process for Release

The release process for the juveniles eligible for special education had a transition IEP as a requisite component. School staff can only guess at a general timeline for a given student's release date. When students leave and where they go seem highly variable based both on possible options and their needs, primarily as determined by court personnel and residential staff. This makes opportunities to prepare the local district and for that matter the community sparse and unwieldy. The family counselor sometimes had little time to arrange after-care services, and Michelle spoke of representatives from local districts attending IEPs with little idea about what type of program they would place the student in.

> Observation: At 11:15, someone came in, pulled a student, and brought him back about ten minutes later. Michelle explained that this was the probation officer for the START (short-term) students. During the free time at the end of the hour, she described him as the court representative, who had about fifty kids on his caseload, twenty-four of them being at Haven. She said that at times problems arise because this person tells kids that they will be leaving sooner that they are ready to. She expressed some frustration with the lack of consistency between the Woods School, the courts, and the public schools. "There is no process, and we are in year four. I have never been asked, 'Do you think so and so is ready to go', but I communicate this through my case reviews which the judges read."

> Observation: One student came back from meeting with the probation officer, and mentioned how he had been told that if he kept up the good behavior, he would be out of here in a couple weeks and would get to choose what school he would be going back to. Another student said, "Man, he's been telling me that for weeks and I'm still here."

> SW: I would say it's pretty typical as far as the timeline for getting a referral. I mean, obviously we have to do it in thirty days and all that, but I would say the one thing that's kind of different is because it's such a unique setting, in that it's so closed, the amount of time the teachers spend with those kids and how the classrooms are smaller and things like that that you really ended up getting like instead of one teacher's input, you really can get everyone's. The TC knows those kids as well as Phil the principal does, as well as Sherry (building secretary) does in the main office, so you really can get a real good picture even though the short time that they're there. Even if they are a START kid for example, of what his

needs are, where his strengths are or where the weaknesses are, so that's kind of unique compared to your typical school setting.

Improved Assessment Practices

Several of the school staff discussed how they are able to get to know the student fairly well in a short period of time. I believed the staff has a unique opportunity to measure these students academically that is being wasted. When the students arrive and are given achievement testing in reading and math, the results were reported as grade equivalents. The problem with this is that grade equivalents can be misleading since, in terms of levels of measurement, they are not an interval scale, but an ordinal one. This means that the distance between the intervals is not consistent, and therefore charting growth based upon it is inaccurate.

Another problem with grade equivalents lay in the fact that these types of scores cannot be compared across time or tests. The inaccuracy manifests itself when looking at a student's exit scores, where teachers in some cases said that the young men had made two years growth or more in their time at Haven. Additionally, the test that was used with the youths is quite old. That means that the normative data to which their performance was compared may also be misleading due to being outdated. This problem could partially be corrected by applying a current achievement instrument and reporting standard scores instead of grade equivalents.

Haven has an opportunity to assess students in a unique way. Taken as a whole, the residential and school components have the young men engaged in a curriculum that is significantly different from what they would experience in a public school, despite having their academic classes based on the State of Michigan curriculum benchmarks. They have the students twenty-four hours per day, often for many months, and control the

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student's environment quite rigidly. Because of this, I recommend that Haven consider employing a more ecologically valid assessment procedure, in the form of curriculum-based assessment. For example, they could incorporate progress through the various group experiences, sports, and work into a curriculum that could be assessed to determine readiness for release. Below, the residential director spoke of what type of information about a student had proved valuable in his experience.

> RD: You know I think...the understanding of different areas of, you know a kid is EMI, what does this mean...you know none of the staff are necessarily that versed in understanding that. I think the key thing with some of that with a kid EI or LD is really learning what is the kids learning style. So again that's going to be where you've got to talk with the teachers what is this kids learning style. Cause again that's going to tell you how a kid responds to even certain directions you give him in the house, or whether you're going to give him directions, maybe this kid here, I got to keep it real simple I can't give him a lot of directions. I may want him to do this here but I may have to ask, "OK did you understand what I was saying". Cause sometimes the kid will tell you yep, yeah, you understand what I'm saying, and then he go do something like, he told me...so again it may be a kid where I got to ask, "OK what did I say and what did I mean by that", so he can tell you a little bit better. So you...just knowing the kid some simple, some basic things I think around the kid.

The residential and court staff are less knowledgeable about the various connotations of special education disability, another area where improved assessment practices can be helpful. The school staff is well versed in assessment, and would need relatively little additional training to adopt a curriculum-based model. Brooks and White (1999), in conjunction with the National Juvenile Detention Association (NJDA) and the OJJDP, developed a curriculum designed to help teachers identify the needs of their students, improve behavior management skills, and promote the development of social skills. This curriculum is consistent with many of the aims of Haven, and it may be used to provide a framework of expectations that an assessment system could be built around. By incorporating more substantive evaluation, expectations about academic and

behavioral performance for the student are more valid. This is very important as providing accurate due process protections are very difficult without knowing how the student's disability affected the problem behavior before sentences are determined and educational plans are developed. Further, having the opportunity to review prior documentation is a key piece in the process of useful assessment.

Centralized Record Keeping

> CT: ...this impacts the special education students as they can exit the program before their records arrive or any IEPs are convened. Also, because the decision rested with a team instead of just him, what he tells the students can often vary by day. She also mentioned that with truancy cases, the court seems to prefer the juveniles to be at Haven for no more than thirty days, which means that many of these kids come and go before records arrive.

The infrastructure for improved record keeping and distribution already exists in the county where Haven operates, at least in regard to special education records. The Intermediate School District requires that all local districts send copies of any special education paperwork. This includes evaluation reports used to determine eligibility and IEPs that document what services the student is receiving. Because of this repository, no student from the county should have their entrance IEP crafted in the blind. The record sharing delay is more problematic for long-term students coming from urban areas in Michigan. A centralized records repository could also facilitate tracking these students once they leave a detention facility to allow longitudinal research on recidivism to be conducted more efficiently. The staff interviewed at Haven has plenty of anecdotal evidence of the successes and failures of their program, but no hard data by which program altering decisions may be made with any degree of confidence.

I recommend that Haven administrators contact the ISDs serving those districts to ascertain if they also have a central repository of information. Even if the most recent IEP

and evaluation reports are faxed to Haven, while the student's full school records creep their way along, the planning team would be farther ahead. This will often provide them with information about possible developmental considerations, achievement and IQ test scores, and other information that will be an important complement to the court paperwork with which the young men arrive. If problems with compliance exist, Haven administrators should consider working through the courts. For example, they may refuse to take any students who are not accompanied by records from their local school.

Directions for Future Research

A research agenda needs to be developed and pursued that would develop a means to track special education students and their rates of recidivism. Policy-makers at the federal and state level should consider monitoring recidivism by disability classification in order to target resources. This would also assist public schools in the identification of at-risk populations. Future research must also include longitudinal studies to determine if recidivism is linked to either type of disability or quality of special education services received. Research also needs to be conducted to determine whether juvenile detention programs with a significantly greater vocational component experience less recidivism for students eligible for special education.

When observing and speaking with these kids, it is clear that language deficits are severe and abundant. While ISDs or agencies who fiscally support detention facilities may find it a hardship to provide these services, they are a necessary component of treatment and effective reincorporation into local communities. Students must have as well developed language skills as possible if they are to be able to advocate for themselves, find and hold employment, and access appropriate recreation (Mclin 2002,

Smith and Griffin 2002). Towards this end, researchers in this field should explore alternative means of delivering this service that is more fiscally palatable. Assistive technology, such as computer-aided language instruction, may be a viable alternative to traditional models.

Summation

The experience of receiving special education in the environment of the Malcolm Williams School at Camp Haven was a positive one. While the services did not closely resemble traditional public school special education, the students had needs that were likewise non-traditional and required an alternative delivery system. From the literature reviewed, I thought that disabled youths were being failed by these facilities. From this study, I saw an instance where kids had an opportunity to have what most students take for granted, and the failure lay before they came and after they left. This irony, that the juveniles only had real learning opportunities after committing a crime and being incarcerated, speaks volumes about their backgrounds. This form of incarceration has some possible benefits for some students with disabilities; the problem for the future is how gains made can be sustained once they return to public school. Areas of concern included services like speech and language that did not seem to have an alternative modality but were left behind as students entered the camp. Employment skills and recreation were key foci of the treatment program that students bought into. Students had consistent medical, dental, and psychiatric care that most would not have had would they have stayed in their home communities.

The essence of the experience is that a great deal of potential exists to meet the needs of disabled youth with the resources available. The potential for this experience to

be enhanced exists primarily through improved assessment and communication between the many agencies involved with these youths. I believe that if the essence is about meeting needs, then there is hope that if done properly recidivism can be reduced, and initial infraction can be avoided as risk factors are further identified and refined. It is my hope that this study will contribute to this goal.

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