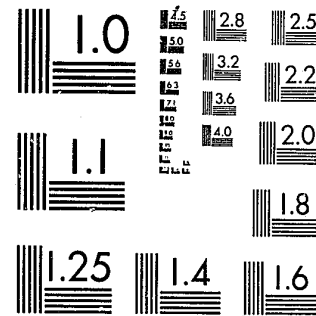


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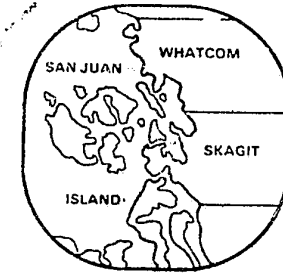
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The Bellingham Street Academy

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- An Evaluation -

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The Preparation of this grant was aided in part by a grant from the United States Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, and the Washington State Law and Justice Planning Division.

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July 19, 1976

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An Association of Local Governments
serving the North Puget Sound Region
DEWEY G. DESLER
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Introduction

The involvement of juveniles in criminal activity continues to be a source of frustration and fear for law enforcement agencies and citizens in this Region. Since deviant behavior is the result, in part, of a learned socialization process, the juvenile's social environment, including the schools, must be assumed to motivate either law-abiding or delinquent behavior. ¹

From approximately the ages of six to sixteen, juveniles are expected to be in regular school attendance nine months of each year. Indeed outside of the home, the school is the most common organized milieu of the child and young adolescent. It is inevitable, perhaps, that the school both receive the brunt of misconduct generated by outside influences and create dissatisfactions on the part of juveniles who do not fit easily into traditional school programs. ² For a considerable number of juveniles the school fails to offer meaningful educational experiences, experiences promulgated by a decision-making process they have no significant voice in. ³

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration's Office on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention goes on to say that "schools sometimes engender self-perceptions of failure on the part of juveniles and push them toward dropping out of school and into misconduct. These problems of youth are exacerbated because of high mobility rates, widespread social anonymity, substandard schools, deficient recreational outlets, lack of employment opportunities for youth and related characteristics. Attempts to reduce the level of misconduct must address those conditions and must endeavor to alter the status situation of youth by creating new roles and opportunities. ⁴

Voss and Elliot contend that it is not a coincidence that the rate of delinquency is inversely related to the rate of dropout. They go on to state that as the holding power of schools has increased so has the rate of delinquency. Compulsory school attendance facilitates delinquency by forcing youth to remain in what is sometimes a frustrating situation; a situation in which they are stigmatized as failures. In the final analysis, escape either through dropping out or graduation or in some cases expulsion appears to be the only satisfactory resolution of this problem.

In most cases dropping out is not an appropriate course of action. Rather, a better strategy would be to change the structure of the school; to explore new types of learning environments in which competition is minimized and in which failure ceases to be a functional prerequisite of the educational system. ⁵

The relationship between delinquency and school status is well documented in this Region. From 1972 until the present both the rate of dropout and the proportion of juveniles known to the court and not in school have grown significantly. These juveniles are characterized by inordinate numbers of prior referrals, disruptive family and support situations and life styles bordering on deprivation. The problems caused by a disadvantaged background are further exacerbated by the school's seeming reluctance to refer 'problem' juveniles and their families to appropriate community services as well as intermittent school financial crises. ⁶

Good behavior is certainly correlated with academic achievement. A student predisposed to doing well academically seeks to accept the school's system of values. Since the system gives him prestige for his actions it is in his best interests to support it. On the otherhand, a juvenile who does poorly in an academic sense is predisposed to criticize, reject or even sabotage the system where he can, since it places him in an inferior position.

Perhaps it is their phenomena, of the school enforcing either negative or positive behavior, that lends credibility to the earlier statement concerning schools and their ability to foster delinquency. The juvenile who finds prestige not in positive academic achievement, but rather in what Colin Lacey calls the 'anti-group', has committed himself to a behavior pattern which means his work will stay poor or, in fact, get progressively worse. ⁷

It is the role of alternative education, such as the Street Academy program, to 1) minimize the competitive aspects of education allowing individuals to progress at a rate proportionate to their skills and desires, yet at the same time, 2) assume through a certain amount of social control, that the individual does not fall further behind his expected grade level, or worse, further behind his often already retarded academic levels.

The question of causality between social behavior and academic achievement has been somewhat ignored as it appears to be easily answered in terms of chronology, i.e., failing grades in March, habitual truancy, in April, or, a delinquency in February, school suspension in March, academic failure in April. As important variables as time and age may be they are rather discretionary and fail to explain maturity and other such environmental characteristics of any given juvenile. The question of primacy in causation is rather individualized to be explored comprehensively here.

In February of 1972 a school was opened in Bellingham that sought to remedy some of the inherent inflexibilities of the traditional system. During its short three ~~years~~ ^{year} of existence the project, though hampered by a lack of funds and staff, it maintained an academic and crafts program which was recognized by the Juvenile Court as a substitute for traditional schools. The project incorporated, developed a written statement of policy, and brought together a working Board of Directors.

During this time it became evident to the staff of the Bellingham Street Academy and its directors that their services would be used by the school district and that funds would not be available from them. At the same time a referral process was established with the Whatcom County Juvenile Court. This process was made more formal when an application was made to the Washington State Law and Justice Planning Office for funding. A contract was awarded the Street Academy, to commence June 1, 1973.

Referral and Intake Process

The process of initiating referrals to the Street Academy included both formal and informal procedures. The majority of program participants were supposed to have come from traditional child-caring agencies such as the

juvenile court or the school districts. Often, however, students "transferred" from the regular school setting, referred informally by parents or other students.

Initially the lines of referral were somewhat more formal with an admissions board convening to consider applications. Conditions for admission included that the prospective student be out of school for at least three months, unless referred by the Public Schools, Juvenile Probation and Parole or another traditional agency. Each student had to exhibit a "desire to participate in the curriculum of the Bellingham Street Academy." The decision for admission was determined by a majority vote of the admissions board. Formerly, if turned down, the potential student was given a one week grace period after which he could reapply.

Most recently the intake procedures have changed rather drastically. Individual intake interviews were scheduled between the staff and each incoming student. During these interviews the staff tried to determine what motivated the student to enroll, what the student expected to gain from the Street Academy and informed the student as to what was expected of him/her. At the same time the student was apprised of the basic structure and rules of the school.

Potential students were rarely refused admittance under the new system. Though students were formerly required to sign an academic contract upon admittance during the early stages of the project they later were required only to submit a schedule of classes. Often, parents contacted the school and conferences were held before the student entered. All students were required to fill out an application form which had to have been signed by a parent or guardian if the student was under eighteen years of age. The use of a Program Entry Package, tailored to the specific needs of individual clients was discarded very early in the project.

Once a student is accepted into the Street Academy he or she is assigned to a "core group". A single staff member acted as the leader and assumed the responsibilities of keeping the academic records of each student and giving special counseling when needed to individual members of the core group. In addition, core group leaders helped students in filling out their schedules and by acting as liaison between students, their probation officer, the student's parents, as well as monitoring class schedules.

Initially, upon entrance, the Peabody Individualized Achievement Test was to be given to each student. The extensive length of time required to administer the test precluded its use, and until just recently, when the Wide Range Achievement Test was given to students, no standardized testing was done.

Educational Component

Education was to be the core of the Street Academy's program. It was conceived as the vehicle of resocialization for youth referral to the Street Academy. Unlike the public schools the Street Academy was designed for those

youth who had failed to attain basic skilled fundamentals within the traditional school setting.

Effective class size at the Street Academy allowed for a student to teacher ratio of 12 to 1.

From the onset of Law and Justice funding, the Street Academy attempted to receive State approval as an educational institution. It was approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the 1974-1975 year as a non-public school. Though accreditation was sought from the same source it was never realized. One of the major reasons for this is that accreditation is directly related to the school's physical plant meeting health standards. The Street Academy's basement location never met these codes. Instead a system was developed that allowed students to receive credit from the regular school district, almost exclusively Sehome High School, for classes taken at the Street Academy and approved by the Department Chairmen of the High School. The number of classes per quarter that were accepted by regular school personnel for credit fluctuated with each individual class' comparability to their more traditional counterparts.

Before the start of each quarter students and the staff met together to discuss classes and activities each would like to see offered. The final schedule was a composite of the needs and abilities of both. Each student was responsible for his or her own schedule of classes. Students and the staff worked out individual programs of study, GED preparation, general academic, high-school completion on re-entry, or vocational. Periodically, meetings were held between students and core group leaders to discuss, revise, and update individual student's plan of study. Students were required to take a minimum of two courses and a maximum of six. Earlier progress reports have made it appear that students were not interested in academic credit but rather became more involved in GED preparation. During the summer months the Street Academy kept its facility open offering limited academic training and serving generally as a drop-in center.

Administration and Staffing

The Street Academy structure was basically democratic in terms of operational decision-making, setting up of rules, school policy and class and activity scheduling. The Director has the power to hire and fire staff, with the approval of the Board of Directors. All fiscal matters were handled by the Whatcom County Mental Health Coordinator, the representative of an agency that regularly granted monies to the Street Academy.

Students were constantly asked for input primarily at the weekly, mandatory all school meetings. Rules and regulations were drawn up by staff and submitted to the students for discussion and final approval.

The entire staff acted as disciplinarians when the need presented itself, often with the support of students as regards drug violations, noise levels, and the use of recreational facilities. Attendance was monitored by a Review

Board consisting of the staff and students. If a student missed class consistently, the student was asked whether they wished to continue at the Street Academy. If they answered in the affirmative, they were given a warning and their attendance closely monitored. If the student continued to be absent without valid excuses, they were often asked to participate in custodial chores at the school. If truancy persisted students were summarily dismissed. It does not seem that many students were expelled. Rather, students would informally terminate at the Street Academy by an absolute lack of attendance. Further, it does not appear that sanctions were applied to students who, while in the program; were arrested for delinquent behavior. Their actions were tolerated and, if anything, the staff assumed a role of advocacy. The high rate of mobility into and out of the Street Academy may well account for the low number of credits earned by students. Those students who helped decide what credit courses would be available at the beginning of each quarter may not have been in the Street Academy at the end of the quarter. Further, students entering in mid-quarter may have found courses not related to their needs or desires.

The staff of the Street Academy seemed never to have exceeded five full-time members. As mentioned earlier the Director had the responsibility for hiring. Each summer notices were placed in the local newspapers announcing the hiring of the following year's instructors. In three years of program existence some thirteen different individuals comprised the Street Academy's staff. Since receiving Law and Justice funding there has been but one director. No single staff member, besides the Director, stayed with the Street Academy for longer than two school years. As the courses offered varied with the skills of the instructors it would appear that there was a definite lack of continuity in classes offered.

For the first time, this past year teaching certificates were required of staff. Other hiring decisions were based upon an exhibited ability of potential staff to relate to the target population, the individual's academic strengths and balances, initiative and prior experience. The project made extensive use of University Year for Action and Program for Local Service volunteers.

Specifically, the staff were required to conduct classes, counsel individual students, develop relevant curricula, maintain contact with parents, the probation staff and other public and private child-serving agencies. Other extraneous duties ran from custodial services to public relations.

Training for staff members was always done rather informally. The staff met several days before school opened to work out the plans for the coming school year and to get to know one another. Once school began weekly meetings were held to discuss strategies and problems. Further, staff meetings with a Mental Health counselor occurred three times per month in two hour sessions.

Evaluation Methods

This evaluation is the study of a treatment process, alternative education, on a treatment group, the Bellingham Street Academy population, and a "comparison" group, out-of-school juveniles from a bordering jurisdiction.⁸ It was hypothesized that the traditional school setting was inappropriate for a large number of juveniles, especially those exhibiting delinquent behavior. It was felt that a much less structured, noncompetitive atmosphere could better equip the delinquent dropout for productive re-entry into contemporary society. This successful re-entry would manifest itself in a return to the regular school setting, increased employability and ultimately a significant reduction in subsequent offenses by program participants.

Previous evaluations had attempted to measure the relative effectiveness of the program though they fell short of this goal primarily due to improper technique. It is assumed that the use of a comparison group insures validity and offers a relatively high level of confidence in these findings.

It should be recognized that the treatment this evaluation design attempts to measure is directed upon two populations originally quite homogeneous. To be specific the types of juveniles requiring each service as alternative education are at a relatively low level of income, parental situation and occupational class and educational attainment. Further, as Chapin points out, the cases lost by mobility, refusals, matching, etc., some forty cases in the comparison group alone, tend on the average to be cases with extreme measurements on criteria of effect.⁹ Therefore, it would appear that the trend is toward increasing homogeneity with a resultant lessening of differences found between populations.

The comparison group was gleaned from probation tapes and files in Skagit County. The individuals within the group were matched individually and as a group (the comparison of means) with Street Academy participants. In this way the comparison population was "similar" to the Street Academy group.

The key characteristics utilized in developing the comparison, characteristics believed to be related to post release/treatment performance in the community were:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| -Race | -Sex |
| -Juvenile court history | -Prior alcohol referrals |
| -School status | -Prior drug referrals |
| -Instant offense | -Juvenile justice status |
| -Age at time of first referral | |

One of the reasons for utilizing Skagit County probation records was that this population had not been exposed to any alternative educational experiences. Several projects similar to the Street Academy, were run by the Bellingham School District simultaneously, thereby possibly tainting comparison group development. Further, it remained possible until just recently, that any juveniles known to the court in Whatcom County could make use of the Street Academy's services. Second, the availability of Skagit County probation

tapes with its accordant ease in juvenile characteristic matching allowed a convenient means to set up this quasi-experiment. Finally, the relative similarity between the jurisdictions, economically and socially, helped assure the relevance of the comparison groups.

The two forms utilized to collect the data are contained in the appendix.

All follow-up information on both groups were taken from juvenile probation departments, sheriff's offices, and relevant police departments from respective jurisdictions.

Joan Wick, the Director of Street Academy, worked diligently in extracting the data needed for this analysis. Her efforts were not aided by a rather decrepit record system. The staff of the Skagit County Juvenile Probation department were very helpful in developing the comparison group, in some instances saving the case histories of 18 year olds from the fiery jaws of the courthouse incinerator.

The analysis concerns itself with the period from June 1, 1973 to June 30, 1976.

The Street Academy Population

In its three years of existence, the Bellingham Street Academy offered its services to approximately 151 juveniles. Typically, program participants were from of less affluent socio-economic spheres as evidenced by the fact that 30.5% or 46 juveniles were categorized as having a life style bordering on poverty. A large number of students were living alone at the time of entering the Street Academy, 17.2%, though 44 and 42 students, respectively either lived with both natural parents or with their mother. That such a large number of participants have come from family situations exhibiting some degree of disruption is to be expected. It follows also that, where socialization in the home fails, a very heavy burden is placed upon the juvenile's school situation. (Chart I)

The majority of Street Academy students come from the two larger Bellingham High Schools. A surprising number of juveniles, 32 or some 21.2% came from schools outside of Whatcom County, perhaps reducing the impact the project might have had on the dropout/delinquency problem locally. As regards referral sources, the proportions from other agencies is evenly distributed. The single largest category is self-referral with 34 students. This is interesting for it gives direction to a number of observations. First, lines of referral with local, traditional agencies were not suitably formalized. Clearly the Whatcom County juvenile court could have supplied all of the students the Street Academy could have worked with. Second, the high number of self-referrals reflects a mobile juvenile population who may have felt that if they referred themselves to the project they could also remove themselves just as easily. The lack of a formalized intake procedure would also contribute to the juvenile being able to invest little constructive time and effort to academic progress

I. Family Socialization

	<u>Unk.</u>	<u>Deprivation</u>	<u>Marginal Poverty</u>	<u>Basic Needs Being Met</u>	<u>Minimal Comforts</u>	<u>Moderate Comforts</u>	<u>Affluence</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Both Natural Parents	13	2	6	2	5	14	2	44	29.1
Mother Only	4	5	19	7	6	1	0	42	27.8
Father Only	1	0	2	3	2	2	0	10	6.6
Relatives or Guardians	4	1	3	3	1	0	0	12	7.9
Stepfather & Mother	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	6	4.0
Stepmother & Father	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	2.0
Alternative Living Situation	2	0	1	2	0	2	0	7	4.6
Adoptive Parents	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	.07
Living by self	23	6	13	2	1	1	0	26	17.2
Total	28	17	46	19	17	21	3	151	
Percentage	18.5	11.3	30.5	12.6	11.3	13.9	20		

II. Prior School and Source of Referral

	Unknown	Local Schools	Juvenile Court	Parents/Guardians	Friend	Another Street Academy Student	Self	Other	Total	%
Unknown	0	0	1	0	1	0	5	0	7	4.6
Bellingham High School	6	15	11	7	6	2	8	0	55	36.4
Sehome High School	0	11	6	6	3	0	11	1	38	25.2
Mt. Baker High School	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	6	4.0
Ferndale High School	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	5	3.3
Vista Middle School	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1.3
Whatcom Middle School	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	4	2.6
Fairhaven Middle School	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	1.3
All Others	0	0	3	9	10	0	9	1	32	21.2
Total	6	28	24	29	22	6	34	2	151	
Percentage	4.0	18.5	15.9	19.2	14.6	4.0	22.5	1.3		

III. Grade Level Upon Entrance

	Unknown	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total	%
Unknown	0	0	0	2	4	0	1	7	4.6
Bellingham High School	3	0	0	22	26	4	0	55	36.4
Sehome High School	2	0	0	14	13	8	1	38	25.2
Mt. Baker High School	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	6	4.0
Ferndale High School	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	5	3.3
Vista Middle School	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1.3
Whatcom Middle School	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4	2.6
Fairhaven Middle School	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1.3
All Others	1	0	3	10	13	5	0	32	21.2
Total	7	1	9	53	59	19	3	151	
Percentage	4.6	.07	6.0	35.1	39.1	12.5	2.0		

*Mr. Pence
Ass'n*

while in the project. One of the major reasons juveniles entered the Street Academy was that they were not motivated academically within the traditional school setting. If, upon entrance, the students had no one to sponsor them, that is, no one with a definite interest in their academic improvement, then the full responsibility of motivation fell upon the staff. Without formal written contracts between the student and the program, without a formal entry package and without some form of standardized testing, the staff would appear to have a handicap in directing individual students toward positive academic achievement. If students were responsible to probation, the schools or some other such agency to show positive academic and social progress, and if the lack of progress could be responded to by a removal from the Street Academy, the students would receive motivation that was otherwise lacking and the staff would unburden themselves of some of the responsibility of discipline and concentrate on class instruction. (Chart II & III)

This problem is further substantiated by the fact that some 15.2% or 23 juveniles were attending a traditional school when they "transferred" to the Street Academy. Alternative education is designed for students who have demonstrated an inability to function in the regular school setting, not merely a desire to leave. *(not all would agree)*

Upon entrance, the grade levels of individual students were either 10th, 39.1% or 9th, 35.1%. Table IV exhibits the program type individual students sought. The majority took a course of general study, generally a sort of 'holding pattern' where credit for courses could be earned or GED preparation capabilities increased. General study seems to be the program's catch all. If a juvenile did not desire credit or the certificate of equivalency, and yet wished to remain a student, he or she chose general study. (Chart IV)

IV. Program Type sought

Grade Level	Unknown	GED Preparation	General Study	Credit Courses	GED and General	Total	%
Unknown	0	3	4	0	0	7	4.6
07	0	0	1	0	0	1	.07
08	0	0	8	0	1	9	6.0
09	2	4	44	0	3	53	35.1
10	1	15	31	0	12	59	39.1
11	1	7	8	1	2	19	12.5
12	0	3	0	0	0	3	2.0
Total	4	32	96	1	18	151	
Percentage	2.6	21.2	63.6	.07	11.9		

Academic Effectiveness

Upon admission to the Street Academy, students were to have been given a standardized achievement test. Theoretically, as they made their way through the alternative school, the test was to have been readministered to gauge, periodically, whether the student had increased in achievement, remained the same, or fallen further behind. Though often insensitive to cultural differences such standardized testing, of an ongoing nature, could have proven quite helpful in measuring the relative academic impact of this alternative program. It appears that such a method of testing was not followed in the Street Academy. Of 151 students, only some 42 or 27.8% ever received either the PIAT (Peabody Individualized Achievement Test) or the WRAT (Wide Range Achievement Test). Of those 42 given a prior test only 7 received any sort of subsequent testing. It is interesting to note that of these seven, two scored higher the second time, four did not change and a single student actually did worse.

An obvious question is why wasn't this testing done. An early progress report claimed that the PIAT was too time consuming to administer. This is a relevant concern. A general attitude prevalent at the Street Academy was that since these juveniles have left the regular school setting and one of the most competitive aspects of the traditional school was its testing, in keeping with the informal atmosphere of the Street Academy, little testing, i.e, 27% was accomplished.

A further explanation may be in the varying amounts of time those students who took at least pretests spent in the project compared to those who were given no testing at all. Those tested spent some 14.07 months, on the average, at the Street Academy, compared to 5.02 months for those not tested. Needless to say, the difference is significant in terms of time.

Once the student entered the Street Academy and the initial testing was dispensed with, in one of the two modes mentioned above, the juvenile selected a course of study, (with the help of a staff person).

As mentioned earlier there were basically three program areas a student could select. By in large they seemed to have chosen "general study", 63.6%. "General study" may have been the most popular instruction, it was, however, also the least productive. Some 81.3% of these general study students earned no credits, 97.9% did not ultimately receive GED certification, and the greatest proportion of students taking non-credit courses signed in as "general study" students.

Earlier the credit situation was discussed. The Street Academy never received State accreditation but rather developed an ongoing arrangement with department chairmen at the Sehome High School. Perhaps to remove troublesome students from their classes, courses could be taken at the Street Academy for credit. In three years of Law and Justice funded existence some 92 credits were earned by some 36 students. These thirty six students represent 23.8% of the total Street Academy. This averages out to 2.56 credits per student. Two and one half credits apiece would not seem to offer much by way of moving a student along towards graduation.

High school equivalency was offered by the Street Academy and 32 students sought it. 21.9% of these students gained credit, while 28.1% of them arrived at their GED's. In three years 14 of 151 students gained their GED, a rate of 9.3%. Again when the difference between the mean amounts of time spent in the project by those students who gained their GED's and those who did not are compared we find that they are indeed statistically significant. It should be mentioned that a juvenile seeking his GED must be at an age comparable to that of a student graduating from high school. Many of the Street Academy students had not reached this level. For them to receive their GED testing would have required lengthy meetings between the students, parents and school district administrators to allow for variance of these rules for prepared, yet under age Street Academy students.

As we have seen the amount of time a student spends in the project is significant as it relates to measures of academic achievement. It also bears investigation when the mode of exit from the project students take is examined. In this research there were nine possible exit modes. They were, personal or family crises, poor attendance, commitment to the Department of Institutions (all negative exit modes); moved or joined the armed services, i.e., left the area or still in the project (neutral exit modes); and went back to a traditional school, received GED, graduated by means of credit earned at the Street Academy, and found employment (positive exit modes). When the proportions of students meeting these exit mode requirements placed in chi-square cells and correlated with the amount of time they spent in the project (be it greater or less than the overall average of 7.42 months) we have a relationship significant at the .05 level.

These tests do not mean that the longer a period of time a juvenile spends in the program, the better socially and academically he or she becomes. Rather, it would appear that for a very mobile population to relent in its restlessness is somehow significantly related to an accordant reduction in his or her social and academic frustrations. This idea goes back to one mentioned earlier dealing with family disruption, school disruption and their relationship to delinquency. The modest investiture, and the Street Academy was a modest investiture, of a juvenile from a disruptive background into an area or program of some relative stability, would seem, with time, (and that is the key) to modify aberrant behavior patterns.

Once more let us investigate the relationship time seems to have with the outcome of students attending the Street Academy. If one takes the Street Academy population and graphs it according to the amount of time (in months) each student spent in the program and then determine the proportion of these students at each frequency who committed new offenses, the coordinates should assume a linear form. When the calculations are accomplished we find a correlation coefficient of .571413, significant at the .05 level once again. Less than 33% of the variation in our proportions of recidivists can be accounted for by chance. As the relationship is positive the calculation would appear to say that as time in the program grows longer the proportion of students committing new offenses increases also. Though the r value is critical, its median position suggests the relationship is not as significant as it might be.

In conclusion several important observations have been made:

- 1) The majority of Street Academy students preferred a course of study that ultimately yielded neither credit for courses taken nor high school equivalency.
- 2) Those students who remained longest in the program did earn more of the above-mentioned positive academic features. This finding is tempered somewhat by the fact that as the amount of time in the project increased the proportion of juveniles who committed new offenses also increased.
- 3) The amount of time in the project also greatly influenced the nature of the exit mode for students. Those who stayed longer than was the average exited in a more positive manner than those who stayed for lesser amounts of time.
- 4) Generally it might be stated that the Street Academy population exhibited a rootlessness typical of those prone to delinquency. It might further be stated that a moderate investment of time and though not necessarily effort, in the Street Academy, slowed their mobility. In conjunction with the process of maturation (our variable of time) positive gains academically were possible. It now remains to be seen if the project, in this informal socialization process was able to affect behavior change in these students as measured by a reduction in their criminal careers. (Charts V, VI, VII)

V. Credits Earned by Course of Study

Credits Earned	Unknown	GED Preparation	General Study	Credit Courses	General GED	Total	%
None	3	25	78	0	9	115	76.2
1	0	5	11	0	5	21	13.9
2	1	0	1	0	2	4	2.6
3	0	2	2	0	1	5	3.3
4	0	0	1	0	0	1	.07
7	0	0	2	0	1	3	2.0
11	0	0	0	1	0	1	.07
12	0	0	1	0	0	1	.07
Total	4	32	96	1	18	151	
Percentage	2.6	21.2	63.6	.07	11.9		
\bar{X} no. of credits	.50	.34	.51	11.00	.50	.609	

VI. High School Equivalency

	Unknown	GED Preparation	General	Credit	GED General	Total	%
GED Earned	0	9	2	1	2	14	9.3
Not Earned	4	23	94	0	16	137	90.7
Total	4	32	96	1	18	151	
Percentage	2.6	21.2	63.6	.07	11.9		

VII. Relationship of Time in Program to exit Mode

	Greater than	Less than Mean
Positive Exit	19	23
Neutral	19	35
Negative	9	46

$\chi^2 = 9.90785$ $df=2$ $p=4.63967E-02$

Contingency coefficient .248142 $\bar{X} = 7.42$ months

The Two Groups: Street Academy Population and the Comparison

The development of a comparison group is documented within the introduction. It should be stated here that from the beginning it was known that the comparison group was going to be somewhat more delinquent than the Street Academy population. This becomes apparent through some of the comparisons of selected variables contained below. A significant number of juveniles who attended the Street Academy and were from out of this Region did not have prior criminal histories available for research purposes. Further, in both groups a large number of juveniles left the Region, hampering the follow-up. Finally, a confounding influence on the follow up was the fact that certain female subjects became married and subsequently changed their names.

None of the above mentioned difficulties should severely hamper the research. It is assumed that those Street Academy participants from out of the Region did have prior records, their other characteristics are too similar to students with priors to disregard. Further, though our comparison group is seemingly more delinquent (and we will demonstrate this later) we can use this finding in tempering our outcome variables when the effectiveness is determined. As explained earlier, it is believed that the majority of our confounding influences can be dealt with by the fact that it is the extremes within the distribution that offer most of the resistance to comparison attempts.

Simple and complex chi-square tests were used extensively to determine the relative comparability of groups. This procedure doubles in importance as it also reveals many of the background characteristics of the Street Academy population.

Instant Offense

The following table reveals the 1) offense immediately prior to referral to the Street Academy and 2) the instant offense the comparison population committed in 1973-1974. It is obvious that there arises a problem in comparison as some 38.4% of the Street Academy population had no recorded (in Whatcom County) offenses. If we subtract the number of out of Region Street Academy students from the total, our figures are much more comparable. (Chart VIII)

School Status

If we disregard the attending school status for the Street Academy our comparison is somewhat more equitable. The attending status speaks to students "transferring" to the Street Academy. Though the proportions in these categories are significantly different they are similar to requiring certain remedial academic services. (Chart IX)

Sex

There is no significant difference between the proportion of male/female in the two populations. (Chart X)

VIII. Instant Offense

<u>%</u>	<u>Street Academy</u> <u>N</u>	<u>Offense</u>	<u>Comparison</u> <u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
5.3	8	Burglary	18	20.9
4.6	7	Auto Theft	5	5.8
2.0	3	Assault	2	2.3
9.9	15	Runaway	12	14.0
2.0	3	Incorrigible	6	7.0
4.6	7	Curfew	2	2.3
3.3	5	Dependency	4	4.7
7.9	12	Grand Larceny	2	2.3
4.6	8	Petit Larceny	16	18.6
2.0	3	V.C.S.A.	1	1.2
4.6	7	Alcohol use/ possession	4	4.7
2.0	3	Drug Use/Possession	3	3.5
0.7	1	Traffic	1	1.2
1.3	2	Other Misdemeanor	3	3.5
1.3	2	Tresspassing	1	1.2
2.6	4	Truancy	2	2.3
0.7	1	Indecent Liberties	1	1.2
1.3	2	Destruction of Private Property	0	0.0
0.7	1	Game Violations	0	0.0
0.0	0	Homicide	1	1.2
0.0	0	Parole Violation	2	2.3
38.4	58	None	0	0.0

XI. Race

	<u>Street Academy</u>	<u>Skagit</u>
White	122	76
Non White	29	10

$X^2 = 2.28843$
 $df = 1$
 $p = .130341$

XII. Prior Drug Referrals

	<u>Street Academy</u>	<u>Comparison</u>
None	139	77
Drug Referrals	12	9

$X^2 = .430223$
 $p = .511879$
 $df = 1$

Prior Alcohol Referrals

There was a significant difference as regards the number of prior alcohol referrals. Of the comparison group 74% had no prior, of the Street Academy population, 87% had none. This finding confirms the earlier conclusion of the comparison group being somewhat more delinquency prone.

XIII. Prior Alcohol Referrals

	Street Academy	Comparison
No Alcohol Referrals	132	64
Alcohol Referrals	19	22

phi = .165241
 $\chi^2 = 6.74118$
 p = 1.09634E-02
 df = 1

Prior Commitments

Again, our comparison group, proportionately, had more prior commitments.

XIV. Prior Commitments

	Street Academy	Comparison
No Commitments	146	76
Commitments	5	10

phi = .164235
 $\chi^2 = 6.39261$
 p = 1.14593E-02
 df = 1

Age at First Referral

The average age at the time of their first referral to the juvenile court for Street Academy participants was 13.37 years. The comparison group averaged 13.87 years. A t-test for the difference between independent means reveals that there are no significant differences in the average ages of our two populations.

XV. Age At First Offense

Age	Street Academy	Comparisons
01	2	1
02	1	0
03	1	0
04	1	0
05	1	0
06	1	0
07	0	0
08	1	1
09	3	0
10	4	1
11	5	2
12	11	7
13	14	15
14	26	23
15	16	27
16	18	7
17	6	2
18	1	0
19	1	0
20	2	0

$\bar{X} = 13.37$

$\bar{X} = 13.87$

t = 1.15715
 p = .263619
 df = 197

Number of Prior Referrals

The comparison group averaged 5.48 prior referrals while the Street Academy population averaged 3.85. Including out-of-Region Street Academy students there is a significant difference in these figures. When these students are not included the significance disappears rendering our groups, in this category, comparable.

<u>Street Academy</u>	<u>Priors</u>	<u>Comparison</u>
72	00	8
18	01	11
12	02	8
10	03	11
12	04	13
7	05	3
7	06	6
6	07	6
2	08	4
2	09	4
1	10	1
0	11	3
0	12	4
0	13	2
0	14	0
0	15	0
1	16	0
0	17	0
0	18	0
0	19	2
<u>151</u>		<u>86</u>

X = 3.85714

5.48052

t = 2.90248
 df = 152
 p = 1.28269E-03

Juvenile Justice Status

Prior to instant offense for the comparison group and immediately prior to program admittance for the Street Academy population, each individual's juvenile justice status was determined. When compared we find significant differences; the comparison population being more often known officially to the juvenile court. Again, this may be attributable to the large number of out of Region Street Academy students as well as undocumented differences in the respective juvenile courts. (Chart XVII)

Conclusions

We have outlined our two populations. They differ on several characteristics. These characteristics all tend to point in a specific direction, lending themselves to control. The comparison group clearly appears to be more delinquent. They definitely were not attending school; they definitely had more prior referrals; they definitely were committed to state juvenile institutions often; they were more often strictly supervised by their juvenile court. The next question is whether they still are relevant for comparison purposes. If they are more delinquent will statistical regression cause them, with time, to become less delinquent? How badly has the inclusion of nonlocal Street Academy students, students whose records did not precede them, confound the outcome analysis?

If we carry forward into final analysis our knowledge of the dissimilarities of our groups, these differences may aid the analysis by offering partial explanations. Further, because the Street Academy's records do not contain the data on individuals that would reduce the dissimilarities, does not mean that they do not exist.

Our comparison group is more delinquent. We will give the Street Academy population another advantage, the first being their exposure to treatment.

Effectiveness

The most obvious post program effectiveness measure is rearrest; the legendary rates of recidivism. This recidivism rate is for both juvenile re-referral and adult arrest, as some of both populations have reached the age of majority. We should expect, from the conclusions drawn in the population comparison section that the comparison group, not receiving the benefits of alternative programming and being somewhat more delinquent to begin with, will recidivate at a significantly higher rate than the Street Academy population.

This first table deals with the proportions of juveniles, in both groups, who committed new juvenile offenses. Of 151 Street Academy students some 88 or 58% had no new known juvenile referrals. Exactly one-half of the comparison population did not commit any detected juvenile offenses. When we compare these proportions in a simple chi-square it is revealed that there is no significant difference in these proportions. (Chart VXIII)

The second table represents the proportions of individuals in each group who turned 18 and thereby reached adult status. Again, the chi-square reveals that there were no significant differences here. The next step (and table) represent the proportions of individuals, from both groups, who had turned 18, and had committed detected adult offenses. The chi-square reveals that there were no significant differences between the groups. (Chart XIX & XX)

One final calculation had to do with the frequency of new offenses. By calculating the mean amount of time it took from either instant offense or referral prior to Street Academy entrance and then examining the proportions of these, by group, who committed offenses either before or after reaching that mean amount of time, an idea as to the frequency of these new offenses might be gained. The first table examines the relationship with juvenile offenses, the second table, the relationship with adult arrests.

Table twenty-one reveals that there are significant differences in the frequency of subsequent juvenile referrals between the two populations. It seems that proportionably Street Academy students were re-referred to the juvenile court at a faster rate than our comparison group. (Chart XXI)

Table twenty-two shows, more predictably, that, the adult arrest frequency rates for the two populations did not differ substantially. (Chart XXII)

Conclusions

The analysis of this data offers some rather disturbing conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the Bellingham Street Academy in reducing or preventing criminal activity amongst its clients.

To begin with our two populations were not totally similar, the comparison group was seemingly more delinquent, significantly so in some variables. If we ignore statistical regression and maturation (and we may ignore maturation as their ages were not significantly different) we could hypothesize that our comparison group should prove to be much worse in outcome comparisons. This was not the case.

- 1) There were no differences, significant differences, in the proportions of juvenies from both groups who committed new juvenile offenses,
- 2) Similar proportions of our populations turned into adults and were subjected to a follow-up study. No significant differences were found in the proportion of the two populations who committed new adult offenses.
- 3) Surprisingly the Street Academy population committed new juvenile offenses more frequently than did the comparison population, as evidenced by the differences in the amounts of time it took for the two populations to commit new offenses.
- 4) Finally, we found no significant differences between the populations as regards the frequency with which they committed adult offenses.

XVII. Juvenile Justice Status

	Street Academy	Comparison
Minor or no Court Intervention	87	24
Probation	25	31
Wardship/Parole	38	31

$\chi^2 = 21.3218$ $df = 2$
 Contingency coefficient = .287855
 Probability = 2.34433E-05

XVIII. New Juvenile Referrals

	Street Academy	Comparison
No new Juvenile Referrals	88	43
New Juvenile Referrals	63	43

$\phi = 8.00537E-02$
 $\chi^2 = 1.51884$
 $p = .217794$
 $df = 1$

XIX. Proportion Turning 18

	Street Academy	Comparison
Adult Status	75	54
Non Adult	76	32

$\phi = .126685$
 $\chi^2 = 3.80366$
 $df = 1$
 $p = 5.11398E-02$

XX. Adult Arrests

	Street Academy	Comparison
Adult Arrest	18	11
No Adult Arrest	57	43

phi = 4.28933E-02
 $\chi^2 = .237339$
 df = 1
 p = .626135

XXI. Time and Juvenile Offenses

	Street Academy	Comparison
Less than \bar{X}	48	27
Greater than \bar{X}	15	15

$\bar{X} = 5.07$ months
 phi = .40825
 $\chi^2 = 17.49997$
 df = 1

XXII. Time and Adult Offenses

	Street Academy	Comparison
Less than \bar{X}	7	5
Greater than \bar{X}	11	6

phi = .03980
 $\chi^2 = .04594$
 df = 1
 $\bar{X} = 5.71$ months

It may therefore be concluded that the form of treatment, as outlined in the earlier sections of this paper, had no appreciable effect upon this population. To a certain extent it may have even proved harmful.

This statement does not say that each and every alternative educational situation will yield similar results. Rather, this particular treatment was singularly ineffective, in this experience. It is within the program's organization, its acceptance by the community, the competence and motivation of its staff as well as the characteristics of the client that the key to success in increased academic achievement and delinquency reduction lay. This model, the very informal atmosphere, the constant turnover of staff and clients, the lack of viable relationships with traditional school and service agencies, may have in itself, caused its own demise. To these youth requiring alternative education the relative ineffectiveness of the Street Academy and its eventual closure remove one more alternative to aberrant behavior. It is hoped that this disillusioning experience will not relegate alternative education to a secondary role in Law and Justice programming. It is of utmost importance that youth who legitimately fail in our public schools be given a second chance elsewhere. It is expected, rather, that this evaluation will narrow the models of alternative education to those more replicable and effective.

Appendix I

A partial list of credit courses offered by the Bellingham Street Academy in lieu of full school accreditation

American History
Basic Reading
Creative Writing
Drama
Minority Studies
Physical Education
Spanish
Needle Craft
Medieval History
Karate
Swimming
Art
Guitar
English
Typing
Photography

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