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ABSTRACT

Described are the program objectives, rationale, and evaluation of an elective, survival oriented, personal development summer program administered by the Atlanta Public Schools. The evaluation was of a quasi-experimental pretest, posttest design. The 34 students were evaluated by the California Test of Personality and "Operation Upstream" questionnaire. Results indicated the young men made significant gains on both instruments. Data from the California Test of Personality indicated eight areas in which there were improvements in personality characteristics. The "Operation Upstream" questionnaire indicated most task objectives of the program were achieved. (BB)

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# RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

VOL. II, NO. 7

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## EVALUATION OF "OPERATION UPSTREAM" SUMMER, 1968

Atlanta Public Schools  
Atlanta, Georgia

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*EVALUATION OF "OPERATION UPSTREAM"*

*Summer, 1968*

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"Bush-whacking" Through the Hilly Forests of North Georgia.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Although character development is one of the most important objectives of American public education, it frequently is the least affected by traditional educational processes. Of the many activities that a school system may employ to foster character development, one that has been shown to be very effective is the "Operation Upstream" project of the Atlanta Public Schools. The total effect of the "Operation Upstream" experience on the lives of the young participants can only be estimated. Nevertheless, this report will reveal quite vividly that significant improvements in character and personality did, in fact, occur as a result of this intensive, twenty-six day outdoor experience.

## II. RATIONALE

Conceived in the tradition of the Outward Bound movement, "Operation Upstream" was initiated during the summer of 1967 as a developmental activity for the young men of the Atlanta Public Schools. The results were so encouraging that the program was expanded and continued during the summer of 1968. "Only under the pressure of stress does a person get the chance to know himself," a quote from a participant in Outward Bound, epitomized the basic philosophy and program under which "Operation Upstream" was designed. It was not a program for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. Furthermore, it was not primarily any of the following:

Recreational	Political
A "camp"	Profit-making
Militaristic	For problem children.
Denominational	

Instead, it was an intensive, outdoor personal development program in which high school young men could elect to participate. The program was conceived and administered by the Atlanta Public Schools. Its primary purposes were to provide young men those

experiences which would enhance their self-realization and which would give them opportunities to develop certain physical and social attributes -- such as agility, perception, strength, and team work.

### III. OBJECTIVES

The specific purposes of "Operation Upstream" were summarized as follows:

1. To provide a wholesome environment in which young men may learn to relate effectively to each other and to authority figures
2. To provide young men opportunities to develop physical competencies which would otherwise lie dormant
3. To allow young men to know and to appreciate themselves, their abilities, and their limitations
4. To stimulate improved personality adjustment within the young men
5. To facilitate the development of social skills and the ability to get along with others.

### IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The twenty-six day program involving eighty-four young men, was survival oriented. It was divided into two sessions, with a separate group of young men participating in each session. The activities, however, were similar for both groups. The emphasis was placed on putting each young man into a stress situation, so that he might define his own capabilities and limitations. The program was also designed to indicate the necessity for team work and dependability.



A Pause for a Lecture on Balance-Climbing Techniques.



No Margin for Error Here -- It's a Long Way Down.

The first phase of the program was executed at the base camp, which was located in a primitive section of the Cahutta Mountains in North Georgia. The daily routine included strenuous activities -- such as calisthenics, obstacle courses, and other forms of physical exercise. Training sessions in first aid, methods of rescue, fire fighting, trapping, and the use of tools were also among the activities which were stressed. Instruction was given in methods of survival in the wilderness, including living off the land. The seventeen-day base camp session ended with "graduation exercises," which required each young man to remain in the wilderness alone for three days -- equipped only with a sleeping bag, a shelter half, first aid kit, matches, salt, vitamins, a piece of string, fish hook, snake-bite kit, and two candy bars. It was usually during this period of "isolation" that the young men learned to appreciate their dependence on others. Swimming, life-saving, and drown-proofing were taught at Lake Canasaga during the second phase of the program. Calisthenics, running, and other aspects of the fitness program were also continued.

The third phase commenced with a thirty-five mile hike from Woody Gap on the Appalachian Trail to Mt. Yonah. The trail also involved mountain climbing experience -- during which Blood Mountain, the second highest mountain in Georgia, was crossed.

At Mt. Yonah the U. S. Army Rangers who were Vietnam veterans, took over and gave an extensive three-day instructional period in mountain and rock climbing. They taught such skills as two party climbs, three and four party climbs, rappelling, and mountain rescue.

The final leg of "Operation Upstream" ended with a river trip on rubber rafts from Helen, Georgia, to Lake Lanier. From there, the seasoned outdoorsmen were transported by bus to Atlanta. Subjective reports from the "Operation Upstream" leaders and from the boys' parents testified to the positive effects that "Operation Upstream" had on the young men.



A Student Snaps His Safety Rope into a Piton  
During a Three-man Climbing Exercise.

## V. STAFF PERSONNEL

The success of the program was largely due to the dedication and competence of the staff. The following presents a resume of each staff member:

Director of the program was Elton Powers. Mr. Powers earned a Master's Degree from Auburn University in physical education and recreation; coached football for eight years; served in the United States Marines for four years; directed the first "Operation Upstream" project; has had extensive hunting, fishing, and outdoor living experience; and currently serves as assistant principal of O'Keefe High School.

Field Director was Phil Alexander. Mr. Alexander earned a Master's Degree from South Carolina University in physical education; graduated in rescue and survival from the Outward Bound school for instructors; had five years of service in the United States Marines; was a water safety instructor for 17 years; was an instructor in the first "Operation Upstream" project; is an expert hunter, fisherman, outdoorsman, and mountain climber; and presently serves as physical education teacher and coach at Grady High School.

One instructor was Billy Chadwick. Mr. Chadwick earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Emory University. Presently he is an outdoorsman who coaches at Grady High School and does church work with young adults.

A second instructor was Robert Bell. Mr. Bell is a retired Army Sergeant, who presently heads the O'Keefe High School Military Department. Mr. Bell, an expert in the use of map and compass, served as outdoorsman instructor in the first "Operation Upstreat" project.

A third instructor was Leonard Hall. Mr. Hall, who earned a Master's Degree from Florida State University, is an athletic coach, fisherman, and outdoorsman.

Furthermore, Mr. Frank Jernigan, principal of O'Keefe High School and one of the principal organizers of "Operation Upstream," continued to serve as a consultant for the program.

## VI. RESEARCH DESIGN

The *California Test of Personality* was administered to the young men on the eve of their departure for "Operation Upstream," and again at the conclusion of the activity, while they were waiting for transportation from Lake Lanier to Atlanta. An "Operation Upstream" *Questionnaire* was administered at the same time. The questionnaire was devised to determine what skills were developed as a result of the outdoor activities. The "yes" responses indicated competence in the several skills. The *California Test of Personality* was used to determine those psychological and personality changes which occurred. Also, a subjective evaluation by the leaders was solicited. The young men in the second session were not tested.

## VII. RESULTS

The questionnaire was designed to indicate a lack of ability by the percentage of "no" responses. Fifty-two per cent of the pretest responses indicated that the young men felt that they could not perform the tasks that they would be expected to perform during "Operation Upstream." Those activities receiving the largest number of "no" responses were concerned with constructing a rope bridge, 30; outfitting one's self for a three-day mountain climb, 24; compass and map reading, 22; and trapping one's food, 22. However, ninety-eight per cent of the posttest responses indicated that the young men could perform the tasks. Table 1 on page 12 presents a summary of the pretest and posttest responses.

The analysis of the results of the *California Test of Personality* indicated that, as a group, there were eight areas in which there were significant improvements in personality characteristics, with the greatest improvement occurring in total personal adjustment. Table 2 on page 14 presents a summary of the analysis of the data.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The primary objectives of "Operation Upstream" were fulfilled. Young men, when given the opportunity to attain heights of physical development previously unknown, proved to be quite capable of accomplishing the task. These young men mastered skills and competencies that would pass the most rigorous survival tests (see Table 1 on page 12).

The positive personal adjustments that the young men made were even more outstanding. Even though these young men were not selected for the experience on the basis of personality deviations, they did register marked improvements in personal and social attributes (see Table 2 on page 14).

"Operation Upstream" has well illustrated that when certain experiences are provided in an appropriate atmosphere or environment, major modifications in personality and character development can and do occur. It is possible that if society expected more from its young men and provided them the opportunities for physical, social, and personal development, the young men would rise to meet the new challenges in fruitful and rewarding ways.

## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the first two years of "Operation Upstream" met with such outstanding success, the following implementations are urged:

1. The base of participation should be broadened to include more young men. At least one group from each Atlanta high school should be solicited.
2. Until the base of "Operation Upstream" is enlarged, attention should be given to the

fiscal needs of the present program. A coordinator of the program should be employed.

3. A follow up study on the participants should be devised to determine whether or not the effects of the experience are carried over into the following school year. A teacher opinionnaire and a retest of the *California Test of Personality* would be appropriate.
4. The staff and participants of "Operation Upstream" should be commended for the outstanding successes which they experienced.



Supplies Being Carried to the Ranger Training Area on Mt. Yonah, Georgia.

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES GIVEN TO "OPERATION UPSTREAM" QUESTIONNAIRE

(N = 34 -- Period of Treatment = 26 Days)

Question	Pretest Answers		Posttest Answers	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Can you safely climb a rock-faced cliff?	20	15	34	0
2. Can you successfully ride and guide a life raft down a swift mountain stream?	18	18	34	0
3. Do you know appropriate procedures for fighting forest fires?	14	21	32	1
4. Do you know how to administer first aid to an injured person?	24	12	34	0
5. Do you know suitable procedures for rescuing a drowning person?	19	17	34	0
6. Do you know how to trap your own food?	14	22	34	0
7. Can you sustain yourself for three days alone in the wilderness, living entirely off wild plants and animals?	20	15	34	0

8. Can you survive in deep water for one hour while covering a distance of one mile?	19	16	30	4
9. Can you use a map to avoid getting lost in the wilderness?	14	22	34	0
10. Can you use a compass and a map together to find your way between two distant points in the wilderness?	14	22	34	0
11. Can you cook your own meals?	25	1	14	0
12. Do you know how to outfit yourself to carry all your needs on your back for a three-day journey through the mountains on foot?	12	24	34	0
13. Do you know how to construct a rope bridge for crossing a stream?	6	30	33	0
14. Can you pitch a tent so that you will remain dry and well even under rainy or windy weather conditions?	20	16	34	0
15. Can you now (without further coaching or assistance from anyone) overcome all obstacles on the project's obstacle course?	16	19	34	0
TOTALS	255	270	483	5

TABLE 2

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS  
OF "OPERATION UPSTREAM" PARTICIPANTS

Scale	Pretest Average	Posttest Average	t Ratio	Level Of Significance
Self-reliance	11.75	13.18	2.87	.01
Sense of Personal Worth	12.71	13.79	2.60	.05
Personal Adjustment	71.89	77.71	7.44	.01
Social Skills	11.61	13.14	2.81	.01
Anti-social Tendencies	11.82	13.29	2.74	.01
Community Relations	12.36	13.75	2.78	.01
Social Adjustment	72.50	78.75	2.76	.01
Total Adjustment	144.39	156.46	3.15	.01

FINANCIAL STATEMENT, PROJECT UPSTREAM, SUMMER, 1968

Receipts

Tuition	\$ 1,139.31
Scholarships	<u>4,875.00</u>
Total	\$ 6,014.31

Disbursements

Salaries	
Mr. Hall	\$1,559.04
Mr. Chadwick	1,726.08
Mr. Brooks	480.00
Mr. Powers	1,855.63
Mr. Alexander	2,061.43
Sgt. Bell	<u>773.76</u>

Total Salaries \$8,455.94

Miscellaneous	
Food, Equipment, and	
Transportation	<u>4,561.38</u>

Total Disbursements \$13,017.32

Total Disbursements Less Receipts \$7,003.01

Cost to the Board of Education  
for Each Boy \$83.37

O'Keefe High School, 21355  
October 30, 1968  
Project Upstream, 05-053