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**ABSTRACT**

The Career Opportunities Program (COP) provides individuals from low income communities an opportunity to acquire work and academic experiences that would help them qualify for a better career in education or a related field. Since 1970, 348 persons have been successfully admitted in the University-based program. At reporting time, 131 (38 percent) had graduated from college; 111 (30 percent) had withdrawn. COP trainees serve elementary schools and Get Set Centers, providing small group and individualized instruction. Survey data is reviewed and tabulated, providing information about COP trainees, the kinds of services they provided, the relative changes of their roles in the classrooms, their perceptions of the program, and reactions of cooperating principals and teachers. The cooperating principals, although agreeing that the performance and service of the trainees was excellent and the program good for training future teachers, felt that scheduling should be coordinated through the schools. The trainees felt a need for a better communication system and more counseling. It was concluded that: the program was successful in attracting participants from low-income communities; the participants played an important role in their assigned schools and day care centers; and that the participants were able to master the academic coursework required. (Author/HW)

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**1973-1974 EVALUATION OF THE  
CAREER OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM**

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**Office of Research and Evaluation  
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA**

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## ABSTRACT

The Career Opportunities Program (COP) provides individuals from low-income communities an opportunity to acquire work and academic experiences that would help them qualify for a better career in education or a related field. Since 1970, 348 persons have been successfully admitted in the program. To date 131 (38%) have graduated from college; 111 (30%) have withdrawn.

COP Trainees serve elementary schools and Get Set Centers. The Trainees provide small group and individualized instruction. The principals and teachers of the participating schools agreed that the performance and service of the Trainees were excellent.

The cooperating principals, although agreeing that the program was good for training future teachers, felt (1) that the scheduling of Trainee service should be coordinated through the schools. The Trainees felt a need for a better communication system and more group counseling.

## **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM**

The Career Opportunities Program (COP) is a work-study program designed to assist individuals from low-income circumstances find opportunities for new career patterns. Participants in the program, COP Trainees, consist of auxiliary personnel employed by the School District (i.e., Aides) and personnel recruited from the Model Cities community. The program also incorporates the career ladder concept which facilitates the upgrading of personnel into higher job level assignments (contingent upon the successful completion of college course work).

COP Trainees receive work experiences in the elementary schools and Get Set Day Care Centers in Philadelphia. The COP Trainees serve as part of the instructional team in the elementary schools and Get Set Day Care Centers to which they are assigned. The COP Trainees serve as instructional aides who bring both rich background experiences for the children and more highly trained assistance for the classroom teacher.

COP Trainees receive study experiences through their matriculation in undergraduate programs at one of three local colleges: Cabrini College, Community College of Philadelphia, Temple University. As undergraduate students enrolled in a pre-education curriculum, the COP Trainee is expected to conform to the regulations of the institutions and to maintain an acceptable grade point average.

### **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

It is expected that the educational opportunities for preschool and elementary school children will improve as the results of having more qualified aides assist in small group and individualized instruction. It

is also expected that having auxiliary personnel assuming new roles in the classroom would improve the self-image of the children and other paraprofessionals. On a secondary level, it is expected that the school district and cooperating colleges will begin to reconsider some of their teacher training practices and policies.

#### MODE OF OPERATION

Most of COP Trainees (85%) were assigned to elementary schools where they served in kindergarten to grade 5 classes. Those assigned to Get Set Day Care Centers (15%) worked as assistant instructors or general aides. The majority of the COP Trainees provided small group instruction (87%) for those children having the greatest learning needs. Cooperative lesson-planning activities are also provided. In cooperative lesson-planning activities the COP Trainee helps to plan lessons and prepares instructional materials for the classroom. In some cases, the COP Trainee provides individualized instruction and assists in classroom management procedures such as the administration of tests, the marking of homework, or the presentation of reinforcement exercises.

COP Trainees also perform some noninstructional tasks. They supervise children in the lunchroom, at assemblies, or at recess. They also take attendance and record pupil progress information. In some schools COP Trainees work with the city-wide reading program or with commercially prepared reading materials. A few work in Title I Reading Skill Centers, the Bilingual Program, the Intensive Learning Center, and resource teams.

#### PREVIOUS FINDINGS

The 1972-1973 evaluation showed that 89% of the COP Trainees were

high school graduates who had attended either a comprehensive or regular senior high school. Most of them received either an academic or general diploma (69%). More than 85% of their supervisors and participating teachers rated them as having satisfactory attitudes, performance, and adult model characteristics. More than 85% of them had between a 2.0 and 3.9 grade point average (letter grade of C or better). At least 88% of the sampled trainees had earned more than fifty approved college credits. The rate of withdrawal from the program declined by 8.5% (from 11% to 2.5%).

#### THE 1973-1974 EVALUATION

The current year's evaluation of the Career Opportunities Program was designed to gather survey information from all program participants. The survey technique differs from that of previous years. The survey instruments were designed to gather more in-depth information about the COP Trainees, the kinds of services they have provided, the relative changes of their roles in the classrooms, and their perceptions of the program itself. Care was taken to compare and contrast the three status groups within the current program: active participants, persons from the Linkage group, and those who have graduated. In as many cases as possible, comparisons were made between the responses of Model Cities and In-house Trainees.

Principal and teacher surveys were designed to have a number of common questions. That is, both groups were asked different versions of the same questions. This technique was used to verify the general reactions of the two groups and to test the stability of their responses.

Since the number of participants in each group was different, the likelihood of persons from the school who would have received a complete set of survey instruments was kept to a minimum.

#### **ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

**Objective 1: To increase the academic achievement of children with low income backgrounds and to develop behavior patterns supportive of their own learning.** (Increased academic achievement is defined as progressing at a rate equal to the average class at a specific grade within the school's district. Improved supportive learning is defined as instructional practices which encourage individualized instruction and/or small group sessions.)

At the time of the preparation of this draft, the achievement scores of the pupils in the respective schools was not available. This analysis will be made and presented as an addendum to the report or the final copy of the report may be delayed for the inclusion.

To measure the extent to which instructional practices had been changed as a result of having the COP Trainees, sections from the surveys of the principals, cooperating teachers and COP Trainees were analyzed. The analysis consisted of determining the amount of time the COP Trainees were involved in the instruction of small group and/or individualized units. In addition, information was gathered to ascertain whether the role and responsibilities of the COP Trainee changed as they earned more college credits. The principals were asked whether having paraprofessionals with advanced knowledge in education caused them to alter in any way the general instructional plans and/or strategies of their schools.

## Results

Forty five percent (41) of the schools and Get Set Centers being served by COP Trainees (as of September 1972) were surveyed. The survey showed that most of the schools had one or two COP Trainees (see Table A). About half of the school had been served by COP Trainees for four consecutive years. Fifty percent of the principals reported that having the COP Trainees in their schools increased the schools' capability for implementing their overall program and for individualizing instruction. About one third of them stated that the COP Trainees had caused the infusion of new instructional ideas and methodologies and had motivated other aides, their pupils, and their community. They also noted that they were able to distinguish the kinds and level of service COP Trainees provided from those with a lower level of professional training. These findings are shown in Table 1. Table 2 shows the ratings the principals gave to their COP Trainees. Fifty two percent (22) of the principals gave the COP Trainees excellent ratings on their classroom performance. However, there was one COP Trainee who was rated unsatisfactory.

A forty-percent random sample was made of the cooperating teachers (as of the December 1973 assignment). The results of the survey of 30 teachers showed that 63% of the teachers (19) had received two or more consecutive years of service from the same COP Trainee (see Table 3). Three teachers had the same COP Trainees for more than three years. In the main, the teachers reported that in the majority of the cases, they had an opportunity to receive the services of the same COP Trainee and, therefore, did not have to spend a lot of time training new paraprofessionals. In only about one third of the cases did the teachers have

TABLE 1

**A Listing of the Prominent Benefits the Principals  
of the Participating Schools Have Identified**

Benefits Schools Received	Number of Principals Responding	Percentage of Principals Making the Judgment
Increased capability for implementating the overall programs of the school	22	54%
Increased capability to individualize instructional program to meet pupil needs	19	46%
Infusion of most recent ideas and methodologies of education into practices of teachers and school	16	39%
More knowledgeable aides in the classrooms	15	37%
Motivation for other aides, the pupils, and the community	15	37%
Increased opportunity for acquiring (or training) qualified, practical, and effective teachers	11	27%
Increased leadership roles for regular teachers	6	15%

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TABLE 2

**Participating Principals' Ratings of the Classroom  
Performance of Active COP Trainees**

<b>Rating Categories</b>	<b>Number of Principals</b>	<b>Percentage of Principals Making Rating</b>
Excellent	22	52%
Good	19	45%
Fair	-	-
Poor	1	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>a</sup>Total includes rating of the dismissed Trainee.

TABLE 3

**Level of Continuous Service Received by  
Participating Classrooms**

<b>Number of Years Having Services of COP Trainees</b>	<b>Number of Classrooms Served</b>	<b>Percentage of Classrooms Served</b>
One year	11	37%
Two years	11	37%
Three years	5	26%
More than three years	3	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

COP Trainees for only one year.

In Table 4 we see the kinds of classroom responsibilities and duties the cooperating teachers assigned their COP Trainees. Initially, all the cooperating teachers used their COP Trainees for individual and small group instruction in reading and mathematics. Two thirds of them used the COP Trainees to supervise some whole class and/or independent activities, such as story telling and playtime. Half of the cooperating teachers had the COP Trainees prepare and present audiovisual aides and instructional materials. The cooperating teachers also assigned some noninstructional duties: taking the daily roll, monitoring the children in the hallways.

Two fifths (17) of the cooperating teachers indicated that they had significantly changed the responsibilities of their COP Trainees. They permitted the COP Trainees to instruct for longer periods of time to assume more professional responsibility, and to plan/demonstrate instructional lessons.

Overall ratings of the performance of the COP Trainees is given in Table 5. More than half of the cooperating teachers rated the classroom performance of their COP Trainees to be excellent; 42% rated them as being good; and 6% rated their performance as being fair.

All of the survey information about the impact of the COP Trainees on improved supportive learning indicate that the presence of the Trainees had a positive effect on the ability of the schools to individualize instruction and to provide small group instruction. Both principals and cooperating teachers felt that the Trainees were able to provide a greater level of instructional support than those generally offered by other classroom paraprofessionals. The increased support was seen as an opportunity

TABLE 4

**Initial and Changes in Classroom Responsibilities  
and/or Duties Assigned to COP Trainees  
by Their Cooperating Teachers**

Assignments and/or Duties Performed by COP Trainees	Number of Cooperating Teachers	Percentage of Teachers Making the Assignment
<b>Initial Classroom Responsibilities<sup>a</sup></b>		
Individual and small group instruction in reading and mathematics	30	100%
Supervise some whole class and/or independent activities (i.e., story telling, play)	19	63%
Prepare and use audio-visual and instructional materials (i.e., filmstrips, bulletin boards)	15	50%
Maintain daily and monthly attendance records	9	30%
Plan and demonstrate lessons (i.e., readiness activities, circle time)	8	27%
Monitoring halls, gym, entrances, etc.	3	10%
<b>Change in Duties as Result of More College Credits<sup>b</sup></b>		
Increased length and level of teaching assignments (i.e., social studies, whole class)	12	--
Given more professional responsibility	9	--
Plan and demonstrate lessons	8	--

<sup>a</sup>Four-fifths (N = 24) of the Cooperating Teachers indicated that the COP Trainees were involved in planning classroom activities.

<sup>b</sup>More than two-fifths (N = 17) of the Cooperating Teachers indicated that they had changed significantly the assigned role and responsibilities and/or duties of their COP Trainee(s).

**TABLE 5**  
**Cooperating Teachers' Ratings of the Classroom**  
**Performance of Active COP Trainees**

Rating Categories	Number of Cooperating Teachers	Percentage of Teachers Making Rating
Excellent	16	52%
Good	13	42%
Fair	2	6%
Poor	-	-
Total	31 <sup>a</sup>	100%

<sup>a</sup>One Cooperating Teacher rated a previous COP Trainee.

for extending the instructional time for the pupils and for increasing the quality of their education. Therefore, the objective for the encouragement of individualized and/or small group instruction was achieved.

**Objective 2: To provide previously denied individuals from low-income communities an opportunity to obtain success in a new career choice.**

As of May 1974, 348 individuals from low-income communities have participated in the Career Opportunities Program. A listing of the composition of the participants, as of May 1974, is presented in Table 6. In the Table we see that 130 of the Trainees were from the Model Cities community and 218 were from the in-house program of the Philadelphia School District. Of the 348 Trainees, about one third had graduated from the program; and one third were still active. At present there are more in-house than Model Cities participants. However, over the course of the

TABLE 6

Status of 348 Trainees Enrolled in the Career Opportunities Program (COP) Since July 1970<sup>a</sup>

Status Category	All Trainees		Model Cities Trainees		In-House Trainees	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Active	111	31.9	46	35.4	65	39.8
Resigned/ Terminated	106	30.5	50	38.4	56	25.7
Graduated	131	37.6	34	26.2	97	44.5
TOTAL	348	100.0	130	100.0	218	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Totals as of May 1974.

program, more of the Model Cities applicants have resigned from the program than In-house applicants. Consequently, the majority of the graduates from the program were In-house Trainees.

#### Characteristics of the Trainees

To obtain a better picture of the Trainees, a more detailed study was made of their biographical data, school service performance, and undergraduate achievement. A survey was developed and distributed to Trainees still in the program (Active) and those who had graduated (Graduates). The Active group was subdivided into regular Active Trainees and those involved in the Linkage Program. A separate analysis was made of the records of those Trainees who had resigned from the program.

Of the surveys sent, 40% of the Active group was returned and 12% of the Graduates. Table 7 summarizes the biographical data gathered from

TABLE 7

**Biographical Data of Active, Linkage, and Graduate Trainees  
of the Career Opportunities Program**

Trainee Status	Sex		Marital Status			Previously Employed?	
	Male	Female	Married	Single	Divorced/ Separated	Yes	No
Active (N=35)	6	29	15	10	10	33	2
Linkage (N=10)	1	9	7	3	--	9	1
Graduate (N=16)	--	16	14	--	2	13	1
TOTALS (N=61)	7	54	36	13	12	55	4

the survey forms. Of the 61 cases studied, 54 were female and seven were male. Thirty-six were married; 13 were single; 13 were separated or divorced. Fifty-five had been previously employed and four had not.

In the survey the Trainees were asked to give two reasons why they had joined the program and two reasons why they decided to continue. Table 8 summarizes the reasons the Trainees gave for joining the program. The two most frequent reasons given were (a) to get a better job (74%) and (b) to fulfill a personal commitment (46%). The Trainees, however, were divided on the reasons why they decided to continue. Equal percentages said that they continued because they either desired to help and/or work with children (36%) or because they had a chance to receive a free education (34%). About one sixth (16%) of them said that they continued because the program would lead to a better job.

**TABLE 8**  
**Summary of Reason Active, Linkage, and Graduate COP Trainees Gave for Joining and Remaining in the Program**

Trainee Status	Reasons Given for Joining the Program			Reasons Given for Remaining in the Program			Intrinsic Values
	Higher Salary	Self Improvement (Better Job)	Fulfillment of a Personal Desire/Commitment	Desire to Help/Work with Children	Free Education	Improved Employment Opportunity	
Active (N=35)	12	24	15	15	9	2	--
Linkage (N=10)	2	8	8	3	3	2	--
Graduate (N=16)	8	13	5	4	9	6	2
<b>TOTAL (N=61)</b>	<b>22 (36%)<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>45 (74%)</b>	<b>28 (46%)</b>	<b>22 (36%)</b>	<b>21 (34%)</b>	<b>10 (16%)</b>	<b>2 (3%)</b>

<sup>a</sup>percentages, shown in parentheses, indicate the proportion of the total sample who gave the corresponding reason(s).

The pattern of responses to the questions persisted within the three groups with the majority of the Trainees in each category indicating that they had joined to get a better job, but remained because of the services they provided for the children or to take advantage of the free education.

The Trainees were also asked to give two major benefits they had received from being in the program. These data are summarized in Table 9.

**TABLE 9**  
**Perceived Benefits Active, Linkage, and Graduate COP Trainees**  
**Received From the Program**

Trainee Status	Benefits Derived From Program			
	Increase in Salary	Opportunity to Achieve Higher Level of Education	Opportunity to Obtain a Higher Level of Employment	Intrinsic Value(s): Service to Children
Active (N=35)	8	18	9	21
Linkage (N=10)	2	11	1	4
Graduate (N=16)	8	14	11	9
<b>TOTAL (N=61)</b>	<b>18 (30%)<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>43 (70%)</b>	<b>21 (34%)</b>	<b>34 (56%)</b>

<sup>a</sup>Percentages, shown in parentheses, indicate the proportion of the total sample who identified with the corresponding program benefit(s).

Most of the Trainees (70%) felt that the greatest benefit they had received from the program was the opportunity to achieve a higher level of education. Their second choice (50%) was the personal rewards they were receiving from the kinds of services they were giving to the children.

Tying for third place was an opportunity to obtain a better job (34%) and an increase in salary (30%).

The only interesting difference that occurred between the total responses and the individual groups occurred in the Active group. Here the Trainees were divided between the opportunity to increase their level of education (18) and to provide service to the schools they served (21).  
**Objective 3: To facilitate and provide for staffing patterns which augment and support the learning of children.**

The majority of the Trainees (70%) in the program had been participating for between three and four and one-half years. Five had been in the program for five or more years. Eleven of the 16 graduates had become appointed teachers in the School District. Table 10 gives the breakdown of these and other information. As far as time in the program, according to Trainee groups, 24 (68%) of the Active group have been in the program from three to almost four and one-half years; most of the Trainees in the Linkage group (80%) have been in the program from between one and two and one-half years; most of the Graduates had been in the program for an average of three and one-half years.

According to all Trainees, most of them (77%) were classified as Instructional Aides and were assigned to individual and/or small group instruction; 25% were assigned to classroom management activities; and 23% were assigned to planning and conducting lessons. In addition, the majority (51%) were asked to monitor or supervise pupils in the yard, hallways, and lunchrooms. They also were required to take attendance (32%) and to assist in the duplication of instructional materials (26%). About one fourth of their noninstructional time was spent completing

TABLE 10

Summary of School Services Provided by All,  
Active, Linkage, and Graduate COP Trainees

	All Trainees (N = 61)	Active Trainees (N = 35)	Linkage Trainees (N = 10)	Graduated Trainees (N = 16)
<b>Years in COP</b>				
1.0 - 2.9 years	21	9	8	4
3.0 - 4.9 years	35	24	2	9
5.0 or more	5	2	-	3
other (Appointed Teacher)	(11)	-	-	(11)
<b>Job Titles While in COP</b>				
Classroom Aide	9	3	4	2
Instructional Aide	22	19	1	2
Kindergarten Aide	10	4	2	4
Teacher Aide	4	1	2	1
Student Teacher	3	3	-	-
Teacher Assistant	6	5	1	-
<b>Instructional Duties/Responsibilities Assigned</b>				
Individual/small group instruction	47	27	12	8
Classroom Management	15	11	1	3
Plan and conduct lessons	14	10	3	1
Teach whole class	4	4	-	-
Prepare and use equip/materials	7	5	2	-
<b>Non-Instructional Duties/Responsibilities Assigned</b>				
Monitor/supervise pupils in yard, hall, lunchroom, etc.	31	15	9	7
Take attendance, monthly reports	22	12	6	4
Duplicating materials	16	12	1	3
Giving/Marking papers, tests	14	10	2	2
Completing report cards/ records	15	7	2	6
Fill out orders, collect money for trips, etc.	12	7	1	4

report cards, marking papers and tests, and filling out purchase orders or collecting trip money.

More specific details of the kinds of responsibilities and/or duties performed by the Trainees are given in Table 11. Here we see that when

**TABLE 11**  
Initial and Changes in the Classroom Responsibilities  
and/or Duties of All, Active, Linkage,  
and Graduate COP Trainees

Responsibilities and/or Duties	All Trainees (N = 61)	Active Trainees (N = 35)	Linkage Trainees (N = 10)	Graduate Trainees (N = 16)
<b>Initial Classroom Responsibilities/Duties Assigned<sup>a</sup></b>				
Writing lesson plans	34	15	9	10
Choosing materials/activities	24	8	8	8
Suggesting ways to introduce new concepts/materials	13	4	4	5
Planning free time activities, trips, science experiments	8	7	-	1
<b>Changes Because of More College Credits<sup>b</sup></b>				
More professional responsi- bility	32	19	3	10
Experiences in teaching lessons to whole class	13	7	2	4
More small group teaching and classroom management	19	10	-	9
Teach more subjects	10	3	2	5
Supervise aides/student teachers	3	-	-	3

<sup>a</sup>Four-fifths (N = 52) of the COP Trainees indicated they they were involved in planning classroom activities.

<sup>b</sup>More than two-thirds (N = 43) of the COP Trainees indicated that their responsibilities and/or duties had changed because they had earned college credits.

the Trainees were first assigned, they were required to write/prepare lesson plans (57%) and select classroom materials/activities (40%). For the remainder of their instructional time, they were permitted to suggest ways to introduce new concepts or materials, and to plan free time activities.

As is shown in Table 11, the responsibilities and duties of two thirds of the Trainees significantly changed as they acquired more college credits. They were given more professional responsibility (79%), were permitted to teach more groups for longer periods of time (42%), and were permitted to teach the whole class on some occasions (30%).

**Objective 4: To compare the performance and achievement records of in-house participation with Model Cities participants.**

According to the data obtained from the 1974 sample, there is a very little difference between the educational backgrounds of the Trainees. An earlier analysis of their educational backgrounds showed that most of them (89%) had received diplomas from comprehensive or regular high schools. Most of them (69%) had been enrolled in either an academic (36%) or general curriculum (33%). Eleven percent of the group had obtained GEDs. Nevertheless, these prior experiences did not appear to influence how well the Trainee performed in undergraduate school.

Another measure was made to ascertain the relationship between the background training of the Trainees and how successful they would be in undergraduate school. The School & College Ability Test (SCAT) was given to each applicant. Analysis of these data according to the three status categories mentioned earlier (Active, Graduated, Terminated) showed that the three groups were not appreciably different. First, more of the

Terminated COP Trainees had SCAT scores below 45 than did those in the Active and Graduated groups. Second, twice as many of the Active and Terminated COP Trainees Aid SCAT scores between 45 and 54 points than did the Graduate group. Another expected outcome was that those entering the program with previous college experience scored higher than the high school graduates (see Table C in the Appendix).

The performance of all the Trainees who have participated in the program is shown in Table 12. Since these data are the averages as of

TABLE 12

College Performance Averages of All Trainees  
Model Cities Trainees, and In-House Trainees<sup>a</sup>

Range of Grade Point Averages	All Trainees		Model Cities Trainees		In-House Trainees	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1.00 - 2.00	50	15.8	28	24.1	22	10.9
2.01 - 3.00	120	37.8	51	44.0	69	34.4
3.01 - 4.00	147	46.4	37	31.9	110	54.7
TOTAL	317	100.0	116	100.0	201	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Cummulative grade point averages as of December 1973, at the time of graduation, or at the time of resignation/termination. Averages of 31 Trainees not available at time of the analysis.

NOTE: 4.00 = A; 3.00 = B; 2.00 = C; 1.00 = D

December 1973, only 317 records are presented. Only one sixth (16%) of all Trainees have a grade point average below a grade of C. More than one third (38%) have a grade point average between a C and B. About half (46%) have a grade point average between a B and A.

When comparing the college performance of Model Cities and In-house Trainee groups, it was found that 14% more Model Cities than In-house Trainees have a grade point average below C; 10% more Model Cities than In-house Trainees have a grade point average between C and B; and 23% more In-house than Model Cities Trainees have a grade point average between B and A. Overall, however, 84% of all the Trainees have a grade point average of C or better and are, therefore, qualified to remain in their respective undergraduate programs.

Table 13 gives the college performance averages of all the Trainees.

TABLE 13

College Performance Averages of COP Trainees According to Status Categories: Active, Graduated, Resigned/Terminated<sup>a</sup>

Range of Grade Point Averages	Active Trainees		Graduated Trainees		Resigned/Terminated Trainees	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1.00 - 2.00	13	11.7	0	0.0	35	48.0
2.01 - 3.00	59	53.2	31	23.7	31	42.4
3.01 - 4.00	39	35.1	100	76.3	7	9.6
TOTALS	111	100.0	131	100.0	73	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Cumulative grade point averages as of December 1973, at the time of graduation, or at the time of resignation/termination. Averages of 33 Trainees not available at time of the analysis.

The table has been divided into the three status categories: Active, Graduated, and Terminated. Since the overall performance of the Trainees

has been presented earlier in Table 12, the purpose of this table is to show comparisons among the three groups. As the table shows, about half of the Trainees who were dropped from the program had college grade point averages which were less than acceptable. Only about 11% of the Active Trainees are on a probationary status. One interesting finding is that 42% of the Trainees who were dropped from the program were in good standing. In fact this percentage is almost the same as those who are on the current Active list. The majority of the Trainees who graduated (76%), completed their college work with B or better grade point averages.

When we take a look at the age of the Trainee and try to determine whether age had anything to do with the accomplishments of the Trainees, we find no consistent pattern. Over the total group of 385 Trainees, about 9% were 54 years or older; 25% were an average age of 49; 22% were an average age of 39; 32% were an average age of 29; and 12% were less than 25. In the Active group most of the Trainees were evenly distributed over the age averages of 49 to 29, with only a few above 54 years and below 25 years. The same condition existed in the age span of the Graduates. The striking difference between these two groups and those who terminated the program was the number who were 29 years or younger. This constituted 58 percent of all terminated cases. (See Table D in Appendix for more details.)

#### Withdrawals From the Program

Detailed studies were made of the reasons and/or circumstances which caused the Trainees to resign or be terminated. Table 14 shows the findings of the May 1974 study. Analysis of the data indicate that 85% of the withdrawals were voluntary and 15% were involuntary. The majority of all

**TABLE 14**  
**Reasons and Circumstances for the Resignation  
 or Termination of 106 COP Trainees<sup>a</sup>**

Category	Number of Trainees	Percentage of Group
<b><u>Voluntary</u></b>		
Health	42	39.6%
Personal	28	26.4%
Entered College Full Time (under another program)	6	5.7%
Maternity Leave	6	5.7%
Moved Out of Town	3	2.8%
Other	5	4.6%
<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>	<b>90</b>	<b>84.8%</b>
<b><u>Involuntary</u></b>		
Academic Failure	13	12.3%
Excessive Absence	2	1.9%
Dismissed from Job	1	1.0%
<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15.2%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>a</sup>As of May 1974

withdrawals (66%) was due to either health (40%) or personal reasons (26%). Academic failure (12%) was the primary reason for most involuntary actions (termination).

The 1972-1973 report treats these data in another fashion. In this study an effort was made to ascertain when the Trainee withdrew from the program. To pinpoint the time period, six-month intervals were established. The records of the 114 Trainees who had withdrawn from the program were first classified in terms of their leaving date and then analyzed to

determine the reasons given. Within each time interval, frequencies were kept of the number of times a specific reason/cause were given. Table 15

TABLE 15

Relationship Between Length of Time in the Program and the Rate of Resignation or Termination Between 1970 and 1973

Length In Program <sup>b</sup>	Year Leaving Program				Total	Percentage of Total
	1970	1971	1972	1973		
0- 6 months	34	9	4	2	49	44%
7-12 months	--	15	2	1	18	16%
13-18 months	--	12	8	1	21	18%
19-24 months	--	--	13	--	13	11%
25-30 months	--	--	8	5	13	11%
31-36 months	--	--	--	--	--	--
TOTAL	34	36	35	9	114	100%
% of Year's Total <sup>a</sup>	12%	13%	12%	3%		

SOURCE: 1972-1973 Report.

Note: The 1972-1973 and 1973-1974 counts differ by eight Trainees. This is probably due to the return of some of the Trainees to the program in the 1973-1974 school year.

<sup>a</sup>Average annual enrollment = 280.

<sup>b</sup>As of April, 1973.

gives the results of the first part of the analysis which was to show the length of time the Trainees stayed in the program before they left. In the Table we find that over the years of 1970 to 1972, an average of 35 Trainees left each year. In 1973, however, only nine Trainees left. When you

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consider that the average annual enrollment was 280 Trainees, the 35 who left represent an attrition or dropout rate of 12%. This attrition rate decreased to 3% in 1973. Of the 114 who left the program, 44% left during the first six months, with the largest number occurring the first year of the program. The number leaving after seven months ranged from 11% to 18%. Again the larger proportions of the withdrawals occurred in the early stages of the program.

The reasons or circumstances the Trainees gave for leaving the program are presented in Table 16. These data were summarized according to the

TABLE 16

Classification of Specific Reasons Given for Leaving  
the Program at Five Program Intervals

Length in Program	Reasons for Leaving Program
0- 6 months	Personal illness and/or problems (47%); no reason given (28%); unable to adjust to new schedules (13%); full-time college (12%).
7-12 months	Personal illness and/or problems (67%); absenteeism (11%); full-time college (11%); maternity (11%).
13-18 months	Personal illness and/or problems (52%); not able to locate (19%); maternity (14%); academic (5%); full-time college (4%). <u>Note:</u> 14% returned to program
19-24 months	Personal illness and/or problems (69%); academic (23%); maternity (4%); loss of job (4%). <u>Note:</u> 15% returned to program
25-30 months	Health (69%); maternity (23%); academic (8%). <u>Note:</u> 8% returned to program

SOURCE: 1972-1973 Report. Data covers the period of 1970 through 1973.

respective time intervals in order to find out whether the reasons given for leaving the program formed a systematic pattern. As we look across the time categories, we find that the one reason/circumstance given most often was personal illness and/or problems. This reason ranged from a high of 69% for Trainees who left after 19 months (about 1.5 years) to a low of 47% for those leaving before six months. Five of the Trainees (13%) who left before six months indicated that they were not able to adjust to the new schedule. Four of the Trainees who left between seven and twelve months in 1970 and 1971 left because they were able to go to college on a full-time basis.

Maternity leave began to become a frequent reason for those leaving after seven months. The highest percentage (23%) of Trainees leaving the program for this reason occurred in the 25 to 30 months group. It must be noted, however, that an average of 10% of the Trainees who left for this reason returned to the program. The first indication of these returnees can be seen in the 13 to 18 months time category.

#### Rating of Program by Trainees

All of the Trainees in the survey sample (61) were asked to rate the program. The majority of them (58%) rated the program as being excellent, 29% rated the program as being very good, and 11% rated it as being good. (See Table 17). However, they did have some recommendations for improving the program. Of their five recommendations, the need to have a more effective communication system appeared to be most crucial (22%). Trainees in all three status groups indicated that this was their greatest concern. The other four recommendations, which represent less than 6% of the group, were: More communication to the public about the program; more team counseling;

**TABLE 17**  
**Rating of the Total Program by Active,  
 Linkage, and Graduate COP Trainees**

Trainee Status	Rating Categories			
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair
Active (N = 35)	23	8	3	1
Linkage (N = 10)	4	4	2	-
Graduate (N = 16)	8	6	2	-
Total (N = 61)	35 (58%) <sup>a</sup>	18 (29%)	7 (11%)	1 (2%)

<sup>a</sup>Percentages, shown in parentheses, indicate the proportion of the total sample who made the corresponding rating.

sessions in which the Trainees are briefed on the content of their courses; more time off.

**Objective 5: To increase community involvement with the participating schools.**

Due to time and resource constraints, data were not gathered to measure the achievement of this objective.

### Summary and Conclusions

The Career Opportunities Program was organized and implemented in 1970 to give individuals from low-income communities an opportunity to acquire work and academic experiences that would help them qualify for a better career in education or a related field. Since that time more than 348 persons have been admitted into the program. Of this number 131 (38%) have graduated from college; 111 (32%) are still attending college; and 106 (30%) have withdrawn. The Trainees who have graduated maintained an average grade point between 3.0 and 4.0. Those who are currently attending college are in good standing. Those who withdrew from the program usually did so within their first six months and usually gave personal illness or problems as their reason for leaving. Although the candidates entered the program with regular high school diplomas, scored somewhat below an acceptable college entrance score on the School & College Ability Test (SCAT), averaged about 35 years of age, only 13 (4%) of the candidates were dropped from the program because of academic failure.

The Trainees served elementary schools and Get Set Centers. They assisted the schools and centers by working with the pupils individually or in small groups. The principals and cooperating teachers at these sites indicated that the COP Trainees were an integral part of their

program and that, because of their additional training, they were assigned a higher level of professional responsibility. In addition, the Trainees were reported to have brought new ideas and instructional methods into the schools and made it possible for their cooperating teacher to assume a more effective leadership role.

Because of time and circumstances, a full investigation of the impact of the program on community involvement was not undertaken. However, the general comments of the school principals and cooperating teachers seem to indicate that they believe that the level of community involvement has increased.

#### Perceptions of the COP Model as a Teacher Preparation Paradigm

When asked if the COP Trainee program was a good way to train future teachers, 75% of the principals indicated that they thought the method was far superior to regular programs. They believed the COP Trainee method was best because it would produce teachers who would be thoroughly trained in both the theoretical and practical aspects of education. The teachers from this kind of program, they indicated, would have been exposed to the kinds of pupils they would have to teach, be familiar with the operations and procedures of the school system, have opportunities to immediately put into practice, and see the consequences of various aspects of learning theory.

Those principals who either thought that they could not make a valid comparison between the Trainee programs or thought the COP Trainee method was equal to other programs gave the following observations: "The program is too difficult for the Trainees to manage over a long period of time. The program puts their schools at a disadvantage, since they cannot

have the Trainee all day. The Trainees should take their courses either after school hours or at their own expense."

One of the participating universities indicated that it had made some changes in some of its admission policies, courses of study and scheduling of courses. The university was willing to accept students with deficiencies in Mathematics, Science, and/or a Foreign Language and to establish courses to remove the deficiencies. It was also willing to accept all transfer credits in which the Trainee received a grade of C or better.

The experiences with the program gave the university an opportunity to find a meaningful way to integrate field experiences with academic work. Through the Trainee program, the university was able to reshape its theoretical models and "methods" course into a more workable unit. Each of these units was so constructed that it corresponded more to real world situations and was geared to the specific age group of the children to be served. Along these same lines, the university was willing to make special arrangements of the scheduling of classes to meet the work requirements of the program.

Two direct quotations from the university sponsor are worth repeating here,

"... I consider the COP model to be highly effective since it maximizes the principle of integration of field and academic experiences. The university has many teacher-training programs which include field components. However, the COP work-study format provides greater opportunity for interaction with children over a long period, as well as the testing and evaluation of ideas, techniques, and skills in a living situation. This is a highly motivating design for learning since it enhances the students active participation and involvement.

As a whole the COP students are a very mature, serious, and hard working group. Since most of the trainees were recruited from the ranks of

aides already working in the schools, they proved to be extremely goal-oriented, and eager to make the most of the opportunity afforded them. They have been successful in their work at the university and most of the trainees are considered to be highly effective teachers (by their cooperating teachers and principals) by the time they finish the student teaching experience. Eager learners themselves, they serve as excellent models for the children they teach...."

Three of the goals of the program were achieved. First, the program was successful in attracting 348 individuals from low-income communities. Of those who enrolled, more than two thirds of them are either still actively participating in the program or have graduated from the college or university in which they were enrolled. Although about one third of the participants did not complete the program, only 3% of them were terminated because they could not maintain an adequate academic record.

Second, the participants played an important role in the instructional process in the schools and Day Care centers to which they were assigned. In the majority of the cases, the participants assisted in individual and small group instruction. The subjects taught most often were reading and arithmetic. As the participants gained more college credits, their cooperating classroom teachers felt that they were capable of assuming more professional responsibility and, therefore, began to permit them to teach more groups of children, prepare and present whole lessons to the class, and perform a number of independent activities.

Third, the participants were able to master the academic work given to them at the college or university they attended. More than 75% of them maintained a grade point average of C or better. Although the participants who enrolled in the program had different educational background experiences, these factors did not appear to have a direct influence on their ability to succeed. However, those who came with college credits tended to score

higher on entrance examinations and to graduate from the program earlier.

The objective which deals with the impact of the participants on pupil achievement (Objective 1) was not evaluated fully at the time of this report. Although the reports of the cooperating principals and teachers indicated the value of the participants in the realization of the instructional programs of the schools and the impact of the new ideas, methods, and techniques the participants brought to their schools, comparisons between the children served in these schools with those of the school district in general have not been made. However, this analysis will appear as an addendum to the report. Nevertheless, if one considers what the impact of such individual and small group services have produced in similar situations (i.e., other instructional aide programs within the school district), one might conclude that the services provided have helped the children to acquire many more additional specific basic skills in reading and arithmetic.

The cooperating principals, although agreeing that the COP Trainee program was effective and should be offered to all paraprofessionals, had three recommendations which they would like to see implemented:

- . The scheduling of the Trainees should be coordinated with the respective schools,
- . Substitute services should be provided to the schools on those days/times when the Trainee is not available, and
- . The academic training of the Trainees should occur on their own time and not during the hours when school is in session.

The Trainees themselves recommended that the program should increase its communication system such that they might be better informed of some of the activities that are occurring within their assigned school and the

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college/university they are attending. Some also recommended that more group counseling and group discussion sessions be scheduled within the school year.

In general the program appears to be meeting all of its objectives and has made enormous growth since its inception in 1970.

TABLE A

Level of Service Provided the Participating Schools  
(N = 41)

Number of COP Trainees Per School	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools In Category
One	9	23%
Two	10	25%
Three	4	10%
Four	6	15%
Five	5	12%
More than Five	6	15%
Total	40	100%

Note: One school dismissed its Trainees.

TABLE B

Length of Continuous Service Received by  
Participating Schools

Number of Years Having Services of COP Trainees	Number of Schools Served	Percentage of Schools Served
One year	4	10%
Two years	3	7%
Three years	6	14%
Four years	20	49%
More than four years	8	20%
Total	41	100%

TABLE C

Relationship Between College Entrance Scores and  
Status of COP Trainees

College Entrance Score <sup>a</sup>	% of Total Group	% of Active Trainees	% of Graduated Trainees	% of Terminated Trainees
Below 45	1.7	1.1	0.8	3.4
45 - 54	26.8	35.4	14.5	34.4
55 - 64	31.9	34.4	27.4	35.6
65 - 74	22.2	20.8	27.4	16.6
75 - 84	13.2	8.3	21.0	7.8
Above 84	4.2	-	8.9	2.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Raw scores, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SCAT).

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TABLE D

Relationship Between Year of Birth and the  
Status of COP Trainees

Year of Birth	% of Total Group	% of Active Trainees	Graduated Trainees	% of Terminated Trainees
Before 1920	8.9	8.4	4.6	15.2
1920 - 1929	24.7	24.3	33.3	14.3
1930 - 1939	21.8	25.2	26.5	12.4
1940 - 1949	32.5	29.7	30.3	38.1
After 1949	12.1	12.6	5.3	20.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0