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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of the "Project Advance" program at the Morse Crisis Intervention Center was conducted. Review of documents, formal and informal interviews, questionnaires and direct observations were the methods used to assess the correspondence between the objectives of the program and its achievements. The evidence, based on findings from analyses of all the data, points to a program which shows a high degree of correspondence between its objectives and its achievements. Raw data, findings based on analyses of these data, and conclusions are included in the Final Evaluation Report. Recommendation to continue the program, with a few modifications of certain aspects of the program, are provided in the Final Evaluation Report. A discussion of the roles of the inside and outside evaluators and a presentation of suggested ways to improve the evaluation of this and other programs are also included in this report. (Author)

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FINAL REPORT

Public Schools of the District of Columbia

Morse Crisis Intervention Center
"Project Advance"

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Division of Research and Evaluation

July 1976

Morse Crisis Intervention Center - Project Advance
(R.F.P. No. P.S. 7607 (Part 1)
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I. Abstract

An evaluation of the "Project Advance" program at the Morse Crisis Intervention Center was conducted. Review of documents, formal and informal interviews, questionnaires, and direct observations were the methods used to assess the correspondence between the objectives of the program and its achievements. The evidence, based on findings from analyses of all the data, points to a program which shows a high degree of correspondence between its objectives and its achievements.

Raw data, findings based on analyses of these data, and conclusions are included in the Final Evaluation Report. Recommendations to continue the program, with a few modifications of certain aspects of the program, are provided in the Final Evaluation Report. A discussion of the roles of the inside and outside evaluators and a presentation of suggested ways to improve the evaluation of this and other programs are also included in this report.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information concerning the findings of the evaluation of the "Project Advance" program at the Morse Crisis Intervention Center. A major issue is the amount of correspondence between the objectives of the program and its accomplishments. A second important issue is determination of the events or circumstances that have influenced the achievement of program goals. A third issue is examination of the techniques used by project personnel to perform the internal evaluation of the program. A fourth issue is the investigation of ways in which the internal and external evaluators can collaborate to improve the evaluation of this program. A fifth issue is the presentation of suggested ways to improve the evaluation of programs in general.

III. Background

A critical problem that faces all school systems is the development of alternative educational programs for those students who are unable to function in the regular classroom. Students with both emotional and behavior problems all too often have academic problems as well. The task that faces educators is, therefore, a complex one. These students must be provided with: (1) assistance in personal and social adjustment, (2) remedial work in many academic areas, especially reading and mathematics, and (3) a learning environment that is capable of sparking their interest sufficiently to compensate for the apathy and negative feelings toward school that have developed through repeated failure to perform successfully.

The available resources designed to work with such students (e.g., special education classes, resource teachers for remedial work, school-based counselors) all too often are not able to provide the kind of long-term intensive experience that is necessary in order to intervene successfully in the patterns of failure that have been established and reinforced.

Clearly a comprehensive program that is designed to meet the special and critical needs of these students is of utmost importance.

Morse School, a D.C. public school facility located on R Street in the Northwest section of Washington, D.C., has had a four year history of providing rehabilitative care to Black, inner city students identified as unable to function within the regular school program.

During the course of their work with these youths, the staff of the Morse School realized that additional and/or more intensive services would have to be provided in order to meet the needs of the students currently enrolled and to work with a greater number of students at any one time.

A strong psychotherapeutic program would be necessary in order to assist the students with personal growth and emotional adjustment. The majority of the students would need remedial work in both reading and math. The wide range of abilities in different academic areas, coupled with great diversity in reading level, would necessitate a highly individualized curriculum. Since years of failure had reinforced an apathetic attitude toward school and learning, a different approach to learning would be necessary in order to arouse the student's interest. Sorely needed opportunities for participation in sports activities and exposure to cultural exhibitions and events, as well as career development education, would also be highly desirable components of a comprehensive educational program.

A proposal for the development and implementation of such a program was written by the Assistant Principal of the Morse School. The objectives of the program would be to provide 60 junior high school students who were referred to the Morse Crisis Intervention Center because of disruptive behavior in the regular school with (a) psychotherapeutic services, (b) an instructional program that emphasizes individualization through the modified Open Classroom technique, and (c) a program of enrichment that will reinforce the educational program. The proposal was submitted to the D.C. Public Schools, funding was granted and "Project Advance" was operationalized in 1973.

IV. Evaluation Design

The evaluation design included the development of hypotheses to be tested, the selection of the variables to be measured, determination of the quality of measurement, identification of the sources of relevant data, processing of these data to obtain findings, and presentation of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations relevant to the evaluation of the program.

The bases for the development of the hypotheses to be examined and the selection of the variables to be measured came from several sources. One source was the description of the program provided to the evaluators by the personnel of the D.C. Public Schools. Another important source was discussions with the participants (students, teachers, and administrators) of the project. Other sources of hypotheses were suggestions

available to the evaluators from their readings about and discussions concerning development of individualized curricula and their knowledge of psychotherapeutic techniques.

These hypotheses were used to assess the correspondence between the objectives of the program and its achievements. Each of the hypotheses was examined by studying corresponding variables which are assessed by the use of questions designed to focus on a specific hypothesis. The hypotheses, with paraphrases from the description of the program given to us by the Division of Planning, Research and Evaluation and with examples of questions used in the face to face interview, the paper and pencil questionnaire, and in some cases other procedures such as direct observation techniques, are presented below:

Hypothesis I (as stated in the Program Description)

Sixty junior high school students will participate in an instructional program that emphasizes individualization through the modified Open Classroom technique.

In order to achieve this objective, the project personnel will observe the students in a variety of settings in order to determine their interests and abilities. An individualized instructional program built around his/her interests and abilities will be developed for each student.

Classes in Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, Health Education, Shop, and Arts and Crafts will be held on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. These classes will be conducted using the Open Classroom technique and will allow students to take an active part in their own learning. Schedules for each student will be reviewed periodically with the student to insure that his/her needs are being met.

The following questions, taken from face to face interviews (Attachments A and B) and paper and pencil questionnaires (Attachments C and D), were among those used to determine whether such a program was implemented at Morse School.

Question 9 (Teacher paper and pencil questionnaire): An individualized instructional program has been developed for each student.

Question 14 (Student paper and pencil questionnaire): My teachers like it if I ask them questions during class.

Question 9 (Teacher face to face interview): How, and with what frequency, do you evaluate the progress of students in your class?

Hypothesis II (as stated in the Program Description)

Sixty junior high school students will be provided with a psychotherapeutic counseling program that will focus on reducing and/or eliminating disturbing behavior.

In order to achieve this objective, a strong intensive program of individual and group counseling and therapy will be conducted by a qualified psychiatric social worker. This person will work closely with both the student and his/her parent in an effort to open avenues of understanding of problems in behavior and to provide assistance in coping with such problems. He/she will also provide consultative help to the staff.

The following questions, taken from face to face interviews (Attachment A and B) and paper and pencil questionnaires (Attachments C and D), were among those used to measure whether the students have been provided with the opportunity to participate in a psychotherapeutic counseling program that focuses on reducing and/or eliminating disturbing behavior.

Question 18 (Teacher face to face interview): How well do the psychotherapeutic consultants meet the needs of the students and the objectives of the program?

Question 25 (Student paper and pencil questionnaire): I feel okay about talking about what's on my mind during the Group Sessions.

Hypothesis III (as stated in the Program Description)

Sixty junior high school students will participate in a program of enrichment activities that include sports activities; opportunities for career development; and art, music, and drama activities.

In order to achieve this objective, every Wednesday will be designated as "Special Projects Day." On these days, and at other times during the week, students will participate in sports activities such as bowling and horseback riding; go on field trips to museums, theaters, and other places of educational interest in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area; and participate in special programs such as bake sales and seminars, etc. An effort will be made to include the parents of students in these activities. The activities will be designed to provide the student with opportunities to release tensions, expose him to cultural activities, offer him an opportunity to familiarize himself with various careers, and to gain an awareness of available job opportunities.

The following questions, taken from the student paper and pencil questionnaire (Attachment C), were used to elicit information from the students about the enrichment component of the program:

Question 19 (Student paper and pencil questionnaire): The places we go to on our field trips are places where I can see and meet people who work at different kinds of jobs.

Question 20 (Student paper and pencil questionnaire): The field trips give me a chance to do some sports activities.

Hypothesis IV (as stated in the Program Description)

All program activities will focus on the objective of preparing the student participants to return to the regular public school system.

In order to achieve this objective, the program will be designed to provide students with services and support which will prepare them to function again in the regular public school program. There will be several procedures for transition of a student back into the program:

- a) Student counseling will be offered to the student.
- b) A school-based conference (including parents, counselor, and administrator from the sending school) will be held at the receiving school. Procedures for programming for academic and emotional support will be discussed.
- c) Contact with departing students will be maintained by Morse Crisis Center personnel for a period of one year after the student returns to a regular program or leaves Morse School.

The following questions, taken from the paper and pencil questionnaires (Attachments C and D), were among the measures used to determine whether the focus of program activities was on preparing students to return to the regular public school program:

Question 24 (School personnel paper and pencil questionnaire): The criteria by which a student is identified as ready for transition back to a regular school program are clear and well defined.

Question 25 (School personnel paper and pencil questionnaire): Students who are placed back into a regular school program receive follow-up service for at least one year.

Question 34 (Student paper and pencil questionnaire): After I leave here, my teachers and counselor will keep in touch with me.

Hypothesis V (as stated in the Program Description)

All members of the staff will participate in pre- and in-service training seminars that focus on effective teaching techniques.

In order to achieve this objective, the staff at Morse Crisis Intervention Center will receive pre-service and in-service training from D.C. Teachers College and Special Education Personnel in the specialized techniques of: managing disruptive behavior in the classroom, teaching in a modified Open Classroom setting, individualizing instruction

to meet the special needs of non-achieving and alienated children, and the use of guided group interaction as a counseling tool. In addition, staff development seminars, which will focus on issues related to teaching in the Morse Crisis Intervention Center, will be held on a regular basis.

The following questions, taken from face to face interviews, (Attachments A and B) and the paper and pencil questionnaires (Attachments C and D), are examples of those used to elicit information from project personnel concerning their pre- and in-service training:

Question 16 (School personnel paper and pencil questionnaire): The issues dealt with during the Wednesday in-service training seminars are relevant to the objectives of "Project Advance."

Question 16 (School personnel face to face interview): What pre-service training opportunities were available to you?

Hypothesis VI (as stated in the Program Description)

There will be ongoing assessment by project personnel of students' progress and the functioning of the program as a whole.

In order to achieve the objective of ongoing assessment of students' progress, a formal pretest will be administered to each student at the beginning of the school year (or his/her date of arrival at the Morse Crisis Intervention Center). Other informal assessment techniques, such as progress charts for academic and social skills, student interviews, teacher observations, psychological reports, etc., will also be utilized. Each student's progress will be assessed semi-annually by project personnel in order to determine readiness for return to the regular D.C. Public Schools program.

The functioning of the program as a whole will be evaluated by the staff and the students through group discussions, questionnaires, and written narrative reports. In addition, professional services will be contracted for the external evaluation of the project. The outside evaluation consultant will be under the direction and supervision of the Division of Research and Evaluation.

The following questions, taken from the face to face interviews (Attachments A and B) and the paper and pencil questionnaires (Attachments C and D), were among those used to gather information about the internal evaluation of student progress and the program in general:

Question 9 (School personnel face to face interview): How, and with what frequency, do you evaluate the progress of a student in your class?

Question 12 (Student paper and pencil questionnaire): My work is checked by my teacher every day.

Question 22 (School personnel paper and pencil questionnaire): There is ongoing assessment of each student's social and personal adjustment.

V. Evaluation Methods

The data sources identified were: (1) the program description provided to us by the Division of Planning, Research and Evaluation, (2) other documents and records related to project activities, (3) student and staff participants of the project, and (4) the observation of ongoing project activities.

The measuring instruments that were used to gather data were (1) face to face interviews, (2) paper and pencil questionnaires, and (3) direct observations. Each measuring instrument was used to obtain information about more than one hypothesis. Our search for information was organized around the hypotheses. Therefore, we identified variables that were relevant to each hypothesis and addressed ourselves to these variables in the development of our data-gathering instruments. The face to face interview, which served as a basis for the development of the paper and pencil questionnaires, allowed us to obtain a richness of detail about a participant's perception of a project that is difficult to achieve by a structured questionnaire format.

The paper and pencil questionnaires allowed us to obtain a large quantity of information from a large number of persons and to standardize the questions used to elicit such information.

Direct observations yielded a rich return of information about ongoing activities, participant interactions, and project documents and records. They enabled us to assess the correspondence between what we heard about the project from program participants and what we saw. The fact that the presence of outside observers is likely to have some effect on the manner in which the participants carry out the activity that is being observed should be taken into account when examining data obtained from direct observations.

The evaluation suffered from a general problem in the design of this project. The evaluation component, both inside and outside of the project, did not provide for necessary comparison and control groups and adequate before and after measures. This deficit is common to many projects similar to this one. A discussion of this general problem will be included in the conclusions section.

A. Face to Face Interview

1. Purpose

The face to face interview allowed us to obtain a large amount of information about various aspects of the program and about the

program in general from a limited number of participants. Although the time expenditure on the part of the participants and the evaluators was greater than with other types of measuring instruments, the richness of detail and the variety of issues addressed provided us with information that would have been difficult to obtain by measuring instruments with more structured response formats, such as paper and pencil questionnaires. In addition to providing us with invaluable information, the responses obtained from the face to face interviews served as a base for the development of the paper and pencil questionnaire.

2. Development

The project personnel face to face interview was developed on the basis of (a) information about program objectives and activities contained in the description of the program given to us by the D.C. School of Planning, Research and Evaluation, (b) the hypotheses to be examined, (c) observations of project facilities, activities, and participants' interactions, (d) informal interviews with program participants conducted during the initial stages of the current evaluation, and (e) earlier versions of the interview which were used to develop the final version of the face to face interview.

The student face to face interview was developed on the basis of the sources listed above. Two informal interviews with students were conducted prior to interviewing students formally. Occasionally, a word or two was exchanged with several students in the halls or classrooms, but these contacts will not, for the purposes of this evaluation, be regarded as informal interviews.

3. Description

The questions included in both the project personnel face to face interview (included as Attachment A in the Attachment Section of this report) and the student face to face interview (included as Attachment B in the Attachment Section of this report) are open-ended in structure. The questions and the questionnaire formats were designed to maximize the freedom of participants to respond in whatever manner they chose and to give as much or as little information as they chose. The questions contained in both interviews deal with various components of the program, such as the psychotherapeutic services and the individualized instructional program. The student interview contains questions specifically designed to elicit information about observations of and attitude toward the program and project personnel.

4. Procedure

All participants were interviewed individually. All interviews were conducted by one interviewer. The setting of the interviews varied, with interviews conducted in the Project

Administrator's office, the Multi-Purpose room, and the offices of project personnel. The interview time for students ranged from five to ten minutes. Interview time for project personnel ranged from 15 minutes to one and one-half hours.

5. Scoring

The responses received to the questions were categorized according to relevance to the empirical hypotheses, and were analyzed accordingly.

B. Paper and Pencil Questionnaire

1. Purpose

The paper and pencil questionnaires were developed in order to make manageable and standardized the gathering of relevant information from a large number of participants. They also provided us with an opportunity to obtain a measure of the reliability of a data-gathering instrument. By administering the questionnaire twice to selected subgroups of participants, we were able to obtain two sets of responses to the same questions. These responses were then examined for similarities and differences.

2. Development

The student paper and pencil questionnaire was developed based on several sources: (a) a description of the program and its objectives given to us by the D.C. School's Division of Planning, Research and Evaluation, (b) the hypotheses to be examined, (c) information obtained during face to face interviews with participants, (d) observations by the evaluators of ongoing program activities, and (e) an earlier version of the student questionnaire that was pretested during the current evaluation. This initial version of the student questionnaire, containing both untested questions and questions which had already been tested in face to face interviews, was administered to a subgroup of four students. Feedback from the respondents enabled us to revise and refine the questionnaire. Specific questions were reworded, added, or deleted, and the format of the section designed to elicit demographic information from the respondent was restructured. The instructions for responding to the questionnaire were reworded in order to make them more precise.

The project personnel questionnaire was developed based on the sources listed above.

3. Description

The student paper and pencil questionnaire (included as Attachment C in the Attachment Section of this report) is composed

of questions with a Likert scale response format. The respondent is asked to choose among five alternative responses that range from an "All of the time" to a "None of the time" response. The respondent indicates his/her choice by circling the number that represents the frequency of occurrence of a specific item. The questions deal with aspects of the program such as Guided Group Interaction sessions, freedom to move about during a class, field trips, etc. The respondent is asked not only about whether specific program activities occur but also whether or not she/he enjoys and learns from them.

The project personnel questionnaire (included as Attachment D in the Attachment Section of this report) contains questions which deal with various aspects of the Project Advance program as well as participants' views about specific activities and the program in general. The response format is identical to that of the student questionnaire.

4. Procedure

The unrevised student questionnaire was administered by an evaluator to a group of four students in the Guidance Counselor's Office at Morse Center. The time required to explain the purpose and response format of the questionnaire to the students and have them complete the questionnaire ranged from 14 to 22 minutes, with the differences resulting from variations in reading, comprehension, and response speeds of the students. In order to facilitate the administration of the questionnaire to one student, whose reading level did not allow him to read and comprehend many of the words included in the questionnaire, the evaluator read aloud to this student each question and its response alternatives. After the questionnaires were completed, questions designed to elicit evaluative feedback from respondents and the guidance counselor about specific questions and phrases as well as the response format itself were posed by the evaluator. The guidance counselor was extremely helpful in offering suggestions for ways to revise the questionnaire so that it could be read, comprehended, and responded to by the majority of students.

The final version of the questionnaire was administered by the evaluators to the student population. A tape recording of the questionnaire was made and played in each classroom while the students followed along on their questionnaire forms and circled the response they chose. This was designed to give some additional help to slow readers who would have been unable to answer the questions independently.

The final version of the project personnel questionnaire was administered to the teachers by an evaluator during a Wednesday afternoon staff development meeting in late May. The time required to complete the questionnaire was approximately 10 to 15 minutes, depending on response speed of the participant.

5. Scoring

The response formats of both paper and pencil questionnaires were designed in such a way as to facilitate computer processing. Each was categorized according to relevance to the empirical hypotheses and was analyzed accordingly.

C. Direct Observation

1. Purpose

Direct observations enabled the evaluators to gain first hand knowledge of many of the aspects of the program listed in the description of the program and discussed during interviews with program participants.

2. Development

Prior to and during all site visits we tried to acquaint ourselves as much as possible with the various aspects of the program. Our readings about the program and initial discussions with program participants, as well as our initial observations of the physical facilities, ongoing activities and participants' interactions, enabled us to develop a checklist of activities and materials relevant to our evaluation.

3. Description

The following aspects of the program were among those considered relevant to our direct observations:

- a. Staff Development
 - (1) documents and materials related to courses offered as pre-service training
 - (2) in-service training seminars and courses
- b. Physical Facility
 - (1) flexible use of rooms and space
 - (2) kinds and location of furniture
 - (3) kinds and use of equipment and educational materials
- c. Educational Component
 - (1) academic class schedules
 - (2) classroom activities (e.g. Open Classroom aspects)
 - (3) student-teacher interactions
 - (4) student programs, folders, lesson plans
 - (5) teacher-student ratio
- d. Psychotherapeutic Component
 - (1) Guided Group Interaction sessions
 - (2) schedules for individual and group therapy
 - (3) interactions between consultants and staff

- (4) procedures used to select students for individual and/or group therapy

e. Enrichment Component

- (1) schedule of field trips
- (2) participant interactions and student behavior on field trips
- (3) special projects and activities
- (4) parent involvement
- (5) communication methods (e.g. newsletters, bulletins, etc.)

f. Internal Evaluation

- (1) formal pre and posttests
 - (a) appropriateness, reliability and validity of tests selected
 - (b) schedule of administration dates
 - (c) test scores, including summary statistics of the scores
- (2) informal evaluation methods
 - (a) progress charts
 - (b) follow up records
 - (c) staff questionnaires
 - (d) staff conferences and discussion groups
- (3) semi-annual assessment techniques and records
 - (a) procedures used to determine students' readiness to re-enter a regular school program

4. Procedure

The evaluators, either individually or in pairs, visited classrooms, attended a guided group interaction demonstration, and examined records and other documents in order to make observations of interactions, activities, and materials relevant to the evaluation of Project Advance. The evaluators used discretion in their observation activities so that their presence disrupted what was going on as little as possible. Notes were taken at the time of the observation.

Several methods of observation were used. General observations are made of all activities and materials occurring during a specific time period. Time, interval, and event sampling techniques were also among the observation methods in use during the current evaluation.

5. Scoring

Observations were categorized according to their relevance to one or more empirical a priori hypotheses. Consideration was given to the correspondence of observed events to proposed program activities as described in the description of the program.

D. Test - Retest Agreement of the Measuring Instruments

1. Paper and Pencil Questionnaire

The final version of the student paper and pencil questionnaire was administered twice to a subgroup of students. The number of persons in this subgroup was small since we wanted to avoid overburdening too many people. The two administrations were separated by a time interval of approximately 5 weeks. The date of each administration was chosen to cause as little inconvenience as possible to the participants. The evaluators did, however, take into consideration the fact that it is preferable not to have the retest given after a long time lapse. This is important because differences in responses as a result of changes in program emphases or achievements would be more probable if there was a time lapse of several months between the two administrations.

Since all questionnaires were filled out anonymously, it was not possible to match questionnaire to questionnaire. A comparison of the responses of the pretest group (Group 1) to specific questions with the responses obtained from Group 2 (main group) during the main administration will be presented.

Tables XVI and XVII present a comparison of first administration and retest administration responses by students to selected questions from the paper and pencil questionnaire. Questions were selected in the following way: Questions were grouped according to relevance to a particular component of the program. At least one question from each group was then randomly selected for inclusion in the test - retest data analyses.

Examination of the tables showed that there is fair to good agreement on the majority of the items. A portion of the non-agreement of responses may be due to the range of response alternatives available, that is, for each question a respondent was asked to choose among five alternatives. Some discrepancy might be expected with such a range. A second factor which made it difficult to compare response percentages from one administration to the next was the fact that the pretest group was composed of only three students. One response, therefore, carried much more weight and could easily skew the group percentage for a specific item. With these limitations in mind, a comparison of the percentages of "All of the Time" responses for the two groups showed that the agreement level is fairly high.

Initial observations of facilities and participant interactions were made by two or more observers at the same time and place in order to check for interjudge agreement in the observations. Discussion of the observations made revealed a sufficiently high level of agreement concerning specific interactions, behaviors, equipment, and materials to allow the observers to make further observations individually.

E. Validity of the Measuring Instruments

The validity of the measuring instruments used in the evaluation of the Project Advance program was determined by analysis of the relations among responses given by the same group of respondents to different measuring instruments. Interrelationships among the participants' responses elicited by questions from the face to face interview and paper and pencil questionnaires, and the direct observation data as reported by the evaluators, supported the hypothesis that the various data gathering instruments were measuring the same variables. The relationship of these reports to the stated objectives of the project proposal supports the validities or meanings of the measuring devices used in this evaluation.

F. In-depth Observation of the Progress of a Subgroup of Students

The evaluators selected four students whose progress was "followed" through interviews, classroom observations, examination of test scores and student folders. The data obtained from this in-depth study of these four students was used to supplement the data obtained from other data sources and clarify our knowledge of program activities.

The four students were chosen, with assistance from the Project Director, on the basis of length of time in the program. In order to maintain confidentiality, the students will be designated as Boy A, Boy B, Boy C, and Girl A whenever referenced for the purpose of discussion in this Report.

The length of time that these four students were at Morse Center ranged from almost two school years to one month. At the end of the 1975-76 school year, Boy A and Girl A will have been at Morse Center two months, Boy B for one month, and Boy C for almost two school years.

VI. Results

A. Introductory Remarks

Some general introductory remarks about the findings obtained from each data gathering procedure shall be made and then findings will be discussed in terms of their relevance to the empirical hypotheses.

The findings to be presented in the Results Section to follow showed a program that is well developed and has achieved a high degree of correspondence between its objectives and its accomplishments. The majority of the program components described in the original proposal were implemented and have progressed nicely. Additional support services that focus on: (1) helping the teachers develop an educational technology based on the Open Classroom approach and (2) modifying student-teacher interactions and student program development to include increased emphasis on the use of behavioral techniques would add to the effectiveness of the program.

The program in general, however, is basically sound and functions as a good intervention measure for the population it serves.

B. The Data Gathered

1. Face to Face Interview

Six formal and numerous informal face to face interviews with school personnel were conducted by the evaluators. Formal telephone interviews with the parents of four students who attended Morse School at the time of the evaluation or during the three year life of the project were conducted by the evaluators. Four formal interviews were conducted with the four students whose progress was being followed and several students were interviewed informally as the evaluators interacted with them in hallways or classrooms during direct observation activities. Interviews were conducted with persons from two neighborhood business organizations who, because of proximity to the Morse Center, were in a position to have first hand knowledge of the Morse Center and its activities.

All of the participants appeared quite willing to speak frankly about their participation in and feelings about Project Advance. The school personnel were particularly helpful and, indeed, anxious to share with the evaluators their knowledge of and attitude toward the project.

2. Paper and Pencil Questionnaire

a. Student paper and pencil questionnaire

The unrevised student paper and pencil questionnaire was pretested with a group of four students. Based on their responses and evaluative feedback about the questionnaire format and specific questions, as well as consultation with the Guidance Counselor, the questionnaire was revised slightly.

Thirty-six students responded to the revised paper and pencil questionnaire. Thirty-three of the respondents were male, and three were female. The age of the students ranged from 13 to 18 years old. Five and one-half percent of the students who responded are 13 years of age. One student, or 2.7 percent of those who responded, is 18. The majority of the students (81 %) are between 14 and 16 years old. Twenty-eight of the 36 students (80 % of the respondents) came to the Morse Crisis Intervention Center from the District of Columbia Public Schools System. Three of the respondents came from private special education schools in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. Three students came from private special education schools located outside of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. Nineteen students, when asked what grade they are now in, said that they were in the eighth grade. Five and nine students believed that they

were in the seventh and ninth grades respectively. Since Morse Center operates on an ungraded basis, it is difficult to know whether students are basing their grade level on the grade in which they were in prior to coming to Morse or where they feel that they should be because of chronological age or length of time in school.

b. Project personnel questionnaire

The project personnel questionnaire was administered to 19 of the 22 regular full-time school personnel. Nine Classroom Teachers, four Teacher-Aides, the Guidance Counselor, the Social Worker, two Resource Teachers, and two Administrative Aides responded to the questionnaire.

Analyses of the data from the responses to the student questionnaire and the project personnel questionnaire are presented in Tables I through XVI. The data are grouped according to relevance to specific program components and/or program objectives. Each table contains the data from analyses of responses given to all questions dealing with one of the program components previously identified as relevant to this evaluation.

3. Direct Observation

Thirteen site visits were made to the Morse Crisis Intervention Center. During these visits, observations were made by means of standard time, interval, and event sampling techniques. Among the behaviors observed were student-teacher interactions, student-student interactions, class size, classroom activities, guided group interaction activities, interactions among staff, and the physical facility. Test scores from standardized achievement tests and informal diagnostic tests were examined. Records, progress charts, student folders and other relevant documents were examined.

C. Results by Hypotheses

The quantitative study of the five hypotheses was based upon data from the face to face interviews, telephone interviews, paper and pencil questionnaires and direct observations. The results of these analyses were blended and discussed in relation to the relevant hypothesis.

Hypothesis I

Sixty junior high school students will participate in an instructional program that emphasizes individualization through the modified Open Classroom technique.

Examination of the data to be presented below will show that

approximately 60 students participated in the instructional program at Morse Crisis Intervention Center. The number of students who were enrolled in Morse Center at any one time varied according to the number of placements received from the D.C. Public Schools Pupil Personnel Department and the rate of return of Morse students to the regular school program. The findings obtained from the measuring instruments showed that there appeared to be strong emphasis on the development and use of an individualized learning program for each student and that a modified Open Classroom approach was used at Morse Center.

Examination of Table I (Question 10), which contains the number and percentage of students endorsing specific aspects of the program that are related to the use of an Open Classroom individualized instructional approach, showed that 25 % of the students who responded to the paper and pencil questionnaire said that a situation in which everyone in class is working on the same lesson at the same time does not occur at the Morse Center.

Only 8 percent of the student respondents endorsed "All of the Time" as descriptive of the frequency of occurrence of everyone in class working on the same lesson at the same time (Question 10). A large majority of the students (47.2%) agreed that "Some of the Time" everyone works on the same lesson at the same time.

Table II presents the number of endorsements and percentage of school personnel endorsing specific aspects of the Morse Center Program that are relevant to the objective of an "individualized instructional program".

Examination of the data from the responses given to Questions 9 and 10 showed that 47 % of the school personnel respondents said that an individualized instructional program was developed for each student "All of the Time". An additional 47 % feel that an individualized instructional program is developed for students "Most of the Time".

Sixty-six percent of the school personnel respondents believed that the majority of students work on the same assignment at the same time only "Some" or "Little" of the time. Thirteen percent of the respondents said that this occurs "None of the Time". Since one identifiable characteristic of an open classroom approach is the difference in ability levels within groups of students and the variety of assignments that are therefore appropriate to each ability level, the relatively few endorsements given to "same assignment" lent further support to the hypothesis that a modified open classroom approach was used at Morse Center.

Additional support came from analyses of the data obtained during face to face interviews with program personnel and student participants. Examination of Table III (Items 1, 2, and 3) showed that all of the six school personnel interviewed reported that both standardized and

teacher-made diagnostic tests were used to prescribe and to individualize learning programs for all students. Interviews with program personnel revealed that a diagnostic instrument, the Wide Range Achievement Test, was administered to the students by the Reading Resource Teacher during their first day at Morse Center. The Wide Range Achievement Test scores were then used by the Guidance Counselor to develop a general program (examples of the programs of the four students whose progress was followed during the evaluation are included as Appendix A in the Attachment Section of this report) including homeroom and academic subject grouping, special interest areas, need for remedial work, etc. for each student. These judgements were frequently refined by more detailed educational testing with both formal and informal tests. Examination by the evaluators of four students' folders showed that the Wide Range Achievement Test was indeed administered to these students during each student's first day at Morse Center and that test scores were included as part of the student's folder. Throughout the school year, the project personnel used informal diagnostic tests, observations, and conferences with the students themselves to determine whether a student's instructional program was appropriate and continued to be appropriate, to his/her needs.

Further examination of Tables III and I, which present the findings from analyses of relevant questions from the project personnel face to face interview and the student paper and pencil questionnaire, indicated that one-to-one tutoring was included as part of the individualized instructional program at Morse. Examination of the responses to Item 4 of Table III showed that all of the school personnel interviewed reported that one-to-one tutoring was an important part of the educational component of the program.

Direct observations of classroom activities showed that it was not unusual to find a student working on an individual basis in the classroom with an Educational Aide or a Classroom Teacher during the class period.

It was also apparent that Classroom Aides had an important function in the classroom setting. Their presence made possible individual tutoring during class time. It would be extremely difficult, given the demands placed on the Classroom Teacher's time, to maintain this type of individualized program without the direct support provided by these Aides.

One-to-one tutoring was also provided by the Librarian and the Reading Resource Teacher. A formal "remedial work" period with the Reading Resource Teacher was often included in a student's weekly schedule. For example, Boy C (from the subgroup of students whom we followed closely) entered the program with an extremely low (grade 1.9) reading level. He received tutoring from the Reading Resource Teacher on a twice weekly basis, and was reading on a grade level of 4.5 at the time these data were collected (16 school months after Boy C entered Morse Center.)

Examination of the materials used in the classrooms showed that folders for each student containing current work assignments, completed papers, and other materials had been established and were in use in every classroom. We determined, through examination of the folder and interviewing students and teachers, that these folders were used to facilitate individualization of classroom activities in the following manner:

Work completed by a student was corrected daily and replaced in the student's folder along with new assignments. This allowed the student to receive feedback about his previous day's work and to get new work which built upon his preceding success.

Examination of the folders of several children in each class showed that among the contents of the folder were mimeographed work-sheets for different lessons (such as alphabetizing, conjunctions, etc.) and different ability levels. This lent further support to the hypothesis that each student worked according to an individualized program that had been developed for him/her.

Standard time, event, and interval sampling observational techniques were used to determine whether all students were working on the same lesson at the same time during a class period. Table IV presents the findings from analyses of the data obtained during direct observation of student activities during various class periods. During six observation periods at least two different activities were occurring in each classroom simultaneously. During an observation period, it was typical to find a teacher working with a group of three to six students, one or two students working independently on a different assignment, and an Educational Aide helping one student with another lesson.

The evidence shows that a beginning level Modified Open Classroom approach was used at Morse. Direct observations of classroom activities enabled us to determine that there was flexible use of the classroom space and equipment, students seemed comfortable moving about or changing seats during class, different lessons were occurring simultaneously, and teachers were encouraging students to ask questions and help one another. However, there was little or no evidence of learning stations and centers or of an educational technology with a comprehensive, graduated and in-depth curriculum as a back up and a basis for such stations and centers. For example, it was learned during our interviews with project personnel that one of the educational goals was to teach these students how to fill out forms such as employment blanks. Although it was apparent that the teachers were inventive and innovative in working toward this goal, no steps seemed to have been taken toward building this one series of tasks which would permit students to climb the skills ladder.

Additional support for the use of a Modified Open Classroom technique in the Educational component of the Morse Crisis Intervention

Center was found in the analyses of the responses given by students and project personnel to specific questions from the face to face interviews and the paper and pencil questionnaires.

Examination of Table I, Question 8, showed that 25% of the students who responded to the questionnaire said that they could move to a different seat during class. An additional 44.5% said that moving to a different seat during class was acceptable to their teachers "Most of the Time" or at least "Some of the Time". Thirty-one percent of the students endorsed "Little of the Time" or "None of the Time" as descriptive of how frequently they were allowed to independently move to a different seat during a class period. Of this 31%, almost half (5 out of 11) said that it would not be acceptable or appropriate for them to move to a different seat at any time during class.

Sixty-one percent of the students (i.e., 22 of 36) said that they were able to ask other students to help them with their work during class at least "Some of the Time" (Question 9). Four of these 22 students said that they could ask other students for help during class "All of the Time". Thirty-six percent of the respondents, however, do not feel that this is something that they can do during a class period.

Examination of the responses given to Question 11 showed that students did not report having a great deal of autonomy in pacing themselves in their work or moving from one lesson to the next. Sixty-one percent of the students reported that they were supposed to ask their teacher's permission "All of the Time" before going on to a new lesson. An additional 11% felt that it was necessary to do so "Most of the Time". If a "Most" of the time response implies that the majority of the time they needed to ask their teacher's permission but occasionally they did not, then a "Some of the Time" response might be interpreted as "it is necessary to ask permission some of the time but some of the time it is not necessary." If a "Some of the Time" response is interpreted in this fashion, then 11% of the students said that "Some of the Time" they could go to a new lesson without asking permission. Only six percent of the students said that it is not necessary for them to ask their teacher's permission before moving on to a new lesson. An advantage of freedom of movement (physical and in terms of progression to new lessons) is that it helps students increase their self-discipline and develop responsibility for their own behavior.

Examination of Table V showed that 69% of the students who responded to Question 12 in the paper and pencil questionnaire said that their work is checked daily by their teachers "All of the Time". An additional 5% of the respondents endorsed "Most of the Time" and 19%, or seven students, of the 36 student respondents said that at least "Some of the Time" their work is checked daily by their teachers. Only 5.5% of the students reported that their work was never checked daily by their teachers.

Sixty-one percent of the students reported (in their responses to Question 13) that they receive daily feedback about their work from their teachers at least "Most of the Time". An additional 30% of the students endorsed "Some of the Time" when asked how regularly they received daily feedback about their work. Eight percent of the students said that they receive daily feedback from teachers "Little of the Time" or "None of the Time".

Further examination of Table II (Question 14) showed that 40% of the participants said that their work with students focussed "All of the Time" on helping the students take an active part in their own learning. An additional 53% said that "Most of the Time" their work focussed on helping the students take an active part in their own learning.

Fifty-three percent of the respondents said that a Modified Open Classroom approach was used most of the time at Morse Center. An additional 27% of the respondents said that an Open Classroom approach was used "Some of the Time". Twenty percent (all of whom were classroom teachers) of the respondents felt that an Open Classroom approach was used at Morse Center "All of the Time". None of the participants endorsed the categories of "Little of the Time" or "None of the Time".

The evidence showed that the majority of the school personnel who work in a teaching capacity with students felt that a modified Open Classroom approach is used most of the time at Morse School. The evaluators agree that many aspects of a modified Open Classroom approach were used at Morse Center. However, as mentioned above, there was no evidence that an educational technology, which is crucial to further development, maintenance, and smooth functioning of an Open Classroom curriculum, had been developed. The techniques used and the organization of the instructional program at Morse Center are indicators of fine beginning steps in the development of a modified Open Classroom curriculum. A more comprehensive, sequentially organized educational technology is needed to maximize the benefits to be derived from an Open Classroom approach.

Hypothesis II

Sixty junior high school students will be provided with a psychotherapeutic counseling program that will focus on reducing and/or eliminating disturbing behavior.

The evidence to be presented below showed that the students were provided with a psychotherapeutic counseling program. A major focus of this psychotherapeutic counseling program was the reduction and elimination of disturbing behavior.

Interviews with project personnel and examination of weekly schedules (see Appendix B for an example of a Monthly Schedule for a typical month) yielded the information that there were several types of psychotherapeutic counseling services available to Morse students.

Several psychotherapeutic consultants provided individual and group therapy on a regular basis to selected students and their parents. Participation in Guided Group Interaction Sessions (which will be discussed in greater detail below), was offered to all students. These Guided Group Interaction Sessions were held on a twice a week basis and were led by one of the several Morse Staff people who had previously taken a course in Guided Group Interaction.

The School Guidance Counselor and the Social Worker also met with each student on a regular basis to discuss academic, social, and personal concerns of students. The frequency of these meetings was determined by each student's individual needs. In addition, the Project Director, the Guidance Counselor, and the Social Worker were available for crisis intervention. Direct observations of the ways in which several crisis situations were dealt with by these persons indicated that sufficient support was provided to the student and assistance was given in helping him/her to explore other alternatives and feelings. One example of such good intervention by the Project Director involved an incident in which Girl A (one of the students whose progress we are following in some detail) was feeling very "new" at Morse and as a result felt very unhappy. The Project Director calmed her, listened to her, and helped her gain familiarity with the school and thus increased her comfort level. She did this by talking with Girl A for a short period of time and then enlisting her assistance as a temporary "office aide".

A demonstration of a Guided Group Interaction Session was observed. It was a "demonstration" session in that the session was open to observers during an open house week and in that the session took place in some special room in the school. Otherwise, the session, its membership, its procedures, etc. were as usual as the participants could make it. Direct observation of this demonstration as well as interview information obtained from program participants revealed that emphasis was placed on the areas of self-concept, empathy, and sensitivity to self and others. The primary focus of the Guided Group Interaction Sessions was the reduction and elimination of disturbing behaviors. The ground rules set up for the group were: (1) respect everyone's opinion and (2) do not "beat up on" each other physically. The groups were based on the assumption that young people pay more attention to what their peers say than to what adults say, and discussions with peers is therefore extremely helpful. Each group ranged in size from 4 to 12 students and were formed by grouping students who shared the same homeroom. The sessions were 45 minutes long. The group leader had an agenda, or a topic focus, that he/she maintained. Some of the topics, however, were suggested by the students themselves.

From interviews with school personnel, direct observations, and reading of relevant literature concerning the Guided Group Interaction Sessions it was learned that the theoretical assumption made was that quite often the students cannot talk about their problems with their parents. It was helpful to them to discuss such problems with peers

and to discover ~~that~~ other students have similar problems. The group experience can therefore be thought of as training in talking together, communicating thoughts and feelings more effectively, and learning how to think in a meaningful way about oneself and one's actions. There was concern not only that the students get content, but that they were able to communicate their feelings about that content. The structure and philosophy of the Guided Group Interaction approach seemed to be consistent with the goals of the Psychotherapeutic Component of the Morse program.

The Demonstration Guided Group Interaction Session led by a skilled leader was observed. The group contained six members (five boys and one girl). The session took place with the members seated in a circle on comfortable living room furniture. Four of the six members spoke quite frequently in the group; two members spoke less frequently. In the beginning of the session most of the communication went through the group leader. However, by the end of the session the group members were communicating directly to each other. The session was definitely guided, and this was done by the leader in a very skilled way. He started with a warm up exercise in which the members were asked to think of a cartoon character that they like and give reasons why they like that character. They were then asked to choose what "disguise" they would choose if they could be any one of the characters named. Some examples of students' choices, with the reasons chosen are: (1) Roadrunner (a cartoon strip and TV character chosen because he is fast and it is difficult to catch him) and (2) the Flintstones (also a cartoon strip and TV characters chosen because they are comical and sometimes get into trouble just as people do in real life).

The discussion in this demonstration group session moved to several school incidents that involved inappropriate student behavior. The group, after discussing the incidents, decided that jealousy was one of the causal factors of the incidents.

The agenda for the demonstration which was observed is presented below:

- (1) Warm up exercise (focussing on identifying issues).
- (2) Discussions of current school incidents, with expression of feelings about the incidents and positive resolutions of these incidents which were achieved by the group.
- (3) Discussion of past behaviors in contrast with current behaviors, discussion about returning to their former schools and what that would be like for them. The following are examples of questions raised during the course of the discussion: "How are you going to handle being with your old friends?" "What are your expectations and theirs?"
- (4) A closing statement by the leader concerning the continuation of this discussion at the next session.

In general, observations revealed that the session had clear structure and focus, which were perceived not as limiting but as increasing the value and learning possibilities of the session. The topics appeared to be discussed in a productive manner, with a sense of continuity and responsibility that appeared to be helpful to the members. The group leader's closing remarks about continuing the discussion and his description of the agenda for the next meeting were examples of such continuity. Another example was the policy of having each Guided Group Interaction leader fill out a log recording his/her observations of the events that occurred during each session. Appendix C is an example of the log used by Guided Group Interaction leaders.

Table VI presents the number and percentage of school personnel rating the frequency of occurrence of specific aspects of the psychotherapeutic counseling program at Morse Center. Fifty-seven percent of the 17 school personnel who felt that they had sufficient experience with or information about the Guided Group Interaction (G.G.I.) sessions to respond to the question (Question 25) said that they thought that "the majority of students enjoyed and benefitted from participation in G.G.I. sessions 'Most of the Time'". Twenty-six percent of the respondents said that the students enjoyed and benefitted from the G.G.I. sessions "Some of the Time". The majority of school personnel respondents said (to Question 24) that they believed that the issues dealt with in the Guided Group Interaction sessions focussed on helping students understand and cope with their own behavior at least "Most of the Time".

There appeared to be a slight difference in the way in which the school personnel respondents perceived the services provided by the psychotherapeutic consultants who provide individual service and the way in which they perceived the services of those who provide group psychotherapy to students. More (68.4% to Q. 28 as opposed to 57.9% to Q. 29) respondents seemed to feel that the services provided by the psychotherapeutic consultants who work with children on an individual basis was more often in accord with the needs of the students and with program objectives than were the services provided by the group consultants.

Table VII presents data obtained from analyses of the responses given by students to questions relevant to the Guided Group Interaction Sessions. Examination of the table showed that 41.7% of the students (on Q. 24) said that the issues discussed during the Group Sessions were helpful and of interest to them "All of the Time". An additional 16.7% of the students endorsed "Most of the Time" when asked by the same question if the issues discussed were helpful to them. However, 11% of the students said that the issues discussed were helpful only a "Little of the Time" and 8% felt that the issues discussed were never helpful to them. The majority (80.6%) of the students said that at least "Some of the Time" the time spent in the Guided Group Interaction Sessions was helpful to them. There are approximately 19% of the respondents (7 of 36) who did not endorse

the session topics as helpful at least "Some of the Time". Further examination of the table (Q. 25) showed that approximately 19% of the students did not feel comfortable talking about what was on their mind in the Group Sessions at all or only on an infrequent basis. It seems likely that there is some overlap between each group of students who responded with a "Little of the Time" or a "None of the Time" response to these two questions. There are several possible reasons for this. If a student does not feel comfortable enough to participate in a discussion, it might be difficult to divorce himself/herself from these feelings of uneasiness enough to benefit from the discussion of others. On the other hand, if a student feels that a discussion is without value and of no interest he/she would not be likely to contribute to it or share his/her feelings or thoughts. It is interesting to note that when asked (Q. 36) whether they enjoyed the Group Sessions, approximately 17% of the students responded with "Little" or "None of the Time". It appears likely that again there is overlap in terms of students who chose "Little" or "None" for the questions dealing with comfort level (Q. 22) and perceived helpfulness of topics discussed (Q. 24) with students who enjoy the Group Sessions "Little" or "None" of the time. The similarities between the percentage of student endorsements that fall into the categories of "All" to "Some of the Time" for each of these three questions support the belief that although a small group of students did not feel comfortable in the Guidance Group Interaction Sessions and said that they enjoyed it little or not at all, the majority (approximately 80%) of the students enjoyed the group sessions, felt they benefitted from the topics discussed, and were able to talk about what was on their mind during the Group Sessions.

Similar findings were obtained from face to face interviews conducted with project personnel and students. The availability to students of Group Therapy, Individual and Guided Group Interaction counseling services was endorsed by all the project personnel interviewed. One-half of the students interviewed reported that they enjoyed the Guided Group Interaction Sessions. The remainder of the students interviewed said they did not enjoy them even though they did participate in them on a regular basis. When asked about the kinds of issues discussed during the Guided Group Interaction Sessions, students mentioned the following areas: "fighting", "grades", "going to a new school", "drugs", "stealing", and "truancy".

Table VIII presents the number and percentage of students expressing positive feelings toward school. Examination of the responses to Question 33 (I "get into trouble" less here at Morse than I did at my last school) showed that 61% of the students said that the above statement was true for them at least "most" of the time. Almost half, or 15 of the 36 students who responded to this question, said that the statement "I get into trouble less at Morse than at my last school" was true for them "All" of the time. These findings lent support to the achievement of the program objective of "a reduction in or elimination of disturbing behavior". However (and this is also applicable to many of the achievements of the program) it is impossible to

determine the causal factor(s) in this reduction in disturbing behavior. It may be due to participation in the psychotherapeutic counseling program, but the lack of control and comparison groups precludes attributing it to a specific program activity or even to the set of activities entitled "Project Advance". Further discussion of this limitation in the original design of the evaluation of this project will be discussed in the Conclusions Section of this report.

Hypothesis III

Sixty junior high school students will participate in a program of enrichment activities that include sports activities, opportunities for career development, and art, music, and drama activities.

Examination of the data to be presented below showed that all of the students who attended Morse School were provided with the opportunity to participate in an enrichment program that included a variety of recreational, cultural, and educational experiences.

Interviews with project personnel yielded the information that the students, accompanied by the majority of the teachers, went on a field trip every Wednesday morning. Among the activities that the students participated in were sports activities such as Go-Karting and Students vs. Teachers Volleyball games as well as tours of places of historical and cultural interest in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. Visits were made to the U.S. Naval Museum, the National Zoological Park, the Main Post Office, the FBI Building and other places where the students would have the opportunity to observe and speak with persons who are working in a variety of different jobs. A list of the 1975-76 School Year Schedule of Field Trips and Activities for the Morse Crisis Intervention Center is included in this report as Appendix D. Examination of this schedule showed that additional enrichment activities, designed to facilitate parent and community involvement as well as to bring the Morse students into contact with schools located near Morse Center, were held regularly. Car washes, bake sales, and parties to which female guests from a neighborhood junior high school were invited were also held on a regular basis during the 1975-76 school year. These parties served a dual purpose - students not only had a chance to broaden their social contacts and increase their social skills at the parties, but the parties served as reinforcers for appropriate scholastic behaviors in that the students were able to "earn" the right to attend each social event. For example, a Bunny Hop was sponsored by Morse Center during April of 1976. Guests from Shaw Junior High School were invited dancing contests, refreshments, and other activities of interest to the students were planned. In order to attend the Bunny Hop, each Morse Center student needed to earn, through good attendance and punctuality, a specific number of points by the day of the Bunny Hop. Posters advertising the Bunny Hop and progress charts showing each student's points were displayed throughout the Morse Center. It was learned that almost all students earned the privilege of attending the Bunny Hop. The inclusion of such

activities that are contingent upon appropriate social behavior and academic effort appeared to be characteristic of the Morse program. It seems highly likely that an increase in such contingency-based activities would result in even greater increases in students' achievements.

Table IX presents the number and percentage of students endorsing specific aspects of the enrichment program. Fifty-eight percent of the students reported in response to Question 17 that they looked forward to the Wednesday field trips "All of the Time". An additional 16% of the students selected "Most of the Time" when asked whether they enjoyed the field trips. The Wednesday morning excursions appeared to serve as learning experiences for the majority of the students (Q. 18). Approximately 70% of the respondents said that they learned new things at the places they went to on field trips at least "Most of the Time". There appeared to be some career development opportunities built into these trips. Forty-one percent of the students in response to Question 19 endorsed "Some of the Time" when asked if field trips gave them a chance to see and meet people who work at different kinds of jobs, 30% endorsed "Most of the Time" and 22% endorsed "All of the Time". Interviews with project personnel yielded the information that many of the opportunities to meet people who work in different jobs were serendipitous opportunities - that is, the primary purpose of a specific excursion was not to increase exposure to various jobs and persons who work in different professions. Perhaps the number of field trips planned specifically for this purpose might be increased. An example of such an excursion was the field trip to the Post Office, which allowed the students to learn about the processing of mail and to observe people who work at various jobs in the postal facility. Informal excursions to neighborhood businesses were another way that the Morse School provided career development opportunities for its students. Interviews with persons from a local business establishment (i.e. a neighborhood cleaners) yielded the information that Morse personnel frequently brought small groups of students over for a tour of the cleaning facility and its operations.

Further examination of the data presented in Table IX showed that sports activities were frequently scheduled (Q. 20). It can be seen that 41% of the students responded to Question 20 of the paper and pencil questionnaire by endorsing "Some of the Time" as descriptive of the frequency with which the field trips gave them a chance to do some sports activities. Thirty-six percent of the students said that the field trips provided them with such an opportunity "All of the Time".

One of the major reasons why sports activities such as Swimming and Student-Teacher Volleyball and Basketball games were held at locations other than Morse Center was that Morse Center does not have a gymnasium, a swimming pool, or other physical educational facilities. The students therefore had to go outside of the Center in order to swim or play basketball. As a result, the opportunities to participate

in such activities were usually limited to days when the field trip activity scheduled was a sports activity.

It appeared that the students did not have much input into the choice of where to go on field trips. Seventy-five percent of the respondents reported (on Q. 21) that they helped choose some of the places that they went to on field trips "Little" or "None" of the time.

Table X presents the number and percentage of school personnel endorsing specific aspects of the enrichment program at Morse Center. Ninety-four percent of the respondents (on Q. 20) said that the majority of students enjoyed and benefitted from participation in field trip activities at least "Most of the Time", with one third of these respondents (6 out of 18) endorsing the field trips as enjoyable and beneficial to students "All of the Time". In Table XI 84% of the respondents said that (on Q. 23) the field trips provided the students with opportunities to learn social and coping skills necessary for a variety of situations encountered in daily life at least "Most of the Time". The respondents were not quite as enthusiastic in their endorsements of the field trips as providing the students with opportunities to obtain information about various careers, although 31% of the school personnel who responded to this item (see Table IX for Q. 22 of the paper and pencil questionnaire) said that such an opportunity was available "Most of the Time". However, 47% of the respondents felt that career development opportunities were built into the field trips only "Some of the Time", and one person (or 5.3% of the respondents) felt that career development opportunities were built into the enrichment program "Little of the Time". Career development is an important area in working with the student population of Morse Center. Additional emphasis in this area would serve to improve an already fine program of enrichment activities.

Art and music activities and classes were strongly endorsed (Q. 18 in Table X) as a part of the Morse Center program. Eighty-nine percent of the school personnel reported that such opportunities were available to students "All of the Time" as a part of the school curriculum.

Observation of selected activities that occurred as part of a May Week Open House led the evaluators to conclude that there is a pervasive attitude of "openness" about the program and its components that facilitates not only discussion and sharing among program participants but also parent and community involvement. During the week of May 10-14, 1976, Morse School sponsored numerous Open House activities, including a garage sale, a health screening, a pot luck luncheon, and a guided group interaction demonstration. The objectives of this May Week, as described in the mimeographed flyer sent to parents and posted in the school, were to: (1) acquaint the schools and community-at-large with the Morse Crisis Intervention Center and its program; (2) give the families of Morse students and the community-at-large an

opportunity to join in with the students and staff at Morse in educational, recreational, fund raising, and other beneficial activities; and (3) provide interested educators in the city an opportunity to observe some aspects of behavior management techniques at Morse.

This belief in the value of sharing of ideas and coordination of effort was demonstrated by the regular scheduling of "Home and School Interaction Team" meetings. Parents were contacted via mail and telephone and invited to attend parent-teacher meetings that not only helped familiarize them with the Morse program, but helped them to learn new skills in parenting and in the provision of support for their children's good work at Morse. Attachment 5 is a copy of the agenda from one of the 1975-76 school year Morse home and school Interaction Team Meetings. This particular meeting focussed on familiarizing the parents with the psychotherapeutic program at Morse Center.

Table XV presents some findings derived from analyses of the data relevant to the enrichment component obtained from formal face to face interviews conducted with four students. It can be seen that all of the students interviewed reported enjoying the field trips. Three of the four students said they did "sports activities" while on the field trips. One student said that he had learned about different kinds of jobs as a result of the field trips. Two students endorsed "going to museums and the zoo", and one student replied that he did not know what kinds of things he had learned by going on field trips. However, this same student, although not able to verbalize what it was that he had learned while on the field trips, reported enjoying the field trips. Informal interviews with several other students yielded similar kinds of findings. All the students liked participating in the field trips and other enrichment activities. They seemed to feel that some of the "highlights" of the year's enrichment program were the Go-Karting trip, the Student-Teacher ball games, the visit to the National Zoological Park, and the Bunny Hop.

In general, the enrichment component of the Morse Crisis Intervention Center program seems to have been well designed. It emphasized a variety of recreational, cultural, and educational experiences. It seemed to be one of the strengths of the program, since it was one way of "making learning fun" for students who entered Morse Center with a history of failure in academic performance and interpersonal relationships.

Hypothesis IV

All program activities will focus on the objective of preparing the student participants to return to the regular public school system.

One of the ways to prepare students for return to the regular school system is to help them modify behavior that is inappropriate to functioning successfully in that school system. In order to do this, it is necessary to help students understand their behavior and

"cope" with their emotions and impulses in a manner that is not counter-productive to their own mental health and their success in school and later life. Helping them to "cope" would take the form of providing them with opportunities to learn and practice new behaviors that will prove to be more congruous with success in school.

The data to be presented below support the hypothesis that all Morse Center program activities focussed on the objective of preparing the student participants to return to the regular public school system.

Table XI presents the number and percentage of school personnel rating the frequency of occurrence of program activities related to the objective of preparing the student participants to return to the regular public school system. Examination of the responses to Question 15 of the paper and pencil questionnaire showed that 47% of the school personnel respondents said that their work with students focusses on helping students understand and cope with their behavior problems "All of the Time". An additional 21% of the respondents chose "Most of the Time" when asked how often their work focussed on helping students understand and cope with their own behavior. The majority (68.4%) of the school personnel said (on Q. 24) that the issues dealt with in the Guided Group Interaction Sessions focussed on helping students understand and cope with their own behavior. Eighty-four percent of the respondents (16 of 19 school personnel) reported (on Q. 23) that the enrichment component (in particular, the field trips) provided the students with opportunities to learn social and coping skills necessary for a variety of situations encountered in daily life at least "Most of the Time". Of these 16, five respondents said that such opportunities were available "All of the Time".

Direct observation by the evaluators of a Guided Group Interaction demonstration supported the endorsements by teachers that the issues dealt with in the Guided Group Interaction Sessions focussed on helping students understand and cope with their own behavior. During the demonstration session observed, emphasis was placed on the areas of self-concept, empathy, and sensitivity to self and others. The primary focus of the Guided Group Interaction Session seemed to be the reduction and elimination of disturbing behavior. Among the issues discussed were current school incidents that involved inappropriate student behavior, past behaviors in contrast with current behaviors, and feelings about returning to former schools. (Further discussion of the Guided Group Interaction Sessions can be found above in the Results section for Hypothesis II.)

The objective of "preparing students to return to the regular school" implies that the students are ready to return to a regular school. "Readiness to return to school" is a concept that needs to be defined operationally - that is, in what ways does a student's behavior need to change and what behavioral goals must be achieved before the student can hope to be successful in a regular school program?

Interviews with project personnel yielded the information that the criteria necessary for a student to be considered by Morse School personnel as "ready for return to a regular school" were improvement in academic performance and social behavior. During the 1975-76 school year data obtained from teacher observation, attendance records, and pre and posttest scores were used by project personnel to assess a student's readiness to return to a regular program. During the first and second years of the project, additional sources such as the Pupil Behavior Screening Instrument (D.C. Public Schools, 1972) and the "How I See Myself" questionnaire (a Likert-scale type questionnaire developed by Ira J. Gordon of the Institute for Development of Human Resources, University of Florida) were used to obtain data for assessment of students' progress and readiness to return to a regular program. One of the major reasons why such instruments were not used during the 1975-76 school year was that the project personnel felt that the additional work involved in responding to such questionnaires was too demanding and of an aversive nature to the students and thus might be superfluous since it might be possible to obtain data in a way that does not involve as much work for the students. The project personnel said that they planned to explore this issue further.

Further examination of Table XI (Question 40) showed that 5% of the respondents said that the criteria by which a student was identified as ready for transition back to a regular school program were clear and well-defined "All of the Time". Forty-seven percent of the respondents endorsed "Most of the Time", and 31% of the respondents endorsed "Some of the Time" when asked to respond to this question. It appeared that the majority of the school personnel felt that the criteria for "readiness to return to a school system" could be more well-defined. The evaluators also feel that there needs to be some kind of standard guidelines for categorizing a student as "ready to return to a regular school". Perhaps the establishment of specific amounts of improvement in specific areas as criteria would serve to make the decision process easier and more reliable.

Only fifteen percent of the respondents reported (on Q. 41) participating "All of the Time" in the assessment of each student's readiness to return to the regular school system. An additional 26% of the respondents said that they participated "Most of the Time" and 15% said that they participated "Some of the Time". Seven of the nineteen persons who responded to the questionnaire felt that they could not answer the question since their job responsibilities did not involve the area of student assessment. It is interesting to note that one regular Teacher, one Social Worker, and three Teacher-Aides were among the seven who felt that it was a task that was not appropriate to their role at Morse Center. It seems likely that these people, who interact so frequently with the students, would have had much to contribute to the assessment of students' progress.

It was learned from interviews with school personnel that the process by which a student was assessed as ready for return to a

regular school as well as the procedures involved in placing him/her were often long and frustrating for school personnel, the student, and the student's parents. The first steps involved a Morse staff conference at which time the progress of those students who were endorsed by teachers as having made substantial progress in academic and social behavior was discussed. Additional observations of the students' behavior were then made before a decision was reached by the Project Director and the Guidance Counselor. If they felt that the student was ready to return to the regular school system, they recommended to the Pupil Personnel Office that a particular student was considered by the Morse staff to be ready for return to a regular school. At this point, any further decision-making as well as additional psychological testing became the responsibility of a committee comprised of representatives from the Departments of Pupil Personnel, Handicapped Services, Placement and other D.C. Public School Offices. If the decision of this committee was to place the student back into the regular school system, the placement was made without consultation with Morse School personnel, the parents of the student, or the student himself. As a result, students were sometimes sent back to the school from which they came. This may be undesirable since it places a child back into an environment where he/she may be viewed not in terms of improved current performance but in terms of not-so-good past performance. For example, Boy C (who was one of the students whose progress we followed in some detail) was identified as being ready to return to the regular Public School System in Fall 1976. He and his parents were notified by the D.C. Schools Placement Office that he is to be placed back into the school from which he came. A telephone interview conducted with his parents by the evaluators yielded the information that Boy C's parents viewed such a placement as highly undesirable in view of maintaining the improved behaviors he learned while at Morse. They feared that it will undo the progress he made to place him back among social contacts who reinforce his inappropriate behavior and teachers who may view him strictly in terms of his past behavior. However, as the placement procedure now stands, their only recourse is to appeal this decision, which is often a lengthy and nonrewarding process. This evaluation team feels that, unless the receiving school is carefully selected and trained for the returning student, there are dangers in this procedure.

Another set of disadvantages of the current placement procedure are the time delays in placements that appear to result from the decentralization of various departments within the D.C. Public School System. Inefficient or inadequate interdepartmental coordination concerning the steps necessary to implement the placement often results in a student languishing in the wrong environment, e.g., in an environment that he/she has outgrown, rather than prospering in a new environment that is suited to his/her current needs. Data obtained from both formal and informal interviews with Morse Center personnel showed that Morse Center was considered by all the persons interviewed to be a "temporary placement" for all students. They described the Center as a place for students "who are coming from a regular school and going back to a regular school".

Several of the persons interviewed spoke quite strongly of the desirability of establishing close working relationships with school personnel from both sending and receiving schools. Further discussion of steps taken by project personnel to establish such relationships will be presented below.

The evidence obtained from analyses of the interview data supported the hypothesis that Morse Center program activities focussed on preparing the student participants to return to the regular public school system. However, additional effort needs to be directed toward modifying the existing placement procedure so that the progress a student makes while at Morse is not reversed because of long delays, an inappropriate placement, or inadequate training of the receiving school personnel.

As soon as a student was notified of his/her placement, the Morse Center Social Worker initiated contact with the receiving school in order to exchange information and plan for the availability of an appropriate support system for the student. Appendix H is an example of an introductory letter sent by the Morse Center Social Worker to the Counselor at the receiving school. A similar letter was sent at the end of the First Advisory Period following the student's reentry to the regular school system. The Social Worker, in addition to communicating via telephone and the mail, also made site visits to the receiving school to talk with the Guidance Counselor at the receiving school and to observe the student in class. Interviews with the Social Worker yielded the information that one of her major objectives in visiting the classroom or home of a student who has left Morse Center was to let the student know that the faculty at Morse Center was still concerned and wanted to continue to help in any way possible.

At the end of the school year, the Social Worker developed a follow-up report that contains information about the progress of those students who were returned to the regular school system during the course of the previous year. Appendix F, included in the Attachment Section of this report, is a page from the 1973-74 Follow-up Report that was developed by the Social Work staff. Information about each student that was obtained during the course of the follow-up activities of the past year as well as information obtained at the time of the final one-year follow-up contact, was summarized and presented in a table format. The result is a brief but comprehensive picture of where students who have left Morse School are, and how well they are doing, at the end of the one year period. We learned from our interviews with the Morse School Social Worker that approximately 60% of the students who were returned to regular schools at the end of the first year of the program were still in school at the end of their one year follow-up period. The findings from analyses of the data obtained from project personnel yielded the information that all the persons interviewed reported that students who are placed back into a regular school program received follow-up service for at least one year.

We learned from our interviews with school personnel and our examination of follow-up records for students who were followed-up during the 1974-75 school year that (a) 60% of the students who had been placed back into a regular school were still attending that school at the end of the one year period, (b) that 25% were in some vocational program or were working steadily and (c) 15% had dropped out. Morse Center had very little information about the students who had dropped out.

In general, the evidence indicated that the project personnel felt strongly about the importance of preparing students to return to a regular school system and that program activities were geared toward achieving this objective.

Hypothesis V

All members of the staff will participate in pre- and in-service training seminars that focus on effective teaching techniques.

All members of the Morse staff were provided with opportunities for in-service training in areas relevant to effective teaching in general and to the specific objectives of the Project Advance program.

Table XII presents the number and percentage of school personnel rating the frequency of occurrence of pre- and in-service training as part of the Morse Center program. Examination of the data obtained from analyses of the responses given to Question 31 of the paper and pencil questionnaire showed that 73% of the respondents felt that the pre-service training received was relevant to the objectives of the Morse program at least "Most of the Time". It is clear that the school personnel viewed the training received as extremely helpful and relevant. We learned from our interviews with project personnel that the majority of staff development opportunities were available subsequent to the start of the Project Advance funding period in September, 1973 and therefore could not be described as "pre-service" training. However, since many of the school personnel currently with the Morse Center were carried over from the Boys Junior-Senior High School program that was previously housed in Morse School, it may be that when responding to Question 31 ("pre-service training was relevant") they were referring to training received long before the start of Project Advance. However, in view of the fact that we learned that many of the training opportunities mentioned in these interviews were sponsored by Project Advance, it seems more likely that the endorsements listed as pre-service training were actually references to Project Advance in-service training opportunities.

Further examination of Table XII (Question 32) showed that 52% of the school personnel said that in-service training and staff development were emphasized at Morse School "All of the Time". An additional 42% said that staff development was emphasized "Most of the Time". Interviews with School personnel, as well as direct observation activities and examination of relevant documents, yielded information that supported these endorsements. We learned that a

weekly staff development meeting was held each Wednesday afternoon. During this time period, the school personnel discussed the program in general, shared their ideas and feelings about specific aspects of the program, discussed student's progress, and listened to guest and in-house speakers present talks on relevant issues. The topics discussed during these meetings, as well as the themes of seminars, workshops, and courses that school personnel participated in since the inception of the project appeared to be relevant to effective teaching techniques in general and to the specific objectives of Project Advance. It can be seen from examination of the responses given to Question 33 of the paper and pencil questionnaire (presented in Table XII) that 84% of the respondents felt that the issues dealt with during the Wednesday in-service training seminars were relevant to their work at the Morse Center at least "Most of the Time". Seven of these sixteen respondents said that the in-service training was relevant "All of the Time". Appendix I included in the Attachment Section of this report is a list of the 1975-76 Staff Development Workshops that were held as part of the in-service training program for Morse Center personnel. Examination of this document showed that the topics scheduled were indeed relevant both to effective teaching techniques in general and the specific needs of teachers at the Morse Center.

Morse School personnel have obtained training in such areas as the Open Classroom and Guided Group Interaction. Summer workshops (sponsored by the Special Education Department of the D.C. Public Schools System) that were designed to train Educational Aides in the development of learning stations and packages were also held at Morse Center.

An area in which the majority of the school personnel seemed to feel the need for additional supervision was the role of Guided Group Interaction (G.G.I.) leader. Although all of the persons who served as G.G.I. leaders participated in a course in Guided Group Interaction (offered at Federal City College by the person who was the Guided Group Interaction Consultant to the Center), a desire was expressed by many of the G.G.I. leaders for additional ongoing supervision in this area. Further examination of Table XII (Question 27) showed that while 57% of the respondents said that they received adequate supervision in this area "Most of the Time", 26% of the respondents said that they received adequate supervision only "Some of the Time". Interviews with the Project Director and the Consultant concerning the G.G.I. Consultant's specific responsibilities yielded the information that although he observed the groups and gave some feedback to the Teacher-leaders concerning their skills, there was little opportunity for the leaders to meet with the consultant on a regular basis for one-to-one supervision. Such individual sessions, if interspersed with training seminars devoted to Guided Group Interaction techniques in which all the leaders participate, could provide the Teachers with the additional support necessary to maintain and increase their skills as Group leaders.

A second area in which additional training for school personnel might be helpful is in the use of behavior management techniques. The

faculty were already using, with success, some behavioral techniques such as contingent reinforcement of specific behaviors. It is likely that increased frequency and sophistication in the use of such procedures would result in even greater successes in their work with children. In order to maintain consistency and quality in the use of such procedures, it would be highly desirable to devote some staff development time to this topic. Emphasis on both the theory and the application of behavior management techniques would seem appropriate to the needs of the program.

In general, the evidence showed that there was a great deal of staff development at the Morse Center and that the staff development opportunities available to the school personnel were very relevant to the objectives of the program.

Hypothesis VI

There will be ongoing assessment by project personnel of students' progress and of the functioning of the program as a whole.

The findings from the data to be presented below showed that some positive steps were taken in the assessment of students' progress and of the functioning of the program as a whole. However, additional emphasis needs to be placed in the areas of standardizing criteria used to determine whether a student has progressed, developing new ways to use test scores to assess student's progress, and developing an internal evaluation design that enables the evaluators, whether internal or external, to make definitive statements about causal relationships between findings and specific project activities. At this point in the discussion, only the data that is relevant to the existence and use of such assessment procedures will be presented. At a later point, the findings obtained from our comparison of pre- and posttest scores from the 1973-74, 1974-75, and 1975-76 school years will be discussed. The reliability, validity, and appropriateness of the test selected for use in the internal evaluation of Project Advance will also be discussed.

The evidence obtained from face to face interview data, direct observations, and paper and pencil questionnaire responses showed that ongoing assessment of students' progress was a regular part of the Project Advance program.

It was learned from examination of records and our interviews with various School Personnel that the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) was administered to each student during the Fall and Spring of each school year (or at his/her dates of entry and departure). The pre and posttest scores for each student were then used to determine whether progress was made. We also learned that informal and formal tests in Mathematics, Reading (e.g. the Morrison-McCall tests from the D.C. Public Schools Reading Clinic), and Spelling were administered to each student during his/her first few weeks at Morse Center and then readministered periodically throughout his/her stay.

Direct observations also support the hypothesis that there was ongoing assessment by school personnel of student progress. During examinations of student work folders, it was evident that students' worksheets were corrected by the teachers and replaced in the students' folders. It was also noted that teacher-made progress charts of students' performance were on display in every classroom.

It was learned from interviews with school personnel that the primary sources of data concerning student progress for the 1975-76 school year were the WRAT scores, teacher observations, and attendance records. The Morse faculty feel that a good indicator of how well a student is doing is his/her attendance record. If a student attended school regularly, they considered this regular attendance to be a sign of progress since the majority of the Morse Center students had a history of truancy. The assumption was made that an increase in attendance behavior usually goes hand in hand with an increase in positive feelings about school. In order to feel positively about school or any environment, it is necessary to succeed in some way in that environment. It is hard to succeed in school when attending on a sporadic basis. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that regular attendance may in some way indicate student progress. It should not, however, be the sole source of "hard" or quantifiable data about students' progress.

Several additional measuring instruments were used by project personnel and outside evaluation consultants to assess students' progress during the first two years of the project. Among them were the "How I See Myself" Scale (developed by Ira J. Gordon of the University of Florida) which is designed to be administered to students, the D.C. Public Schools Pupil Behavior Screening Instrument (designed to enable the classroom teacher to assess students' behavior), and several teacher-made parent and teacher mini-questionnaires. There were several reasons why these instruments were not used during the 1975-76 school year. Apparently, the school personnel felt that completion of these questionnaires and survey forms was (1) an aversive experience to the students whom they felt disliked "committing" themselves in writing, (2) extremely time-consuming for both teachers and students, and (3) perhaps not even necessary since it might be possible to obtain similar kinds of information in a less time-consuming and disruptive fashion. With these thoughts in mind, a moratorium was placed on the use of these and other available measuring instruments (such as a Student Survey developed by Commonwealth Learning, Inc.) for the 1975-76 school year. It was learned during interviews with school personnel that they plan to discuss at length the usefulness of such instruments prior to continuing to include them among the instruments used to measure student progress at Morse.

The findings from analyses of the data obtained from the paper and pencil questionnaire supported the hypothesis that assessment of student progress was a regular part of the Morse program.

Table XIII presents the number and percentage of school personnel saying that various activities relevant to the ongoing assessment of

student progress occurred. Sixty-eight percent (that is, 13 out of 19) of the school personnel respondents said in response to Question 16 that they were able to review daily each student's work at least "Most of the Time". Seven of these thirteen said that they were able to review daily each student's work "All of the Time". Since four people of the 19 school personnel who completed the questionnaire did not feel that their particular job responsibilities at Morse Center entailed reviewing students' work, the 13 school personnel (or 68% of the total group) who endorsed at least "Most of the Time", represent an even larger percentage (13 of 15 endorsements, or 87%) of those who responded to this question.

Further examination of Table XIII (Questions 37, 38, and 41) showed that there seemed to be a definite delineation of job responsibilities with respect to assessment of student academic and social progress. Six respondents said that they knew such assessment occurred but that they themselves did not participate in assessment activities because such activities were "Not Appropriate to My Role". Since examination of data concerning the roles of the respondents yielded the information that only two of the respondents served in an Administrative Assistant capacity, one can conclude that some members of the Teaching, Guidance, or Social Work staff feel that assessment activities do not fall into their bailiwick. One of the assets of the Morse program is its small size and the resulting increased opportunities for personal interactions and relationships between staff and students. Since all personnel interacted with students on a frequent basis, it seems at best inefficient to ignore the resources of all school personnel when assessing students' progress. Of course, certain school personnel roles probably provided more opportunities to assess a specific type of student progress (for example, Classroom Teachers and Educational Aides had frequent opportunities to assess academic progress) but it is important not to overlook the fact that valuable contributions can be made by all members of a staff.

A larger percentage (47.4%) of the respondents stated that ongoing assessment of student social-personal adjustment (Question 36) occurred "All of the Time" in comparison with the percentage of respondents (36.8%) who stated that ongoing assessment of student academic progress (Question 35) occurred "All of the Time". However, further examination of the table showed that the percentage of respondents (36.8% and 47.4%) who endorsed either "All of the Time" or "Most of the Time" for academic progress was equal to the percentage of respondents (47.4% and 36.8%) who endorsed these same two categories with respect to student social-personal adjustment. In effect, a comparable number of school personnel said that assessment of student academic progress and of student social-personal adjustment occurred at least "Most of the Time".

The next discussion will be the assessment of the functioning of the program. The evidence to be presented below indicates that there was some ongoing assessment of the functioning of the program.

However, the evaluators feel that a more comprehensive evaluation design would allow the project personnel to increase the effectiveness of their evaluative efforts.

The findings from the analyses of the data obtained from school personnel responses to questions relevant to ongoing assessment of the functioning of the program are presented in Table XIV. Included in this table are the responses to questions that focussed on (1) whether school personnel implemented procedures to assess the degree of correspondence between program objectives and program activities, (2) whether the program had appropriate and adequate resources and equipment, and (3) school personnel's observations and feelings about specific aspects of the program and the program in general.

Examination of this table showed the distribution of responses given by school personnel who were asked to evaluate whether the psychotherapeutic consultant who worked with children on an individual basis provided service that was in accord with students' needs and program objectives. Four of the 19 school personnel who completed the questionnaire did not feel that they had sufficient information to respond to this question. Thirteen of the 15 (87%) people who did respond felt that the psychotherapeutic consultants provided service that was in accord with students' needs and program objectives at least "Most of the Time". However, it was also learned that additional communication and coordination between the psychotherapeutic consultants and the school personnel would be desirable in order to maximize the benefits derived from the services of such consultants. Two of the school personnel respondents said that the service provided was in accord with the students' needs and the objectives of the program only "Some of the Time". Four of the school personnel who were questioned did not feel they knew enough about the consultative service provided to respond to the question. It is evident that the service provided by the psychotherapeutic consultant was looked upon favorably by many of the school personnel, but some school personnel did not have knowledge of it. It would seem desirable to familiarize all school personnel with the services provided and to develop some guidelines to increase flexibility in revising the exact nature of the services purchased as the need arises during the course of the school year. In this way the benefits derived from good consultants can be maximized.

A second area that was extremely relevant to the functioning of the program was the assessment by the staff of their own "team effort". Examination of Table XIV (Question 34) shows that the respondents appeared to be enthusiastic about the amount of support and cooperation that existed among staff members. Fifty-seven percent of the school personnel endorsed "All of the Time" when asked to describe how often they received support and cooperation from other staff members. An additional 36% endorsed "Most of the Time". None of the respondents chose the "Little of the Time" or the "None of the Time" response alternatives.

Table XIV also presents data relevant to how school personnel viewed the Morse School physical facility (Question 47) and the available equipment and learning materials (Question 48). The majority of the school personnel respondents said that the Morse Center physical facility was inappropriate for the needs of the program. Seventy-three percent of those questioned said that the physical facility was appropriate to their needs "Little" or "None" of the time. However, 21% of the respondents felt that "Most of the Time" it was appropriate for the needs of the program. Feelings about the adequacy of the program's supplies and equipment also varied, with 26% of the respondents endorsing them as adequate "Most of the Time", 47.4% of the respondents endorsing them as adequate "Some of the Time", and 21% who felt that they were adequate "Little of the Time". It was learned from interviews with school personnel that the general feeling is that the Morse School facility was inadequate in several important areas for the needs of the program. One deficit was the lack of a gymnasium and swimming pool - both of which are resources usually available in public junior high schools. As a result, the Morse students had to be transported to various other facilities in order for the program objective of "providing opportunities for participation in sports activities" to be met. Since it was necessary for the students to leave the school grounds, and since arrangements with other schools or commercial establishments for the use of equipment or a facility had to be prearranged by school personnel, such opportunities were not always readily available to the students. A second inadequacy of the Morse facility was its lack of one-way observation mirrors, counseling offices, time-out rooms, and other items that would have provided support to the psychotherapeutic component of the program.

It was learned from the Project Director that it is rumored that the Morse Center program is to be moved to a new facility in the near future. The proposed site is, like Morse Center, an elementary school building. It does not have the necessary equipment for the psychotherapeutic or physical education components of the program. One of the major differences between the Morse School facility and the facility being considered to house the Morse program in the future is size - the proposed site is quite a bit larger than Morse. An increase in the size of the physical space is not viewed as an asset. The population which Morse Center serves requires careful monitoring so that the more aggressive student does not harrass or harm the more timid student. It would be impossible to provide this kind of monitoring, given that the small size of the faculty remains stable, in a larger area. It seems that the Morse faculty have not been given the opportunity to give input into any plans that may exist for relocation of the Morse Crisis Intervention Center program. It would seem appropriate, in fact even highly desirable, that these people who are most familiar with the needs of the program be consulted on this issue not only for the relevance of their ideas but also for the increase in staff morale.

Additional data that supported the hypothesis that ongoing

assessment of the functioning of the program occurred was obtained from face to face interviews with school personnel. Several times during the 1975-76 school year the entire staff met for discussion of their relationships and interactions. These group process sessions were led by the Guided Group Interaction consultant. Specific issues relevant to the functioning of the program were often discussed at the Wednesday Staff Development Seminars. On June 9, 1976, the agenda for the Staff Development meeting was comprised of items that pertained to the evaluation of the program's functioning. Attachment 9 is a list of the topics that were scheduled to be discussed that day. The Project Director verified that these discussions did in fact occur.

The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) will be discussed in terms of (1) its appropriateness for the way it was used in the Morse program and (2) its reliability and validity. Data from the 1973-74 and 1975-76 pre and posttest administrations of the WRAT will also be discussed. The findings from these data and suggestions by the evaluators for additional analyses will follow.

The Wide Range Achievement Test has been found to be of value in many areas of knowledge and their practical applications (WRAT Manual, J.F. Jastak and S.R. Jastak, Copyright, 1965, by Guidance Associates of Delaware, Inc., Wilmington, Delaware). The following areas are relevant to the objectives of the Morse Center program:

- (1) The accurate diagnosis of reading, spelling, and arithmetic disabilities in persons of all ages,
- (2) The determination of instructional levels in school children,
- (3) The assignment of children to instructional groups progressing at similar rates and their transfer to faster or slower groups in keeping with individual learning rates, and
- (4) The comparison between school achievement and other abilities in all individuals, especially those who are disturbed or maladjusted.

Since the WRAT was used at Morse Center to diagnose the reading, math, and spelling levels of students, and to prescribe appropriate programs and group students according to ability levels, the rationale for its selection can be supported. However, because the WRAT cannot diagnose for specific kinds of skills needed with an academic area (for example, the WRAT can tell one that a child is below expected grade level in reading, but it cannot tell if he/she has difficulty with short vowels or consonant sounds), it should be used in conjunction with tests that can make these kinds of distinctions. The Morse School personnel insured that such distinctions were obtained when it administered to students the Morrison-McCall Reading Test and other appropriate tests.

Another advantage of the WRAT is that it can be scored immediately

by the school personnel with a minimum of time and effort. The interviews with Morse personnel yielded the information that this was among the factors considered when they selected the WRAT. Since their personnel resources were limited, and since it was crucial to be able to diagnose ability levels of each incoming student as soon as possible, the WRAT was an appropriate instrument to select.

The WRAT satisfies quite adequately the statistical conditions of reliability. The reliability coefficients derived from split-half forms of the same test range from .971 to .976, depending on the chronological age. The authors of the test caution that these reliability coefficients do not necessarily represent accurately the clinical reliability of the scores. They report that on the basis of clinical experience and some validity calculations, the most reasonable guess concerning the clinical reliability of the WRAT is an average reliability of .93 with a range of .90 to .95.

The validity of the WRAT varies according to the methods used to estimate the validity. The WRAT is considered to have a fairly high validity. It has obvious content validity for the assessment of academic achievements. The three parts of the test are core parts of a standard school curriculum. The items within each part are sequenced well in terms of difficulty from very easy to very difficult. The high positive intercorrelations among the three parts of the WRAT and other measures of academic achievement (including, especially, school grades themselves) provide excellent evidence of both internal and external validity with a wide variety of validity criteria.

The findings obtained by Morse School personnel from their analysis of the WRAT pre and posttest data from the 1974-75 and 1975-76 school years show that the Morse School personnel did compile and use these data to assess the progress of the Morse Center students. The way in which the Morse School personnel did this was to ask the question - What percentage of the total group improved? Examination of the WRAT summary data sheet (a portion of this summary sheet is included in this report as Appendix K) showed that the school personnel determined that "98.1% of the students who attended Morse during the 1974-75 school year improved".

The meaning of this statement seems somewhat ambiguous. For example, does "improved" mean that there has been an increase in grade level from pretest score to posttest score in all three (Spelling, Math, Reading) content areas? Or does it mean an increase in at least one content area? The criteria for classifying or considering a student as "improved" must be clearly defined. Consideration must be given not only to specifying the precise number of content areas in which an increase in test scores must occur but the size of the increase itself must be operationally defined. This definition should include a statement that describes improvement as a specific amount of academic improvement in years and months increase for a corresponding interval of time from pre to posttesting. Some improvement, or increase in posttest scores, is to be expected simply because of the passage of time.

Let us assume that a student entered Morse School in September and was returned to the regular school program in June of that same school year. How much of a grade increase in his/her test scores was to be expected over that ten month period? A reasonable assumption, based on criteria used by the majority of school systems, is a one academic year, or one grade level, increase. However, we know that in their school careers to date the Morse students did not progress at the rate of one grade level per year, otherwise they would not be behind academically. An assumption made is that the students (1) started behind at grade K, (2) progressed slowly from K to current grade, or (3) both. A big problem in this discussion which makes calculations very suspect is the type of scale that grade level is. It is probably an ordinal scale, with no zero point and no equal intervals. However, our argument is still approximately correct, since it is necessary to make certain assumptions when trying to analyze data. We will assume that a child starts out at the "0" point in terms of grade level when he/she starts kindergarten or first grade. It might be helpful at this point to present an example of an alternate way to analyze the test data that takes into account the student's past performance when determining what "improvement" means for a particular student. The amount of grade increase that is "improvement" for one student may not be "improvement" for a second student.

In order to make such an analysis it is necessary to know a student's chronological age, his actual grade level at the time of the pretest and his grade level scores on the pre and posttest. We have such information about the four students whose progress we have been following more intensively at Morse School. The information we have concerning "Boy C" will be used as an example of a way to use these test scores to measure student progress. Boy C is 16½ years old. (The fact that he has remained in school for ½ year past the age at which he could legally drop out is, in the evaluator's belief, an endorsement of the quality of the Morse School program and the people who are part of it.) He was in the 7th grade prior to entering Morse School. He was at Morse from the end of November of 1974 to June, 1976, which is a total of a little over 1 and 2/3 school years or 17 school months. His WRAT test scores for 1974-75 and 1975-76 pre and posttests are presented below:

	Spelling			Math			Reading		
	Pre	Post	Diff.	Pre	Post	Diff.	Pre	Post	Diff.
1975	2.2	3.2	+1.0	2.6	3.6	+1.0	1.9	3.3	+1.4
1976	2.3	3.2	+0.9	3.9	5.2	+1.3	3.9	4.5	+1.6

Since Boy C was in the seventh grade at age 16.5 years, and since it is reasonable to assume that he entered Grade 1 at age six, it is also reasonable to assume that he has made an increase of seven grade levels in 10.5 years. This works out to be 2/3 of a grade level in one year. Since school years are comprised of 10 months,

he averaged an increase of 6.6% of a grade level each month prior to attending Morse Center. We can then say that his average rate of progress prior to attending Morse was $\frac{2}{3}$ of a grade level each 10 month period. Any increase over this amount might be considered "improvement". His 1974 to 1975 pre and posttest scores can then be examined in order to compare any grade level increase with the criterion grade level increase (i.e. more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of a grade level in any 10 month period) that has been established as necessary in order to say that he has "improved".

Examination of the Boy C's 1974-75 WRAT test scores shows an increase, from the September 1974 pretest score to the June, 1975 posttest score, of one school year in his Spelling and Mathematics test scores and a 1.4 school year increase in his Reading score. Each of these increases is greater than the criterion increase of $\frac{2}{3}$ of a school year, therefore, we can say that Boy C "improved" in Spelling, Mathematics, and Reading during the 1974-75 school year. During this school year, he progressed in all three content areas at a more rapid rate than he had been progressing prior to coming to Morse School. Examination of his 1975-76 school year WRAT pre and posttest scores also shows that (by the criteria presented above) he can be said to have "improved". In fact, his rate of improvement for 1975-76 was greater in two of the three content areas than it was for the 1974-75 school year.

The informal and preliminary analyses of this data that was done by Morse School does not provide this kind of detailed information about student's progress. In effect, Morse School personnel were not using the information about students' progress that was available to them and by doing so, shortchanged the program of credit due it. Substantial progress was made in Spelling, Reading, and Math by this particular student during his first year at Morse, and even greater progress during his second year.

We propose that improvement scores be calculated for each of the three content areas (Math, Spelling, Reading) of the WRAT. In this way, Morse School personnel can determine in which area a child is doing very well in or which area additional work is needed. Also, such analyses will provide data relevant to the strengths or weaknesses of specific components of the academic curriculum.

VII. Conclusions

A. By Hypothesis

The discussion of the conclusions will be organized around the empirical hypotheses.

Hypothesis I

Sixty junior high school students will participate in an instructional program that emphasizes individualization through the modified Open Classroom technique.

An individualized instructional program was developed for each student within the first few days of his/her arrival at Morse. Test scores from the Wide Range Achievement Test and other formal and informal diagnostic tests were used to prescribe a student's general program and his/her need for remedial or accelerated work in specific areas. Throughout the school year, teacher-made diagnostic tests, observations and conferences with the students themselves were used to determine whether a student's program continued to be appropriate to his/her needs.

One-to-one tutoring was an important aspect of the instructional program. One-to-one tutoring was provided by Classroom Aides, the Reading Resource Teacher, the Librarian, and the Classroom Teachers. The Classroom Aides had an important function in the classroom setting. Their presence made possible individual tutoring during class-time. It would have been extremely difficult to maintain this type of individualized program without the direct support provided by these Aides.

A beginning level Modified Open Classroom approach was used at Morse. There was flexible use of classroom space and equipment. Lessons on different levels occurred simultaneously, with students working on specific lessons according to their ability level. However, there was little or no evidence of learning stations and centers or of an educational technology with a comprehensive, graduated and in-depth curriculum as a back up and a basis for such stations and centers. The lack of these stations and centers made it difficult for students to work independently.

The Classroom Teachers and Aides were enthusiastic, dedicated, and innovative. A good rapport seemed to exist between them and the students. Contingency-based behavior management techniques were occasionally used in working with the students. Their successful use, coupled with the special needs of the Morse population, is an endorsement for the development and use of a comprehensive behavior management program that focusses not only on academic skills, but also on self-management and social skills.

Hypothesis II

Sixty junior high school students will be provided with a psychotherapeutic counseling program that will focus on reducing and/or eliminating disturbing behavior.

Several kinds of psychotherapeutic services were available to Morse students. The majority of students participated twice a week

in Guided Group Interactions (G.G.I.) Sessions. The theoretical basis for and the structure of these Guided Group Interaction Sessions seemed to be consistent with the goals of the psychotherapeutic component of the Morse program. The G.G.I. sessions focussed on the areas of self-concept, empathy, and sensitivity to others as a way of reducing and eliminating disturbing behaviors. The sessions provided the students with an opportunity to share and discuss ideas, communicate thoughts and feelings more effectively, and think in a planningful way about themselves and their actions.

The G.G.I. leaders (Morse School Personnel who had received some training in group counseling techniques) appeared to be responsible, creative people who knew how to structure the sessions so that issues were discussed in a productive manner. They need to be provided with continued training and supervision in group counseling so that their skills will be maintained and increased.

A psychotherapeutic consultant provided individual therapy to selected students who had been identified as needing a more intensive therapy program and whose parents approved of their child's participation in such a program. At times the parents or siblings of students also participated in family therapy sessions provided by this consultant. A two person psychotherapeutic team, comprised of a psychotherapeutic consultant and the Guidance Counselor, provided group therapy to selected students on a weekly basis. This consultant was not paid out of Project Advance funds but rather from Medicaid. Accordingly, one of the selection criteria for participation was eligibility of a student for Medicaid payments. The criteria for identifying students in need of the Group and/or Individual Therapy seemed to be an informal assessment by School Personnel of students' needs for more intensive psychotherapeutic service.

The School Guidance Counselor and the Social Worker also met with each student on a regular basis to discuss academic, social, and personal concerns of the students. The frequency of these meetings was determined by each student's individual needs.

The Project Director, the Guidance Counselor, and the Social Worker (as well as the remainder of the Morse Staff if the need arose) were available for crisis intervention. These persons demonstrated a capability to provide support to a student while helping him/her explore feelings and alternatives.

Hypothesis III

Sixty junior high school students will participate in a program of enrichment activities that include sports activities, opportunities for career development, and art, music, and drama activities.

All students who attended Morse School were provided with the opportunity to participate in an enrichment program that included a variety of recreational, cultural, and educational experiences.

Every Wednesday morning was designated as "Special Activities" Day. The majority of these Wednesday mornings were used for field trips, which gave the students a chance to participate in sports activities (e.g. Go-Karting, Swimming, Volleyball games), and to visit places of historical and cultural interest in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area (e.g. the National Zoological Park and the U.S. Naval Museum). Several of the sites for field trips were chosen primarily to give the students an opportunity to observe and speak with persons who work in a variety of different kinds of jobs (e.g., the FBI Building, the Main Post Office for Washington, D.C., cleaning establishments, etc.). Students seemed to very much enjoy these field trips, even though they seemed to have little or no input in the selection of the sites.

Activities designed to facilitate parent and community involvement were emphasized at Morse School. A Morse Home and School Interaction Team was established and met regularly. Additional activities, such as Bake Sales, an Open House, and Health screenings, were also included among the parent-community-school liaison component.

Opportunities to participate in social activities (e.g. a school picnic and Bunny Hop) that were contingent upon appropriate social and academic behavior were included in the Morse enrichment program. Such contingency-based activities seemed to result in an increase in positive behavior. It is reasonable to assume that the continued use, and even accelerated use, of such contingency-based activities would result in even greater behavioral gains for students.

Hypothesis IV

All program activities will focus on the objective of preparing the student participants to return to the regular public school system.

One of the ways in which to prepare students to return to the regular school system is to help them modify behavior that is inappropriate to functioning successfully in that school system. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to provide them with opportunities to learn and practice new behaviors that are more likely to be congruous with success in school. The objective of "preparing students to return to the regular school" needs to be defined operationally. That is, what behavioral goals must be achieved before a student can hope to be successful in a regular school program? Morse School defined these goals as improvement in academic performance and social behavior. The means of achieving these goals were provided through the various aspects of the Morse program. For example, the instructional program was individualized to better meet each student's academic needs. The psychotherapeutic program helped the student increase his/her ability to communicate with others, acknowledge and deal appropriately with feelings, and think about himself/herself in a meaningful way.

The Morse School developed a set of procedures to facilitate the adjustment of a student who was returned to a regular school.

Included among these procedures were conferences with the student and his/her parents, conferences with the Counselor at the receiving school, visits to the receiving school, as well as additional follow-up contacts with the student and the faculty at the receiving school. These follow-up activities lasted for a one year period following the placement back into the regular school.

The Morse faculty's lack of input into the decision-making concerning the actual placement sometimes resulted in placements that were not advantageous to the student. For example, frequently students were sent back to the school from which they came. This may be undesirable since it places a child back into an environment where he/she may be viewed not in terms of improved present performance but not-so-good past performance. A second set of disadvantages of the current placement procedure are the frequent delays in the decision-making about placement that seems to result from inadequate interdepartmental coordination among the various D.C. Public School departments jointly responsible for the decision and its implementation. The result was that a student is left to languish in the wrong environment or in an environment that he/she had outgrown rather than prospering in a new environment that would be better suited to his/her current needs.

Hypothesis V

All members of the staff will participate in pre- and in-service training seminars that focus on effective teaching techniques.

All members of the Morse staff were provided with opportunities for in-service training in areas relevant to effective teaching in general and to the specific objectives of the Project Advance program.

School personnel participated in courses (offered by Federal City College and other educational institutions in the local area) in such areas as the Open Classroom and Guided Group Interaction. Summer workshops, sponsored by the Special Education Department of the D.C. Public Schools System, designed to train Educational Aides and Teachers to develop learning stations and packages, were also held at Morse School.

Staff Development Seminars were held at Morse School each Wednesday afternoon. During this time period, the school personnel discussed students' progress and the program in general, shared their ideas and feelings about specific components of the program, and listened to presentations on such topics as "Mainstreaming" and "Classroom Meetings as a Group Process" from guest and staff speakers.

Some supervision relevant to the role of Guided Group Interaction leader was provided to the Morse staff. However, additional training and perhaps one-to-one supervision from the Guided Group Interaction consultant would be highly desirable as a means of maintaining and increasing their skills as Group Leaders.

Training in the use of behaviorally oriented teaching and behavior

management techniques would provide the school personnel with the skills necessary to develop and implement contingency-based, sequentially ordered academic and social skill programs for students.

Staff development was strongly emphasized at Morse School. The staff development opportunities available to the school personnel were very relevant to the objectives of the program.

Hypothesis VI

There will be ongoing assessment by project personnel of student's progress and of the functioning of the program as a whole.

Some positive steps were taken in the assessment of students' progress and of the functioning of the program as a whole. Additional emphasis needs to be placed in the areas of standardizing criteria used to determine whether a student has progressed, developing new ways to use test scores to assess students' progress, and designing a comprehensive internal evaluation plan that allows the evaluators (both inside and outside) to make definitive statements about causal relationships between findings and specific project activities. Without such statements the D.C. School system has no basis for deciding to terminate, modify or continue a program or any of its aspects.

A formal diagnostic test (the Wide Range Achievement Test) was administered to each student during the Fall and Spring of each school year (or at his/her dates of entry and departure). These scores were used to help build a general program for each student and to assess his/her progress. Additional tests of both a formal and informal nature, were administered to each student during his/her first few weeks at Morse and then readministered periodically throughout his/her stay.

Attendance records were also used as a source of data about students' progress. While an increase in attendance can in and of itself indicate that a student has progressed from non-attendance to regular attendance, it is important to use other sources (i.e. tests, observations, etc.) in order to determine whether progress in specific academic or social areas has occurred.

The method used by school personnel to analyze data derived from the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) was perhaps too informal and preliminary to provide sufficient information about students' progress. It did not make use of all available data. An alternate way to analyze the WRAT data was presented in which the evaluators examined the test scores of a student who had been at Morse almost two years. The analysis of his test scores showed that he had made progress in all three content areas of the WRAT that was greater than the grade progress he had made prior to coming to Morse School. In fact, he progressed at a more rapid rate during the second year of his stay at Morse than he did during his first year. As stated above in the Results section, Morse School will continue to shortchange

itself if it does not analyze the data sufficiently to identify the good work it is doing.

B. Discussion of Role of Evaluators

As stated in Section A above, one of the disadvantages of Project Advance's internal evaluation design was that it did not allow for the determination of causal relationships between specific program activities (or even the program itself) and student progress. It was determined by the evaluators that (a) Morse School implemented the majority of the program components described in the Project Advance proposal, (b) Morse students participated in these activities, and (c) the students seemed to have improved both academically and in terms of social adjustment. However, it is not known whether (c) is a result of (a) and (b) - that is, that participation in certain program activities resulted in improvement in, for example, academic effort or achievement.

What is needed in order to make such a determination is the use of control and comparison groups. That is, some students would participate in Project Advance activities and others, also identified as unable to function in the regular school system, would not (they might perhaps be placed on a waiting list control to be admitted to the activities later). Comparisons of the progress of these two groups of students after a specific time period could then be made. The students who did participate in the program might have changed in ways (hopefully, positive ways) that the students who did not attend Morse did not. This would then tell us that participation in the Project Advance program results in changes in specific behaviors in students. With enough eligible students different patterns of activities could be offered to several groups of students.

Such an evaluation design could be taken a step further. A design could be developed that would let us determine which, if any, of the different components of the program (i.e. the Academic, the Psychotherapeutic, etc.) are effecting students in specific ways. For example, let us start with a group of 25 students who have been identified as unable to function in the regular public school system. Let us randomly assign them in groups of five students. Let us leave five students perhaps on a waiting list in the regular school system. They will receive no additional treatment. Let us leave an additional five students in the regular school system but provide them with psychotherapeutic counseling at that school site that is identical to what they would receive at Morse School. The third group of five students would go to Morse School and participate only in its academic program. The fourth group would go to Morse School and participate in the psychotherapeutic counseling program. The fifth group would go to Morse School and would participate in both the psychotherapeutic counseling program and the academic program. By comparing through use of assessment procedures already in use at Morse, the differences and similarities among these five groups, we could determine whether a specific program component (or set of components) was beneficial to

the students.

Such an evaluation design, although not complex, requires much forethought, planning, and coordination among schools and school officials. A plan for the development and implementation of such an evaluation design must be constructed early in the life of the program. It should, in fact, be developed well before the program begins.

This is an area where a coordinated effort on the part of the inside and outside evaluation teams can be most beneficial. The inside evaluator has the opportunity to do an in-depth and sensitive study because of his closeness to and familiarity with the project. An even more important reason for the special role of the inside evaluator is that, being part of the team that designs and operates the project, he can be sure that the design and operation of the project permits a meaningful evaluation. For example, care must be taken (1) to define comparison and control groups, (2) to obtain crucial measures before the start of the program, and (3) as appropriate, to make provision for these measures at or after the end of the program.

There is a need for the services of the outside evaluation consultant, who can serve in an advisory capacity during the initial planning and development of the program and can assist the inside evaluator in determining whether program guidelines are being met and objectives achieved. The emphasis, however, must be on the development of a working relationship early in the life of the program so that the necessary coordination between the inside and outside evaluation components occurs.

VIII. Recommendations

1. Continue with existing academic program. Begin to develop learning stations and an integrated educational technology appropriate to an Open Classroom approach.
2. Incorporate behaviorally oriented behavior management and teaching techniques into the repertoires of the Morse School staff. This will involve providing them with in-service training in the theory and use of behavior management techniques.
3. Continue with the use of contingency-based program activities for students. Develop academic and social skills programs that are built on a series of sequential steps and that include clearly defined goals and appropriate reinforcers for success for all students.
4. Continue with existing psychotherapeutic program. Offer additional training opportunities (i.e. one-to-one supervision, seminars) to Guided Group Interaction leaders to maintain and improve their leadership and group counseling skills.

5. Continue with procedures used to assess a student's readiness for return to a regular school. Develop standardized criteria for defining "improvement".
6. Continue with existing program of enrichment activities. Place additional emphasis on career development opportunities when selecting sites for field trips. Allow the students to have some input into the selection of field trip sites and activities.
7. Continue with existing parent and community involvement program.
8. Continue to develop lines of communication to schools where Morse students are placed when they are ready to return to a regular program. Try to increase Morse staff input into the decision-making concerning student placements.
9. Continue with follow-up activities, particularly direct contacts with the students themselves.
10. Upgrade the evaluation of the program. Develop an evaluation design that defines and uses control and comparison groups. In order to develop such an evaluation design, a working relationship between the inside and outside evaluation teams must be established very early in the life of the program. This is necessary to insure that coordination between inside and outside evaluation components occurs and information needed to make decisions about the utility of the program and its components is obtained.

IV. Summary

An evaluation of the "Project Advance" program at the Morse Crisis Intervention Center was conducted. Review of documents, formal and informal interviews, questionnaires, and direct observations were the methods developed and used to assess the correspondence between the objectives of the program and its accomplishments.

Five students and six members of the teaching and administrative faculty at Morse School were interviewed. Various other school personnel were interviewed informally. Telephone interviews were conducted with the parents of four Morse students. Interviews were conducted with several persons who worked in commercial business establishments in the Morse School neighborhood. A paper and pencil questionnaire was administered to the majority of the students. A similar paper and pencil questionnaire was administered to the school personnel. Direct observations of classroom and hall activities, guided group interaction sessions, participant interactions, materials, equipment, and the physical facility were made.

The findings derived from formal analyses of available data showed a program that achieved a high proportion of what it set out to achieve. An area that needs additional attention is the internal assessment of students' progress and of the functioning of the program as a whole. A discussion

of ways of improving the evaluation of this program and programs in general, with emphasis on the role of the outside evaluator as consultant to the inside evaluation team, is included in this report. The results of the analyses of the data, conclusions, and recommendations to continue some of the practices while modifying others are provided in this final evaluation report.

Attachments

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