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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

VOICES UNHEARD: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

John R Stiefer

Norman, Oklahoma

2003

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VOICES UNHEARD: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

A DISSERTATION

APPROVED FOR THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

M. Langenbach

Dr. Michael Langenbach, Co-chairperson

Courtney Ann Vaughn

Dr. Courtney Ann Vaughn, Co-chairperson

Christine K. Ormsbee

Dr. Christine Ormsbee, Member

Dr. Jeffrey Maiden, Member

Dr. Gregg Garn, Member

DEDICATION

My wife, Théres, is the most intelligent and most self-sacrificing person I have ever known. She gave up law school and, then, delayed the start of her doctoral program so that I could chase after my dreams. My best friend, my soul mate, this is for you.

We have a daughter, Mahdisen, who is the smartest and coolest person I know. She climbs Fourteeners, skis double black diamonds, paints, sings, and plays a Strat. Sometimes, she lets me hang out with her. Daughter, this is for you.

Mr. Jerry Moon hired me for my first teaching job. He was my principal and trusted me with children. This is for you.

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Dr. Ann Nalley once told me that could achieve whatever I wanted if I would simply explore my potential. This is for you.

Far too many children have been subjected to punitive isolation in public schools. They have been silenced for too long. Let your voices be heard. This is for you.

And finally, my father, Danny B. Stiefer, who never finished high school and said to me when I received a Master's degree, "Yep, I'm proud of you. But, it ain't a Ph.D. A Ph.D. means you got more than 'book smarts.' It means you got an education." Old man, this one's for you.

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omnia ad Dei gloriam

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	xiii
CHAPTER I	
INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose of the Study	6
Significance of the Study	6
The Need for the Study and the Research Question	6
Definition of Terms	8
Organization of the Study	9
CHAPTER II	
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	10
ISS Justification	12
Purpose of ISS	15
ISS Conditions	17
Outcomes of ISS (Ideal and Theoretical)	20
ISS Program Evaluations	24
ISS Program Descriptions	25
Perceptions of ISS	27
Conclusion	29

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN 31

Design of the Study 33

Limitations 34

Framing the Research Question 34

Deconstruction 35

Capturing the Phenomenon 36

Bracketing the Phenomenon 36

Construction 37

Contextualization 38

The Setting 40

Academic Performance Index 42

The Eagleton High Mission Statement 42

The Goals of Eagleton High 44

The ISS Program 45

Participants in the Study 45

Data Collection and Presentation 48

Methodological Assumptions 49

A Personal Addendum (Situating the Researcher) 50

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANT VIGNETTES 59

The Participant Vignettes 59

The Seventeen – Year Olds 60

Slacky Tidy 60

Smada 63

Stooshie 65

The Eighteen – Year Olds 70

Maga Dog 70

Cris Bwoi 74

Bafan 77

The Nineteen – Year Olds 80

Rude Bwoi 80

Sound System 83

General 85

CHAPTER V

SELF – NARRATIVES 91

The Self – Narratives 91

Slacky Tidy 91

Smada 95

Stooshie 98

Maga Dog 104

Cris Bwoi 107

Bafan 113

Rude Bwoi 119

Sound System 123

General 131

The Duality of Self – Stories 141

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS 143

Construction and the Emergent Elements 143

The Primary Elements 144

The Secondary Elements 144

The Punitive ISS Experience 144

The Primary Elements 144

The Problematic Event 144

The Punishment Event 146

The Accommodation Event 148

The Secondary Element 149

Maltreatment 149

A Suggestion 153

Implications 153

Suggestions for Future Studies 155

Conclusion 155

APPENDIX

A.	Interview Questions	158
B.	Parent/Guardian Consent Form	160
C.	Participant Consent Form	163
D.	Participant Assent Form	166
E.	The Eagleton High School Student Adjustment Classroom	168
BIBLIOGRAPHY		183

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participant demographics 47

ABSTRACT

In-school suspension (ISS) is the temporary placement of a misbehaving student in an alternative location within a school or a school district. ISS is designed to offset the negative effects of long-term exclusion and external suspension from school. Ideally, students placed in ISS are supervised by school personnel who continue to provide educational experiences for the student.

Punitive ISS is a specific type of ISS that employs strict rule enforcement, punitive activities, and isolation in order to eliminate student misbehavior. These curricular practices were put into place under the pretext of being ideal ISS. However, there is no research-based support for their use. This research project sought out the perceptions of nine students who were placed in a punitive ISS setting. Perceptions of this type were missing in the existing literature.

Interpretive interactionism as an approach to research was used to examine and contextualize the interrelationship between the lived experiences of the students who were assigned to ISS and the response to their personal troubles. Participant and researcher collaboration revealed that the participants experienced the totality of punitive ISS as a sequence of three occurrences: a problematic event, a punitive event, and an accommodation event. In addition, the issues of maltreatment and depression were identified as part of the ISS experience.

This research project challenges public school officials to examine existing punitive curricular programs so that the programs may be better aligned with program

descriptions and goals or eliminated from the curriculum. Secondly, public school educators are prompted to seriously examine the influence that their interactions have on children. Finally, a call for more research in this area is extended.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In-school suspension (ISS) programs are curricular components into which students are placed for disruptive or maladaptive behaviors. These programs are located in alternative site-based settings away from the regular classroom. Problematic students assigned to ISS remain in school while being isolated from students who are not creating disruptions or misbehaving. The presumptive benefits of ISS include continued academic learning time, assistance with assignments, counseling for behavioral problems, and improved self-image (Sheets, 1996; Sullivan, 1989). It has also been postulated that ISS may help to reduce the daytime juvenile crime rate by keeping children in school where they can be accounted for and supervised, whereas out-of-school suspension (OSS) eliminates them from the school setting (Turner, 1998).

ISS is a site-based program designed to offset the negative effects of long-term exclusion and external suspension from school. These negative effects include behavior suppression, an increase in untargeted maladaptive behaviors, and student avoidance of school staff (Costenbader & Markson, 1998). Ideally, students placed in ISS still have academic learning time and help as needed (Sheets, 1996). Also, counseling services for students experiencing personal and behavioral difficulties are a critical component of ideal ISS programs (Knopf, 1991). Placement in ISS may result in behavioral changes that are associated with improved self-image and greater self-discipline (Gushee, 1984). In essence, ISS allows excluded students to have an educational experience that

minimizes lost classroom learning opportunities by having academic assignments sent from regular classroom teachers to the ISS location (Turner, 1998).

Schools cannot account for the whereabouts of students who have been out-of-school suspended. ISS was purported to reduce daytime juvenile crimes by retaining students within the school building where adult supervision was provided (Turner, 1998). It should be noted that Mendez and Sanders (1981) questioned this ISS benefit. ISS provides school administrators with the ability to use OSS for more serious offenses. Gushee (1984) indicated that ISS helped to reduce the effects that OSS can have on the dropout rate by providing disciplinary consequences within the learning environment.

In its most basic form, ISS requires a room that is equipped with a pencil sharpener, scratch paper, a dictionary, and an adult supervisor (Radin, 1988). It is assumed that students assigned to ISS work all day on the assignments provided to them by their regular classroom teachers. During lunch, students in ISS remain together. All interactions between the supervising adult and ISS students are limited to discussions that focus on academic tasks. Radin (1988) mentioned that some schools might have an ISS facility that includes resources on self-help, decision-making and self-discipline, and study skills. Whatever the case, ISS is a place to work while isolated from one's peers.

External suspension is ineffective and may be counterproductive according to Costenbader and Markson (1994). On the other hand, ISS is a cost-effective alternative to external suspension as a disciplinary method. In creating a setting such as ISS that

offers provisions for continuity of the educational experience, school officials seek to avoid some of the disadvantages of external suspension.

The reality of ISS does not always reflect the utopian vision of ISS. For example, students assigned to ISS may need help with assignments from a variety of academic disciplines. Mendez and Sanders (1981) stated that the staff of a typical ISS program consisted of a single teacher-instructor who could not provide expertise in all academic areas. As a result, students in the ISS setting do not receive adequate academic assistance and fall behind students who have not been excluded from the regular classroom. This "lagging behind" effect might possibly be attributed to lost instructional time with regular classroom teachers who possess academic expertise.

In addition, although the literature suggested that effective ISS programs helped to reduce juvenile crime by keeping potential youthful offenders in school where they could be monitored, this view was based on the assumption that these particular students would not be able to engage in criminal mischief while sequestered in school and gathered into one group. For instance, Mendez and Sanders (1981) wrote:

> Forces of social control (schools) often identify nonconforming individuals as deviants, and initiate social reaction to behavior, which then produces greater misconduct because of the formation of a deviant identity. ISS programs, when used for indiscriminant forms of misbehaviors, can serve as a labeling agency. When a student is assigned to ISS, all the teachers who instruct that student are informed of the student's misbehavior. (p. 68)

It now becomes a possibility that a deviant subculture of youthful offenders is created as a result of ISS. There is reason to question the link between the unintended outcomes and the nature of ISS.

Statement of the Problem

Traditionally, schools have dealt with inappropriate student behavior by using punitive measures such as corporal punishment, external suspension (indefinite exclusion from school with a date of return to school agreed upon after certain conditions are met), and expulsion (permanent exclusion) from school (Collins, 1985; Patton, 1990; Sheets, 1996; Siskind & Leonard, 1993; Sullivan, 1989; Turner, 1998). During the 1970s, corporal punishment, external suspension, and exclusion were heavily criticized based on the potential for physical abuse and discrimination (Gushee, 1984). As a response to the criticism, ISS as a form of fixed-term exclusion was created and has been used as a replacement for corporal punishment, external suspension, and expulsion. Also, court decisions such as Goss v. Lopez (1975), Gonzales v. McEuen ((1977), and Ingraham v. Wright (1977) placed limits on the ability of public school administrators to suspend students. In addition to the criticisms of corporal punishment and exclusion, legal intervention facilitated the creation and implementation of ISS (Wiles & Rockoff, 1977).

Much has been written about the use of effective site-based programs such as ISS for students who engage in off-task behaviors or who lack self-discipline (Billings & Enger, 1995; Pemberton, 1985). However, based on a study of 40 schools from across the United States, Mendez and Sanders (1981) expressed concern regarding the effectiveness

of ISS programs and the criteria, specifically recidivism and dropout rates, used to determine effectiveness. It appears that very few listened because thirteen years later Costenbader and Markson (1994) pointed out that high recidivism rates in existing ISS programs and the associated high dropout rates are critical indicators of problems that affect not only students, but which have grave and long-term consequences for society. As recently as 1996, Morgan-D'Atrio, Northup, LaFluer, and Spera questioned the effectiveness of ISS. These researchers indicated that recurrent behavior problems for many of the students served by ISS were not significantly reduced. ISS may have exacerbated behavior problems according to Morgan-D'Atrio et al. The long-term effects these curricular programs have on children and society have not been addressed (Gushee, 1984; Mendez & Sanders, 1981).

An examination of the effects of ISS programs on children might be useful. More specifically, the effects of punitive ISS (PISS) programs on children need to be addressed. Punitive ISS is a specific type of ISS that employs the practice of punishment to eliminate misbehavior. Of the four ISS models described by Sheets (1996), punitive ISS programs are the most commonly used in public schools. He described punitive ISS programs as "jail-like" with atmospheres of strict rule enforcement. Hopefully, common schools are safe learning environments for children. If this is the case, then curricular programs such as "jail-like" punitive ISS as characterized by Sheets (1996) may not have a place in public education due to the deficiency of supporting data from research studies concerning the impact of punitive curricular programs on children.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the perceptions of nine students who were served by a specific punitive ISS program. In doing this, aspects of possible routinization that might be attributed to unintended curricular outcomes were revealed by examining how students experience punitive ISS. More so, it gave students an opportunity to tell their personal stories based on their own perceptions about experiencing punitive ISS. These perceptions were missing in the existing literature. Thus, this study initiated a line of research that will eventually fill a void in the existing literature and related material. Other researchers, school officials, teachers, and the public will then have a clearer impression and greater understanding of the students served by punitive ISS programs. It is imperative that we understand how these students negotiate their daily lives as a result of the programs that were created to address their problematic behaviors (Denzin, 1989).

Significance of the Study

This study was valuable in determining to what extent and in what areas research on ISS programs should be pursued. Insights about unintended curricular outcomes associated with ISS were apparent. Public school administrators may find value in this research should they decide to implement or modify programs of ISS at their school sites. Finally, the study augmented the existing theoretical base.

The Need for the Study and The Research Question

Costenbader and Markson (1998) indicated that no studies to date had investigated the effects of ISS on the beliefs and attributions of those students who had

been served by ISS. Johnson (1991) indicated that research on ISS programs did not examine student perceptions. Such research could address issues of effectiveness and ineffectiveness of ISS programs from a basis supported by data. Costenbader and Markson (1994) wrote about the need for further research on ISS programs and the need to understand the effects these programs have on children. Hyman and Snook (2000) pointed out that specific programs of punishment such as punitive ISS are scarcely researched. There is a void in the literature with regard to student perceptions of curricular programs such as ISS.

Studies dealing with student perceptions of ISS programs are sparse if not nonexistent. Instead, the topic of ISS in the literature has been written primarily for school administrators and fails to make the distinction between ideal ISS and punitive ISS (Costenbader & Markson, 1998). Sheets (1996), however, clearly delineated four different models for ISS programs: the punitive model, the decision format model, the academic model, and individual models. Research on the topic of ISS could be specific for the model of interest. It must be reiterated that of the four ISS models described by Sheets (1996), he pointed out that the punitive model is the most commonly used. Yet, the individual model is closest to being ideal and less frequently implemented. It may be that school officials are simply confused or uninformed and put into place punitive ISS without realizing that academic/rehabilitative ISS models exist.

The focus of this study was on student perceptions of a site-based ISS program. This study contributed to filling the void that exists in the literature by examining

punitive ISS and inquiring: How do students who are served by punitive ISS experience these curricular programs?

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used in this study:

ISS – the temporary suspension of a student and placement of the student in an alternative location within a school or a school district accompanied by the supervision of school personnel who continue to provide educational experiences for the student (Johnson, 1991). This is also referred to as "internal suspension."

Out-of-school Suspension – the suspension of a student from school with the stipulation that the student not be allowed on school property for the duration of the suspension (Johnson, 1991). This is also known as "external suspension."

Punitive ISS – the most commonly used ISS model in public schools. This model assumes that punishment will eliminate student misbehavior. Punitive ISS is characterized by strict enforcement of rules, punitive activities, and a jail-like environment (Sheets, 1996).

Suspension – a disciplinary action that is administered as a consequence of a student's inappropriate behavior, requiring that a student absent him/herself from the classroom for a specified period of time (Costenbader & Markson, 1998).

Ideal ISS – ISS programs that contain: Foundation components such as a mission statement, appropriate policies, and the development of rules and procedures; Operational components such as a qualified monitor, resources, and instructional material; Evaluation

components such as written evaluation forms for staff and students, accurate records of student behavior, an ISS committee; and a Counseling component (Knopf, 1991; Sheets, 1996).

Organization of the Study

This study was presented in six chapters. Chapter One served as an introduction to the topic of ISS. Punitive ISS was distinguished from and contrasted with ideal ISS. Also, inherent problems associated with punitive ISS were presented. Chapter Two provided an overview of the literature and related materials as they pertain to ideal ISS and punitive ISS. Chapter Three introduced the naturalistic methodology of interpretive interactionism and provided a rationale for its use as an appropriate mode for this particular study. Chapter Four was a presentation of participant profiles. Chapter Five offered their self-stories in the format of descriptive realism. This format allowed for the emergence of elements embedded within the ISS experiences described by the participants. Also, this chapter contained my self-story as it is related to the ISS experience. Chapter Six linked the elements that emerged from the participants' experiences and presented them as a coherent whole. This final chapter also served as a venue for concluding remarks and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The stakeholders of public education have been preoccupied with the topic of discipline in the classroom (Benshoff, Poidevant, & Cashwell, 1994; Palardy, 1996; Rose & Gallup, 1999; Turner, 1998). Traditionally, public schools have dealt with serious student misbehaviors by employing such methods as OSS, expulsion, and corporal punishment. These methods were and continue to be used so that order in the classroom is maintained and misbehaviors of problematic students are corrected (Turner, 1998).

Curricular practices such as OSS, expulsion, and corporal punishment met with criticism because of racial inequity, increased dropout rate, and the potential for physical abuse (Gushee, 1984; Stage, 1997). This criticism along with litigation in the mid-1970s led to the development of ISS (Stage, 1997). ISS is a curricular practice in which disruptive students are removed from the regular classroom and placed in an isolated setting at the school site.

Ideally, ISS would meet the demands of classroom teachers and address public concerns because ISS would allow the removal of misbehaving students from the classroom while simultaneously allowing for their continued educational experience and rehabilitation. However, this ideal ISS was not the norm (Haley & Watson, 2000; Mendez & Sanders, 1981). Instead of implementing ISS that stressed academic assistance, rehabilitation, and remediation, hybrid ISS programs that emphasized punishment while overlooking rehabilitation were put into place (Downing & Keaster,

1998). These hybrid programs included varying combinations of the punitive, decision format, academic, and individual ISS models that were described by Sheets (1996). The most commonly used hybrid ISS programs incorporated the punitive model as a foundation (Sheets, 1996). The punitive model included an assumption that punishment would eliminate student misbehavior. Strict rule enforcement, a jail-like environment, and punitive activities characterized the punitive model. The decision format model was a means to change behavior by solving student problems through activities. These activities were used to improve self-esteem, communication skills, and problem-solving ability. An important component of this model was the continuous dialogue between students and ISS staff members. This dialogue was meant to facilitate the development of appropriate behavior. The academic model was based on the assumption that misbehavior was the result of student frustration. The frustration may have been caused by a learning disability or an inability to attain a set level of academic achievement. This particular ISS model was used to improve academic skills, which led to a reduction or the elimination of misbehavior in the regular classroom. The individual model was described as the most reasonable and theoretically sound (Sheets, 1996). The assumption in this model was that students misbehaved for a variety of reasons that were unique from student to student. These misbehaviors could be changed by integrating components from the punitive, discussion format, and academic models to configure an ideal model called the individual model by Sheets (1996). Also, the individual model included an evaluation component

that was omitted in the others. Again, one is inclined to think the individual model is ideal.

A review of the literature related to ISS suggested that ISS research studies and articles were presented in a categorical manner that did not make distinctions between the various ISS models described by Sheets (1996). In other words, "in-school suspension" as a term describing a curricular program was used generically and equated punitive ISS with ideal ISS. The literature included ISS justification, purpose, conditions, outcomes, program evaluations, program descriptions, and perceptions as categories.

ISS Justification

Public education is accountable to those it serves. A major source of public concern was the topic of discipline in public schools (Rose & Gallup, 1999). As a result, public schools took measures to alleviate such concerns. One such measure was ISS. The literature related to ISS justification attempted to validate ISS as a curricular practice.

ISS has existed in public schools since the mid-1970s (Hockman & Worner, 1987; Johnston, 1987; Patterson, 1985; Vanderslice, 1999). It was created as an alternative to OSS because of due process litigation that challenged OSS and reinforced First Amendment rights for students (Collins, 1985; Gushee, 1984; Johnston, 1987; Vanderslice, 1999; Wiles & Rockoff, 1977). Also, pressure from various civil rights and child advocacy groups led to the abandonment of severely punitive discipline methods such as corporal punishment and OSS (Gushee, 1984). According to Gushee (1984), OSS and corporal punishment were the most common forms of punishment in public

education before the court decisions of the mid-1970s. These punitive methods were replaced with more humane methods of discipline such as ISS (Collins, 1985).

The pressure from civil rights and child advocacy groups was the result of specific concerns for the possibility of psychological and physical harm to students who were administered corporal punishment (Gushee, 1984). In addition, OSS was described as discriminatory because minority students and students who were academically below grade level were targeted for this disciplinary measure (Gushee, 1984). As a means of justifying the existence of ISS, Vanderslice (1999) indicated that OSS was administered in questionable proportions based on factors such as race, socioeconomic status, gender, and disability.

After the mid-1970s, ISS justification became more diverse. ISS was not limited to being merely an alternative to OSS and corporal punishment. Schools needed ISS to modify the behavior of disruptive students (Sheets, 1996). ISS was used as a deterrent that protected the learning environment from disruptive students. Finally, Sheets (1996) suggested that ISS might be a means of keeping students within the school and off the "streets" so that the community could be protected from youthful offenders during school hours.

Mendez and Sanders (1981) pointed out that ISS provided a site-based setting where problematic students could be disciplined while their misbehaviors were corrected. The emphasis was on keeping problematic students in school as opposed to placing them out of school. Weiss (1983) stated that problematic students viewed OSS as a "vacation"

from school. As a result, ISS was seen as an alternative so that problematic students could be retained in school. Whereas, OSS was intended for students who displayed violent or aggressive behaviors such as fighting, vandalism, and verbal confrontation, ISS was used as an alternative type of suspension for students who exhibited passive behaviors such as truancy, conversational profanity, substance abuse, and tardiness.

Stage (1997) presented a unique rationale for the existence of ISS as a curricular component. In a study that investigated the behaviors of students with behavioral disorders and ISS, Stage (1997) criticized OSS in a manner that had applications for justifying the existence of ISS. For example, Stage (1997) indicated that OSS increased the likelihood of students dropping out of school. An initial OSS led to an increased likelihood of subsequent OSS's for students. Thus, OSS became self-propagating. Stage (1997) expressed concern for suspended students who were achieving below grade level because they were missing academic instructional time due to the OSS's. Stage (1997) implied that all of the factors mentioned facilitated the implementation of ISS.

In order to improve behavior, ISS supposedly provides instructional support and counseling to problematic students. On the other hand, Opuni, Tullis, Sanchez, and Gonzalez (1991) pointed out that OSS deprived students of academic instruction and did not guarantee that inappropriate attitudes and problematic behavior from students would be corrected. As a means to address this shortcoming, ISS was implemented as an alternative.

Purpose of ISS

Discipline problems are everywhere in public schools and happen all of the time (Collins, 1985). Prior to the implementation of ISS, disciplinary measures such as corporal punishment and OSS were considered severely punitive. ISS as a disciplinary action was considered more humane and sensitive to the needs of students (Collins, 1985). The focus of ISS as a disciplinary measure was on rehabilitation and not retribution. ISS programs were supposed to be effective curricular practices that dealt with discipline in public schools in a rehabilitative manner that was reflected in ISS's multifaceted purpose.

Exclusion from school increased the likelihood of dropping out, caused academic deficiencies to occur, and created problems in the community (Turner, 1998). In keeping with its purpose, ISS served as a countermeasure for the problems associated with full exclusion. Primarily, ISS was designed to keep problematic students in school so that these students might develop the skills essential for membership in a functional society (Collins, 1985; Johnston, 1987; Johnston; 1989).

Collins (1985) and Johnston (1989) indicated that the dropout rate for problematic students decreased as a result of not excluding these students from school. Rather than exclusion from school, misbehaving students were placed in ISS programs. Patterson (1989) wrote that ISS more readily allowed the regular classroom teacher to meet the needs of deserving students by allowing for the removal of "troublemakers" from the classroom. Opuni et al. (1991) indicated that one of the purposes of ISS was to provide

opportunities for the removal of undisciplined students from the classroom to enhance instruction and learning. As a result of providing an avenue for the removal of misbehaving students, Vanderslice (1999) remarked that ISS protected the learning environment as a part of its purpose. In keeping with the protective aspect of ISS, Vanderslice (1999) suggested that ISS protected the community from problematic students by keeping them off the "streets" and in school where they could be monitored. Sheets (1996) and Turner (1998) also mentioned this particular function of ISS.

Many of the purposes for ISS are associated with academic improvement. Opuni et al. (1991) specified that ISS served the purpose of providing instructional assistance in order to keep students caught up academically with regular classroom instruction. In addition, ISS was intended to address academic skills and attitudes that were absent and kept students from maximizing their efforts toward learning (Opuni et al., 1991). These same researchers suggested that ISS improved organizational skills, goal setting, and study habits.

ISS is a means of improving teacher effectiveness as a part of its purpose. For example, Siskind and Leonard (1993) suggested that ISS was a location change for disruptive students and a place to hold these students away from the regular classroom. In providing an alternative location for disruptive students, ISS reduced teacher stress and improved morale for classroom teachers (Opuni et al., 1991). Moreover, teacher effectiveness increased due to the stress reduction and improved morale (Opuni et al., 1991).

Thomas County Schools (1991) issued a report of its ISS program that mentioned ISS as a positive way of dealing with students who did not take the responsibility of learning seriously. However, Opuni et al. (1991) suggested that problematic students might not know how to take the responsibility of learning seriously due to their improper attitudes toward learning and their chronic misbehaviors. In order to change these attitudes and misbehaviors, ISS programs should have included provisions for counseling services and instructional support for students (Opuni et al., 1991). In suggesting a purpose for ISS, Opuni et al. (1991) wrote, "ISS programs provide a mechanism to address dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors of students in order to facilitate a conducive school environment where productive instruction can occur" (p. 4). Sheets (1996) provided another purpose for the existence of ISS by specifying that appropriately designed and maintained ISS programs are implemented to change misbehaviors.

ISS Conditions

Sheets (1996) delineated the various ISS models. In doing so, he pointed out that the individual model, which is closest to being ideal ISS, was the program that should be implemented. However, it appears that the punitive model was the model of preference (Hyman & Snook, 2000; Mendez & Sanders, 1981; Sheets, 1996). There are differences with what ISS programs should be like and what actually exists within these programs.

The conditions that exist within effective ISS programs should be based on a mission statement that explains the ISS program in terms of what the program is supposed to accomplish (Vanderslice, 1999). These conditions should include clearly

defined protocols for the ISS program, professional intervention by a counselor to increase student self-esteem and self-awareness, and plans for a program evaluation that helps measure student behavioral changes over time and determines whether or not program objectives are attained.

The conditions within actual ISS programs tended to include a uniform set of characteristics. One constant was the isolation of problematic students in a room located away from regular classrooms (Mendez & Sanders, 1981; Opuni et al., 1991; Patterson, 1985; Thomas County Schools, 1991; Vanderslice, 1999). Patterson (1985) indicated that unacceptable behavior was due to the inability of problematic students to function within group situations. Therefore, isolation was necessary to keep problematic students out of trouble. The isolation away from other students forced the misbehaving students to interact and be sociable with the ISS instructor who was the only person with whom the students were allowed to talk. The literature indicated that a premium was placed on "no talking" in the ISS setting (Opuni et al., 1991; Patterson, 1985; Weiss, 1983). Other conditions in actual ISS programs included mandatory on-task behavior and strict adherence to the completion of assignments (Mendez & Sanders, 1981; Patterson, 1985; Thomas County Schools, 1991; Vanderslice, 1999).

Weiss (1985) indicated that a person who is knowledgeable in a variety of academic subjects and who has counseling knowledge should staff the ISS program. Patterson (1985) wrote:

> The most challenging task facing the ISS supervisor-teacher is tutoring all students in all subjects. In the absolute sense, this is an impossible task. One teacher cannot be qualified to teach all subjects on the secondary level, nor can one teacher be familiar with all levels of the curriculum in even one subject. (p. 99)

Vanderslice (1999) suggested that the ISS monitor/instructor serving as a supportive resource and mentor was the key operating component within ISS programs.

Siskind and Leonard (1993), in a study to determine the effectiveness of ISS programs in a South Carolina school district, found that ISS programs tended to be inconsistent because ISS conditions varied from site to site within the school district. One general trend was that ISS programs in the school district were punitive and not therapeutic. This study pointed out that no provisions for counseling services were in place. The absence of a counseling provision was of particular interest since Knopf (1991) expressed concern for the absence of counseling interventions after indicating that such interventions were a most important ISS program component. Siskind and Leonard (1993) mentioned that successful ISS programs were academically oriented and contained a counseling component. Moreover, school officials continued to use inappropriate ISS by providing limited services to students in programs that were void of a counseling component (Davis, 1998). However, Patterson (1985) suggested that isolation and not counseling of problematic students was the fundamental component of

ISS, explaining that the following statement was found on a blackboard in the ISS classroom of a Nebraska junior high school:

> You must obey the rules since isolation and independent work are what you choose for yourself when you did whatever you did to be sent here. While you are 'paying your debt to society,' let this experience prepare you academically and/or emotionally to cope with school better when you return to your regular classes. (p.99)

It would seem unrealistic to expect students to remain academically current under the conditions imposed by punitive ISS programs that lack a counseling component necessary for proper rehabilitation.

Knopf (1991) pointed out that ISS as a curricular program should be a means of assisting students with the development of self-discipline, the initiation of positive changes in behavior, and the establishment of improved attitudes toward school. However, this does not appear to be the case in a majority of the ISS programs that were studied (Knopf, 1991).

Outcomes of ISS (Ideal and Actual)

Conceptually, ISS should produce positive results with respect to behavioral change that is associated with problematic students. Weiss (1985) proposed that such behavioral change should result in decreased assignments to ISS programs for students. There should also be a decrease in student misbehavior, a drop in the number of lost instructional days experienced by students assigned to ISS, and a decrease in rates of

recidivism. Not only do problematic students benefit from ISS, but also positive results for regular students occur. Opuni et al. (1991) asserted that by eliminating problematic students from the regular classroom, the students who are self-disciplined would be ensured of a healthy learning environment and improved classroom instruction. In short, ISS was to be a means of helping all students become productive citizens in society (Thomas County Schools, 1991).

Knopf (1991) implied that a well-planned ISS program with counseling interventions helped teach disruptive students skills such as personal responsibility, rational thinking, decision-making, positive human relations, and communication. However, based on a study of North Central Association member schools, Knopf (1991) indicated that many ISS programs did not meet their full potential for two reasons. First, there was a failure to identify the cause or causes for inappropriate behavior. Second, ISS programs operated as a form of punishment instead of being rehabilitative programs for misbehaving students. Hockman and Warner (1987) pointed out that students placed within ISS programs were less likely to return to ISS in the future if a counseling component was an integral part of the program. The in-school suspended students who were placed in programs without a counseling component were seventeen times more likely to return to ISS in the future (Hockman & Warner, 1987). A report from the United States Department of Education indicated that self-discipline and positive behavior were enhanced as a result of assistance provided by guidance and counseling (ERIC Digest, 1990). Punishment can be a detriment to the development of self-discipline and positive

behavior. Forms of punishment that included removal from the classroom or punitive isolation may have negative effects on children (ERIC Digest, 1990).

For many students, ISS did not reduce misbehaviors (Morgan-D'Atrio et al., 1996). ISS may have even increased behavior problems and has been associated with the increased possibility of grade retention, increased recidivism which made ISS self-propagating, increased likelihood of OSS, and increased dropout rates (Morgan-D'Atrio et al., 1996; Siskind & Leonard, 1993). In addition, OSS, expulsion from school, and dropping out of school have been linked to increased rates of juvenile crime (Morgan-D'Atrio et al., 1996).

ISS components such as social skills training, anger management programs, and conflict resolution have often been implemented indiscriminately to all internally suspended students without any consideration being given to the specific misbehavior displayed by the problematic student (Morgan-D'Atrio et al., 1996). In other words, a student with recurrent anger problems might have been assigned to a proactive treatment such as social skills training without any type of assessment of his/her social skill level. Proactive treatments that were used in this manner failed to identify the causes of many adolescent behavior problems such as childhood anxiety, depression, or somatic complaints (Morgan-D'Atrio et al., 1996). It is possible that punitive ISS programs might have been proactive treatments which had unintended negative effects. Costenbader and Markson (1998) suggested that punitive ISS might have serious side effects for students. These side effects included generalized suppression of behavior, increased maladaptive

behaviors that were untreated or that were not present prior to ISS placement, and withdrawal from/avoidance of school and school staff members.

Johnston (1989) suggested that in-school suspended students were at-risk and speculated that less than 50 percent of them could be expected to complete high school. An ISS study conducted by Johnston in 1989 yielded the following results: in-school suspended students were more likely to experience academic failure and had a nine percent increase in dropout rate. Sixty-seven percent of the in-school suspended students in the study did not graduate with their class and took more than three years to complete high school. Costenbader and Markson (1998) reported that ISS recidivism was associated with grade retention and increased dropout rates. It appears that ISS as a curricular program did not improve school attendance rate, did not decrease recidivism within ISS, and did not decrease high school dropout rates (Costenbader & Markson, 1998). The ISS programs studied were merely punitive measures with minimal rehabilitative and academic components (Knopf, 1991).

Collins (1985) suggested that ISS programs generally reported immediate success and dramatic results as positive outcomes. A closer examination of ISS program evaluations revealed that problems and program failures were kept in the background or not mentioned at all (Collins, 1985). Knopf (1991) asserted that the concept of ISS falls short of achieving outcomes proposed in the literature.

ISS Program Evaluations

Sullivan (1989) proposed that ISS program evaluations were necessary because the conditions within ISS mandated such evaluations. ISS program evaluations can be useful in identifying the causes for conditions that exist within ISS. Sullivan (1989) indicated that ISS program evaluations revealed the following causes for conditions that exist within ISS: amount of financial support, monitoring procedures, degree of counseling and student assistance, and evaluation design.

Turner (1998) indicated that evaluation was essential for accountability. Of the schools with ISS programs included in a 1991 study conducted by Knopf, only one-fourth of the schools had a plan of evaluation. ISS program evaluation can provide information that serves as a basis for decisions regarding program effectiveness (Turner, 1998). In order to evaluate an ISS program's effectiveness, Mendez and Sanders (1981) asserted that criteria for ISS assignment, counseling procedures, and collaboration with stakeholders were critical variables. Turner (1998) included recidivism rates, attendance rates, dropout rates, teacher opinion, and student academic progress (grade point average) as critical variables. The analysis of an ISS program evaluation provided information regarding selection criteria for ISS assignment. If there were no selection criteria as revealed by program evaluations, then ISS merely served as an academic dumping ground (Mendez & Sanders, 1981). For those students who are placed in ISS programs that do not have selection criteria, there may not be educational benefits. Instead, there

may be overall negative effects in the specific areas that are supposed to be improved by ISS programs (Morgan-D'Atrio et al., 1996; Siskind & Leonard, 1993).

Specific ISS program evaluations (Opuni et al. 1991; Orodo-Aluoch, 1998; Siskind & Leonard, 1993) revealed common aspects as listed:

- There is a need for staff development and training for ISS teachers, regular classroom teachers, administrators, and parents.
- All stakeholders should be included in decision-making.
- All aspects of ISS (student activity, ISS teacher activity, administrator activity, counseling services, and regular classroom teacher activity) should be documented.
- Evaluation should be biannual and should include an ISS policy review.

Turner (1998) alluded to the success or effectiveness of an ISS program as being a product of carefully planned evaluation. However, Turner (1998) expressed concern regarding the inadequate nature of ISS program evaluations in the school systems he observed.

ISS Program Descriptions

The literature contained numerous descriptions of ISS programs (Haley & Watson, 2000; Johnston, 1989; Opuni et al., 1991; Patton, 1990; Siskind & Leonard, 1983; Thomas County Schools, 1991; Weiss, 1983). Most of them would be categorized as punitive under the guidelines established by Sheets (1996). The literacy-based

behavior management program described by Haley and Watson (2000) was the exception. This ISS program would be labeled as an "individual model of ISS" under the parameters defined by Sheets (1996).

Of particular interest were the ISS programs that contained unique attributes within their respective descriptions. For example, Weiss (1983) described an ISS program in New York as "punitive and unpleasant." This program was referred to as "The Brig" by the students in the school and was designed to discourage students from breaking school rules.

Johnston (1989) provided another description by reporting on an ISS program in a North Carolina high school. This program received a Model of Excellence award from the United States Department of Education. The stated purpose of this ISS program was to reduce the dropout rate through a program that was to be highly structured with restrictions on social interaction. Johnston (1989) reported that this program isolated problematic students and treated students in a businesslike manner. In describing this program Johnston (1987) wrote, "Students who are being punished expect to enhance their self-esteem through their ability to accomplish scholarly tasks and punishment is something positive in terms of learning lessons of life" (p. 129). Fifty percent of the students in this particular ISS program did not complete high school. This alarming dropout rate appears to defeat the stated purpose of the program.

Thomas County Schools (1991) in Georgia provided a most enlightening description of student isolation within their ISS program. The program was described as follows:

> Mark Twain once said, 'God has put something noble and good into every heart which His hands created.' Believing this, Thomas County Schools knew that the disruptive students required special constructive attention. Thus, the Thomas County Schools took a step in the right direction. The academically structured ISS program was created. (p. 3).

In accord with this statement, Thomas County Schools took isolation to a more punitive and constructive level. Instead of merely isolating problematic students from regular students, the problematic students were completely isolated within individually constructed isolation carrels. The carrels were designed to prevent any eye contact with the surroundings. The ISS program in the Thomas County Schools was described as a means of keeping students in school where they learned to accept responsibility for their misbehavior.

Perceptions of ISS

The literature associated with perceptions of ISS can be presented according to student perceptions, teacher perceptions, or administrator perceptions. Kennedy (1984) examined student perceptions of school climate and ISS. This quantitative study attempted to identify a solution to discipline problems and to determine if students perceived that the identified solution was related to their feelings toward school. The

major finding was students did not believe their school was a better learning environment than the schools that did not have ISS.

A quantitative study to determine if differences existed in the attitudes of suspended students, never-suspended students, and teachers toward ISS was conducted by Turner (1998). The study revealed that previously suspended students, students who were never suspended, and teachers had different attitudes with regard to ISS. These differences were based on the perceived ability of an ISS program to reduce student referrals to ISS. Student who had been suspended viewed ISS programs as effective if the programs reduced referrals. Teachers saw ISS programs as "vacations from the regular classroom" and ineffective for misbehaving students. The attitudes of never suspended students were used as a comparison for the other two groups. Turner (1998) reported that these differences in attitude might be indicators of effectiveness for ISS programs.

Duncan (1991) reported that administrators in South Carolina public schools believed that ISS along with detention, out of school suspension, parent conferences, and student conferences were the most effective measures in dealing with student misbehavior. This was the major finding of a study that sought to identify the most effective solutions based on administrator perceptions to student discipline problems in schools.

In a study that examined the perceptions of Missouri high school principals on the effectiveness of disciplinary measures such as ISS, Billings and Enger (1995) found that

ISS was perceived as being most effective. Even though ISS was perceived as being the most effective way to deal with student discipline problems, OSS was used more often.

It appears that studies pertaining to perceptions of ISS were carried out in order to examine the effectiveness of ISS. Studies that examined the perceptions of those served by ISS to the degree that their lived experiences could be obtained and examined for themes were missing from the literature. Pifer (2000) indicated that not much research was being conducted that examined the perspectives "problem" students have toward school. Pifer (2000) wrote:

> To understand the meanings assigned to school, schooling, and education by 'problem' students we must listen to their explanations of and their perspectives on the process of schooling and their experiences within that social setting. Could not their perspectives upon the meaning and significance of school aid in our overall understanding of what it is we as educators are doing? (p. 3)

Conclusion

ISS was used to punish tardiness, misbehavior in the classroom, smoking, alcohol and drug use, lack of cooperation, truancy, fighting, etc. School officials, pedagogists, and theorists indicated within the literature that there were justifiable reasons for the continued use of ISS. Gushee (1984) suggested that school discipline practices were guided by an incorrect analogy between school discipline and criminal justice. In other words, problematic children were to be treated like criminals/inmates. This false analogy caused schools to use inappropriate penalties, overreact to minor student offenses, and

blame students for problems that may have originated elsewhere in the school environment.

What are the meanings assigned to ISS by the students who are served by ISS? Denzin (1989) suggested that in order to understand the meanings assigned to an event such as ISS by problematic students, we must listen to their interpretations and perspectives on the process of ISS. Pifer (2000) reiterated this point by suggesting that the experiences of problematic children within a social setting such as school should be examined by way of dialogue and interpretation.

Costenbader and Markson (1998) proposed that studies which allow informed decision-making regarding the continued use of ISS were rare. No studies to date investigated the effects ISS had on the beliefs and attributions of problematic students. One simple and efficient way to acquire information about people is to ask them directly (Costenbader & Markson, 1998).

Haley and Watson (2000) suggested that any student who attended school was susceptible to ISS for rules infractions or misbehaviors. These students included average students, above average students, gifted students, behaviorally handicapped students, learning disabled students, and students whose second language was English. In effect, all students were at risk for assignment to punitive ISS programs.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The problem with ISS programs was identified as the disparity between ideal ISS and punitive ISS (Sheets, 1996). There are differences between these two curricula. Ideal ISS was viewed as a panacea for student misbehavior (Sheets, 1996). Punitive ISS did not effectively reduce student misbehaviors (Morgan-D'Atrio et al., 1996). Instead, researchers indicated that punitive ISS programs possibly increased the severity of student misbehavior. Yet, administrators and school officials continued to implement punitive ISS programs in public schools under the guise of ideal ISS, and the effects of punitive ISS on children were unknown (Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Gushee, 1984; Knopf, 1991; Mendez & Sanders, 1981).

The existing literature about ISS, apparently written for public school administrators (Costenbader & Markson, 1998), consisted primarily of evaluations for existing ISS programs (Opuni et al., 1991; Siskind & Leonard, 1993; Thomas County Schools, 1991) and failed to make the distinction between ideal ISS and punitive ISS. In addition, there was material in the literature that informed public school officials about the development and implementation of ideal ISS as a curricular component (Haley & Watson, 2000; Patton, 1990; Sheets, 1996; Sullivan, 1989; Vanderslice, 1999). The literature described ISS according to various categories such as: justification for ISS programs, purpose for ISS programs, conditions associated with ISS programs, outcomes

of ISS, evaluations of specific ISS programs, descriptions of specific ISS programs, and perceptions of ISS programs.

This study focused on how students experienced a punitive ISS program based on their perceptions. The literature related to perceptions of ISS was limited to a few articles and studies (Billings & Enger, 1995; Johnston, 1987; Patton, 1990; Pemberton, 1985; Turner, 1998). These articles and studies were informative with regard to the effectiveness of ISS based on the evaluations of specific ISS programs. They said nothing, however, about the effects that ISS had on children. Nor did the literature differentiate between ideal and punitive ISS. Most of all, there was a failure to consider student perceptions for what Sheets (1996) called the most commonly used ISS model, punitive ISS. A gap in the literature existed and was partially filled with this interpretive study.

Basically, information and an understanding of exactly what students experienced when they were assigned to punitive ISS programs was missing. Bowling (2000) wrote that there is a need to address the "how" and not the "why" questions in order to examine the experiences that occur in the daily lives of people. By examining lived experiences, information and understanding may be attained. The problematic lived experiences of students who were served by punitive ISS programs can be made available to readers. In doing this, the effects of punitive ISS may become manifest and discernable. "Interpretive Interactionism" as defined and described by Denzin (1989) provided a research methodology for this study that investigated the perceptions of students assigned

to a specific ISS program by inquiring about how they experienced ISS. Interpretive interactionism can be described as a fusion between symbolic interactionism and phenomenology in which the researcher attempts to understand the meaning of problematic social interactions from the perspective of those experiencing the event.

Design of the Study

Interpretive interactionism as an approach to research was used to examine the relationship between problematic personal experiences and the institutions that were created to deal with those experiences (Denzin, 1989). Denzin also indicated that interpretive interactionism examines and contextualizes the interrelationship between the lived experiences of people and public responses to personal troubles. A very good example of this situation was found in ISS and the students who were assigned to such programs. In order to examine and contextualize these lived experiences, a methodological framework consisting of six distinct phases was provided by Denzin and was used to guide this study. The phases were as follows:

1. framing the research question;
2. deconstruction and critical analysis of prior conceptions of the phenomenon;
3. capturing the phenomenon, including locating and situating it in the natural world and obtaining multiple instances of it;
4. bracketing the phenomenon, reducing it to its essential elements;
5. construction of the phenomenon in order to put it back together in terms of its essential parts; and

6. relocating the phenomenon back in the natural social world.

Limitations

This study was limited to the public school site in which the research project took place. Also, the number of participants within the site limited the study. Generalizability of the findings was uncertain. However, Denzin (1989) wrote:

> The formulation of causal propositions that can be generalized to nonobserved populations (based on extensive analysis of randomly selected samples) is a cardinal feature of much current social science work. The interpretivist rejects generalization as a goal and never aims to draw from randomly selected samples of human experience. This follows Stake's (1978, p.5) position on this issue: "Case studies will often be the preferred method ... because they are epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience and thus to that person a natural basis for generalization." Interpretive researchers seek to build interpretations that call forth its readers' naturalistic generalizations. (p. 26)

It was hoped that a complete reading of this interpretive study would facilitate the "naturalistic generalizations" of the readers.

Framing the Research Question

According to Denzin (1989), the research question was to be framed using steps that are similar to materials found in the opening chapter of a traditional research study. The steps for framing the research question in an interpretive study are as follows:

1. Locate the problematic biographical experience to be studied within one's own personal history.
2. Discover how this problem is becoming a public issue that affects multiple lives, institutions, and social groups.
3. Locate the institutional sites where persons with these troubles can be found.
4. Ask how it is that these experiences occur.
5. Formulate the research question into a single statement.

Deconstruction

As a step in the interpretive process, deconstruction was comparable to a review of the literature, which was done in Chapter II, explaining how the concept of ideal ISS and the reality of ISS were incongruent in most settings. This suggested the need for further study and clarification to determine students' perceived impact of ISS on their hearts and minds. Denzin (1989) wrote:

> A deconstructive reading of the phenomenon involves a critical analysis of how it has been presented, studied, and analyzed in the existing research and theoretical literature. Deconstruction has the following characteristics: It lays bare prior conceptions of the phenomenon in question. This includes how the phenomenon has been defined, observed, and analyzed. A critical interpretation of previous definitions, observations, and analysis is then offered. The underlying theoretical model of human action implied and used in prior studies is critically examined.

> The preconceptions and biases that surround existing understanding are then presented. (p. 51)

Deconstruction and critical analysis followed framing the research question.

Capturing the Phenomenon

Capture involved locating the phenomenon to be studied in the natural world (Denzin, 1989). The process of deconstruction was related to what had been done in the past with the phenomenon. Capture, on the other hand, was related to what was being done in the present by the researcher. Basically, this entailed data collection or securing instances of the phenomenon being studied. Capture involved the following steps as suggested by Denzin (1989):

1. securing multiple personal histories that embody the phenomenon in question;
2. locating the epiphanies of the persons being studied: and
3. obtaining multiple personal and self-stories from the subjects in question concerning the topic under investigation.

Capture took place after the deconstructive reading of the literature and was summarized as "Data Collection and Presentation" in this chapter.

Bracketing the Phenomenon

Bracketing involved isolating the key, essential features of the process under investigation in the study (Denzin, 1989). This occurred during analysis, the results of which are presented in Chapter IV. Bracketing included the following steps:

1. locate within personal experience, key phrases and statements about the phenomenon in question;
2. interpret the meanings of the phrases;
3. obtain the subject's interpretations of the phrases;
4. inspect these meanings for what they reveal about essential, recurring features of the phenomenon being studied; and
5. offer a tentative definition of the phenomenon in terms of the essential recurring features.

Bracketing was a phase in the interpretive methodology that followed capture of the phenomenon being researched. It was a phase of interpretive interactionism that allowed for an analysis of the captured phenomenon. Elements contained within the phenomenon were recognized as a result of bracketing.

Construction

Construction was described as putting the key elements of a phenomenon together in a temporal order. This is done in Chapter VI. Denzin (1989) suggested a stepwise process for construction that leads to contextualization.

1. List the bracketed elements of the phenomenon.
2. Place the elements in their order of occurrence within the experience.
3. Indicate how each element affects and relates to every other element in the process being studied.

4. Concisely state how the structures and parts of the phenomenon cohere into totality.

Contextualization

Denzin (1989) indicated that contextualization relocated the bracketed phenomenon back into the worlds of lived experience. He suggested that contextualization occurred as a four-step process.

1. Obtain and present personal experience and self-stories that embody in full detail, the essential features of the phenomenon as constructed in the bracketing and construction phases of interpretation.
2. Present contrasting stories, which will illuminate variations on the stages and forms of the process.
3. Indicate how lived experiences alter and shape the essential features of the process.
4. Compare and synthesize the main themes of these stories so that their differences may be brought together into a reformulated statement of the process.

For this study, contextualization occurs in Chapter V. Denzin (1989) wrote:

> Deconstruction, capture, bracketing, construction, and contextualization bring into sharper focus the phenomenon under investigation. The goal of these interpretive activities is to create a body of materials that will furnish the foundations for interpretation and understanding. Interpretation clarifies the meaning of an

> experience. Interpretation lays the groundwork for understanding, which is the process of interpreting, knowing, and comprehending the meaning of an experience. Understanding, by locating meaning in the experiences of interacting individuals, is the goal of interpretive interactionism. (p. 62)

Denzin's stepwise process of bracketing, construction, and contextualization is normally utilized to determine emergent themes. However, Bowling (2000) suggested that bracketing and contextualization be combined in order to identify and clarify emergent themes and present them with some continuity. This was accomplished using vignettes and self-stories in order to better understand the participants' lived experiences in the ISS program. In following the interpretive study paradigm employed by Bowling (2000), construction of the emergent elements obtained through bracketing and contextualization are presented and discussed in Chapter VI. Again, this allowed the themes that emerged to be linked into a coherent whole (Denzin, 1989).

As a research methodology, interpretive interactionism was most suited to address the needs of this study. Empirical studies can be informative with regard to the number of students assigned to ISS who drop out of school. Also, empirical studies can numerically inform the reader about increasing or decreasing rates of recidivism in ISS. But, empirical studies do not explain how students live and experience ISS. These lived experiences might provide information that can be used to improve existing curricular programs in public schools. Denzin (1989) noted:

> In social life, there is only interpretation. That is, everyday life revolves around a person's interpreting and making judgments about their own and others' behaviors and experiences. Many times these interpretations and judgments are based on faulty, or incorrect, understandings. Persons, for instance, mistake their own experiences for the experiences of others. These interpretations are then formulated into social programs that are intended to alter and shape the lives of troubled people. But often the understandings that these programs are based upon bear little relationship to the meanings, interpretations, and experience of the persons they are intended to serve. As a consequence, there is a gap or failure to understand. The programs don't work because they are based on a failure to take the perspective and attitude of the person served. (p. 11)

The literature did not include interpretive studies in which the perceptions of students who were served by ISS programs were considered. Their voices, perhaps the most important voices when ISS as a social and educational issue was considered, had not been heard. This study using interpretive interactionism as a methodology possibly gave meaning to their experiences and perceptions.

The Setting

Eagleton Senior High School [the name was changed to ensure participant anonymity] was built in 1962 and was a suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban school (Bear, 2000). This public school was located within a district that had a total enrollment of 17,434 students (PreK-12) during the 2000-2001 school year. These

students were distributed among 34 elementary, four junior high, and three high schools. The school district's per pupil expenditure was $5304.66 as compared to the state average of $4187.00 per pupil for the 2000-2001 school year.

Eagleton High had an enrollment of 1459 students for the 2000-2001 school year. There were 451 seniors, 547 juniors, and 461 sophomores. Also, 50 percent were White, 32 percent were Black, eight percent were Hispanic, five percent were Asian, four percent were Native American, and one percent was Pacific Islander. Only one percent of the students was categorized as being limited with their English proficiency. Twenty-eight percent of the students qualified for free or reduced price lunches. Those students receiving special education services were at 7.2 percent. Twenty-one students were categorized as mentally retarded, 80 had specific learning disabilities, two were seriously emotionally disturbed, one was speech impaired, and one was classified as Other Health Impaired according to designations assigned in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA). The faculty was composed of five administrators and 81 classroom teachers. There were seven resource specialists, five paraprofessionals, and 21 support staff members.

The school offered academic courses in the core areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition, elective courses in the arts, foreign language, physical education, vocational/technical education, JROTC, media broadcasting, and computer education were offered. Eagleton High School provided the opportunity for students to participate in 13 different varsity sports.

Academic Performance Index

The Academic Performance Index (API) for Eagleton High was 1104. The Oklahoma State Department of Education (2001) described the API as an indicator of the educational success associated with a school. The API for secondary schools was based on seven indicators that included: Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) scores, attendance rates, dropout rates, Advanced Placement (AP) participation and performance, graduation rates, ACT scores, and college remediation rates. Eighty percent of the API was based on OSTP scores. Ten percent was based on attendance, graduation, and dropout rates. Ten percent of the API was based on ACT, AP, and college remediation rate. The state of Oklahoma API average based on data for the 2000-2001 school year was 1000 on a scale from zero to 1500. Based on API scores, Eagleton High was considered to be slightly above average compared to other public high schools in the state.

The Eagleton High Mission Statement

The mission statement for Eagleton Senior High School was to provide society with effective citizens who were to be positive, life long contributors to their community. The mission was to be accomplished by providing a meaningful instructional program with a dedicated staff in a safe environment that allowed every student to develop his or her fullest capabilities as indicated in the Eagleton High Faculty Handbook. This mission was based on the following beliefs:

- Every person has worth and the inherent right to be treated with dignity, respect, and kindness.
- Everyone has the right to a safe environment with opportunities for growth.
- All people have rights and with those rights come responsibilities.
- Everyone is unique.
- Everyone can learn.
- Learning is a life-long process.
- Everyone needs recognition, appreciation, and a sense of belonging.
- Everyone has the basic need for rest and nourishment.
- Everyone needs enrichment and challenges to change, grow, and improve.
- Life is enhanced by a positive attitude.

The Faculty Handbook also included the following passage as an extension of the mission statement:

> We assume the responsibility of creating an institution which takes all students as they are, and aids them in realizing more fully their individual abilities for knowledge, decision, and action. It is out duty to teach the basic structure and essential processes of our society and the democratic system, subject to revision and improvement by an evolving and critical citizenry. Because our students enter from and depart to diverse parts of the world, we emphasize the cultivation of effectual human relations,

values, and perceptions which prepare them for world responsibility. In pursuit of these qualities, we strive to produce an atmosphere that will free the forces of creativity and imagination. Likewise, we envision a concept of morality that includes freedom and innovation, liberation and progress, rationality and discipline. (p. 2)

The Goals of Eagleton High School

As found in the Faculty Handbook for the 2000 – 2001 school year, the goals were:

- To encourage to the fullest each individual's desire and ability to acquire facts, to challenge them critically, and to use them to solve problems.
- To promote the physical and emotional development of the individual.
- To develop responsible citizens who are informed and literate on the structures, processes, and functions of government.
- To foster effectual human relations through a system of values that recognizes, respects, and understands that there are differences.
- To increase creativity and imagination through experiences based on knowledge, focusing attention on the expression of ideas.

- To provide an awareness of ethical principles through an environment in which these values are exemplified and are related to situations which call for decisions.
- To create a school curriculum with staff involvement reflecting the following premises: All students can learn, Schools control the conditions of success, and Success breeds success.

The ISS Program

Eagleton Senior High School had in place a curricular program of ISS that was based on a plan formulated in 1994. The ISS program description can be found in the appendix. The program description fits the definition of the individual model provided by Sheets (1996). However, there were differences between the program description and what was actually in place. The existing program omitted the counseling component for reasons unknown and did not include a plan of evaluation. Instead, the focus was on effectively punishing assignees to the extent that the program corresponded exactly to the punitive model described by Sheets (1996). Students were strictly isolated within individual carrels and remained silent during their stay in ISS. Their were no provisions for academic assistance.

Participants in the Study

All nine participants in this study were high school students who had been served by the ISS program at Eagleton High School during the 2001-2002 school year. Each of the participants in this study was a student in one of the science sections that I taught

during the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years. During that time, I got to know each of the participants as unique individuals. Getting to know my students in an appropriate and professional way had always been a part of my pedagogical style. Establishing this type of relationship alleviated the issue of trustworthiness to a great extent. I learned to trust my students and they learned to trust me. Hersch (1998) said, "Getting to know adolescents is an evolutionary process. I needed time to build trust so I could count on their openness and honesty." (p. ix) . Each participant was given a Patois or Jamaican slang name to ensure anonymity.

Two of the participants in this study were female and the remaining seven were male. Three of the participants were seventeen years old, three were eighteen years old, and three were nineteen years in age. Four of the males were African American. The remaining three males were Caucasian as was one of the females. The other female participant was Caucasian/Native American. Only one of the participants lived in a traditional home with their mother and father. The rest were from non-traditional homes. Either they lived with a parent and a stepparent, a relative other than a parent, or they lived on their own. None of the participants had grade point averages that exceeded 2.9 on a 0.0 to 4.0 scale. This information is summarized in Table 1. Four of the participants (Slacky Tidy, Maga Dog, Rude Bwoi, and General) were members of my remedial life science class. I observed that none of them associated with one another during the course of the school year unless I assigned them to a lab group together. Another group of four participants (Smada, Cris Bwoi, Bafan, and Sound System) were members of my

physical science course for juniors and seniors. However, each of them was in a different section/class. The remaining participant (Stooshie) was a member of my regular life science course from the school year prior to this study. Of these nine participants, only Maga Dog and General had ever been involved with the juvenile justice system. Both of them had served sentences in juvenile correctional facilities.

Table 1. Participant demographics

Participant	Gender	Age	Grade	Race	Family	GPA
Slacky Tidy	F	17	10	W	B	0.9 (F)
Smadi	F	17	11	W, N	B (2)	2.8 (B)
Stooshie	M	17	11	W	B	1.8 (C)
Maga Dog	M	18	10	A	D (3)	0.7 (F)
Cris Bwoi	M	18*	12	W	C (1)	2.5 (B)
Bafan	M	18	12	A	A	2.9 (B)
Rude Bwoi	M	19	11	A	B (2)	1.4 (D)
Sound System	M	19	12	W	E	2.1 (C)
General	M	19	11	A	D (3)	2.2 (C)
Race:	W = Caucasian A = African American N = Native American					
Family	A = Mother and Father B = Parents Divorced (lives with mother) C = Parents Divorced (lives with father) D = Lives with Other Relative E = Lives on Their Own 1 = Stepmother 2 = Stepfather 3 = Grandmother					
GPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) Scale	3.5 – 4.0 A 2.5 – 3.4 B 1.5 – 2.4 C 1.0 – 1.4 D 0.0 – 0.9 F					

*Cris Bwoi turned nineteen shortly after the interviews were completed.

*The grade point averages were obtained from student records.

This study met all the criteria established by the local school district administration and board of education, the Eagleton High School administration, and the University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board (IRB) regarding the use of human subjects. Appropriate consent was obtained. No policy was violated. All participation was voluntary.

Data Collection and Presentation

Data was obtained using open-ended questions asked by me during semi-structured audio taped interviews with the participants that lasted approximately 45-60 minutes each. This type of collaborative interaction facilitated the interpretation of everyday lived experiences according to Bowling (2000). The participants were interviewed once with follow-up interviews as needed. On many occasions the participants approached me several days after their interviews and wanted to comment further regarding their ISS experience. These informal conversations initiated by the participants served as an additional source of data. Since this study sought to gain insight regarding student perceptions of ISS, interview questions were formulated with that purpose in mind. In addition, participant demographic information was obtained during the interviews.

The data obtained was specific for the lived experiences of nine students assigned to the ISS program at Eagleton Senior High School. Also, my experience as an ISS monitor at Eagleton High during the Fall 2002 semester served as an additional data source. My observations of the Eagleton High ISS validated the descriptions of the

participant ISS experiences. Finally, documents such as ISS referrals from administrators provided a source of data that verified the reasons and lengths of stay for participant assignment to ISS.

The data collected during this interpretive study was presented using descriptive realism as recommended by Denzin (1989). In this way, the participants' stories could be told in their own words so that emergent elements would become self-evident. Denzin (1989) explained descriptive realism as a writing style to present interpretation.

> It allows interpretation to emerge from the stories that are told. It reveals the conflictual, contradictory nature of lived experience and suggests that no single story or interpretation will fully capture the problematic events that have been studied. Descriptive realism assumes that reasonable, plausible, workable theories and accounts of experiences can be given by those persons who experience the event or events in question. After all, it is their lives that are being told about. (p. 136)

Denzin (1989) suggested that writers of interpretive interactionism who use dialogic and polyphonic descriptive realism should allow the world being interpreted to interpret itself.

Methodological Assumptions

Interpretive interactionism as a research methodology is based on three assumptions described by Denzin (1989). The assumptions are as follows:

1. In the daily lives of people there is only interpretation. Individual reality can be comprehended because of the constant interpretation that takes place with

regard to the behaviors and experiences of the individual and his or her interaction with others.

2. It is a worthy goal to attempt to make interpretation available to others. Each person's existence is unique and carries with it interpretations that contrast at various times. It is in sharing these interpretations that understanding is improved and better responses to social issues can be constructed (Bowling, 2000).
3. All interpretations are unfinished and inconclusive.

Interpretive interaction demonstrates how verbal research techniques can provide a comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena (Bowling, 2000). This research methodology allows the researcher to interpret lived experiences more thoroughly than what is possible with more conventional research methods.

A Personal Addendum (Situating the Researcher)

For the researcher who uses interpretive interactionism, Denzin (1989) recommended that the problematic occurrences being written about were ones that the researcher had experienced. Denzin (1989) wrote:

> The interpretive interactionist attempts to live his or her way into the lives of those being investigated. He or she attempts to see the world and its problems as they are seen by the people who live inside them ... the researcher attempts to share in the subject's world, to participate directly in the rounds of activities that make up that world, and to see the world as the subjects see it. (p. 42)

Before I began this study, I was concerned that I would be unable to relate to the experiences of the students. I felt like a person with perfect vision who was studying the visually impaired. I could not simply put on a blindfold and pretend to be blind. General, a participant in the study, would probably say that at any time I could just take the blindfold off and see again. Prior to the study, I could always look into the ISS setting, but I could never really be in. I had never really experienced the full manifestation of ISS.

During the summer of 2002, my wife accepted a prestigious job at a large university in the southeastern part of the United States. I assumed that I would find a job at the university or in the local public school system and spend my time finishing this dissertation. I was wrong. A job never materialized and I remained at Eagleton High School for the 2002-2003 school year while my wife and daughter moved out of the state. Two weeks before school was scheduled to start, I received a telephone call from the assistant principal who supervised the science department and who I genuinely liked and respected. He informed me that my teaching schedule was being reduced from five sections to four so that I could monitor the "in-house" room from 1:30 PM until 3:15 PM each day. I immediately became angry and will never forget the conversation that transpired. I told him that, traditionally, teachers who were deemed ineffective in the classroom or who were unable to receive a full teaching load got the "in-house" job. I sarcastically asked, "Which one is the case for me?" He told me that I was a good classroom teacher but that he knew I was working on my "doctor thang" [a Ph.D.] and that I was interested in "in-house" and this would be a good chance for me to see things

up close. I informed him that I was not at all interested in "in-house." My interests were punitive curricular programs, the nature of ISS at Eagleton High, and the ways that students experienced this punitive program. He did not understand the depth of my anger which had been caused by what I perceived as an insult to my professional integrity as a classroom teacher and as a novice educational researcher. How dare the administration insult me by assigning me to monitor the ISS room?

I was already frustrated and angry about so many personal events (separation from my family, selling our house, trying to find an apartment, the lack of progress on my dissertation, the ISS assignment, etc.) before the school year ever started. Finding out that the assistant principal who assigned me to the ISS program had resigned the day before school started and another regular classroom teacher would be in charge of the punitive ISS program and supervise me only added to my frustration and anger. But, I was a professional person and I would do my job to the best of my ability without complaining.

On the first day of school, I walked into the Eagleton High punitive ISS room at 1:30 PM after having taught four sections of science. Since 1994, I must have walked by that room countless times without ever wondering about the events that were transpiring within it. I never gave much thought to the students who were being affected by their ISS placement. It did not take very long for me to realize that the ISS room was an empty and desolate place. It was sterile. There were five cheaply constructed isolation cubicles against the east wall. Four were adjacent to the north wall. Each cubicle contained

decrepit student desks that were oriented toward the wall facing away from the room's windows. Next door, I could hear the voice of the advanced placement psychology teacher. He was a masterful educator who also taught adjunct at the local university. His students roared with laughter at his anecdotes. They would listen intently to his lecture and zealously answer his questions. As I stood in the center of the ISS room, it occurred to me that for an entire school year I was going to have to listen to the marvelous sounds of teaching and learning that were taking place in the classroom next door which was the antithesis to the room I was occupying.

I could not help recalling a time in 1975 when I was a sophomore at Eagleton High and the very room in which I was standing was my sophomore English class. Our teacher was from Oxford, Mississippi and spoke with a distinct Southern drawl. We read the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, and Charles Dickens. The poetry of Alfred Lord Tennyson, Emily Dickinson, Carl Sandburg, and Langston Hughes still stand out in my mind. So much academic learning used to take place in this room. As a high school sophomore in this once vibrant room, I learned to love the process of writing and learning. Now, it was just cold. Learning no longer took place in this damned room. What was once a hallowed learning environment had become a place where feelings of resentment, rejection, and self-doubt were cultivated.

One of the assistant principals came into the room a short time later and wanted to know if I had learned the "in-house" routine. Sarcastically, I informed him that it could not be all that difficult. One merely had to record a student name and the time of day that

the student was in the room. The routine was simple. I asked about turning the desks around so that I could see the faces of the students. He told me that they needed to remain in that position. He informed me each principal would go over the rules with students before they were sent to "in-house." He said, "We want to make this hard on them. We want this to be a place were they don't want to be." I wondered if he meant school or ISS? As I reflected about that moment, I realized the he was just concerned about my well-being. But, I still had philosophical differences with the administration regarding my assignment to the ISS setting at Eagleton.

I was in the ISS room for three school days before I received a student. He was a junior who was referred to an assistant principal by one of the special education teachers. The principal sent him to me with a sentence of three consecutive days in the "in-house"/ISS room. I logged him into the attendance book and assigned him to a cubicle. Right away, I noticed that he was used to the routine. In fact, he knew more about the procedures than I did. He would raise his hand without turning around until I acknowledged him. I felt helpless because I was unable to do anything but make sure he remained quiet and not go to sleep. He knew to sit quietly and face the wall. It seemed to me that punitive ISS for a special education student was unethical and legally questionable. This type of ISS was a change of educational placement that went against the procedures established by Congress in the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that guided the IEP for this student or so I thought. Also, I honestly believed that he never understood why he was in there. He would raise

his hand for my help several times only to ask if I knew why he was in there. Out of curiosity, I called the special education teacher to inquire about the ISS placement for this particular student. The teacher told me that the student was being a "pain in the ass" and the two of them needed some time apart. The teacher told me that this student was included in two regular classes during the school day and spent the remainder of his time at school in the special education classroom. I asked about the student's learning disability and was told that extreme hyperactivity was the problem. The teacher told me that he would send up some review work that the student could do on his own. How was I expected to work with this student if a specially trained teacher was unable to work with him? I knew right then and there that it was going to be an interesting albeit frustrating school year for me.

My anger and frustration reached a new high the following morning. I was summoned to a meeting and was told that we needed to punish students when they cause problems in class and prevent the teacher from teaching. It was explained to me that if you make the punishment bad enough they [students] won't want to be in "in-house" and they [students] won't be a problem in the classroom. I was so enlightened. It made entirely too much sense to me. I sarcastically thought to myself that all of the existing literature on ISS, the ISS research studies, and the ISS program evaluations had been a tremendous waste of time for so many. The events of this meeting had brilliantly summed it all up. Punish students so oppressively that they will not want to go back to ISS.

Instead, they would rather be in the regular classroom. How could I not see the logic in this?

That evening I thought of every possible way to get out of ISS duty. I decided to go straight to the building principal and demand that I be reassigned or I would request a transfer out of the building. Did they not know my background? Then, I remembered General telling me during one of our interviews that I couldn't wear his shoes. I couldn't be like him for even one day. General told me that I could look in but not be in unless I was in his situation. Now I had to disagree because I, too, had been sentenced to ISS. Maybe I was not placed there as a punitive measure, but I would experience ISS in the exact same way as General. Instead of getting a few days worth of punishment, I would get 180 schools days. I would spend an entire school year in there.

I could never get used to the silence. My regular classroom had always been a dynamic learning environment with many procedures going on at once as my students were actively engaged in the process of learning together. To go directly from my regular classroom filled with sounds made by students who were learning to the absolute silence of ISS where students were completely disengaged was almost unbearable. I merely completed my administrative tasks and sat in silence. It was very depressing.

The ISS assignment presented me with a moral dilemma late in my second week as the monitor. A young man was given a one-day sentence for talking in class. The teacher did not send any work for him. When I called her to request an assignment, she told me that she was in the middle of a lesson and really didn't appreciate the

interruption. She never sent the work for him. Later, I caught him playing a game on his cell phone as he sat in the cubicle. However, cell phones are not allowed in school. I knew if I sent him back to the office one of the principals would have suspended him from school with an out-school-suspension for three or more days. I told him to put the phone away and to make sure it was turned off. The principal should have made sure that his teacher sent him an assignment.

Initially, whenever I attempted to help students who had assignments, they were very belligerent with me. It was as though I were an enemy to them. Their attitudes were so filled with anger. I discovered that they did not want my help, because they did not trust the ISS teachers. They simply treated me as part of a power structure designed to oppress and punish them. The students in that room never got a chance to know me as an educator. They rejected me as someone who desperately wanted to help them. After two weeks of being in the punitive ISS room, I realized that I could not help the students socially or academically. I was not a trained adolescent psychologist; did not want to risk creating any more emotional or psychological trauma for them; was helpless to do anything positive for students in the ISS room; and would always speak to my regular students about the hope for a better tomorrow. What hope was there for the students in the ISS program at Eagleton? It seemed to me that we had given up on them and treated them as lost causes.

As a result of my ISS assignment, I realized that specific elements revealed themselves whenever students were placed in there. Factors such as maltreatment,

neglect, rejection, and hopelessness were displayed during the time of placement. I, also, experienced each of these in a very short period of time as a result of my ISS program monitor assignment.

In the end, I realized that the assistant principal who assigned me to "in-house" as a monitor had done me a huge favor. By making it a part of my job description, he made it so that I could not leave unless I quit. He made me live through the very experiences that the participants had to suffer through each day they were assigned to the ISS program at Eagleton. Not only did I get to look in, but also I got to be in. For that, I am both grateful and insolent.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANT VIGNETTES

Interpretive interactionism as a research tradition is used to assist the reader in gaining insight about the troubled lives of ordinary people and the programs designed to the address their personal problems (Denzin, 1989). Contained in this chapter are characterizations of the participants in this study. My intent was to assist the reader in understanding the participants as somewhat typical of the students found in any American public high school. Bowling (2000) wrote that participant background information should be provided so that a general impression of the sample could be gained and the contextual realities of the participants' lives could be elucidated.

The Participant Vignettes

I had the entire school year and in some cases two years to build trust in the participants prior to their participation in the research project. Actually, it was very easy to get the participants to tell me about their lives. They seemed very interested and more than willing to share the details of their personal lives away from the ISS experience. Perhaps no one in education had ever given them this opportunity or none had ever seemed genuinely interested in them. The individual participant profiles provided a clearer albeit limited view of some of the events that shaped the lives of the participants prior to this study. These profiles illustrated that their lives are unique, but not so unusual that we cannot empathize with them to some degree.

The Seventeen-Year Olds

All three of these participants had parents who were divorced when the participants were very young. Both females, Slacky Tidy and Smada, were seven years old and Stooshie, the male participant, was five years old when the divorces took place. Smada and Stooshie were high school juniors at the time of this study. Slacky Tidy was a nontraditional sophomore. Although she had attended high school for two years, she did not have enough academic credits to be classified as a junior. All three were extremely likeable and never presented themselves as behavioral problems in my science courses.

Slacky Tidy

In Patois or Jamaican slang, Slacky Tidy means "unkempt or messy." The first time I saw Slacky Tidy, I thought she needed to practice a little more personal hygiene. Her shoulder length dishwater blonde hair was oily and unbrushed. She always wore seemingly soiled and really loose fitting clothes and a jacket that was a little too big for her. Slacky appeared to me to be a person who was untidy. I could always smell tobacco on her breath, which more than likely caused the staining on her teeth. Slacky Tidy was a seventeen-year-old sophomore. She told me that she was supposed to be a junior, but had to quit school during the first semester of her tenth grade year because she got sick and was absent from school too much. Her school records show that she transferred to another high school in the district during the second semester of that same tenth grade year. Slacky told me that she and her mom were having personal problems with an

assistant principal at Eagleton High which resulted in her transferring to the other high school.

Slacky Tidy lived with her mom who worked as a cashier in a grocery store and a nineteen-year-old brother who quit school when he was sixteen. Her parents divorced when she was seven and her father's whereabouts were unknown to her. Slacky worked as a telemarketer after school, but told me that she was quitting to get a job as a carhop at a Sonic Drive-In. As a member of my remedial life science course during the year in which this study took place, Slacky never really displayed any significant academic ability. Actually, she never completed any of her assignments and spent most of her time trying to talk to other students in the class whenever I was not presenting a lecture. Slacky Tidy told me that she liked to read Sidney Sheldon books and spend time with her best friend who lived in an adjacent state. She wanted to finish high school so she could go to college and become a lawyer or an actress (her favorite movie was "Legally Blonde"). And, she described herself as "boy crazy" and someone who loved to socialize.

In describing the number of times that she had been placed in ISS during the current school year, Slacky Tidy said, "This year I been put in in-house (ISS) for like tardy round-up (tardiness), cussin' out a teacher, and cigarettes that I wasn't even smoking." She did not remember any of the circumstances associated with the first time that she was ever placed in ISS. Slacky did tell me that she received three days of ISS for tardiness, five days for the use of profanity toward a teacher, and five days for possession of cigarettes in school.

She explained the events that led her to be placed in ISS for using profanity:

> Okay. Like I don't think I shoulda got five days for callin' that teacher a 'bitch.' She said I was like stupid and so I called her a 'bitch.' Like I coulda said a lot worse, you know. She shouldn't be telling people they're stupid. And, I think the principal shoulda like said something to her about it. My mom had a conference with the teacher and principal and like they didn't do nuthin'. She shoulda had to apologize to me for that.

She also addressed the cigarette incident:

> Oh man, I was across the street from the school just hangin' out with my friends. We like go over there everyday at lunch and smoke. So, I was like comin' back from lunch and I guess one of the principals saw me puttin' the cigarettes in my pocket and they stopped me and like asked me about the cigarettes. I tried to play it off, but they asked me to empty my pockets and I had the cigarettes and they gave me five days of in-house tellin' me it was all a violation of the school code and stuff.

And, for the tardiness, she had the following to say:

> I was late for first hour a few times, like four times. My mom had to drive me to school 'cause I don't got no car and I ain't ridin' no school bus. She like oversleeps and causes me to be late. It ain't my fault. She tried to tell the principal, but they said I should like just ride the bus and then I wouldn't never be late. I think I got in-house for being late for school and because one day I skipped

my classes after lunch because a bunch of us went to my friends house for lunch one day and just partied.

It would appear that she was not a very conscientious student. However, I found Slacky Tidy to be very respectful. And, when she did attempt an assignment for me, the work was usually acceptable even though it was always incomplete. Unfortunately, she withdrew from school the day after our last interview. She told me that she and her mom were having trouble with the same assistant principal again and that she was transferring to a local private Christian school. It was interesting to me that the assistant principal Slacky Tidy mentioned stopped me in the hall shortly after she withdrew from school and inquired about her classroom behavior. He found it hard to believe that she was always cooperative and noncombative with me. He told me that she would probably enroll again for the next school year and dropout or transfer to another school just like she had always done before.

Smada

Smada's parents divorced when she was seven years old. She lived with her mother during the workweek and saw her father on weekends. All of her grandparents, aunts, uncles, mother, and father lived within an area of one square mile. She was very close to her extended family and maintained a good relationship with her parents. I had known Smada since she was in the ninth grade. Her boyfriend was a former student of mine before he dropped out from school during his sophomore year. Smada used to accompany him to my classroom whenever he had to stay after school for me. He was

gangly, quiet, pretty rough around the edges, and seemed to exude a "Gothic bad boy" image with his dark features. Smada was a complete contrast to him. She was fair-featured, outgoing, and extremely talkative when I first met her. Smada displayed these same traits as a sophomore in my life sciences class during her first week of high school. Her sophomore year was the year prior to this study.

Things changed drastically for Smada during the second week of her sophomore year when she was placed in ISS. This was her account of what happened:

> I got in trouble in vocal music for chewing gum and was sent to the office. They put me in in-house for the rest of the hour. The next day, I got in trouble again for talking. But, I wasn't talking. I was just asking my friend what the teacher said because I couldn't hear her. I got put in in-house for five days. The principal said there was no reason I should be sent down for two days in a row for the same class. After I got out of in-house, my mom and dad went to the principal and I got changed to a different subject.

During the time of this study, Smada was a seventeen-year-old high school Junior enrolled in my physical science course. Since that second week of her sophomore year, her demeanor had changed. She was no longer the extroverted person that I was accustomed to seeing. She had become extremely quiet and introverted, someone who did not socialize with any of her peers in the physical science class. She pretty much kept to herself and always held her head nodded downward as if not to look at anyone. Smada

was a pretty good student who seemed to value an education. She expressed her feelings about getting an education as follows:

> I need my education. I realized that I needed my education for my future so I can make good money. I need to finish high school if I want to go to college. I want to be a nurse. I just want to finish high school and go to college so I can study to be a nurse. I have been dating my boyfriend for three years now. And, if our plans work out for the future, we will both go to college and then get married. We decided we shouldn't marry after high school because we would have to suffer money wise. It would just be better for me.
>
> I want to be somebody, you know. I don't just want to work as waitress or something. I need my education so I can make something from my life. I want to be somebody, be somebody important. I just want to be somebody important, you know.

"Smada" means "somebody" in Patois. She successfully completed my physical science course with an "A" average and told me that her boyfriend was receiving his high school diploma from an alternative program at a local vocational-technical school.

Stooshie

Shortly after my last interview with Stooshie, he asked if I was going to include some personal comments about him in the dissertation. I let him know that I would be including participant profiles. At that very moment, he handed me some notes that he had

written about himself and indicated that no one could describe him better than he could. He insisted that I use his notes. This is what Stooshie had to say about himself:

> I have never really pondered about what can be said of myself autobiographically. I was born into an upper-middle class White family consisting of a housewife and a real-estate banking executive officer. Until the age of five, I lived in my tranquil little prestigious neighborhood in a relatively huge house on a magnificently landscaped lot. Then, divorce struck.
>
> My mother was eight months pregnant with my younger brother. My father, who had been sleeping around more than a twenty-dollar Los [sic] Vegas prostitute, moved in with his mistress even before the divorce was final. My mom, brother, and I moved in with my grandmother until she lent us her rent house a year later. We resided in that eight hundred square foot house until the end of my junior high days.
>
> The divorce caused psychological problems according to my psychiatrist who diagnosed me with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and ODD (oppositional deficit disorder). I spent most of my junior high years in and out of psychiatric hospitals. After an eight-month stay in a wonderful out-of-state facility, I am free of those chains and doing okay.
>
> I am burdened with the blessing of having an IQ in excess of 150, but only have a grade point average of an average "C" student due to my lack of interest in things that don't challenge me. This includes most of my schoolwork. If a task

does not engage my mind, then I see no need to apply myself to it and it normally does not get done. I am constantly thinking though. For example, I am developing a car that fly's and runs on water. Unfortunately for me, most of my thinking and research is conducted while I should be applying myself to school-related work. I plan to never stop continuing my education. I am planning to get at least a Master of Science with a double major and a double minor. I am working on my FCC broadcast technician license. And, I plan to get a degree in broadcast journalism.

How do I plan to pay for all of this? I currently have three businesses, a technical production company, a severe weather consulting firm, and a web page design business. Unfortunately, none of my businesses are generating excessive revenue. There is a lot more about myself that I don't have time to share. But, to allude to the opening paragraph of F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, not everyone has had all the chances in life I have had, either.

The Patois term "Stooshie" means "upper class or 'hitey-titey'." The self-description he provided merely reinforced the pseudonym that was given to him. It was his belief that no one other than Stooshie could write about him in manner that would do justice to his very existence.

I had known Stooshie for two years prior to this research project. During the school year before this research project, he was a gregarious student in my introductory life science course for sophomores. Stooshie always projected an air of superiority that nearly got him into trouble with many of his peers. By the end of the first quarter of the

school year, none of the students in the class wanted to interact with him due to his arrogance. On numerous occasions, students in the class and even some of his other teachers asked me about his arrogant nature. Quite a few of his classmates wanted to "beat him up" after school. I will never forget an English teacher who told me that she just wanted to "slap him" every time she saw him because he was such a "smart ass."

Stooshie was built like a refrigerator with a head, arms, and legs. I never saw him in the company of others unless he was forcing himself into a group discussion as an unwelcome guest. Needless to say, he spent a great deal of time talking to me, because everyone else would leave whenever he approached. Somehow he made it through the remainder of that school year without any confrontations with his peers in that class. I always made sure that I kept a high profile with that particular group of students. He stayed in contact with me during his junior year, which was also the year of this study. In fact, I saw him everyday at school and we would spend a few minutes just visiting about everything and anything from current events to school to whatever came to mind.

Shortly after the Christmas break, I did not see Stooshie in the halls for a few days. When I asked him if he had been ill, he told me that he had been in ISS. When I began to seek participants for this study, Stooshie came to mind. He was the only participant who was not a student enrolled in one of my science courses at the time of the study, but he was more than willing to be a part of the project. This is his account of why he was placed in ISS:

There's too many things to remember about exactly why I was placed in in-house so many times. Most have been for being tardy. The one time I spent the longest in was for telling a certain administrator to 'kiss my ass.' I got three days right after Christmas break this year for that. I thought I was correct, but I knew the ramifications. I thought I was correct in the fullest and I didn't much care for him. He's an arrogant, well, I better stop there. I just have a problem with people who think they possess a superior intellect.

The reason I told him to 'kiss my ass' was because I was assigned to Saturday school for being tardy. Now, I'm involved with stage production and we usually have lots of work on Saturdays. I was given a time to report to Saturday school and I thought I would go in early and work on stage production before reporting. Well, the time he gave me was actually thirty minutes later than the time Saturday school actually started. So, when I got there the doors were locked and I got another Saturday school on top of that one for being late. I didn't think that was fair because it wasn't my fault. So, I told him to 'kiss my ass' when he started to lecture to me about being on time especially when I was told to report to his office and ended up waiting for about ten minutes for him. My time is just as important as his.

I genuinely liked Stooshie. We both shared a common interest in guitars and tornadoes. Of course, he always knew more about the topic of discussion than I ever did. Stooshie successfully completed his junior year of high school without any major

incidents. I would have cited a different source from The Great Gatsby if I had written his description. In Chapter VI of The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald's (1925) character Nick says, "So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end" (p. 104). I am not insinuating that Stooshie was delusional or untruthful. He honestly believed everything he said based on his own perception of the daily events in his life.

The Eighteen-Year Olds

Only one of these three participants (Bafan) lived with parents who were not divorced. The others (Maga Dog and Cris Bwoi) lived in nontraditional settings. Bafan and Cris Bwoi were seniors and members of my life science course, but each was in a different class. Maga Dog was in my remedial life science class. I never had any problems with these participants regarding their classroom behavior. However, I did on one and only one occasion refer Maga Dog to the hall outside of my classroom for repeatedly using profanity in my class on the first day of school. He seemed really fond of using the word "Fuck" as often as possible. In the hall, I told him that I could not use that particular word in the classroom and neither could he or else we would both be fired. He laughed and it was never an issue after that.

Maga Dog

Maga Dog was an eighteen-year-old sophomore who lived with his grandmother. He should have been a high school senior, but his past troubles with the juvenile justice system resulted in his being in and out of school a lot. Because of that,

Maga Dog only had enough credits to be classified as a sophomore. Maga Dog moved from Texas at the start of the school year and was living with his grandmother. His mother was deceased. She died when he was seven years old due to a crack cocaine addiction. Maga Dog did not know much about the father he had never seen. He told me that his grandmother thought that his dad might be somewhere in Michigan in a penitentiary. Maga Dog was an only child and said that he liked to "just hang wit' da fellas."

During our interviews, I found out that Maga Dog did not drink, smoke, or take drugs. He said that he had to take good care of his body because the "ladies" liked a man who was in good shape and in control of his life. I must say that every time I saw Maga Dog in the halls at school he was with a female student and acting very affectionate toward her. At approximately five feet and eight inches tall, he was very stocky with a muscular build and always wore clothing of the same color: extremely baggy khaki colored pants, a loose fitting shirt depicting a professional sports team, and a red bandana that was always neatly folded and carried in his hands. His clothing may have represented some type of gang affiliation.

Maga Dog was a member of my remedial life sciences class during the school year in which this study took place. He was very talkative and disruptive when I first met him. We came to a very simple understanding by way of compromise. I merely told him that I would always be "straight up" or honest with him if he would be honest with me. Even though I believed that Maga Dog trusted me, he was still skeptical about people of

authority. For example, whenever I would call on him during a discussion, his immediate response was always "I didn't do nuthin'." I had to work at keeping his trust on a daily basis.

He confided in me that he had been in and out of several juvenile correctional facilities in his lifetime. All of my doubts were erased during my first conversation with his Juvenile Affairs case worker. The case worker could not give me specific details, but certainly confirmed Maga Dog's association with the juvenile justice system. Maga Dog described his history with juvenile corrections during one of our interviews.

> Awright then. It's like this. When I was thirteen, I broke into some peoples' houses and me and some of the fellas stole some stuff and got caught by the police. I got put in a boys group home for three months. When I was fourteen, I got caught stealin' some shoes and clothes from a mall. I got three months in a juvenile facility for that. When I was sixteen, I got six months in the same juvenile correctional facility for aggravated assault and petty larceny. I beat this punk up pretty bad and took his watch and cheddar [money] 'cause he had owed me some cream [money] from a bet.
>
> Lass year, I was in a boot camp for juvenile offenders for almost the whole year. I stayed out of trouble so my probation officer let me come back to school this year. You know what I'm sayin'?

It was amazing to me that he could describe his experience with the juvenile justice system like a recorded message on a machine.

The transition from juvenile boot camp to a public high school was very smooth for Maga Dog based on his comments about his time in ISS.

> I been in there too many times, much too many times. Tardies, saggin' drawers, you know, makin' a fashion statement, leavin' trays at the table in the cafeteria, cursin' in the halls, you name it. I just be talkin' to my Krew [close male friends] and the curse words just come out. It's stuff I don't even think about. You know what I'm sayin'? I know that the lass time I was in there, they put me in 'cause a girl in my math class said I had stole some money out her locker. Man, I ain't even know the girl. But, she accused me of stealin' fifty dollars she said was from fund raisers or somethin'. It was all circumstances.
>
> Man, I had got a pass to go to the office for a absence when she said the money had got stolen out her locker at the same time. They put me in in-house for five days. Sayin' I was a lie. I do admit I had some cream on me at the time, but it was from bets I had won from hoops. And, I'm tellin' you it was a lot more than fifty dollars. They didn't have nuthin' on me.
>
> Before that I got three days for using the girls bathroom during P.E. (physical education) class. Man, I swear I didn't know it was the wrong bathroom. It wasn't nobody else in there, but me. But, the P.E. teacher saw me comin' out and wrote me up. I bet I spend more time off in in-house than I do in my regular classes. Man, I got my own personalized cubicle (isolation carrel) because I been so many times.

Peter Tosh, the legendary reggae artist, wrote a song called "Maga Dog" that includes as a lyrical line the words, "Sorry fi Maga Dog, Him a go turn around and bite you." This Patois phrase means, "That mongrel dog is going to bite the hand that feeds it." Shortly after my last interview with Maga Dog, he stopped coming to school. I was able to find out from his school counselor that he had violated his probation and was possibly involved in some local crimes. His whereabouts were unknown.

Cris Bwoi

Cris Bwoi was a model of perfection when it came to his appearance. He always maintained perfect posture with his six feet tall frame. His blond hair was always cut and combed to perfection with not a single hair out of place. Cris Bwoi was always color coordinated when it came to his clothing.

Participation on the school football team was a big part of his life. Actually, sports in general were a major focal point for him. Cris Bwoi had aspirations to be a sports writer for a major newspaper someday. He lived with his father, stepmother, grandmother, and half-sister. He also had a younger sister who lived with his mother. His parents divorced when he was five years old. He said that he saw his mother and sister every now and then.

Cris Bwoi was a high school student who was having the time of his life during his senior year. That is until he was placed in ISS. He described the placement:

I've only been once. Just one time during my whole school career from elementary school to junior high to high school, only one time. I was in there for four continuous days because I left a school function without permission.

It was an all day school journalism competition at a state university and my event was finished early in the morning and I got bored of just waiting around. I knew we would be there all day, so me and a couple of other students got a cab and went down to the mall which is about five minutes from the campus. It wasn't my idea, but it seemed okay to me.

I'd been there [the college town] a lot of times before, so it wasn't like I was going to a strange place. In fact, one of the people I went with has an older brother who goes to college there and we've been there to see him lots of times on weekends. On the way back from the mall, our sponsor had left a message on one of the other student's cell phone and she [the sponsor] was pretty upset. So, we all got in trouble when we got back to the high school.

I mean I understand that she [the sponsor] had to do it, because if she would've tried to handle it on her own and got caught by the principal then she probably would've got fired or something. That's what the assistant principal said to us anyways. I was just thinking that sometimes when we had football practice at the stadium, some of the players would drive their own cars and stop at the Seven-Eleven to get a drink or something to eat. The coaches would get mad but nothing ever happened to the players. It seems like the same thing to me.

Oh! Here's a better example. During my journalism class, I have to go out and sell ads for the school publications sometimes and I drive my own car. All of us do when we sell ads. And, we stop all of the time to get something to eat or shop, whatever. We don't ever get in trouble for it. Sometimes we even bring food back to school with us. Everyone knows we do it. And, I've never had a principal get on to me about it.

Man! The drivers ed coaches let their students stop and get something to drink or eat all of the time and nobody ever gets in-house for that. It's not right for me to get in-house for what I did. They could've talked to me about it or something. The assistant principal said I was representing my school at the competition and that's why I had to be put in in-house. That's the way it was explained to me. But, it seems like the school is represented in those other situations. All I did was go to a mall. No big deal. I didn't even buy anything.

Cris Bwoi was given an ISS placement late in his senior year. I noticed a very distinct change in his demeanor when he returned to my class after his time in ISS. He stopped dressing in the sharp manner to which I was accustomed. Instead, he wore baggy shorts, old tee shirts, and sandals everyday. He stopped combing his hair opting to just let it do what it wanted. In Patois, Cris means "crisp, brand new, and slick-looking" and Bwoi means "a young male."

I saw Cris Bwoi at his graduation. We got the chance to talk a little bit about his plans for the future. He had just turned nineteen. His hair was perfect. And, he was color coordinated in his new suit. He looked brand new again.

Bafan

Bafan means "clumsy or awkward" in Patois. He was six feet three inches tall and weighed two-hundred twenty-five pounds. Bafan always had his hair either braided or combed out into an "Afro." He looked like a teen-age version of Buckwheat from the "Little Rascals." After the first week of school, I really thought that Bafan had been incorrectly placed in my physical science course. He could not remember anything from the previous day. He could not remember the seating arrangement, my name, materials to bring to class, etc. I thought that he might have been on an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for students with a learning disability. This was not the case.

Bafan had the attention span of a four-year-old child. There were times when I would be responding to a question that he asked and instead of paying attention to me, he would be focused on something else that was taking place in the classroom or looking out of the windows to see if something eventful was occurring outside. As a student, Bafan was a very analytical and sequential learner when or if he was engaged in learning. I had to explain everything to him in a very carefully planned stepwise manner.

Bafan was an eighteen-year-old senior who planned to go to a small black college for pre-med. He liked sports especially football. Bafan was the youngest of four children. He had three older sisters. His mother worked at the local county hospital as a lab

technician and his father was an Army drill instructor. I discovered during a couple of parent-teacher conferences that Bafan had a great relationship with his family especially his mother and father who were very supportive.

I noticed a drastic change in Bafan after his placement in ISS. He no longer wandered around my classroom talking to other students. Bafan became very sedate and disengaged from the class. It was as though he no longer wanted to be at school or around anyone. It caused a great deal of concern for his parents and me. His mother called me at school once a week to discuss his behavior at school.

There was an incident two weeks prior to his placement in ISS that was interesting to me and perhaps traumatic to him. During the physical science class in which Bafan was a member, his senior English teacher burst into the classroom during my lecture and started yelling at Bafan. She was upset about a computer disk that evidently was not to have been taken from her room. It contained his senior research project. He attempted to tell her that he took it by mistake, but I do not think she heard him because of her own voice.

As quickly as I could, I asked her to step out of my classroom and into the hall because I thought her actions were very inappropriate, disruptive, and most of all embarrassing to Bafan. In the hall, I told her that I would retrieve the disk. I also let her know that I would prefer it if she knock on the door before entering my room to scream at a student. As I gave her the retrieved disk, she yelled at Bafan once more through the open door that the next time he did something like that he would find himself suspended

from school. This was a very embarrassing moment for Bafan because it happened in front of everyone in the class.

Two weeks later he was placed in ISS. Bafan talked about being put into ISS.

It wasn't the first time I had been to in-house. I been in there a lot of times. But, it was for stuff like being tardy for first hour, not having a notebook, or something. Little stuff, you know. Man, this last time was stupid. I can tell you all about it because I was in there for seven days. It was stupid.

Okay, this is how it happened. You can ask anyone in the class and they'll tell you the same thing. In my Senior English class, we had read a book and turned in a notebook over it. When the teacher was passing them back, she told me so the whole class could hear that I had gotten a 'zero' because it was so sloppy. I just took my notebook and didn't say nothing. She asked me, "Didn't I care about the zero. Didn't the zero bother me?" I didn't say a word, man. But, she kept on like she was trying to get me or something.

Finally, I told her, 'Did I say I didn't care?' That's all I said. She told me to go out in the hall and she came out after she had written me up. She didn't yell at me or anything. She just talked to me like normal with that smile she had like I was in trouble. It made me mad, because on the referral she had written that I was defiant and disobedient and refused to answer her questions. And on top of that, she put that I had tried to start a disturbance in the class and had made her feel

threatened. The assistant principal told me that I was in serious trouble and he put me in in-house for five days.

Bafan did not receive anymore ISS placemenets for the remainder of the school year even though he said he continued to have problems with his English teacher. He told me that he only had a few weeks left at Eagleton High and just wanted to graduate. Bafan did graduate a few weeks later and was accepted to a small, predominantly African American university in the southwest United States.

The Nineteen-Year Olds

Each of these participants had attended high school for at least four years. Rude Bwoi and General started the school year as sophomores in my remedial life science course, but earned enough credit by the end of the first semester to be classified as juniors. Sound System was a fourth year senior enrolled in one of my physical science sections. Rude Bwoi lived with his mother and stepfather. General lived with his grandmother. Sound System was living in his own apartment. There was never a moment during the school year when any one of the nineteen year olds was a behavioral problem to me.

Rude Bwoi

"Rude Bwoi" in Patois is used to describe a male who is a tough guy or hard hearted. Rude Bwoi always looked angry. It was as if he were about to explode into a violent fit of rage at any given time. He was not very tall and pretty thin. More than

likely, his intimidating facial expression was a front to remind everyone to keep a safe distance from him or approach him with caution.

Rude Bwoi was an only child and lived with his mother and stepfather. His parents divorced when he was eight years old. His mother worked as a nurse in the Army and left his father because he wasted all of their money on drugs, alcohol, and other women. His mother got out of the Army, remarried, and worked as a nurse in the county hospital. His stepfather was employed as an EMT (emergency medical technician) at the same county hospital. Rude Bwoi told me that he did not trust people and only had five friends that he trusted.

During the time of our interviews, Rude Bwoi kept expressing worry that his girlfriend might be pregnant. He was unsure about the pregnancy. Rude Bwoi played football and basketball for the school and did not know what he wanted to do after high school. He was very sure that he did not want to go to college, but was concerned that his mother was going to make him attend.

There was never a moment in my remedial life science class when Rude Bwoi was a behavioral problem. I enjoyed visiting with him about sports. He was very knowledgeable about professional teams and players. Even during these conversations, he kept the same intimidating, angry looking facial expression. Rude Bwoi never smiled about anything.

There were two occasions during school year that I received notification to submit assignments for Rude Bwoi who had been placed in ISS. He recounted the ISS placements this way:

> I had been in there a lot before. I don't remember why I was put in there every time. But, this year I been twice. Once because I had pushed this girl after she had ripped my shirt. I was walking by her desk and she had said something to me and I said something back and she grabbed my shirt and ripped it. And, I pushed her. I didn't punch her. I just pushed her. The teacher said she only saw me push her and sent me down. I got three days in in-house.
>
> The other time was for going to the bathroom. After I had talked to this assistant principal about a situation and was going back to class, I stopped to go to the bathroom. Man, this principal had followed me and saw me coming out the bathroom. He called me out of my class and put me in in-house for three days. He said I wasn't supposed to stop at the bathroom. I shoulda gone straight to class. Man, I had to go.

The second ISS placement for Rude Bwoi came at the beginning of the last quarter of the school year. It was very evident that he was angry about his time within ISS. Rude Bwoi became very withdrawn in my class and kept to himself after his ISS sentence.

He was the only participant who had a change of heart during the interviews and told me that he no longer wanted to be part of this study. A few days later, Rude Bwoi

changed his mind again and wanted to continue with the interviews. After our last interview, Rude Bwoi started talking to me about sports again.

Sound System

I got to know Sound System two years prior to the study. He was a student in the science class adjacent to mine when he was sophomore. During his junior year, he was in the English class that was across the hall. He seemed to get into frequent trouble in both classes, because during those two years he spent a great deal of time at the table in the back portion of my classroom. His science and English teachers would send him to my room whenever he would misbehave. The teachers around my room had an agreement with one another that we would send each other our misbehaving students as a "time out" practice. This was a way of avoiding the office and ISS.

Sound System was a member of my physical science course during his senior year. He was a tall and lanky young man who could not stay awake in class. Apparently, Sound System did not getting enough sleep away from school because he worked at two different jobs: a fast food restaurant and a body shop that customized cars. He needed both jobs to pay for his rent and monthly expenses consisting mainly of a car and bicycle. He and his father did not get along very well and he moved out of his parent's house during his senior year. He would not discuss his relationship with his father. Sound System did say that he and his father got into several "fist fights" prior to Sound System moving out.

It is a dream fulfilled for most teenagers to have their own car. Sound System was no different. His car was his pride and joy. It was a multicolored 1968 Dodge/Plymouth Charger. Most adults would have taken the car to a local junkyard and abandoned it. But to Sound System, it was better than a Rolls Royce. He put in a set of speakers and played loud rap music through them as he drove around town. You could hear the car coming from a mile away it seemed. The bass speakers would make the windows of the school rattle whenever he drove by as he was leaving for the day. The Jamaicans called the DJ's who had large mobile stereo setups that were played loudly at open air dances "Mr. Sound System." In addition to his car, Sound System owned a bicycle motocross (BMX) bike. The car and bicycle required much of his income to keep them in working condition. He used the bicycle to jump from ramps and do daredevil stunts, which often resulted in scrapes and contusions on his face, arms, and legs. This bicycling activity seemed to be popular with many of the male teens at the high school.

Sound System was always in trouble at school. He used to get into fights as an elementary school student because he was small. The fighting trend continued into junior high school for the same reason. At the end of junior high school, he experienced a growth spurt. The fighting habit continued into high school but for a different reason. Instead of getting picked on for being small, Sound System sought out those who used to pick on him and started fights with them. He saw this as some sort of retribution. Sound System missed too much classroom time due to placement in ISS. He honestly could not remember the number of times that he had been placed in ISS during his senior year. The

reasons for placement were for fighting, tardiness, defiance toward teachers and principals, and cursing at a teacher. My student records showed that Sound System spent 18 total days in ISS during his senior year.

He was very concerned about not being able to graduate due to the possibility of failing Senior English. Sound System had no desire to pursue formal education beyond high school. I will always remember that during one of our interviews he told me that you have to define yourself and never allow yourself to be bullied into silence. He did not know the source of the quote. The thought occurred to me that Sound System was going to spend much of his life trying to define himself, but he certainly was not going to be bullied. I do not know if Sound System passed Senior English and graduated. He did not participate in the graduation ceremony.

General

General is a Patois term used to describe a person who is a "smooth operator." Of the nine participants in this study, I knew General for the shortest length of time. He became a student in my remedial life sciences class at the beginning of the second quarter of the 2001-2002 school year after transferring from another high school in the district. General withdrew from school during the fourth quarter of that same school year. This will be discussed later. While I got to know the other eight participants for at least a full school year [Slacky Tidy withdrew during the fourth quarter, but started school at Eagleton High], I only knew General for 18 weeks of school.

General was a very handsome young man and he knew it. He was well aware that the females around him thought he was handsome. Imagine a young Muhammad Ali with lighter colored hair and one will have an image of General. I can say without any doubt that I never once had any type of classroom problem with General. I could never understand why he was placed in the remedial science class. During classroom discussions when I would present a basic concept, General would always ask questions that took the discussion to a higher cognitive level. For example, when I presented the topic of rudimentary cell division, General inquired about cancer being accelerated cell division. He said that he had read about cells and cancer somewhere and was just curious.

General described himself as open-minded and intelligent. He made an emphatic point to tell me that he really liked money and women, because he could never have enough of either one. His desires caused him to become a part of the juvenile justice system and spend time in jail. When he was fourteen years old, General was caught with a group of older boys who had stolen a vehicle. At the age of 16 years, he robbed a convenience store at gunpoint. General lived with his mother and had no idea about the identity of his father. It was something that he did not care to discuss. He said the topic had caused him and his mother to have many problems when he had asked about the identity of his father.

Within a week of General's arrival at Eagleton High School, he was placed in ISS. He recalled the moment vividly with eloquent syntax that was intertwined with Ebonics.

Oh yeyuh! I remember the incident very clearly to this day. I was put in in-house for stating my opinion to a teacher. This teacher had made a comment about my personal appearance, so I made one back. And, as with most cases when the student in class states they opinion, you know they goin' down. She wrote me up and I went to the office.

I believe that I should be able to speak my mind if I state it in the right way. But, you know if you do the crime then you gots to do the time. And, in the eyes of the faculty, the principal, I was wrong. So, there wasn't anything I could do about it and I just took my sentence and spent time in in-house.

I was at another school in this district when school first started. And, while I was there I was put in ISS, as you like to call it. It's the exact same as 'in-house' except they call it 'refocus.' I got put in there for, okay; there was this student who had kept making comments to me about my family. He was sayin' stuff like I didn't know who my daddy is and childish stuff like that.

You know at first I let it go by, but the constant constant pushin' of the comments. I said something back to him and he came at me. And just like the NFL, you know when the refs call a personal foul on a player but they really don't see who the real perpetrator was until the replay. That was me. The teacher hadn't heard nobody but me she said. All she said she saw was me mouthin' off and grab the other student. She said she really didn't see him say anything to me. I didn't

really take it to that effect. I just went ahead and did my time. Right after that incident, I transferred over to this school.

Shortly after our last interview, General was assigned to ISS for the remainder of the school year which would have been for a total of more than 40 days. Initially, he was assigned a placement at the high school. This placement was to last until a slot opened up at the school district's system wide ISS program that was used for those students who were deemed "incorrigible" by the school administration.

It seems that General and two female students were caught engaging in some type of sexual activity in the boys' restroom during a physical education class. The same teacher who was mentioned earlier when he had problems with Maga Dog caught them. After five days at the high school ISS program, General was sent to the district-wide ISS program. He withdrew from school a short time later.

I saw General at a local fast food restaurant about two weeks after I found out that he had dropped out from school. He looked terrible. It was as if he had been living on the street. He was dirty and his clothes were filthy. He had debris in his hair and he had been drinking because I could smell the alcohol on his breath. General was loitering in the restaurant hoping to get some free food. I felt badly for him and asked him if he wanted something to eat. He said he wasn't hungry. He was just "hangin' out." I told him that a young man like he should always be able to eat and that I would buy the food this time and he could take care of it the next time. I did not want to let his pride prevent him from eating. As we waited at the food counter after he ordered, he said he was going to enroll

in a program for dropouts at the local Vo-tech (vocational-technical school) and finish high school there. I told him that it would be a good thing to do and I left after he got his food. A few weeks later, I asked one of the counselors at Eagleton to call the Vo-tech and ask if General had enrolled in the program. He never did.

Interpretive interactionism assumes that each person is unique from all others and yet is the same as all other persons. Denzin (1989) indicated that every person is like every other person, but like no other person. The uniqueness of the individual makes that person a singularity or a singular event. The singular lives of people are structured and framed by universal occurrences such as social, economic, political, technological, religious, and media events associated with the postmodern period (Denzin, 1989). Denzin contended that each person is, therefore, a universal singular with the universal aspect being a set of comparable experiences and the responses to those experiences as shared by the individuals. Bowling (2000) in writing about the working poor in America said:

> Their struggles are different. The differences are based upon the uniqueness of their particular life trajectories. Despite the uniqueness of their individual life trajectories, however, all of these individuals' experiences occur within a larger cultural context of shared historical meanings relative to their life experiences. Given that their experiences are situated in a larger context of social meanings, similarities in their experiences and/or patterns of response to those experiences

can be understood as the universal dimension of the universal-singular dialectic. (p. 92)

These vignettes provided a concise examination of some of the comparable ISS experiences shared by these unique singulars; these unique students.

CHAPTER V

SELF-NARRATIVES

Presented in this chapter using descriptive realism as a style are the self-stories of the participants as they described their experiences with ISS. Whereas the participant vignettes were easy to obtain, the participant self-stories regarding their ISS experience were more arduous. The participants talked about themselves and the events that led them to be placed in ISS with a great deal of ease. However, they seemed to think more about their responses and then take more time to describe how they experienced ISS. Initially, I felt that they were hesitating because they wanted the freedom to sincerely express themselves without any fear of reprisal. I had to be patient in waiting for the participants to respond to the interview questions because I did not want to bias their responses with additional prompts or probing questions. I wanted their descriptions, not descriptions that were influenced by my questions. Even when I reminded the participants that we had an agreement of total anonymity, they remained deliberate with their responses.

The Self-Narratives

Slacky Tidy

Slacky Tidy talked rapidly about her personal life. She seemed excited at the prospect that someone might actually be interested in her. In contrast, she described her ISS experience with some hesitation and she slowed down her sentences a great deal. I noticed that for some reason she did not use the word "like" as often as she had done when speaking about her personal life. There was little excitement in her voice and she

appeared to get defensive and slightly angry with me as she described her ISS experience. It was as if she did not want me to know what happened to her because I was a teacher. This was her narrative:

> It's boring in there. There ain't nothing to do. They keep putting me in there for stupid reasons and I ain't got no choice not to go. If I don't, they'll kick me out of school. Then, I won't see my friends. It ain't like I do things thinkin', "Oh well, if I do this then they're gonna put me in in-house." I just do what I do everyday and I guess it ain't like what they want me to do.
>
> I ain't gonna let nobody treat me like crap though. I seen my mom get treated that way too many times. Treated like crap from her boyfriend. No way man. I like school and all because I get to see my friends, but I ain't gonna take no [expletive] from nobody. [At this point, Slacky appeared to become very angry. I had to stop the interview to give her time to calm down. I genuinely did not feel like I needed to be on the receiving end of her anger. I let her know how I felt. She seemed to regain her composure.] My friends are about the only reason I stay in school. If I had to spend all my time in in-house, I'd just quit school. In-house sucks man. You try just sittin' in a cubicle all day long with nobody to talk to. You should try it. I can't hardly stand just being quiet all day. Being alone, man.

When I asked about a typical day in ISS, she responded:

> Okay, first of all you gotta be there like before school starts and you're in there all day long until seventh hour is over (8:00AM until 3:15PM). They put you in these

old desks that are fallin' apart. They hurt your butt and your back when you sit there all day long.

There's these cubicles with white dividers all around you so you can't see nobody and all. You have to sit down and you just face the wall in front of you all day. You can't turn around or they [the ISS monitors] yell at you. There's like nobody to talk to. You can't see nobody anyways because of the dividers. You just have to sit there all day and be quiet or you get more days added on.

You eat lunch in the cafeteria by yourself and you get like two bathroom breaks, but you don't get to talk to no one at all. All's you do is sit there and do whatever work they give you. Most of the time, I don't get no work. So, I just sleep in there. Even if I got work I probably couldn't do it. You can't get no help in there. You have to go for help during seventh hour to your teacher.

You can't talk in in-house. And besides, they're like always on the phone or reading something or talking to another teacher so they can't help you. They don't help you. They just tell you to do whatever you can and go get seventh hour help. Man, they don't care about you. I like going to school and my classes and all because I get to see my friends and talk about stuff. But in in-house, you don't get to do any of that.

I thought about just walkin' out and all but it wasn't worth getting in more trouble or kicked out of school even. Then, I couldn't see my friends. They just want to keep you away from everybody so you can't talk. They just punish you by

making you be away from your friends all day. That's like the only reason they put you in there.

I understand that you shouldn't cuss at a teacher, but they shouldn't be allowed to say whatever they want to to students neither. So, I shouldn't have got in trouble like that. The other stuff wasn't even school stuff so it wasn't any of their business. I don't think I shoulda been punished the way they did it.

You shouldn't just be allowed to isolate people for no reason at all. Man, it makes you feel like you don't belong and brings you down you know. It made me not want to be in school. I mean I don't wanna be someplace that don't want me you know. But, it didn't change the way I feel about other things. I still have my friends and stuff. I just don't like not being able to talk to my friends you know. And, um, I always look to see if a principal is around trying to catch me doing something.

When Slacky was asked about the counseling that she received while she was in ISS, this is what she had to say:

Like what do you mean? Oh! You mean like did I get some counseling help in in-house? No! They don't care about helping me. The principal just tells you to go up to in-house and not to do it again or you'll get put out of school and all that. When you're in there, they don't never talk to you about stuff to keep you from getting in more trouble again.

I know some counseling would've helped me. I go to group at school and it helps me a lot. [Her eyes begin to tear up at this point.] I get to talk about my personal problems at home and all and it like helps me to work things out. If they would've sent me to group and not in-house, then I probably wouldn't have got in trouble for the same stuff all the time. I probably wouldn't have got in so much trouble.

Smada

Smada in recounting how she experienced the ISS program at Eagleton had this to say:

I didn't feel like there was any reason to be in in-house. I was mad. Frustrated you know. I just hated being in school. I didn't understand why everyone was so mean to me. I wanted to quit school. I just wanted to get away from the school. They put you in there and you are alone. I mean alone all day long from the start of school until the end of the day, by yourself.

There are dividers like panels that separate everyone. There is no talking. You can't talk to anybody. You don't see anybody until you eat lunch. All you do is schoolwork if they give it to you. And, there is nobody to help you with the work. I work slow so I would just get further behind and sometimes I would get more work if I got behind. So I got punished for being behind with more days in in-house. It wasn't fair.

You have to do your work to get out. I would ask the teacher in in-house for help, but they didn't know how to help me with the questions. It wasn't their subject. I asked a lot of questions actually, but I couldn't get any help. The teacher didn't know how to teach the subject. They weren't very good teachers. I think they put the teachers who can't teach in there, the worst teachers. There was two different teachers in the morning and one in the afternoon. There wasn't a math teacher, or an English teacher, or a science teacher.

I really hated it. I felt terrible. I couldn't talk to anyone or see my friends. I was so miserable that I couldn't eat anything. I was ready for it to end. I just wanted to get out. I worked as much as I could to get out, but I couldn't keep up and felt like I couldn't get out. It was frustrating.

For a while it changed the way I felt about school. But I had to realize that I had to get past this. I would sit at home and convince myself that I had to get through school. I have to get through school. I can't work at McDonalds. I want to be a nurse and make some money.

This was the only time I ever got in trouble in school. And it was a stupid thing. It was for nothing. Chewing gum and talking. That's what I got in trouble for. What I did was nothing. Nothing. It made me realize, "Who cares?" I thought, "Who cares?" Nobody in that school cares about me. [At this point, Smada tells me that this is so stupid and she doesn't want to talk about it anymore. I let her know that it was okay if she wanted to stop the interview. She calmed down and

continued.] I never got in trouble in school. Ever. Being in that place changed me at the time. But, you have to find it in you to get past this. Just fight to get out of it and get past it. Some people can't but I had to get through it. I have to finish school. It was a waste of my time, my life. I don't know why we have in-house. Maybe they think it'll straighten us up. I don't know. I know I don't chew gum or talk to people in school anymore.

Maybe in-house caused me not to talk to people in school anymore. I think I talk to people at school sometime, but when I think about it, I really don't. Except for my friends. I sure don't talk to my teachers. It could've been a lot worse though. They could have kicked me out of school. That would've been a lot worse. I have to finish my high school.

Smada had this to say about the counseling she received while in the ISS program:

I don't have any more to say about it. [Again, Smada seems to get a little irritated at this point. However, she continues.] I think I've said all that I want to say. Nobody ever talked to me about in-house. Nobody told me about in-house. What it was for, no counselor, nobody.

I never understood the point of it. I feel like I was in jail or something. Like I was some kind of criminal. I didn't break any laws or hurt anybody. They made me feel like I didn't deserve to be in their school. If I had some kind of

counseling I would have been able to find out why it happened to me. Maybe my high school time would be different.

I just can't get into trouble like that you know. I won't do anything that might get me put back in in-house. Maybe talking to a counselor would have helped me do things different. I'm not sure. I know I'll worry about being back in in-house as long as I'm in this school. Sometimes I can't go to sleep at night because I keep thinking I'll be in there the next day for no reason. There is nothing else for me to say. I can't think of anything else that I want to say about this.

Stooshie

Stooshie articulated his ISS experience eloquently:

In-house or as you call it, ISS, is pretty malproductive. It's a waste of my time. It takes away my learning time and we don't get any work sent to us. So basically, we just sit and do nothing. We have to make up the time in our class on our own initiative. There are times when teachers send down a whole bunch of extra work. And, there is no one to help you with it. You're just kind of on your own.

High school wasn't the first time I got into trouble at school. When I was in the fourth grade I made a bad joke about archeology and got the whole day in detention. I was about ten years old and scared to death. The principal said you're going to get detention for the whole day. He left and I had to sit in a desk in the

hall all day and do work. I was scared and wondering what's going to happen to me. I didn't know what detention was. I understand having detention in elementary school. I learned from my mistakes.

High school is a lot different structure wise. It's at a different level. In high school, it's pretty much just an aggravation. I don't learn anything from it. In fourth grade, I learned that there were consequences for my actions. I got what I deserved. But, in-house is designed to just irritate you.

You get there when school starts at eight a.m. If you're lucky your teachers send down work for you. Some of it gets there on time and some doesn't get there until near the end of the day. Let's see, you eat lunch alone so there's no interaction with your peers. It's silent, real strict, real formal, and really not all that much fun.

But for me personally, I have a chance to get all my work completed. There's no distractions. Given a choice, I would not want to be in there. There's no set time for any subjects. You just get all of the work and you have to pretty much decide when to get it done. You have to discipline yourself and decide how much gets done when. It's up to you. And, you just have your work and you have to get it done.

There's not too much academic help with the work. In one case, the teacher will help you to the best of their ability. But, if you have a vocal music teacher in there and you need help with calculus, then that's probably not their

expertise and you're not gonna get the help. The same amount of help you'd get from a math teacher. You never have the teachers in there that you need. So you fall behind academically. They don't have the time or resources to deal with every student in there.

This is the most asinine thing I've ever heard of. I mean getting this for being tardy is ridiculous. I deserved detention in the fourth grade. But, I lose a whole day of learning just because I was a little late and it really sets me back academically. I don't care to debate the ethics of being late. I mean the administration have the audacity and want to talk about the ethics and productiveness of ISS while I'm getting behind.

Learning wise, you are limited because you don't get to ask questions that you would in a regular class. It's ridiculous that I'm punished like this. Instead of improving, I get behind and I'm punished academically. There's no help or nothing. I think it's unethical to punish students academically. Don't take away my constitutional right to learn.

At this point, Stooshie made an interesting observation about the punishment he received:

The punishment should fit the act. I shouldn't be punished academically for something that was not academic behavior. I was a little late. So what? Doctors are late all the time. Now the time I told him to 'kiss my ass,' I got what I deserved. Even though I was right, what I said was inappropriate.

During the times I was reprimanded for being late, I conducted myself professionally and mature. I wasn't antagonistic. I see it as which is worse, miss the whole school day because you want to punish me. This is pretty non-productive because you miss the whole day of learning.

It's like convenient for them to just put us in in-house. It's like we don't want to worry about who was here at what time. It saves on clerical work I guess to just put us in in-house. Hey it's a "round-up" just get us all in our place at one time.

Stooshie returned to describing his ISS experience:

It hasn't really changed me. I'm a strong-willed person. I'm just more aggravated about school because of in-house. I have friends that were placed in in-house for simple stuff. Some dropped out because they couldn't deal with the isolation or whatever.

I had a good friend who got caught having sexual intercourse in the restroom. It was a faculty restroom by the gym that was unlocked and he got in-house for five days. Everyone knew what he did and it just changed him. He wasn't the same person I knew. He's harsh and has friends now who are always in trouble at school and out of school. His friends changed. And, I feel all of this is a direct result of being in in-house for a long time. It was the only time I ever knew that he was in there. He got transferred to downtown SAC [This is the student adjustment center which is a district wide OSS program.] and quit school. He

wasn't the same person I knew and I feel it was a direct result of in-house. The girl's parents moved her to the Christian school. You'd think the principals would be more concerned about STD's (sexually transmitted diseases) and pregnancy counseling for the students.

But, I'm realistic. They don't care about that. In-house will never make me want to dropout of school. Nothing will hold me back from getting my education. I'm gonna have letters after my name someday. That's just all there is to that. Just stay out of my way and that's it.

Look, maybe you want to know if in-house made me want to quit school. Like I told you, nothing will stop me from getting an education. Nothing. But, I've seen kids who didn't last one hour in there. They cracked. They just cracked.

Maybe the isolation got to them. It can make you crazy. You just sit there and do nothing. It's like being under a military dictator or something. It's fairly intimidating. The structure is extreme. You will and will not do this. Some people can't take it. They get up and leave; quit school. There is no conversation. Just silence; total silence.

It didn't break me. I definitely was not scarred for life. I didn't get kicked out of school. Maybe I was prohibited from learning for a few days. That was bad enough. But, I looked at it as a minor setback; a hassle. I was prevented from asking any questions. They, they shut up Nicola Tesla, but she still did fine.

[Tesla was male and I really have a hard time keeping from laughing at this point.] I'm no worse for the experience.

I've always been different. From elementary school to junior high, I was in and out of mental health institutions. My whole childhood was not that great. My parents divorced when I was five and my dad left me. He moved to Philadelphia. I still live with my mom. I am intellectual and truly desire to learn. High school is about survival. College will be about learning. That's all I care about; explaining the unknown. That's it.

Both Stooshie and I agreed that there was an absence of counseling in this program of ISS. This is what he said when I inquired the possible difference that some type of counseling might have made to him:

Let me think about that one. If you mean a chat with the people in the guidance office who call themselves counselors, then 'No.' It wouldn't have made any difference. I've been in therapy many times and it does help. A real counselor would probably have kept me from going back to in-house for the same thing over and over again. I would have been sent for other reasons I suppose. You never sent me. How come you never sent me?

I asked him what he thought was the reason why I never sent him to office when he was in my science class.

You respected my individuality. And, you let me learn what was important to me. I guess you just accepted me. You must have a high tolerance for pain.

Maga Dog

Maga Dog was composed and cavalier as he talked about his ISS experience. It was as if he were being interviewed for a television talk show. This is his account:

> See, the way I figure it, the school just wants to isolate you from everything so they can control you. It's just like being locked up. In lock up, you isolated from society and stuff so you can be controlled while you rehab.
>
> You ain't got no freedom. I mean you do what they tell you to do when you locked up. You eat what they tell you eat. You sleep when they tell you. You know what I'm sayin'. You ain't got no choice about going to school neither. You get up and go to class. But, at least you can talk to the people you locked up with.
>
> In-house be different, man. In in-house, you just quiet. I mean it's solitary confinement, man. Solitary. You in a lil' old cubicle with nuthin' but empty white walls to look at. You got your schoolwork to do and that's it. No free time. No breaks. Nobody to talk to. I ain't lyin' to you. In some ways, in-house is worse on your mind than being locked up. Like I said, when you locked up you can still talk to people that you see. But, in in-house, you don't see nobody. It can make you go crazy if you stay in there for three or four days.
>
> I only think about getting out. I can't stand bein' alone. Man, it ain't like I do stuff thinking that I'm goin' back to in-house. You know. Everything I do is like you doin' something illegal or breaking some school rules. If you thinkin' I might like being in in-house, you wrong. That's crazy. I don't like being locked

up and isolated. I hate it. Like I said, in-house and lock up pretty much the same. But, in lock up you have more free time. You know, time to talk. I mean I don't like lock up because you stay in there twenty-four seven. You know what I'm sayin'? At least in in-house you get to leave when school is over.

You go to in-house before school starts and pick up your assignments from a basket. Most of the time, it ain't no assignments for you to pick up. You supposed to bring the books you need. Then, they put you in a cubicle and you sit in there all day until 2:30 doing your work. It ain't nobody to talk to. Nobody to look at. No windows to see out. No nuthin'. Just silence and you be quiet all day. You eat lunch by yourself. At least at lunch you can see who be in there wit you. But, you can't talk to nobody. And, the sorry thing is all the principals be eatin' lunch in there too so they can see who all be in in-house. You get to go to the bathroom and that's it.

It defeat the purpose of coming to school. You know what I'm sayin'? Why should I come to school and just sit all day bein' quiet. We come to school to get a education and learn things to prepare us for life. I understand if I mess up and get in trouble, then I should get some rehab or counseling. But, in in-house you just sit all day and don't learn nuthin'. It just makes me not want to come to school no more, plain and simple, straight up. They just want to punish you. They use it to try to get rid of me cause they think I'll quit school. When I was in the juvenile lock up we had to get counseling so many times. They would tell us they

were trying to help us so we wouldn't be back. I even have to stay in touch with my probation officer.

But, here, man, they don't care about tryin' to help you. They just want to punish you for something they say you did so they can get rid of you. Man, I ain't steal nobody's money. That girl just front. Man, she front. [She lies]. And, the bathroom was a accident. You know what I'm sayin. Ain't you never did something like that? I do admit I clown [goof off] a lot, but I don't think that I should be punished like what they do. Don't nobody deserve to be treated like that in school. Like you some criminal. Man, I know I'm "street." But, that don't make me no criminal.

When Maga Dog was asked to describe the counseling he received in ISS, he answered:

Whatchoo mean? You talkin' 'bout in-house. Man. I ain't get no kinda help. They just put you in there and tell you how many days you got to stay and you leave when time is up. Don't nobody give you no counseling. You can't even get no help with your schoolwork unless you go seventh hour after school and you don't get to talk to nobody like your counselor about it neither. They ain't gonna waste they time tryin' to counsel me. Man, that's crazy. Thinkin' they care about me and want to counsel me. Help me. Shoot!

They don't care about no rehabilitation wit' a gangsta like me. Man, I'm bein' straight up wit you. I don't act a fool all the time. And, when I do, it don't

hurt nobody. I don't act out in class when the teacher is tryin' to teach the lesson neither. But, I got to be me. True to myself. You know what I'm sayin'? So, they can't do a whole lot to make me be somebody I ain't. They can put me in in-house all they want, but it won't make me be nobody else. After being locked up for real, in-house ain't nuthin'. I can't lie to you. At first, I didn't like it. But, now I know how to deal with it. The time goes by and you out. It goes by slow, but it goes by. If you don't mess up in in-house, then you get out. Just like being in a juvenile correctional facility. I mean, I guess I'm used to it. You know it don't bother me. I'd rather be off in class with da fellas, but I do what they tell me when I get sent out.

I know you probably think I'm bad and all that. But, it ain't like that. My grandma tries to keep me right. On da straight and true. And, I never really got in trouble until junior high. I just started hangin' out with the wrong peoples and things just happened. You know what I'm sayin'? But, I'm straight [not a troublemaker]. I'm straight. You straight? We all be straight.

Cris Bwoi

Cris Bwoi was very clear as he told me about experiencing ISS:

Well, you're in there for seven hours basically from eight to three. It goes by slow. You get a bathroom break in the morning, you eat lunch at separate tables from everyone else and you can't talk to anybody, and you get a bathroom break after lunch. At lunch, you don't even look around or you get yelled at and they

assign you to more days in in-house. You sit in little isolation cubicles so you can't see anyone else in the room. It's just totally silent and isolated.

I couldn't believe it was school. I could hear someone in the cubicle next to me on the first day I was in there and I asked if they had an extra pencil. I got an extra day in in-house so I learned not to make a sound in there. I'm a fairly big person and the desks in there are so small. It doesn't take long before you are really uncomfortable. Honestly, I think it's all a part of the plan to make you hate the place so much that you never want to go back.

You're supposed to get assignments each day and work on them all day. There's no set time for doing anything. There's no lectures or teaching. You miss out on everything in class. You just work at your pace. If you don't feel like doing anything or if you don't get any assignments, you just sit there. More often than not, you don't get assignments. If the in-house teacher isn't paying any attention, you go to sleep. You just do the best you can in in-house because you won't get any help.

The teachers in there can't help you because they don't know the subjects. They're art teachers, music teachers, coaches, you know, whatever. They're not math teachers or English teachers. And besides, they're on the phone all of the time so they can't help you. What you have to do is go during seventh hour for help. The only thing is, seventh hour only lasts 30 minutes so you only get a little

help. If you need help in, say, three subjects, you have to go to seventh hour for three days to see those teachers. Does this make sense?

I was in in-house for four days and I got way behind. There's no way to get caught up with your work if you need help. Four days of in-house means 24 days of seventh hour help if you want to stay caught up, but that doesn't work because your teachers aren't going to give you that much time to catch up. So, there's really no way to catch up once you get behind in in-house. It's not like a real class. It's not even like real school. The teachers in there can't help because they don't know the subjects.

I think they feel sorry for us because they know we need help but there's nothing they can do. Look! I'm not stupid. I figured out that in-house wasn't there for me to learn my subjects. I was in there to be by myself, away from everyone for punishment. I couldn't talk to anybody.

The in-house teachers pretty much keep to themselves. They talk on the phone or read a paper or a book. That tells me they don't want to be bothered. When you're in there for a few days you learn to manage your time and control yourself. Over a four day time period. I learned to pretty much stay on an even keel. I mean the first day I was pissed of to be in there. The second and third days I was just dealing with it. The last day, I was just glad that it was about to be over.

It sure changed the way I feel about school. And, I'm a senior. What I did was so little. I mean it was nothing. And, if I can get put in in-house for that, I

mean come on. Like I said, I've never been in trouble at school for anything. Ever. I feel like part of the reason is that I'm a senior and haven't been in trouble. So, that's part of it.

Some teachers and principals just want you to know that they can get you anytime for no reason. What I did didn't have any effect on a class full of students and it didn't affect any teacher or anybody. It still makes me mad just thinking about it. I just deal with it, because I guess they feel that what I did was really wrong and I had to be punished for it.

I'm just ready to get out of here more than ever. I can't believe that it happened the way it did. I've never been in trouble. I think my teachers were pretty shocked that I was put in in-house because they asked me about it and what happened. Usually, they don't really talk to the people who come back from in-house because they go there so much.

It did change the way I feel about principals. I'm sure they think I'm some kind of bad student or troublemaker now. So, they'll be watching everything I do and asking my teachers about me.

Some of my friends have been in in-house and it kinda changed them, because they always worry about being sent back for no reason. I'm not being paranoid, but I know how certain principals can be once they don't like you. I pretty much knew what was going to happen once the principal called me to his office. I just didn't think I'd get in-house. I thought he'd talk to me and tell me

not to do it again. It just seemed pretty harsh, in-house and Saturday detention. I got both.

When I asked Chris Bwoi to explain what he meant by Saturday detention, he said:

> It's pretty much the same as in-house except it's in the school cafeteria. You go Saturday morning at eight o'clock until around 11:30. There's a teacher just like in-house and you're expected to sit there and be quiet for about three hours. You're supposed to take enough work with you to keep you busy while you're there. You can't talk, but it's not as isolated as in-house.
>
> You're at a table by yourself and they try to put as far from everybody as possible. I guess they figured that being there early on a Saturday morning is punishment enough. I saw two people fall asleep and they got sent out. The teacher told them they would have another Saturday school to re-serve their sentence. Re-serve their sentence, that's an interesting choice of words don't you think?

After explaining Saturday detention, Chris Bwoi continued with his description of how he experienced ISS:

> I'm graduating and there was no way I was going to throw it away. I wasn't happy about it, but I knew there was nothing I could do except go and get it over with. I knew whenever my time was up and the end of the day came, I left and didn't go back the next morning.

It would have been nice to have someone explain to me why I was put in in-house for such a small thing. I mean the purpose would've been something I like to know. I just never saw the point. But, I wasn't going to say anything. I only have six weeks until I graduate and I didn't want to do anything to ruin it.

I never saw what I did as being that bad. I honestly didn't think it was that big a deal. I still don't. No one has ever told why it was wrong. I was finished with my part of the competition and I was just sitting around being bored. I think the type of punishment I got was wrong that's for sure. But, I'd do the same thing all over again.

You get to think about a lot of things in there. And, I thought about this a lot. In-house is a place where principals can send kids who they're tired of seeing over and over so they don't have to deal with them. It gets them out of their hair for a few days. Maybe they'll even quit school and then they get rid of them for longer.

But, I've been thinking about my situation a lot. I've never been in trouble for anything at school or away from school. Now I think that some of my teachers may not think highly of me or that I'm a bad person because of something a principal might say to them.

I still have trouble sleeping at night. Just the thought of having to sit in that room for seven hours day after day by yourself, no one to talk to or look at. I feel sorry for the kids who have to stay in there for ten days or longer. There has

to be some kind of psychological effects on you. I don't know. I'm not a psychiatrist. I do know of students who quit school after being in in-house for a couple of weeks. It's gotta make you crazy.

When I asked him if some type of counseling would have made a difference, he replied:

After in-house? No, it wouldn't have made a bit of difference to me. The damage was already done and I was pretty mad about it. I think that counseling would have just made matters worse. It would almost be like they were, I don't know exactly how to put it, like they were so much higher than me.

If the counseling was before in-house, then I might not have been as angry about it, because I might have been given a better explanation for being put in in-house.

Bafan

Bafan spoke of his ISS experience:

Well, you have to be there at eight and you're there until around three. You go to lunch by yourself. You sit all day by yourself. You do your work all by yourself. And, that's exactly how you are in there. You are by yourself. [Bafan really emphasized "by yourself."]. You're isolated away from everybody.

They got you in these little cubicles like jail cells or cages or something. You can't see nobody else and it's so quiet in there you can't hear nobody else because nobody makes any noise so they don't get in more trouble. You can hear

the pages of the books turning in other cubicles if they have work to do. Sometimes somebody will cough or something, but that's about the only sounds you can hear.

I hate it when I hear people in the halls talking and I know that I can't go out there. Oh, and whenever the in-house teachers are talking on the phone, it's irritating. It's like they know you can hear them talking and they want you to know their business. It's like they make fun of you because they know you can't talk and they can. Besides that, it's just total silence and isolation.

I felt like I was in jail or prison. I've never been in jail, but I seen 'Oz' on HBO and I watch crime shows on TV [It was extremely hard for me to keep from laughing, because Bafan was so serious about the realistic portrayal of being incarcerated on television]. There's some students in this school that's been to jail and they tell you how it is. People in jail and prison, they have no contact to the outside world. But, at least they get visitors or a phone call.

In in-house, you don't got nothing but yourself. You don't have no access to the outside world in the school. I'm not stupid. You don't have to go to jail to know what it's like to be in jail. And, to the best of my knowledge, jail is pretty similar to in-house. You don't have no freedom. You don't learn nothing while you're in there. It just makes you not want to be in school. You ain't free to learn. It's just all about being isolated. You got a lot of time to think about things in in-house when it's isolated.

I feel like I was at a disadvantage in there. It was unfair to me. I didn't get a chance to learn the things other students in my classes were learning. That got taken away from me. I didn't take it away from myself. It got taken from me. Me and my parents talked about that. If I was supposed to learn some kind of lesson from in-house, I can't think of what it is. I mean it didn't serve no purpose. They should've had some kind of talk between me and the teacher, because I think she'll probably get mad about something again and send another student to in-house. It ain't gonna be me, because I ain't saying nothing in her class.

Man, one thing is I felt like a outcast or something you know. It was like I was rejected and they just didn't want nothing to do with me. When I think about that, it's like I don't know, it's pretty sad to feel rejected you know. Don't we need to feel like we belong? Even though I think it wasn't fair for me to get in there, my mom said I should just take my punishment and get out. You know. Do whatever it takes not to go back. I feel like I wasn't going to ruin my chances even worse. I ain't missing out on graduating.

When I asked Bafan to talk about the help he received with classroom assignments during his placement in ISS, he rolled his eyes and asked if I really wanted him to talk about it. This is what he recalled:

Well, one of the teachers was an English teacher and could help me with my English work when I had problems with it. But, he was usually doing other things, reading the paper or talking on the phone, something, and I didn't want to bother

him all the time. The other teachers in there couldn't help me because they didn't teach the subjects and they weren't familiar in different subjects. They just told me to do what I could and get help during seventh hour.

It was like they didn't want us to be bothering them. Like if we asked for help then we were breaking the rules by not being quiet. So, it was just better to be quiet and go to seventh hour if I needed some help.

At this point, Bafan wanted to know why I thought in-house was needed in school. I responded by asking him if he knew about a purpose. This was his answer:

I really don't think there is a purpose for a student to go in isolation all day for several days. There really isn't a point. That's not helping nobody out. I mean if they do something really bad like curse at a teacher or fight in class or something out of control like that then they should be sent home, if a student is out of control and can't be contained in a classroom. But, to just take us out of a classroom for whatever reason doesn't help. I just got madder when I went back to class. But, I knew not to say anything because I didn't want to get in trouble again.

I mean I want to learn things and get my education and pulling me out of class doesn't let me do that. If I didn't really want to be in school I would've quit a long time ago. But, my education is important to me and I didn't deserve to be treated like a convict. It wasn't just the isolation. But, they deprived me from learning. I haven't been in any trouble since, so I guess I did learn to keep my

mouth shut no matter if I think I'm right. Whatever the teacher says I just do it or take it you know.

I mean this teacher I had the incident with still keeps on me about nothing at all. Like she wants to get me in trouble again. But, the principal told me that if I get sent out again then I probably won't graduate. That's just crazy. It's not worth all that to me to say anything back to her. I need the class to graduate. Even though I might not like her, I just pretend to like her and let her say whatever because like I say I need her class to graduate.

Bafan explained the counseling component of this ISS program:

I didn't talk to any counselors. Nobody in in-house gets counseling unless you're in group rehab for drugs or something. I did have a parent conference with the principal and teacher. But, it's not like my parents didn't know what was going on with me. I do come home and talk to them about school everyday. So, they knew what was going on and it was affecting my day, because I have her [the English teacher] class early in the morning and I would be mad for the rest of the day.

At home, my parents could see how I felt, but they couldn't do anything. My mom just told me to take it from day to day and it would be over soon when I graduated. I guess my parents helped me deal with in-house. So, when we went to the conference my parents asked about the type of communication she had made with me during class to get me sent to in-house. They told the principal they just didn't want me getting in trouble no more from her. The principal just read what

she had wrote on the referral about me being defiant and interrupting her class and scaring her and he said that I could have been expelled from school. Like I said, my parents knew my side of the story and they just told me to do whatever it takes to finish.

I didn't really need any counseling. I just knew to go back to class. Really, this is the only time I been able to talk about in-house. It did affect me in other classes, because I feel like I am always going to do something that might get me put back in in-house. I mean I know that teachers talk to each other. And, they talk about who's been in in-house.

It made me realize that life ain't fair. But, you got to go with it. I mean you might have a job or a boss that you don't like but you need the money so you just deal with it. Sometimes I can't sleep because I worry about being back in in-house. I mean if we could've talked about the situation with my English teacher to a real counselor then maybe she could've realized that she's got some anger issues and maybe I wouldn't have been so mad about it after. I mean really.

Talking to you about in-house has helped me to realize some things. And, I'm not as mad about it now. School counselors, they can help you with your schedule and graduation credits and all, but I don't think they can deal with personal problems like this. Like the people who go to group at school get some real help with their problems because they have a real counselor. And, she can help them with their problems by talking to them and they can talk to her. They

can solve their problems when they go to group. The school counselors can't do that. They don't know how to help you like that.

Rude Bwoi

Rude Bwoi was very serious whenever he spoke with me. There was always a sharp edge to his voice as if he were on the verge of an angry outburst. I asked him to tell me about his ISS assignment:

If you've ever been in there, the littlest things start to tick you off, man, after a while. 'Cause, you're in a isolated place and you're just by yourself. You had to be there at 7:45 until 3:05 and by then seventh hour was over so they made sure you didn't get no help from your teachers. They didn't help me in in-house. And, they are strict about the isolation. They made sure you didn't see nobody.

You can just sit there and pretend to work because they never check on you. There's nobody to talk to and the teachers, it's like, I don't know, they pick on you and stuff 'cause you're in in-house, over the littlest stuff. Most of the teachers that come in there just talk on the phone all day or do stuff like grade papers. They don't pay no attention to us. And, if you ask them a question, they go off on you and threaten you with suspension.

I don't think that's fair 'cause you ask for help and get in trouble for it. I'm still a student in this school. I'm a person who still has feelings. They just treat you like you're some enemy or something. I think they don't like me

'cause they think I'm a troublemaker or something. Maybe they heard something from another teacher or principal or something about me.

Man, when I was a sophomore, I got into trouble a lot for fighting and cussing out a teacher and stuff in the cafeteria. You know leaving my tray and such. So, maybe I got a reputation. The thing is, I don't think it's fair no matter what. If you're a student and you ask a teacher for some help, you should get some help. Not be threatened with some more punishment. So, I just make sure I sit and be quiet.

If you're quiet, they don't even notice you and you won't get in trouble. And, even if they don't notice you when you ask for help, you can't get up out of your seat to ask for help because you just get in more trouble. I seen some of the other students get in trouble for that. I don't know, all they do is talk on the phone. I can hear them laughing and stuff while they're talking on the phone. It just irritates me. Man, it just really irritates me. Here I am and I can't get no help 'cause all they want to do is talk on the phone and stuff. Read the newspaper.

One time the teacher turned on the T.V. in the room and was watching the news. She started yelling at us for turning around and watching. What are we supposed to do if we don't got no work?

Usually, they give you a whole bundle of papers when you first get there in the morning if your teachers sent you work. And, there's no order to it. You just do whatever work you want. You don't do math first and English or

whatever. You just do it whenever. Once you get done with one thing just move on to the next one. If you don't have work, you just sit there or go to sleep. You're not supposed to sleep, but they don't pay attention.

All day long, man. You just sit in there all day. I don't want to get too far behind so I try to make sure I got work. I go see my teachers during seventh hour to get some help and some work. But, if my teachers ain't in seventh hour I don't get no work and I just sit in in-house all day. The in-house teachers can't help you anyways. They don't know the subjects or they on the phone. Seventh hour ain't that long [30 minutes] so you can't get much help. You always get behind, further behind when you're in in-house.

Man, I'm telling you this. The thing that gets me the most is the silence and the loneliness. It's silent and you're isolated, silent. Man, you're isolated from everyone else in the school even during lunch. You have to go to the bathroom with the teachers. They take you all at once. At least you see other students at lunch, but you can't talk to nobody. Then, you go back to the isolation in those little cubicles.

I mean really, it's just isolated. You're away from everybody. Jail, it's kinda like jail because of the isolation. Except in jail, you're isolated from people, but there's other people in the cell with you. You know what I'm sayin'? I ain't never been to jail though. Have you? [I said, "No."]. Some of my friends have and they told me it was like in-house.

When I asked Rude Bwoi to describe the counseling services he received while he was in ISS, he laughed for a moment and then said:

> Man, I didn't get counseling. Are you being for real? I didn't talk to nobody. Not any counselors or principals. I just did my time and knew to get out. I knew to go back to my regular classes the next day, you know. You just do your time and that's it.
>
> After I got out, I knew I had to watch everything I do, because somebody is watching me. I mean you can get written up for every little thing you do. I feel like everything is against me and not for my way, even if you didn't do anything wrong. It's hard to learn like that when you feel like you might get in trouble for every little thing. I don't even like to talk in school except with my friends.
>
> Look, I just want to show my mom that I can do it. That's really about the only reason I stay in school. I mean there's been many times when I thought about stopping, but I talk to my mom and she wants me to continue to learn and succeed in life and I don't want to let her down so I just keep on going. But, I mean a situation like in-house when you get put in there for the stupidest thing is ridiculous because it takes learning away from you.
>
> I just feel it's wrong to punish students for the littlest things like not signing your name on a paper or going to the bathroom. It just gets stupider. My mom wants me to go to college. But like I said, I really don't want to. I don't even know what I want to do. I used to like to get up and come to school. But to be

honest with you, I don't like to come to school anymore since I got put in in-house for going to the bathroom. I don't like people always telling me what to do and how to do it and when to do it. That's the way it always is in in-house you know.

I'm just ready to get on with the next phase of my life after high school. It's my mom that keeps me coming to school and I like 'conversating' with my friends. But, that's about it. Man, I think some kind of counseling could help me now. If I could talk it out you know. Right now though, I don't think nobody wants to listen to me. They done made up their minds that I'm a bad student, a bad person or whatever.

Sound System

Here is how Sound System recounted his ISS experience:

You're in there from first hour through seventh hour (eight AM until 3:15PM). It's nothing but busy work. And, it's like you have to do everything like you were in prison almost. Like you have to follow what the prison guard says, "Get to work, lights out, time to eat." That's basically what it is. You do what they tell you. I mean the longest I've ever been in there was five consecutive days and all you do is busy work. And, if you finish with your work, they find more for you to do even if it's just copying words from a book. So you learn to work the right amount so you don't get more work.

You're not allowed to talk at all. At all! I hate not being able to talk. And besides, you can't see each other. So, I don't know if anybody else is even in the room except me and the teacher until we eat lunch and then I can see who else is in in-house. If I have a question or need help, the teacher might help me. It depends on if they are on the phone or reading the paper. Most of the time they're doing something. Filling out something, grading papers, talking on the phone to someone, reading the paper. Sometimes they look up and then I can ask for help.

Most of the time I just want to ask for help whenever they don't pay attention, but that would be talking and it gets you more time in in-house if they are pissed. Right away they cut you off and tell you not to be talking. And, if you try to say that you just need some help or something they write you up for talking and send you to the principal. If that happens, you get put in downtown SAC [a district-wide ISS program administered by the central office] or kicked out of school for ten days.

What can I say? You're just all by yourself you know. You don't see anybody else unless you line up to go eat lunch or line up to go to the restroom. That's about it. You are alone. I mean isolated by yourself. You just sit in there all day and miss class and discussions. It's ridiculous. You miss all of your regular work. I mean you get to make it up when you go back to class, but I feel they should let us go to class. I know there's gotta be some punishment. Oh, excuse

me. "Negative consequences" as they like to say. But, in-house isn't really it. They should give us a pass to go to class and that's it.

In-house doesn't do anything except make you mad and have issues. I mean the isolation can drive you crazy. It's like sometimes I wanna just scream or something. There should be something better. Man, there's been times like when a teacher they feel my behavior in class wasn't the best and so I get sent down to the office and they put me in in-house thinking that everything will get better. Like it's gonna get better on its own.

They don't care that I'm not getting any help. They just think that I'm going to be outta their hair and they just go on teaching class and send us work and see if we learn from whatever they send us. It's like they don't care about me. They don't care about me when I need some help, like help with schoolwork and help with other stuff, stuff at home and teachers. In-house just sucks, man. What do you want me to say? [Sound System seemed to be frustrated and on the verge of an angry outburst. I just sat and let him proceed at his own pace].

All right. As far as like the teachers in in-house, all of the rules apply to you the same when you're in there. It doesn't matter what you're in there for. Everyone gets the same treatment. I mean it's really not a place to be sending kids. For everything you do wrong, you get sent to in-house and isolated from the school. I mean think about it. I'm here to learn and see my friends. I'm a little late for class or something and I get sent to in-house where I don't get to learn and I

don't get to see my friends. It can make you crazy. I know that my friends are all around the school and I don't get to see them at all.

They put you in your isolation cubicle just like everyone else. If they run out of room, then you get put in the center of the room but you still can't see anybody because you have to face the front and you have to be totally quiet. Everyone is put in the same room and treated the same no matter what. No matter what!

In-house bothers me a lot. I hate the place. It makes me not want to come to school. I mean I get up in the morning all excited about doing lab or something and then I think my first hour teacher might get pissed at me for something and I get to spend the next three days in in-house. That's not something to look forward to. Do you think it's cool to be so worried about what might happen in school like that? I'm serious! It reminds me of elementary school when we had bullies and I used to get into fights. Now the teachers and the principals are the bullies or like that anyways. Not all teachers, just some. But, definitely the principals, they like to pick on students just like bullies.

I mean some people just have a hard time with school: getting here on time; getting to class on time; dealing with people; issues. There are problems, you know. If you're just a couple of seconds late then you still get in-house just like you were an hour late. There's parking lot problems. Some people can get here to school earlier. I just don't think I should get put in in-house every time

you know for being a little late. Being in there didn't really teach me a lesson or anything. I didn't learn anything. I was just punished for nothing really. Like I said before, though, if I feel like a teacher is gonna get pissed at me for something I did or didn't do like my homework or something, then I worry about being sent to in-house and sometimes I just skip. I would rather skip school and not be isolated. Rejected like I'm some reject or something.

I didn't like the place at all. It made me, it brought me down, really to tell you the truth. Man, I got kind of depressed. I wanted to talk to somebody. I wanted to talk to anybody and say something to somebody. But, I couldn't you know. It's like somebody had a gag over my mouth and blinders on my eyes.

Have you ever been alone?

I answered, "Yes, I was once a student in a foreign country and didn't know anybody and felt alone."

But, you had people you could talk to right? And, you could see them.

I said, "Yes."

Then, you weren't alone. Man, in in-house you are by yourself. I mean completely by yourself. It's brutal, man. And, the only person that you see doesn't really want to see you or else they wouldn't spend all their time on the phone or just ignoring you. Like you don't even exist. Hey! I'm here. Right here. I'm a fucking person too. You know, sometimes I think they might just be frustrated teachers. They teach their own subject and can't teach all the subjects we have.

They can't help you if the work is not their subject. They can only help with the work in their subject. So, it's probably frustrating for them to be in there. But as far as when I was in there, I didn't get any help when I needed it. I just got work handed to me so I quit asking for help. I was expected to just get it done and turn it in. Like I told you before, whenever I would ask for help I would always get more work to do.

I really think this was a way to get me to stop asking for help. And, it worked. I stopped asking. It could've been so easy. If I didn't understand my work, the in-house teacher could call my teacher and ask about it, but they didn't want to bother the teacher on the phone because they might be teaching or giving a test or something. So, they told me to do what I could and go for help after school. Sometimes I would and sometimes I wouldn't. It would depend on how I felt. Some days I just wanted to get away from school and be with my friends, you know.

When I asked Sound System to tell me about any type of counseling he received to help him deal with his feelings while in ISS, he answered:

Nobody cares about how I feel. Well, nobody except my girlfriend. And, my friends, I guess. Nobody. The teachers and principals, they don't care about me. I guess they figured in essence their problem was gone, you know. I was gone for the time being and it probably won't happen again because I learned my lesson in in-house. I guess they figured wrong huh? I mean like I heard a teacher the other

day yelling at a kid for sleeping in her class. She was like, 'I don't have to put up with this in my class. I can just send you to in-house.' It's like she didn't care. She just wanted to get rid of the kid. It's like in-house is a place she can send her problems. You shouldn't just send kids to in-house for sleeping in class.

I mean like me, I work two different jobs to pay for my place. And, sometimes I'm just tired you know. You shouldn't just be able to send your problems away. Shouldn't you deal with them? I just think teachers should deal with problems like sleeping in-class especially if they are boring you to death. I mean you can't just always send your problems away. Hey, does this count as counseling?

I answered, "Maybe as an unofficial session."

It's like you're done with in-house. Now get out. I don't ever want to go back to in-house. So, I do whatever they tell me. Man, the last time was almost too much for me and I don't want to quit school now. I'm too close to finishing. I don't have any problems with the teachers, but I think some of them have problems with me. It's like they're looking for a reason to send me out again. It's like whenever somebody is talking in class or something, they ask me to get quiet. I just feel like they think I'm a bad kid or something and they don't really know me. I'm not that bad you know. I just wished they knew me, you know.

But, they really don't want to know kids. They just want to teach kids a lesson, a hard lesson, I guess. Even though they're not gonna expel them, it's like

they feel that by putting the kid in in-house is gonna straighten them up a little. That's what they think.

They think that putting us in in-house will make us act right. It's gonna make us behave right you know. It's just for the punishment. They just think that if they punish us enough we'll act right. I mean we shouldn't just get punished and that's it. You're done. I think I should've had some sort of conference or something. You know talk about things that were bothering me. We could've found some other solution instead of in-house.

I shouldn't have been punished like that for the little things I did. They could have made me stay after school or something. But, they shouldn't have taken school away from me. I know one thing. I'm not doing two things in school anymore. I'm sure as hell not going to fight anymore. But, that wasn't in-house. I got kicked out of school for ten days. And, I'm not going to piss any teachers off or anything because I don't want to go back to in-house. It would be nice if I could talk to somebody sometimes about problems so I don't get in any more trouble.

Man, I just don't want to be put back in in-house ever. Fuck. I can't stand being isolated. Man, I hate feeling like I'm alone. I never thought about it before. But, when I was in in-house I really hated being by myself. I like school and being with my friends. And, I like to learn about things. But, how can anyone learn in isolation? You don't learn a thing in isolation.

I'm just worried about fighting. I was picked on a lot when I was a kid. I used to get beat up all the time when I was in junior high and elementary school and by my dad. I got a lot bigger after junior high and I wasn't afraid to fight anymore. I just don't want to get kicked out of school. The kids don't pick on me now, but the teachers do. And, I probably get mad about school stuff like work and assignments more now.

I asked Sound System what he meant by the teachers picking on him and he explained:

I got in trouble a lot in elementary school and junior high for fighting. Actually, I wasn't fighting as much as I was getting beat up. But, I was in a lot of fights. So, I think that the teachers just talk to each other from elementary school to junior high to high school and they just figure I'll be trouble here [in high school].

I'm pretty sure they don't like me. I mean I've never really done anything to them to make anybody talk about me. I wished they liked me and I could talk to them. If they talk about me, it doesn't have any effect on me though if they do talk about me. It just makes them think I'm a problem they don't want.

General

When I asked General to tell me about his ISS experience, I assumed that he knew I meant his high school ISS experience. Instead, he included his junior high school experience as well.

I was in the seventh grade in junior high. I heard some students talkin' about it [ISS]. You just sit out here in this cold building; just sit there away from everybody. I had to check in at 7:45. I couldn't understand why it had to be that way. I never really understood the seclusion: being away from everybody; no noise; no talkin'. I guess it could help somebody if they was tryin' to concentrate and learn or study or something. But from the standpoint of the fact that I was in school and in suspension, the words just don't seem to fit. They just went against each other. I mean like you be in school to get schooled [to learn]. You know what I'm sayin'? But, you suspended from that while you in school. You know what I'm sayin'? It just don't make no kinda sense to me. I'm here to learn you know, not to be secluded. How you gonna learn unless somebody teaches you? In seclusion, how can you learn?

At this point, I quickly stated, "But, you said ISS could help somebody if they were trying to learn." General replied:

What I meant was if you tryin' to study and concentrate it [ISS] could help you. Because it ain't nobody in there to distract you. But, think about this. Don't you think the students need a teacher to help you learn? And, the person in in-house can't help you because they don't know the all the subjects you tryin' to learn. General talks about his high school ISS experience.

The thing about it is I got the right to speak my mind when I know it's right. I know my opinion matters. Even though I got the chance to explain, to tell my side

of the story, all the explaining that you do ain't gonna change nothin'. Once the teacher writes on that piece of paper [the discipline referral form] and what the principal perceives from that paper, you can't change that regardless. When he came into his office and he first read that paper, that was his picture right there. So regardless of what actually happened, regardless of how many people come in there and talk about it and support your side of the story, your case can't really be played.

See, this is what I'm talkin' about. At another school earlier this year, I was placed in ISS as you call it. It was in-house, but they called it 'Refocus.' It was all the same. The structure there was basically the same as any place else I been to: strict rules; no talking; isolation; can't see nobody. The only difference was during seventh hour [after the regular school day] you had to go and get help from your teachers and get the next days' work for in-house, if you was in there. And, no matter what I did for this certain teacher, she wasn't signing my paper for me to get out of Refocus.

And, so when I went and spoke to a principal about it, it was the fact that you can't get your paper signed so you can't get out. I was like, you mean I could be in here the rest of the year? He didn't say nuthin'. He just stared at me like I was nuthin', like I didn't matter. It infuriated me to the point were I wanted to rebel, but I didn't because I knew the alternatives was worse. So, I stayed in in-house because it gave me a chance to think about what the school was trying to

tell me. The school was pushing me away and I got to think about other alternatives. It was like we don't want you to go to school here. We want you to think about other things, because they were constantly bringing up my age. When she wouldn't sign my paperwork, they kept saying, 'Well, you're eighteen and you should think about other things that you can do.' I came to a point where I realized they just don't want me to go to school here. I think they was usin' ISS as a tool to get me to leave school. And, they got me to leave school all right. I just couldn't understand.

I tried hard to do the things that my momma instilled in me. And, it seems when I try and try and put forth the best effort that I can and when I do what's right, in everybody else's eyes it's wrong. Or, you ain't working hard enough and they reprimand you. You get put in in-house for reasons that can't be fair. And, the more and more times they sent me, the more and more it just made me feel, it made me feel like you just can't achieve anything. It was like they were telling me, 'You will never succeed.' But, I always believe in myself. I always believe that I can succeed. Always.

I got out and I guess a lot of people was thinking, 'We're gonna keep an eye on him.' And everywhere I went, teachers and principals were pickin' and choosin' little things. You know, what I'm sayin'? Telling me about my pants saggin'. Askin' me why I'm wearin' this or that color shirt. Like I was a gangsta or something. The little things that wasn't noticed before got noticed. And, I

really didn't appreciate that. It was like I was some kind of target for them to shoot at every day. But, I wasn't giving them a reason to put me back in in-house. You just don't have no idea what it's like. No idea.

When I suggested that he tell me. General looked me directly in the eyes and spoke in a very calm, soft voice with a serious tone.

It's like being in solitude [I almost laughed because he was so serious and I think he meant solitary]. It's nerve racking. You know to yourself that you gonna get out sometime. But, you know the consequences of getting out. It's like you can't just get up and say, "I'm gonna go." That just makes the punishment even worse 'cause I did that one time.

I don't know how many people have ever been locked up. Have you? Have you ever had to sit in one place in total silence for six hours at a time and not open your mouth? Wantin' to go get some water or go to the bathroom, but you know they won't let you go so don't even ask. [As he is saying this I immediately thought about the physical and emotional abuse that my father would impart on me as a child, but I did not share this with him because I didn't want him to think that I could empathize or that I shared his pain. I wanted him to speak from his perspective.] Wantin' to say something to somebody, to scream something man. But, you know if you make a sound you get more days of in-house. Man, do you have any idea what that's like?

I answer with a hint of embarrassment, "No."

It's a lot of people that say, 'Well, it's for the good.' And, there's some people that would say, 'Well, if I was in your shoes I'd do it. I'd just walk out.' You can't wear my shoes not even for a day. It's not possible. Like you, you want to know what it's like to be in in-house. Man, you can look in, but you can't be in unless you've been in that situation. You have three days: you have five days; you have ten days; total silence. Man, you don't have nobody telling you nuthin'. It would be different if somebody was yelling at you or telling you what to do all the time. But, it ain't like that. It's cruel. You just sit there in your desk and work in total silence. There's nuthin,' nobody. After a while, the desks hurt. They use them old desks too. They're all jammed up against the wall with no place to stretch your legs. If you try to move the desk away from the wall, they get up in your face and start yelling at you. Toward the end you get all excited to be with other students again. You can hear them out in the hall, but you know you can't be with them. As the general population would put it, 'You bout to get out!' Then, you realize you got so many more days in here.

Man, I'll tell you something. After the first time, you get put in longer. It goes from three days to five days: six days to ten days; up to 30 days. Do you have any idea what this tells us? [I did not know if he is asking rhetorically or if he wanted me to answer so I said nothing and waited for him] It tells us there's no alternatives, You [he means the school] have no alternatives. If you put forth the effort to a child, they will always give you something good in return. And, if

you're not gonna do anything but keep on punishing a child the same way, then why waste your time on them. Just send them on their way if you're not gonna help them. Why you gonna tell us you can't do nuthin' with us? Tell us you have no other alternatives. Tell us how you really feel. Tell us you think we're worthless.

In in-house, the more you go, the more you get used to it. But, I'll tell you this. Every time you go back, you can't believe they're sendin' you back to in-house. So, instead of sendin' me to in-house I wish they would just send me home. Man, just send me home. I won't lie to you. I used to get up and think about what I was gonna do with my friends at school. Then, I would remember that I was spending the next three days or five days in in-house. It changes your views of school. I mean keeping a person in seclusion like that bottles up your emotions. It doesn't help anything. I mean like you get out with all these feelins' you kept in and go off on some teacher and do something you not supposed to do, then everybody points the finger at you. And, you get put right back in in-house.

But really, the problem is created in in-house because of the seclusion. Everybody knows that it's not good to keep all of your feelings, your emotions inside. Don't get me wrong. You can't just go off and act on your emotions and hurt people. But, when you forced to keep everything inside for a long time and you let it out, don't blame the person exclusively. In-house had a lot to do with it.

You know what I'm sayin'? Oh, and one more thing, I watch my back. You know what I'm sayin'? I make sure about what teachers and principals are around.

When I asked General to tell me about the help he received while he was placed in ISS at Eagleton High, he replied:

You mean with schoolwork or problems? What?

I said, "Both."

If I had a question, the teacher would help as best they could. I believe that. But, if they didn't know and there wasn't nuthin' I could do, they would tell me to turn it in, leave it as it was, and it was just a answer that you missed. Go on with it. We didn't have one teacher who knew everything. We had a lot of teachers who didn't know too much about anything. I mean if you had a question about math or science, how can a music teacher or a art teacher help you? As far as counseling, you being serious? Is that supposed to be a serious issue?

I responded, "Hey man. You touched on some sensitive material when you talked about the seclusion and your penned-up emotions. Of course, I'm being serious."

Nothing! Nothing! They just send you on your way. Your time is up. You a free man. You done been paroled. Oh, a principal might tell you that you was punished for what you did wrong and you know the consequences if it ever happens again. But, that's it as far as counseling. It's not to help you with anything that you went through. It's just to tell you, 'Now you know not to go back to in-house.' It's just, 'We was right and you was wrong. Deal with it. Now,

go on.' Man, I really believe there's a purpose for the school and a purpose for the student. The school needs a place to punish the student and the student needs a place to be isolated from other students. It's not a place to help the student. It's to tell the student that you're in here [ISS] to learn not to cut up. And, go on about your business.

Don't get me wrong. I do admit it's some stuff that goes on in class. But, it's not so bad that you need to be secluded for several days. I mean we're young and gonna cut up some, laughing and carryin' on about stuff. I don't think it's to disrespect the teacher or their classroom. But, some teachers want to get personal with their comments to students about cuttin' up, talkin' about being stupid. I mean you get personal with me and I get backed into a corner, I'm gonna come right back at you with a comment that you might not like, being the kind of person I am. Teachers shouldn't call students stupid. I mean in your eyes what I do might not be the smartest thing but it don't make me stupid.

It's like the teacher is always right in the eyes of the principal. And, even when I tell my side of the story, it's like, 'Okay, but you still going to in-house.' Hey! When a teacher tells you in front of a class how they feel about you as a person in a negative way, then don't just punish me when I lash out and tell the teacher how I feel about them in the same way. I mean if I had cursed a teacher out or made some kinda threats, then I could understand being put in in-house.

But to express my opinion after someone disrespects me, man, the teacher isn't always right.

I know I'm there to learn and it is the teachers' class, but tell the truth. Say that you said something of a personal nature to me before I said something back. Tell the whole story. I think in-house just tells the student that they've [the school] given up on you. There's nothin' else we can do to help you. But, the school doesn't help you by putting you in in-house. If you in trouble, it's for a reason. I think the school could help the students by teaching us to deal with the stuff that gets us in trouble. Ain't school about learning? It shouldn't be about just punishing us for messin' up. At school, we can learn to talk it out.

In-house ain't nothing but jail at school. I know because I been to jail and prison. Both of them: got caught; got caught up in da hype and got myself caught. See man, I know you tryin' to figure out if jail is like in-house. They pretty much the same in principle: seclusion; isolation; except, you get to talk to people in jail cells. I mean the bars tell you, 'You ain't going nowhere.' I got used to that. But, in-house is cruel. I mean jail is serious. But man, in-house, you ain't goin' nowhere 'til that bell rings. They might as well put up bars. In jail, you stay with other people unless you in solitary. But in in-house, you totally secluded and can't talk to nobody all day. You can't see no one to talk to. It's like time slows down and the day goes on forever slowly. It's just cruelty, man. See, in prison you ain't goin' nowhere til' they let you out: three months; six months; two years;

whatever. You can't see society. But in in-house, you right there in the school. I mean it's right outside the door.

I ain't lyin' to you. When I was a little kid I would see stuff that I wanted but I knew I couldn't have it. No money, you know what I'm sayin'? When that bell rings for everybody else to go to the next class and they in the halls talkin' and you know you ain't goin' nowhere until the end of the day. Out in the hallway is something I can't have. Man, it's evil, plain evil. Man, this what's up with counseling like you wanna know. It wouldn't make no difference to me, not now. Maybe when I was in junior high in seventh grade. Back then, I would've listened to somebody who was tryin' to help me. But now, you know, I make my own way. I'm too skeptical. I know the school wants me out. They don't want to help me. To them, I'm just a problem they want to go away. Counseling can't help me now.

The Duality of Self-Stories

Self-stories serve two purposes in an interpretive study. They are recorded firsthand accounts of a lived experience that enable the interpretive researcher to locate embedded elements by way of contextualization. Secondly, the self-stories reveal the problematic lives of common people. In this case, the common people were ordinary high school students.

Denzin (1989) wrote that the subject matter of interpretive research is biographical experience. (p. 37). He suggested that the biographical experiences be recounted as self-stories. Pifer (2000) noted:

> There is great benefit in listening to the voices of disenfranchised students. Their perspectives shape their experiences, express their realities. For educational practitioners, it is important to consider what school means to our students, to listen to them explain and describe their experiences and thoughts on the process in which we and they are engaged. Only they can tell us about their experiences and perspectives. Only they can shed light upon the reality of schooling and education in their lives. (p. 21)

These students experienced school in ways that were unknown to me. And, I had been a public school teacher for 16 years. It also occurred to me that many of my colleagues were unaware of the purely punitive nature of this site-based ISS program. The participants experienced aspects of schooling that could not be understood by regular classroom teachers or administrators unless they themselves were assigned to monitor the ISS room.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Punitive ISS programs were the most commonly implemented of the four ISS programs identified by Sheets (1996). These curricular practices were put into place under the pretext of being ideal ISS. However, there is no research-based support for their use in common schools (Hyman & Snook, 2000; Mendez & Sander, 1981). This research project sought out the perceptions of nine students who were placed in a punitive ISS setting. Specifically, I wanted to know how these students experienced the punitive curricular program at Eagleton High School.

The preceding chapter contained participant profiles and self-stories, and the self-stories revealed elements that emerged from the dialogue provided by the participants. This chapter presents an examination of those emergent elements which reflect how the participants experienced punitive ISS. It also contains a policy suggestion regarding the use of punitive ISS as a curricular component, implications, thoughts on further research, and summative comments.

Construction and the Emergent Elements

Construction as a stage of interpretive interactionism consisted of listing the emergent elements in the order that they took place within the experience and connecting the elements into a coherent whole (Denzin, 1989). A list of the emergent elements as they occurred during the ISS experience and an explanation of each element is presented in this section.

The following list is a representation of the primary elements and a secondary element identified during bracketing and contextualization.

Primary Elements

1. The problematic event
2. The punishment event
3. The accommodation event

Secondary Element

1. Maltreatment

The Punitive ISS Experience

The participants of this study experienced the totality of punitive ISS as a sequence of three occurrences: a problematic event, a punitive event, and an accommodation event. In order to gain access to the ISS program at Eagleton High School, the participants had to be associated with a problematic event. The problematic event facilitated a punishment event. In this instance, the latter was limited to strict isolation which brought about feelings of maltreatment. Finally, there was an accommodation experience.

The Primary Elements

The Problematic Event

People with unique attributes occupy common schools. In the everyday activities associated with schooling, these people who include students, teachers, and administrators interact with each other. So that these interactions were not merely

haphazard events and contributed to the process of formal learning, limitations regarding behavior were put into place. Therein lies a problem. The uniqueness of each individual caused differences in the interpretation of acceptable and unacceptable behavior to exist between students and the authority structure (administrators and teachers) in the school. These differences were displayed as problematic events.

These problematic events were diverse in nature and seriousness. For example, a problematic event might have been initiated by something as innocuous as a student failing to bring a pencil to class, being tardy, chewing gum, violating a dress code, or talking in class. The event might have been caused by something more severe and might entail student defiance of authority, physical altercations, or leaving school without permission. It must be noted that the student was not the problematic event. Instead, the student was a participant in the event that included teachers and administrators who regarded problematic events as disruptions to the instructional process.

Cris Bwoi's story for example, illustrated this point. The interactions that occurred between Cris Bwoi, the other students who accompanied him to the mall, the journalism sponsor, and the assistant principal comprised the problematic event because all were integral components in a series of situations that led to punishment. Students associated with problematic events were deemed to be the source of such events by authority figures such as principals and teachers. As means to diminish such occurrences as problematic events, students were punished.

The Punishment Event

After being judged to be someone who initiated the problematic event, helped to initiate the problematic event, or participated in the problematic event after it was started, the student was subjected to strictly enforced isolation. The punishment, being a consequence of the student playing some role associated with the problematic event, was meant to serve a dual purpose. First, the punishment was supposed to serve as a deterrent that prevented student participation in future problematic events. If a student knew that a negative consequence would result from his or her actions, then s/he would be inclined not to participate in a problematic event or so it was believed by the administrators at Eagleton. Second, the punishment was supposed to provide some avenue for self-correction. The student had time to reflect on the behavior that led him or her to be punished. This time of self-reflection developed a mindset that allowed students to make decisions that helped them avoid any involvement with problematic events in the future. Again, this was the belief of the administrators at Eagleton.

The isolation associated with the punishment event was two-fold in essence. First, there was the social isolation as a result of being sequestered from the general student population. Then, there was the internal isolation of being placed in cubicles that separated the students from one another within the ISS room. There was very little research on the effects of this type of "corrective" isolation (Roberts & Gebotys, 2001). Leven (2002), expressing concern about solitary confinement for prison inmates, wrote:

> Isolation ... reflects a twisted concept of justice. These punishments inflict humiliation and suffering. The forgotten goal of restoring misbehaving inmates must become a renewed priority. We need to constantly remember that many ... were victimized and suffered serious mistreatment as children. They come from dysfunctional homes and are the products of physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect, and a lack of love and support, making it difficult to develop self-esteem and empathy. We need to understand that when inmates act out, it is a way for them to assert power and self-identity. Rather than treating them in a way that encourages anger and feelings of powerlessness and dehumanization, we need a system that allows inmates to experience empowerment, but in constructive ways. We need to shift our punitive thinking and actions towards a different model of inmate justice, which promotes accountability but also fosters restoration. (p. 1)

Reread the previous quote and substitute the word "student" for the word "inmate." This form of "double isolation" as it was used in ISS at Eagleton High could possibly have had devastating effects on children. Research associated with the effects of corrective isolation on children is needed. In the case of punitive ISS, the punishment event was simply regimented isolation.

The Accommodation Event

The accommodation event is best summed up as any student adaptation that is a direct result of a punishment event. The authority structure at Eagleton intended that the accommodation event be student conformity to standards of acceptable behavior. If a student completed his or her stay in ISS without any identified incidents, then he or she was considered to have conformed to acceptable standards. Nothing was done to validate conformity. The students knew that they did not have to return to the ISS room after their designated length of stay was completed. They knew to return to their regular classrooms without any guidance. For these students, the accommodation event was merely time served.

The accommodation event could take on more drastic features. For example, some students were unable to accept the rigid conditions imposed by the isolation. These students created new problematic events by knowingly and openly violating an ISS rule. They left the ISS room without permission, engaged in a verbal altercation with the room monitor, or refused to attempt assignments sent by regular classroom teachers. These events led to out-of-school suspension; this was their accommodation event. This type of accommodation event was very complex in nature and needs to be researched. The intent of the student in these accommodation events is intriguing. It is possible that the intent was to ultimately be removed from the school environment for reasons known only to the student.

The accommodation event is always of a positive nature in ideal ISS settings. Again, ideal/individual ISS programs include a counseling component that is omitted from punitive ISS programs. This counseling component may promote a positive accommodation event such as improved self-esteem and personal growth.

Basically, any act of conformity or nonconformity displayed by the student after assignment to punitive ISS can be considered an accommodation event. However, the accommodation event as it occurred during the ISS experience at Eagleton High School was rarely positive and had the tendency to facilitate subsequent problematic events. Of the nine participants in this project, none indicated that the ISS program at Eagleton was in itself a deterrent to involvement in further problematic events.

The Secondary Element

Maltreatment

Maltreatment is a direct result of isolation and manifests itself as neglect. Neglect was defined as a form of maltreatment characterized by a chronic lack of care in the areas of health, supervision, education, or meeting of emotional needs (Éthier, Palacio-Quintin, & Jourdan-Ionescu, 1992). Students who were placed in the ISS program at Eagleton were neglected. Their most basic functional needs were not met.

Simple biological needs such as the elimination of body wastes by the students assigned to ISS were considered to be major inconveniences by the administration. Actually, this specific need was considered to be a privilege and granted twice a day if the ISS room monitors remembered to take the assigned students to the restroom. On

numerous occasions, the students told me that they had not been taken to the bathroom facilities for more than four hours. The first few times that this happened, I called the room monitor who had the restroom responsibility. I wanted to verify what the students told me. I was informed that the students were not taken because of time constraints, forgetfulness, or the students simply did not deserve to go because their behavior in the cafeteria during lunch was unacceptable. Also, the cubicles and desks were physically restraining. Sitting in the same position for two to three hours at a time in four feet by four feet cubicles was unnatural and unhealthy for the children and it went against everything they were physiologically programmed to do (Keller, 2001). Basic health needs were overlooked.

When performed correctly, the task of supervising the students in the ISS room was labor intensive. One had to continually move from cubicle to cubicle in order to provide academic assistance, keep students on task, and make sure that rules were not being violated. I observed room monitors who were spending most of the time reading a newspaper, talking on the telephone, or stationed at the computer in the room. While the room monitor was self-occupied in these instances, students were sleeping, sitting in silence, or attempting to get the attention of the room monitor. Students in the ISS room were not supervised. Instead, they were merely under surveillance.

The students in the ISS room received very little assistance with academic work. No matter how hard I tried, there were many subjects that I could not teach or provide

assistance to the students. I may have been able to do the assignments myself, but teaching them was another matter. This aspect of punitive ISS was addressed earlier.

To make matters even worse, revenue shortages at the state level forced the local school district to make severe budget cuts that terminated bus routes after the seventh hour of the school day on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. The students in the ISS program were unable to receive seventh hour help from their regular classroom teachers because seventh hour was also eliminated on the days without "after school" buses. If a student was assigned to "in-house" on a Thursday, then s/he could not receive academic assistance during seventh hour until the following Monday. Eagleton also replaced Saturday morning detention (Saturday School) with Monday after school detention (MAD). If a student was assigned to both ISS on a Thursday and MAD on a Monday afternoon, then it meant that a full week passed before seventh hour assistance was available for that student. Assignment to ISS on a Thursday was an academic "death sentence" that surely caused emotional distress for students. They knew that they were going to fall behind academically. Instead of providing a means for academic stability or growth, the punitive ISS program at Eagleton promoted academic decline.

No consideration was given to the emotional needs of the students assigned to the Eagleton ISS program. The isolation that was an integral part of the ISS experience severed all ties with the human element necessary for the type of social interactions that allow people to express their emotional needs. Of course, the emotional needs may have served as a source of misbehavior in the first place. For example, it is possible that when

a child's emotional needs are not met, he or she will become frustrated. The frustration may be displayed in what is perceived by teachers and administrators as misbehavior. The misbehavior leads to the problematic event that leads to the punishment event that leads to an accommodation event. In a sense, the emotional needs of a student may trigger a vicious cycle of punishment. The complete omission of any rehabilitative counseling in this program did nothing to placate the emotional needs of the student. The absence of counseling quite possibly facilitated the occurrence of misbehaviors that led to subsequent problematic events.

Maltreatment also occurred in the form of humiliating experiences that were extremely demeaning to one's human dignity. For example, the students in punitive ISS at Eagleton High were made to line up against a wall in the cafeteria before they returned to the "in-house" room. This was done so that the room monitor could account for every student in ISS. All of the regular students and teachers who entered the cafeteria for lunch saw the in-school suspended students lined up as if they were on public display. It was completely unnecessary and served no other purpose but to humiliate and demean. The monitor merely needed to check attendance when the students returned to the ISS room and report absentees to the appropriate administrator or attendance secretary.

There is never a reason to demean, humiliate, or mistreat children. This destroys whatever vision or hope they have of a better tomorrow. Disrespect, humiliation, and maltreatment lead to hopelessness. If a child's vision of the future is a predictor for success and hopelessness destroys that vision, then it should come as no surprise

whenever children engage in maladaptive behaviors. What vision do they have? What vision have we helped them create? The possible relationship between punitive ISS and the manifestations due to maltreatment needs to be examined by researchers.

A Suggestion

Instead of putting into place the rehabilitative program that was described as the Student Adjustment Classroom, a purely punitive ISS program referred to as "in-house" was implemented at Eagleton High School. "In-house" went against the mission statement, beliefs, and the goals for Eagleton High. It is suggested that the administration and faculty either modify the mission statement, beliefs, and goals so that these beliefs and goals are better aligned with the existing punitive ISS program or change the program so that it fits the description of the original rehabilitative model and becomes better aligned with the existing mission statement and school goals.

Implications

Issues such as continuity of educational experience were often cited as an advantage of ISS. For students who were in ISS, course assignments received from regular classroom teachers were a means of preventing them from falling behind classmates. However, research indicated that suspended students were typically deficient in academic skills and "lagged behind" classmates with respect to assignments (Costenbader & Markson, 1994). Therefore, assignments without classroom instruction may have been both difficult and frustrating and may have presented one more situation in which suspended students were unsuccessful. It should mentioned that several of the

participants in this study indicated that they were rarely able to keep up with academic work while in ISS because of a failure to receive classroom assignments and/or help. As a monitor in the ISS room at Eagleton, I noticed that in-school suspended students had a great deal of trouble obtaining assignments from regular classroom teachers.

Furthermore, those who advocated the use of suspension supported their position with the following rationale according to Costenbader and Markson (1994): "Students who are interested in learning should not have to suffer from the constant disruptions of the very few" (p. 106). Without question, suspension effectively and efficiently eliminated the disruptive few. However, given the high risk of dropout in this population of "fews," interventions that address the needs of not only classmates, but also of suspended students, are imperative. There exists a body of research regarding discipline practices such as ISS. Again, the topic of ISS is treated generically without consideration being given to specific models. No studies were found that addressed the effects that specific ISS models have on children. Therefore, research that addresses specific ISS models was and continues to be needed. More research that addresses punitive ISS is urgently needed as it was identified as the most commonly used ISS model (Sheets, 1996). The effects these punitive programs may have on children can have implications for this curricular practice as it occurs in public schools. Findings and implications from this and other studies could influence decisions to modify or even eliminate punitive curricular programs in public schools.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Limitations and emergent elements of this study provided the basis for future research suggestions. Similar interpretive studies could be conducted in other high schools. Also, the number of participants could be increased. In doing this, concerns regarding generalizability may begin to be alleviated. Each of the emergent elements open research avenues that are seemingly endless. I encourage research investigations that examine the roles of the student, the teacher, and the administrator in problematic events. The specific effects of corrective isolation on children assigned to punitive curricular programs need to be researched. The complexities of student behavior during the accommodation event should be explored.

Because there are limitations associated with the methodological framework of interpretive interaction, researchers are encouraged to try other means of examining and presenting interpretation. Denzin (1989) suggested that researchers consider representational forms such as film, novels, drama and plays, and photography as possibilities. Each of these formats can be used to examine how students experience punitive ISS.

Conclusion

This study examined how students experienced a punitive curricular program in a public high school. In fact, the research question was, "How do students who are served by punitive ISS experience these curricular programs?" The answer to this question was rather mundane and simple. The participants in this study experienced punitive ISS alone

and in complete isolation. There are many possible side effects that may be attributed to the isolation and need to be examined with further research studies. The elements that emerged from this study contained aspects that contradict some of the literature on the topic of ISS. One such contradiction was continuity of academic learning. No such continuity occurred in the program at Eagleton High.

Punitive ISS programs have the potential to harm students academically and socially to the extent that damage is irreparable. There must be conclusive evidence that allows policymakers in public education to retain, modify, or eliminate punitive curricular programs.

Pifer (2000) in examining the meaning of school for "problem" students writes:

> Studies of this sort contribute to the existing literature by deepening and expanding the conversation and our understandings of what goes on at school and how students and others' lives are shaped by their experiences. Perhaps, this study and others like it will reveal ways in which not only policies can be changed or constructed but also ways in which individuals involved in the process of education interact with and influence the lives of their students. (p. 22)

I hope that this project has enriched the literature. I hope it initiates dialogue that leads policymakers to act. And, I hope that it prompts public school educators to seriously examine the influence that their interactions can have on children. All interpretations are unfinished and inconclusive (Denzin, 1989). More research is needed.

APPENDIX

A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Voices Unheard: An Interpretive Study of In-school Suspension

John R Stiefer

The University of Oklahoma

Participant Interview Guide

1. We have already discussed this project. Do you have any questions?
2. I just want to remind you that if anything illegal, unlawful, or that poses a harmful threat to you or anyone else is revealed, then I have an obligation to terminate the interview and immediately notify the appropriate authorities and your parents/guardians.
3. Do you still want to continue with the interviews or do you have questions?

   [If the participant does not wish to continue, thank him or her and inform them that should they decide to change their minds, the opportunity is available. If the participant wants to continue, then proceed with the questions.]
4. Tell about yourself. Your family.
5. What caused you to be placed in ISS?

   Follow up: How did you feel about this?
6. Based on your experiences, tell me all that you can about ISS? Tell me about a typical day in ISS.

   Follow up: Did you receive help (academic or counseling) while you were in ISS?
7. How did ISS affect you?
8. Is there anything else that you want to tell me?

B. PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

The University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

In-school Suspension: An Interpretive Study of Routenization

John R. Stiefer, Principal Investigator
The University of Oklahoma

In-school suspension (ISS) is a curricular practice in which disruptive students are placed in an alternative site-based setting away from the regular school setting. In other words, problem students are isolated from the students who are not causing trouble. I am interested in the effects ISS has on students.

Research tells us that students who are placed in ISS programs are more likely to drop out of school. I want to examine the possible effects that ISS has on students from their perspective. The long-term of goal of my research is to determine the value of ISS. This study will provide invaluable insight about ISS from the perspective of students who are served by ISS and public school officials who employ ISS as a curricular practice.

Your son or daughter's participation in this research project is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw them from the study at any time with no consequences. This study poses absolutely no foreseeable risks to participants. As a participant, your son or daughter will be asked interview questions during one or two thirty-minute session(s). In order to ensure accuracy, the interview session will be audio taped. However, audiotaping will be stopped or not used at all at either your request or the participant's request.

All information associated with this project will be kept in a locked file cabinet by the principal investigator. Federal, state, local, and institutional laws pertaining to confidentiality will not be violated. All participants will be given code names to ensure confidentiality. Only the principal investigator will know the identity of the participants.

If you want to discuss this research study or have any questions, then please call the principal investigator, John R Stiefer, at: (580) 536-6514.

John R Stiefer
Doctoral Student
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Under no duress or coercion, I hereby agree to allow my son or daughter to participate in the above-described research. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my child at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

___ Yes, I agree to allow audiotaping during interviews.

___ No, I do not want audiotaping during interviews.

Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date

C. PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

The University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus
Participant Consent Form

In-school Suspension: An Interpretive Study of Routenization

John R. Stiefer, Principal Investigator
The University of Oklahoma

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Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Under no duress or coercion, I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

___ Yes, I agree to allow audiotaping during interviews.

___ No, I do not want audiotaping during interviews.

Signature of Participant	Date

D. PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM

The University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus
Assent Form for Participants

In-school Suspension: An Interpretive Study of Routenization

John R. Stiefer, Principal Investigator

I, the undersigned, understand the nature of this research project as it pertains to me. The research project has been thoroughly discussed with me by the principal investigator. My assent is conveyed as I agree that in-school suspension should be investigated from the perspective of those who have been served by in-school suspension programs.

Again, understanding my rights as a participant in this project and under no duress or coercion, I provide my assent for this study.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

E. THE EAGLETON HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT ADJUSTMENT CLASSROOM

It is the philosophy of Eagleton High School that students have the right to learn and teachers have the right to teach without interruption. The Student Adjustment Center has proven to be an effective alternative to out-of-school suspension. This form of discipline removes the student from the classroom, but keeps the student within the school during the period of suspension. This reduces the possibility of suspensions being a "student holiday," and it demonstrates to students and parents that the school will deal with misbehavior. Therefore, in order for this program to work the school must have parental support, since parents are the primary disciplinarians.

The objectives of the Student Adjustment Classroom are:

1. To provide a structured setting for students who disrupt the educational process, preventing students from learning and teachers from teaching. This alternative setting provides:

(a) a highly structured environment;

(b) a place for the student to continue to learn;

(c) opportunity for the student to earn the privilege of returning to regular school setting.

2. To help students learn to function in a structured school setting by providing opportunities for students to:

(a) improve their self-concept and self-control;

(b) correct their behavior, stressing that each individual is responsible for themselves and their actions.

(c) receive assistance in academic subjects where they are experiencing difficulty.

The Parents, teachers, and administrators have expressed the need for a behavioral and instructional program for students who disrupt class and impoverish the learning atmosphere. This alternative program is largely correctional in nature, but also provides its students with an opportunity to continue their education. Students sent to the Student Adjustment Classroom include those who:

1.Violate published district policies or regulations (Student Code).

2. Are guilty of conduct which substantially interferes with the maintenance of essential school discipline.

3. Are guilty of conduct which, in the judgment of school officials, warrants the reasonable belief that substantial disruption of school operations will likely result;

4. Are guilty of incorrigible conduct; including defiance of authority; disorderliness, immorality, persistent violation of school rules, and persistent misbehavior.

5. Have exhausted all reasonable alternatives to the student's regular classroom program, including a variety of discipline management techniques. Any student considered a current, future, or consistent danger to school personnel or other students will not be assigned to the Student Adjustment Classroom. The Student Adjustment Classroom in no way replaces discipline procedures currently being used.

The maximum number of students in Special situations will be a total of thirteen.

TRANSPORTATION

Due to the fact that the length of the school day for students assigned to SAC is from 8 a.m. until 3:05 g.m., students will need to provide their own transporation or ride the seventh hour bus. Bus passes will be issued by the seventh hour teacher.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Upon assignment to the Student Adjustment Classroom, the assigning principal will have a conference with the students parents.
2. Before attending the Student Adjustment Classroom, the student will meet with the designated principal.
3. The principal will discuss and have the student sign a behavioral contract.
4. The principal will inform student and parent(s) that the student must abide by the rules set for the Student Adjustment Classroom, (which will be reviewed) or suspension and/or expulsion proceedings will be initiated immediately.
5. The Student Adjustment Classroom teachers will write up a discipline referral up on any student that does not fulfill the behavioral contract. A student sent out for behavior will be emergency suspended pending a hearing to decide the student's future at Eagleton.
6. Students will be assigned to the Student Adjustment Classroom for a minimum of three school days and up to fifteen school days. Any exception to this rule will be determined by a team that is composed of all principals. Early releases from SAC must be approved by all SAC teachers. The SAC staff may offer an incentive plan that would enable certain students who exhibit above average behavior to return to the classroom a few days early.

This incentive plan is only offered to students assigned to SAC for the first time and will be limited to those students assigned to SAC for general behavior offenses. Students referred to SAC for the second time will be automatically assigned for a minimum of 10 or more days.

7. At the end and/or during the assignment period, students will be re-evaluated by the Students Adjustment Staff. A recommendation will be made for the reassignment, the retention in the Student Adjustment Classroom, or the return to the classroom.

8. Students who fail to function in the classroom following a SAC assignment may be subject to further disciplinary action.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Students will forfeit all student privileges for the period of time they are assigned to the Student Adjustment Classroom. Students are barred from all district school extra-curricular activities. They are not allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities or practices during the period of assignment. upon assignment, the classroom teacher is responsible for giving the Student Adjustment Classroom staff -DAILY" assignments for the students assigned and textbooks assigned to each individual student. Teachers need to make sure the work assigned requires a daily written response.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school day will be from 8:00 a.m. until 3:05 D.m. Students will report directly to the classroom upon arrival and remain in the classroom until the late bus arrives for the afternoon departure. The students will be provided an instructional day that

consists of a minimum of 360 minutes a day exclusive of lunch. SAC vacation will be the same as any other assigned vacation.

ABSENCES

When a student is to be absent, the parent/guardian must notify the Eagleton Hogh School Attendance Office by telephone by 10:00 a.m. for each day absent. Students will make up the day(s) missed for an excused absence.

Student will make up the day(s) missed for absence. In addition, the student will be days for each day missed (three days equal unexcused.) Two absences will be accepted. More than two absences must have a doctor's statement. Staff in SAC will fill out a discipline referral on the student and send to the assigning principal for disciplinary action.

TARDIES

Tardy is defined as not being in the proper place at the appointed time.

1. Students are to report to SAC and the teacher in charge will notify the Attendance Office.
2. One additional day will be added for two tardies. Student must report to the Attendance Office for a pass to Student Adjustment Classroom.
3. On the first tardy, no credit for that day. No extra days added. Second tardy no credit and one extra day of SAC will be added.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Students will remain on the attendance roll of their regularly assigned classes and reported absent by those teachers to the attendance office. Each student's attendance will be kept by the Student Adjustment Classroom Staff and reported to the Attendance Office hourly by phone. Upon completion of the student's assignment to SAC, the attendance clerk will be notified of the date the student should be in attendance in the regular classroom. (Remember SAC assigned days do not count against the student toward attendance.)

VO-TECH STUDENTS

Vo-Tech students assigned to Student Adjustment Classroom will spend three to five full school days at SAC before returning to the Vo-Tech campus. During that time, students will work three hours on home school assignments and three hours on Vo-Tech assignments. Beginning on the sixth day, Vo-Tech students will spend equal time at SACand at the Vo-Tech School until they have completed their adjustment period.

TRUANCY

Truancy is defined as absence without previous knowledge or consent of the parent/guardian or the school.

1. Parents/guardians of students who do not contact the school prior to an absence.
2. A student who is truant from the Student Adjustment Classroom will be readmitted only after a conference with the parents/guardians, student and/or principal.

3. The student must make up each truancy day and will be assigned three days for each truancy day.

4. After the second truancy, expulsion or suspension procedures may be initiated by the principal.

TRANSFERS AND WITHDRAWALS

While assigned to the Students Adjustment Classroom, students who transfer within the School District will be required to complete any assignment to the Student Adjustment Classroom. Students who withdraw from the Student Adjustment Classroom before their time is completed may re-enter the School District within the same year or the next school year only through the Student Adjustment Classroom.

SUSPENSION

Failure to follow Student Adjustment Classroom policies while in SAC will result in suspension of the student. One extra penalty day will be added for each day of suspension. students who are removed from the Student Adjustment Classroom will be required to re-enter Eagleton High School through the Student Adjustment Center program, making up the days missed during suspension from the Student Adjustment Classroom. A parent conference and re-evaluation of the student's assignment days will be required.

EXPULSION

The principal may initiate expulsion proceedings for the following reasons:

1. The student continues to be guilty of incorrigible conduct that impairs the program or the school to provide to other students.

2. No further reasonable efforts can be made to provide for the continuing education of the student,

3. Students who are expelled from the Student Adjustment Classroom will be required to re-enter the school system through the Student Adjustment Classroom program, making up the days missed during the expulsion.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments will be made by the teacher each day in each of the student's credit courses. Make sure the work assigned requires a written response. Students will be responsible for completing their regular daily assignments from the classroom teacher. As a student is assigned to the Student Adjustment Classroom, his/her teachers will receive assignment sheets:

1. Daily assignments will be requested. Return assignment requests promptly.

2. Each assignment should be given the equivalent of 50 minutes' work.

3. Assigned work may consist of make-up work, previous assignments missed, and/or homework.

4. Remedial work may be given to assist students in gaining concepts and skills to perform work required in the classroom and considered as work for grades while in attendance at the Student Adjustment Classroom.

5. Any worksheets and/or additional books needed will be sent with the assignment sheet.

6. When the student has completed an assignment sheet, the work will be returned to the classroom teachers bv the student before 8 A.M. each morning. Unsatisfactory work will be returned to the student to be redone.

7. If extra help is needed by the student, they will be able to receive a pass from the SAC staff 7th hour to be dismissed to the classroom for the seventh hour in order to get help from teacher. Seventh hour pass requests will be sent to the teachers during second hour. The classroom teacher will sign the pass to send the student back to SAC before 3 P.M. The student must always be dismissed from SAC at the end of the day.

8. Credit will be given for all acceptable work done at the Student Adjustment Classroom.

9. Grades for work done in the Student Adjustment Classroom will not replace previous grades, but will be averaged with grades earned in the classroom.

10. Grading will continue to be the responsibility of the regular classroom teacher to whom the student is assigned.

11. Teachers need to write on the assignment sheets the day the student should return to the classrom 7th hour to take the test.

CLASS SCHEDULE

TIME	
8:00 a.m. - 11:35 a.m.	English/Language Arts/Mathematics/ Social Studies/Counseling
10:00 a.m. - 10:05 a.m.	Five minute restroom break during

	the morning time block. (Be sure to use the restoom before entering the class at 8 A.M.
11:35 a.m. - 11:55 a.m.	Lunch with the SAC instructor in the cafeteria only.
11:55 a.m. - 3:10 p.m.	Science/Electives/Vocational Awareness/Behavior Skills
1:35 p.m. - 1:40 p.m.	Five minute restroom break during the afternoon time block.

Students will be dismissed at 3:05 p.m. to board the last hour buses. Passes will be issued by the 7th hour teacher to the students that ride a bus.

OPERATION PROCEDURES

1. Upon entering the room, there will be absolute silence. No conversation with other students will be allowed.

2. There will be no breaks taken with students from other classes.

3. Students will be accompanied by the SAC staff on restroom breaks.

4. The fourth hour staff will escort students to the cafeteria. During this time, students will not allowed to stop by the snack bar area, but will eat in the cafeteria. They will sit individually at a table and face the north. Absolutely no talking nor laying their head on the tables.

5. Students will not be allowed to loiter around outside or inside the school building during lunch.

6. Students will avoid bringing any items not related to school work. Such items, including, but not limited to cigarettes, lighters, matches, knives, any other weapons, radios, jewelry, etc. will be confiscated by school personnel and returned to the parent/guardian only.

7. Students will not be allowed to SAC early to go to work.

8. Students will do work assigned by the Student Adjustment Classroom staff if assignments are delayed from the classroom.

9. Student will make up the day(s} for any absences. In addition, they will make up three additional day for each unexcused absence.

10. On the first tardy, no credit for that day, no extra days will be added. Second tardy, no credit and one extra day added.

11. Students are not to be on any other school campus while assigned to the Student Adjustment Classroom. Students are not allowed to attend any school activity at home or away while assigned to SAC.

12. Student Adjustment Classroom students who transfer within the School District will be required to complete any assignment to the Student Adjustment Classroom before entering any classes.

13. Students who withdraw from the Student Adjustment Classroom to enter another school district may re-enter Eagleton High School with-in the same school year or the next school year only through the Student Adjustment Classroom.

14. Students will be responsible for the proper care of the SAC property and/or materials.

15. No tobacco of any kind, no food of any kind, and no chewing gum!

16. Students are subject to searches according to the Board of Education Policies and Administrative Procedures.

17. Counselors will obtain assignments.

CLASSROOM RULES

1. Students will be absolutely silent upon entering the room.

2. Bring your own pencil, paper, and books to class each and every day.

3. Students cannot leave their seat or the classroom after the bell. They must be dismissed by the staff.

4. Students will speak only when permission is granted. (Raise your hand.)

5. Students will remain in their seats unless instructed otherwise.

6. Students will work on classroom assignments until all daily work is completed.

7. Students will not distract others in any way.

8. Students will be awake at all times and not put their heads on the desk.

9. Students must follow all directions the first time they are given.

10. Students must report to SAC each day on time.

11. Students must work only on assignments made by school staff.

12. No writing on desk or walls. - Three extra days!!

13. Work area must be left clean at the end of each day.

14. All work assigned must be completed, and returned to the teacher before 8 A.M.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

The development of individual pride is an important phase of education. Individual dress and grooming play an important role in this development. Furthermore, it is important that all students dress and groom themselves in such a manner that they will be a credit to themselves as well as to their fellow students.

Garments that detract from the learning process are unacceptable and are not to be worn. The school has the right to ask students to change their apparel if it is of such a nature as to detract from the educational atmosphere within the school.

COUNSELING

The student assigned to student Adjustment Classroom will be required to attend the Student Assistance Program (SAP). After they have completed SAC they will be assigned to SAP for a period of time designated by the principal. The SAP sessions will assist in orienting students to the rules and regulations, and expectations of Eagleton High School. The counseling sessions will aid each student in developing a responsible behavior plan. (Minimum assignment of four consecutive times to discipline group.) One counseling session per week will be held with each student. In addition to developing a responsible behavior plan, the counseling sessions will assist students in decision making,

goal setting, and behavior modifying as well as in determining any additional referrals as needed.

EXIT REQUIREMENTS

Students earn the privilege of returning to their regular classes through periodic evaluation by the Student Adjustment Classroom staff. When their reassignment time is completed, students will have -

1. Assignment satisfactorily completed.
2. An acceptable behavioral plan completed.

The classroom teachers will be notified of the date the students will return to the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Unwillingness to adhere to any of the above regulations or other regulations covered in the Student Handbook will result in additional time in SAC, suspension, or expulsion. The administrative office will keep records on all students and will check all students out of SAC.

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