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GRADUATE COLLEGE

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE BARRIERS TO INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION IN A PROJECT FOR HOMELESS AND INDEPENDENT LIVING STUDENTS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion

of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Dalton L. Young III

Norman, Oklahoma

1998

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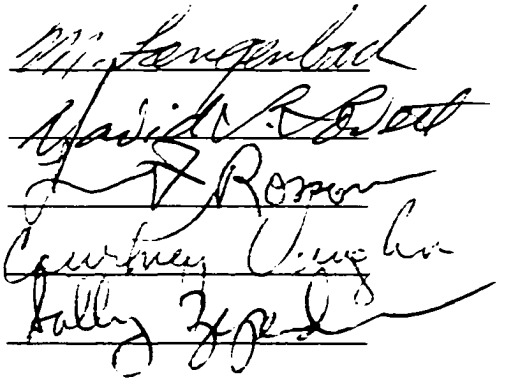
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE BARRIERS TO INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION IN A PROJECT FOR HOMELESS AND INDEPENDENT LIVING STUDENTS

DISSERTATION

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

By



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ABSTRACT

The present study reports the investigation of barriers in developing a program for independent living students at a public high school. Services for Independent Living Students, Inc. provides an access point to community services. The access point makes students aware of what services exist in Thatton, the fictional name of a Southwestern city in the United States. The program often "brings" the service to the student. Students that access the program typically have been emancipated by the court system, abused or neglected, or have escaped a toxic home environment.

The author interviewed individuals who worked with students who accessed the program under investigation. Previous studies cited funding, planning, training, and "turf" issues as barriers to collaborative projects. However, barriers to the "independent livers" program were more subtle. Participants emphasized manpower, priorities, public opinion, and one-on-one interaction as obstacles to collaboration.

In general, participants agreed that two factors influenced the beginnings of the "independent living" program, a mayor's task force and a project at a state university. Services for Independent Living Students,

Inc. makes use of existing services and agencies within the city, county, and state. In other words, new services are not created. Therefore, the program in Thatton required neither new funding nor new paid personnel.

Barriers noted by participants did not exactly match the barriers cited by previous authors. However, they did fit into the same categories. Specifically, the barriers to the independent living students program appeared as more targeted descriptions of barriers than previous authors have written about. For example, previous studies noted turf issues as a significant barrier. The study reported herein found that the lack of one-on-one interactions created difficulty for the independent living program. In a study that did not take into account the perceptions of those individuals who work with students, problems that developed due to lack of communication might have later been attributed to turf issues. However, to quote one participant, "Turf issues were not present once people had spent some 'face time' with one another."

In future studies, researchers might investigate perceptions of consumers (i.e., the students) toward the program. Also, an investigation comparing development of

a product oriented (e.g., new buildings, new staff, new rules) program with a process-oriented program (e.g., new connections to existing services) merits further consideration.

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE BARRIERS TO AN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION IN A PROJECT FOR HOMELESS AND INDEPENDENT LIVING STUDENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to test certain propositions in the literature related to interagency collaboration programs and barriers to successful implementation of such programs. Previous literature regarding "full service" schools and programs is scant. Investigations related to barriers are even more limited. Typically, studies report on collaboration projects that developed from the efforts of a few teachers or counselors (Payzant, 1992). Previous accounts may not have addressed barriers to a program which involved representatives from many agencies and many schools. A program that began as a joint effort between the local

school and other agencies could face barriers different from programs growing out of the work of a few individuals. For example, project framers could resolve confidentiality issues during the planning stages of the program rather than waiting for problems with confidentiality to arise.

Additionally, the independent living students program developed according to a process model, not a direct service model. In other words, the program under investigation did not seek to establish a building where all students could receive medical exams, food stamps, clothing, and help with school work. The independent living students program built "connections" from agencies to schools and schools to agencies. The program developers used services and agencies that already existed. Dryfoos (1994) described ten school-based clinics and two full service school sites. However, all of the programs she reviewed created new locations with new services. Those programs did not utilize assistance that was already available.

Outside observers have conducted most of the research related to barriers. Previous studies have not examined the insider's viewpoint. Research including the perspectives of workers (or partners) in the program

could add to the body of knowledge regarding barriers to interagency collaboration programs.

Authors cite funding, confidentiality, training, planning, and "turf" issues as key barriers to interagency collaboration programs (Gardner, 1992; Kirst & Jehl, 1992; Payzant, 1992). While Kirst (1991) and Gardner (1992) offer some strategies to overcome the previously noted barriers, no data-based research is available regarding programs attempting to carry out strategies that the authors suggest.

Kirst (1991) described a scenario in which school hospitals could be categorized as subsidiaries of local hospitals. The local hospitals could provide the needed eligibility for Medicaid funds, medical licenses, and liability insurance. Bills could be handled by accounting staff at the hospital because the hospital, technically, would employ school health employees. Therefore, federal programs could pay for most health related services. State categorical funds could provide some "glue money" for planning and administration of a collaborative program. The United Way could fill in the cracks where the federal or state categorical programs could not provide coverage. City funds could provide after-school recreation and before-school child care.

Finally, community colleges might provide programs to help parents become wage earners and improve their parenting skills. Kirst did not advocate the creation of a new location and new services. Rather, the existing programs and services should connect or "link" togther into a framework that would provide services to a population of previously overlooked individuals.

The current study investigated the perceptions of barriers to an interagency collaboration project. The program studied in the present investigation, a subgroup of the Responsive Leaders for All Children (RLAC), began as a joint effort between schools and state, local, and federal agencies. The RLAC program received funding from a grant through the University of Thatton (a pseudonym). This presented a unique situation because previously examined programs had not received funding at the outset (Payzant, 1992). The grant funded six smaller projects focusing on interagency collaboration. The independent living students program represented an outgrowth of one of the six projects. However, the independent living students program did not represent a prototype for all of the projects.

The study investigated perceptions of several individuals working with the Independent Living Students

program. The researcher collected perceptions from several present and former school staff members, representatives from state agencies, and representatives from local agencies. However, the school did not grant permission to interview consumers of the services (students).

In the broadest sense, results of the present study could affect the development of such programs in the future. The results have significance because many states have written and/or passed legislation that enables and/or mandates such programs. Concerns that provide the background for the study have developed from several bodies of research.

The literature review includes a historical perspective of school and agency collaboration programs, a summary of recent legislative action in various states, and findings associated with barriers to such programs. Also, literature concerning programs in other nations is discussed.

Statement of the Problem

Most literature related to collaboration contains statements like "Schools should . . ." or "Schools ought.

. ." Available literature emphasized prescriptions for programs rather than descriptions of functioning programs. Additionally, authors typically did not focus on programs that developed from the work of a coalition of individuals representing schools and agencies. In general, investigations have not included information collected from persons who worked in collaborative programs. Most research did not include thoughts and perceptions from individuals who developed and continue to participate in the interagency collaboration project. Previous research typically focused on programs that created new "service centers" at or near the school site. Finally, there is little research available about programs funded from their inception.

The independent living students program differed from previously studied programs. For example, the program did not need to seek funding to initiate action. A national foundation provided adequate funding through a grant. The grant paid for activities that allowed agency and school representatives to discuss collaboration on an ongoing basis. Also, program development began at a retreat attended by a coalition of school officials, representatives of various agencies, and university faculty members. The independent living students program

did not intend to create any new "service centers." The group simply planned to create "links" between agencies and schools. These links could then be used to meet the needs of independent living students and their families.

Significance of the Study

As previously noted, little research about "top-down programs" exists. Most programs in the literature developed from a few teachers/counselors doing the initial work. The program under study "began" with a state-level conference. At the conference, a diverse group of state level education and agency professionals developed a broad outline for an interagency project. The group then divided into several smaller groups, representing local areas. The smaller groups called themselves site teams. Team members worked together in their own cities and/or schools, then chose what services to offer based on availability of services and the needs of local students and their families. Again, site teams never intended to create new services, instead they focused on more efficient use of existing services. Teams developed ever expanding partnerships within their communities. Eventually, the teams came to name

themselves. The team that gave rise to the program under study came to be called the LIFT project.

The present investigation has broadened the literature related to barriers because it included a program that did not attempt to create new services or new locations for services. Much of the existing research has focused on programs that used a new location or new grouping of services based upon the same type of service delivery. In other words, a school-based clinic might be located at or near a school. The clinic would duplicate services that another agency might already provide, just in a new location. The developers of the program under investigation used existing channels to streamline social services to an under-served population.

The current report includes descriptions, given by developers and workers in the program, of the perceived barriers. Previous studies have neglected to include such information. Perceptions of program partners could deepen the understanding of what barriers can exist when creating such programs.

The present research adds to knowledge related to full service school programs that follow a traditional model of policy development. The traditional policy process begins with the recognition of a problem followed

by the formation of a study group, the development of policy recommendations, political decisions, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation (Gramlick, 1981; Schultz, 1968; Stonich, 1977). Programs typically profiled in previous studies developed from the efforts of a small group (First, Curcio, & Young, 1994).

Research Questions

The primary question related to the applicability of notions about barriers to interagency collaboration projects. Specifically, "What did each participant believe to be the primary and most pressing concerns when developing an interagency collaboration project?" Reports have failed to include perceptions of barriers from individuals working in previously studied programs. The present study investigated impressions of barriers from the individuals who actually worked with students. If participants had cited funding, confidentiality, training, and territorial concerns as fundamental barriers, findings from previous studies of similar programs would gain more credibility, due to the inclusion of a previously ignored source of information.

In summary, the present research tested the applicability of ideas in the current literature to a different type of interagency collaboration program. The development of Services for Independent Living Students, Inc. included many actors from schools and other agencies at the planning stage, and followed a traditional, i.e., "top down," model of program development.

Research Methodology

Approaching the present study from both a deductive and inductive perspective appeared most appropriate. From the deductive point of view, some research about barriers exists. As previously stated, authors cited funding, confidentiality, planning, training, and turf issues as barriers to school and agency collaboration (Gardner, 1992; Kirst, 1991; Payzant, 1992). However, previous research findings did not necessarily apply to Services for Independent Living Students program, Inc. The program in Thatton developed following the traditional policy development model. In other words, the program was planned, developed, and then implemented. Furthermore, previous studies did not include perceptions of persons who developed, worked in,

or received services through the interagency collaboration programs.

Because the program under investigation did not fit neatly into the mosaic pieced together by previous research, an inductive methodology seemed a valuable method to examine these questions. The independent living students program differed from programs previously studied because of development, funding, and delivery methods. Such differences could have an impact on issues faced by program designers, program workers, and/or program partners. The study of the Services for Independent Living Students, Inc. investigated the barriers (or problems) program partners perceived or dealt with at the outset of the program and throughout the development and implementation process.

Originally a case study format had been considered as a possible research methodology for this study. However, phenomenology proved a better approach. Perceptions of the individuals represent what is most important to them. Husserl (1970) and others (Moustakas, 1994; Van Kamm, 1966) noted that when perception of an event is the key element under investigation, phenomenology is the appropriate methodology.

Phenomenology also became more workable in view of the limited amount of research time and energy available.

The researcher selected participants based upon their length of involvement with the program and their opportunities to work closely with the students served by the program. Participants included a school administrator, a high school counselor, a contact person at the university, a member of the program's evaluation team, two human service agency workers, a pediatric nurse, a mental health professional, and a teacher. The school did not grant permission to interview consumers, i.e., students, for the present study.

Individuals were interviewed regarding their impressions of the development of the program. Though loosely structured, interview questions served as a guide to both the investigator and interview subject. Participants were asked follow-up questions, if necessary, to clarify their descriptions. Interviews were tape recorded, then transcribed. The researcher asked anyone not initially commenting on barriers to the Services for Independent Living Students program more direct questions in order to extract impressions of what, if any, barriers the individuals perceived. This tactic provided insights into why the individual believed that

no barriers existed, if that were the case. Participants had the opportunity to recommend other individuals whom the participant believed would provide useful information for interviews.

The following procedures were observed to preserve the confidentiality of the participants: informed consent, pseudonyms, and the freedom to withdraw at anytime. Interview data remained in a locked cabinet in the interviewer's home. Henry (1996) used similar methods to ensure protection for participants in a two-year field study. Henry (1996) noted a concern that the subject's perceptions about the social status of the researcher may unnerve the subject or otherwise bias the study. The researcher collected notes about each interview in order to document body language, facial expressions, and other inaudible phenomena. Based upon those notes, fear, intimidation, or nervousness did not appear to become issues for participants during the study. Persons interviewed were well-educated professionals who had agreed to be interviewed.

Data analysis occurred concurrently with the data collection. In the early stages, the emphasis was upon actual data collection rather than analysis. As the amount of data increased, the emphasis shifted from data

collection to analysis. The researcher organized the data, then searched out common threads in each account of the independent living students program development.

The researcher read the transcriptions of audio taped interviews and made notes about the transcriptions of all interviews. The researcher compared post-transcription notes and transcriptions to notes that were taken at the original interview. Common themes emerged as data analysis progressed. The common themes provided a context for the researcher to verify the consistency of information obtained in subsequent interviews. Participants who provided information that did not fit into the context provided by previous interviews were immediately contacted by the researcher. Further discussion took place to clarify and confirm apparent perceptions about barriers to the program under study.

Some written documentation became available during the course of data collection. Documentation consisted of personal notes and other materials made available by the interview participants. Although limited, hard copies of the written material provided another source to verify the consistency of interview data.

Overall, a consistent picture of the evolution of the Services for Independent Living Students, Inc. began

to emerge. A certain set of common perceptions and experiences developed. The commonalities between the descriptions have led to a clearer picture of participants' beliefs about barriers to the development of the program. The final analysis compared perceptions of study participants to ideas about barriers which hinder collaboration reported in previous articles.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Recently, health care professionals have focused on prevention rather than crisis management as a tool to keep people healthy and reduce costs to patients and health care providers. Blue Cross and Blue Shield (1991) reported a shift in emphasis, from crisis management to prevention of major health crises to cut costs. Maintaining a patient's health, in the long term, is less costly than dealing with a crisis, such as a major surgery or transplant. Thorpe and Knickman (1990) noted the cost benefits of prevention as the principal reason for the growth of Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) in recent years. It must be appropriate then that schools seek to prevent crises (e.g., student failures, students dropping out) as well.

Diverse groups with varied agendas have created interagency collaboration projects. Since the early 1900s, different groups have collaborated with schools to prevent student failure (Eliot, 1928; Hunter 1904; Wirt, 1925). Partnerships between schools and other types of agencies (state, local, and federal) have existed at many

different times in the past. Most programs had one goal in mind, preventing failure in school. However, many efforts focused on creating new services and new programs and did not draw upon services that existed already. It is possible that the past efforts were less than permanent due to the creation of a new bureaucracy rather than a streamlining of the existing system.

A Brief Historical Perspective

Interagency collaboration is hardly a new prospect for public schools. As early as 1904, Hunter wrote, "The time has come for a new conception of the responsibility of the school"(p. 3). Superintendent William Wirt (1925) agreed, writing, "Schools should serve as a clearinghouse so that all child welfare agencies can work together efficiently" (p. 446). Eliot (1928) concurred, "All agencies working with neglected children should be closely related under the aegis of the school" (p. 602). During the progressive years, from 1890 to World War I, activists wrote of the problems of suffering children and cried out for action. Reformers pressed for school lunches, medical clinics, dental inspections, classes for persons with disabilities, vocational guidance, job

placement, and school site social workers (Tyack, 1992). Schools materialized as good centers for the provision of such services. One major factor provided for that vision: Schools provided contact over a prolonged period for a group that was somewhat permanent.

Volunteer organizations often stepped in to provide some of the social services. Volunteers did an efficient job. Women's clubs, often made up of former teachers, provided free breakfasts and lunches, but volunteer groups sought for the schools to take over providing the services rather than continuing to provide them as a charity (Sedlak & Schlossman, 1985). However, "Once the reforms became incorporated into the bureaucracy, the clientele, character, and initiative of the programs often changed" (Tyack, 1992, p. 20).

"Medical inspection became one of the most highly touted panaceas of the progressive era" (Reese, 1986, p. 218). Reese wrote that educators endorsed school-based clinics as a way to eliminate "backward and dull" children (1986). However, clinics created to give indigent children vaccination and hygiene instructions were denounced by the American Medical Association as socialized medicine (Tyack, 1992). Terman, conversely, argued that, "Children of today must be viewed as the raw

material of the state" (1929, p. 16). In the same article, Terman calculated the monetary loss to the state for each child who died due to poor hygiene or non vaccination. By 1940, 70% of schools in cities with populations above 30,000 ran some type of public health program employing a school nurse, and in most cases, at least one physician (Rogers, 1940). Even during the Great Depression, medical staff and budgets increased. Between 1930 and 1940, dental clinics and services in schools experienced steady growth (Schlossman & Brown, 1986).

Vocational counselors also began to play a role during the 1940s. Counselors very seldom dealt with individual psychological problems of students. More often, counselors acted as a link to locating needed resources for families and children and to connect students and schools to jobs and the broader economy (Tyack, 1992). As counseling positions became more widespread, the role of the professional school counselor began to change.

Two pressures emerged for the counseling professionals. One was to "Work as part of the attendance machinery in enforcing compulsory attendance rules" (Costain, 1969, p. 445). Another pressure came to

dissociate themselves from the downtrodden, the students they had come to serve. Professional counselors were urged to work in "Average, good, or superior schools to avoid any stigma from working with those less privileged" (Levine & Levine, 1970, p. 64). Ultimately, the guidance counselor at most public schools became an agent for helping students deal with emotional or psychological problems that could affect the student's success in the pursuit of academic credits needed for graduation.

Tyack (1992) explained that during hard economic times pressure can be brought to bear on school officials to streamline programs, cut costs, and go back to basics. The absorption of the professionals involved in providing social services into the bureaucracy of schools and the transformation of their function might also be blamed for the evaporation of the partnership between the social service provider and the public school.

During the 1990s, schools and community agencies operated apart from one another. That is, schools generally exist to teach students a curriculum. Agencies such as the Department of Human Services and county health departments typically meet other needs for students and their families. Previous authors (Kirst, 1991; Melaville and Blank, 1990) found five principal

problems with the separated method delivery for social services. First, most services are crisis oriented. They were designed to address problems that already exist rather than preventing future problems. Second, problems of children and families must fit into distinct categories that do not reflect their interrelated causes and solutions. Third, insufficient funding exists to support the separated system. Fourth, comprehensive solutions have not been applied to complex problems. Finally, functional communication, in general, has not existed between schools and agencies (Kirst, 1992; Melaville & Blank, 1990; Tyack, 1992).

School systems working to combine reform and collaboration with social services could create a new level of bureaucracy. For example, Dryfoos (1994) wrote about several school-based clinics. The clinics provided new services with new personnel, new policies, and new paperwork. Kentucky and New Jersey have integrated collaboration efforts into larger reform projects (Curcio, First, & Young, 1994). However, the Kentucky and New Jersey programs also generated new services along with the associated new policies and paperwork. Furthermore, in its 1993 monograph, the Southeastern Regional Vision for Education included a section with

advice for groups seeking to develop a full-service center (Kadel, 1993). The article discussed methods of fund raising, training staff, finding locations near schools. Most advice centered on providing a new service in a new location. The document did not mention the possibility of simply linking with existing programs to accomplish the goal.

In many states, legislation has prevented interagency collaboration programs from developing. However, several states have begun to write legislation enabling interagency collaboration programs to exist. For example, previous to 1989 school reform legislation in New Jersey, schools could not share information with the juvenile justice system. Following the new legislation, probation officers have been allowed to monitor the academic progress of students who have been conditionally released from juvenile detention centers.

In the cases of Kentucky and New Jersey, court decisions forced both states to reform their entire educational systems (Curcio, First, & Young, 1994). Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) required collaboration between schools and other agencies, for a student on an individual family service plan (IFSP). The IDEA legislation also encouraged

collaboration among agencies for students in transition to adult life, beginning at age sixteen. During recent legislative sessions, many states have addressed interagency collaboration programs with either mandates or enabling legislation. For example, New York made grant funding available for the development of collaborative programs. Pennsylvania legislation charged the Department of Education with developing programs in interagency collaboration.

Outlines of State Level Legislation

State level initiatives span a continuum from simply establishing a task force or study group, to enabling districts (or consortia of districts) to create programs through grants, or through mandating that programs exist. A few programs, `very small in scope, focused on special education students, for example. Other programs mandate collaborative service delivery for all students. Outlines of selected state legislative efforts follow. The outlines contain references to special education implications. Special education notations have been included because of concerns that students needing special education services not be excluded from the full service school model.

GEORGIA

House Resolution 426, introduced during the 1993 session used 1990 census data to support the formation of a study committee to investigate the "Statutory and funding options that would support the implementation of the interagency collaboration notion in education, health, and social services, with a focus on local schools as resource centers."

While Resolution 426 may seem small and inconsequential, it provided a good example of what many states had been doing in the early 1990s to begin the development and implementation of full service programs. The legislation also charged the study group to examine relaxation or elimination of state codes that would, "impede adoption of interagency collaboration." The resolution gave the committee the power to recommend the repeal of any state regulation that could prevent collaboration. Statutes related to confidentiality within certain agencies ranked high among statutes recommended for review, relaxation, or repeal. Confidentiality often has been cited as one primary barrier to collaboration (Kirst, 1992; Melaville & Blank, 1990).

The Georgia legislation did not address the needs of special education students directly. However, in other Georgia programs, families have been put on plans similar to the IFSP of a young special education student. It is assumed that as the committee studied other collaboration programs the group might take note of the IFSP model and evaluate it for their own use. Persons reading the legislation would assume that the needs of special education students will be considered because of the use

of phrases like "All children," and "Delivery of all educational services."

The legislation set the time limit for study and deadline for the committee report as December 1, 1993. As yet, no report of the committee's findings has been retrievable.

NEW YORK

Senate bill 1649 passed during the 1993-1994 session with an emergency clause to put it into effect immediately. Senate bill 1649 set up grant funds to individual school districts or consortia of districts to develop programs of interagency collaboration. The grants were renewable for up to five years. Grant funds must have made up less than 90% of the operating budgets the first year, 60% the second year, 50% the third and following years. The grant projects must have included an extensive list of services from the education, health, and social service fields including parenting classes, suicide prevention, alcohol/drug abuse treatment, preventive health care, and case management for students who require any such services. The guidelines allowed programs to use funds for planning activities. Senate bill 1649 also required annual reports to the

Commissioner of Education for renewal of funding during subsequent years.

The New York statute did not address special education directly. However, the researcher assumed that special education students will not be excluded due to the use of phrases such as, "All students," and "Any student requiring such services."

DELAWARE

The Delaware legislature has written a bill very small in scope and very specific in application. House bill 120, focused reform on training for parents of young children. The 1993 legislation established the Parents as Teachers program under the control of the Department of Education. Targeted parents received training by education professionals, health professionals, and social service professionals. Training centered on the needs facing children and resources available to meet those needs. Training also included guidance in the language development process, use of community resources (service agencies), and dealing with the "at-risk" or the child with developmental disabilities. The bill also provided for case management for students who require multiple services.

The text of house bill 120 referred often to the concerns over the child with developmental disabilities and services that should be coordinated to give that child the best possible learning experience from birth to 22. While this program was not as large as some others, it should be noted that a group of children with many needs was chosen for a first effort. Children with developmental disabilities can often have multiple problems and need services from multiple agencies. Therefore, the group of children with disabilities was a viable choice for a small scale, first program in interagency collaboration.

MINNESOTA

The Education and Employment Act (EEA) of 1994 recognized the need to prepare all individuals for employment. A Coordinating Council was established to oversee collaboration between the Departments of Education and Labor in developing several programs that would benefit students in transition to the post secondary world of work. The EEA may seem out of place because it did not directly address students requiring special services to succeed in school. However, collaboration designed to prepare students to succeed in

the workforce might lower the number of students who require social services during and after secondary school. The EEA established a Youth Apprenticeship Program and a Youth Entrepreneurship Program to expose students at an early age to different facets of the working world and to tailor educational experiences into various different career areas.

Minnesota's legislation did not address special education students directly. However, the wording in the text was similar to terms used by special education professionals when they speak of adults with developmental disabilities moving into the world of work from the secondary school setting.

HAWAII

Hawaii represented a unique situation; the entire state of Hawaii comprises a single school district. Therefore, Hawaii's legislation could have implications for school systems in large cities. House bill 2090 of the 1993 session charged the Departments of Education, Health, and Mental Health, to assume shared responsibility for service provision to children with mental or emotional disorders and their families. The legislation mandated the development of a program

providing for collaborative service delivery for qualified families. Services within this program ranged from diagnostic screening services, to consulting with teachers about students with mental or emotional disorders, to parental training in communicating with children with emotional disturbances.

TEXAS

Texas bill TX73RHB 45, introduced during the 1993 legislative session, amended the section of the education laws dealing with students in danger of dropping out or "At-Risk." Simply, TX73RHB 45 enabled schools or consortia of schools to receive money for innovative programs in dealing with at-risk students and for developing programs of interagency collaboration with health, social service, and other agencies within the community. TX73RHB 45 did not address special education students, however, other sections of Texas law have addressed needs of students with developmental disabilities.

OREGON

Senate bill 898 of the 1993-1994 session expanded early intervention services for children to include individualized family service plans. Family service plans resemble IEPs for students in public schools. Not only did the plans address schooling of children, they also focused on the provision of health and social services to their families. Senate bill 898 focused on service provisions for children with developmental disabilities. Early intervention for children with disabilities was also a goal of the resolution. A State Interagency Coordinating Council was established. Guidelines required that the council must have been twenty percent parents with a minimum of one parent of a child with a disability younger than six years old. The program outlined in senate bill 898 was not large in scope, but a group of children who could have multiple needs has been selected for an attempt at interagency collaboration.

MASSACHUSETTS

House Bill 4941 established a task force in 1993 to investigate meeting the needs of children, adolescents, and young adults (birth to 22) in a community-based

interagency collaboration model. This legislation focused primarily on special education reform. The task force identified populations in need of social services to bolster the educational services they received. The Secretary of Heath chaired the state's task force. Human welfare experts from a spectrum of state agencies and educational institutions, as well as teaching professionals, served on this task force. The task force should have presented findings and plan for implementation of a program to the legislature on April 1, 1994. Those findings have not been made available, as of the present writing.

PENNSYLVANIA

House bill 105 and Senate bill 273 are both extensive resolutions concerning interagency collaboration within the public schools. House bill 105 mandated services be provided to all students. This bill established agreements between the Departments of Education, Health, Public Welfare, and Labor and Industry. House bill 105 also charged the Department of Education to encourage programs in interagency collaboration at the district level. The form that the encouragement took was not identified. House bill 105

also charged the Departments of Health, Public Welfare, and Labor and Industry to create local health clinics at or near local school sites. Rural and under-served areas received priority status.

Senate bill 273 focused on early intervention and service provision to preschool children with disabilities. The bill expanded the membership of the Interagency Coordinating Council and set more stringent limits on who may serve (did not allow for a designee to be sent in place of a member). The Pennsylvania legislature provided a true collaborative effort in service provision to preschool children who have disabilities. This program mandated that an Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) would be developed for any family eligible for services. Again, this plan was very similar to an IEP that a child with disability would have developed for him or her in the public schools. Senate bill 273 also appropriated more funds for collaborative programs.

Overall, the two resolutions presented a typical model of what was happening with the full service movement. Programs were mandated and funded for a small population, then after evaluation, the project could have been expanded to larger groups of students.

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey implemented the Family-Based Youth Services Centers (FBYSC) program in 1989. The 1993 legislation, Senate bill 757, added to the mandates for the original program, modified the membership of the oversight committee, and established a family support system for children with developmental disabilities. Funding for all interagency programs was modified to 50% state funds and 50% local funding or in-kind contribution. Amendments to the original legislation also included a statement that ". . . family support services constitute a state benefit but shall not be counted as income." Also, the FBYSC would not duplicate the vocational training program available through the Department of Labor. Senate bill 757 added much attention to children with developmental disabilities and included them explicitly. Under the old legislation, children with disabilities had been included in an implied manner.

Assembly Bill 1780 established the Children and Families initiative. The initiative was a voluntary program that allowed schools and communities to provide various services to the families of school age children. Family Centers would provide various core services

including preventive health care, job training, and referral to other service providers. The legislation granted centers the right to provide additional services based on the needs of the community. Funding for this program would be 50% state funds and 50% local monies or in kind contributions. The legislation was put into effect immediately after passage.

WISCONSIN

Assembly bill 588 enabled a comprehensive program of interagency collaboration. The legislation also changed existing laws to make collaboration an easier task. The resolution created the Children and Families Board. The board consisted of the State Superintendent of Schools, the Secretaries of Industry, Health & Social Services, Corrections, the Attorney General, the Director of Courts, the Director of the State Board of Vocational Education, and representatives from various parenting organizations.

Assembly bill 588 appropriated funds, by way of grants, for local full service programs. The text of this legislation referred to such programs as "plants." Physical sites would provide medical services, counseling services, juvenile justice interaction, and after school

programs. Proposals that secured funding had established a local board. Guidelines allowed local boards to request waivers for any state regulations that prevented collaboration among agencies. However, federal laws and regulations could not be waived.

Funds were requested via an application and certain core services must have been provided. The core services differed, depending on the age of the children served. Elementary sites, for example, must have included various services related to early childhood needs, but secondary school sites must have provided job development programs. In addition, all sites provided health, social, and mental health services. Assembly bill 588 also established provisions for students returning from a juvenile detention center.

Assembly bill 588 represented the most extensive of the "first-time attempts" at collaboration. Only New Jersey and Kentucky created programs as extensive in the first attempts. However, reforms implemented in New Jersey and Kentucky developed because of court mandated change, rather than pressure from local groups and local initiatives (First, Curcio, & Young, 1994).

Summary of State Level Legislation

The above legislative ventures vary in scope and regulations. Delaware simply focused on providing integrated training for young parents while Wisconsin passed extensive legislation to provide for programs at the primary and secondary school levels. Regardless of the extent of each bill, all support the idea that interagency collaboration is a growing trend nationwide. Very few of the bills attempted to carry out a full service program for all students right away. The scale of most plans may be a hint at the novelty of educators, health providers, and social workers sharing pertinent information regarding students and families in need. Most small projects began with full service to children with disabilities. Such a notion is encouraging because children with disabilities often require services from more than one individual agency. While results of evaluations in the above states have not yet been available, those results will probably bear out the feasibility of full service programs for all students, not just those with a disability.

For now, patience and observation will tell which of the programs outlined in this section of the study will prove effective and which will not. Most of them,

however, have developed in the sprit of reform that authors like Kirst (1991), and Melaville and Blank (1990) have suggested. Finally, the idea of full service is not new, however, the permanence of mandated collaboration between agencies and the local school may provide the anchor that programs have not had in the past (Jehl & Kirst, 1992).

Programs Outside the United States

Interagency collaboration programs in other nations could be viewed as models of what programs in the United States could become. Three examples of collaborative efforts from countries other than the United States follow. Each country has attempted to create a program to best service the needs of students and their families. While each effort may seem unique, the focus has remained on improving educational service to students.

New Zealand

Policymakers in New Zealand have developed a program called the Seamless Education System. Under the "seamless" plan, students gained increased opportunity for skills training. Students were not required to

attend a traditional "school." Industrial schools, universities, and private sector entities could provide training. Students have accessed training through the avenue that best meets their individual needs. However, this program may not be without some monetary cost to the student (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1995).

Canada

In Ontario, Canada the Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project (BBBF) began in 1989. BBBF was designed to provide integrated services to students in 11 communities in Ontario. The research project, sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training links home, school, and community programs together in the implementation of high-quality prevention programs (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1991). The final year for intervention program was 1995. Follow up studies were slated to begin in 1996. Data collection and research will continue over the next 20 years to learn the effectiveness of the programs (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1991). As yet, no findings based upon this work have been published.

Norway

Designers of the "Norwegian model of schooling" (Hagen & Tibbitts, 1993) worked from the larger perspective. They sought to develop a general program based upon needs of a large population and resources available to meet the identified needs. Project framers included many individuals in the planning stages of the programs (Hagen & Tibbitts, 1993).

The Norwegian "experience" followed the typical policy process model. The typical model of the policy development cycle has been summarized as a multi-step process. The cycle begins with problem recognition, followed by the formation of a study group, the development of policy recommendations, political decisions in the legislative and budgetary processes, implementation, and evaluation (Gramlick, 1981; Schultz, 1968; Stonich, 1977). Many programs in the United States, however, have been "grass roots" phenomena. The independent living students project differed from most programs in the United States because it developed in a stepwise fashion, like the Norwegian model. Hagen and Tibbitts (1993) have summarized and attempted to evaluate the success of the "child centered policy" in Norway. However, individuals working in the programs did not

contribute to the study. The people who actually work within a full service program might provide insights that someone observing the program in its final working form might fail to note.

Summary of Programs Outside the United States

While collaboration does not represent an brand new idea, the schools of the 1990's have given social services a more permanent position than in the past. Many states have recently revised or repealed legislation that might hinder the linkage of school children and their families with social service providers. Under some legislative plans, schools have been mandated to serve as a bridge to connect the two parties. Finally, programs in other nations could serve as models for larger scale collaboration projects.

CHAPTER III

THE SETTING

The Program

As previously stated, the Lift Group was only one part of a larger project. While the Lift Group comprised one of six projects developing under the aegis of the RLAC, it did not represent a prototype program. The Lift Group exists in a suburban setting that houses a major university. The school district served roughly 12,550 students. The Lift group created a vision for what the program would produce: "All children will be empowered to reach their full potential through collaborative efforts and the sharing of resources among schools, agencies, families, and the community." The Lift Group had achieved several goals since beginning in 1994. The following represent some of those goals: Improved communications between and among schools, agencies, and community groups; new formal and informal linkages between and among schools, agencies, and community groups; school sites identified to begin implementation;

and agency personnel now linked to individual secondary schools (Knudson & McQuarrie, 1997).

The Lift group has ten functioning task forces: Accessible Information Networks; Adequate Transportation; Alternative Educational Opportunities; Community Education; Documentation and Evaluation; Child Care; Protective Shelters; Youth Recreation; Multi-Service Center: and School-Linked Services. All groups worked together for two years to plan and start a collaborative services program for the Thatton Schools and the City of Thatton. The 1996-1997 school year was the first official year for program implementation at individual school sites (Knudson & McQuarrie, 1997).

The primary program under investigation was centered at the first of two local high schools. The "original" high school served roughly 1900 students in grades nine through twelve. The faculty consisted of 130 teachers. Until the 1997-98 school year, the Thatton High program served only eleventh and twelfth grade students. The program for independent living students served between seventy five and one hundred students who lived independently of adults. This number may not represent the total number of students living on their own, however. Independent students typically identify

themselves as such by signing as their own guardians at enrollment. Once enrollment ends, students who did not come forward to identify themselves may not be recognized as qualifying for services. During the 97-98 school year, a second high school opened. At that time, ninth and tenth grade students were added to both high school populations. Persons working with the independent living students expected that the number of students served by the program would increase. However, they did not estimate by how much.

Fear of self-identification represented another factor that could impact the accuracy of the number of students living on their own. One study participant noted that until recently, a school board policy did not allow students living without a guardian to attend school. A key player in the independent living students program noted that some students may be afraid to come forward and make use of the program for fear of being placed in foster care.

The program can provide many services for independent, sometimes called emancipated, students. Services range from medical examinations and care, to aid in getting food stamps and social security benefits, to job assistance and mentor programs, to housing and rental

assistance. The entire community participates in helping independent living students. Individuals participating in the study often stated that without the support of the local community and school board, there simply would be no help for independent living students. For example, a longtime worker noted that a church group collected backpacks, often used as book bags by students, and filled them with school supplies, cosmetics and other toiletries that most "regular" students take for granted. Another service, in conjunction with local merchants, allowed students to take vouchers to certain stores to purchase school supplies, clothes, and shoes. The above services represent only a few examples. The list of services continued to grow throughout the investigation.

The program, now known as Services for Independent Living Students, Inc. has recently received not-for-profit status from the Internal Revenue Service. Such status means that anyone may make tax-deductible gifts of money, goods, or services. Due to the not-for-profit designation, most persons interviewed expect the services available to students living alone will expand dramatically.

When the new high school opened for the 1997-1998 school year, the principal began working to develop a

similar program at Thatton's new high school. However, the principal believed progress could be slow because faculty members with the most experience working with "independent livers" had remained at the original high school.

Accounts regarding the development of the present program varied slightly. However, most claimed that the university initiative, funded by a national foundation, provided the opportunity for school and agency people to take action on an issue that had concerned all parties for some time: Students who, because they worked long hours or did other things to support themselves, did not succeed in school. Participants also discussed the publication of newspaper articles that raised public awareness of the issue and the formation of a Mayor's Task Force to look into the issue of students living on their own. The task force and the articles became important factors in community acceptance of a program for independent living students.

The City of Thatton has a high median income level and, not surprisingly, a high median education level. Thatton is a mostly white suburb of Capitol City. Thatton also houses the University of Thatton, a state

university. Many of the students at Thatton High School have parents employed in some fashion at the university.

Persons surveyed believed "most people" in Thatton had no concept that such students even existed. Once people became aware, support for some type of program began to grow. Almost all participants noted that the community provided crucial support from the very beginnings of the program.

The Participants

The author began the selection process with a list of seven individuals obtained from a university professor who had been instrumental in securing funding for a collaboration project. The seven individuals had been active participants in that project and were also working with students at Thatton High School.

In all, the author contacted seventeen candidates. The individuals were not selected randomly. The author selected candidates for interviews based upon the information that each could bring to the study. For example, the school counselor served as the primary entry point for the independent living students program. The author also considered the previous experiences the

candidate might have had with collaborative projects. A teacher who was interviewed had worked previously in a "school" in the state capitol that served mostly students from homeless families.

During each interview the author also gave the interview participant an opportunity to nominate others who could make a strong contribution to the study. B. D., the housing manager at a local agency, received a nomination from almost every other participant. The "snowballing technique" continued until the author began to get mostly nominations for individuals who had already been interviewed.

The nomination process seemed appropriate because individuals involved with actual collaborative activities contributed the names of persons they believed to have strong perceptions of the barriers to collaborative efforts. Previous studies have not provided a view from individuals actually working in collaboration with one another. Henry (1996) used a similar method for a study which investigated connections between parents and schools. Finally, this method was employed as a way to ensure that anyone with important information had been included.

CHAPTER IV

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The author contacted seventeen individuals as candidates for interviews. Three of the seventeen individuals contacted regarding their participation did not participate in the study. No apparent reason was noted or inferred regarding their refusal to participate. The author conducted fourteen interview sessions with participants between February 1997 and June 1997. Most interviews lasted forty-five to sixty minutes. Following the example of Henry (1996), the author conducted interviews in a setting the participant found comfortable. The researcher conducted only two interviews away from the participant's place of employment. However, the participant suggested the location of the interview. Both interviews took place in semi-public locations. Allowing the interviewee the opportunity to select the location for the session seemed to create a "friendly" or "safe" environment for the interview. All participants seemed quite at ease and willing to share freely of their insights into the development of the interagency collaboration project.

After gaining the participant's consent(See Appendix B for the consent form), the researcher taped, then transcribed each interview. The transcriptions provided the primary data for analysis. Sample interview questions guided each interview (See Appendix A for the sample questions). The researcher modified the questions to allow for expansion on any topics that might arise during the interview. Interview notes were also kept in order to allow the researcher to record any aspects of the interview that would not be captured on the tape recording; body language or facial expression, for example.

The participants in the present study did not embody the entire group of people working toward collaboration between agencies in the city of Thatton. However, the participants represented the group most recommended by their peers as having important information to add to the study. The selected individuals also represented a group of people who had worked, each in his or her own way, with students at the high school who live on their own.

Interviews

Summaries and impressions of selected interviews are reported below. Interviews selected for inclusion contained information that could be verified or corroborated by information from other interviews. Additionally, the interviews to follow appeared to contain the most information about barriers that existed during the development of the independent living students program.

R. M. – High School Counselor

R. M. has been involved with collaboration for about five years. The author interviewed R. M. at the high school where he works. R. M. has a small office in a student services center. Students could meet with him anytime during the day and stay until after school to meet with him. After his interview, several students were seen waiting to speak with him.

R. M. believed that school and agency collaboration was "A very touchy issue with most districts." However, he noted that he worked in a district that ". . .is willing to look beyond an image and do what students need

for students to succeed." I asked R. M. what role the national foundation project based at the university played in the development of the program at his high school for independent living students. R. M. replied,

> That's pretty much when this whole thing started because that was the push. Not too many people had thought too much about bringing in the Department of Human Services (DHS) to do food stamps for students. You know, that's a pretty alien concept for most schools. I had a principal before who said, 'We are not a social agency. You are not a social worker.' I knew what he meant by that. He didn't mean you are not supposed to help students. He meant you count their transcripts, you counsel with them when they want it, but you don't need to get involved with stuff like seeing that a kid has food to eat, seeing that they had clothes to wear. He's not here anymore.

R. M. also stated that manpower presented a large problem. He noted that during the 1996-1997 school year the housing manager from a local agency worked at the high school. The housing manager met regularly with students who lived on their own and connected them with

resources. For example, students received food stamps, toilet paper, and soap. However, the local agency made no guarantee that the housing manager could continue coming to the school forever. "The greatest issue was never that an agency didn't want to be involved. It was always manpower." I asked R. M. how many staff people and how much money the high school needed to work with students who had special needs. He responded:

> One salary. Who pays it is the question. Maybe it could be half the school, half the agency. It's always money. That's always what it's about and everybody is trying to spend as little of it as they can and get by.

R. M. believed that lack of communication with the community could generate a barrier to collaborative effcrts. R. M. observed that many people in the community did not know that any students at the high school were living on their own. "People just don't think about it." R. M. noted that he had received some angry phone calls,

> One of the big mistaken conceptions about what happens with the Independent Living Program were that we paid for kids to move out of their homes. Well, we didn't do that. But for some

> reason, some of the parents had heard this kind of a rumor so they'll call and want to know what that is and they'll be kind of irate at the beginning. Some people believe that students shouldn't live on their own and shouldn't need social or welfare services. In their minds, we shouldn't be doing it (providing services). But we are responsible for the students when they are here; whether they come in beaten-up or hungry or whatever.

Furthermore, R. M. said that once people understood what had happened, they became very supportive, "when they realize what we do." R. M. stated that over half of the senior students who gain access to the independent living students program graduate. In his opinion, these students would not have finished school otherwise. Many of the participants in the study recounted "success stories" about individual students in the course of their interviews. According to R. M., "We are trying to get students graduated from school, and we are trying to support them anyway we can to keep them coming to school, the community sees that as a good thing."

R. M. quickly mentioned that the community plays a vital role in the success of the Services for Independent

Living Students, Inc. In his opinion, state legislators, local businesses, and prominent citizens had supported collaborating for the success of students. He believed that the community made all the difference.

> It wouldn't be happening without the city as a group. You won't go to most towns in this state and find things like this happening in schools. That's a direct tie, it's got a direct relationship to the people of the city. There are more agencies going on in this town and more services for needy people than you'll find anywhere in the state. So the city's open to that and that's why it worked here and it wouldn't work somewhere else maybe. Living here is the whole reason this thing is happening here and not somewhere else.

Lack of "face time" with agency professionals can also prevent effective collaboration for students. R. M. said,

> Generally, if you get to know the people in the agencies, and you become a person to them and you know your contact person in the agency, then if specific things come up, isolated incidents, they will do what needs to be done.

> Talking about what the issue is, what it is that the student needs and then it works because it is a one-to-one thing instead of a school and an agency and you've got your separate missions. This way it goes beyond, I guess, it kind of goes around that and gets to the heart of it. Here is this student that needs something, you guys provide the service, and so they do.

R. M. believed that communication had been a key element in dealing with legalistic issues, like confidentiality.

> As I recall that was one of the major problems in sharing information. Even agencies sharing information with each other, much less schools sharing in that information. We talked and came up with having some release forms and getting signatures, that has worked out well. We talked about having one single form, once signed would allow access for all agencies to any pertinent information. That didn't happen though.

R. M. explained that "turf" issues had been resolved through face to face communication.

> There was a lot of turf work going on in those [national foundation] meetings. But the more we talked [about] the students . . . it kind of got better on its own because everyone was sitting down with each other and talking about it.

R. M. noted that students must be willing to take advantage of the service an agency provides or it is as if the service did not exist.

> DHS, Juvenile Services, county youth and family, county mental health, It just goes on and on. All these people from different agencies are on the board of directors for the independent living program. That has really opened up some avenues for students that did not exist before. Students are real afraid of agency types of things, they won't just walk in to DHS and apply for food stamps.

Wehlege and Rutter (1986) also reported that students must make a commitment to their own success in any school program.

Because of district and board policies, many students would not admit they were living on their own. "Some students were afraid that they would be kicked out

of school if anyone knew that they were living on their own. I think that until recently we had a board policy that said you couldn't come to our school unless you were living with a parent or guardian."

Overall, R. M. continued to return to a few main themes. He continually commented on the role of face to face interaction with agency personnel. He followed that with comments about the importance of keeping members of the surrounding community involved. Also, R. M. believed that the citizens' attitudes toward collaboration provided overwhelming momentum for the independent living program. R. M. originated the idea of manpower rather than simply funding as an issue to contend with. Money may have presented a problem, however, the evidence of that issue showed up as a lack of manpower or staffing.

T. G. - Community Business Person

T. G. began working with collaboration for independent living students as part of the Mayor's task force.

> It started out that the mayor had a task force formed and so I got on that task force shortly before the chair left. When she left, I

suddenly found myself as one of the chairs. We made an assessment of existing services in Thatton that maybe these kids could access if we just knew how to make it easier for them, who to talk to and that sort of thing.

Again, lack of information to the public or lack of communication presented a barrier. T. G. noted housing as one of the biggest problems for independent living students.

The biggest problem the kids have is housing and the task force had kind of gotten hung up on not doing anything because we couldn't deal with the biggest thing first so we just started back with taking baby steps and well, what can we do with what we've got? What can we do that might make a difference? and started doing those things and then talking to as many people as we could talk to in the community.

T. G. mentioned talking with people in the community again and again in the interview. She continued to discuss how many things were donated by community members when they became aware of the needs of students.

We got prom dresses donated, we got tux rentals donated for prom, got yearbooks donated,

tickets to the prom. What else did we get? Just a lot of things that kids in a normal home life take for granted as part of their high school experience that were not even an option for independent living kids that really have a lot to do with quality of life when you are 17 or 18 years old.

People even called to donate housing for students, and these calls were referred to existing agencies. The focus was not to create new "services," but new links. Individuals who knew how to handle the calls to donate housing took care of the particulars. In T. G.'s view, "What we were trying to do was find a way for the kids to ask the people [with the proper training] to do things that they are good at doing."

T. G. believed that people in the local community honestly did not know about this particular group of students.

People were shocked. They were appalled, especially at the numbers of kids. Because when you are talking a hundred kids out of 1,700, that's a pretty large percentage, and that's only juniors and seniors. We have kids at the mid-highs that we haven't even talked to

or heard about. Yeah, they were appalled that there were that many kids, especially in a community like Thatton, where most of the population is well educated and employed.

Many times the issue of communication with the community emerged. T. G. described several personal success stories about individual students, stressing the importance of putting student needs out to the community. "Perhaps, in a city opposed to schools and agencies working together, new services might have been created, needlessly."

T. G. addressed the issue of bureaucracy, saying that it represented one of the biggest obstacles faced by the individuals working for collaboration. She also noted a good idea for getting around the walls of bureaucracy. "People get frustrated with those roadblocks and a lot of times they're happy to address those issues. I think you just make people understand that you know they want to do a good job." T. G. stated that often potential collaborators wanted to know how working together could help their agency achieve its goal. "At that point I simply ask what I can I do to help [that agency] achieve the goal."

T. G. mentioned a barrier that R. M. commented on earlier. Manpower and money seem to prevent "social workers" or "collaboration agents" from being available at each school in the system.

> What I think an organization like this can do is access the money that maybe other groups can't, by focusing on independent living kids. There is a lot of dropout prevention money. We are in a position to write some grants to fund positions which [Action] is more than willing to manage. Action's strong suit is case management and that sort of thing.

Because simple answers had not existed, T. G. stated that many creative solutions had been proposed for students. Her statement reinforces what Kirst (1991) wrote about the necessity of groups working for collaboration using creative solutions.

More of the same issues developed with this interview. Manpower or staff commitment, communication with and perception by the community both appear in T. G.'s interview. T. G. reinforced what R. M. stated about Thatton's support for collaboration as a community. The notion that creative solutions must come into play to work within and around the existing bureaucracy also

developed in the interview. Effective solutions may incorporate a process that the high school principal addressed. Specifically, collaborators must work together to meet the goals of individual agencies in concert with meeting the objectives of the collaborative project.

G. W. - Agency Person

G. W. worked as the county coordinator of services for a state agency. She has worked that position for several years and has many years of social work experience. The state had mandated regional plans for prevention services, focusing on substance abuse. G. W. coordinated prevention services for the same county in which the independent living students program operated.

G. W. noted that the primary impact of the independent living students project was that the reach of agency services had expanded. G. W. also noted that many of the partnerships and linkages began informally, "during the breaks," rather than during planned meetings to discuss collaboration.

G. W. mentioned for the first time the issue of "credit" related to funding, and being willing to let go

of it. In this instance, credit referred to the concept of recognition for a successful program, "...not wanting to share monies. Agencies are set up with so little of the pie that everybody is trying to grab for it, so they can get their needs met financially." G. W. believed that as funding decreased, collaboration became more difficult. "Just putting information and money out on the table to benefit the whole is scary. It is difficult."

The notion of manpower as an issue surfaced again. G. W. did not focus on new personnel, rather, prioritization of the effort became important. "Ideally, people would be able to focus, spend time, work hard on, and build those collaborations and it would be a natural part of their job instead of an extra curricular part of their job. It would be a strong priority." For G. W., the issue became not just having enough people to do the work but, the opportunity for individuals to focus on collaborating with other agencies.

Making collaboration a priority represented a new issue. The distinction between having people and money for the job of collaboration and allowing the people to prioritize collaboration became important. "Agencies that get more money, then hire new staff to do the same

job they have always done, but do not allow someone to focus on collaborating, simply perpetuate an inefficient system."

H. P. - High School Principal

H. P. served as the principal at the "original" high school from the 1993-1994 school year through 1996-1997 school year. Beginning with the 1997-1998 school year, H. P. worked as the principal at the "new" high school. Prior to working as a principal, he had worked as the athletic director for the district. Prior to that time, he taught in the classroom and coached several sports. H. P. spent many hours with students during his career. His experience and commitment to students was reflected in the content, tempo, and tone of his interview. H. P.'s interview was the most brief, not because he had little to say, however. The meeting had intensity. Each sentence contained an abundance of information. H. P. appeared very focused on student success. In fact, that notion came up often in the interview. H. P. listed the barriers to collaboration he perceived in one short burst.

> There are barriers you have to work around. There are territories that you have to work around. There are laws you have to work around, confidentially problems, accessibility problems. Perceptions of people in the neighborhood that we are trying to provide more for students than we should.

However, H. P. believed that clear lines of communication can overcome most of the barriers he mentioned.

> The major thing is assure that every kid has the ability to be successful. Sometimes, it takes giving some students special help from outside agencies. The agencies can help to build the foundation [so] students can successfully go to school. Focus on what students need to be successful. If you can get people in the community to understand that we've got kids who have these different needs, they are willing to help. Business people in the community understood. They were willing to work with us. Once that happened, some other things started falling into place.

H. P. noted one situation that he called the "What can you do for me syndrome." He stated that schools can remedy the problem by offering a service back to the agency. ". . . I'm asking the county health department to come in and do something, I've got to make it in such a way that I make them feel like I am giving them a service too." For example, make the agency believe that they can have more contact with a population that needs help. This population might not otherwise receive the services of the agency. "...I can make [your agency] more readily accessible to students who need your help. You've got to offer something. You can't just say, we'll send them to you. You've got to offer space, a willingness to work together."

H. P. also noted that students who need help can present a barrier in and of themselves.

> Self-pride still steps into it. A lot of kids are afraid to admit that they need help and some don't want to. It's difficult providing something students need but wouldn't access because of money or time. They really have to admit that they need the help. So how do you do that? You know, you have to kind of peer into their heads a little bit. And that's what

R. M. is good at. He's worked with them. He's got an identity now. Students who want help know, if they have a problem like this, contact R. M. It breaks down some of those personal barriers.

Wehlege and Rutter (1986) found similar results in their study. That study noted that students at-risk must make an actual commitment to their own success.

The principal (H. P.) believed that barriers presented by the average "person on the street" were easy enough to overcome. He related the following about a call from a person in the community who thought the school was paying students to move away from home:

Just be honest with them. I think honesty is the best policy. What we are trying to do is give your kid a chance. Our statistics tell us that if a kid doesn't have a high school diploma, they've got about a 60% higher chance of becoming involved with the justice system than somebody who does have a high school diploma. So one of the things we are trying to do is provide them every resource available so that they can concentrate on school. Your kid is out there. He's foundering. Your kid's out

there: She's pregnant. She's got a baby. We want to give them assistance so they can go ahead and get the education they need.

He also believed that the school facilities were underutilized by the community. He wanted to see them become neighborhood centers for all types of services.

> . . . the schools are only used six or seven hours a day. These are nice buildings that could be used another six or eight hours a day for educational services or for other things that would help keep kids involved in school or get parents involved in school. Maybe help parents that don't have a high school diploma get enough credit so they can get an adult education. I'd like to see these types of things happen.

H. P. made the first lengthy discussion about the average resident of Thatton as a barrier. However, in his opinion, the focus in his community appeared to be the success of every student. Once people knew the primary goal of the program, H. P. believed the community would support that program, provided it created opportunity for student success. H. P. also mentioned the under-use of school buildings and that under-use

could perpetuate the notion, among the community at-large, that schools should provide only "book learning".

H. P. stated that students needing help could present a barrier to collaboration projects. He was the third participant to mention this idea. In essence: students, presumably older students, must step forward to take advantage of the program. If students did not identify themselves in some way, they became increasingly more difficult to identify. Students who could not be identified could not be served.

T. S. - Teacher

T. S. taught in the school system that generated the program for independent living students. She had previously been the administrator for a program that provided educational services for homeless children in the state's capitol city. T. S. had expertise in working with social service agencies to meet specific needs for homeless parents and children.

T. S. knew from the beginning that there would be problems with terminology and definition of the problem. ". . . I knew that inter-professional groups don't work

really well together until certain criteria are met. So I knew they would face a lot of language problems and a lot of turf issues."

However, T. S. noted that individuals readily gave up turf issues once certain other issues were addressed.

> People were willing to give up turf issues and work toward the common goal, but there needed to be education about what all the different agencies did. The agency resistance seemed to be: We've done this before. Education has brought us something and said we want your help, would you collaborate with us? Then educators would end up saying, this is the way you are going to do it.

Once a common language could be established, the primary barrier, in T. S.'s opinion, would have been defeated. In her view, it seemed most important to educate the people involved on just what each agency did, could do, and could not legally do.

T. S. also noted that a problem with leadership development had existed. She expressed concern that once the group originally working toward service integration moved on, whether by their own choice or by the direction of their employer, no one would step in to fill the

vacant positions. Such comments again reinforced the notion that agency workers could not, for varied reasons, prioritize for collaboration.

F. T. - Emergency Shelter Director

F. T. had directed an emergency juvenile shelter for over three years. He prepared for a career in social work at a state supported university. He has worked in this field since graduating from the university. The shelter F. T. administrated provided temporary emergency relief for children ages 0 (infants) through 17 years of age. Children at the shelter were typically abused, neglected, in need of supervision, or in state custody. F. T. became involved with collaboration primarily to seek funding for a protective shelter to "separate victims from victimizers." His initial focus had since faded because funding specifically earmarked for a protective shelter had not become available. F. T. noted that although few problems emerge with sharing information with other agencies, including schools, that information sharing remained very limited. Statutes regarding confidentiality often limited his freedom in sharing information. "Laws of confidentially bind us to

certain things that we can expect of other people. Other than that, people have to be careful about what they say, but there is really no barrier to sharing certain information."

F. T. reaffirmed that priorities, for most people, did not include time to collaborate. He related priorities to the time frame required to see results.

> Because it was such a long term commitment, a lot of people didn't have the time or it wasn't a priority for them. I think people get involved with things and they want to see [pause] progression. They want to see results. Sometimes they want to see immediate results.

F. T. continually returned to statements about positive interactions with the public schools. Their business is children. And my business is children so we didn't have those issues [turf, credit, trust]. We don't have those issues now. I don't think that we would ever have those issues. The schools have been really a good group to work with. I have never had any problem getting any collaboration or cooperation with the school system. I think that's a big reflection of the community. In the community here, people want to do things. They want to collaborate They want to cooperate with each other.

F. T. emphasized that certain issues should not be overlooked. He said,

> . . . people taking time away from their primary job duties, . . . and who is going to pay for that time while they are away working on something else? That became an issue. The issues of territory and turf and crossing boundaries were also something to think about. I think those things were real issues and were of concern to a lot of people.

F. T. noted that he did not experience many problems in collaborating with the schools, but cautioned that certain issues must not be overlooked. F. T. emphasized the need for a trade-off between time invested away from a primary duty and results. Again, money did not represent the central issue. The ability to prioritize overshadowed the issue of expense. F. T. mentioned confidentiality which had been mentioned in previous research studies. However, he quickly noted that anything that can legally be shared, usually is. Finally, F. T. stated that turf issues had been a concern, however, he said that he did not personally observe problems with turf issues.

P. N. - Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

P. N. worked in public health for almost 20 years. During the past few years she had been a pediatric consultant at the state department of health. She became involved with collaboration as the result of the national foundation initiative at a state university. She simply heard about the independent living students project and contacted the people in charge and offered to participate, believing that her background in public health could be a benefit.

In her view, perhaps the greatest barrier to collaboration could be referred to as recognition or credit.

> I think that one of the biggest barriers or problems that needs to be overcome is the natural human tendency to have hidden agendas. I am very interested in health, the health of children, and the health of their families and so I might mention health as my hidden agenda, only it's not very hidden since I say it up front. I very much want the health of children to be incorporated in decision making and the

problem solving that occurs in a community because I know that is very important.

P. N. also saw the schools as a major part of collaborating to provide better services to people in the local community. In her view, the cause was

> . . . partly because the children were in the schools and we have emerged to be a working population of parents where there is certainly more than one parent working. Children, for many hours of the day, are with the schools. After school and before school care enlarge that number of hours. The schools are a natural partnership, for health or medical providers, in terms of meeting health needs of children during their waking hours. . ..

Again, the notion of priorities emerged, however, with a somewhat different focus. It appeared that P. N. wondered which issues were most pressing in the community?

> We found ways to meld all of the specific concerns and issues in such a way that the community can handle most of the most important issues. Certainly there was a need to

prioritize. We had to focus our energy in a specific direction and not be scattered.

Focus played an important role in the success of the collaborative project. "I think that [focus] was the key to successful collaboration."

P. N. made another comment on priorities; sometimes they set themselves.

> There has been a natural prioritization because the most interest was in certain areas. There weren't enough people resources to meet the needs in another area. So, there was a natural prioritization which was a building, strengthening process that allowed people to feel that the most important concerns are being addressed.

Lack of facilitation presented a previously unmentioned barrier. P. N. commented:

> It can either be a grouping of people or one person, but it does need [to happen]. Facilitation became very important for people to give their small amount and let it create energy and actually let it be helpful to the project. Ideally, one person [would be] devoted to facilitation. If you are in a

> circumstance with shrinking resources where it's not appropriate to use public funds to single out one particular project in a community, then you need facilitation to occur for everyone to give the amount that they can.

P. N. discussed a lack of facilitation, then discussed the importance of someone assuming the lead role in a collaborative project. T. S. also believed in a leadership role but felt that it did not develop in this project. Both commented on the importance of developing leadership as a means for continuously generating a collaborative effort. P. N. noted the importance of continuously focusing on the vision or returning to the goal of the project. In her view, the "revisiting" process alleviated the need for individuals to take credit or feed hidden agendas.

W. S. - Psychologist / Department of Health

W. S. supervised the Child Guidance Services for the twenty-two counties that made up the southwest region of the state and included this project. He worked as a clinical psychologist for many years specializing in work with children. Typically, children who W. S. treated

lived below middle class standards. Often their families received some type of federal or state welfare benefits.

The primary resistance to collaboration that W. S. pointed out related to the perception that schools and agencies had existed in opposition to one another.

> One of the first things we had to deal with was a lot of suspicion between the schools and social service agencies. It seemed that the two groups felt like they were competing or almost enemies in some way. There was a lot of mutual suspicion. Early negotiating focused on clearing up that mutual suspicion and getting people to feel like they were working on the same team and going in the same direction.

Personnel and the ability to prioritize for collaboration entered into W. S.'s comments as well. I think part of [the suspicion] came from the fact there was never really enough service available in a community to deal with all the needs. For example, a child needs some kind of service and child advocates feel like they need to go out and find that service. The advocates kept running against what appeared to be barriers.

W. S. gave the example of a student who needed counseling services, however, the agency could not see the student for six weeks.

> That creates some frustration on the part of the person looking for services. From the agency perspective, we don't have enough people to go around, there's more need out there than we can serve. We can't do everything for everybody. So tension grows between people looking for service and the people trying to provide it.

Sharing of information, which information and how much, represented a problem for the psychologist.

> The school folks really didn't understand some of the confidentiality laws that agency folks were dealing with. There was a perception that agency people withheld information when in fact, there may have been both legal, ethical, and professional reasons for doing that.

Lack of communication could have created the barrier in this case. W. S. stated that the school "folks" were not aware of restraints placed on some agencies and professionals. W. S. offered a statement that eased tensions, in his experience. "We will tell everything we

can about certain situations, however, we can't tell the school everything." W. S. remarked, as had others in the study, that during the course of conversations and face to face meetings, the distrust between school and agency professionals began to fade. The facilitation element that P. N. mentioned came into play here. Without the catalyst to generate the conversation, collaboration remained difficult.

U. P. - University Professor

U. P. originated the proposal for a grant submitted to the national foundation. His interest grew from facilitating leadership training for educators who taught children with special needs. He wanted to develop a system of delivery for services that did not duplicate what already existed in the community. U. P.'s idea of a process rather than a product oriented approach represented a novel idea.

U. P. initially noted the willingness of community agencies to work together, but nothing seemed to move beyond the talking stages.

> I think both in Thatton and in other communities there probably has been a lot of

conversation taking place. Facilitators used processes that we knew could cause people to work together more effectively. We facilitated those processes occurring in schools. This project allowed the situation to move beyond people just occasionally talking. People really started to plan some action.

U. P. noted that turf issues originally concerned him. Also, lack of shared communication and lack of training to work with others outside the agency created concern. Not surprisingly, U. P. mentioned basically every barrier previously mentioned by other respondents. He did so in one statement.

One of the barriers that the group came up with was turf. Another barrier was lack of communication. Other barriers focused on people not knowing about other agencies or other groups that assisted children and families. Basically, people lack knowledge of other available resources. Also, people had not been trained to work with others outside of their own agency. Time created another barrier because most people who work with children and families were already swamped or overwhelmed

with responsibilities. Time to work together on things to better meet the needs of children and families did not exist for some people.

U. P. mentioned the ability to prioritize for collaboration, "the people who work with children and families are already swamped or overwhelmed." The notion of poor communication about what is available in the community for children and families became another recurring barrier. In U. P.'s view, the lack of information led to the distrust or "turf" issues mentioned in previous literature. The barriers mentioned by U. P. seem to fit well with what the previous research has mentioned regarding collaboration efforts. However, he became well acquainted with research related to collaboration projects while writing the grant proposal. Knowledge about previous research could have influenced his perception of barriers to the program in question.

B. D. - Case Manager, Action Inc.

B. D. worked for an agency that functioned as a "catcher's net to some of the other agencies like DHS, Food and Shelter for Friends, and some of the other shelters." Specifically, B. D. worked as the Supportive

Housing Case Manager. B. D. was a recent graduate of a state supported university where she prepared for a career in social work and earned a master's degree. She worked directly with independent living students at the high school. As participants commented on other individuals to interview regarding the program, almost every participant mentioned B. D.

B. D. originally noted that the community at large had difficulty accepting what had happened with the independent living students.

> At first, the majority of people didn't have a very positive outlook on it. A lot of organizations and people felt like we were enabling kids to be defiant to their parents, although, I never received any phone calls from parents asking, 'Why are you helping my child?' Overall, community members that may not have had anything to do with independent students had a lot of negative things to say about the program.

According to B. D., the attitudes from the citizens had changed greatly since the 1995-1996 school year.

> We got a surge of people coming in who wanted to do something for [the students]. People

were just appalled that the kids live on their own. When [critics] met some of [the students], I think that's when they became jazzed about the project because they found out that the independent living kids meant business, they wanted to get through school and could not go home in some circumstances. So, I think with exposure and the school getting used to us being there the situation has really improved.

B. D. stated that when she arrived, the school had identified a large number of students as living on their own. She commented on the problem of priorities and serving the independent living students.

> There were probably close to 70 students who had been named as 'independent living'. Being served is totally different. The counselors at the high school were so overwhelmed with the responsibilities of being the school counselor. That school is so jammed with students, R. M. just rose to the occasion and did what he could, but one person can only do so much, so I think only a handful of students were being served in an adequate manner.

Students originally had concerns about what might happen to them if they stepped forward to be served.

> They didn't want anybody to know, especially if it was a physical abuse situation or sexual abuse situation. I think social workers held a stigma for students, in that if [any student] was ever to catch wind that I was a social worker, they instantly thought DHS. If any of them were under 18, they were scared to death that I was going to them put into foster care and pull them from their environment. Originally, no students were really [excited] about coming to visit with me. Word of mouth was great with kids and I think they realized that I am not going to act on anything unless we've decided together it is for their benefit.

B. D. related a story about one student who was actually offended by the help she offered.

> I met a boy who graduated last year, he had been on his own since he was thirteen. He was one of the hardest to do anything for. He wouldn't let me do anything. I finally got the picture and realized I was irritating him and

backed away. I was just so [excited] about doing everything.

B. D. believed students who had been on their own for many years may not be unusual, "I'm sure there are students in fifth grade who are independent. Weird things happen to kids."

Certain community members, and the school board itself, presented a difficult obstacle to overcome. Some people continued to wonder if the independent living students deserved the help they were getting. We can't convince anyone that may be able to write grants, to accept the fact that this is a real problem and that there are going to need to be full-time people tracking these kids. Independent living students need intensive case management, which includes a lot of follow-up and is extremely time consuming. [I am] one person who has many other responsibilities. I can't be everywhere all the time.

B. D. stated that teachers did not always appreciate her presence.

> Most of the teachers are parents too. Maybe they just didn't see a need that drastic for me to be taking [students] to doctor appointments, picking them up from work, taking them home

sometimes, and getting arrangements or special entitlements for independent students. Although, I never was approached directly, there were interesting comments left in my mailbox.

B. D. became concerned that if the current situation changed, and that she were no longer allowed to work at the schools, that the independent living students might go unserved. However, she noted one possible solution to that problem.

> If we had a practicum student in each school, trained by a combination of myself, R. M., and a few of the teachers that have helped at the high school, then they could be doing their practicum hours in the school while being supervised by someone. It could be really easy if we found an M.S.W. to supervise something like that. We could become an on-site area for practicum students. That scenario would alleviate the need to hire anyone or come up with a salary. The school system isn't in a position to pay that salary.

Non-Summarized Interviews

In the interest of brevity four interview summaries have been omitted from this report. These interviews reiterated the themes that have emerged in other interviews. The information provided has not been considered less valuable nor was it in contradiction to the previously summarized interviews. These individuals continued to refer to community support, lack or collaboration on regular basis, student identification, lack of previous interaction between school and agency personnel.

Synthesis of Interviews

Based upon the interview data, four common elements emerged. Most participants commented on a lack of communication between agencies and schools. Community support (or lack thereof) constituted the second most often mentioned barrier to collaborative efforts. Surprisingly, participants noted funding issues only when stating that most agencies could not, or did not, make collaboration a priority. Finally, participants noted that unless an individual or group took on the task of

facilitating or creating opportunities for collaboration, it could not occur.

The lack of communication about what information could or could not be shared between schools and other agencies surfaced in most interviews. Often in the literature confidentiality issues took center stage as barriers to collaborative projects (Kirst, 1991; Young, Curcio, & First, 1994). Comments in previous reports asserted that legislation at the state or federal level will invariably block collaborative projects. However, it seems that legalistic or ethical defense of confidentiality may not be the barrier. The barrier could be the lack of communication about what data are confidential and why certain types of data must remain confidential. While one should not ignore the issue of legislated confidentiality, it appeared more appropriate to make more specific comments about why confidentiality of information presented a barrier to collaboration between schools and agencies. R. M. and others noted that often an air of distrust between school and agency professionals had developed. Each group believed the other was "hiding" something or withholding information. In fact, most respondents noted that once everyone

understood what could or could not be discussed, tension dissipated and the process moved forward.

Turf issues that had been discussed in the literature (Jehl, 1991; Young, Curcio, & First, 1994) faded quickly once all parties agreed upon which information was to be in the collaborative domain. In fact, with each legislative session, more states will probably draft legislation enabling collaborative projects to share more information with schools. As this occurs, communication about what might and might not be shared between agencies and schools will become vital. Without communication, the individuals could become more apprehensive toward collaborating to provide services for students. Additionally, it was apparent that a positive attitude toward collaboration between the people and agencies involved was important for the local community to support such a project.

Comments about the willingness of the Thatton community to accept collaborative projects occurred almost as frequently as comments about communication. In most interviews, respondents noted initial non-acceptance by certain members of the community. For example, the principal described one call in which someone thought the school was paying students to move away from home. The

principal, and others (the case manager and teacher, for example), quickly noted that once the general public had a clear understanding of what actually took place, almost everyone supported the collaboration project. Most respondents also commented that some collaborative projects had already existed in Thatton. Several stated that in another community, one not as open to collaboration as Thatton, a program that joined agencies and the public school might not be accepted.

The manner in which the project was financed could have encouraged public support. The community at large never paid more in any type of taxes to support the independent living students program. This occurred largely because of the focus on using existing services and not creating new buildings with new policies about services already in place. Monetary issues related to collaborative projects often appeared as a barrier in the literature (Kirst, 1991; Kirst & Jehl, 1992; Melaville & Blank, 1990). However, most interview participants focused on priorities, not the actual dollar figure involved.

P.N., the nurse practitioner, commented that the issue of prioritization occurred for her on two levels. On one level, the issue of which services appeared most

important to provide took precedence. This seemed to handle itself. "People tend to gravitate towards issues that they had a stake in, so some issues, like housing, naturally came to the top." The second level of prioritization dealt with the ability to collaborate on a regular basis.

Gaining the ability to make collaboration a priority on a regular basis did not happen so easily. In fact, G. W. believed that issue might not be resolved. The failure of individuals (or organizations) to make collaboration a priority within their "regular" duties surfaced in many interviews. Almost every participant made some statement about the time available to spend on collaborating with other agencies. G. W. commented, "Collaboration should not take a lesser seat to one's regular tasks." She reported that ideally, collaboration would be a major part of an individual's daily routine. She also made an important distinction: "Agencies that get more money, then hire new staff to do the same job they had always done, but do not allow someone to focus on collaborating to give students and their families assistance, simply perpetuate an inefficient system."

One cannot ignore funding issues in general, however. B. D. remarked that the school system could not

or would not financially support a position to generate collaboration between groups. R. M. noted that "one salary, one person. . ." would suffice to manage collaboration at the high school. At the time, B. D. played that role, however, restating her own concern, ". . . this might not be the case forever."

Finally, participants believed that a facilitator, some participants used the word leader, must rise to the challenge of collaboration. The facilitator must engage in planning for collaboration in general and his or her future in that role. Simultaneously, the leader must also train a successor. Many participants noted that no guarantee existed that such a leader would be able to continue in the long term. P. N. addressed the leadership issue specifically by stating that some facilitation must occur. In her view, a period of facilitation created an opportunity to give up hidden agendas and the need to take individual credit for accomplishments, funding, and effort.

In summary, barriers to collaboration most often mentioned in the present study did not match exactly with findings from previous research. However, the barriers appeared to be refinements of, rather than substitutes for, the barriers from the previous literature. This

study identified the following barriers: identification of students, lack of communication, inability to collaborate on a daily basis, sharing recognition in return for funding, and community support. While these findings did not contradict previous studies they do seem more concrete than broad terms like legal concerns, funding problems, or turf issues.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Conclusions

As noted earlier in the report, confidentiality, funding, planning, training, and "turf" issues had often been mentioned in previous research related to collaborative projects. The present study did not find that the above mentioned issues took prominence with the participants interviewed for this research. Participants believed that other issues created barriers to the independent living students project. However, the barriers noted by the participants fit into the context provided by previous research. For example, the ability to prioritize collaboration in one's job duties relates to the issue of funding mentioned by previous studies. Other such parallels will be explored in the paragraphs to follow.

In this section, the researcher will revisit the issues that participants mentioned during the course of the interviews, then draw some parallels between the

perceptions collected from participants and issues noted in previous literature. In the instances where no mention had been made of an issue from the previous literature, the researcher will suggest some possible explanations. The barriers and the number of times each was mentioned has been summarized in Table 1 located in Appendix C.

Several participants identified the inability to make collaboration a priority in their day-to-day work as a barrier to collaborative efforts. Most believed that while supervisors did not openly object to their efforts, collaboration had to take a secondary role. Most viewed collaboration with schools and other agencies as an extra task. Participants noted that they were willing to take on the collaboration process because they believed that it could have a positive effect on the lives of their clients. Conversely, many also commented that their agency was "swamped" already and they could not spare the time to work on collaboration. Furthermore, G. W., the agency staff member, stated that when money did make new staff available, the new staff members continued to serve clients in the same manner as before. New staff members did not create opportunities to explore solutions involving collaboration.

It may be possible then, that money and time shortages did not represent the primary barriers at work. Presumably, the traditional system, which does not place collaboration as a priority for serving people with needs, creates the barrier. Shortage of time and money could merely be a symptom of some larger belief that the traditional delivery system somehow serves well enough. However, it is this separated service delivery system that authors advocating collaboration find fault with and view as inadequate.

Turf and confidentiality issues did not play a prominent role in responses by participants in the present study. When participants did mention confidentiality and turf issues, they were mentioned as a consequence of what could happen subsequent to little or no communication taking place between school and agency staff. Many participants noted that once clear lines of communication developed, turf issues faded. While legal and ethical confidentiality issues could not always be removed, the perception that confidentiality presented an insurmountable wall between schools and agencies had been shifted to the notion of "what we can and can't share with one another."

During the process of opening lines of communication, participants noted that the perception of the community can play a large role in their own attitudes toward collaboration. Dryfoos (1994) noted that in school-based health clinics, community members often fear that the clinic will primarily serve to provide birth control pills or condoms to the student population. As communication develops between schools and agencies, communication must also develop between the collaborative project and the community at large. Several positive newspaper articles related to collaborative projects in Thatton supported the development of the independent living students program at Thatton High School. Often, participants commented that in a different community, a collaborative program between the school and agencies might not survive. Community members might believe that bridges between students with needs and resources to meet student needs should not develop inside the school.

The participants stated that members of the community had expressed concerns. Most of the concerns resulted not from information made available by people working within the collaborative project, but from misinformation. Once participating individuals had

accurate information presented to them, most concerns quickly dissolved into a willingness to participate and even contribute time working with the independent living students.

Planning and training issues did not arise in any interviews. Outside of the notion of facilitating collaboration, participants made no mention of planning type activities. A perception seemed to exist that because the independent living students program did not create any new services, no new staff members needed training. Individuals working with this group of "independent" students simply performed the same duties they normally would perform. The population of individuals whom agency professionals assisted, one that previously went unserved, represented the only difference for the agency professionals. The interview data suggested that when individuals perform their regular jobs with a previously overlooked population (perhaps in a setting outside their offices), those individuals have the skills needed to meet the needs of the new population. Nevertheless, students and agency staff did not connect under the traditional service delivery system.

Some type of facilitation did, and must (according to the nurse practitioner), take place. Facilitation could take the form of activities and exercises or the form of an individual acting as a mediator. In the case of Thatton High School, both types of facilitation occurred. Many of the individuals working with the independent students participated in the University of Thatton's national foundation initiative activities and events. B. D., the Action, Inc. director, acted as an individual taking on the role of facilitator between students at the school and agency staff members, which she had been doing at Action, a local "clearinghouse" for community services.

While the present study does not represent information from every individual involved with this particular interagency collaboration project, it certainly includes some information that has not been mentioned in the existing literature. Most often, barriers to collaborative projects are stated as broad categories: funding issues, turf issues, and legal issues. However, the study reported herein suggests that the actual barriers to most projects could be described in much finer detail. Turf issues, for example, did develop because of the limited amount of communication

between agency and school personnel. After clear lines of communication between groups evolved, apparently the turf issues faded away. Refinement of the barriers listed in the existing research is only one recommendation for further research that will be made in the final section.

Limitations

Before making recommendations for further research, the limitations of the present study must be recognized. First, the researcher had very strong emotional attachment to students with special needs. Specifically, the researcher felt a strong connection to students whose needs fall outside the realm of typical special education categories. Additionally, the researcher attended several of the early meetings that laid the foundation for the Services for Independent Living Students, Inc. Persons attending those meetings spent hours discussing possible barriers to future collaboration projects. Participating in such discussions could have influenced the researcher's view of the interview data and participant responses. However, follow-up calls were made to verify any unclear ideas from an interview.

Second, the study did not include impressions from consumers (students) of services provided by the independent living students project. Also, the study only conducted interviews with a limited number of individuals who worked with a very special population of students. Perhaps a different method of data collection, a questionnaire type format for example, might have been used to gather more input from a larger group of individuals. However, one problem noted with existing research was the lack of personal contact and information collected from participants.

As most participants noted, the city of Thatton had a strong community orientation. There were many publicly supported agencies within Thatton that served diverse types of individuals. The community was highly educated and most people had high socioeconomic status. Residents of Thatton have exhibited a strong commitment to student success and quality schools. F. T., the shelter director, suggested that residents of Thatton would support any program that could be effectively associated with enhancing student success. Barriers to a program integrating community agencies with the schools might face stiffer opposition in a city with different

demographics or different attitudes about what constitutes quality educational opportunities.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies might seek to determine the extent to which institutional setting influences the development of collaborative projects. In other words, how much does the traditional service delivery system affect attitudes toward collaboration? Researchers might also consider a long term case study of a process or "linkage" oriented collaboration project like the one studied here.

Researchers might also consider a study focused on the perceptions of all students who accessed the program: Students who graduated from high school and students who did not. A comparison of independent living students who accessed the program as opposed to any eligible students who chose not partake of program benefits, while somewhat impractical, might yield enlightening results.

Finally, a study that compared barriers to different types of programs, perhaps using one product oriented program (creating a location that provides multiple services) and one process oriented (focusing primarily on linking existing services to each other), within the same

community or similar communities might yield new information.

In conclusion, the findings here imply that barriers to collaborative efforts need not be large and insurmountable concepts like funding problems or legal issues. The barriers in Thatton were perceived as smaller and more manageable. Participants noted lack of communication, inability to collaborate regularly, and community support. Previous studies implied that funding presented a large barrier. In Thatton, the program for independent living students did not cost citizens more in taxes nor did it deplete the resources of any single project partner. Funding for schools and social services may not increase in the near future. Schools and social service providers might do well to consider collaboration as means to increase fiscal efficiency, while promoting student success.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Sample Interview Questions

Sample Interview Questions

1. How long have you been involved with this interagency collaboration project?

2.Please describe your role in the Thatton program.

2a. Please describe your involvement in the development of the Thatton program.

2b. Please describe your involvement in the implementation of the Thatton program.

2c. Please describe your role in the evaluation process.

3.Please describe any barriers or obstacles you noticed at the development stage, at the implementation stage, and at the evaluation stage.

3a. Please describe the means used to overcome each of these barriers or obstacles.

4. In your opinion, were these processes effective?

5. Do you have suggestions for more effective strategies?

6. How familiar are you with the literature related to interagency collaboration projects?

   6a. How do the strategies used in this project compare to those described in the literature?

   6b. What about the Thatton program, in your opinion, caused the difference?

7. Could you recommend one or two other individuals that might have useful information for use in this study?

8. Is there anything that you would like to add to your interview, or ask me about the interview?

Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title: An investigation into the barriers to interagency collaboration in a project for homeless and independent living students

Principal Investigator: Dalton L. Young III
Doctoral Candidate

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
The University of Oklahoma
Phone Number: (405)329-2659

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Michael Langenbach
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
University of Oklahoma
Phone Number: (405)325-4202

This is to certify that I, _____, agree to participate as a volunteer in a research project under supervision of Dr. Michael Langenbach and conducted by Dalton Young as authorized by the University of Oklahoma.

I understand that I will be interviewed regarding my participation in and perceptions about the interagency collaboration project I have been involved in. I understand that follow up interviews may also be necessary. I understand that the methods and materials have been approved by the site coordinator/administrator.

I understand that my confidentiality has

been assured. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any type of penalty. I understand that the above named researcher will answer any questions about the procedures or my rights as a subject at any time.

I understand that by signing this form and agreeing to participate in this research project I ***do not*** waive any of my legal rights.

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

Appendix C

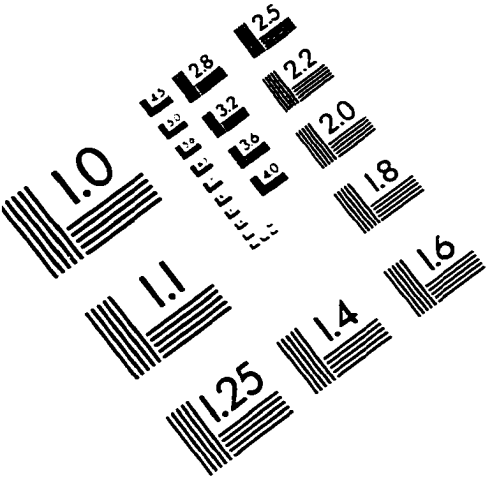
Table of Themes

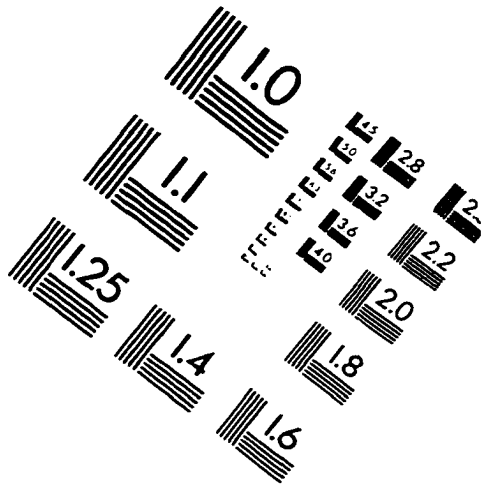
Table 1

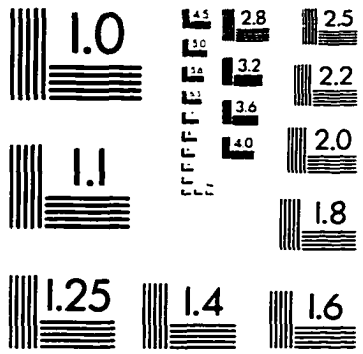
Themes emerging from interviews

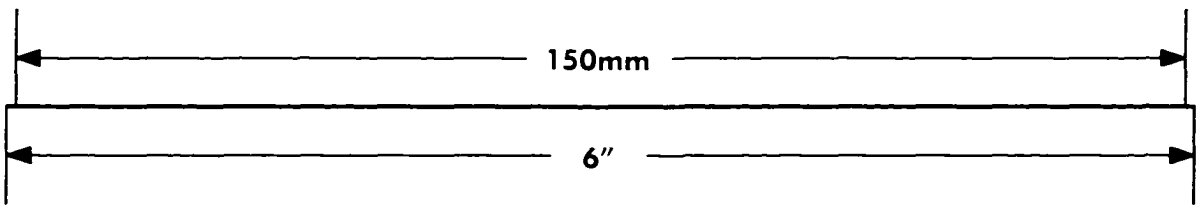
Descriptions of Themes	Frequency (14 Max.)
Identifying Students	8
Community Support	10
Sharing "Credit"	6
Collaboration not a Daily Priority	9
Lack of Communication	8
Legal Issues	3
Turf Issues	2

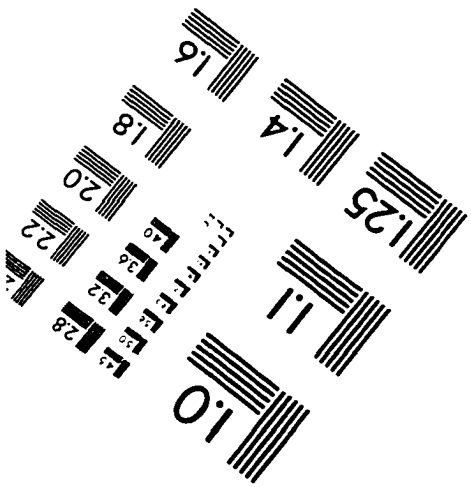
IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

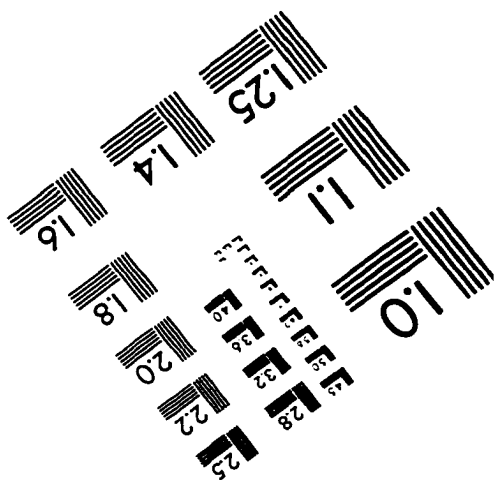












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