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AN EVALUATION OF PAINT CREEK YOUTH CENTER

A dissertation submitted to the

Division of Research and Advanced Studies
of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the Division of Criminal Justice
of the College of Education

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hereby submit this as part of the requirements for the degree of:

Doctor of Philosophy

in Criminal Justice

It is entitled

An Evaluation of Paint Creek Youth Center

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Abstract

Paint Creek Youth Center is a residential treatment center for serious juvenile offenders located in southern Ohio. The program focuses on changing the attitudes and behaviors of the youth from anti-social to pro-social. Paint Creek achieves this aim by utilizing theoretically based treatment components. Some of the treatment components include a token economy system, a positive peer culture, a system of treatment phases, and an assessment of the youths criminal thinking errors (number of problem areas). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the overall effectiveness of Paint Creek Youth Center.

The effectiveness of the program is examined by measuring the likelihood of recidivism. The criminal activity of youth admitted to Paint Creek Youth Center is compared to youth of similar characteristics who have been admitted to an Ohio detention facility (N = 480). The analysis is conducted by examining differences between the experimental and comparison group and by examining the Paint Creek youth only.

The results reveal no significant differences between the Paint Creek youth and youth admitted to detention facilities with regards to criminal activity upon release. This alone suggests that the Paint Creek program does not produce lower levels of recidivism than traditional detention facilities. However, this conclusion is premature.
The second analysis, which looks at Paint Creek youth only, provides positive results. Specifically, the results reveal that both the number of problem areas and the treatment phase of release were significantly related to the likelihood of engaging in criminal activity upon release from the facility. Thus, the structure of the Paint Creek program appears to have impacted some of the youth admitted to the facility. The type of youth who are "successful" has yet to be determined. There are several recommendations for the program which will help determine what type of youth the program benefits.
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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: Introduction .............................................. 5

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Foundation ............................... 14
  Theories Underlying Juvenile Intervention at Paint Creek 16
    Behavioral Theory ........................................... 17
      Operant Conditioning .................................. 17
      Principle of Reinforcement ......................... 18
      Principle of Punishment ............................. 20
      Principle of Extinction ................................ 21
      Principle of Shaping .................................. 22
  Social Learning ............................................. 22
  Cognitive Theory ............................................ 28
    Criminal Personality .................................... 30
      Anger ..................................................... 31
      Pride ................................................. 31
      Power Thrust ........................................ 32
      Victim Stance ......................................... 32
      Failure to Consider Injury to Others ............. 33
      Failure to Assume Obligation ....................... 33
    Interpersonal Maturity Model (I-level) ................. 33
  Family Therapy Models ..................................... 36
  Summary Of Theories ........................................ 40
  Group and Milieu Therapies at Paint Creek ................. 40
    The Concept of a Positive Peer Culture ............... 42
    Structured Peer Therapy ................................ 46
    Structured Learning Procedures ......................... 49
      Modeling and Role Playing ............................ 49
      Performance Feedback ................................ 50
      Token Economy System ................................ 51
    Reality Therapy ......................................... 52
  Summary of Group and Milieu Therapies ................. 54
  The Previous Assessments of Juvenile Treatment: What Works? 55
    Meta-Analysis: A Review ................................ 56
    Effects of Varying Program Components ................. 62
      Education and Work Programs ......................... 62
      Restitution ........................................... 63
      Family Intervention .................................. 64
    Program Components ..................................... 67
      Timing ................................................... 68
      Type of Environment .................................. 69
      Offender Selection Characteristics: Risk, Need, and Responsivity 69
    Staffing ............................................... 72
Examination of Paint Creek Youth Who Successfully Completed the Program .......................... 163
Summary of the Results ........................................ 167

CHAPTER 6: Discussion ........................................ 170
A Longitudinal Look at the RAND Sample ............... 171
A Look at the Experimental Group V. the Comparison Group ........................................ 172
A Look at the Paint Creek Youth Only ..................... 174
A Qualitative Look at the Principles of Effective Intervention ........................................ 179
Summary ............................................................ 187

CHAPTER 7: Summary and Recommendations ............ 189
Summary ............................................................ 189
Recommendations and Conclusions ......................... 194

REFERENCES ....................................................... 197

APPENDICES ....................................................... 211
List of Tables

Table 1.1 Meta Analysis Summary
Table 4.1 Youth Variables and Measurement
Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics for the RAND Sample
Table 4.3 Zero-Order Correlation Matrix for the RAND Youth
Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics for All Youth
Table 4.5 Zero-Order Correlation Matrix for all Youth

Table 5.1 Reconviction and Recommitment for the RAND Sample
Table 5.2 Zero-Order Correlations for the RAND Sample (Reconviction)
Table 5.3 Zero-Order Correlations for the RAND Sample (Recommitment)
Table 5.4 OLS for the RAND Sample
Table 5.5 Logit for the RAND Sample
Table 5.6 Reconviction and Recommitment for All Youth
Table 5.7 Zero-Order Correlations for All Youth (Reconviction)
Table 5.8 Zero-Order Correlations for All Youth (Recommitment)
Table 5.9 OLS for all Youth
Table 5.10 Logit for all Youth
Table 5.11 OLS for Paint Creek Youth in the RAND Sample
Table 5.12 Logit for Paint Creek Youth in the RAND Sample
Table 5.13 OLS for all Paint Creek Youth
Table 5.14 Logit for all Paint Creek Youth
Table 5.15 Characteristics of Paint Creek Youth by Phase of Release
Table 5.16 OLS for Phase Three Youth and the Comparison Youth
Table 5.17 Logit for Phase Three Youth and the Comparison Youth

Table 6.1 Staff Characteristics
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The issue of crime and how to deal with offenders has emerged as a key issue among politicians and practitioners. During the 1980's many politicians focused on the need to "get tough" on crime, shifting away from treatment programs toward punishment or incapacitation strategies. Today, the central focus appears to be on the rise in serious juvenile delinquency. As a result, politicians are recommending the development of more juvenile detention facilities or programs which take on a militaristic approach to accommodate the changes in juvenile criminal policies. Few platforms focus on rehabilitative programs as a mechanism of altering a youth's criminal behavior. This thesis examines the effectiveness of a progressive treatment program which seeks to alter the juvenile offender's criminal patterns as a means to reduce future criminal activity. The post criminal activity of offenders who experience this treatment program will be compared to the post criminal activity of offenders who are housed in a juvenile detention facility as a way to examine the above controversy.

Correctional policies are constantly changing because of the lack of agreement on what the dominant goal of corrections should be (Cullen and Gilbert 1982; Rothman 1980;
Walker 1994; Wilson 1975). The more recent emphasis on punishment emerged in part due to the literature suggesting that almost nothing works in the treatment of offenders (Bailey 1966; Lipton, Martinson, and Wilks 1975; Martin, Sechrest, and Redner 1981; Martinson 1974; Sechrest, White, and Brown 1979; Whitehead and Lab 1989). However, Greenwood and Zimring (1985) point out that the reliance on punishment strategies has been costly, has not reduced crime, and has led to large prison populations.

Although policymakers are still searching for new ways to deal with offenders, the goal of rehabilitation has not completely disappeared. In fact, the evidence in support of this goal is plentiful (Andrews and Bonta 1994; Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, and Cullen 1990; Basta and Davidson 1988; Cullen and Gendreau 1989; Garrett 1985; Gendreau and Andrews 1989; Gendreau and Ross 1981, 1987; Greenwood and Zimring 1985; Lipsey 1992; Palmer 1978, 1983, 1992; Ross and Gendreau 1980). The current focus, however, has shifted toward the question of what programs work best for whom and under what conditions.

Several principles of effective and ineffective intervention have been devised to determine what program components should be considered in the treatment of offenders (Andrews and Bonta 1994; Gendreau in press). A recent article by Gendreau (in press) summarized the
characteristics of eight effective principles of intervention and six ineffective principles of intervention. The effective principles include the following:

1. Develop services that emphasize behavioral strategies, such as token economies, modeling, and/or cognitive-behavioral therapies.

2. Target high-risk offenders.

3. Match the offender’s treatment to each offender’s style of learning, the staff characteristics, and staff members’ intervention methods.

4. Administer the enforcement contingencies to the offender in a fair and consistent manner.

5. Choose, train, and supervise staff members so that they provide treatment in an understanding and effective manner.

6. Emphasize pro-social attitudes and activities in the actual treatment. This emphasis seeks to interrupt the delinquent network by emphasizing a pro-social way of life.

7. Provide relapse prevention programs in the community after release.

8. Refer clients to additional services in the community.

The ineffective principles, according to Gendreau (in press), include the following:

1. Focus on nondirective or client-centered therapies, such
as psychoanalytic and psychodynamic therapies.
2. Focus on strategies put forth by the medical model.
3. Encompass the subcultural and labeling methods.
4. Target low-risk offenders.
5. Target weak predictors of recidivism.
6. Emphasize alternative programs to incarceration, including intensive supervision probation, boot camps, electronic monitoring, house arrest, and restitution.

Gendreau (in press) suggests that implementation of the effective principles should result in a favorable outcome for the offender. Paint Creek Youth Center, a residential facility in Bainbridge, Ohio, is a program that attempts to incorporate the principles of effective intervention discussed by Gendreau. Few studies have examined the simultaneous effectiveness of these principles.

Antonowicz and Ross (1994) set out to test the principles of effective intervention. They examined 44 controlled studies published from 1970 to 1991. The authors' analysis revealed six program components related to program efficacy. First, effective programs had a strong conceptual model, which specified how the intervention was going to target a reduction in future criminal activity. Antonowicz and Ross (1994) agreed that the most effective conceptual models are based on cognitive-behavioral
theories. Second, effective programs provided many intervention strategies, not just one method of treating all offenders (see Palmer 1992). Third, effective programs targeted the criminogenic needs of the offenders. Criminogenic needs are factors linked to recidivism. Among these factors are prior criminal history, criminal associates, antisocial attitudes, and drug abuse (see Andrews and Bonta 1994).

Fourth, Antonowicz and Ross found support for the principle of responsivity. Effective programs measured responsivity as the presence of behavioral or social learning techniques (e.g., modeling, role playing) or the use of a classification system (e.g., I-level or Conceptual level systems). Fifth, the programs that utilized role playing or role modeling techniques were more successful at producing change than were programs that did not include these techniques. Sixth, effective programs used social cognitive skill training which emphasize the offender’s

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'Antonowicz and Ross (1994) operationalize the responsivity principle in two ways: if a program uses a classification system or if a program uses behavioral or social learning techniques. Andrews and Bonta (1994) explain the responsivity principle in terms of differential treatment among clients. In other words, each client is receiving treatment to his/her specific needs and problems. However, one of the responsivity measures used by Antonowicz and Ross (1994) is not clearly laid out in the article. Specifically, the presence of behavioral or social learning theories does not clearly refer to the administration of differential treatment.
thinking. In contrast to the principles of effective intervention, Antonowicz and Ross (1994) found successful intervention programs for both high-risk and low-risk offenders (also see Andrews and Bonta 1994; Gendreau in press). Antonowicz and Ross (1994) found limited empirical support for some of the commonly accepted principles of effective intervention (i.e., risk, responsivity, and behavioral strategies). The supported strategies examined by Antonowicz and Ross (1994) are evident in the documentation of the Paint Creek program (Program Manual 1986; Program Manual 1994).

Many researchers argue for higher quality research before accepting or rejecting these commonly accepted principles of effective intervention (Antonowicz and Ross 1994; Palmer 1992; Lipsey 1992; Van Voorhis, Cullen, and Applegate 1995). The literature suggests that future researchers should increase the rigor of their evaluations by including an adequate comparison group, studying a sample large enough to permit generalizability, and examining the outcome of treatment. In addition, researchers should adequately describe the program, including the theoretical basis, goals and objectives, and the types of treatment interventions offered. These improvements will provide enough detail to adequately assess the principles of effective intervention.

10
Van Voorhis, Cullen, and Applegate (1995) point out that most correctional program evaluations are actually based on poorly implemented programs. The authors stress the importance of implementing and evaluating treatment programs that address the principles of effective intervention. Few studies have examined programs which are well designed and also reflect the principles of effective intervention. However, the RAND Corporation has examined one such program—Paint Creek Youth Center, mentioned earlier. The RAND Corporation reports that the results were inconclusive. This may be due to some methodological flaws (i.e., a small sample size and a short follow-up period of approximately one year).

This study reexamines the effectiveness of Paint Creek Youth Center. The effectiveness will be determined by evaluating the program's longitudinal effect on recidivism and the program's ability to conform with the principles of effective intervention.

Paint Creek Youth Center is a residential treatment program for serious delinquent youth in Ohio. This evaluation of Paint Creek Youth Center seeks to examine the following research questions:

1. Do the youth admitted to Paint Creek Youth Center have lower rates of recidivism compared to the youth admitted to Ohio training schools?
2. Does the effectiveness of the treatment provided at Paint Creek Youth Center differ among the different types of clients?

3. Do the RAND Corporation's conclusions about recidivism hold up longitudinally?

4. Does Paint Creek Youth Center address the principles of effective intervention?

This study seeks to add to the information about effective intervention strategies by evaluating the effectiveness of the Paint Creek Youth Center program. Several unique qualities of Paint Creek Youth Center influence this evaluation. The Paint Creek program relies on behavioral, social learning, cognitive, and family theories in order to treat juvenile offenders. The reliance on criminogenic theories gives greater assurance that the program is targeting causes of crime. The Paint Creek program encompasses the majority of the principles of effective intervention, such as emphasizing behavioral strategies, targeting high risk offenders, administering fair and consistent contingencies, choosing and training staff, emphasizing pro-social attitudes and behaviors, providing relapse prevention, and referring the youth to community agencies (Program Manual 1986, 1994). The grounding of the Paint Creek program in theory and its encompassment of the majority of the principles of effective
intervention may result in some important policy implications.

This document includes the following components: (1) a foundation of the pertinent theories of criminal behavior and the group therapies incorporated into the program offered at Paint Creek Youth Center, (2) an examination of the theories and therapies used at Paint Creek Youth Center through an assessment of the juvenile treatment literature, (3) a description and critique of Paint Creek Youth Center, and (4) an empirical evaluation of the effectiveness of the Paint Creek program. The evaluation will examine the overall effectiveness of a program which encompasses many theories and therapies which are advocated in the literature. However, this evaluation will not examine the effectiveness of each individual theory and therapy used at Paint Creek Youth Center.
CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Foundation

Numerous theories address changing one's behavior patterns. The theories currently viewed as effective mechanisms for change generally include behavioral theories (including operant conditioning and social learning theory), cognitive theories, and family theories. These theories provide explanations of why people engage in a variety of behaviors ranging from anti-social to pro-social. However, for the purpose of this discussion, the listed theories will primarily be used to examine intervention strategies. More specifically, this discussion will center on how a person can change his or her behavioral repertoire from inappropriate behaviors to appropriate behaviors.

Many of the theories underlying planned behavioral change suggest that such change can occur through the use of individual counseling as well as group counseling. Group and milieu therapies come in many forms. These strategies used in the treatment of juveniles include positive peer culture, structured learning theory, and reality therapy.

Although theories and therapies are essential in the development of treatment programs, many treatment programs are not grounded in theory. Developing programs which are based on a theoretical premise offer a significant
advantage. Criminological theories present explanations on crime causation. These theories move from a general focus of why crime exists, to specific areas of crime causation (e.g., lack of social bonds, learned delinquent behaviors, lack of cognitive ability). Thus, the knowledge gained from theories provides treatment programs with key components, key areas, and key populations to target when attempting to change criminal behavior patterns.

Theories suggest the correlates and causes of crime. These variables should not only be targeted in the treatment, but also examined in program evaluations. Theories aid in identifying evaluation measures to include when determining the impact of a program. The results provided by an evaluation should contribute information on the areas of programming which made a difference. This information can be used to refine the program.

Overall, theories aid in targeting the domains, the individuals, the behaviors, and the evaluation measures when developing and evaluating a program. Thus, grounding a program in theory helps to avoid the "black box" syndrome of not being able to articulate the program components and why the components exist.

In addition to the theoretical basis of a program, there are other issues that must be considered when designing or evaluating a program. These issues refer to