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A Follow-up Study of Ninth Grade Students in the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools Who Were Expelled for the Use, Possession, or Sale of Marijuana During the 1977-78 School Year

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A FIELD PROJECT

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF NINTH GRADE STUDENTS IN THE
OMAHA, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHO WERE EXPELLED
FOR THE USE, POSSESSION, OR SALE OF MARIJUANA
DURING THE 1977-78 SCHOOL YEAR

Presented To The
Graduate Faculty
University of Nebraska
at Omaha
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska at Omaha

By

Janet M. Belle

May, 1979

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the Graduate Faculty, University of
Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree, Specialist in Education, University of
Nebraska at Omaha.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Select Committee on Crime reported that the youth of the nation are suffering from a deadly disease; a dependency upon drugs. The youth are being decimated and slowly destroyed by a drug epidemic. The drug crises in the schools greatly exceeded the worst expectations.¹

As the committee looked further into the problem, it discovered that drug abuse is appropriately described as an extremely deadly epidemic which is presently raging in schools. The committee reported alarming and negative effects upon the academic and social behavior of the nation's youth.²

Halleck attributed drug abuse to the student's feelings of alienation.³ M. Samuels and D. Samuels related drug abuse to peer pressure.⁴ Their study disclosed that

¹Select Committee on Crime, United States House of Representatives Report to the 93rd Congress, Report No. 93-357, June, 1973.

²Ibid., p. 358.

³S. Halleck, "Psychiatric Treatment of the Alienated College Student," American Journal of Psychiatry, 1967, p. 124.

⁴M. Samuels and D. Samuels, Schools and Society: The Complete Handbook of Peer Counseling (Miami, Florida: Fiesta Publishing Corporation, 1975), p. 30.

youngsters are being continuously conditioned to use and accept drugs and that their parents, already inundated by the media's brainwashing, present inadequate models for them to imitate.⁵ Gold and Mann concluded drug use was a defense against poor self image.⁶ Levinson found drug users were basically lonely, unable to establish relationships, and identified poorly with parents and teachers.⁷

It appears that increased use of marijuana is contributing to the decline of the learning environment. More than one in every five of the nation's fourteen and fifteen year old youth smoked pot in 1974. It is estimated that six percent of the nation's three million high school students smoke pot each day. More than one half of our population between eighteen and twenty years of age smoke pot each day.⁸

Why are parents and millions of young people all over the country trying to understand the drug scene? Some are curious observers. Others are involved with drugs and desire further information about addiction and its effects on the human body. And, of course, there are many who do not wish

⁵Ibid., p. 27.

⁶M. Gold and D. Mann, "Delinquency as Defense," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1972, 42, pp. 463-479.

⁷B. Levinson, Drug Education: A Pilot Study of a Three Dimensional Approach, (Montreux, Switzerland, October, 1973).

⁸T.H. Bell, "Washington Report," Kappan, 1976, 57, p. 423.

to understand since they have already decided what they think or feel. They have already decided what they want done or want to do, positions which, unfortunately, are not always based on accurate information and rational discussion.⁹

THE PROBLEM

The problem of drug abuse by young people must be placed against its broader social background. It may be dealt with then, not as a puzzling and isolated aberration of the young, but as one response to the pressures and dislocations of a highly complex, rapidly changing society; a society in which the difficulties of growing up are many and confused.¹⁰

Tragically, the chances are substantial to the extent that when parents send their children to school each day, they are being sent into a drug filled environment. They are placing their children in an atmosphere where drugs are usually bought and sold, an atmosphere where there is considerable pressure from other students.

Drug abuse in the schools has become so extensive and pervasive that often it is only the uniquely gifted

⁹J.H. Brenner, R. Coles and D. Meagher, Drugs and Youth (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1970), p. 19.

¹⁰Anne MacLeod, Growing Up in America - A Background to Contemporary Drug Abuse (Rockville, Maryland: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1975), p. 11.

and self-controlled child who is capable of avoiding involvement with some form of drug use.¹¹

As well as other school districts, the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools are experiencing the problem of drug abuse; namely, the use of marijuana. The disciplinary action used in the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools is based on a policy established by the Board of Education. Quite often the student is expelled from school for the duration of the semester.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to follow up those ninth grade students who, during the 1977-78 school year, were expelled from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools as a result of the use, sale, or possession of marijuana. The intent of the investigator is not only to determine the number of students who were expelled from school but to identify those expelled students who are currently enrolled in the tenth grade, those who withdrew and reside in Omaha, and those who left the Omaha School District whose whereabouts are unknown.

As a result of the foregoing identifications, it is the intention of the investigator to develop a brief case study on each such student. The data presented in case studies will be reviewed carefully to see if there is any

¹¹Ibid., p. 18.

observable evidence that marijuana usage has a negative effect upon the academic, social, emotional, and physical development of students.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study will be limited to the ninth grade students in the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools who were expelled for the use, possession, or sale of marijuana during the year 1977-78.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Cannabis Sativa. A plant that has been cultivated for centuries for the hemp fibers of the stem, the seeds of which are used in feed mixture; and the oil as an ingredient of paint, as well as for the biologically active substance contained in its leaves and flowering.

Expulsion. The act of forcing a student to leave for the remainder of the semester.

Hashish Oil. A concentrate of Cannabis, hashish oil is produced by a process of repeated extraction to yield a dark viscous liquid, samples of which contain from twenty to sixty percent tetrahydrocannabinols. A drop or two of this liquid on a cigarette is equal in psychoactive effect to an entire dry marijuana cigarette.

Marijuana. A dried flowering or fruiting top of the plant Cannabis Sativa; commonly called Indian Hemp.

Tetrahydrocannabinols (THC). A mind-affecting chemical - the principal and most active ingredient in marijuana. The active ingredient has been synthesized and purified.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that, as a result of this study, the Omaha, Nebraska Public School district administrators will gain more insight into the effectiveness of current procedures in handling marijuana users.

PROCEDURES

The procedures to be followed in this study are as follows:

1. To examine the literature concerning the effect marijuana has on users.
2. To follow up the ninth grade students who have been expelled for the use, possession, or sale of marijuana, identifying those who successfully completed ninth grade and enrolled in the tenth grade, those who withdrew and remain in the school district, and those who left the district.
3. To develop a brief case study for each person as identified in number two above.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter I will include a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the limitations of the study, the definition of terms, and the significance of the study.

Chapter II will review the related literature.

Chapter III will include a presentation and analysis of the data regarding ninth grade students who were expelled from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools for possessing, selling, or using marijuana during the 1977-78 school year.

Chapter IV will include the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature on the use of marijuana was made to determine what effect marijuana has on student behavior and school achievement.

The intent of this chapter is to place the phenomena of individual use of marijuana into a broad perspective while maintaining contact with individual cases, and to link them--not forgetting the unique nature of the person, drug, or group--to the larger context.

WHAT IS MARIJUANA?

Marijuana (Cannabis) is the dried flowering or fruiting top of the plant Cannabis Sativa, commonly called Indian Hemp. It usually looks like fine green tobacco. Its possession is illegal. Hashish is a preparation of Cannabis taken orally in many forms.

Marijuana is smoked in pipes or cigarettes. Hashish is frequently made into candy, sniffed in powder form, mixed with honey for drinking, or with butter to spread on bread.

Some slang names used for marijuana are Acapulco gold, joints, sticks, reefers, weed, grass, pot, muggles,

mooters, Indian hay, locoweed, mu, giggle-smoke, griffo, mohasky, Mary Jane, and Mexican gold.¹²

It is impossible to define marijuana without first attempting to clear up a massive terminological confusion. For a variety of reasons, the term "marijuana" has become, in this country, synonymous with Cannabis and all of its products and derivatives, including the natural and synthetic tetrahydrocannabinols (THC).

For clarity in this discussion, the term "Cannabis" will be used to refer to the particular forms of Cannabis which are widespread in North America, and the term THC will be used where derivatives of synthetics of Cannabis are involved.

Cannabis is an ancient substance which is obtained from the common hemp plant, Cannabis Sativa, of which Cannabis Indica and Cannabis Americana are species. This plant grows wild in most temperate climates of the world. The fibers of its stalks are widely used for manufacturing of rope. The substance Cannabis is derived from a resin exuded by the female plant. The resin is primarily concentrated in the tops of the female plant but it is also present to some degree in its leaves and flowering shoots.

¹²Alton Blakeslee, What You Should Know About Drugs and Narcotics, (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Press, 1976), p. 9.

The potency of the Cannabis is a result of the climatic and soil conditions under which the plant grows, the time and methods of harvesting, and the part of the plant from which it is derived. In certain parts of India, primarily the high plateaus, cultivation and harvesting are highly developed. Once the peculiar qualities of its resin were recognized, the hemp plant came to be cultivated and tended with great care. It was learned that the quality of the resin, as measured by its effect, was not dependent solely on the vagaries of climate conditions--such as heat and drought--but also on technique of horticulture.

THE HISTORY OF MARIJUANA

The earliest reference to Cannabis appears in a work on pharmacy written by the Chinese Emperor Shen-Neng in 2734 B.C.; possibly two thousand years before the plant reached India.¹³ But it is in India that marijuana has been most carefully cultivated, highly valued, and widely used. Perhaps that is why marijuana was given the botanical name Cannabis Indica, Cannabis of India, rather than Cannabis of China.

Indian literature is replete with references to the hemp plant, the different uses of which have been

¹³J.H. Brenner, R. Coles and D. Meagher, Drugs and Youth, (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1970), pp. 19-20.

tightly interwoven with the fabric of Indian life. For at least two thousand years the drug has been richly used for medicinal, religious, social, and recreational purposes. Marijuana and hashish have been seen as protectors from evil influence, supporters in times of famine, stimulants to labor, and keys to divine revelation. Indians of the nineteenth century used marijuana as the "poor man's heaven" and "soother of grief."

Indeed, in India, a highly civilized country with a complex culture, diverse religious, and exquisite art forms, the use of marijuana is not surprising. India is a country where appreciation of the aesthetic and a fine regard for individual feelings are by tradition highly valued. Also, it is a place that has devoted itself to inwardness and contemplation, and where sensuousness has not withered before waves of self-hate. Yet, India as a country of extreme poverty and famine must neglect human needs and wants which possibly contributes to a substantial amount of the population's dependency on the drug.

From India the use of marijuana spread to the Middle East and other countries bordering on the Eastern Mediterranean, including Greece. Many centuries passed before the use of marijuana spread to Western Europe where it was apparently introduced by Napoleon's army on its return home from Egypt. It is not clear how and when Cannabis came to the New World,

but by the nineteenth century it was extensively used in Central America, South America, and Mexico. Not until around 1920, however, was it introduced in significant quantities in the United States.¹⁴

FORMS OF CANNABIS AND ITS COST

Three forms of Cannabis which are currently distributed on the illicit U.S. market are marijuana, hashish and hashish oil.¹⁵

One of the major sources for the marijuana traffic found in the United States is Mexico. However, in certain areas of the United States marijuana is grown and sold locally. The locally grown marijuana cannot compete in quality with Mexican marijuana, but it adds substantially to the overall traffic in the United States.

The current street dose is sixty to ninety milligrams of marijuana per cigarette. Prices range from fifty cents to three dollars for a single cigarette. Kilogram prices vary from seventy dollars to over two hundred dollars depending upon quantity and area.

¹⁴J.H. Brenner, R. Coles and D. Meagher, Drugs and Youth, (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1970), pp. 19-20.

¹⁵Drug Enforcement Administration. Drugs of Abuse, (Washington, D.C.: Office of Public Affairs, 1975), p. 20.

EFFECTS OF MARIJUANA ON THE USER

Cannabis Sativa: As a psychoactive drug, Cannabis is usually smoked in the form of loosely rolled cigarettes ("joints"), although it may also be taken orally. It may be smoked alone or in combination with other plant materials. Low doses tend to produce initial restlessness and an increased sense of well-being, followed by a dreamy, carefree state of relaxation. In addition, the use of marijuana may cause alteration of sensory perceptives, including an illusory expansion of time and space, and a more vivid sense of touch, sight, smell, taste, and speech.¹⁶

Marijuana users are generally more prevalent among those students who find it necessary to use drugs in order to achieve courage, to gain self-knowledge, or to satisfy strong cravings.¹⁷

It is important to recognize that as a result of this relaxed, euphoric state, the individual who uses marijuana is more suggestible and therefore, is more easily influenced to believe something which may be clearly a distortion. This is where the danger lies. The user will

¹⁶Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁷Brill, Smith, J.R. Wittenborn, and S.A. Wittenborn, Drugs and Youth: Proceedings of the Rutgers Symposium on Drug Abuse, (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1969), p. 164.

either be convinced or be convinced by others that the ideas and so-called insights attained while using "grass" are valid and may proceed to react to, and act on them. If these indeed are false conclusions, the users' discomfort will eventually be increased and the thought processes will move farther from reality. The personal insights gained are generally superficial and difficult to maintain once the drug effect wears off.¹⁸

Finally, the need and pressure to belong and to identify with a "hip" group, or with a group that offers the freedom to be "oneself" is tantalizing. This same sense of belongingness and of identification is a significant factor causing the regular user to feel bound to the drug-oriented group.¹⁹

The LaGuardia Report, compiled by Mayor LaGuardia's committee on marijuana in New York City, indicated that marijuana was neither criminogenic nor associated with a criminal sub-group.

The conclusions of the LaGuardia Report published in 1938, are the chief source of support for those who contend that marijuana is a harmless drug. A re-reading of some of the experimental findings on which these conclusions were based suggests that some of the negative

¹⁸Richard H. Blum, Students and Drugs, (San Francisco, California: Jasey Bros., Inc., 1969), pp. 82-84.

¹⁹Donald J. Welk, Drugs and Youth (Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1971), pp. 12, 15.

results were largely ignored. For example, among seventy-seven subjects who were given extracts of marijuana concentrate (containing tetrahydrocannabinols) or who smoked from one to ten cigarettes, six developed psychotic episodes of three to ten hours duration, characterized by mental confusion and excitement of a delirious nature with periods of laughter and of anxiety.

In three others, prolonged psychoses developed, though their previous emotional state was such that the role of marijuana in precipitating the psychoses was unclear.

Some studies have found that simple psychological functions were little affected by marijuana, but that complex functions were affected adversely by both large and small doses. Falling off in ability which occurred when the individual was taking marijuana, manifested itself in loss of body speed and accuracy.²⁰

Brill, Smith and Wittenborn stated that their experience at the Harvard Health Service revealed that the use of marijuana did entail considerable risk, did cause harm, and had few counter-balancing beneficial effects. Also, they had observed a great many students who insisted that it helped them and who had continued its use even while their grades went down. It was noted that their ability to cope with themselves and society decreased with the continued use of the narcotic. During discussions

²⁰Brill, Smith, J.R. Wittenborn, and S.A. Wittenborn, Drugs and Youth: Proceedings of the Rutgers Symposium on Drug Abuse, (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1972), pp. 172-173.

with these students, they admitted that they lost the desire and the ability to study.²¹

According to Brenner, Coles and Meagher, the following describes the experience of the marijuana user:

The marijuana user becomes newly aware of his surroundings. He takes note of shapes, colors, and textures in a way that he has never done before. His perceptions and appreciations are not necessarily more profound, but he certainly sees things differently. His focus of interest shifts; attention to objects waxes and wanes. The experience has an element of concreteness in that shapes, sounds, and colors are minutely examined. Listening to music becomes a total experience for the subject, who is convinced that the structural components of the music are clearer, and therefore more beautiful than ever before. Touch gives more pleasure and wonderment and seems more important, whether it be the touch of a fabric, a book, or another person.

Under the influence of marijuana, speech is affected; the user's desire to talk decreases, and he is conscious that speech requires a certain physical effort, felt in the muscles around the mouth and throat. Psychologically he simply prefers not to speak. So, a person who has taken marijuana can seem silent.²²

Huddleston reported that pupils generally do not attend school while in the extreme stage of marijuana usage--a stage characterized by hilarity, talkativeness, and general animation--or even when they are in the later

²¹Ibid., p. 173.

²²J.H. Brenner, R. Coles and D. Meagher, Drugs and Youth, (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1970), pp. 19-20.

stage--one which is characterized by depression, drowsiness, and uncoordination. Teachers should become aware of certain observable characteristics of students who are under the suspected influence of marijuana. For instance, if the pupil is indulging in more than occasional marijuana smoking, he may appear sleepy, perspire freely and show marked pallor. The teacher should be alert to identify these signs, even though they may indicate health abnormalities. When they are noted, the teacher should refer the pupil to the health service for regardless of what causes the condition, an investigation is imperative.²³

The marijuana smoker may have badly stained fingers because of the practice of holding cigarettes until they are almost consumed. His eyes--depending on the recency of use--may be reddened, and the pupils of the eyes may appear frozen and dilated. To conceal this telltale sign, the smoker will often wear dark glasses. Another observable factor is that the student may come to school wearing clothes that carry the odor of the marijuana smoke. This can be identified because it is similar to the odor of burning hay.

²³Samuel A. Huddleston, Coping With the Student Drug Problem (Greensburg, Indiana: A Service for Principals as Modern Today, 1970), pp. 12-14.

Letteri conducted a survey of secondary school students in New York state in order to examine the relative influence of parents and peers on marijuana use among adolescents. Independent data were obtained from adolescents, their parents, and their best school friends. The data indicated that drug use by peers exerted a greater influence than drug use by parents. Friends were more similar in their use of marijuana than in any other activity or attitude. The highest rates of marijuana use were observed among adolescents whose parents and friends were drug users. The data concluded that curiosity and peer pressure were the main problems of drug abuse.

Adolescent drug use had been interpreted by some as a response to parental consumption of psychoactive drugs. The assumption was that the child was imitative of adult behavior. The conclusions have been based on studies which used the child's perceptions of parents' drug use but not actual self-reports by the child's parents.²⁴

Hansen reports that effects of marijuana smoking are relatively unpredictable. The symptoms experienced by the user are probably due more to his predilection or expectations than to the effect of Cannabis. In addition, the quality of

²⁴Dan J. Letteri, Predicting Adolescent Drug Abuse: A Review of Issues, Methods and Correlates, (Rockville, Maryland: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1975), p. 36.

marijuana varies considerably depending upon the amount of tetrahydrocannabinol present. Physical effects were patently indiscernable in small doses. The heavy or chronic smoker may develop a reddening of the whites of the eyes. The more experienced smoker would more commonly be relaxed, quiet, and introspective.²⁵

EXPANDING MISUSE OF MARIJUANA

In the last few years there has been a deluge of reporting about the rapidly expanding incidence of drug misuse in our society. Evidence of its epidemic levels is becoming so prevalent that even those with but a casual or passing interest in the phenomenon are willing to cite drug abuse as one of our major problems. There are indications that the majority of the population, seldom so articulate, are voicing concerns for the development of programs to reduce this major threat to the physical and mental well-being of our society.²⁶

Quite naturally, the involvement of school-age children in this problem has become a focal point for concern. The skyrocketing number of young people exhibiting

²⁵Esther D. Hamsen, Children and Drugs (Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1972), p. 39.

²⁶Donald J. Welk, Drugs and Youth, (Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1971), p. 65.

psychological or physiological dysfunctions as a result of drug involvement has created a great urgency for a study, responses, and appropriate action.

The school, in its traditional role, has been looked to as one of the chief institutions to reverse this appalling trend. But the schools do not exist in a state of isolation from the communities they serve. Education must reflect the needs of the individual, but it must also draw from the community those resources needed to accomplish the goals established for treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention of drug abuse. In the same way, the family must also accept its share of responsibility if society is to move toward viable solutions. If the coordination of efforts from the school, the family, and the community is unified, a significant impact upon drug abuse can be expected.²⁷

NEBRASKA LAW ON THE USE OF MARIJUANA

In the state of Nebraska, the possession of less than eight ounces of marijuana or less than twenty-five marijuana cigarettes is punishable by a mandatory jail sentence of seven days with instructions on drug abuse. A subsequent offense is punishable by not less than one nor

²⁷ Alton Blakeslee, What You Should Know About Drugs and Narcotics, (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Press, 1976), p. 40.

more than five years in prison. Possession of eight ounces or more of marijuana or of twenty-five or more marijuana cigarettes or possession with intent to sell is punishable by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years. The sale of marijuana is punishable by not less than two nor more than five years.²⁸

OMAHA, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS LAW

The relationship between the Omaha Public Schools and the Omaha Police Department relative to the handling of drug and drug related cases during the 1978-79 school year is outlined in the following statements:

During the last legislature session, the senators reviewed the legal status of marijuana and decided law enforcement agencies should not be concerned about the marijuana amounts under one ounce. This has several procedural implications for the public schools of Nebraska. First, if the police are called to the school for an amount of marijuana of less than one ounce, they will pick up the marijuana and make a property report. They will not take the student, nor will they charge the student.

Between an ounce or a pound would constitute a misdemeanor. The police would take the marijuana, and file a property report. The officer may or may not remove the student from school. If you feel the student should leave the school setting, you should follow the due process procedure; and that is the

²⁸J.H. Brenner, R. Coles and D. Meagher, Drugs and Youth (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1970), p. 164.

student would be recommended to the Board of Education for an expulsion. If the student refuses to leave, we would cite him as a trespasser and advise the officer of this decision. This places a new charge before the officer, and should cause the student to be removed from school. Any amount of marijuana over one pound is considered a felony. A student in this situation will be removed from the building by the police.²⁹

DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR MARIJUANA USERS

The goal of a drug education program in the secondary school should be to provide information in such a manner that students can understand the social, medical, moral, and legal implications of drug use. To accomplish this goal, drug education can be organized into two categories: topical, or concerned with giving information, and dynamic, dealing with decision making.

The justification for this information-giving approach is twofold. First, the subject of drugs is paramount in the minds of many students, and second, drug use is a matter of great social, medical, moral, and legal concern to society at the present time. Therefore, it is a topic that should be incorporated in the curriculum of the schools just as racism, pollution, and violence.

²⁹Omaha Public Schools Student Personnel Services, Drugs, Omaha Public School District, Omaha, Nebraska, (an unpublished article), 1978, p. 4.

The dynamic approach to drug education focuses on how a young person arrives at the decision to use or not use drugs. A drug education program requires an examination of the motivational forces and situations that lead students to seek this form of experience. A drug program also requires the imparting of a feeling for what drug use would mean in personal terms such as: what would drugs do to me? or what would drugs do for me? This is the critical feature of the entire effort, because in the last analysis, the choice of using drugs or not using them is in the hand of the student.³⁰

³⁰Samuel A. Huddleston, Coping With the Student Drug Problem, (Greensburg, Indiana: A Service for Principals as Modern Today, 1970), p. 3.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

The possible effects of marijuana upon a student's social behavior, emotional development, and academic progress can be theorized by a careful study of detailed case reports. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the actual data on selected students in order to determine possible motivational causes, or patterns, of behavior.

In developing the case studies, each cumulative folder was reviewed to ascertain the student's physical characteristics, academic progress, and social and emotional behavioral problems from kindergarten through the eighth grades.

The twenty case reports published in this study were selected from ninth grade students who were expelled from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools for possessing, selling, or using marijuana during the 1977-78 school year.

The Nebraska school law, Section 79-449 states:

A student may be recommended for expulsion from school for engaging in the unlawful possession,

selling, dispensing, or use of a controlled substance or alcoholic liquor.³¹

To protect the names of those students who were actual users of marijuana, fictitious names were used in the case studies of those students who were expelled from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools for possessing, selling or using marijuana during the 1977-78 school year. The identification is as follows:

- | | | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| 1. Bill | 5. David | 9. James | 13. Jim | 17. Don |
| 2. Ken | 6. Doris | 10. Doug | 14. Joe | 18. Gary |
| 3. John | 7. Tammy | 11. Roger | 15. Sam | 19. Sharon |
| 4. Terry | 8. Ron | 12. Paul | 16. Rena | 20. Chris |

³¹Omaha Public Schools Student Personnel Services, "Due Process," Policy and Procedures, Use of Forms, The Hearing, 1979-1980, p. 15.

BRIEF CASE STUDIES

1. Bill

Physical Characteristics

Bill is a white male student whose physical stature was small for his age. He was described as well dressed and nice looking. His motor skills appeared underdeveloped and immature. His general health was good. His vision had to be corrected by glasses.

Academic Progress

Bill was identified as a low achiever. During his formative school years, he had difficulty performing to his own satisfaction which resulted in temper tantrums. He would often start a project over again several times. Later in his school years he failed most of his classes and seemed not to care.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Bill showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. He seemed to cling to older girls for mothering effect. He showed a definite need for love, patience, and understanding of his problems. He made the statement, "Nobody loves me." He would constantly instigate trouble with fellow students. In eighth grade, Bill would disturb the class by discussing "getting stoned," "smoking dope," and "being smashed," with his friends. Despite all of these problems, his peer group was acceptive of, and responsive to him.

2. Ken

Physical Characteristics

Ken is a white male student who is small in stature. He was described as not looking clean. He had some difficulty with verbal communication and lacked adequate physical coordination. His general health was good.

Academic Progress

Ken was identified as a low achiever. He was capable of performing good work but was considered lazy. Ken was a poor listener and had difficulty following oral directions. Consequently, he had trouble completing his work on time. Ken seemed to have the ability but lacked motivation. His poor attitude toward school resulted in continually decreasing academic success. Ken needed to be constantly challenged in school work.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Ken appeared to be emotionally disturbed. He indicated a lack of respect for self and lack of confidence. He often resorted to attention-getting behavior and displayed a great disrespect for others at times and was often untruthful. Ken had difficulty in getting along with his peers, which resulted in negative reactions from his peer group.

3. John

Physical Characteristics

John is a black male student. He was described as small-boned but well proportioned for his size. His clothes and appearance were usually neat and tidy. He wore braces on his teeth in the fifth grade. John did not participate actively in physical activities.

Academic Progress

John was identified as a low achiever. During his formative years of school, John made fair progress. It was suggested by his teacher that he repeat second grade due to his lack of penmanship and reading ability. His attention span was short. His favorite classes were math and music. John needed constant encouragement in his daily class work. He was considered to be a very hard worker. He had the capability of doing acceptable work.

Social and Emotional Behavior

John seemed to be emotionally disturbed. He was rather aggressive and had a tendency to tease and sometimes fight. He could be a "creator" of trouble among students. John seemed always happy and had the habit of giggling while doing his work. He was a good follower and leader at times. He liked to be around his friends and was well liked by them.

4. Terry

Physical Characteristics

Terry is a black male student of average size. He was described as being usually neat and clean. There was a scar on his face of which he seemed self conscious. Terry's physical skills were average.

Academic Progress

Terry was identified as a low achiever. He seemed to be very slow academically. Terry had difficulty doing kindergarten work. His attention span and interest were short. He had difficulty reading. He also did not listen or follow directions. His work in math was very poor. Terry often did not finish what he started. In the sixth grade, Terry was put in a Special Education classroom. In a regular classroom situation the work was very difficult for him.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Terry showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. He was rather withdrawn and did not have much to do with the other students. Terry was quick to fight, if agitated. He daydreamed a good deal in class. Terry would sometimes cry for no reason at all. Terry liked the other students, and he seemed to be well liked by his classmates.

5. David

Physical Characteristics

David was a black male student who was of average size and well built. He seemed healthy except for frequent colds. David's physical skills were very good.

Academic Progress

David was a low achiever. Although he was a slow reader, he did excellent work in manuscripts and detailed drawings. David worked well on an individual basis. When he entered third grade, he was put into a Special Education classroom. He tried very hard in school.

Social and Emotional Behavior

David showed signs of being emotionally distressed. During his early years in school, he would crawl on the floor continuously and make funny noises. He seemed rather nervous at times and would get very angry when criticized. David was popular with his peers.

6. Doris

Physical Characteristics

Doris is a black female student of average size. She was neatly dressed and seemed well cared for. She had difficulty modulating her voice. Doris' motor skills were fair.

Academic Progress

Doris was a low achiever. She never attended kindergarten which the teachers felt placed her at a great disadvantage with others. Doris was retained in the third grade. Her handwriting was quite small. She had difficulty with math. Doris' overall achievement was below her grade level.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Doris showed some evidence of being emotionally disturbed. She was quiet and rather withdrawn, yet she displayed tendencies toward being stubborn such as refusing to follow directions, continuously pouting, or crying for attention. Doris was accepted by her peers and she seemed to have developed many friendships.

7. Tammy

Physical Characteristics

Tammy is a white female student of average size. It was recorded that she came to school unclean and unkempt, however, she seemed to be healthy. Tammy had poor motor skills, and showed little interest in physical activities.

Academic Progress

Tammy was a low achiever. She had difficulty retaining any information and/or new skills, and had to repeat the first grade. Her attention span was short, and her progress in reading and math was slow. If Tammy's work was too challenging, she became quite upset. She had a low frustration level and needed strict supervision.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Tammy showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. She demanded the attention of the class with her constant misbehavior and seemed to be easily misled by her peers. Tammy was extremely talkative and had a very poor self concept. At times, her attitude toward school was very poor. However, she liked being around the students and was fairly well liked by her classmates.

8. Ron

Physical Characteristics

Ron is a white male student of average size. He was well dressed and looked healthy. He wore braces on his teeth. Ron's motor skills were average.

Academic Progress

Ron was a low achiever. He would rather be involved in social situations instead of academic material. Ron was not motivated to do class assignments, and his attention span was short. Ron seemed not to care for school.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Ron showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. He was known by the other students as a fighter and trouble maker as well as the class clown. Ron liked being around the other kids, but he was not well liked by his peers. In the eighth grade, he was placed in a home for boys.

9. James

Physical Characteristics

James is a Spanish male student. His physical stature was tall and well built. He was a clean looking student and appeared to be in good health. His physical skills were good.

Academic Progress

James was identified as a low achiever. His academic skills were below his grade level and required much remediation. He needed to be motivated and watched constantly or he would neglect his school work. Often he complained about having to do so much work. James required much praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement.

Social and Emotional Behavior

James showed some evidence of being emotionally disturbed. He seemed to enjoy kicking other students when they were not looking at him. Sometimes James would be untruthful when being reprimanded. He often said that everyone was picking on him. James did not seem to like many of the students in the classroom, although he was fairly well liked by his classmates.

10. Doug

Physical Characteristics

Doug is a white male student. He was described as being short and stocky. He was clean and neat. He had a slight speech problem and wore glasses. Doug was very proficient in his motor skills.

Academic Progress

Doug was a low achiever. His drawings lacked detail which indicated some immaturity. Doug's attention span was short, and he was very easily distracted. He did not give his attention to reading and missed out on much of the instruction. Doug was failing most of his classes.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Doug seemed to be emotionally disturbed. He would bully other students on the playground. When corrected, he would throw temper tantrums. However, he remained quite sociable. When Doug could have his way, he had a warm, delightful personality. Doug was liked by his peers.

11. Roger

Physical Characteristics

Roger is a black male student of average size. He was usually neat and clean. It was noted that he had a speech problem. Roger had poor coordination in motor skills.

Academic Progress

Roger was identified as a low achiever. During his early school years, he knew his colors but needed to gain a better understanding of numbers. He had trouble grasping new ideas. Roger, also, had a short attention span.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Roger showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. During his early school years, he had to have something to suck on--eraser, pencil or shirt. He had a tendency to pout when corrected. Roger seemed very close to his twin sister. He craved and needed a lot of attention. Roger liked his classmates, and he was always well liked by them.

12. Paul

Physical Characteristics

Paul is a white male student who was thin, tall and of average build. He was healthy and seemed to have had attention. Paul was average in motor skills, but he tended to think of himself as "the best."

Academic Progress

Paul was a low achiever. All of his academic skills were below average. He needed constant attention and praise in order to do his school work. It was observed that he would hastily and carelessly complete his assignments in order to have time for socializing. Paul had to repeat third grade because of his low academic skills.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Paul showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. He was a very nervous person and tended to want attention at his command. Sometimes he would just scribble on his desk and daydream. However, Paul could be loud and noisy at times. He was liked and well accepted by his peers.

13. Tim

Physical Characteristics

Tim is a Spanish male student who was rather large for his age. He was neat, clean and well dressed and had a healthy-looking appearance. His motor skills appeared below average although it was determined that he could be an excellent athlete.

Academic Progress

Tim is an average achiever. He worked hard but sometimes hurried with written assignments. His math and reading skills were good. Sometimes Tim would not listen to directions given in class. His overall academic work was good.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Tim showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. After his first year in school, he became a show-off to other students as well as causing numerous disturbances in the classroom. He would trip, poke, or insult his classmates. Tim started showing an indifferent attitude toward classroom rules and displayed disruptive behavior. Tim was fairly well liked by his peers.

14. Joe

Physical Characteristics

Joe is a white male student, who was of average size for his age. He was neatly dressed and had a clean appearance, although he frequently would bite his fingernails. Joe had good physical skills.

Academic Progress

Joe was an average achiever. He did average work in most areas. Spelling was his weakest subject area. Joe had a tendency not to listen and then had to ask too many questions before he could start his work. He often rushed, and therefore, did somewhat careless work.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Joe showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. He was quite talkative, nervous, and restless. Joe had moments when he could not control himself with other students. He had been under the doctor's care for supervision of hyperactive tendencies. However, Joe was liked by his classmates.

15. Sam

Physical Characteristics

Sam is a black male student who was large boned and of average size for his age. He was well dressed and neat. His physical skills were very good.

Academic Progress

Sam was an average achiever. His overall progress in school was good. Sometimes he would fail to listen to his teacher which would result in his not producing better work. However, Sam seemed to like school.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Sam showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. He was quiet and would show deep-seated resentment toward authority. When being corrected, he would raise his voice in a hostile tone and tell the teacher to shut up. His classmates liked him. In eighth grade, Sam was placed in a home for boys.

16. Rena

Physical Characteristics

Rena is an Italian female student who was large-boned and of average size for her age. She dressed neatly and always looked clean although she had frequent skin infections. Rena had good physical skills.

Academic Progress

Rena was an above average achiever. She was proud of her Italian heritage and shared much information with regard to it in her geography class. Usually, Rena finished her work first and then used her spare time productively. She always talked about going to college to become an Air Force pilot. Her overall academic skills were above average.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Rena showed evidence of being emotionally disturbed. She was very critical of her peers--loud and boisterous. Rena had a tendency to swear frequently. Although Rena's behavior was quite disruptive, there were some students who liked her.

17. Don

Physical Characteristics

Don is a white male student who was husky and of average size and build. He was neat, clean, and seemed to be healthy and well cared for.

Academic Progress

Don was an average achiever. He made progress in school with a good understanding of math and reading. Don could be easily distracted. However, he competed to get his work done hastily which led to errors. He had a lot of motivation but could easily feel defeated. His overall academic progress in school was average.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Don was not emotionally disturbed. He liked to be a leader and helper and often liked the encouragement of approval. He was well liked and had many friends.

18. Gary

Physical Characteristics

Gary is a white male student who was of average size for his age. His dress, grooming, and appearance left a great deal to be desired. His eye and hand coordination were poor as well as his overall physical skills.

Academic Progress

Gary was an average achiever. He enjoyed looking at pictures in story books and was very interested in school and his work. Gary knew the alphabet early, reasoned well, and was able to discuss nicely. His overall work was above average.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Gary was not emotionally disturbed. He was shy and quiet yet socialized very well with others. He did not have a temper and was able to take criticism from his teacher. Gary was very friendly and had good peer relationships.

19. Sharon

Physical Characteristics

Sharon is a black female student who was tall and thin for her age. Usually she was neat and clean. She had frequent colds which resulted in excessive absences. Sharon's physical skills were very good.

Academic Progress

Sharon was an above average achiever. She had good work habits and did not find her work difficult. Her concept of numbers was very good as well as her reading ability. She remembered and utilized study skills learned in reading. She also completed her assignments. Sharon's overall academic progress was above average.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Sharon was not emotionally disturbed. She had a pleasant disposition and showed respect toward adults. Sharon got along well with others and liked to be a leader among the girls. Her peers were friendly toward her in work and play.

20. Chris

Physical Characteristics

Chris is a white male student who was tall and slender for his age. He was a well dressed, healthy youngster. Chris' physical skills were fair.

Academic Progress

Chris was an above average achiever. His fine motor skills and verbal expression indicated mature understanding and capabilities. Chris' interest in reading reflected in his achievements as well as his ability to print nicely. His overall academic skills were above average.

Social and Emotional Behavior

Chris was not emotionally disturbed. He was highly social and enjoyed verbalizing with his friends as well as helping them. Chris had a most pleasing personality and associated with others very well which resulted in his having many friendships.

ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

The purpose of the study was to follow up those ninth grade students who, during the 1977-78 school year, were expelled from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools as a result of the use, sale, or possession of marijuana. The intent of the investigator was not only to determine the number of students who were expelled from school but to identify those expelled students who are currently enrolled in the tenth grade, those who withdrew and reside in Omaha, and those who left the Omaha School District whose whereabouts are unknown.

Table 1 indicates the twenty ninth grade students, by race and sex, who were expelled for the use, sale, or possession of marijuana from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools during the 1977-78 school year.

Of the number of students expelled, ten percent were black females, twenty-five percent were black males, ten percent were white females, and forty-five percent were white males. Ten percent were Hispanic males.

Table 1

AN ANALYSIS, BY RACE AND SEX, OF THE TWENTY NINTH GRADE STUDENTS WHO WERE EXPELLED FROM THE OMAHA, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 1977-78 FOR THE USE, SALE, OR POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA

Race	Number	Percent of Total
Black Females	2	10
Black Males	5	25
White Females	2	10
White Males	9	45
Hispanic Males	2	10
TOTAL	20	100

Table 2 presents data regarding the twenty ninth grade students who were expelled for the use of marijuana during the 1977-78 school year and who are presently enrolled in the tenth grade, those who withdrew and live in Omaha, Nebraska, and those who left the Omaha School District with their whereabouts unknown.

Seventy-five percent of those expelled are currently enrolled in the tenth grade. Ten percent have withdrawn from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools and are residing in Omaha. Fifteen percent have withdrawn from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools and are living in Omaha, Nebraska.

Table 2

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TWENTY NINTH GRADE STUDENTS WHO WERE
 EXPELLED FROM THE OMAHA, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 DURING THE 1977-78 SCHOOL YEAR WHO ARE PRESENTLY
 ENROLLED IN THE TENTH GRADE, THOSE WHO WITHDREW,
 AND THOSE WHO LEFT THE OMAHA SCHOOL DISTRICT
 WITH WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Status	Number	Percent of Total
Enrolled in Omaha Public Schools, Tenth Grade, 1978-79	15	75
Withdrawn from Omaha Public Schools, Residing in Omaha, Nebraska	2	10
Withdrawn from Omaha Public Schools, Not Residing in Omaha, Nebraska	3	15
TOTAL	20	100

Table 3 presents data regarding the twenty expelled ninth grade marijuana user's physical characteristics, their academic progress, and their social and emotional behavioral patterns.

In developing the case studies, each student's cumulative folder was reviewed to determine the individual's (1) physical characteristics, (2) academic progress, and

(3) social and emotional behavioral problems. Table 3 shows that of the twenty students expelled, fifty percent were average in size for their age, thirty percent were small for their age, and twenty percent were large for their age. A total of eighty percent of the ninth grade students expelled were small to average in size for their age. In reviewing the cumulative folders, it was found that half of the expelled students lacked adequate physical skills necessary for participation in sports.

Concerning academic progress, sixty percent had low achievement and forty percent had average to above academic achievement. The most significant statistic shows that eighty percent had discernable socio-emotional problems that resulted in unacceptable behavior. Only twenty percent showed no observable behavioral problems. Another pattern observed from a review of the cumulative folders was that over half of the twenty students expelled were well-liked by their peers.

Table 3

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS, ACADEMIC PROGRESS,
AND SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS OF THE TWENTY
NINTH GRADE STUDENTS WHO WERE EXPELLED FROM THE OMAHA,
NEBRASKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR THE USE, SALE, OR
POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA DURING THE
1977-78 SCHOOL YEAR

	Total	Percent of Total
<u>Physical Characteristics:</u>		
Number who were small in size for their age	6	30
Number who were average for their age	10	50
Number who were large for their age	4	20
<u>Academic Progress:</u>		
Number with low academic progress	12	60
Number with average or above academic progress	8	40
<u>Social and Emotional Behavior:</u>		
Number showing social and emotional behavioral problems	16	80
Number with no reported behavioral problems	4	20

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

Of all the problems of American life today, few are more disturbing to most adults than the problem of drug abuse among the young. As a society, America has always been deeply concerned with its children. Since the 17th century, foreign observers have remarked upon how Americans cherish--and spoil--their children. It is true that children are the hope and the inheritors of the nation's future.

Drug abuse by the young seems to be a violent repudiation of this familiar dream. The use of drugs for sensation of escape would seem to signal a deep dissatisfaction with the life style established by today's society. To many of today's adults, this life style that youngsters reject and repudiate looks far more comfortable and more privileged than was their own during their teen years. This misunderstanding could attribute to the confusion that adults have in dealing with the drug problems.

Through the public awareness of marijuana misuse, young people should know that recent research studies have

shown that marijuana use has many adverse side effects and is a harmful practice. Also, marijuana may permanently damage an individual's brain and lung tissue as well as dull the senses over a period of time.

Because of its illegal use, laws have been enacted by the state of Nebraska to insure the safety and well being of the total school population.

Due to the large number of young marijuana users, it seems necessary for the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools to implement a Drug Education Program. It is also the responsibility of our schools to seek and have the support and involvement of the parents and the school's community. Without the ingredients of support and involvement, a drug program cannot be successful.

If the viewpoints of the marijuana users were understood, work then could begin toward providing a meaningful Drug Education Program in the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools for those students who have been expelled for the use, sale, or possession of marijuana.

On the basis of the reported case studies, the writer reached the following conclusions and recommendations:

CONCLUSIONS

1. Twenty ninth grade students were expelled from the Omaha Public Schools for the use, sale, or possession of marijuana during the 1977-78 school year.
 - a. Ten percent of the students were black females.
 - b. Twenty-five percent were black males.
 - c. Ten percent were white females.
 - d. Forty-five percent were white males.
 - e. Ten percent were Hispanic males.
2. Twenty ninth grade students who were expelled for the use, sale, or possession of marijuana during the 1977-78 school year and who are presently enrolled in the tenth grade, those who withdrew and live in Omaha, Nebraska, and those who left the Omaha School District with whereabouts unknown.
 - a. Seventy-five percent of the students are currently enrolled in the tenth grade.
 - b. Ten percent have withdrawn from the Omaha Public Schools and reside in Omaha.
 - c. Fifteen percent have withdrawn from the Omaha Public Schools and do not reside in Omaha.
3. Physical characteristics of those twenty ninth grade students expelled for the use of marijuana.
 - a. Eighty percent were small to average in size for their age.
 - b. Twenty percent were large for their age.

- c. Over half of the twenty expelled students lacked adequate physical skills necessary for participation in sports.
4. Academic progress of those twenty ninth grade students expelled for the use of marijuana.
 - a. Sixty percent had low academic achievement.
 - b. Forty percent had average to above academic achievement.
 5. Socio-emotional behavioral problems of those twenty ninth grade students expelled for the use of marijuana.
 - a. Eighty percent had discernable socio-emotional problems that resulted in unacceptable behavior.
 - b. Twenty percent showed no observable behavioral problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that due to the number of ninth grade students expelled from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools for the use, sale, and possession of marijuana, a Drug Education Program should be extended to an alternative school, such as an Individualized Study Center. The students could be assigned to the Center with a Drug Education Program which should evolve from the following principles.

1. Drug education teachers should be selected on the basis of their interest and should be competently trained in curriculum content and learning theory. Teachers should also be aware of and understand their own perceptions and feelings concerning the use of narcotics.

2. Information presented to the students must be scientifically sound. It should include the social, medical, moral, and legal implications of marijuana usage.
3. Counseling should be made available to aid students to evaluate what brought them to drug usage. Through this process, students can be made aware of responsible decision making concerning marijuana use and personal accountability.
4. Concentrated efforts must be made for the students to be rehabilitated so they may return to the mainstream of academic activity.
5. The Drug Education Program should be extended into the local school community for assistance in the development of goals and objectives, and for making a maximum effort to utilize resources and financial assistance from the state and national level.
6. The Drug Education Program should seek input from district and school personnel, students, parents, lay persons, and outside experts. Evaluation of the Drug Education Program should be a continuous process by all participants. A follow-up study should be continuously made on students who have been expelled from the Omaha, Nebraska Public Schools for the use, sale, or possession of marijuana, in order that decisions can be made for the continuance of their education.

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