

NYSP AT CARSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND ECKLUND UNIVERSITY

Carson Community College

Carson Community College was not included in the original list of sites to be visited during the Summer of 1996. It was added when Robert Stake suggested that I conduct a site visit, since I would be involved in writing the annual report for the project. We reviewed the list of sites currently included in the student survey portion and selected Carson because of its type and its geographic locale. Later, we learned that Carson is a well-established and well-respected NYSP program, having won several awards over the years including a recent nomination for the Conte Award (the highest award given by NYSP).

My initial contact with the Project Administrator was cordial, but he immediately referred me to the Activity Director to arrange the specifics of the site visit. The Activity Director was very open and accommodating about the visit and said the program was open anytime to anyone who wanted to see it in action. In reviewing schedules, mid-July was identified as a good time--approximately 3-4 weeks into the program. Syd Hathaway, NYSP Evaluator, was scheduled for July 15. Since I was also interested in learning more about the NYSP evaluation process, I suggested that my visit overlap with Syd's. This was fine with the Carson NYSP project staff and with Syd. My site visit began with Syd's on Monday and then I stayed two more days to conduct the full site visit. The first day, Syd took the lead in order to conduct his evaluation, but I shadowed him and participated in all the observations, interviews, and debriefings. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the Activity Director was called to jury duty but she had made arrangements for the staff to accommodate my requests and schedules.

The Site

Carson Community College is in a township adjacent to a mid-sized metropolitan area. The campus consists of perhaps a

dozen or so buildings, fairly modern and in good repair. The buildings are situated on a large expanse of land, surrounded by huge grassy fields. The athletic building is in the back of the campus, accessed by a road that curves along the rim of campus, past the athletic fields, to a parking lot adjacent to the athletic building. The building contains the office suite of the athletic director (who is the NYSP Project Administrator), offices of athletic faculty and staff, and athletic facilities.

Carson Community College has hosted the summer NYSP program for 26 years. Local people associate NYSP with Carson, and the NYSP staff clearly feel they are an integral part of the College during the summer months. The NYSP program staff is housed in one office in the athletic director's suite. The program also seems to have complete access to the buildings' sports facilities during the camp day. The program has exclusive¹ use of: the gymnasium (sometimes divided into two gyms by screens/drapes drawn down the middle of the space), swimming pool (separated into "shallow" and "deep end" sides), a new state-of-the-art weight training room, dance studio, first aid room, and a small classroom space near the gym that is used by the Liaison Officer for consultations and counselor meetings. Large tracts of sports fields and the tennis courts are immediately adjacent to the building. Education classes are held in a classroom building across an open courtyard (accessible through hallways in bad weather). Lunch is served in the campus cafeteria, a short walk away.

The Daily Routine

The NYSP staff begin arriving between 7 and 7:30 on Monday, because there is a weekly professional staff meeting at 7:45 AM. The Liaison Officer (and probably the Activity Director, although she was on jury duty two of the days I visited) tends to arrive shortly after 7:00 most days, with other staff and instructors arriving between 7:30 and 8:00. There is some checking in at the NYSP office--mainly by the Auxiliary² staff--but most

¹Another camp is in session at the same time, and those participants are sometimes found in separate areas of the sports fields, but I never saw any other group in the athletic building during the NYSP hours.

²Using the NYSP term to denote the following group: Activity Director, Liaison Officer, Education Coordinator, D&A Instructor, Medical Coordinator and, at Carson, also the Head Instructor.

Instructors tend to go directly to the gym. The Counselors arrive with the participants.

Participants are recruited from the inner city and are provided free bus transportation to and from six pick-up points in the city.³ The school buses begin arriving at the campus between 8 and 8:15, and by 8:30 all buses have arrived and the participants convene in the gymnasium. The counselors ride the buses with the participants.

When they arrive, the participants immediately line up in teams, sitting in parallel lines facing the middle of the gym--boys on the left side of the gym, girls facing them on the right. Each team has a different color NYSP T-shirt⁴, so the effect is of color-coded lines, or spokes radiating from the center of the gym. Counselors are with their respective teams and are in charge of getting the team organized and orderly and ready for attendance-taking and the rest of the day. Some counselors use this time to "go down the line" talking to each participant, giving little pep talks, herding the participants into straighter lines, watching for talking or acting out behavior. One Counselor talked about the importance of this morning ritual, as a way to set a positive tone for the day and as a way to show the participants that he's interested in and cares about them. Other Counselors are simply there with their charges. Instructors are milling about, talking to each other and verifying attendance.

About 8:35, the Head Instructor uses the P.A. system to make announcements⁵. Announcements are followed by warm-ups. This is about 15 minutes of stretches, calisthenics, and jumping in place to very loud rock music. Lots of stomping and hand-clapping and generally getting the blood moving. Two or three instructors lead the exercises from the middle of the gym.

³The cost of the buses (\$138.00 per day per bus) is paid for out of a grant from the State Legislature. The program was awarded \$30,000 this year by the Legislature, and the Project Administrator had just learned that the award will be renewed for next year.

⁴Campers are given one NYSP T-shirt and are expected to wear it everyday. Teams are awarded points if all members are wearing their team T-shirt. Staff said participants are just expected to wash the T-shirts everyday. I find it hard to believe that they all manage to do that, but the expectation didn't appear to pose problems--the participants wore the shirts everyday and appeared to be neat and clean.

⁵The system echoes in the gym and can't possibly be understood by the teams nearest the doorway. One of the instructors explained that "we just tell them to sit quietly, and then we tell them what was said later."

Some counselors participate, some don't. The rest of the instructors are along the walls in the gym. The warm-ups, according to Syd Hathaway, are not a common feature of the programs and the Carson group is proud of this feature.

After warm-ups, the teams line up (boys at one door, girls at another) and file out of the gym, picking up snacks from tables in the foyer⁶. The snack consists of muffins and juice and is laid out on the tables during warm-up. Generally, the participants stay with their teams while eating snack, either inside near the gym (in rain) or right outside the door. The girls are at one end (and outside another doorway), away from the boys. There is some chatter among the participants and across teams, but the groups are orderly and relatively quiet during this time. The teams finish their snacks and the counselors lead them to their first activity.

The next three hours (until lunch at 12:15) are divided into four 40-minute periods, with ("exactly") 5 minutes of passing time between periods. During this time, the participants have one period of "Education" (which includes Drug and Alcohol, Health and Nutrition, and Career Awareness), one period of "Instruction" in a given sport, and two separate periods of sports "Competition." Campers are classified into one of four large groups by age or gender: Older Boys (13+); Younger Boys (11-12); 10-Year-Olds (boys only); Girls (mixed ages). The general schedule defines the activity category for each group; individual teams within each group are then assigned to specific sports. For example, the Older Boys have "Instruction, Education, Competition, Competition" as the order of their activity during the four periods; each of the five teams in this group would then be assigned to specific sports for the Instruction and two Competition periods.

So, each day consists of 40 minutes of "enrichment"⁷ and 120 minutes of sports activity. The daily schedules, listing the specific activities for each team, are all contained in a schedule packet that all staff carry around with them. In addition, the Head Instructor designates each morning (verbally, not in written

⁶Teams that will be swimming during the first activity period go directly to the locker rooms, and have their snack after swimming.

⁷The auxiliary staff continue to refer to this class as "enrichment" although it is listed as "education" in the schedules, etc. I got the impression it used to be called enrichment and the name change is fairly recent, but I'm not sure of that.

form) which staff will referee where, throughout the day. Everyone seems to have the schedule mastered⁸ and is able to get to and from different activities pretty much on time and with a minimum of confusion and disruption. The flow of activity feels "orderly" and organized, with everyone where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there. Even on the first "rain day" of the year (7/15-the day of the NYSP evaluation site visit by Syd Hathaway), things went smoothly: the Head Instructor passed out a written revised schedule at the morning staff meeting, and the day's activities and transitions seemed to go without a hitch.

Management and behavior during the day's activities are guided in large part by the Point Cards. Each counselor carries a Point Card for the team each day. Throughout the day, the team receives a score for their behavior and performance during each activity. The points are awarded by the professional staff (Instructors), who must initial each entry. The counselor turns in the Point Card at the end of each day⁹, and the next morning team tallies of cumulative points are posted in the gym before warm-up. Campers know where their team falls in the rankings, and which teams are leading in points. Counselors of leading teams proudly volunteer that information. Professional staff use Bonus Points as "carrots" and Penalty Points as "sticks" in their management and discipline strategies--both during formal activities (sports and education periods) and in their observations of team behavior during passing periods, lunch, bus loading, and the like. The Point Cards are a big deal to the participants¹⁰ and

⁸Although the schedule seems clear, I got confused from time to time. There were clearly a couple of instances when a team was not following the published schedule, but the staff and counselors seemed to know where they were supposed to be. There is one wrinkle in the schedule, on each "third day of camp" and perhaps I was a little confused by that. Nevertheless, it is the schedule packet that staff refer to when they need to find a team or reunite a camper with his team.

⁹At the bottom of the Point Card is this warning: "If you do not turn in a card by the end of the camp day, your team will receive zero points and you (the counselor) will receive a letter of reprimand."

¹⁰As perhaps the following will illustrate: The ten year olds were in Basketball one day and were not cooperating and following directions to the instructor's satisfaction. The Instructor ended the game, ostensibly because the boys were not listening, although it was the end of the period and the other teams were leaving the gym. The counselor chastised the boys, telling them they couldn't get angry and act out when things don't go their way. The boys' main concern was whether or not they would "get their points." The counselor walked over to the Instructor and talked a moment, then came back to get the team in line and to their next activity. "Did we get the points?" was asked immediately; "yeah, we got the points", the counselor said. I got the impression, from his tone of voice, that he had to do some fast talking with the Instructor...

a central feature of the camp. Nearly everyone I spoke with (participants, counselors, professional staff) referred to the point system in some way.

The way points are awarded on the Point Cards is noteworthy and consistent with the stated goals and priorities of the camp. There are three rating points for each category. For Shirts (do all team members have on their NYSP T-shirts?), Warm-up, Instruction, and Enrichment, the rating points are 0, 5, 10. Those are sort of global ratings for the team's behavior (participating, cooperating, listening, following directions, not acting out). For Competition, a small number of points is awarded for the outcome of the competition (Win or Tie = 1 point; Lose = 0 points), and 1-3 Bonus Points and/or Penalty Points can be awarded at the Instructor's discretion, for particularly good (or bad) behavior. Bonus and Penalty points can also be awarded to the teams at other times; see the section on "Discipline." The big points, however, are for Sportsmanship, with 0, 5, or 10 points awarded for each competition period. This reinforces the program creed that it is sportsmanship and sportsmanlike behavior that are most important, not the outcome of the competition. The participants and counselors are well-aware of the relative point values, and the Instructors refer to these weightings to reinforce their lectures and reminders and admonishments. Reviewing how to assign points (and how to maintain consistency in ratings) was a topic at one of the weekly professional staff meetings.

Lunch is served at 12:10. Counselors walk their teams to the campus cafeteria, girls teams first and then boys teams line up. The Counselors stay with their teams in line, supervising. The participants sit in teams with their Counselors, girls on one side of the cafeteria and boys on the other. I didn't see many Instructors eating lunch¹¹ (although they are around supervising) and none of the auxiliary staff except the Head Instructor (supervising) were in the lunchroom. Campers are dismissed by teams, and if a team has been too rowdy during lunch, or commits some transgression such as not clearing the table properly, they have to wait until last for dismissal.

Campers walk in teams to the buses (about 12:50), where the Liaison Officer is stationed. He and other professional staff monitor the bus loading, to make sure participants are orderly.

¹¹I'm told they aren't supposed to, unless they are providing guidance to the participants.

This is a time, though, that participants may be pulled over by the Liaison Officer for discipline (such as letting a participant know he or she is suspended the next day for accumulated transgressions during the day), or brought over to the Liaison Officer by one of the Counselors. It has a real "end of the day" feel to it, with participants and staff looking hot and tired and ready to go home. There is also a "gauntlet" feel to the staff lineup (particularly the Liaison Officer) at the buses, although the participants didn't seem bothered by it. Many participants merrily wave good-bye from the buses (which leave about 1:15). The Head Instructor and Liaison Officer compare lists of who's suspended the next day or who was expelled (for attendance-monitoring purposes, which they have down to a fine art). Other Instructors may chat briefly, but they disperse pretty quickly; there's not much lingering around.

Personnel

One important characteristic of this program is the longevity of the Auxiliary Staff. The members of this core group have been with the program for many years (8, 12, or 20+ years). For example, the Program Administrator has been with the program since its inception (or shortly after), first as Activity Director and now as Administrator. The Activity Director was a participant (!), then Head Instructor, before becoming Activity Director. The Head Instructor was an instructor and sort of "special assistant" to the previous Head Instructor before she moved up to Activity Director. The Liaison Officer started out in another capacity, although this was really the job he wanted from the beginning. The Education Coordinator has been with the program for a number of years.

There is also a sense of continuity in the relationships among the staff. The Activity Director has a brother who is on the instructional staff. The son of the Program Administrator was a participant, then a counselor and is now on the instructional staff. The secretarial support is provided by the wife of the Education Coordinator. Several of the instructional staff were recruited from the school the Head Instructor teaches at during the academic year (as were some of the counselors).

This continuity and longevity contributes to the routine and "smooth operation" of the daily activities, I believe. They've developed a system and a way of working that gets the job done

and enables them to count on each other to do certain tasks in certain ways, or to fill in if someone is out. The Activity Director was on jury duty two of the days of my visit, for example, yet the schedule seemed to run smoothly---everyone went about their tasks. Yet it was clear from the staff's comments that they see the Activity Director as central--in setting the tone and expectations of the camp, in "backing them up," and in solving problems and handling routine situations. The staff has been doing their jobs so long that I think it was sometimes difficult for them to describe what they do or why they do things in a certain way . . . sort of like asking fish to describe water, so to speak.

All of the Auxiliary staff (except the nurse) are certified classroom teachers. The Liaison Officer and the Education Coordinator are English teachers; the Activity Director, Head Instructor, and D&A Instructor (who is relatively new) are in sports/health positions at their schools.

In contrast to the Auxiliary Staff, the instructional staff tends to have a shorter tenure. The Head Instructor said she thinks 4 years with the program is probably long enough, and is careful to look for signs of "burn out" among the instructional staff. Most (if not nearly all) of the instructors are Caucasian (or not African American) as is the case with the Auxiliary staff. Again, the instructional staff are certified teachers or coaches, recruited from K-12 schools in the area. This represents a change, apparently; at one time the instructors were college (Carson) coaches, but when the Activity Director assumed the job that policy was changed in order to recruit instructors who were more familiar with working with this age group and population of kids. But not all of the instructors work with disadvantaged, minority, or inner city kids at their schools; at least two of the instructors I spoke with teach in "white/suburban" private schools. But they seemed interested in and comfortable with working with this population; in fact one of the instructors said she intends to switch over to the city schools because she feels she does have a talent and skill for working with these youngsters. No specific training is provided for working with this population (rather, there is instructor orientation for camp procedures).

Counselors are recruited from participants, from local schools (instructional aids, for example) and from JTPA. With few exceptions, counselors were African-American (like the vast majority of the participants). Counselors are expected to participate in the sports with the participants and to serve as

assistants to the Instructors. In staff meetings, the Instructors are reminded to use the Counselors, and they are also reminded that they have to *tell* the Counselors what they want them to do. In sports activities, Instructors pull the Counselors into the games. If the Head Instructor catches a Counselor not participating, she chastises on the spot. She also says that could be a reason for "writing them up" . . . and after one written warning, Counselors can be fired. So Counselor participation is taken seriously. Counselors are also expected to provide most of the management and discipline for their group during transitions, and to play a role in motivating and encouraging the kids. The discipline during activity periods is handled by the instructor, and the instructors do support and assist the counselors as needed during transitions. But a lot of the responsibility for managing the students and for helping them assimilate the experience falls to the counselors. They are trained, in orientation sessions (4 hours?) prior to camp, in camp procedures and expectations. Not specifically in "counseling" or working with this group, but most I talked with seemed comfortable with that expectation from their own histories and experiences. (They referred to baby-sitting, working with kids at other camps, professional experiences (such as IA's), having kids of their own, and the like).

The Sports

Number and types of sports. Campers are exposed to about 8 different sports over the course of the summer. "Exposed" means just that: for example, participants only have one period of tennis (boys only), 2 periods of track (plus All Camp Track Meet), and three periods of swimming (plus the All Camp Swim Meet) during the summer. Each group has a "focus" of 4 sports, for which they generally receive 2-3 periods of Instruction *and* 8-10 periods of Competition. The sports vary slightly across groups; the following lists all the sports for each group, with the "focal sports" in bold¹².

Older Boys (13+): **Basketball, Football, Soccer, Water Polo,**
Weight Training, Swimming, Track, Tennis.

Younger Boys (11-12): **Basketball, Football, Soccer, Water Polo,**
Weight Training, Swimming, Track, Tennis.

¹² To figure this out from the schedule sheets, I randomly selected one team from each group and charted their activities over the summer.

10 Year Olds (boys): **Football, Soccer, Softball, Kickball,**
Basketball, Weight Training, Swimming,
Track, Tennis, "Cooperative Games".

Girls (mixed ages): **Basketball, Soccer, Softball, Volleyball,**
Swimming, Dance, Track.

Sports instruction and competition. Every participant participates in three periods (120 minutes, total) of sports activity per day: one period (40 minutes) of "instruction" in a given sport and two periods (40 minutes each) of "competition", usually in two different sports. The Activity Overview states that the first 5 minutes of each Competition period must be used for Instruction. The Head Instructor says that she doesn't want any more instruction than that in Competition: "The kids need the competition. They get bored. I don't want them to lose interest. It doesn't mean you can't stop and correct something during competition. But keep it short."

For the Instruction periods, the Instructor develops and submits¹³ formal lesson plans for 2-3 periods. These are supposed to be age appropriate and to show some progression, but the emphasis is not on reaching a certain level of sports skill, or showing marked improvement. According to the Head Instructor, the participants are to learn about safety, the equipment, and the basic rules of the sport. There is "skills testing" designated for each sport. The Instructors are supposed to do this skills testing at the beginning of each period (of Instruction or Competition or both, I'm not sure). I didn't see it, and it had been an issue in one of the staff meetings ("Are Instructors doing skills testing like they're supposed to?"), so I'm not sure how much the skills sheets are actually used. Individual performance is *not* recorded for specific sports skills. There is a physical fitness test administered the first day of camp and those scores *are* recorded, and then used to make up teams that consist of a range of abilities. The physical fitness test is not re-administered, so there is no emphasis on formal "gains."

It is important to note that "Instruction" only occurs for a given sport for 2 or 3 periods. A team will get Instruction in a

¹³Lesson plans are submitted to and then formally approved by the Head Instructor.

given sport two days in a row, and then one more day sometime later in the summer. However, a team will participate in as many as 10 Competition periods in a given sport over the course of the summer. It is *not* the case that Instruction in the sport occurs before Competition in the sport; it may, but a team may also have Competitions in a sport long before they have Instruction. Also, I observed both Instruction and Competition periods, and it wasn't always easy to tell the difference between the two. Competition involves "playing a regular game" and Instruction may involve drill work (practicing free throws in basketball, for example). But Instruction may also involve what looks like a regular game. The Instruction periods do not consist of much lecturing; the Instructors generally try to get the teams playing and moving around as quickly and as much as possible.

The Instructors are certified teachers and are mostly physical education (or related) teachers at local middle schools or elementary schools. They seem very adept at keeping the kids moving and at handling any unruliness or disruptive behavior. And I didn't see much of that. Within a very few minutes after the start of the period, everyone is involved and participating and a game (if that's what's going on) is in full swing. Very few participants on the sidelines. A fair bit of yelling, in the vein of "coaching," but participants were rarely kicked out of a game or sent to the sidelines for disciplinary purposes.¹⁴

Structure and style of sports instruction. The instructional style, throughout the sports activities, is direct and didactic. The clear and overriding purpose is to keep the participants active and engaged. So, most of the period is taken up with physical activity; transitions are quick and smooth; transgressions (name calling, arguing, fighting, loud talk, etc.) are dealt with promptly on the spot¹⁵ or the participant is sent to the Liaison Officer.

Review of the lesson plans indicates an emphasis (consistent with what the Head Instructor said) on learning the basics of the sport and getting the participants involved and

¹⁴I was told that this could happen, but I never saw it. Of course, it was pointed out that this was the middle of camp; the "incurables" had been expelled in the first weeks.

¹⁵As I'll describe later, the Counselors are primarily responsible for the team's behavior during transitions and at the very beginning and end of the period. During the period, the Instructors are in charge, although they will also monitor and intervene if necessary at other times.

doing something quickly and consistently. Sometimes there are different lesson plans for the boys (Younger and Older) and then for the 10-year-olds. In swimming, the lesson plans vary for "beginners" and "swimmers"--based on ability level instead of age. The "third day" lesson plan tends to be a repeat of the second day or playing a slightly different type of game--which makes sense, given that the third day of Instruction occurs singly and at "some later date." I couldn't always match the procedures outlined in the lesson plan with exactly what I was observing in a specific period on a given day. But I didn't judge that as necessarily problematic because: a) the participants seemed to be able to follow and do what was being asked of them; b) the Instructors were never "scrambling" but rather seemed to have a clear plan for the period and to begin implementing it right away; and c) the participants were active and involved and appeared to be enjoying themselves, and it was made clear to me that those are the main objectives.

It was difficult to observe (i.e., hear) the actual teaching and instruction going on during the sports activity. The Instructors were on the court or the field with the participants and there was a game (or organized drill) going on. It was more "coaching" than instructing in a classroom sense. The participants would play, with the Instructor yelling instructions to the group or demonstrating a technique or giving pointers to an individual. The instruction and reminders were more directed to the rules of the game and to behavior than to technique. Some examples:

A boy playing basketball pushed another boy to get the ball away from him. The Head Instructor (who was briefly participating as "coach/referee" in the game) stopped him and said "What are you doing?! You can't push like that." The boy said he was trying to block the other. "Play defense, but don't push and shove. That's not the way you play defense!"

In a girls softball game, better-able participants or Counselors would matter-of-factly help out players who were having problems, with batting, for example; someone would just walk over and help her hold the bat and swing, then go back to waiting their turn to bat or assuming their previous position in the infield.

In a basketball Instruction period, the Instructor sat the boys in a circle at the beginning of the period and lectured them a little bit on how important it is to learn proper technique of dribbling, shooting, holding the ball, etc. from the beginning (it

was their first lesson). He also stated that *he* was the one in charge, the one who knew what he was talking about, and it was *their* job to listen and follow instructions.

In swimming, the Instructor stayed on the side of the pool, demonstrating what she (the beginner's Instructor) wanted them to do. She was very clear, very animated . . . demonstrating the right and wrong way to do certain strokes, for example. The participants listened and paid attention and then tried to implement what was asked when the whistle blew. The beginning of the period was spent briefly reminding them about whistle codes, the buddy system, and the upcoming swim meet . . . but they were in the water fairly quickly with only 2 or 3 participants sitting out. There was no splashing around and horseplay (one girl who ran to her place in line had to go to the back of the line).

In dance, the activity in the beginning of the period was the whole group following the teacher in repeating (practicing) a routine of clapping and stomping patterns¹⁶ (moves basic to the African dance techniques the teacher emphasized). At the end of the period, the teams were performing the "dances" (really NYSP cheers) they had developed and practiced on their own. The Counselor for the team led the cheer and the other groups were asked to provide feedback (they really didn't, other than to say something like "say the words more clearly." But the spectator teams were respectful and attentive while the team was performing).

The Instructor who teaches "cooperative games" for the 10-year-olds offered to demonstrate these to me during one of the football periods. One Instructor took one team to part of the field (they mark off boundaries with cones or plates or something, as needed during each period) to do drills and the others stayed put for cooperative games. The boys were chastised at the beginning of the period for complaining. But then the cooperative activity went pretty much as described in lesson plans. The boys were gathered first to review the rules of the game to be played, then they played the game, then they gathered together at the end to discuss what "principles"

¹⁶The Head Instructor was with me (and Syd) at the time, and she saw one of the Counselors not participating in the practice. She got on her right away, and the Counselor started participating--although she clearly hadn't learned the steps previously.

(of cooperation) were being used, i.e., what they learned doing the game. While the Activity Schedule only lists one specific time the boys are scheduled for Cooperative Games, they had clearly done this before. They knew the routine, they knew the games, and they knew the answers to the questions posed at the beginning (Q: "What does it take to be successful?" A: "cooperation, communication, listening.") A couple of the Counselors were chatting with me, clearly trying to look busy and involved with me . . . but the Instructor did get them in the game (by making them "It" in the next game). The participants seem to like the games. The Instructor said sometime the 11-year-old boys (who had the games last year) want to know when they get to do it (they don't). And the girls have apparently done some of these activities, too.¹⁷

Education Classes

Every group attends one period (40 minutes) of "education" per day. The teams attend in groups, so there were 4 to 6 teams of students in the room at a time, during the days I observed.¹⁸ The classes are held in a large lecture hall (auditorium) in a classroom building. Drug and alcohol, career awareness, and health/nutrition topics are all scheduled during this time, i.e., there are not separate "Drug and Alcohol" classes scheduled, as there are at some sites.

The 1000 minutes total of education time over the summer are divided into topic areas as follows:

Drug and Alcohol:	440 minutes (7.3 hours)
Health and Nutrition:	320 minutes (5.3 hours)
Careers and Higher Ed:	240 minutes. (4.0 hours)

The dominant format for the education classes is to have guest speakers (13 topics) or videos (6 topics); only 4 of the topic

¹⁷These are games the Instructor uses in PE classes at her school. Other Instructors are also familiar with them, and use them at their schools; so it's relatively easy to implement them on the fly--as for "rainy day" activity or in the case of spontaneously letting me see them.

¹⁸The schedule overview indicates that there are two groups on many days. I don't know if the activity is in a different room for each group, or not. On those days that "group A and group B" are designated, the activity is marked on the overview as a small group activity (80% of the total number of activities). The days I observed, however, were all large group activity, as scheduled.

areas are managed solely by the D&A Instructor. The Education Coordinator is not involved in the classroom or in the instruction per se; he said if he does 2 lessons a summer "that's a lot." The D&A Instructor is present and manages at least some of the questions and answering. She said she tries to prepare the kids for the speaker or video, introducing the topic in an earlier session and letting them know what will be happening. Sometimes, she says, she has to find ways to better explain the material, particularly to the younger kids. One example was the talk on AIDS: she used the metaphor of "Pac Man" to help the 10-year-olds understand the concept of some cells "taking over or eating up" other cells. As a Health education teacher, she is comfortable doing that as need be and in handling the "introductory" sessions on her own. The D&A Instructor also talks with the guest speakers about the format and focus of their sessions (and the Education Coordinator says she is very good at that). According to the Education Coordinator, they want the guest speakers to be aware of, follow, and reinforce the camp's position that it is not information per se that must be given to the kids¹⁹, but that the kids need to learn and understand that it is their *decision-making* that matters. So, there is an attempt at consistency across the guest speakers in that theme.

The fire department was the focus of the education sessions the days I was there. One session included a video on fire-safety, followed by a lecture/discussion by a fireman on fire safety techniques, followed by activities such as trying on fireman's gear and using some of the equipment to practice putting out small fires²⁰. On the third day, a fire truck was in the parking

¹⁹As the Education Coordinator said in his interview, the participants already know quite a lot about, for example, alcohol or tobacco or drugs and their dangers: "The main thing we try to teach them is that life is full of hard decisions and there are no easy answers. I was here during the Reagan era and I absolutely refused to use 'just say no.'. It was too simplistic. Have to help the kids learn how to cope, how to make good decisions, how to use their decision-making skills. The kids already know the information. Someone at a national conference pointed out that although mature, well-educated adults know the dangers of smoking, they still smoke. So having the information isn't enough. Have to learn how to make the decision. [The D&A Instructor] is very good at telling the guest speakers to emphasize that . . . how that is an important part of the lesson. So we're educating the guest speakers as well. The main thing is to help kids learn to make decisions. The non violent contract helps us, too. The wording of the contract shows that it's their decision-making. When (Liaison Officer) works with kids, he doesn't say it was bad that you were fighting, but rather 'you made a bad decision.'"

²⁰ Which was a big hit among the teams, particularly the girls. The D&A Instructor noted that the activity was "fun, sort of dangerous, but learning in a safe environment. You never know how they will react . . . you just have your fingers crossed. But they loved it."

lot and the kids got to see it up close and experiment with the firehoses (which had everyone involved soaking wet). The classes I observed were paced reasonably well and the kids asked a lot of questions, and were reasonably cooperative about answering questions posed by the fireman²¹.

Per NYSP requirements, the Education Coordinator has to indicate which activities are "hands-on/interactive." These are flagged on the overview and, according to their tallies, constitute 68% of the activity sessions. The Education Coordinator defines this as "out of their seats, doing something, or passing objects around." Trying on fireman's gear, for example, counts as "hands-on/interactive." They are encouraged to have hands-on lessons (target = 50%) by NYSP, and the Education Coordinator concurs that it is a good idea: "It is a sports camp. They don't come here to go to school." Similarly, he feels that the focus on using guest speakers is a good idea, too: "It's more interesting for kids to hear a real drug addict talk about what life is like than to hear Lori [the D&A Instructor] describe what it's like." He reports that the use of guest speakers is something currently encouraged by NYSP for exactly that reason.²²

The education staff do try in some ways to link the education activity to the sports camp theme and activities. For example, the D&A instructor says she specifically talks about how much fluids the participants should be drinking on breaks, to replenish body fluids and electrolytes; or, the importance of not lifting weights at too young an age²³--things like that, because "it is a sport camp." The Education Coordinator describes an activity he developed (and which he presented at a national conference, at NYSP's request) that is a "baseball game" used for review sessions: the "batter" is asked a question and can (physically) advance around bases if correct. I didn't get the sense that such "linkages" are pervasive, but rather that the education staff do try to acknowledge and build upon the participants' interest in sports.

The Education Coordinator feels they are fairly well guided and supported by the national office in designing and

²¹The D&A Instructor did remind the groups of their point cards periodically, as a classroom management technique. One day the fireman suggested giving the teams extra points for answering questions, so somehow he had been made aware of the system, too.

²²Although I have also heard from NYSP personnel that the "guest speaker approach" is "the old way" of doing the education classes.

²³But the 10-year-olds do take weight training.

implementing the education program. It would be easier "to make the numbers," he says, if the National Office would allow a given activity to "count" in two categories. For example, if a DARE officer comes in, he talks *first* about what it's like to be a police officer, and *then* about drug education. But the activity can only count as either career awareness or drug education--you're not allowed to split the session on paper as 20 minutes of each category. The Education Coordinator also feels that there has been an increased emphasis on the importance of the educational program at the national level, and at the local level as well, with the Project Administrator's and Activity Director's insistence that the program offering be done well.

Emergent Themes

The three "themes" included in this section are those that seemed most dominant and forceful to me during my visit. I summarize and/or refer to information presented in previous sections relating to the theme and add information (primarily from interviews) to flesh out or expand the topic.

Discipline (and management). Teaching and maintaining discipline is a central, ongoing, and explicit concern of the camp staff--from the Project Administrator down to the Counselors. The rules and procedures regarding discipline, and the procedures for managing behavior (in activities or in between) are well-known by the participants. My site visit was in the 4th week of camp, and by this time, everything seems to be running like clockwork. Campers walk in teams from one activity to another, relatively orderly and, in general, seem to do what is expected of them and what they are told to do. One of the Counselors referred to the "boot camp" atmosphere, and I think that is not far off. Instructors are like officers; Counselors are like sergeants; and the purpose of the experience is to teach the participants how to behave, with physical activity the primary mechanism for doing that. There are clear rules; the rules are strict; transgressions are dealt with immediately; chronic offenders are kicked out (temporarily or permanently). It is made very clear to the participants, repeatedly, that they don't have to be here, that there are others waiting, and if they don't follow the rules they're out. The result is that the camp activities *do* run smoothly, and most of the time *can* be spent doing the activity as opposed to managing the participants. But the professional staff has not relaxed their guard. *Nothing* seems to get past these guys! The

"feel" that I get from the staff is that they like working with youngsters but they have found that you must set--and hold--limits.

As part of the application procedure, participants sign a contract ("pledge") that outlines the behavior that is expected and the behavior that will not be tolerated ("zero tolerance for violence" was a phrase I heard a lot, in reference to the contract). Twice on the contract form is the statement that is "a privilege, not a right" to be a participant in NYSP. I must have heard this phrase a dozen times during my visit. The contract states that if you don't follow the rules, you can be "dismissed" from camp. The contract is referred to when disciplining a participant or a team. The staff see it as stating the expectations from the beginning. If a participant is suspended or expelled, the parents have no recourse, since it is "a privilege, not a right" to be there. The Project Administrator, Liaison Officer, and several of the Counselors referred to this. The Project Administrator said they do try to give the kids chances and work with the parents as much as possible, but the bottom line is expulsion is their decision and there's nothing the parents can do about it. As one of the Counselors put it: "They come here and do what their teachers have been trying to get them to do all year . . . follow directions, listen, work together. They learn self respect." Why do they do it here and not at school, I asked. Quick response: "because they have something to lose." There is a waiting list and the participants know about that (one of the participants pointed out a boy to me who was on the waiting list and came after another in the team was expelled).

The Liaison Officer is officially "in charge" of disciplinary procedures. Basically, the Counselors are expected to manage the participants as much as possible. The Instructors are expected to handle minor disruptions; physical activity (push ups, laps, etc.) are used as immediate punishment---it "gets it over with" and the participant is not dismissed from "class." The idea is to keep them involved in the activity, not separate them and have them sitting idle (some contrasted this with the approach used in school). Sometimes the Instructors bring the violators to the Liaison Officer unnecessarily (I observed one such instance); then he might talk to the Instructor later and suggest ways they could have handled it. If the Liaison Officer "sees" the participant, the date is entered on a 3X5 card with the participant's name at the top. The official procedure is that if two dates appear on the card, the participant is *suspended*; if more dates appear, the

participant can be *expelled*. The transgression is not noted, only the fact that the participant has been "seen" by the Liaison Officer. Dates are entered if he happens to see a transgression (walking around) or if the participant is brought to him. I saw some of the cards, and several had more than three dates. They do try to work with the participant, and they do make judgments about who is truly "incorrigible" and who isn't. Some staff pointed out one of the counselors who was once a participant--as one who was very difficult as a participant, but eventually got turned around. "The staff just saw something in him" one of the other counselors told me. One of the "problem girls" hit her counselor one day while I was there; and she was expelled that day.²⁴ To date, the Liaison Officer said 6-7 participants have been expelled, most in the first week of the program. He says he may have 20 suspensions: 1-2 day "cooling off" periods. The participant is told to think about why he or she was suspended at then to see him first thing of his/her day back.²⁵ [My field notes, page 18, tell of the Liaison Officer's pretend-act of "bellowing" at the 10 year olds to "straighten them up."]

The other Professional Staff members are also involved in discipline. The counselors say that they feel supported by the other staff in this regard. I did see one clear example, the [field notes, page 15]. During line up after a tee-ball game²⁶ with ten-year olds: an Instructor (the one who teaches cooperative games) saw them misbehave and came back (she was carrying equipment into the building) and basically "took over." She lectured them for several minutes and then marched them off to lunch---directing them all the way on keeping in line, holding doors, etc. By the time they got to the cafeteria, she softened and ended up giving them bonus points ("if you keep this up the rest of the way to the cafeteria"). Good example of the approach I sensed throughout: punish bad behavior, reward good behavior, and do it on the spot. Also, an emphasis on the decision-making: "Did you see

²⁴Her mother was called, but the girl herself wasn't told immediately, since it was near the end of the day. The Liaison Officer gave a note to a Counselor with instructions to give it to the girl as she was getting off the bus, because he expected her to have a pretty violent reaction. Usually, though, he takes the camper home and talks to the parent.

²⁵I witnessed one of these suspensions, during bus loading. The Liaison Officer told the boy he was suspended and the boy was in tears. The Liaison Officer did soften a little, told him to take this like a man--just take the day off and think about it and come see him Monday morning.

²⁶I just realized that this sport is not officially listed on the activity schedule. It must be one of the methods of playing softball (which is listed) for the 10-year-old boys.

how (the line leader) let the other team go ahead, and didn't try to push ahead in front? That was a good decision."

The other dominant procedure is the use of the Point Cards, which I described earlier. Instructors specifically use these as a classroom management technique. Campers are very much aware of their points and attuned to whether or not they "got their points" in a given activity. This is the primary method of the carrot and stick approaches, although it is team based, not individually based. There is a clear expectation that peer influence should be part of the management; that, and engendering a feeling of responsibility to the team (one of the girl counselors, who had been a participant, talked to me at length about the "team spirit" and camaraderie aspects of the camp).

The counselors I spoke with said they try to model, to let the kids know that they really do care about them and to "keep on 'em" about how they are supposed to behave.

Sportsmanship (and competition). An excerpt from my interview with the Project Administrator (paraphrased): "In the early years of the program, the emphasis was on giving the kids instruction in athletics. Now, get them to the program under the pretense of athletics, but the purpose is to teach them right from wrong. *Sportsmanship is the most important thing in our camp.* Not to make a basket. Not to win every game. Might think if they lost the game that they got cheated. If I didn't get the job, I got cheated. If I didn't pass the test it was because they didn't ask the right questions and I got cheated. Get the message here that if you work hard, you succeed. If you study you'll be successful. Being here shows them the idea of college, the nice surroundings; hey, I want to go to college, I want to be in places like this. Learn to work hard, be good people, learn manners, how to play and participate with other members of the group; team concept. Can't start fights. Can't be disruptive. Important to get them at this age. Try not to throw them out the first time they can't behave, give them a second chance, work with their parents. Try to get that support and cooperation; can't get it if parents act like it's all someone else's fault their child is in trouble---parents don't tend to act like that with participants." This pretty well summarizes what I heard from just about everyone (Activity Director, Head Instructor, Education Coordinator, Liaison Officer, Instructors, Counselors), as well as what is supported in some camp procedures, such as the Point Cards.

According to the Activity Director, competition is not the driving force that it used to be in the camp. Syd and I were both a little surprised by the comment at first, given the emphasis on Competition (two periods per day) in the schedule. What she was referring to, I'm reasonably convinced, is the emphasis on sportsmanship versus the outcomes of a competition, or versus performance in the sport itself. Learning sports skills, improving individual or team athletic performance, or winning competitions, are not the central concerns of the camp staff and instructors. Over and over, the emphasis on sportsmanship is discussed and reinforced. It's in the handbooks, the contract the participants sign, on the Point Cards. Every student I spoke with mentioned it and was able to offer some definition of what sportsmanship entails (e.g., shaking hands after a game, not criticizing others, not pitching a fit when you lose).

However, the Counselors at least feel that it is a never-ending battle to reinforce this with the participants, who are much more attuned to the winning. "They're in a bad mood all day if they lose," one Counselor said, and that general idea was echoed by several others. The 10-year-old boys, in particular, get sulky and/or aggressive when they lose or when they are called down. They alone participate in "cooperative games" as part of their sports activity periods, designed to teach them cooperative versus competitive skills. And their Counselors are continually admonishing, cajoling, reminding the boys to focus on the sportsmanship and not on the winning and losing. It's interesting that, with all the staff's verbal emphasis on directing the attention away from competitiveness, Competitions (i.e., "regular games") are the norm during sports activity, and the Point Cards reinforce competition by keeping the participants aware of "which team's ahead." But perhaps it is more an effort to provide a counterweight to the natural and pervasive competitiveness that sports engenders--teaching the socially acceptable method of being competitive (i.e., sportsmanship)-- rather than a real expectation that the competitive aspects will disappear.

"It is a sport camp" (but...). Another common theme heard repeatedly is that sports are the mechanism--the draw, the enticement--for getting the kids to camp. But sports instruction is not the primary purpose. The Education Coordinator called it a "ruse" or a "metaphor"---noting that a lot of benefits and services are provided to the participants in the guise of sports. The medical exams, for example. Learning self-respect. As the Head

Instructor summarized it: "It's not so important to learn sports skills. Sportsmanship is the main concern. To learn what it takes to be good people. To be kind to each other. To help each other in games and to learn to get along with each other. To learn that winning isn't everything . . . not so much on getting competent in the sports skills themselves, as long as they are trying and doing their best."

I do feel that there is not a tremendous amount of emphasis on athletic performance per se and that the camp procedures were implemented to support these priorities. But, the Instructors are, by and large, physical education teachers . . . they "focus" on sports quite naturally and easily. It may be (as I tried to suggest earlier) that the rhetoric about all the other stuff reflects what is "novel" or important to remember in the camp setting and interactions.

On the other hand, the phrase "it is a sport camp" was also repeated many times. The emphasis is not on education ("it's not school"). The draw is the sports. As some of the participants told me, "kids like sports" and they'd rather be doing that than sitting around at home "chillin" or watching TV. The opportunity to do sports will motivate the participants; the threat of not doing the sports will keep the participants in line. The Head Instructor wants to make sure most of the emphasis is on competition; keep them moving and active and involved in the sport.

A note on Gender. I'm not sure this is a "theme"--and it's certainly not an issue with the camp staff. But it is interesting to note the differences and separation of the genders. Syd Hathaway did note that they should encourage more co-ed activity, and they say they do, but I didn't see it. I think they meant those times when girls teams and boys teams are in the gym playing basketball--on separate courts, but they are all in the gym. Girls and boys teams have swimming together, but they sit separately and tend to be in separate groups (or stay well separated if they do find themselves on the same end of the pool). The Dance Instructor said she doesn't see much mixing and suggested that the swim meet might be the first time they all spend much time together; but this is her first year, and she has been teaching dance . . . The girls play a different slate of sports. They stay segregated in warm-ups, snack, education, instruction and competitions, even lunch. The girls have different routines. For example, the girls teams do chants, march songs, cheers as they go

from one activity to another. You can hear them coming. The boys are quiet . . . not even much talking in line (except the 10-year-olds). The girls demonstrate their "sportsmanship" with chants repeated at the end of the game . . . something that involves thanking the other team and the coaches. The girl participants I spoke with talked about how it is difficult for the girls to establish a team orientation (i.e., do it for the team), and one of the counselors spoke of the same thing from her experience as a participant. The girls say the hardest thing about sportsmanship is learning not to criticize others. The boys (or rather, their counselors; I couldn't get the boys themselves to say much) say it's not getting angry at losing (though the girls get sulky, too, their counselors say).

Program Organization

History and background. The NYSP program has been in operation at Carson for 26 years. The staff wish the program were even better known locally, but they do acknowledge that it is associated with the college. They do receive some local press; there was local TV coverage while I was visiting, and there are references to such in the newsletters from past years of the program. Three NYSP awards are displayed in the NYSP office. The staff is particularly proud (I sure heard about it, and saw references in letters, meeting minutes, and the like) of being nominated recently for the Conte award. This, they say, placed them in the "top three programs nationwide."

Perhaps one of the most notable things about the program is the longevity of the staff. The Project Administrator (who is now the Carson Athletic Director) was the program Activity Director for a number of years. The current Activity Director was a participant, then a Counselor, then Head Instructor--so she has been with the program for years and years. Most of the Auxiliary Staff have been with the program for nearly a decade or more. They all see and talk about changes in the program over very broad time periods. And some of their procedures have been in place for so many years that they seem to run on autopilot.

The main changes mentioned by most are: a) not using college instructors (coaches) as the sports instructors, but rather recruiting PE teachers who are accustomed to working with this age group (and with inner city kids); b) a shift in emphasis away from the sports skills themselves (and competition) toward more

concern for the child's social skills and adjustment and physical health. (For other perceived changes in the national program; see below.)

Funding. The local program budget is about \$120,000, \$55,000 of which is funded by NYSP. One significant source of additional funds is a Legislative grant of \$30,000, which will be renewed next year. Carson also provides support. The College pays for some counselors and provides additional salary support for the Activity Director. The Liaison Officer is currently involved in fundraising efforts, too. He has been given a "letter of introduction" that he uses to solicit funds, services, or goods from local industry.

The program feels kind of "flush." There isn't much mention of financial concerns and they are able to provide a great deal free of charge. They can pay for the buses out of the legislative grant, for example. A substantial portion (if not all) of the costs of the medical exams are donated. One benefit of the additional funds is additional auxiliary staff. The Head Instructor, for example, who is the Activity Director's assistant and performs many (if not most) of the day-to-day program management tasks. Syd noted that the Head Instructor position would not be funded by NYSP and it was fortunate for the program that they had funds for such a position. Similarly, the Drug and Alcohol Instructor (who is paid for by NYSP) basically acts as the Education Coordinator's "right hand." It is the D&A Instructor who supervises all of the "education" periods, negotiates with guest speakers, and teaches some of the D&A lessons. The Education Coordinator "supervises" the D&A Instructors work, but is not very much involved in the day-to-day operation of that component. Rather, he spends his time in the office, managing the computer tasks (including word processing, which he says the other auxiliary staff can't do) and then perhaps doing some organizing for the all camp swim and track meets. His wife is the secretary for the program, but she is only in the office two days per week. He says he has to stay in the office so he can answer the phone, answer questions, do the word processing, handle the NYSP evaluation software, and help prepare the materials for the evaluation visit. A large number of the Counselors are supported by JTPA, which is also a boon to the personnel funding.

Personnel. As mentioned above, most of the auxiliary staff have been with the program a number of years. The Activity Director is the director of physical education at her school during the academic year; the Head Instructor is a PE teacher and coach (her father coaches a local semi-pro team). Both the Liaison Officer and the Education Director are English teachers. The majority of the Instructors are school teachers, mostly PE teachers, coaches, or health education instructors. Nearly all the professional staff have master's degrees, which is not considered odd because masters degrees are required for continued certification in the state. When I commented on the level of education, the staff thought that was not unusual. In their minds, most programs use college faculty, anyway--who would have strong credentials.

The Auxiliary staff is a fairly tight group and they are extremely loyal to the Activity Director. They say they work well together, and that the Activity Director provides the perfect balance of autonomy and support---she will back them up when needed, and trust them to do their jobs properly.

The Head Instructor is in charge of the 18 professional staff (instructors) and 36 counselors. [The application and interview procedures, the job descriptions (responsibilities), contracts, and personnel evaluation procedures (checklists) are available upon request.]

The Instructors don't tend to have the longevity of the auxiliary staff. The Head Instructor says she looks carefully for evidence of burn out, and usually about 4 years is enough for one stretch. Nearly all of the Instructors are white. According to the Instructors I spoke with, there is no specific training provided for how to conduct instruction or for how to interact (manage, discipline) this group of youngsters. Not all of the instructors do work with inner city schools. There is a staff orientation and there are weekly staff meetings. Topics such as awarding points are covered, as well as other routine issues such as emergency procedures and schedules. The staff meeting minutes show references to some management discussions, such as not yelling at the kids, not putting your hands on them, trying to work with and give them support, and the like.

The Counselors come from three groups: former participants; classroom paraprofessionals; JTPA. Most of the Counselors are African-American. The boys' teams have male

counselors; girls' teams have female counselors. Their primary job is to be the "den mother" or "sergeant" of the team---to get them from one activity to the next, to make sure they're behaving, to give them pep talks and make them feel good about themselves, etc. They say the hardest part is dealing with the sulking and aggression and emphasis on winning that the kids bring with them. The girl participants are hard to deal with at first (everyone agrees) because they have an attitude; the 10 year olds exasperate everyone, especially their counselors, throughout the summer. There are several counselor interviews in my field notes: they do represent a wide range of backgrounds, educational backgrounds and aspirations, and attitudes toward the job. They do seem to take their roles as models seriously, even if they are sometimes a little uncomfortable with that designation.

Program Relationships

Institution. The NYSP program is well situated within the community college. The Athletic Director is the Program Administrator, and he seems very much involved in the camp's operation (he was the Activity Director for a number of years). The college administrator to whom the program is responsible is the VP of Student Affairs, who now also serves as the VP of Financial Affairs and is therefore the "fiscal officer" for the program. Syd and I met with him, and he was very knowledgeable and supportive of the program. His background is in athletics, and he pops in on the program periodically to see it in operation. The college provides some financial support (counselors, Activity Director salary) in addition to the expected/required support (Project Administrator, facilities, etc.). He does not see the program as recruitment for Carson, but rather as good PR, and as a good thing for this group of kids. The college loses some moneys (can't rent out facilities to other groups while in use by NYSP), but sees it as returning something to the community. The program has good access to facilities.

Community. There are a number of camps and summer programs in the metropolitan area, but most of them are "private" (i.e., for pay) and therefore not accessible to inner city kids. NYSP fills a niche in that regard. There doesn't seem to be a lot of contact with community agencies in recruiting or following kids. They do get the use of community facilities (for medical exams, for example). The ABC (Action for a Better Community) is the

agency that certifies their 90% rate, but they don't seem to have much interaction with them (and staff complain about the forced relationship, to some extent, as when trying to extract the certification letter from them). The Advisory Board does seem to represent various community agencies. They do have some relationship with a residential school program, but it doesn't work that well: the school always wants to send 5 or 6 kids, which the program accepts, but they tend to be the incorrigibles and they usually don't make it past the first week.

National program. The auxiliary staff seemed satisfied with the relationship with the national program. Four of the auxiliary staff have been able to attend national meetings; the Education Coordinator was invited (and his travel expenses paid for) in order to present a lesson. The Project Administrator says it is good to be recognized as a good program and have peers and colleagues stop you to ask advice or talk about the program. They like the way Ed (Thiebe) runs the program; feels he knows what people go through and is supportive. The Project Administrator noted major changes in the national policy and procedures over the past years that he feels are good. One has to do with the paperwork (streamlining). Another with the change in the way evaluations are done. They used to be nitpicky and antagonistic, with the Evaluator clearly looking for problems. For example, they were "once criticized for not having enough white kids. Are you kidding? We recruit from the inner city. It's not easy to get white kids." The focus of the evaluations, and the way the Evaluators conduct themselves, has shifted more in the direction of being helpful and supportive, instead of "knocking them down." There has also been the policy shift away from a primary focus on the sports instruction toward addressing the "larger" social and (perhaps) physical needs of this population of kids. Or as one staff member put it: "In the early years, it wasn't as important that you were working with poor kids. Now it's critical. We're trying to save a generation that's growing up in poverty, with no sense of right and wrong." No real suggestions on how the National Office might provide more support, other than by using every opportunity to acknowledge the support of the home institutions.

NYSP at Ecklund University

*I am a good sport at all times and conduct myself with decency and honesty.
I do my best to get along with others and have pride in myself. I put forth
my best effort in all competition and always compete fairly.*

NYSP slogan on EU bulletin board

Initial Impressions

Two weeks prior to my arrival, I contacted Louise Johnson, Activity Director for the National Youth Sports Program at Ecklund University to make arrangements for my visit there. Within the first moments of our phone conversation, I got the impression from Johnson that Ecklund participants and staff were quite used to visitors, and that my visit was regarded as nothing out of the ordinary (the internal NYSP Evaluator had, in fact, preceded my visit by one week). However, the activity schedule at Ecklund, Johnson explained, was quite busy, and arranging for a three-day visit, as I had initially planned, would be difficult. The children were often bussed off-site to participate in a variety of activities, including instructional clinics led by sports celebrities and rehearsals for opening day Olympic ceremonies. Thus, opportunities to see the local program operate at full capacity became less likely as the days quickly passed. We eventually settled on a two-day visit during the program's fifth week of operation. During this time, the program would be operating at roughly fifty-percent capacity, as half the students were--alternately--scheduled for activities at off-site locations. Still, the program staff "would have their hands full."

Having some extra time on the day before my visit, I walked a half block from my hotel to the Ecklund campus to introduce myself and to take a look around. It was off-hours, so I was taking my chances on whether I would get the opportunity to meet Johnson or any other members of the NYSP staff.

The buildings on the urban Ecklund campus were of similar design, clustered closely together atop a small hill above the busy city street. Little more than the numbers assigned to each distinguished one building from another. The Ecklund campus was stark. There were very few trees, grassy areas, or other amenities to remind visitors that they are walking through a college campus. The campus directory, a stone and steel monolith

positioned near the center of the cobblestoned student plaza, hinted that I might find Louise Johnson in Building A7, the campus' athletics building.

Building A7 was silent and nearly vacant. A recent round in Ecklund's bout to stay financially solvent had forced its Administration to send most of the staff and faculty on summer furlough. A radio played somewhere in building A7. If I followed the trail of music to its source, I thought, I might be able to talk to someone who would know where to find Louise Johnson. My strategy paid off.

Johnson was headquartered near Building A7's swimming pool office. The air in her office was hot and thick with humidity. When I entered, she was sitting on the couch poring over the activity schedule for the following day. I was greeted with a handshake and a warm smile. She invited me to sit down at a desk cluttered with schedules, various NYSP promotional material, and photocopies of hand-written daily announcements that remarked on program achievements and notified her staff of visitor (e.g., mine) arrivals. Our friendly chat began with details of my trip, the up-coming Olympics, and introductions to members of the NYSP-EU staff who occasioned by. Eventually, our conversation turned to matters regarding the history and activity of the Ecklund program.

Program History and Background

NYSP had been in operation at Ecklund University for the last twenty years. Prior to 1976, it had operated for a total six years out of Marion, and then Hawthorne University in Springdale. A faculty member in EU's Physical Education Department had been the critical link in bringing NYSP there when uncertainties arose as to whether the program would survive at Hawthorne.

The program served inner-city youth, all of whom were African American, and who hailed from "some of the most troubled neighborhoods" in the city. Most of the participants lived under the poverty line—as did 97% of all African Americans in Springdale—and some were in family situations where abuse and neglect were no mere abstraction.

While the program at EU—from a demographic standpoint—might not differ remarkably from other NYSP in major metropolitan areas, it was unique in at least two ways. First, its activities took place in the evening (between the hours of 4:30 and 9:30), giving some Springdale youth a respite from life in the city’s mean streets. Second, the program received attention from politicians gaining a “high profile” status in the community. NYSP staff members saw these uniquenesses largely as benefits, and had drawn local and national media to “showcase” their program to the public. Reputation, media exposure, and recognition by political leaders had created rare opportunities for the children to mix with some of the biggest celebrities in the sports world, and had propelled the program into the heights of public acclaim.

Program Personnel

The NYSP instructional staff at EU was headed by Louise Johnson, the program’s Activity Director. Johnson, an adjunct professor at EU in Health and Physical Education, was also a counselor in one of Springdale’s public middle schools, licensed in personal, family, academic, and drug addiction therapy. Her affiliation with the local youth sports program coincided with its move to EU. She was regularly visible at the playing fields, rooms, and corridors of the athletic building where NYSP activities took place, engaging children and staff with friendly banter, warm smiles, greetings, and the occasional embrace. She was loved and respected for what she had done here.

While Johnson was responsible for the day-to-day management, planning, and coordination of program activities, she was supported by colleagues Mildred Payton, Ron Smith, and Eugene Ormond. These individuals were, respectively, responsible for the drug/alcohol awareness, math/science, and general education components of the program. While much of the information about the NYSP program at EU summarized in this report is based on my observations, key insights into the instructional components that serve as enhancements to sports training activities came through interviews with these four people.

Responsibility for the daily conduct of sports instruction/activities was extended to members of the local community who ranged in age—by my estimate—from 20 to perhaps, 60. These staffers who, by day, held jobs as public

school teachers, counselors, college professors, policemen, building engineers, and financial auditors, served over 500 NYSP participants in the evening. They offered quality instruction in nine different sports and guidance in matters of personal conduct, manners, cooperation, values, and self-esteem. Many of the younger instructors, once participants in the program themselves, had returned, in their words, to “give something back to members of the community.” Many of the staffers I talked to seemed open to being thought of as role models, having themselves persevered through the ills of urban life and gone on to lead successful professional lives. The return of former NYSP participants as instructors, and the sense of personal commitment among the entire staff cannot be underestimated when evaluating the program’s impact on participants’ lives. The people who run the NYSP at EU were dedicated to providing a safe and friendly environment to its participants; where kids could count on having a hot meal, learning skills in an area of sports that was of interest to them, meeting friends, having fun, and perhaps most importantly, being around those who believed in the likelihood of their success.

Walk tall. Talk tall. Stand tall.

NYSP motto on hallway bulletin board

Description of EU Program

Program goals. Louise Johnson made it clear to me that the overall goal of the program was to provide a safe environment for the children who attend. The program should be, in her words, a place where “Children [can] come to enjoy, feel safe, be exposed, to learn, to meet friends, and more than anything else, [feel] that they can succeed.” A counselor by profession and a nurturing person by nature, Johnson took special care to ensure that the children who come to her program are accepted for who they are, rather than be treated according to where they have been, or the personal/family troubles they have experienced. Johnson said that by introducing EU children to influential people in the black community (e.g., EU Provost James Jordan, local financier Steve Cox), they could begin to appreciate what is possible in their own lives. It lent credence to her mantra: “Anything is in reach. [These] people are just like you.”

Priority at EU was given to making the children feel good about themselves. The context in which this seemed most often to occur is sports skills instruction. While educational enhancements accounted for a significant amount of participants' time during a typical day, the majority of participants' time was spent in physical activity. Indeed, the highest quality instruction and guidance was in the dance and karate studios, but much too on the courts, tumbling mats, and playing fields.

Emphasis and structure. The EU program was clearly oriented towards sports skills instruction. However, I was told by more than one source during my visit that there are no "superstars" here and that moreover, the staff's job was not to seek out nor develop exceptional talent. Rather, children were instructed in skills so that they could play the game better in the future--a strategy that all staffers agreed has positive consequences for building children's confidence, character, and self-esteem.

In the first week of the program, participants of all ages chose to "major" in one of the following nine sports:

Basketball	Football	Tennis
Dance	Karate	Volleyball
Gymnastics/tumbling	Swimming	Weight Training

Naturally, some sports (e.g., football and basketball) were more popular among youth than others, so participants were encouraged to choose a major that would lead to new experiences, to become skilled in a sport less familiar. Participants, just as students in higher education, were given the opportunity to change their major on "add/drop day," should they be unsatisfied with their first choice. All participants had the same "minor," however: Physical Fitness, PE activities included calisthenics and running exercises (e.g., "wind sprints"). Also required of all students, while not considered a minor area of study, was swimming. Additionally, students were rotated into and out of other sports activities including golf, racquetball, and archery. Thus, children engaged in a number of different athletic activities most given evenings. Participants' time was organized into a "class" schedule that allotted from 45 to 75 minutes for each period. (The two activity schedules for the days of my visit to EU can be mailed, if requested.) Meals were scheduled for students in the first two hours of the program.

Groups of “Majors” were organized not by age or gender but, by skill level.²⁷ By homogenizing skill level, they diversified student groups. Thus, one value that emerges from the structure of activities at EU is a commitment to diversity; with boys and girls experiencing sports together, with younger participants playing with their older peers—instilling in the latter a sense of responsibility, and giving the former, perhaps, someone to look up to.

Description of Activities

Sports skills instruction. The facilities at EU were neither extensive nor elaborate. Space in the physical education building was at a high premium. Some NYSP activities (e.g., dance) were conducted in classrooms, while participants in other sports (basketball and gymnastics) shared the building’s main gymnasium. Space on tennis courts, outdoor playing fields and in the swimming pool did appear, however, to be adequate.

In general, the seriousness with which athletic activities were conducted tended to be very high. Still, emphasis was clearly on participation itself; on having fun, feeling good, promoting self-respect, and dignity. While basketball players ran through a series of passing and defensive drills, for instance, perfect execution was not a priority for either players or coaches. As expected, some children took these activities more seriously than others. Some were visibly sweating and breathing hard, others not. All appeared anxious to “just play the game.” This wish was granted at the end of the evening. Players were split into teams and were handed the ball. The games they played were neither closely supervised nor officiated. The kids indeed had a good time.

Students in “Majors” other than team sports, I observed, received more focused attention and direction from instructors for the entire class “period.” The dance instructor, a former dancer, was particularly attentive to form, presence, and style. As her students came on stage, dancing and leaping, arms and fingers extended, heads poised, she demanded, “Make a statement! It’s more important than the routine itself! Work through the

²⁷ At a number of points during the course of the six-week program, participants were evaluated for skill improvement and, thus, were given opportunity to move up to higher-level instruction.

mistakes. . . . [take] imperfections in step, but form is expected to be perfect!" I later witnessed her admonishing a teenage dancer for wearing nail polish. This instructor insisted that her students take themselves and the art they were learning seriously, to show the kind of respect and dignity each deserved.

The Karate Kids—a group of a dozen or so, including four girls—were shoeless and formed lines on exercise mats in a room that the university used, ostensibly, for similar purposes. They took direction from the lead instructor who called out from the front of the room the names of well-rehearsed “moves.” One student, positioned front and center, served as a model while a second instructor walked through the lines offering assistance on an individual basis; observing moves, correcting where necessary. “If you make a mistake,” the lead instructor encouraged, “look at somebody beside you, or in front. Catch up. It’s okay.”

Back in the gymnasium, tumblers, young girls and boys alike, were having a great time. While some children were being evaluated by instructors for improvements in skills and routine, others were enthusiastically practicing on the side. One boy insisted that I not go away until he had successfully executed a back flip. Of course I obliged and he, after a number of tries—each successive attempt betraying an increased degree of determination—finally “nailed it.”

Instructional Enhancements

The following sections summarize my observations of the instructional components in the EU staff’s larger effort to “enrich” the sports-related experiences of their students. During my visit I was able to observe what students were experiencing in drug and alcohol prevention, general education, and science classes. Additionally, I attended a talk given by Steven Cox, a successful African American investment broker living in the Springdale area.

Drug/Alcohol prevention and general education. Mildred Payton, alcohol/drug prevention education coordinator, indicated in an interview that the program at EU tried to build on NYSP required instruction by enhancing participants’ self-esteem and decision making power. I did not see that. According to Payton, kids were challenged with hypothetical scenarios and situations where tough decisions had to be made with respect to

the use of alcohol and/or drugs. Instead, I observed students disengaged and uninterested with a rote style of instruction that featured teachers reading questions from text materials with the readings appearing to be unrelated one to another without instructional theme or objective. My requests for copies of instructional materials (e.g., course syllabi, lesson plans, etc.) and examples of “quizzes” were not fulfilled.

On the first day of my visit I chose to follow the basketball group through their first few instructional and sports-related activities. The first stop was a classroom in the basement of the athletic building where students met regularly to receive instruction in drug and alcohol awareness/prevention. Kids were sitting at individual school desks scattered across the room. The instructor was reading from what appeared to be a health education workbook: “. . . alcohol has (blank) food value. . . alcohol irritates the (blank) lining.” Some children were eager to fill in the blanks while others were not terribly interested in the activity at all. The instructor continued, “It blanks the function of blank, blank, and blank.” and then later, “Let me read some more facts to you.” And it went on too long.

All the instructional settings I observed during my visit—not just those in drug and alcohol prevention—favored a question and answer format whereby instructors read questions and individual or “teams” of students shouted out their response. Mimicking the popular T.V. game show, “Jeopardy,” a typical teacher-student exchange went like this.

Teacher: This person performs analyses using numerical data.

Students: What is a statistician!

A similar format was used on the following day in a “general education” class dedicated to increasing students’ awareness of African American history and ancestry. In this session, instructors removed handfuls of question cards from a children’s game box and again, read aloud: “This person organized the Underground Railroad . . . “

While interviewed, the instructional staff alluded to a need to link instructional experiences to their sports activity (e.g., career opportunities in the sports industry, location and capitols of countries participating in the Olympics, etc.), much of the classroom activity I observed lacked connection to other

experiences students were having. It was dull, quite modest in its intellectual ambition. Students were not asking questions. They did not appear to be working meaningfully on either individual or group assignments. They possessed no instructional materials (e.g., texts, workbooks, etc.) of their own, nor produced materials or written work. What I saw in my two days at EU was instruction based on the recitation of fragmentary bits of knowledge and “learning” demonstrated by students’ ability to recall or guess correctly.

Science. On my second day on campus, I was escorted by Johnson to the science building. There the head of the Biology Department was leading a dozen or so boys and girls (aged 10-12) through lab procedures for the dissection of a fetal pig. It was a mini-course in anatomy and physiology. Five days were devoted to this particular unit. Other topics in the science curriculum included tours of a greenhouse, photosynthesis, and the human skeletal system, two periods scheduled for each.

On this particular afternoon, students were deeply engaged with their lab specimen. Each had their own. Some had given names to their pigs. A lab assistant helped students through the incision and pinning procedures leading to exposure of the viscera. Students were then invited by the professor to gather around the lab table where he used his model to identify various organs. The instructor peeled, poked, and pointed at—among other things—the pig’s heart, lungs, liver, stomach, spleen, stopping occasionally to explain the function of each organ and how each related to another. The kids were intensely focused on what lay open in front of them, showing neither signs of queasiness nor confusion over the professor’s sometimes abstract explanations. A supplemental handout, a photocopy of a textbook chapter appeared to have come from an undergraduate biology course. I wondered if the professor had adequately considered the difficult level of material for his class.

It was getting close to time for me to leave, but I thought it important to ask (through my own blue surgical mask), “So, how many of you would like to be doctors *now*?” For whatever reason—perhaps because I was a bit woozy from the formaldehyde myself, or had failed to see how this was being made to connect with sports or other elements of the program—I had not expected to see so many little rubber-gloved hands rise

into the air. "I want to be a pediatrician," said one young surgeon.

Additional instructional enhancements. In addition to instructional time spent covering the areas required by NYSP (e.g., drug/alcohol prevention, health and nutrition, math and science, career opportunity), special effort was made on the part of the EU instructional staff to expose their students to a wide variety of topics, ideas, issues, people, and new experiences. For instance, one enrichment project, "Law and Justice," was intended to increase students' awareness of the criminal justice system. A Springdale attorney and judge independently donated their time and shared professional experiences with students, helping to educate them of their rights as citizens, and to inform them of career opportunities in the judicial system. They also spoke of ways to become politically active in their neighborhoods. One night after mealtime, I got a chance to chat with the attorney in the makeshift cafeteria. Food was served to students along a line in the gymnasium's balcony. A white, thirty-somethingish lawyer with a forward verbal delivery, Ms. Stockton represented fashion designers suing counterfeiters of Gucci shoulder bags and Tommy Hilfiger sportswear. She explained to me that her past lessons addressed, among other things, students' own culpability when purchasing ripped-off merchandise, the use of local politicians to solve local problems (e.g., getting streets cleaned), and the importance of voter registration drives in public housing complexes. From Ms. Stockton's account, her political empowerment seminars emphasized a common theme: legal and political empowerment.

Louise Johnson explained to me that the EU program was often visited by people leading successful professional lives. One was Steven Cox, a young African American now a millionaire in the investment brokerage industry. I attended a workshop by Cox and an associate addressing a myriad of subjects including how to get started in the stock market, summer internship opportunities related to the market for high school students, and how students could pay for their own college education by investing. While I found his talk to be both compelling and ambitious, I was left to wonder whether his young audience, who looked somewhat less than inspired, viewed the stock market as having any relevance in their lives.

While NYSP minimum time requirements for enrichment courses clearly fulfilled, my general impression was that the topics addressed by such activity were fragmented and unrelated, only superficially addressing the ideals embodied in NCAA's second objective for the NYSP program, "To help young people acquire good health practices, to help them become better citizens, and to acquaint them with career and educational opportunities. . ." On the whole, the curriculum was in need of conceptual integration, more of a thematic coherence, if it was to have the intended impact on its students.

Other opportunities. Creating an environment in which all participants could improve their own self-esteem, and would be given exposure to new people and things were ideals that pervaded all elements of the program at EU. To a large extent, the program's reputation, personal contacts made by its Activity Director, and location actually gave EU children access to some of the biggest sports figures of our time, as well as to opportunities to participate in activities related to national and international sports competition. The list of stars who EU participants met, mingled with, or received instruction from was long, including Andre Agassi (tennis champion), Riddick Bowe (champion prizefighter), Shang Husng (American Volleyball Olympian), and Jose Jones (SCUBA diver famous for expeditions to the sunken Titanic).

My visit to EU, as it turned out, coincided with two major sporting events occurring locally. The first was a major professional tennis championship tournament. A member of EU instructional staff served as youth coordinator for the national tournament held annually in Springdale. As such, he was able to arrange chances for the children to mix with the pros, receive free clinics, and learn scoring and other rules applied to the game. The second event was an Olympic soccer competition held in Springdale's football stadium. NYSP/EU dancers and gymnasts were asked to perform routines as part of that event's opening day "extravaganza." Among the international teams competing in Springdale that week was the Ghana National Team. On the first day of my visit, the head coach for this squad and his two very young sons arrived to conduct a demonstration on soccer skills for the NYSP kids. For a half hour, EU participants were shown—and a few participated—in exercises on dribbling, stopping, and kicking the soccer ball. Arranging for these kinds of

high profile sports activities is clearly something at which the program at Ecklund University excels.

Relationship with University

This was a bad time for the Ecklund University. A recent budget crisis forced the university to shut down operations for most of its campus facilities and to put nearly the entire staff and faculty on furlough. The buildings, with the exception of a few youth groups and skeleton staff were largely vacant. As such, it was difficult to expect much support from the university at all. Thus, with the exception of their reliance on the buildings, their classrooms, gymnasium, swimming pool, playing fields, the biology professor, and the two buses used to bring kids to and back, Johnson's program appeared to be autonomous, self-sufficient. And it seemed content with this arrangement. When asked whether she thought that her program would survive if financial resources were cut or depleted, she responded with a cool, "Yes." Indeed, there seemed no reason to believe that it would not, given her group's perseverance through the financially troubled circumstances that presently beset the sponsoring university. She and members of her staff have "pulled double-duty," donating their own time to provide custodial support (staffers could be seen sweeping and mopping the hallways), and supplies needed to keep the program running day by day. Johnson had even recruited local off-duty police officers to provide for building security. Said Johnson, "If Congress takes [the money] away, it still wouldn't matter because we would go to the powers that be and ask . . . and [rely on] friends for resources . . . we would do whatever it takes to make it work."

Relationship with Community

Recruitment. The EU program enjoyed a high rate of retention (though the figures were not made available to me) and recruitment of participants was rarely a problem, according to Johnson. Young people of Springdale knew of NYSP's reputation for success. It passed as word of mouth and, to some extent, through local media coverage. "Word just kinda gets out," explained Johnson. Some efforts were made by the NYSP staff to reach out to communities, to high schools, and areas of high incidence crime and drugs. Motorcades of staffers drove to

neighborhoods like Bay City to introduce themselves, distribute brochures, and encourage youngsters to join in on the fun.

The Host Community. Ecklund University is located in a predominantly white and upper-middle class Springdale neighborhood. NYSP children were bussed in or took public transportation from far-away neighborhoods many of which looked quite a bit different. This summer, as it happens, NYSP was one of two programs for disadvantaged urban youth located on the EU campus. The other, was a day camp sponsored by Springdale's Mayor. The perceptions of those who resided in this neighborhood, Johnson explained, were somewhat tainted by the behavior of the Mayor's loosely supervised group. (I came within a few feet of being hit by a large cement fragment dislodged by the foot of one such participant who was standing on a balcony of one of the EU buildings.) Johnson reported that there was some tension in the community between those who lived there and programs like hers. Preconceptions, stereotypes, and observations of rambunctious youth, Johnson reported, had led some people at bus stops to "urge" her students to go back to their own neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, the short visit made it difficult to ascertain how real this tension was, what its sources were, and how deeply the feelings of animosity among those who live here. Perhaps the only time the public saw NYSP kids was when groups waited for their bus to take them home. Maybe many in this metropolitan neighborhood were not aware what went on in the campus buildings located away from the main boulevard that runs through their neighborhood. Perhaps there was little awareness close by that the program exists at all. One thing, however, seemed rather obvious to me: Johnson's program managed to operate with success despite its isolation from both the University and the surrounding community. I wondered what the program would look like if there had been concerted effort on NYSP's part to reach out to the surrounding white community, perhaps urging the sponsorship of local businesses, but to work as hard to make the NYSP mission as well known in nearby streets as it was across town and across the country.