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ABSTRACT

The Positive Impact Program (PIP) is a program that involves the community through role models as mentors in striving to meet the needs of at-risk students. The program is directed by 16 black men who work every week with school-age black males (N=18) who have been identified as being "at-risk" by their teachers. The teachers identified the students by the following characteristics: (1) low self-esteem; (2) lack of motivation; (3) poor academic record; (4) disciplinary problems; (5) poor school attendance; (6) poor social skills; (7) lack of respect for authority; and (8) poor hygiene. The data for the analysis were teacher ratings of the eight at-risk characteristics and measures of academic achievement over the past 2 years. Standardized test scores and class grades were the measures of academic achievement used in this investigation. Contrasts from Year 1 to Year 2 were made on all these measures using the dependent two-mean hypothesis test. These adolescent black males were further classified as "at-risk" or "not-at-risk" and if at-risk, whether or not they participated in PIP. In their classes the relative standing of these groups of junior high black males increased from Year 1 to Year 2 in achievement measured by standardized test scores. However, the average grades of all groups declined from Year 1 to Year 2. Second year teacher ratings indicated that the at-risk students showed overall improvement. (Author/ABL)

TEACHER RATINGS AND ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES OF AT-RISK ADOLESCENT BLACK MALES IN THE POSITIVE IMPACT PROGRAM (PIP)

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Abstract

The Positive Impact Program (PIP) is a program that involves the community through role models as mentors in striving to meet the needs of at-risk students. The program is directed by 16 black men who work every week with school age black males who have been identified as being "at-risk" by their teachers. The teachers identified the students by the following characteristics: (1) low self-esteem, (2) lack of motivation, (3) poor academic record, (4) disciplinary problems (5) poor school attendance, (6) poor social skills, (7) lack of respect for authority, and (8) poor hygiene.

The data for the analysis were teacher ratings of the eight at-risk characteristics and measures of academic achievement over the past two years. Standardized test scores (Metropolitan Achievement Test in 1991 and Stanford Achievement Test in 1992) and class grades were the measures of academic achievement used in this investigation.

Contrasts from Year 1 to Year 2 were made on all these measures using the dependent two-mean hypothesis test. These adolescent black males were further classified as "at-risk" or "not-at-risk" and, if at-risk, whether or not they participated in PIP. Group contrasts were made on these measures using the independent two-mean hypothesis test.

In their classes the relative standing of these groups of junior high black males increased from Year 1 to Year 2 in achievement measured by standardized test scores. However, the average grades of all groups declined from Year 1 to Year 2. Second year teacher ratings indicated the at-risk students showed overall improvement.

Teacher Ratings and Achievement Measures of At-risk Adolescent Black Males in the Positive Impact Program (PIP)

Introduction

What does it mean when one says that a young person is at-risk? The Phi Delta Kappa study by Frymier and Gansneder (1989) of students at-risk began with the assumption that children are at-risk if they are likely to fail either in school or in life. For example, if a student fails a course in school, is retained to repeat a grade, or drops out of school, that student is at-risk.

In reality, there is no single, working definition of an at-risk student because the definition varies from community to community, from school to school, and from year to year. The basis of a definition, as well as the basis of a district's program for identifying students at-risk, becomes a list of characteristics. Some common characteristics and behaviors of at-risk students are absenteeism, truancy, frequent tardiness, poor grades, discrepancy between ability and performance, reading level not commensurate with grade level, difficulty learning basic skills, inability to tolerate structured activities, lack of definitive goals, feeling alienation from school, belief that school doesn't care, failure to see the relevance of education to life experience, limited extra-curricular involvement, two or more years older than peers, frequent change of school, disruptive classroom behavior, low income, siblings and/or parents who are dropouts, low educational level of parents, limited parental monitoring of student activities, low parental expectations, becoming involved in drugs, becoming sexually active at an early age, getting pregnant, becoming despondent and suicidal, drifting into crime, accepting failure as a way of life, becoming dependent on welfare throughout life, and drifting into gang membership (Brodinsky & Keough, 1989).

According to the 1989 Arkansas Association of Educational Administrator's booklet At-Risk Students in the Public Schools of Arkansas, for many years Arkansas, like other states, has had many students at-risk. "Approximately 3,800 young people leave America's school systems every day. About 56 of these students are youth in Arkansas. These are the at-risk students whose special needs and problems are neither identified nor addressed. Before graduation from high school, they join the rolls of dropouts-- 3,800 of them every day" (p. 6). In an attempt to stop this trend in Arkansas, the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators appointed a task force in 1989 to study the problem of at-risk students. Three years after the appointment of the task force, this study will give reference to some programs that have been established for at-risk students both nationally and locally as a result of legislation in Arkansas and other states.

Statement of the Problem

In Wynne, Arkansas, the at-risk student is no different from his counterpart in Los Angeles, Detroit, Atlanta, or New York City. He performs academically below grade level, has been retained in grade at some time, is economically and socially disadvantaged, has low self-esteem, and shows little or no self-motivation. As a result

of these characteristics, when he does attend school, he is often a disciplinary problem. Teachers and administrators have recognized him for years and have endeavored to meet his needs not only in the classroom but also in life.

The Positive Impact Program (PIP) is one example of involving the community through role models as mentors in striving to meet those needs of at-risk students (Cobbs & McCallum, 1992). The program is directed by 16 black men who work every week with school-age black males who have been identified as being "at-risk" by their teachers. PIP has chosen to specifically address six areas of concern for these at-risk students: (a) teen pregnancy, (b) AIDS, (c) sexually transmitted diseases, (d) suicide, (e) gangs and (f) failure to acquire a high school diploma.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the change in student achievement and teacher ratings of junior high age black males over a one-year period. These adolescent black males were classified in three categories: (a) those identified as being at-risk who participated in the Positive Impact Program; (b) those identified as being at-risk who did not participate in PIP; and (c) those who had not been identified as at-risk. Student achievement results were investigated using both standardized achievement test results (in reading, mathematics, language arts, science, social studies and the complete battery) and student grades (in English, mathematics, science and social studies). Students were initially identified as being at-risk by their teachers on the basis of self-esteem, motivation, academic record, discipline, school attendance, social skills, lack of respect for authority, and personal hygiene and health care. Subsequently, teachers were asked again to rate the at-risk students on these same factors to determine if their behavior was worse, better or had not changed.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to the Wynne School District in Eastern Arkansas in the school years of 1990-91 and 1991-92. The study was further limited to black male students in grades six through eight. The teacher ratings, standardized achievement test scores and student grades were also assumed to provide valid measures of student behavior and achievement.

Methods and Procedures

Design of the Study

This was a descriptive study about achievement and behavior of adolescent black males, classified as being at-risk or not-at-risk. If identified as at-risk, students were further classified as participating or not participating in the Positive Impact Program (PIP). Both standardized test results and student grades were used as pre and post achievement measures from 1991 and 1992. Pre and post measures of student behavior were obtained through teacher ratings.

Target Population

The population for the study consisted of black males in grades six, seven, and eight at Wynne Junior High School during the 1991-1992 school year. This

population was stratified by classifications of students being at-risk or not-at-risk, and whether or not the at-risk students participated in the Positive Impact Program (PIP).

Sampling Procedures

Of the 90 black males in grades six, seven and eight, 55 participated in this study. Of 23 identified as not-at-risk, 13 participated. Of the at-risk students, 42 of 67 participated in this study, 18 of 31 were in PIP and 24 of 36 were not in PIP.

Instrumentation

Student achievement measures were recorded from 1991 MAT-6 and 1992 Stanford Achievement Test results in reading, mathematics, language arts, science, social studies and the complete battery. Student ratings on at-risk characteristics were obtained with teacher ratings on self-esteem, motivation, academic record, discipline, school attendance, social skills, lack of respect for authority, and personal hygiene and health care. An initial rating sheet was used to identify at-risk students. A subsequent questionnaire was used to rate the at-risk students on each of these characteristics.

Data Collection and Recording Procedures

Students were identified by grade, whether they had been identified at-risk, and whether or not they participated in the Positive Impact Program. From the student records, standardized 1991 MAT-6 test scores were recorded each student in reading, mathematics, language arts, science, social science and the complete battery. Standardized 1992 Stanford Achievement Test scores in the same areas were also recorded.

Student grades in English, mathematics, science and social studies were also obtained from the student record file for the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years. Student grades were recorded on a 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 scale representing grades of A, B, C, D or F.

Teacher questionnaires were tabulated from 1990 and 1991 that identified students at-risk on eight characteristics. The revised teacher questionnaire was given to teachers who had the student in class during the 1991-92 school year. Students were rated on each of the eight characteristics as (1) worse, (2) no change, or (3) better.

Data Processing and Analysis Procedures

Since students were in three different grades, the MAT-6 and Stanford Achievement Test scores were standardized to indicate the student's relative standing in his class on that particular measure. This standing could then be monitored from year one to year two. Another need for the standardization arose because the district changed tests, administering the MAT-6 in 1991 and the Stanford Achievement Test battery in 1992. Scores on both of these test batteries were standardized using the district's grade mean and standard deviation. Scores reported in the study represent a distribution having a mean of 500 and standard deviation of 100.

Average scores on all tests for all groups (at-risk and not-at-risk students, and at-risk students in PIP and not in PIP) were reported. Independent two-mean

hypothesis test contrasts were made between these scores. Dependent two-mean contrasts were made between year one (1991) and year two (1992).

Average student grades were likewise contrasted using the independent two-mean test between at-risk and not-at-risk students. Year one and year two grades were likewise contrasted using the dependent two-mean test.

Initially, teachers were asked to identify a limited number of black male students who they thought were "at-risk." The results from these initial questionnaires were tallied and are presented in table form. The results for the spring 1992 ratings of the same eight at-risk characteristics by teachers now having at-risk black male sixth, seventh or eighth graders in their classes are also presented in table form. An average gain (or loss) across the paired at-risk characteristics was also figured and presented.

Results

The population for this investigation consisted of adolescent black males in grades six, seven and eight at Wynne Junior High School during the 1991-92 school year. These students were classified as being at-risk or not-at-risk by their teachers. Furthermore, the at-risk students were classified as whether or not they participated in the Positive Impact Program (PIP).

Of the 90 black males in grades six, seven and eight, 55 participated in the study. Of 23 students identified as not-at-risk, 13 participated. Of the 67 at-risk students, 42 participated in the study. Of the 31 at-risk students who participated in PIP, 18 were in this study. Of 36 at-risk students who did not participate in PIP, 24 were in this study.

Standardized Test Results

Summary statistics for student standardized test results for the April, 1991, administration of the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT-6) and the April, 1992, administration of the Stanford Achievement Test are presented in Table 1. Since two different test batteries were used and since the students in the study were in three different grades, test scores were standardized to indicate each student's relative standing in the distribution (based on a class mean of 500 and standard deviation of 100). In Table 1, Year 1 represents MAT-6 scores and Year 2 represents Stanford Achievement Test scores.

Year 1: Metropolitan Achievement Test Results. In the Year 1 MAT-6 test results, most group means fell about one standard deviation below the mean (ranging from 340 to 435). This standing in the distribution was noted for both at-risk and not-at-risk students.

Year 2: Stanford Achievement Test Results. For the Year 2 Stanford Achievement Test results, test means ranged between 419 to 470 for all groups. Thus, all average test results fell less than one standard deviation below the mean.

Contrast Between Year 1 and Year 2 Test Results. Dependent two-mean hypothesis tests were conducted between Year 1 and Year 2 test results for all groups on each of the tests. These tests were conducted at the .05 level of significance. As shown in Table 1, significant increases were noted in 28 of the 30 two-mean

Table 1

Comparisons of Year 1 and Year 2 Standardized Achievement Test Results

		Year 1		Year 2			
Reading	N	X	s	X	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	50	385	86	427	100	-4.25	.000*
Not At-risk	12	404	73	435	65	-2.39	.036*
At-risk Total	38	379	90	425	110	-3.69	.001*
At-risk, in PIP	17	365	81	432	93	-2.85	.012*
At-risk, not PIP	21	390	97	419	124	-2.55	.019*
Mathematics	N	X	s	X	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	49	403	94	442	91	-4.13	.000*
Not At-risk	12	417	68	454	98	-1.25	.239
At-risk Total	37	399	101	439	90	-4.72	.000*
At-risk, in PIP	17	414	97	448	86	-2.85	.012*
At-risk, not PIP	20	386	105	431	94	-3.72	.001*
Language Arts	N	X	s	X	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	50	407	115	444	92	-3.88	.000*
Not At-risk	12	430	102	461	52	-1.29	.225
At-risk Total	38	399	119	438	101	-3.80	.001*
At-risk, in PIP	17	402	102	435	82	-2.27	.038*
At-risk, not PIP	21	396	133	441	116	-3.01	.007*
Science	N	X	s	X	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	47	356	119	458	89	-8.24	.000*
Not At-risk	12	378	66	435	69	-2.61	.024*
At-risk Total	35	349	132	466	94	-8.35	.000*
At-risk, in PIP	17	359	137	462	91	-5.74	.000*
At-risk, not PIP	18	340	131	470	100	-6.09	.000*
Social Science	N	X	s	X	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	47	385	107	445	93	-4.48	.000*
Not At-risk	12	407	83	463	78	-2.40	.035*
At-risk Total	35	377	115	439	98	-3.78	.001*
At-risk, in PIP	17	372	120	436	109	-3.19	.006*
At-risk, not PIP	18	382	112	442	90	-2.29	.035*
Complete Battery	N	X	s	X	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	46	375	114	438	97	-7.22	.000*
Not At-risk	12	393	79	446	68	-3.51	.005*
At-risk Total	34	369	125	435	106	-6.27	.000*
At-risk, in PIP	17	373	115	435	95	-4.74	.000*
At-risk, not PIP	17	365	137	435	118	-4.15	.001*

* $p < .05$

hypothesis tests conducted. Overall, these junior high school level black males showed significant increases in their relative standings in their class in reading, mathematics, language arts, science, social science and the complete battery. However, this increase may be attributed to the change in achievement test battery administered. Overall, these results appeared consistent across groups, whether or not they had been identified at-risk and whether or not the at-risk students participated in PIP.

Student Grades

Average grades were compiled for students in English, mathematics, science, social studies and across these four subjects combined. As shown in Table 2, these grades were compiled for the total group of grade six, seven and eight black males, as well as, these students classified as at-risk or not-at-risk and whether or not they participated in PIP.

Year 1 Average Grades. For all groups, the Year 1 grades averaged above 2.00. On a five-point scale (A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1; and F=0), these average grades generally fell at the C to C+ level ranging from 2.00 to 2.83.

Year 2 Average Grades. Average grades fell above and below 2.00 for all groups in Year 2. The average grades for all groups fell below 2.00 in science. Overall, in Year 2 the average grades ranged from 1.59 to 2.50.

Contrast Between Year 1 and Year 2 Average Grades. In the ten observations of average student grades (five grade averages across two years), the at-risk students in PIP had the lowest grade averages. To contrast Year 1 and Year 2 average grades, dependent two-mean hypothesis tests were conducted between Year 1 and Year 2 average grades for all groups in each subject and on the overall average. These tests were conducted at the .05 level of significance. As shown in Table 2, significant declines were noted in 21 of the 25 two-mean hypothesis tests conducted. Overall, these junior high school level black males showed significant declines in their grades in English, mathematics, science, social science and the overall average. Comparable results for all students in grades six, seven and eight were not available for comparison to determine if an overall trend existed in lower grades being earned in succeeding years in junior high school.

Teacher Ratings on At-risk Characteristics

Initially, teachers were asked to fill out referral questionnaires to identify students they perceived at-risk on the basis of eight variables: low self-esteem, lack of motivation, poor academic record, disciplinary problems, poor school attendance, poor social skills, disrespect for authority, and poor personal hygiene and health care habits. These referrals were received in fall, 1990, and fall, 1991.

In spring, 1992, teachers were asked to rate these students over the past year on each of these eight variables. Each student was rated as being (1) worse, (2) not changed, or (3) better.

Year 1 Teacher Questionnaire Results

As shown in Table 3, the most frequently rated characteristics identifying students at-risk were poor academic record and lack motivation followed by low self-

Table 2

Comparisons of Year 1 and Year 2 Student Course Grades

		Year 1		Year 2			
English	N	$\bar{X}$	s	$\bar{X}$	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	54	2.63	1.05	2.04	1.08	5.36	.000*
Not At-risk	13	2.62	.87	2.08	1.12	2.50	.028*
At-risk Total	41	2.63	1.11	2.02	1.08	4.69	.000*
At-risk, in PIP	18	2.50	1.15	1.78	1.11	4.08	.001*
At-risk, not PIP	23	2.74	1.10	2.22	1.04	2.79	.011*

		Year 1		Year 2			
Mathematics	N	$\bar{X}$	s	$\bar{X}$	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	54	2.44	.98	1.94	.96	3.47	.001*
Not At-risk	13	2.54	.78	2.08	.95	2.52	.027*
At-risk Total	41	2.41	1.05	1.90	.97	2.82	.008*
At-risk, in PIP	18	2.00	1.19	1.78	1.17	.70	.495
At-risk, not PIP	23	2.74	.81	2.00	.80	3.68	.001*

		Year 1		Year 2			
Science	N	$\bar{X}$	s	$\bar{X}$	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	49	2.14	1.06	1.67	.88	3.78	.000*
Not At-risk	12	2.08	1.08	1.92	1.00	1.00	.339
At-risk Total	37	2.16	1.07	1.59	.83	3.72	.001*
At-risk, in PIP	17	2.00	1.12	1.59	.71	1.95	.069
At-risk, not PIP	20	2.30	1.03	1.60	.94	3.20	.005*

		Year 1		Year 2			
Social Studies	N	$\bar{X}$	s	$\bar{X}$	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	49	2.59	.91	2.16	.83	3.56	.001*
Not At-risk	12	2.83	.84	2.50	.80	1.48	.166
At-risk Total	37	2.51	.93	2.05	.82	3.22	.003*
At-risk, in PIP	16	2.44	1.03	1.88	.62	2.18	.045*
At-risk, not PIP	21	2.57	.87	2.19	.93	2.36	.029*

		Year 1		Year 2			
Average Grades	N	$\bar{X}$	s	$\bar{X}$	s	dep-t	t-prob
Total Group	48	2.40	.78	1.94	.73	5.48	.000*
Not At-risk	12	2.48	.68	2.10	.82	2.83	.016*
At-risk Total	36	2.38	.82	1.88	.71	4.73	.000*
At-risk, in PIP	16	2.17	.92	1.72	.76	2.48	.026*
At-risk, not PIP	20	2.54	.71	2.01	.65	4.32	.000*

* $p < .05$

Table 3

Results of 1st Teacher Questionnaire

At-risk Characteristic		Total Group (N=55)	Not At-risk (N=13)	At-risk Total (N=42)	At-risk, in PIP (N=18)	At-risk, not PIP (N=24)
Self-esteem						
	N:	22	4	18	8	10
	%:	(40)	(31)	(43)	(44)	(42)
Motivation						
	N:	24	3	21	12	9
	%:	(44)	(23)	.50)	(67)	(38)
Academic Record						
	N:	28	3	25	11	14
	%:	(51)	(23)	(60)	(61)	(58)
Discipline						
	N:	17	3	14	6	8
	%:	(31)	(23)	(33)	(33)	(33)
School Attendance						
	N:	0	0	0	0	0
	%:	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Social Skills						
	N:	2	1	1	1	0
	%:	(4)	(8)	(2)	(6)	(0)
Respect for Authority						
	N:	14	2	12	5	7
	%:	(26)	(15)	(29)	(28)	(29)
Personal Hygiene and Health						
	N:	3	0	3	1	2
	%:	(6)	(0)	(7)	(6)	(8)

esteem, lack of discipline and lack of respect for authority. For the 18 at-risk students in PIP, the characteristics most frequently cited were lack of motivation (12), poor academic record (11), low self-esteem (8), lack of discipline (6), and lack of respect for authority.

Year 2 Teacher Questionnaire Results

The at-risk characteristics were rated (1) worse, (2) no change, or (3) better by teachers of these junior high school black males in spring, 1992. Frequencies of responses for each group are presented in Table 4, accompanied by the percentage of responses, characteristic mean and standard deviation. As shown throughout the eight characteristics, the most frequently chosen rating was "no change." However, across all characteristics a rating of "better" was chosen more frequently than "worse." Overall, improvement had been noted by the teachers for both not-at-risk and at-risk students, and for at-risk students who participated in PIP and for those who did not.

Contrasts Between At-risk and Not-at-risk Students

A series of independent two-mean hypothesis tests were conducted between at-risk and not-at-risk students for Year 1 and Year 2 standardized test results, for Year 1 and Year 2 grades, and for the 2nd teacher questionnaire. As shown in Table 5, not a single significant difference was noted between the average scores for these two groups. That is, no significant differences were noted on the average 1991 MAT-6 test results, the 1992 Stanford Achievement Test results, the eight characteristics on the 2nd teacher questionnaire, nor on final course grades in 1991 and 1992.

Contrasts Between At-risk Students in PIP and Not in PIP

A series of independent two-mean hypothesis tests were conducted between at-risk students in PIP and those not in PIP for Year 1 and Year 2 standardized test results, for Year 1 and Year 2 grades, and for the 2nd teacher questionnaire. As shown in Table 6, of 31 hypothesis conducted only a single significant difference was noted between the average scores for these two groups. No significant differences were noted on the average 1991 MAT-6 test results nor the 1992 Stanford Achievement Test results (in reading, mathematics, language arts, science, social science and the complete battery). No significant differences between at-risk students in PIP or not in PIP were noted on any of the eight characteristics rated on the 2nd teacher questionnaire (self-esteem, motivation, academic record, discipline, school attendance, social skills, respect for authority, and personal hygiene and health). No significant differences were noted on final course grades in 1992 (in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and course average). Also, no significant differences were noted in final course grades in 1991, except for mathematics.

Table 4

Results of 2nd Teacher Questionnaire

At-risk Characteristic		Total Group (N=55)	Not At-risk (N=13)	At-risk Total (N=42)	At-ris in PIP (N=18)	At-risk, not PIP (N=24)
Self-esteem	$\bar{X}$	2.36	2.46	2.33	2.44	2.25
	s	.59	.52	.61	.51	.68
1-Worse	N (%)	3 (6)	0 (0)	3 (7)	0 (0)	3 (13)
2-No Change	N (%)	28 (53)	6 (55)	22 (52)	10 (56)	12 (50)
3-Better	N (%)	22 (41)	5 (45)	17 (41)	8 (44)	9 (37)
Motivation	$\bar{X}$	2.32	2.55	2.26	2.50	2.08
	s	.67	.52	.70	.62	.72
1-Worse	N (%)	6 (11)	0 (0)	6 (14)	1 (5)	5 (21)
2-No Change	N (%)	24 (45)	5 (45)	19 (45)	7 (39)	12 (50)
3-Better	N (%)	23 (44)	6 (55)	17 (41)	10 (56)	7 (29)
Academic Record	$\bar{X}$	2.30	2.73	2.31	2.28	2.33
	s	.75	.47	.81	.83	.82
1-Worse	N (%)	9 (17)	0 (0)	9 (21)	4 (22)	5 (21)
2-No Change	N (%)	19 (36)	8 (73)	11 (26)	5 (28)	6 (25)
3-Better	N (%)	25 (47)	3 (27)	22 (53)	9 (50)	13 (54)
Discipline	$\bar{X}$	2.06	2.09	2.05	2.22	1.92
	s	.77	.70	.80	.81	.78
1-Worse	N (%)	14 (26)	2 (18)	12 (29)	4 (22)	8 (33)
2-No Change	N (%)	22 (42)	6 (55)	16 (38)	6 (33)	10 (42)
3-Better	N (%)	17 (32)	3 (27)	14 (33)	8 (45)	6 (25)
School Attendance	$\bar{X}$	2.30	2.36	2.29	2.39	2.21
	s	.46	.51	.46	.50	.42
1-Worse	N (%)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
2-No Change	N (%)	37 (70)	7 (64)	30 (71)	11 (61)	19 (79)
3-Better	N (%)	16 (30)	4 (36)	12 (29)	7 (39)	5 (21)
Social Skills	$\bar{X}$	2.37	2.46	2.36	2.50	2.25
	s	.63	.52	.66	.71	.61
1-Worse	N (%)	4 (8)	0 (0)	4 (10)	2 (11)	2 (8)
2-No Change	N (%)	25 (47)	6 (55)	19 (45)	5 (28)	14 (59)
3-Better	N (%)	24 (45)	5 (45)	19 (45)	11 (61)	8 (33)
Respect/Authority	$\bar{X}$	2.13	2.09	2.14	2.22	2.08
	s	.74	.70	.75	.73	.78
1-Worse	N (%)	11 (21)	2 (18)	9 (21)	3 (17)	6 (25)
2-No Change	N (%)	24 (45)	6 (55)	18 (43)	8 (44)	10 (42)
3-Better	N (%)	18 (34)	3 (27)	15 (36)	7 (39)	8 (33)
Hygiene/Health	$\bar{X}$	2.35	2.36	2.36	2.33	2.38
	s	.56	.51	.58	.49	.65
1-Worse	N (%)	2 (4)	0 (0)	2 (5)	0 (0)	2 (8)
2-No Change	N (%)	30 (57)	7 (64)	23 (55)	12 (67)	11 (46)
3-Better	N (%)	21 (40)	4 (36)	17 (40)	6 (33)	11 (46)

Table 5

Contrasts Between At-risk and Not-at-risk Students

Measure	At-risk Group Mean	s	N	Not At-risk Group Mean	s	N	ind-t stat	t-prob
Year 1: MAT-6 Test								
Reading	379	90	38	404	73	12	-1.00	.328
Mathematics	401	100	38	417	68	12	-.63	.534
Language	399	119	38	431	103	12	-.89	.385
Science	349	132	35	378	66	12	-1.00	.326
Social Sci.	377	114	35	407	84	12	-.97	.341
Battery	368	123	35	392	80	12	-.77	.447
Year 2: Stanford Achievement Test								
Reading	421	107	41	434	65	12	-.55	.587
Mathematics	434	92	40	453	98	12	-.65	.527
Language	434	99	41	460	51	12	-1.28	.208
Science	446	105	41	434	69	12	.42	.677
Social Sci.	426	102	41	463	77	12	-1.34	.193
Battery	422	105	40	447	69	12	-.96	.347
Year 2 Teacher Questionnaire								
Self-Esteem	2.33	.612	42	2.45	.522	11	-.60	.550
Motivation	2.26	.701	42	2.55	.522	11	-1.25	.217
Acad. Record	2.31	.811	42	2.27	.467	11	.14	.886
Discipline	2.05	.795	42	2.09	.701	11	-.16	.870
Sch. Attendance	2.29	.457	42	2.36	.505	11	-.49	.624
Social Skills	2.36	.656	42	2.46	.522	11	-.46	.651
Respect/Auth.	2.14	.751	42	2.09	.701	11	.21	.837
Hyg. & Health	2.36	.577	42	2.36	.505	11	-.03	.973
Aver. Diff. (Years 1&2)	2.27	.592	38	2.25	.535	8	.07	.945
Year 1 Grades								
English	2.63	1.11	41	2.62	.870	13	.06	.956
Mathematics	2.41	1.05	41	2.54	.776	13	-.39	.697
Science	2.16	1.07	37	2.08	1.08	12	.22	.826
Social Sci.	2.51	.932	37	2.83	.835	12	-1.06	.295
Yr-1 Av. Grade	2.38	.820	36	2.48	.679	12	-.40	.694
Year 2 Grades								
English	2.02	1.08	41	2.08	1.11	13	-.15	.880
Mathematics	1.90	.970	41	2.08	.954	13	-.57	.573
Science	1.58	.874	40	2.08	1.12	13	-1.68	.099
Social Sci.	2.03	.811	39	2.50	.798	12	-1.78	.081
Yr-2 Av. Grade	1.85	.692	39	2.10	.822	12	-1.08	.285

Table 6

Contrasts Between At-risk Students in PIP and Not in PIP

Measure	At-risk in PIP Mean	s	N	At-risk Not PIP Mean	s	N	ind-t stat	t-prob
Year 1: MAT-6 Test								
Reading	365	80	17	389	97	21	-.88	.387
Mathematics	413	97	17	390	104	21	.74	.466
Language	402	102	17	397	134	21	.16	.875
Science	358	138	17	340	130	18	.42	.678
Social Sci.	372	120	17	383	112	18	.26	.794
Battery	372	114	17	364	133	18	.20	.846
Year 2: Stanford Achievement Test								
Reading	427	94	18	416	120	23	.30	.762
Mathematics	440	90	18	428	95	22	.44	.661
Language	432	80	18	433	114	23	-.02	.985
Science	446	112	18	446	102	23	.03	.977
Social Sci.	427	112	18	425	95	23	-.05	.961
Battery	427	98	18	417	112	22	.29	.774
Year 2 Teacher Questionnaire								
Self-Esteem	2.44	.511	18	2.25	.676	24	1.02	.314
Motivation	2.50	.618	18	2.08	.717	24	1.97	.055
Acad. Record	2.28	.826	18	2.33	.816	24	-.22	.829
Discipline	2.22	.808	18	1.92	.776	24	1.24	.222
Sch. Attendance	2.39	.502	18	2.21	.415	24	1.28	.209
Social Skills	2.50	.707	18	2.25	.608	24	1.23	.226
Respect/Auth.	2.22	.732	18	2.08	.776	24	.59	.560
Hyg. & Health	2.33	.485	18	2.38	.647	24	-.23	.820
Aver. Diff. (Years 1 & 2)	2.27	.592	38	2.25	.535	8	.07	.945
Year 1 Grades								
English	2.50	1.15	18	2.74	1.10	23	-.68	.502
Mathematics	2.00	1.19	18	2.74	.810	23	-2.37	.023*
Science	2.00	1.12	17	2.30	1.03	20	-.85	.402
Social Sci.	2.44	1.03	16	2.57	.870	21	-.43	.671
Yr-1 Av. Grade	2.17	.921	16	2.54	.713	20	-1.34	.188
Year 2 Grades								
English	1.78	1.11	18	2.22	1.04	23	-1.30	.201
Mathematics	1.78	1.17	18	2.00	.798	23	-.72	.473
Science	1.59	.712	17	1.57	.992	23	.08	.936
Social Sci.	1.82	.636	17	2.18	.907	22	-1.39	.174
Yr-2 Av. Grade	1.72	.734	17	1.94	.659	22	-1.00	.326

* $p < .05$

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess the change in student achievement and teacher ratings of junior high age black males over a one-year period. These adolescent black males were classified in three categories: (a) those identified as being at-risk who participated in the Positive Impact Program (PIP); (b) those identified as being at-risk who did not participate in PIP; and (c) those who had not been identified as at-risk. Student achievement was investigated using both standardized achievement test results (in reading, mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, and the complete battery) and student grades (in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and overall course average).

A review of literature related to this study indicated at-risk students in Arkansas, experience similar problems as other at-risk students throughout the United States. The at-risk student in Arkansas is no different from his counterpart in Los Angeles, Detroit, Atlanta, or New York City in performing academically below grade level, being retained in grade at some time, being economically and socially disadvantaged, having low self-esteem and showing little or no self-motivation. As a result of these characteristics, when he does attend school, he is often a disciplinary problem. The Positive Impact Program (PIP) uses adult black males in the community as role models and mentors to strive to meet the needs of at-risk students.

The subjects in this study were black males in grades six, seven and eight, classified as being at-risk, or not at-risk, and whether or not the at-risk students participated in the Positive Impact Program (PIP). The data for analysis were measures of academic achievement over the past academic year, and teacher ratings of these students on eight at-risk characteristics.

The relative standings in their classes of all of these groups of junior high black males increased from year one to year two in achievement measured by standardized test scores. This may have been due in part to the change of tests by the school district, using Metropolitan Achievement Tests the first year and Stanford Achievement Tests the second. The average grades of all groups of students declined from Year 1 to Year 2. Comparable data was not available for all students to determine if this was an overall trend that grade distributions were lower as students progressed from one grade to the next.

The Year 1 grades for all groups averaged above 2.00 on a five-point scale (A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1; F=0). These average grades generally fell at the C to C+ level, ranging from 2.00 to 2.83.

In comparison, Year 2 grades fell both above and below 2.00 for all groups. The Year 2 average grades ranged from 1.59 to 2.50. In science, the average grade for all groups was below 2.00.

In the ten observations of average grades (five grade averages across two years), the at-risk students in PIP had the lowest grade averages. In contrasting Year 1 and Year 2 average grades, these junior high school level black males showed a significant decline in their grades in English, mathematics, science, social studies and overall average.

Teachers were asked to identify students they perceived at-risk in the fall of 1990 and fall of 1991. The characteristics most frequently identified for these at-risk students were: poor academic record, lack of motivation, low self-esteem, lack of discipline, and lack of respect for authority.

In spring, 1992, teachers were again asked to rate these students as (1) worse, (2) no change, or (3) better on the factors used to identify them at-risk. Overall improvement was noted by the teachers with more characteristics rated "better" than "worse." However, the most frequently chosen rating was "no change."

In comparing at-risk students with not-at-risk students, not a single significant difference in average scores was found on any MAT-6 nor Stanford Achievement Test measure, on grades in any subject in 1991 and 1992, nor on teacher ratings of behavior. In comparing at-risk students participating in PIP with at-risk students who were not participating in PIP, lack of significant differences between these same average scores was again apparent in all contrasts except one. In 1991, the at-risk students not in PIP had a significantly higher mathematics grade average than did the at-risk students in PIP. However, that difference was not significant in 1992.

Conclusions

The success or lack of success of the Positive Impact Program (PIP) will be measured by variables in addition to those investigated in this study. Although measures of achievement and teacher ratings of behavior are important to the goals of the program, only a limited amount of success was evident with these variables. However, conducting the same investigation over a longer period of time may show positive advancements in these measures of achievement and teacher ratings.

Of particular omission from this study, yet pertinent to the evaluation of the effectiveness of PIP, would be more information gained from the at-risk students themselves, interviews with their teachers and parents, interviews with the PIP advisors, and examination of school, court and police department record files. The effectiveness of the various PIP activities was not investigated here, but would be helpful in identifying program components which appear to work best.

Also, the success of PIP is due to the commitment of 16 black male advisors to these at-risk students. An investigation of their concern and organization to action might be fruitful for other communities wishing to assist at-risk students.

Finally, the at-risk students in this study exhibited many of the at-risk characteristics identified in the literature review. They were low in achievement, as measured with standardized achievement test scores and school grades. Teachers also identified these students as lacking motivation and self-esteem and having discipline problems in school. Although programs such as PIP maybe successful in working with at-risk students, results of this study indicate that gains in academic achievement do not come rapidly.

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