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Indochinese in Job Corps: From failures to fantastic finishers

Benedict Cisneros

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INDOCHINESE IN JOB CORPS:
FROM FAILURES TO FANTASTIC FINISHERS

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---Abstract---

Statement of the problem

Job Corps centers, federally funded vocational training schools, were established to provide troubled youth a means of obtaining an education and meaningful job training. Each center is rated on performance criteria to determine eligibility for future funding. One such criteria is the weekly termination rate (WTR). The WTR allowed by the government was not to exceed a maximum of 2.5 percent.

Suddenly and for no apparent reason the program started to fail completely, but only with one group of students, the Indochinese. Job Corps centers were having to contend with WTR's of 100% with this segment of their population. This complete breakdown caused a need to modify curriculum to better serve this group of students. Failure to lower the WTR would have meant closure of many Job Corps centers throughout the country.

Procedure

The investigation of two distinct methods of reading instruction was the basis of this study. Special reading programs and procedures as well as Indochinese ethnic mixture
were the variables used to determine difference.

The research methodology employed relied on the causal comparative method of analysis. Specifically, the t-test for related and unrelated means was selected to treat the data of the study.

Job Corps centers accepted all eligible students between the ages of 16-21 years of age. Four Job Corps centers with an Indochinese population were selected, two would serve as control centers, two as test centers throughout the entire data collection periods.

All students at all four sites selected were tested according to established procedures during the baseline period. During the experimental period established procedures were followed at both control centers, meanwhile new programs and procedures were followed at both test centers. A point of interest is the fact that both test centers enrolled all three ethnic groups (Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian) of the Indochinese population. However, one center isolated each group and allowed no interaction throughout the experimental period.

The plan was to examine and compare reading scores and over-all retention rate of all Indochinese students at the end of the experimental period.

Results

The results of the study revealed significant reading achievement gains at both test centers. It was originally
thought that the test center with no ethnic interaction would have significantly higher results. This proved no to be the case.

The null hypothesis of no significant difference was therefore rejected, and the modified curriculum was considered successful in retaining Indochinese corpsmembers.

Conclusions and Implications

Due to the fact that few Indochinese (of each group) were available at the start of this study, the matter of ethnic group mixture is open for debate.

The Job Corps continues to enroll a large segment of the Indochinese population. To date all ethnic groups are trained together at all centers. It is impossible at this time to determine if scores could be increased significantly without the use of a minimum of several test centers and control centers.

Until this further testing is completed, we can only conclude that special programs did assist the Indochinese, and should be utilized in all aspects of their training programs, no other implications can be demonstrated at this time.
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Job Corps centers have provided an excellent laboratory for testing new approaches for educating disadvantaged youth. Job Corps has, in fact, a long history of innovation and experimentation in education curricula. Its standardized, self-paced approach was at the vanguard of the alternative education movement in the 1960's. Copious in-house studies have been undertaken of the effectiveness of this approach. Educational gains testing was for several years a basic element of Job Corps performance monitoring.

To ensure a high standard, Job Corps centers have been evaluated annually by the Department of Labor for contract compliance and job performance. Job Corps programs provided a broad range of educational and vocational training as well as a variety of other support services necessary to prepare corpsmembers to become more responsible, productive and employable. These programs are open to youth suffering from a disruptive home life, parental neglect or whose parents or guardian is a chronic invalid, alcoholic, narcotics addict, or is having serious health problems.

Because of their troubled backgrounds, all prospective corpsmembers were transported to centers in geographic regions far removed from their home life. This caused a drastic readjustment problem for both student and staff! An extreme example was a Job Corps center in rural Utah that accepted
an inner city New York student.

Because of this adjustment, or rather failure to adjust, the corps's screening and placement policy changed. In the mid-1970's newer centers began to accept students from only their own states, and recruitment was localized. In the event a state had no Job Corps center the nearest center was selected.

The curriculum was established according to federal standards and centers were responsible to National Dept. of labor direction. Corpsmembers enter at a very low level of actual educational accomplishments, despite having completed many more years of school than their attainment scores reflect.

About three quarters of all Job Corps participant had completed schooling only through tenth grade. Those who stayed the longest in the program were those who had the least amount of schooling at the time they entered. This indicated that those who needed the program most (or knew they had the fewest outside opportunities) opted for the longest stay. However, a 1971 study (Aurora Associates) found that the educational level associated with the longest stay was a grade level of 6.3 or lower on entry. Those students remained six or more months.

In general, while Job Corps participants' gains did not meet public school norms, they exceeded gains the corpsmembers
themselves had actually achieved while they were in the 
public school system.

Only a minority of corpsmembers were advanced enough 
at entry to eventually achieve a GED while in Job Corps. 
Although it is difficult to determine from the studies just 
what percentage of corpsmembers actually earned the GED, at 
least one study (U.S. Senate Investigating Committee) 
suggested that a tenth of all enrollees were achieving the 
GED and that three-tenths at least entered the program. Of 
those staying enrolled beyond four months (the average is 
six months duration) gain a GED. As of September 1978, 
approximately a tenth of all enrollees were achieving the 
GED and five-tenths were entering the program. Of those 
taking the test, nine out of ten passed it and received a 
GED certificate. The higher the entry level, the greater 
the chance of earning a GED. According to several studies, 
earning a GED was probably the most valuable benefit to be 
derived from Job Corps. While studies frequently mentioned 
that the vocational education segment was the most popular 
area with corpsmembers, employers tended to regard Job Corps 
experience or vocational training as insufficient preparation 
for the actual trades. Project Threshold's (an experimental 
New York halfway house) experience with corpsmembers and 
oneployers showed that a high school diploma or GED was the best 
job preparation the corpsmember could have. Significantly
more corpsmembers who had acquired GED's (high school equivalency) retained their post-GED jobs longer as opposed to those who had no GED. The same relationship existed between pre-Job Corps high school graduates and those without GED's. The diploma or GED shortened the time necessary to secure employment and usually assisted the corpsmember in finding work that was directly related to his vocational goals and interests.

Receipt of the GED certificate shortens the time necessary to find a job, makes it more likely that the corpsmember will find one close to his or her interest, and increased the corpsmember's retention in a job. There is indication that a GED is the best job preparation a corpsmember can have. However, the majority of corpsmembers enter at too low a reading/math level or stay too short a time to achieve the level necessary for the GED.

There were several important factors contributing to how satisfied the corpsmember was with the education program and how much he or she attained while in the program. Besides length of stay and level at entry (as discussed above) the research studies suggest the following.

1. Correspondence between corpsmembers' pre-entry expectations and their perception of Job Corps actualities: The closer the fit, the more satisfied the corpsmember. The most recent study (1978) suggested that the education program (along with job training) was the most likely to be rated positively among the various
expectations. However, females, Blacks and older enrollees were more likely to rate the education program positively.

2. Alternation of scheduling: Studies have found that alternating basic education with vocational training makes for higher corpsmember satisfaction and better retention. The vast majority of enrollees view Job Corps as a job program rather than an academic program, and higher satisfaction and greater correspondence with expectations were achieved if all corpsmembers' programs included vocational education. Indeed, in a few conservation centers where daily alternation was impossible due to the distance of work sites, this was felt to be a major cause of lower retention. The main difficulty with alternating the two segments appeared to be that vocational education presupposes competence in basic skills which corpsmembers may then only be acquiring. Thus, there is a need either to find materials and structure experiences to match corpsmembers levels, or to incorporate vocational education content into basic education program. However, the first approach may further minimize the work experience value of vocational education, since the program may be so simplified that the experience does not correspond to actual work. The second approach may alienate corpsmembers who want experience, not more formal schooling. If basic education courses are not specifically vocational in content, then the studies indicate that there should be "positioning" of general education courses in terms of their relationship to economic self-sufficiency, e.g., the job itself, money management, career path.

3. Feedback/time completion: It was found that corpsmembers had a strong need for time-limited completion and quick feedback. In other words, corpsmembers needed to be able to measure progress through unit-completion type programs, and have a
clear sense that they are at a certain level, and have finished and "put away" previous levels. It was suggested that corpsmembers be given a prediction of just how long they need to stay in Job Corps to complete their stated goals, since those who felt it "could go on forever" are likely to give up due to lack of any sign of goal attainment.

4. Remedial or compensatory education: According to work at the Omaha Job Corps center, intense remedial reading programs were found effective only with those at 4.9 reading level or below. Other studies suggested that there was a stigma attached to being assigned to a special program for the very lowest levels, so such remediation should probably take place within the normal classroom setting. Besides frequency and vitality of interaction, teacher attitude is a significant affector of student performance. Communicated concern, high expectations coupled with high confidence in students, and in general achievement, many studies rated this as the most important determinant. This argues for programs with a high degree of teacher/student interchange as opposed to self-instruction.

In summary, the majority of existing studies concluded that most corpsmembers entered Job Corps at a low educational level and made some gains, though usually not enough to earn a GED. Programs should have materials which are geared in subject to adults and which are perceived as directly relevant in content to employment and particularly, vocational skills. However, while materials are an important area of concern for corpsmembers, corpsmember-teacher interaction is the most significant
determinant of actual gains.

The Job Corps presently uses the RJS1 (the Job Corps reading screening test, number one). This test was administered to all corpsmembers (regardless of ethnic background) during their orientation week. The test was meant to be a rough indicator for placement of Job Corps students into beginning or graded reading levels. The test was developed by Barnard M. Johnson of the Weber Basin Utah, Job Corps center and Dr. Douglas Porter of the Harvard School of Education. In developing the test contemporary literature was surveyed to determine high interest selections, each section was then analyzed to determine grade level using vocabulary lists. This resulted in 25-31 for each level. An item analysis to check internal consistency was performed. This reduced the test items to the final 25. Lastly alternate response choices were selected and the final test format was completed.

Due to the increasing number of Indochinese students and the high attrition rate of this group, it became evident that the Job Corps reading/screening program was totally inadequate as it existed.

A revised reading program and screening process had to be developed. While reading tests have been generally the best predictors of achievement, teacher forecast tests of perception, and measures of language ability, all appear to be somewhat valid predictors. Teacher made tests are one of the main sources of
gathering data about students in a classroom. These results help one to predict future achievement, assess how well students have accomplished the goals, provide feedback to the student and reinforce the student for what he had accomplished. Teachers are aware that a student makes rapid progress when instruction is near his current level of mastery. Thus, tests help teachers make initial, rough assessments so that instruction can begin with a greater probability of success. In addition, tests are used for research purposes to evaluate the effectiveness of a new program or to compare two modes of instruction.
One's observation of a student's daily performance was the main source for determining how well he/she was doing. However, one will also want to make periodic, controlled assessment of each student's current reading ability, in order to place him at his appropriate instruction level. Sheldon and Carrillo's (1952) study of the problem compared students reading performance on the progressive reading test (now the California Achievement test) to home background information gathered through a questionnaire sent to the student's parents. A summary of their results indicated that students' attitudes toward education strongly predicted their reading test performance and that their attitudes appeared to be shaped by parental attitudes (Carrillo, 1964). The major conclusion from the review of the various attempts to measure reading readiness was that readiness tests generally have positive, but fairly low correlations with later reading achievements.

A commercially prepared test usually offers the advantage of having been administered to a large number of students from a wide variety of rural and urban centers. Usually these tests have been administered to children of various social, racial, and ability levels. Thus the test will have been "normed" on a population of students
from more than one class, school or district. A description of the norming population is critical for an interpretation of the test scores.

Clear standardized directions on how the test is to be administered are also desirable. A set of directions that are concise and uniform will ensure that the results are not depressed or inflated because the directions left the procedure unclear. The students' scores will not be so useful if the test is given in a different way than the way it was given to the norming population.

Teachers want a test that makes reasonable demands in terms of the amount of time needed to administer the test so that students are not fatigued and also so that the classroom instructional program may continue. In addition, tests that are difficult and tedious to score are sources of teacher error in grading (Farr, 1969).

According to Kohl (1973) there are special skills involved in test taking, and they are best learned after a person is already able to read with ease. One must make a clear distinction between being able to read with ease, and being able to do well on tests. The main problem with testing is that some tests are designed specifically to measure experimental programs, rather than traditional approaches. A student's attitude toward a test, his concept of his own ability to perform on it, his physical well-being,
and the attitude of his parents or siblings may well influence his performance. Intelligence tests, probably because of their correlation with these various measures, do not seem to add to the predictive validity of reading tests. One of the most important short-comings of the predictive studies of reading tests is that the researchers usually fail to describe the initial reading program. Until this is done, the predictive validity of readiness tests will remain an unanswered question. The evidence regarding subcultural differences in predicting reading achievement are therefore not very conclusive.

Many authors wrote about alternative approaches to education, but only six—Binh (1975), Brahn (1980), Dau (1979), Phommsasouvanh (1979), Thompson (1982), and Thuy (1976)—provided any insight to culture or interaction with the Indochinese. All definitions and ideas concerning interaction were similar, but Binh's was used in this study, because it provided a frame of reference from actual experience, of actual problems that could be anticipated (binh, 1975). Binh stated that motivation levels for the Indochinese are reportedly high, while academic levels differ markedly. The traditional way of learning on the part of the Indochinese is likely to be confusing or even disturbing to American teachers. Indochinese on the other hand, may feel uncomfortable in the traditional American classroom
setting, because Indochinese are not familiar with independent study and do not question the absolute authority of the teacher (Thompson, 1961).

Although many authors provided insight to culture or inter-action with the Indochinese. Only one specifically outlined an approach to a particular subject. However, none provided any concrete evidence about affective factors in education. There were only three authors that gave a definition of attitude. Only one was related to attitudes toward reading Strang (1968) claimed that remedial instruction should result in improvement, both in reading ability and in attitudes toward reading and toward oneself, the latter is more pervasive. If attitudes were modified, progress was likely to continue after special instruction was discontinued. Strang obtained evidence that remedial education, was on the whole effective in improving the reading ability. In general all definitions were similar but Aiken (1970) was used in this study for the sole purpose of establishing a reference point. Aiken indicates that there is not a standard definition of attitude, but that it is generally referred to as "a learned predisposition on the part of an individual to respond positively or negatively to some object, situation, concept or another person".

It is assumed that if corpsmembers enjoyed particular
subjects they may develop positive attitudes toward those subjects and attempt to work to the best of their abilities.

This assumption may be applied to reading. If corpsmembers have a positive attitude toward reading, then they would put forth their best efforts. What exterior factors constitute a positive attitude? One cannot assume that corpsmembers with positive outlooks toward learning are high achievers in reading. Assumptions must be substantiated with reliable research procedures; otherwise, they are nothing but worthless assumptions. Unconscious bias may or may not be a factor in learning ability, however they were part of the scope of this project. There may also be other factors which affect learning.

The lack of studies relating the predictions of reading measures to the type of subsequent instructional programs limited the conclusions of the many researchers who indicated that readiness tests can be used diagnostically. Future research needs to focus on investigations in which the readiness test scores are used to provide information concerning the need for the development of specific readiness skills. Because of the need for additional research, any suggestions for using readiness tests are necessarily tentative. However, there seems to be enough evidence to warrant the following procedures for selecting and using readiness test:
1. Select a readiness test which measures the necessary prerequisite skills to learning to read for the particular reading program that is to follow the readiness testing.

2. Develop local norms, both classroom and school, for predicting growth.

3. Use teacher judgement, skills check list, and readiness test to increase the validity and reliability of judgement.

Taking the above into consideration in the preparation of a new Job Corps screening/placement test, the JCRP1 was developed. The JCRP1 does not replace, nor was it meant to replace the RJS1. It is however, a more accurate indicator of the stage of graded reading performance, for the placement into the revised Job Corps reading program.

The need for programatic change became evident at the Inland Empire Center in San Bernardino, California. The Inland Empire Center, one of the first centers to receive Indochinese students was faced with a great deal of failure in the efforts in training this group of people. These failures became evident in the high weekly termination rate (WTR).

The WTR of every Job Corps center plays a key role in the determination of its success or failure. The Department of Labor has estimated 2.5% of a centers total population as the highest acceptable WTR. The Indochinese population at all centers considered in this study provided a very small percentage of the total population! However, they
did have an overall negative impact on the total WTR figures.

Concerned Job Corps administrators were assembled and commissioned by TEAM Associates to prepare a Technical Assistance Guide for the Department of Labor. This guide would be used as a sensitivity tool in dealing with Job Corps Indochinese population.

Existing testing/screening methods had failed with the Indochinese group of students. Indochinese showed an unwillingness to learn to read, placing all their interest in vocational programs and training.

Many factors had to be examined to provide the best revised program possible. Reading readiness something associated with elementary school age children was the first thing looked into.

Reading readiness a subject concerned with a students ability and disposition to learn were considered. The reasons were as follows:

1. Indochinese for the most part were deprived of education, due to civil war and the eventual communist takeover.

2. Indochinese came to Job Corps for job training not academic schooling. Therefore they exhibit little desire or motivation to participate, since they saw no relevance between the two program segments.

3. The new program had to address the inability to understand the language. Therefore it should be flexible and be immediately adjusted as individual problems occur.
4. Lastly the program had to motivate participants to read and convince them that not only is reading a desired and necessary skill, but one that is possible to attain.

A simple definition of readiness for beginning reading is the stage of development and maturity when a student can learn to read easily, effectively, and efficiently without much personal disturbance. This same definition may be applied to readiness for any of the succeeding stages of reading beyond the beginning stage. If a student was able to proceed well in the task presented, he was ready for that stage. If a student failed at the task, he was not ready. The problem with this however, is that, this definition which incorporates his functioning in the task presented. But a discouraging failure is the very thing we wish to avoid by the determination of reading readiness status.

The answer is frequently a program in which the student is to be given opportunities to practice the various elements involved in the reading process, without sufficient regard for the many other important experiences which he might be having, which in the long run would also contribute to reading abilities (Gans, 1963).

Readiness may be considered as analogous to a complex chemical formula, which is composed of many elements. If one of these elements is missing or is proportionally weak,
the substance is not the same, and the same over-all qualities would not be expected. So it is with readiness to learn to read. Many factors work together in the proper proportions. If one or more of the factors is comparatively weak, the results are weak, the learning to read is a function of the student operating as a whole organism. Adkins corroborates this last statement, when he says there is no sharp distinction between readiness and lack of readiness. The growth process is gradual. One stage merges imperceptibly into the next (Adkins, 1974).

The revised Job Corps reading program is unique in that it considered past studies prior to new programmatic development. Two factors were of utmost importance: first the method of delivery; second the actual type of program to be offered. In the past sources outside Job Corps had been ignored, and considered "not in the know."

Mathematica, an independent survey company and one of the Job Corps' harshest critics, issued a plan of correction for Job Corps reading programs in 1981. Mathematica selected several centers throughout the country and explored basic and vocational education methods of delivery. Part of the study included interviews with Job Corps participants. Following the completion of the survey, results from the various centers were compared. In general it was discovered that:
1. The corpsmen's expectations had to be met to ensure satisfaction with the program.

2. If a student's skills did not match entry requirements, vocational content needed to be incorporated into the basic education program.

3. Emphasis needed to be placed on vocational programs. Most students considered Job Corps a non-academic program.

4. Lastly students needed to be informed of their progress, and know their anticipated graduation date from the program.

Various forms of programmed learning were looked into because some researchers claimed this was the proper approach to the teaching of reading. Programmed instruction because of its self-teaching possibilities, use of materials which break subject matter, or skills into small learning units, in which responses are called for in connection with each unit and answers are provided to which students may refer immediately after making each response. Programmed instruction may take the form of separate work sheets, cards, tablets, workbooks or textbooks (Smith, 1963).

Chall (1961) stated that phonics can be a form of programmed learning. Burrows (1951) argued that many students have been confused and retarded by elaborate exercise and rules of phonics.

Phonetic training can accomplish no miracles. Phonetic training can not push every student up to grade level in
reading any more than one kind of food can make someone grow two inches in a month. Aims must be established in relation to student basic abilities.

Another type of programmed learning is the linguistic approach. The science of linguistics had developed rapidly in recent years. Proponents of linguistics theory believe linguistics has much to offer in improving language instruction in general and there are strong possibilities of utilizing the science of linguistics to advantage in teaching reading.

Chall (1967) states that one of the best ways to teach reading is by the use of programmed learning. Programmed learning is self-paced and self-directed learning. Steps are laid out for the learner in a more structured way. Each bit of learning is so organized that each successive step depends on steps previously covered. All students get immediate confirmation of his/her responses. Theoretically any approach to beginning reading, sight, sentence meaning, phonic or linguistic can be programmed. Sullivan Associates is a good example of programmed beginning reading course.

The main reason for this investigation was, that this type instruction is self-paced and provided a building block structure with a definite time-line built in. Phonics training was looked into as a possible method,
because of the same benefit.

As the influx of Indochinese refugees into the United States increased, the need to better serve this segment of the youth population became more apparent. Indochinese entering youth programs were largely non-English proficient (NEP), under educated, unaware of American customs and vocational training.

Reading is one of many subjects taught at all Job Corps centers, and was a part of the focus of this study, since reading is considered to be one of the major communication skills. The actual method of delivery is open to debate. Reading is the meaningful interpretation of printed or written verbal symbols. It involves sensing, perceiving, achieving meaning and reacting in a variety of ways (Harris, 1963).

The phonic skills approach is a controversial subject and has been for years. Many educational battles have been fought over whether a student should be taught by the phonetic method or sight (look-say). (Rogers, 1979) claims that both methods, phonics and programmed learning, are necessary.

Phonics simply stated is the study of the relationship between the speech sounds and the letters which represent them. The amount of phonics needed for reading varies greatly according to the needs and abilities of the learner
Proponents of phonics claim that written English is primarily an alphabetic system; that is letters of the alphabet represent speech sounds. One important fact is that the major spelling patterns of present day English are fortunately few in number, but for these the reader must develop, through long practice, high speed recognition responses. These responses must become so habitual that practically all the clues that stimulate them eventually sink below the threshold of attention, leaving only the accumulative comprehension of the meaning.

The application of phonics knowledge (i.e. actually decoding or sounding out an unknown written word) is a highly abstract, and time consuming task. Chall (1961) stated that in 1937 Dolch & Bloomer concluded that a mental age of seven was minimal to phonic success. For years educators placed major emphasis on phonics in second and third grades, minimizing it in the first grade. Today, however, the situation is somewhat different. She concluded that intensive decoding (identifying the relationship between the letters of the alphabet and the sounds in words) was responsible for early success in reading.

Phonic methods fall into two categories: Synthetic and analytic phonics. Analytic phonics is preferred by most reading authorities. Synthetic phonics is begun by
teaching a student a number of letter sound and other isolated phonetic elements. After these were mastered, the student was expected to sound out words by recognizing and blending the parts in a left to right manner. Analytic phonics uses meaningful words that are presented as wholes, students do not learn to sound isolated elements of words. Instead, he is led to identify the elements in whole words. He is encouraged to use letter substitution techniques. For example, if a student encounters a new word such as rake, he may reason the following: "It begins like run, and it ends like take therefore it must be rake!". Although there is no experimental proof of the superiority of analytic phonics, the following advantages seem apparent.

1. The whole-word approach capitalizes on interest in words.
2. Enables the student to discover letter sounds by themselves. Because of this, they are more likely to understand and use what they learn in reading situations.
3. Blending problems avoided.
4. Results in practice in "reading through" words.
5. Conducive to learning words so that they are likely to become familiar sight words.

Most Indochinese have not had any formal education since 1975, when the communist closed all schools in
their homeland. Indochinese share everything with others of their own ethnic group. Anyone not sharing would be dealt with harshly. Plagiarism as we know it (cheating) is unknown, copying directly from a source is not uncommon and sharing one's work with a friend is equally common, Dau (1979) corroborates all the above by saying that linguistic and cultural barriers are real and adjustments must be made on the part of the Indochinese students as well as by American teachers if cultural mainstreaming is to occur.

According to Silvaroli (1969) the reading success of each student is in part contingent upon the knowledge which his teacher possessed concerning his strengths and weakness as well as his knowledge in designing appropriate reading experiences. One of the most efficient means of obtaining such diagnostic and placement information is through the use of an informal oral reading test. The objectives for such a test are:

1. Provide teachers with tools to assist in placing students in proper books for instruction.

2. To suggest criteria to be used in helping students to select independent reading materials.

3. To suggest criteria to be used by the teacher in choosing appropriate supplementary reading in all subjects.
Silvaroli (1969) continues by saying that there are three levels of reading, and they are:

1. Independent level - students can with 98% accuracy pronounce words, read and have comprehension of 90% to 100% correct answers.

2. Instructional level - students can with guidance pronounce 95% of words and have comprehension of 75% correct answers.

3. Frustration level - material is difficult for the students to succeed, pronunciation is 70% or less. Comprehension is 50% or less.

Reading, the ability to assimilate and interpret the printed word, something most people take for granted, was the main focus of this study.

Carrillio (1964) stated that in teaching the Indochinese, the reading program needed to be flexible and rather immediately adjustable as individual problems occurred and required correction.

In a well balanced reading program, substantial attention is given to the role that motivation plays in the development of reading skills. Reading tasks make more sense to students when they perceived reading as being personally and socially attainable, useful, enjoyable and desirable. A climate that supports the development of these perceptions promotes efficient and stimulating use of instructional time.
There is an unfortunate amount of disagreement among lay people and professionals over what intelligence measures mean. Before attempting to help a student who has a reading problem, most educators require some measurement of general and specific abilities to learn (Rogers, 1979). The most commonly used measurement is the I.Q. test. Language development is one of the most important of the readiness skills for developing comprehension. The reader must first be able to use words and sentences orally, before he can bring meaning to written words or sentences. He must be aware of the relationship between oral and written language; that is, they must realize that spoken words can be represented by written symbols (Cooper, 1979).

Two factors were of utmost importance. First, a reading program had to be developed to meet the needs of the Indochinese population at Job Corps centers throughout the country. Second, Job Corps had to acquire and understand about the Indochinese, their specific wants, needs and expectations.

The following tasks have been established as crucial in establishing a reading program that will lead to improved student achievement:

1. Providing sufficient instruction and activities that are directed at the development of comprehension skills.
2. Having students spend, on a regular basis, a substantial amount of time on reading.

3. Placing appropriate emphasis on decoding skills, (sometimes, this means less emphasis than was being given.)

4. Integrating decoding instruction with instruction in other areas, such as vocabulary development, use of syntax, concept development, and comprehension.

5. Designing instruction and activities as prerequisite to the development of reading skills.

6. Development of students' oral language abilities, on a continuing basis.

7. Development of student's experiential backgrounds.

8. Utilizing and extending student's experiential background.

9. Integrating reading into a total language program (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

10. Encouraging teachers to look beyond reading as a tool and to examine what students read; e.g., recreational reading materials, literature.

11. Establishing at all grade levels a well-defined reading program that provides appropriate instruction for each student.


13. Challenging students who already read well to achieve greater proficiency and to use reading on a broader basis than they have been.

14. Integrating reading into the school's total instructional program and involving all staff members in the program.
These steps are critical to the success of any reading program (Strickland, 1957). Taking this information we must determine what if any problems existed in the methods of delivery of Job Corps programs. Learning to read is no longer thought of as the mastery of a bag of tricks which can be obtained through repetition and practice. "The matter of learning to read is now recognized as one of the most important and most difficult of all developmental tasks the student is called upon to learn." It is a task imposed by the culture and not what a student has a natural yearning. "Reading is not just a skill, but rather a resource for a fuller living (California State Department of Education, 1979).

For this reason, reading is one of the many subjects taught at all Job Corps centers. In the past the focus of concentration in the teaching of reading has been in the cognitive area. Job Corps teachers are pressured to increase corpsmembers' reading performance as a step toward employability with the emphasis on academic superiority. Job Corps teachers tend to forget, or worse, ignore the fact that the affective area does exist and is equally if not more important a factor (Dau, 1979). This ignorance and unconscious labeling fall under this category and are affective factors in the instruction of the Indochinese that should constitute a part of teaching
of every Job Corps subject.
The Job Corps, a federally funded program, accepted students of diverse backgrounds to receive academic and vocational training. The students' one common bond was generally failure within the public school system.

Job Corps programs had enjoyed over ten years of success with its self-paced and individualized approach at both academic and vocational training. Suddenly the program experienced 100% failure. This failure was evident only within one group of students. The sudden influx of Indochinese students into the Job Corps programs created a new problem in the educational field.

Federal guidelines indicate: 1) participants must be between the ages of 16-21 years of age, 2) unemployed or under employed, 3) be of limited income, or on public assistance, and 4) lastly and most importantly, all students must complete all Job Corps programs within 24 months.

The problem was two-fold in nature. Indochinese placed a greater value on vocational training than on academic class work. However, they lacked the reading and communication skills needed to successfully complete vocational training. With their single-minded, naive desire for only vocational training, it was discovered that most Indochinese were just not ready to learn.
A program had to be developed to mainstream the Indochinese into the Job Corps system, yet conform to the two year maximum time limit. Since very little had been done with the Indochinese prior to this study many factors had to be looked into. Teacher attitudes, student attitudes, testing methods, programmed learning and even reading readiness were looked into. All this, to find an effective method of program delivery for the Indochinese.

The Job Corps adopted the Defense Language Institute (DLI) reading program in 1982 for use on a limited basis while results were studied. The program was developed at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) English Language School, Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. It is a highly specialized kind of language and reading teaching that differs widely from language and reading instruction in public or private school or commercial academies. The differences stem essentially from different objectives. The language reading programs conducted in many civilian institutions equipped people primarily to read, write, and translate; minimum practice in hearing and speaking the foreign (English) language.

The DLI taught the student aurally (by ear) to recognize and discriminate significant sound patterns of the new language. Indochinese students were taught to reproduce them as accurately as possible at the time, to
associate them directly with objects, relationships, and events directly available to them in the classroom or daily life. Finally, and it is particularly important, only the most necessary grammatical explanations were given; and even these were withheld until such association had been formed and reinforced. The corpsmember learned the language before they learned about it.

This approach is called structural because it describes and teaches as an organization of separate words, to be put together by rules of grammar. Therefore, all words are taught as functioning parts of particular structures. Not the word, but the thought group (phrase, clause or sentence) was treated as a unit of meaning.

The DLI discourages direct translation. Every effort is made to train students to think directly in English, without recourse to their own language. The teachers role was to sharpen auditory skills and to build a memory bank of auditory clues. This meant that there was many opportunities for the Job Corps student to become verbal participants instead of passive receivers.

Good relations between cultural groups are the result of mutual understanding and tolerance. It is very important that the instructors promote this understanding between the two cultures.

It has been said that every language is a perfect
index of the culture which created it, and that it is at the same time the highest product of that culture. If this is true, and we believe that it is—it follows that we cannot understand the language without understanding the culture, and vice-versa (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1981).

Dau (1979) points out that communication breakdown can present a problem in dealing with the Indochinese. American teachers are conditioned to expect immediate response. A simple question for Indochinese students could pose a large communication problem. An Indochinese student, for example, may in an effort to be polite, answer certain types of questions in the affirmative. If the teacher asks, "Do you understand?" the answer may automatically be given "yes" for it would be impolite for the Indochinese to say they do not understand, as that implies that the explanation was not adequately given (Brahn, 1980).

American teachers are used to students standing erect with their eyes front when reciting; Indochinese, on the other hand, have been taught to stand erect, with their eyes lowered when answering fellow students or teachers (Phommsasouvanh, 1979). Brahn makes mention of one very important factor that tends to be overlooked, and to create miscommunications. This inability to understand the colloquialisms of another language may present special problems, the real meaning often differs from the literal
meaning. Not only is idiomatic speech a part of everyday life, but it is used in I.Q. and other tests; this point is corroborated by Lyman (1963). Indochinese come from a distinct ethnic background and are at a disadvantage when colloquialisms are used in such tests. Wilson (1962) states that a foreigner has a difficult time unless colloquialisms are made explicit. Inadequate school programs have not given these students a chance to be educated properly. As a result many of these students do not succeed academically (Skoczylas, 1975).

It is only in recent years that Job Corps educators have become more aware of the significance of the affective area of education in dealing with the Indochinese in Job Corps. Therefore cultural differences, which constituted a major part of the affective area of education, were a major factor of this project. The effects of the factors of cultural differences, attitudes toward learning, and ethnic group membership were investigated, in conjunction with standard Job Corps curriculum and modified programs. Each factor was defined at two levels: two control centers and two test centers; the .05 level of significance was set to determine acceptance or rejection of the null hypothesis, that the DLI approach makes a difference.
LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Because of the long history of fighting between the Indochinese ethnic groups, two types of test centers were established. One test center used special programs, but separated the Indochinese groups (Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian) into three distinct ethnic groups. These three groups would have no interaction between themselves. The other test center would also use special programs and would also have the same three Indochinese groups. However, all three groups would be inter-mixed throughout the test period.
PROCEDURE

Four Job Corps centers were selected for this study. Two would serve as test centers for new materials and programmatic approaches. The other two would serve as control centers and maintain the use of established curriculum. The only limitation placed on the control centers would be the screening and placement of the Indochinese.

Inland Empire Job Corps Center in San Bernardino, California, would serve as the West Coast test center. This center accepted Indochinese from all ethnic subgroups (Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian). This center is located on the outskirts of the city of San Bernardino. The surrounding population are lower income Anglo, surrounded by pockets of Mexican American and Black Americans, also of lower socio-economic backgrounds. The dominant language for forty percent of the students is Spanish.

Tongue Point Job Corps Center in Astoria, Oregon, the most northwestern point on the bank of the Columbia River, served as the West Coast control center. This center accepted Indochinese from the Vietnamese, and Cambodian groups only. This center is located three miles south of the Village of Astoria. The population
is predominantly Anglo of above average socio-economic background. The only language evident was English.

The Gainesville Job Corps Center in Gainesville, Florida, served as the East Coast test center. This center would accept Indochinese from all ethnic sub-groups. However, unlike the West Coast test center these groups would not be mixed for testing purposes. This center is located in an isolated pocket, but in the middle of the city of Gainesville. The surrounding population are lower socio-economic Spanish speaking backgrounds, surrounded by Anglo population pockets also of lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The Westover Job Corps Center in Chicapoe, Massachusetts, served as the East Coast control center. This center accepted Cambodian and Laotian as well as Hmong, a sub group of the Laotian population. This center is located in the middle of the city. The population is predominantly Anglo with no significant minority being evident. About 75% of the population came from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

The use of two test Job Corps centers with as many similar geographic, climatic, and population conditions, plus the selection of two control centers, using the same criteria enabled this researcher to provide a large sample for this study, and to compare
and contrast data. You will note that the two test centers while similar in makeup, the Indochinese are not mixed at the one center. All three Indochinese groups will be treated with the new materials and procedures, but in separate and distinct ethnic groups. This allowed the testing of program progress of Indochinese as a separate group at one center, as opposed to one large group at the other. All this information would give rise to the null hypothesis that was tested in this study, it was:

There will be no significant difference in reading scores at Job Corps centers using the DLI reading program.

Once the four centers to be used in this study had been selected and identified the following measures were implemented:

1. All prospective corpsmembers were screened by local Employment Development Department (EDD). They were referred to the Dept. of Labor Regional Office for verification and actual assignment to a Job Corps center.

2. All incoming Indochinese students upon entry were given a copy of the centers corpsmember handbook, which outlined rules, regulations and guide-lines for completion of the Job Corps basic, vocational education programs.

3. All incoming Indochinese students at all locations were tracked from their entry day until separation from the Job Corps program. This tracking was from January 23, 1980, until May 10, 1981.

4. All students, Indochinese included were
handled and processed the same way, according to established Job Corps Procedures.

5. The WTR was measured for the Indochinese group.

6. The WTR was measured for the entire population of each center.

7. The percentage of impact on the entire centers WTR was calculated.

8. The total retention rate of the Indochinese groups was determined, based on the actual count enrolled at the end of the tracking period. This figure was compared to the actual number enrolled throughout the tracking period.

9. For this initial tracking period we established 180 days in training to represent retention. 180 days (six months) was the figure used by the U.S. Department of Labor as the national average enrollment period per student. This time frame does not indicate that they had completed their entire program.

10. All Indochinese students were tested on the standard Job Corps reading test, the RJS1, and their scores from this group and future groups to be studied.

11. A total of 1,096 students were tracked during this initial period, the breakdown by center was as follows.

Gainesville test center 255 students
Inland Empire test center 238 students
Tongue Point control center 311 students
Westover control center 292 students

12. The period of June 1, 1981, until September 3, 1982 was established as the time period of this study. During this second period of time, Indochinese would be tracked, and the WTR figures would be calculated.
13. A total of 1,075 students were tracked during this second period of time, the breakdown was as follows:

- Gainesville test center: 260 students
- Inland Empire test center: 258 students
- Tongue Point control center: 272 students
- Westover control center: 285 students

Upon entering, corpsmembers had been tested on the RJS1 according to normal Job Corps orientation procedures. Here the similarity to standard Job Corps procedures ended. Indochinese scoring 8 or below were further screened to determine if the deficiency was caused by the fact that they were non or minimally English speaking. Those who qualified took the DLI placement test and were placed in the pre-elementary or elementary levels of the DLI. The DLI placement test is the American Language Comprehension Placement Test (ALCPT). The test, composed of 100 questions, took approximately one hour to administer. The first 60 questions were an oral test in which the students listened to a test tape. The remaining 40 questions tested reading comprehension. The test scores placed the Indochinese students in the pre-elementary or elementary phase of the DLI. All answers to tests were recorded by the student on the ALCPT answer sheet.

They then proceeded in the English as a second language (ESL) for three hours per day with an additional
hour of supplementation using the Sullivan reading materials, until completion of the DLI elementary level. At that point the JCRP1 and a progress evaluation were administered.

Those scoring 11 or higher on the JCRP1 were placed in the Jop Corps graded reading program. Those scoring below 11 on the JCRP1 were placed in level A of beginning reading. These individuals would continue supplemental ESL instruction on an as needed basis, to be individually determined by the instructor. Approximately one month after the corpsmembers had entered the regular Job Corps program, the reading comprehension subtest of the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) was administered. After 90 hours in the reading program, an SAT post-test was administered.

Demographic data from all four sites was tabulated to ascertain a description of the total population sample. Mean scores were calculated on both groups, to validate the continuity of the calibre of the Indochinese sample population. The in-depth evaluation site data also provided valuable information. Necessary time in ESL before entry into the regular Job Corps program was tracked, educational gains were also evaluated. Information after entry into the regular Job Corps program was available, as well as attendance data from the reading class, and termination data. An additional analysis was undertaken to ascertain if there was differential impact across
Indochinese ethnic groups.

Indochinese not meeting the selection criteria (low English language and reading skills) were eliminated from both the test and control groups, however, their numbers were counted as part of the total number of Indochinese corpsmembers involved in the study. A total of 1,075 Indochinese corpsmembers provided the sample data. The ideal design called for an equal number of subjects for each group to be considered. However, due to the anticipated attrition of students from the control groups, an artificial set of random numbers was created to aid in equalizing the subject groups. Thus the final statistics were obtained from the large group at random, to equal the number of the smaller group.
### TABLE 1A
Score Frequencies Comparisons
Control Centers
Pre to Post RJS1 Scores

#### TONGUE POINT WEST COAST CONTROL CENTER

311 Participants  
Baseline Period: 1-23-80 - 5-10-81

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272 Participants  
Experimental Period: 6-1-81 - 9-3-82

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#### WESTOVER EAST COAST CONTROL CENTER

292 Participants  
Baseline Period: 1-23-80 - 5-10-81

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285 Participants  
Experimental Period: 6-1-81 - 9-3-82

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### TABLE 1B

Score Frequencies Comparisons

Test Centers

Pre to Post RJS1 Scores

#### INLAND EMPIRE WEST COAST TEST CENTER

238 Participants  
Baseline Period 1-23-80 - 5-10-81

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258 Participants  
Experimental Period 6-1-81 - 9-3-82

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#### GAINESVILLE FLORIDA EAST COAST TEST CENTER

255 Participants  
Baseline Period 1-23-80 - 5-10-81

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260 Participants  
Experimental Period 6-1-81 - 9-3-82

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</table>
A review of Table 2 clearly indicates not only that the control sites did not change much during the experimental period, but also that the test sites (1) improved their retention rates by an enormous amount and (2) that they far outstripped the control sites in retention.

The maximum WTR allowable was 2.5% the experimental period figures clearly indicate that the WTR's of the test sites indicate not only dramatic improvement, but improvement into the acceptable range.
### TABLE 3
Influence of Special Reading Programs on RJS1 Scores

Test and Control Centers: Job Corps

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<tr>
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<td>1-23-80 - 5-10-81</td>
<td>6-1-81 - 9-3-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westover</td>
<td>292 4.60 (2.7)</td>
<td>285 4.46 (3)  t = .126 .50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue Point</td>
<td>311 4.93 (2.2)</td>
<td>272 5.33 (2.3) t = 0.057 .50</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Test Centers</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainesville</td>
<td>255 3.93 (2.8)</td>
<td>260 8.60 (2.0) t = 3.18 .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Empire</td>
<td>238 3.73 (2.7)</td>
<td>258 7.26 (3) t = 4.02 .001</td>
</tr>
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</table>

45
A review of table 3 clearly indicates that there was no significant difference in scores pre-to-post at each of the control centers. However, between test centers pre-to-post the results were significant, exceeding the .01 level of significance in both cases.
TABLE 4
CONTROL VS TEST CENTERS
BASELINE PERIOD
1-23-80 - 5-10-81

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<th>Control Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>SD</th>
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<th>P</th>
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<td>6.03</td>
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CONTROL VS TEST CENTERS
EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD
6-1-81 - 9-3-82

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</table>
IMPLICATIONS FOR JOB CORPS

According to the data presented in this study, special programs do affect the mainstreaming of Indochinese into Job Corps. In relation to ethnic group membership mixture, it seems to make no difference whether corpsmembers were Vietnamese, Cambodian or Laotian, although this could not be tested in this study. The implementation of special programs and procedures would appear to be the determining factor.

It was originally thought that the test group with no ethnic group mixture or interaction would have a significantly higher achievement rate over the other group of mixed students. This proved not to be the case. Unfortunately, due to the fact that few Indochinese (of each ethnic group) were available at the start of this study, this idea could not be tested. While both test centers showed a dramatic increase in both test scores and retention rates, the matter of ethnic group mixture is open for debate. Due to the fact that only two centers were selected as test sites, and that ethnic mix occurred at only one center, the results are inconclusive at this time.

The Job Corps continues to enroll a large segment of the Indochinese population. To date all ethnic groups are trained together at all centers. It would be
impossible at this time to determine if scores could be increased significantly without the use of a minimum of several test centers and control centers.

Until this further testing is completed, we can only conclude that special programs did assist the Indochinese, and should be utilized in all aspects of their training program, no other implications can be demonstrated at this time.
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