

EDUCATIONAL GAINS

This is the third in a series of reports based upon the findings from the Corpsman Gains Study, Priority Task 3 of the Plans and Programs Directorate. The data for these reports were gathered in October 1966 and January 1967 from a representative sample of approximately 3,000 Corpsmembers from 31 Centers. They were tested in order to develop a social maturity scale and to establish baseline data for social, vocational, and education growth.

The first two reports, A & R #2 and A & R #3, presented the demographic characteristics and social behaviors of our sample as perceived by the Corpsmembers and the staff. This, the third, presents the educational gains accomplished by the Corpsmembers.

This document deals specifically with the evaluation of the education program and is especially intended for those who use the programs. It is hoped that the summary and recommendations will be of interest to all and genuinely helpful to the program users. Comments about the validity of our findings and their application to your Center's programs are extremely welcome.

This is the fifth issue of A & R Reports. You may wish additional copies or may have questions concerning the content. Please address any inquiries or requests to Mrs. Dorothy Wade, Job Corps, Plans and Programs, Evaluation and Research Branch, Washington, D.C. 20506.

INTRODUCTION

From October 1966 to January 1967 the Job Corps conducted the Corpsman Gains Study in an effort to determine whether the program was affecting change in its enrollees.

The October-January study focused as completely as possible on total program. Efforts were made to measure social-behavioral changes, attitudes toward the program, and academic improvement. A representative sample of over 3,000 Corpsmembers from 31 Job Corps Centers were tested in October and as many as remained were retested again in January.

Two earlier reports have been prepared based on the results of this study. A & R Report #2 focused primarily upon demographic characteristics, social behavior and attitudes. This report, the third in a series, focuses upon gains in reading and mathematics.

The purpose of the achievement testing was to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the Job Corps academic program. Interest was focused on determining if the programs are geared to the population, if they are comprehensive or extensive enough, and if the programs differ in quality. More specifically, do Corpsmembers improve in academic skills after entering Job Corps? If so, which ones are improving, and how does their progress compare to performance prior to entering Job Corps?

Although definitive answers were not always available, the data constitute a reasonable first-cut which isolates areas which require more intensive study and it permits a few recommendations for program improvement.

METHOD

The educational gains discussed in this respect are based on a sample of about 2,000 Corpsmembers for whom achievement levels were determined in both October 1966 and January 1967. Each Corpsmember was administered two subtests, Paragraph Meaning and Arithmetic Computation, of the Stanford Achievement Test (S.A.T.). In order to determine the impact of Christmas vacations on the gains data, a small sample of 200 Corpsmembers were tested three times, in October and December, 1966 as well as in January 1967.* Amount of educational gain is simply the difference in tested achievement level, grade

*See Appendix.