

Dr. Goodfellow is conducting a multi-year evaluation of a school-based juvenile probation program in a large urban district. In this program, the probation officers are assigned to five or six schools that have the highest number of students on probation. Their offices are on campus in the hope that schools, families, and probation officers can have ready access to each other. One of the major components of this evaluation is a series of interviews that Dr. Goodfellow has conducted with participants in the program. Here are some summaries of recent interviews at Roosevelt High School/

**Jonathan Greco: School Probation Officer**

Jonathan Greco has been a juvenile probation officer for five years. He initially got into the field because he wanted to help children. Each year, however, it got harder to identify any successes, and he felt like he was failing the children. For the most part, Jonathan believes that his perceived lack of success was due to a number of factors such as an extremely high case load, lack of adequate training, and the large number of parents who do not seem interested enough in their children, and who did not trust him. He felt there were limits to what he could do to help his clients because he could not affect the reasons for his limited success, and the factors in his non-success never seemed to change. His boss tried to help, but he seemed to believe that there are just some people who have the ability to be good probation officers, and some who do not; a lot of these abilities cannot be learned. Jonathan started worrying that his supervisor might start to see him as one of those who did not have it. Because of this, Jonathan became reluctant to share his concerns and non-successes with his boss. Also, because he had input into case assignments, he started assigning cases to himself that were more likely to be successful. Eventually, this bothered him because he was often assigning the toughest cases to the least experienced officers. He knew something had to change so when the new school-based probation program began, he volunteered. It was a good move for him. Since taking on this job, he has found renewed excitement and enthusiasm. His clients are more likely to see him as trying to help them, and he is surprised at how much he enjoys going into classrooms to talk to students as part of the prevention effort in this program.

**Patricia Ramirez: School Counselor**

Patricia Ramirez is the school counselor at Roosevelt High School who is assigned to the in-school probation program. Like so many school counselors, this is just one of several roles she serves. For example, in addition to this program, she is the counselor assigned to the 300 sophomores in the school and she coordinates a mentoring program that connects at-risk students in the school with college student mentors who are graduates of Roosevelt High School.

One of the requirements of the in-school probation program is that the students must be enrolled in school and attending regularly. However, many of these students have been in and out of school, and when they were in school long enough to earn grades, they tended to earn Ds and Fs. Historically, even though school attendance is often mandated as a condition of probation, the students on probation were not given much support. Many of them just quit coming to school. Patricia has made it her responsibility to try to reverse this trend by providing these support services for the students.

1. She has assigned mentors to the students in the program. These mentors come from the same neighborhoods as the students and have faced many of the same challenges, including legal difficulties. The hope is that they can show the students in the program that this type of success is possible and what they did in order to succeed. These mentors

meet with students individually and in groups to just talk, and the mentors are also available to provide some tutoring.

2. Roosevelt High School is a member of a consortium that provides an on-line system for credit recovery. The on-line credit recovery system offers course work in a self-paced, individualized manner. The lessons are organized around specific objectives that are presented in a highly sequential manner, with frequent opportunities for students to respond and get feedback. Students are allowed to work through lessons, and when they feel prepared, they can take exams. If they pass a lesson exam, they go not the next lesson. If they do not pass the exam, there is on-line tutoring for the students. When they feel ready, they can be retested with an alternative form of the test.
3. Patricia has closely monitored students' progress in this credit recovery system and she has found that it does not work if students do not read at the sixth grade level or higher. Because so many of these students read below the sixth grade level, Patricia has helped create an on-site adult literacy component for the credit recovery process. The literacy program uses trained volunteers and is supported by grant money and donations. The program targets reading fluency and comprehension strategies for the most part. So many of the students struggle so much with decoding, that they have difficulty understanding what they read. To help with this, the adult literacy program works with the students to make decoding less of a conscious and labor intensive activity. In terms of comprehension strategies, the adult literacy program puts emphasis on teaching students how to monitor their comprehension and what to do to fix it if their comprehension fails. the goal is to make them more independent, self-regulated readers.
4. These students have so many personal and social issues that Patricia wishes she had time to do more individual counseling. However, it is just not possible with everything she does. She has been able to start a group or two each semester. She has focused so far on students who are getting close to graduation. She wants to work with them on being reasonable about what they want to accomplish in the short-term. She also wants to teach the students how to make better choices, and how to be their own support system. Others may try to bring them down or take little notice of their efforts to do well. The students need to encourage and praise themselves for their efforts.
- 5.

#### **Fred Monroe: Student**

Fred Monroe was put on probation for drinking and driving under age and flight to avoid arrest. Part of the conditions of his probation is that he attend school regularly at Roosevelt High School. Fred had dropped out initially after his sophomore year. He has been in the in-school probation program for one semester. Fred said that in the beginning he attended school primarily to avoid going to jail. After a few months, things started to change a little for him. He still wanted to avoid jail, but he found there were things at the program he liked. For example, he liked that the staff seemed to care about him and paid attention to him. He particularly liked his mentor Gus and his counselor Ms. Ramirez. Gus had made this bet with him that he could improve his grades on the tests in his on-line algebra class. At first, if he improved his score just four points each week, Gus would take him out to eat that week. He was now getting close to 100 on these tests and he should be able to finish algebra this semester. According to Fred, Gus also knows some neat ways to make learning easier. For example, he taught him to associate what he was learning with stuff he already knew, like remembering that there is a rat in the middle of **separate** so that he would remember how to spell it correctly. He likes Ms. Ramirez

because she is “cool” and she seems to believe in him. Fred says that he often does not think he can finish school. He wants to finish it so he can get a better job, but he is not sure he can do it even if he tries. Ms. Ramirez tells him she believes in him, celebrates his success like the algebra test scores, and has introduced him to other kid just like him who are now in college. He guesses if they can do it, he can too.

## **Questions**

### **Jonathan Greco: School Probation Officer**

1. For the most part, Jonathan believes that his perceived lack of success was due to a number of factors such as an extremely high case load, lack of adequate training, and the large number of parents who do not seem interested enough in their children, and who did not trust him. He felt there were limits to what he could do to help his clients because he could not affect the reasons for his limited success, and the factors in his non-success never seemed to change. Answer the following questions about Jonathan’s attributions for his non-success.

- a. Is Jonathan making an internal or external attribution for his non-success? Explain your answer.
- b. Is Jonathan making a controllable or uncontrollable attribution for his non-success? Explain your answer.
- c. Is Jonathan’s making a stable or unstable attribution for his non-success? Explain your answer.

2. Jonathan’s boss believes that that there are just some people who have the ability to be good probation officers, and some who do not; a lot of these abilities cannot be learned. What view of ability, incremental or entity, does his Boss have for the ability to be a good probation officer?

3. Jonathan started worrying that his supervisor might start to see him as one of those who did not have it. Because of this, Jonathan became reluctant to share his concerns and non-successes with his boss. Also, because he had input into case assignments, he started assigning cases to himself that were more likely to be successful. What type of goal orientation(s) is Jonathan showing (e.g. learning or performance)?

### **Patricia Ramirez: School Counselor**

- 1. Why might the mentors be seen as examples of coping models?
- 2. B. F. Skinner, a famous behaviorists, suggests that effective instruction should be specific about what it is trying to teach, teaches first things first in a logical sequence, and should not require students to all progress at the same rate. How are these ideas built into the on-line credit recovery system?

3. How are the information-processing ideas of automaticity and metacognitive regulation reflected in the adult literacy program?
3. How are the social cognitive ideas of self-reinforcement, self-monitoring, and goal setting incorporated into Patricia Ramirez's groups?

**Fred Monroe: Student**

1. Fred said that in the beginning he attended school primarily to avoid going to jail. After a few months, things started to change a little for him. He still wanted to avoid jail, but he found there were things at the program he liked. For example, he liked that the staff seemed to care about him and paid attention to him.

a. How is Fred's continued attendance at school being maintained by positive reinforcement?

b. How has Fred's continued attendance at school been maintained by negative reinforcement?

2. Why would Gus' bet with Fred be an example of the use of shaping?

3. Why is Gus' little spelling trick an example of elaboration?

4. Fred says that he often does not think he can finish school. He wants to finish it so he can get a better job, but he is not sure he can do it. Is Fred's concern about finishing school a result primarily of self-efficacy or his outcome expectations?

5. How is Ms. Ramirez using vicarious learning with Fred?