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# HANDGUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM

## PRESCRIPTIVE PACKAGE

*Third Edition*



BALTIMORE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT



151455

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**Baltimore County Police Department**  
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**PRESCRIPTIVE PACKAGE**

*Third Edition*

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**U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Justice**

**NCJRS**

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**Baltimore County Police Department  
Office of Policy Analysis and Development Services  
Technical Resource Group**

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **HISTORY OF THE**

### **HANDGUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM**

In late 1985, the Chief's Office of the Baltimore County Police Department was involved extensively in planning the Justice '86 Crime, Violence, and Handguns Conference scheduled for March 1986. Chief Cornelius J. Behan had long been attuned to the widespread proliferation of handguns in the nation, and he recognized that Baltimore County was no exception. The escalation of criminal and accidental handgun deaths, especially the preventable deaths of so many children, was impossible to ignore. It was time for this agency to make a concerted effort to address the problem.

In April 1986, the Handgun Safety Education Committee, comprised of fifteen sworn and civilian members of the Department and chaired by the Acting Chief of the Crime Prevention Bureau, was organized. The Committee was established to research the local and national handgun problem, investigate prevention efforts of other organizations, and develop a comprehensive Police Department handgun safety program for Baltimore County.

Preliminary research revealed a steady rise in handgun related homicides (nearly 100%) in Baltimore County since 1981. Nationally, adult handgun deaths were up. Accidental deaths of children were increasing at an alarming rate, especially in urban areas. Handgun sales (particularly to females) were at an all time high, many of these guns being purchased for protection. Incredibly, over one-half of the gun owners reported keeping their handguns loaded. It was obvious to the Committee that there existed a large gap in education regarding handgun ownership and use. This became the focus of the Department's handgun violence reduction effort.

The committee members set out to develop an aggressive, media supported, citizen endorsed campaign to train potential gun owners, as well as experienced gun owners, in the proper techniques of safe firearms usage. It was the Committee's opinion that police officers should lead the campaign for handgun safety since they investigate incidents of gun misuse and carry weapons themselves on a daily basis.

In the months to follow, the Committee progressed slowly, but not without results. By year's end, a Department Special Order announcing the formation of the Handgun Safety Education Committee had been distributed to Department personnel. This document provided an overview of the program's background, goals, and objectives.

The proposed format of the Handgun Safety Education Program had been drafted, outlining the program's three primary objectives:

- 1) to reduce handgun related injuries and deaths,
- 2) to reduce handgun thefts, and
- 3) to provide handgun safety awareness education.

It detailed project tasks, including fund-raising, data collection and analysis, lesson plan development, training, and development of visual enhancements. The police officer presentation was envisioned initially as a single comprehensive presentation covering several handgun issues.

Although the committee recognized the need for ongoing evaluation of the program, the actual process had not yet been conceived. A database of local and national handgun statistics was to be established. This would provide data for evaluation purposes, for the Handgun Safety presentation, and for advertising and media campaigns.

After drawing up a basic program format, the Committee solicited the technical support of the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, a Washington, D.C.-based citizens group dedicated to educating the public on the risks and responsibilities of handgun ownership. The Center had been involved in research and development of handgun violence prevention programs in several other jurisdictions.

In January 1987, a meeting was held between key Committee members and Jane Clarenbach and David Doi of the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence to review the progress of the Committee. Doi and Clarenbach expressed great interest and agreed to assist in launching this project. Their commitment was firm and for the duration of the project.

In February 1987, Colonel Leonard Supenski assumed the position of Chief of the Crime Prevention Bureau and made the Handgun Safety Education Program his top priority. Previous committee work was reviewed and a program strategy was developed. At this stage, the Handgun Safety Program began to take shape. Intensive research was conducted to further measure the local and national handgun problem. Research data was gathered and a statistical database established. The database included when/how handguns were involved:

- during calls for service, crimes, arrests, and juvenile-related crimes;
- in accidents, suicides, suicide attempts, deaths, and injuries;
- in defense of persons and property; and
- in thefts.

Initial research revealed a staggering number of handgun related criminal and accidental deaths, forty percent of which involved youths. Nearly 700 handguns were being stolen each day. Research also showed that recreational users made up a relatively small percentage of gun owners. The majority of owners bought guns for protection, had little knowledge of gun use, had done little to no research before buying, and asked no questions upon purchase. This group became a primary concern and focal point for education. This research indicated the need to target single audiences rather than address the general public with one comprehensive presentation. The segmented program would be tailored to particular audiences, referencing problems associated with ownership, storage, or use of handguns specific to those groups.

The strategy was to begin the program with the least controversial issue and build a solid foundation of support. This rationale was based on the public's heightened sensitivity to guns stemming from a recent two year legislative debate on gun control at the state and federal level. For this reason, it was imperative that the agency take a neutral stance and approach the program sensitively. Accordingly, it was recognized that the program should focus *exclusively* on handgun safety, not handgun control. The original intent was to garner support and minimize resistance by approaching every elected government official in the County and every other agency or private sector group that would be touched by this program.

Colonel Supenski took his research and idea framework to Chief Behan's assistant, Kai Martensen, who became the facilitator of a new nine member project team. Subsequently, the program, now dubbed the Handgun Violence Reduction Program (HVRP), developed fairly quickly. The workable portions of the two years of efforts by the Committee were retained (collection of data and the selection/training of program presenters). The rest was discarded. The committee composition essentially remained the same. The organizational structure was changed slightly, and the conceptual framework was clearly established.

A short time later, Supenski, Martensen, and Doi and Clarenbach from the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence reconvened to discuss the Center's recommendations. Clarenbach and Doi suggested combining efforts of the Department's public relations people and an advertising firm to identify target audiences and messages. Media involvement was considered critical to maximize the reach of the program, to assist in development of public service announcements (PSAs) and news programming, and to spur leadership support. Communication materials such as PSAs featuring the Chief and County Executive, brochures, letters, and speeches were identified. Research direction was established. The need for the involvement of a key community leader to mobilize the community behind the program was identified. Clarenbach and Doi suggested that the community leader host a business/civic leaders breakfast to rally support and enlist personal and financial commitment. Clarenbach and Doi also produced a helpful list of suggested points of contact:

- other law enforcement agencies (state police, county sheriff, Fraternal Order of Police for support and assistance)

- state/federal officials (State Attorney General, US Senators, Congressmen)
- gun dealers/ranges (participation and assistance)
- schools (school & PTA presentations)
- universities (evaluation)
- health care professionals (panel participation, office displays)
- civic/religious/service organizations (presentation locale and volunteers)
- retailers (display, volunteers, cash/in-kind contributions)
- corporations (presentation locale, employee awareness, in-kind services)
- public utilities (information inserts)
- media (PSAs, special reports, editorial support, talk shows)
- volunteers (clerical support, delivery of printed materials to public)

The first issue tackled by the restructured HVRP committee was how to deliver the program. This was not to be presented as an anti-gun program, but as a program designed to reduce the number of deaths and injuries caused by handguns through safety, education, and theft prevention. The presence of guns in our society was recognized as inevitable, and the program was designed to focus on that reality. The group also recognized that most people in society do the right thing most of the time when given reliable information. The goal was to provide that audience with critical information.

It was determined that HVRP should be carried out in three phases. Phase I would target those people who already owned guns. There would be no point in discussing gun ownership alternatives with this group. They would respond best to simple, straightforward gun safety and theft reduction information. Phase I would provide suggestions for "childproofing" handguns and information on legal issues and liability surrounding ownership using television, radio, and print PSAs, brochures, and police presentations. This phase of the program was as noncontroversial as possible. No one could dispute the issue of safety.

Phase II would be targeted toward potential gun owners. Most people who decide to buy a handgun do not participate in any training or education. Phase II would address this situation. Emphasis would be on risks and responsibilities of handgun ownership, including legal, psychological, and practical issues of ownership. Unlike Phase I, alternatives would be presented for personal, home, and business security. The key issue would not be handguns, but fear -- people's perception that they must protect themselves. If you can reduce the fear, you reduce the impulse to buy a gun, and, in



turn, reduce the proliferation of guns. Clearly, this would reduce the chance of misusing guns. Research shows that handgun turn-in programs have failed. Therefore, it is presumed that once people decide to purchase guns, they rarely change their minds. It is essential to reach the public *before* they decide to buy a handgun. Presentation material would dispel the unrealistic notion of what handgun ownership means. It would focus on the difficulty of proficient handgun use, impractical expectations of protection (i.e., possession  $\neq$  protection), and legal issues. The program would provide other options to persons who were not prepared to assume the risks and responsibilities of handgun ownership. This material would be presented to the general public, to business and community groups, and to victims of crime through police presentations, PSAs, and brochures.

The third and most critical target audience was nonowners. Phase III would address the risks and responsibilities of ownership, dangers of misuse and intentional abuse, and reducing the attractiveness and fascination of handguns to children. Presentations to children, PSAs, brochures, and posters would focus on the deglamorization of handguns and provide information on what to do when coming in contact with a gun. In theory, the program would educate parents through their kids (similar to seat belt and smoking campaigns).

As the project committee clarified the HVRP mission, the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence continued to act as a consultant. Together, they envisioned a 33-month implementation phase with a kick-off targeted for September 1987. The program was seen as a long term commitment with several phases aimed at various audiences, with institutionalization of the program as the ultimate goal. To lend credibility and attain maximum exposure, it was necessary to launch a multimedia campaign (radio, television, newspapers, billboards, mail stuffers) reinforced with presentations to target groups. Unfortunately, the great expense involved in initiating such an undertaking had not been thoroughly investigated.

Based upon previous experience setting up similar programs in Minnesota and North Carolina, the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence prepared a draft of the projected program budget -- what it would cost in dollars, in-kind services, and distribution. Original estimates were placed at approximately \$280,000.

As outside funding became an obvious necessity, Colonel Supenski approached the Baltimore County Police Foundation, a board of Baltimore County business executives interested in furthering Department causes. This organization would be sought as a conduit for HVRP donations. It is important to note that many members of the Police Foundation held conservative views opposing gun control. This presented a considerable challenge in selling this program. Fortunately, the Foundation realized the true premise and potential of HVRP and agreed to act as financial conduit, committed \$2,000 in seed money, and offered to provide in-kind services. These funds were added to \$12,500 already committed by the Center for Prevention of Handgun Violence.

With initial funding in hand, it was clear that large-scale external support was needed. The Department could neither fiscally nor creatively handle this project alone. As the project grew, the ability to handle it with limited internal funding and staffing decreased. Media involvement was needed to provide PSAs, investigative reports, and editorials. The business community could contribute to fund-raising, provide services and materials, and add credibility. The advertising industry could provide necessary marketing tools. Gun retailers could assist in material distribution, and citizen groups could provide the necessary grassroots support.

Advertising agency assistance was first sought to assess and solidify the marketing strategy of HVRP. Several local agencies were identified as viable options. Each was approached and evaluated based upon receptiveness to the HVRP concept, ideas presented, and willingness to consider *pro bono* service contributions. The Sandler Agency was selected for their willingness to work cooperatively (rather than autonomously) and provide some services *pro bono*, with the remaining provided at cost. Their function would be to provide creativity, production, and placement of ad work.

The next several months were spent "knocking on doors." After securing the support of most local elected officials, focus was turned to the private sector, with the intent of hitting every major corporation in the County. This was not done without forethought and planning, however. Rather than set out on a random, arduous search, local resources and familiar contacts were accessed. Being an alumnus, Colonel Supenski first requested the assistance of Leadership-Baltimore County, a civic-minded group of respected area leaders. He also met with the Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce. These fruitful meetings provided him with specific contacts in key businesses throughout the County.

Baltimore City business resources were also tapped. As the city had no Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC), a high-powered private organization dedicated to promoting urban economic development, and the Environmental Growth Association (EGA), which attracts business to the Baltimore area, were approached for assistance. EGA member and former Baltimore County Executive, Donald Hutchinson offered valuable advice. He recommended that a professional fund raiser or "lead CEO" be brought on board. This person was to lend his/her name to the project and contact selected peers for support.

After several meetings and much deliberation, a list of possible candidates to become the Handgun Violence Reduction Program's "lead CEO" was compiled. Frank Gunther, a well-known and highly respected retired Baltimore County business owner, was unanimously selected. He enthusiastically accepted the position.

By mid-September 1988, Mr. Gunther and Colonel Supenski had met on numerous occasions to assess program needs and discuss fund-raising strategies. Gunther suggested the formation of a CEO advisory board to provide expertise, clout, and financial backing. He insisted that a prerequisite to formulating a fund-raising plan, was to put an actual dollar figure on the production of the entire program. It was determined that the amount needed to develop, implement, and assess the Handgun

Violence Reduction Program, with no donations, totalled over 2.3 million dollars, much of this needed for media promotion. A scaled-down version of the program was considered also, and costs were projected at 1.2 million dollars with no donations. Realistically, a large portion of these funds would have to be in the form of in-kind and *pro bono* services. The fund-raising strategy was to show potential contributors the extent of Baltimore County's commitment. That meant translating administrative costs, personnel, and materials into dollars and cents. A determination was made on the cost for discounted media services, including those being provided *pro bono*. The ad agency conservatively estimated a figure of \$145,000 needed in cash donations for the scaled-down version designed to produce a complete promotional package for the program, with most of this spent on air time. At this point, the anticipated "kick-off" had been moved back to November -- the first of several delays.

Gunther and Supenski now approached the media. Gunther, selected for his high profile, was familiar with Arnold Kleiner, the General Manager of one of Baltimore's major television stations. A meeting of the three was arranged. This meeting opened the door to multimedia involvement and provided important "trade" suggestions. Mr. Kleiner responded positively to the program and expressed a desire to reside on the CEO advisory board. He agreed to donate air time for PSAs, facilitate public affairs programming, conduct air editorials, lend technical assistance, and help publicize the "kick-off." He also offered constructive advice, which was critical considering that this was uncharted territory for most involved. Mr. Kleiner speculated that other television stations would probably not want to take part in a coordinated media effort, but may want to participate independently. Local papers would more than likely want to assist. It was recommended that a breakfast meeting ("psych session") be held prior to the "kick-off" for VIPs, including the County Executive, Chief of Police, HVRP project director, lead CEO, CEO of ad agency, Police Department public information officer, and radio/television personnel (e.g., general managers, news directors, and public affairs department heads). Mr. Kleiner's generous offer to contact other television and radio station general managers gave the project team the break it needed. Following a fervent door-to-door sales process, nearly every major television and radio station and the areas' two largest newspaper publishing groups were onboard. Value of total in-kind services had now topped \$900,000. Despite this progress, the committee had only half of the estimated funding required to carry out the program as originally conceived.

The HVRP program had now been designed. There was sufficient political backing and a sizeable pledge of in-kind services. The HVRP committee had the creative assistance of a reputable ad agency, and a professional fund raiser on board to assist in raising the remaining funds. Armed (pun intended) with this significant commitment and quality concept, the committee members ardently solicited the local business communities for financial assistance.

By December 1988, the committee had made great strides. Phase I presentation lesson plans, complete with slide show, had been devised and Department personnel had been trained. Presenters were to include: Police Department Executive Corps (rank of captain and above) to address high impact groups to sell the program, primary presenters (Crime Reduction Division and select personnel) to conduct the majority of

presentations to target groups, Precinct Crime Prevention Officers to reinforce messages to Neighborhood Watch groups, and field officers to provide information when taking reports of crime. In-service training was conducted for Department personnel to provide an overview of the HVRP program and instill the HVRP concepts. This training included statistics, home/business target hardening, safe handling, storage and maintenance of handguns, and legal ramifications of gun ownership. In addition, the University of Maryland had been contracted to conduct a before and after telephone polling of Baltimore County citizens to determine the public's perception of handgun violence. This would assist the Department in gauging the level of effectiveness when the program was completed.

A telephone line (889-GUNS) had been reserved by the C & P Telephone Company to be used for inquiries and requests for HVRP presentations. Several PSAs had been designed by the Sandler Agency. Three of the PSAs were designed to air on radio, enlisting the participation and credibility of several local personalities: Johnny Unitas (former professional football player), Chuck Thompson (popular local sports announcer), and Wes Unseld (former professional basketball player and current head coach). The professional voice-over was provided by a seasoned professional who offered his personal services and studio time free of charge. Dubbing was provided at cost. The advertising agency also designed fifteen- and thirty-second PSAs for TV.

The first brochure distributed, entitled "Handgun Safety Guidelines," contained a message from the County Executive and Chief of Police and focused primarily on the safe use and storage of handguns. AT & T Systems, a Police Foundation member company, printed 100,000 copies of the brochure *pro bono*. These were made available to retail gun dealers, Baltimore County businesses, Baltimore County government employees, other agencies, presentation participants, hotline callers, and victims of gun theft.

The Noxell Corporation had donated \$3,000 through the Police Foundation to offset the costs of design, art work, and production of a Phase II brochure entitled "Legal Issues of Handgun Ownership." In addition, McCormick and Co., Inc. had donated the printing of the project's stationery and envelopes *pro bono*.

In May 1988, the Handgun Violence Reduction Program was launched at a well-attended kick-off ceremony. In attendance were various elected officials, business and community leaders, as well as corporate donors and members of the electronic and print media. The program was received positively by the Baltimore County community. 889-GUNS was in full service, several Phase I presentations had been conducted, brochures were being distributed, and radio ads were being aired. Shortly thereafter, key Department personnel became completely immersed in handgun legislative issues, which brought HVRP to a temporary standstill.

When attentions could again be focused on HVRP in mid 1989, the direction of the program had to be re-evaluated. The focal point was to shift from Phase I to Phase II at this time. However, finances were running low. There was only one-half the amount needed to properly conduct Phase II. The Committee decided to incorporate the work

already done toward Phase II into Phase I. This was not ideal, as these phases dealt with two different principles and two groups of people, but it was necessary. Putting Phase II on hold enabled the Committee to concentrate on Phase III, essentially the "star" of the program and presumably the only one of its kind in the country. This portion of the program would be a cooperative effort between the Police Department and the public school system.

During the summer of 1989, members of the Committee met with the Superintendent of Baltimore County Public Schools to discuss plans for Phase III and the probability of incorporating an educational program addressing handgun violence reduction into the existing school curriculum. The concept was highly praised and a member of the school's administration was assigned to the project. A high powered panel of top school administrators, curriculum and policy specialists, and key Department members was assembled. By November 1989, this group had developed a definite idea and direction for Phase III.

Phase III was envisioned as an ongoing program with police officers going into the schools as instructors, while a "celebrity" promoted the message outside the schools via public appearances and PSAs. To convey the HVRP message to students age five to eighteen, three implementation levels emerged. School educators felt that handgun ownership should not be addressed at the elementary level, but an explanation should be given on what to do when coming upon a handgun. School curriculum specialists participating on the Phase III Planning Committee determined the most appropriate message and methodology. In lieu of an entirely separate program for this age group, basic handgun safety principals were to be incorporated into teachers' lesson plans, where appropriate, and into police presentations already done in elementary schools.

The planning committee determined that HVRP should be concentrated in the middle schools (6th - 8th grades). Research showed that this was when guns were most likely to begin showing up in schools. The most effective way to deter youngsters of this age group was to appeal to their overwhelming concern of peer perception and group acceptance. The primary message would be "it's not cool to carry guns." Not only would handgun issues be addressed in schools during police officer presentations, but they would also be incorporated into several curriculum areas: history (assassination of leaders), conflict resolution, human values, social studies, art, and child welfare issues. HVRP concerns were to be further discussed in the Student Handbook and as part of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program.

The planning committee envisioned a more conversational discussion-based format for high school students. This age group would not have a need for the glitz and fanfare required by younger age groups. Straightforward dialogue of handgun facts and issues would prove most effective. This was to be accomplished through police officer presentations, supplemented with discussions led by school faculty and administration.

The biggest hurdle at this stage was the lack of sufficient funding to fully implement Phase III. A pilot program was tested at the 9th grade level during the 1989-90 school year at the expense of other Police Department/school efforts. Subsequently, a

notice of availability of grant funds by the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (JJAC) was obtained in December 1989. An HVRP grant application was completed, which requested funds for:

- overtime to allow police officers to plan, schedule, and conduct HVRP classes in the schools;
- the purchase of equipment to be used in classroom presentations;
- media creation and development;
- incentive items for the students; and
- the development of a program evaluation and prescriptive package.

A JJAC grant for \$90,510 was awarded in early 1990, and Phase III became a reality.

## CHAPTER TWO

# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### Introduction

Phase III of the Handgun Violence Reduction Program (HVRP) is intended to emphasize to school-aged children the dangers of handgun misuse. To accomplish this goal, uniformed police officers present handgun safety information and messages in an educational setting.

Although every level of education (elementary, middle, and high school) should be reached, the program was initiated at the high school level one year prior to receipt of the JJAC grant. Although the HVRP Planning Committee recommended focusing initially on grades six through eight, representatives of the public school administration had another idea. Since a curriculum already existed at the 9th grade level entitled "Violence in America," they could insert HVRP easily into that curriculum. It was not possible to institute HVRP at another grade level at that time without disrupting the Social Studies curriculum. It was agreed to start HVRP in ninth grade for the 1989-90 school year, with the intent to switch to the seventh grade the following year.

Initially, there were no plans to continue a high school level classroom presentation into a second year. Instead, HVRP was planned to move to the middle school level with the acquisition of grant funds. This would ensure that students received the information before entering high school. Preliminary plans were made to develop a four lesson sequence for the seventh grade level to replace the ninth grade lesson.

As the first year progressed, it was apparent that the ninth grade effort was a major success. Students and teachers alike were showing overwhelming support. Teachers from other grade levels were requesting the program. This was the first indicator that eliminating the ninth grade effort would be more difficult than expected. As explained later, the ninth grade program was not only continued but expanded in the second year of grant funding. With the continued support of the school system and JJAC, HVRP has become an institutionalized part of the seventh and ninth grade curricula of the Baltimore County Public Schools.

## **Planning and Development of Ninth Grade Lesson**

Development of the lessons began with brainstorming sessions by members of the Police Department involved in the first two phases. Initially, objectives of the lesson were identified. It was then necessary to seek the cooperation and support of the Department of Education. This began with a meeting between the Project Director and the Assistant Superintendent of Public Schools. At this meeting a brief history of the program was presented along with the plans for Phase III, including the lesson objectives. Additionally, incorporation of key information into other existing police school programs at various grade levels was discussed.

The Assistant Superintendent of Schools formed a committee of key school and police personnel. School personnel on the committee included Department Chairpersons, teachers, and Directors of each level of education.

Incorporating key information about the dangers of handguns into existing police programs in the schools was not a difficult task. This was accomplished in several weeks. The subcommittee charged with developing the ninth grade lesson included: a police Sergeant (responsible for the daily operations of the program), the Coordinator of the Office of Social Studies (the topic fit best into the Social Studies curriculum), and three high school Social Studies teachers (one from each area of Baltimore County).

The committee decided to expand the effort to a three lesson segment entitled "Violence in America." The first lesson would be taught by the students' Social Studies teacher, the second lesson would be taught by a police officer, and the third lesson would be taught by a school administrator (i.e., Principal, Assistant Principal, Guidance Counselor). The objectives for the two additional lessons were developed and are discussed later. The procedures for accomplishing the objectives of each lesson were then determined. Not detailed procedures, these were designed to serve merely as a guide to meeting the objectives.

School representatives were satisfied that the objectives and procedures developed for lessons one and three were sufficient to prepare the Social Studies teachers and school administrators to conduct their classes. Concerns were raised regarding the police officers' lesson, especially since their teaching experience was rather limited. To allay the concerns, the officers developed a detailed lesson plan based upon the lesson objectives and procedures and piloted the lesson in several classes.

A strategy was developed to fine tune the officer lesson. The process involved three cycles of pilot presentations to actual ninth grade classes, teacher input, and police officer critiques. Teacher feedback and a final critique by the officers led to a composite lesson plan presented to the committee for final approval.



The lesson plan approved by the committee was revised after the 1990-91 school year. The 1990-91 HVRP evaluation revealed that instructors were unable to accomplish all objectives and fairly answer students' questions in the ninth grade program. Consequently, the ninth grade program was expanded to two lessons presented by the officer beginning in the 1991-92 school year. The third day of the ninth grade program, formerly presented by school administrators, was eliminated and replaced with a second officer lesson. Based upon input from school administrators, teachers, and police instructors, it was agreed that the administrators' lesson was *not* a constructive use of limited time. In order to add a second day of police officer instruction, the seventh grade program was reduced from three to two days. Again, based upon the 1990-91 program evaluation, it was determined that the seventh grade program could be reduced by one day with minimal effect. (Indeed, subsequent evaluations have verified that the reduction of the seventh grade program has had no significant effect.)

## How to Present the Ninth Grade Lessons

*Lesson One:*

*Taught by a Social Studies Teacher*

### Objectives:

Following this lesson the students will be able to:

- describe the extent of violence in American society;
- describe why violent acts occur and how victims feel about violence; and
- identify ways in which conflict situations could be handled nonviolently.

### Procedures:

1. The teacher will write several of the following statements on the chalkboard or on a transparency:
  - Many feel we are living in a time when people and property are not safe. Stealing, violence, and threats to our safety are commonplace. There is a decreasing respect for the wisdom of the law. We must abide by the law or we are all lost. We cannot go along with this trend; we must seek to reverse it.
  - When someone intrudes upon my space and threatens me, the intruder has given up all rights, and I will do whatever I can to defend myself.
  - Many citizens question whether we are returning to the days of the Old West when openly carrying a gun was the norm not the exception.
  - Public officials are right to insist that private citizens taking the law into their own hands cannot be condoned.
  - Great literature from Homer onward teaches that anger is sometimes justifiable and can be necessary for coping.

2. The teacher then leads the class in a discussion based on the following questions:
  - *How do you react to these statements?*
  - *What information could be cited to support each statement?*
  - *With which statements do you agree? Why?*
  - *Is our society or our school becoming a more violent one? What evidence could be cited to prove or disprove this statement?*
3. The teacher then asks the students to think of a violent situation with which they are familiar. It may be one in which they were personally involved or one they have seen or heard about from the news, on television, or even at the movies. The teacher has several of the students briefly describe what happened.
4. After a few students have related their situations, the teacher distributes a Violence in Our Society Resource Sheet (see Appendix A). The teacher selects one of the situations previously described and the students are instructed to complete section A of the chart on the Resource Sheet. In so doing, the following questions are answered by the students regarding the situation presented:
  - *What made the situation violent?*
  - *Why did the violence occur?*
  - *How did the victim feel about the violence?*
  - *What alternatives to violence were there?*
  - *How could the situation have been handled nonviolently? (list 3 or 4 examples)*

The same procedure is then used for a second situation with the students listing their responses in Section B on the Resource Sheet, and using section C for a third situation. Based on the ability level of the class, an option for more able students would be to divide into groups of approximately three students each. The teacher asks a member of the group to describe the situation. As each situation is described, the other members in the group answer the questions on the Resource sheet. These responses should be recorded in phrase form in sections A, B, and C of the Resource Sheet.

5. After the exercise is complete, the teacher discusses the following questions with the class:
  - *What common characteristics make these situations violent ones?*
  - *What feelings are usually held by the victims of violent actions?*
  - *What alternatives are usually available to avert violence?*
  - *How can situations be handled nonviolently?*
  - *In what situations were weapons a factor?*
  - *Does the availability of weapons make violence more likely? Support your answer.*
6. The teacher then informs the class that a police officer will visit them for two sessions to give a police officer's perspective of violence in America.

*Lesson Two:*

*Taught by a Police Officer (Day One)*

Objectives:

Following this lesson, students will understand:

- how violent our society is;
- that the media has an effect on their perception of violence;
- how America is compared to other countries with regards to violence; and
- that handguns play a major role in the commission of violent crime.

Students will also be able to identify options/responses available to them when confronted with a violent situation.

Procedures:

1. The officer introduces him/herself to the class and explains that they will be discussing violence in general, serious violence in our country, and violence as a complex social problem in search of solutions due to minimal progress with current alternatives.
2. The officer asks several students for their definition of violent crime.
3. The officer asks the class how we learn about violence (answers should include newspapers, radio, T.V., gossip, true life experiences).
4. The officer then asks for a volunteer to do some writing on the chalkboard for the next few minutes.
5. The officer asks the class to name four very violent acts/crimes. These are written on the chalkboard by the volunteer so as to create four columns. The responses sought are MURDER, RAPE, ARMED ROBBERY, and SUICIDE.

6. Once accomplished, the students are asked: *What are some reasons or causes why people would commit murder?* Make sure that students understand that murder is when someone kills someone else illegally, not accidentally or in self defense. As the students give their responses the volunteer will list all of the appropriate responses under the word MURDER. Some examples of responses would be:<sup>1</sup>

Jealousy  
Drugs/Alcohol  
Cults  
Mental Illness  
Prejudice

Hate  
Peer Pressure  
Contract  
Power

Anger  
Domestic Problem  
Money  
Revenge

7. The officer then proceeds to ask: *What are some of the reasons or causes why people would commit rape?* Some examples of the response would be:

Drugs/Alcohol  
Jealousy  
Mental Illness

Hate  
Cults  
Power

Anger  
Peer Pressure  
Desire For Sex<sup>2</sup>

The volunteer lists each of the responses under the word RAPE. Stress that rape is a violent crime and the abuser uses power, control, and dominance over the victim.

8. The officer continues by asking: *What are some of the causes or reasons why people would commit armed robbery?* Some examples of responses would be:

Money  
Drugs/Alcohol  
Hate  
Revenge

Power (Gangs)  
Jealousy  
Anger

Peer Pressure  
Prejudice  
Mental Illness

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<sup>1</sup>It may be necessary to consolidate some of the answers that may be given. For example: If a student response is Gangs or Territory, those answers can be described as Peer Pressure or Power. Property can be construed as Money. Crazy could be Mental Illness, etc.

<sup>2</sup>The officer usually takes the time here to point out that "Desire for sex" may be the reason or cause on a date rape, however, the rapist who stalks his victim is far more likely to be committing the act because of the feeling of power and dominance over another person. The officer then points out that in the State of Maryland date rape carries the same penalty as statutory rape. There is no distinction between the two in the law. The officer also points out that while on a date if one person says no and the other does it anyway, it is rape. Even if the victim consented at first and then changes their mind before the act occurs, it is still rape.

It may be necessary here to explain that Armed Robbery is when someone comes up to you with a weapon and takes something from you, not when someone comes into your house or car and steals something from that place.

The volunteer lists the responses under Armed Robbery.<sup>3</sup>

9. Finally, the officer asks: *What are some of the causes or reasons why people commit suicide?* Some examples of the responses would be:

|                 |                 |               |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Drugs/Alcohol   | Revenge         | Peer Pressure |
| School Pressure | Family Pressure | Stress        |
| Mental Illness  | Cults           | Cry For Help  |
| Depression      | Low Self Esteem |               |

The volunteer lists the responses under Suicide.

10. The officer thanks the volunteer for their help and allows him/her to be seated.
11. The officer asks the students to consider the following questions over the next several minutes, not to answer them now as we will come back to them later:

- Can a police officer do anything to eliminate these causes or reasons why people commit these acts?*
- Can society do anything to eliminate these causes or reasons why people commit these acts?*
- What can we do as individuals to lessen our chances of being murdered, raped, or robbed?*

12. The officer then provides the class with the amount of these crimes/acts occurring in the U.S.:<sup>4</sup>

|                |        | <u>1988</u> |         |
|----------------|--------|-------------|---------|
| Murder         | Rape   | Robbery     | Suicide |
| 17,859         | 83,885 | 284,220     | 30,796  |
| With Firearms: |        |             |         |
| 10,537         | 8,300  | 164,549     | 21,662  |

<sup>3</sup>Occasionally, students may give "Poor" as a reason why people commit this crime. The officer points out that this is not a crime that is usually committed by poor people. Poor people who steal to survive are far more likely to shoplift for their basic needs (e.g., food, clothing).

<sup>4</sup>These figures are taken from the Sourcebook provided by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics and should be updated each year.

13. The officer emphasizes that the type of firearm most commonly used in these acts is a handgun.
14. The officer then uses students to set up a murder scenario which demonstrates that police and society have little effect on violent crime in everyday activities. Reinforce the causes of the violent crime that were used in the scenario. Stress the importance of self protection and crime prevention.
15. A comparison is made between the number of handgun *murders* occurring in Great Britain, Canada, and the U.S.

|               | <u>1988</u> |
|---------------|-------------|
| Great Britain | 7           |
| Canada        | 8           |
| United States | 8,915       |

The officer tells students to think about why there is such a big difference between the countries. Discussions to resume on Day Two.



*Lesson Three: Taught by a Police Officer (Day Two)*

Objectives:

Following this lesson the students will be able to:

- understand the problems in our criminal justice system that complicate the problem of violent crime;
- understand that the alternatives and solutions to solving the violent crime problem are broad and complex; and
- understand what to do to increase their odds of surviving a violent attack;

Procedures:

1. The officer asks the class to explain why we have such a high number of murders in our country compared to Canada. Some examples of responses would be:
  - a) We have more people in the U.S. (True. We have 10 times the population that Canada has, but if we multiply their number by 10 their total would still be only 80).
  - b) They deal with their criminals in a more strict way (True).
  - c) They have strict gun control. (True. Their laws border on gun banning, whereas we have always had guns in the hands of our citizens).
2. The officer then provides some statistics that may help explain the reason for such a drastic difference:
  - a) There are 60 million handguns in circulation in the United States in the hands of our citizens, not including police and military. There are 70 to 80 million rifles and shotguns. The officer should point out that with this amount of guns in the hands of citizens, the potential for violence is much greater in our country.

- b) On any given day 135,000 students in this country walk into their schools with a gun. (It is helpful here to cite some local incidents of this to drive home the point. It is also important for the officer to try to impress upon the students that if they know someone who has a gun in school, the proper thing to do is to tell a teacher or other school official. This could save someone's life, maybe even their own or that of a brother, sister, or friend).
  - c) Every day in this country a child under the age of 12 is killed with a handgun. (Again, it may be helpful to cite some recent examples, preferably local ones, to demonstrate the point).
3. The officer now proceeds to discuss the options/alternatives in dealing with violent crime in this country (none of which can be considered solutions, but they are alternatives in dealing with the problem):

a) Criminal Justice System

The officer asks:

*How many think the people who commit these crimes don't spend enough time in jail? (ask them to raise their hands).*

The officer provides the average time spent in jail in this country by a person who is arrested for committing one of these acts.

1988

Murder  
85 months

Rape  
49 months

Armed Robbery  
36 months

The officer asks:

*Now how many think the people who commit these crimes are not spending enough time in jail?*

*Why aren't they spending more time in jail?*

(Some of the responses will be: Because we don't have enough jails or because the jails are full).

The officer's next question should then be:

*Well then, what is the solution to overcrowding of the jails? (This usually leads to two responses which are the next two alternatives to be discussed).*

- b) Stronger punishment

The officer asks:

*How many people think that the death penalty is the way to address prison overcrowding or violent crime, for that matter?*

The officer explains that capital punishment is a very controversial subject. For every person that believes we should use it, there is usually someone who believes it is cruel and unusual punishment. There is an estimated 2,400 people on death row in this country of which approximately 125 are executed each year.

- c) Build more jails or bigger jails.

The officer asks:

*How many think we need to build more jails or bigger jails?*

The officer asks those students to keep their hands raised and asks:

*What would you say if I told you that the new prison being built in this state will be built about a mile or two from here? (Most students will put their hands down).*

The officer explains that if we don't want these criminals wandering the streets, then one day we will have to realize that we may have to live near a prison. What is worse? Living near a jail where there are walls, armed guards, dogs, barbed wire, razor ribbon, and alarms or letting violent criminals walk the streets with us after a very short period of time?

- d) Tougher gun laws.

The officer asks:

*How many think that tougher gun laws may help? Not banning them because with 60 million already out there, we are beyond that point. (Usually there are only about 25-35% of the students who feel that gun laws can help).*

The officer explains the required procedures that a person must go through before they can obtain a driver's license in this state. For example:

- 1) Must have proof of insurance
- 2) Can then apply for a Learner's Permit
- 3) Have 120 days to practice on the Learner's Permit
- 4) Must have 21-year-old person with you when you practice and that person has to have had a driver's license for at least 3 years
- 5) Must take an eye exam
- 6) Must take a written test
- 7) Must take a practical driving test with a State Police Officer sitting next to you
- 8) If you pass you must maintain insurance coverage

The officer then explains that in most states a person who wishes to buy a gun can just go into a gun shop, pay for the gun, and leave without having to prove any knowledge of proper use, maintenance or safety precautions, without practicing, and without a background check done on the buyer to ensure that he/she is not a convicted felon or was not in a mental institution for something serious.

The officer asks:

*Does this make sense?*

*Would such a gun law be unreasonable?*

*Why or why not? (if time allows)*

4. The officer should make it clear that the purpose for this discussion is not to promote a gun ban because there are legitimate reasons for owning a gun.

The officer elicits from the class these legitimate reasons:

- a) Protection
- b) Hunting
- c) Target Practice
- d) Collecting
- e) In the course of employment

5. The officer now returns to the questions he asked the class to consider earlier and asks:

*Is there anything the police can do to eliminate these reasons or causes why people commit these crimes? (Pointing to the chalkboard)*  
*Is there anything that society can do to eliminate them?*

The officer may choose to allow responses to the questions from the class or he may ask them in a rhetorical way as a lead-in to a role-play with the students (if time allows). For example:

The officer can identify two students as boyfriend and girlfriend and another as an acquaintance. The remainder of the class is told that they represent the rest of the county or city and that they do not know these three people. Additionally, the officer appoints three other students as the police department and designates one as the chief.

The scenario begins:

*The boyfriend and girlfriend have been going together for a long time, but one night they have a big fight and the girl dumps the boy. This upsets the boy very much because he still really likes the girl. A week later he sees the girl on a date with another guy (the acquaintance). This upsets him even more because he never liked the acquaintance in the first place, and now he is dating his girl! The boy decides that he is going to teach this other guy a lesson for dating "his girl." So, one night he follows them on a date and at the end of the date, after the acquaintance drops the girl off at her home, the boy finds the most opportune time and jumps the acquaintance and begins to slap him around, just to let this guy know that he doesn't like what is happening. The situation worsens though, because the boy gets carried away. He continually beats the acquaintance with increasing anger and violence. It's actually beginning to feel good to him as he vents his emotions. Finally, he stops, but it's too late. The acquaintance is dead.*

Now the officer asks the students who were appointed police officers: *Why didn't you stop this from happening?*

Their response will be that they didn't know that it was happening.

The officer then asks the students who were representing the rest of society: *Why didn't you stop this from happening.*

They will respond the same way.

Here the officer makes the point that, unless we know that it is going to happen ahead of time, we cannot stop a crime such as this from happening. And yet, the scenario murder involved a number of the causes or reasons listed on the board (hate, anger, revenge, power, jealousy, domestic problems, etc.).

6. Now the officer states: *Let's look at what we as individuals can do to lessen our chances of being murdered, raped, or robbed.*

In order for a crime to happen three elements are necessary:

- a) A person has to have the *desire* to commit a crime (anyone can have the desire, and there is nothing anyone else can do about that).
- b) A person has to have the *ability* to commit a crime (anyone can have the ability to commit a crime, and there is nothing anyone else can do about that).

- c) A person needs the *opportunity* to commit the crime (this is the only element that we as individuals can affect).

7. The officer asks: *What are some of the things we can do to be more safe?*

The officer then cites some examples:

- a) We need to do a better job of securing our homes, because over 4 million are burglarized each year, and 54% of them did not require forced entry.
- b) We need to secure our guns better, because 275,000 are stolen each year. The National Rifle Association, the National Safety Council, the American Medical Association, the National Shooting Sport Foundation, and every police department recommends that a gun be unloaded and locked up with the bullets kept separate from the gun.

If we do:

- there is less chance of accidents occurring,
- there is less chance of spontaneous use in anger,
- they are not as accessible for someone to commit suicide,
- there is less chance they will be stolen, and we must remember that every gun that is stolen is now in the hands of a criminal.

This will very often result in a student stating: *If we lock up our guns like that, then how are we going to be able to protect ourself if someone breaks in?*

The officer then points out that national statistics show that when our homes are broken into, approximately 90% of the time we are not home. (Note: your local jurisdiction may show that figure to be even higher.) Additionally, most burglars want to be in and out in a few minutes, and they do not want a confrontation.

The officer asks: *Is it worth the risk to have them properly secured?*

c) We need to be more aware of our surroundings. For example: When we go to the Mall:

- We should park our car as close to the building as possible, preferably under one of the lights on the lot. We should not park way off in the corner so that no one scratches our car, especially if it will be dark when we return to our car.
- We should take note of exactly where we parked our car.
- When we come outside, the first thing we should do is get our car door key ready and then get our bearings as to where the car is parked.
- We should not walk to the car if we see someone suspicious between us and the car. Wait a few minutes for the person(s) to leave. If they don't leave, we should ask Mall Security to escort us to our car. If they are unavailable, call the police and ask them to check out the suspicious subjects. They would rather handle that kind of call than a murder, rape, or robbery.
- If there are no suspicious persons, then we should proceed to our car, but as we approach we should try to take note (from a distance) if someone is hiding behind or under our car.
- Once we reach our car, we should take a quick look behind the front seat to ensure that no one is hiding inside. If there is someone inside we don't want to challenge them. We should leave and get help.

When walking down a street:

- If a car passes us slowly and someone inside is giving us "the look" (the kind that makes us think "uh-oh"), we should turn around immediately and head in the opposite direction and keep an eye on what the car is doing.
- If it turns around and comes back, then we should turn around again and seek a place to go for help.



Travelling through rough areas:

- If we must go somewhere that means we may have to go through a rough area, then, if possible, we should take a few extra minutes and go around that area to avoid any potential danger.

Taking shortcuts:

- We shouldn't take shortcuts through alleys or dark or wooded areas. They very often lead to tragedy. (Cite some actual cases as examples)

Going out at night:

- If we are going out at night, we should go with a few friends. Chances are that we can always take along a few friends wherever we go and besides we'll have a lot more fun in the process. The average mugger doesn't try to rob several people. The average rapist doesn't attempt to rape three or four girls at a time.

All of these things will help us be more secure because we are taking away much of the opportunity for someone to commit a crime against us.

8. The officer the points out that there are no guarantees; despite all crime prevention tactics, we can still be attacked. Therefore, we must know how to react to such a violent situation.

The officer emphasizes that whenever we are the victim of a violent crime our goal must be *to survive the attack*.

The students must realize that criminals have the advantage because:

- a) They have the element of surprise. They know what they are going to do; we don't.
- b) They will do whatever they feel is necessary to gain control of us.
- c) They will be nervous because they don't know how this is going to turn out.
- d) They have another plan, though. They will become more violent as they meet resistance.

The victim, on the other hand, is going through a number of emotions:

- a) Shock (initial reaction)
- b) Fear (sets in very quickly)
- c) Nervousness
- d) Anger (deep down inside you don't like what is happening to you)

The officer explains that the victim must control this anger to lessen the chance of the criminal becoming more violent.

9. The officer then explains to the students how they can improve their odds of surviving an attack by:

- a) Remaining Calm - sounds hard, but once you tell yourself to calm down, you usually will.
- b) Following directions - the criminal will be telling you what he wants. Do it.
- c) Maintain a non-threatening image - follow the directions in a non-threatening way. Announce your actions and don't make any sudden moves (the officer should demonstrate this).
- d) Avoid struggling - statistics show that people who resist attacks are far more likely to be seriously injured or killed. There is one exception to this rule: If you really believe that you are going to die, then struggle - because then you don't have anything to lose. The attacker(s) may have said something to make you believe this.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Usually a female student will ask, What about in the case of a rape, shouldn't a woman resist? Here the officer explains that in such a case the woman has a tough decision to make. She must decide whether she should avoid struggling and be raped or whether she should resist and probably increase her chances of being raped and murdered. The officer should define rape simply as "unwanted sex" and emphasize that only the woman can make this decision. No man (father, husband, or boyfriend) has the right to make it for her. She has to decide for herself if she wants to try to survive and be raped or resist and risk serious physical injury and maybe death.

10. The officer concludes by explaining that we don't want "cowards" (crying, whining) in these situations because the attacker may feel that you don't deserve to live or are too much trouble and kill you anyway. We also don't want "heroes" because it just might get you killed unnecessarily. The officer should depict this on the chalkboard as follows:

Hero-----X-----Coward  
                    You

Many of us have seen statues and monuments erected for heroes. What do they all have in common?

**They are all dead.**

#### Special Considerations:

The officers involved in presenting this class must understand that it is important to remain current on local or national events relative to this topic. They often come up during a class, and being up-to-date on current events helps demonstrate the officer's credibility and sincerity. This may also help the officer keep the lesson fresh and interesting. Perhaps the best approach is to have a copy of all gun-related police reports forwarded to the officers responsible for conducting the presentations. Additionally, the officers involved should be clipping news stories and maintaining a categorized binder of gun-related incidents (e.g., murders, suicides, accidental shootings).

The officer should also ensure that the lesson contains a lot of information, and it takes some practice to get the timing down to ensure that the lesson is completed. Therefore, the officer must maintain control of the class and not let the students go off on tangents. The officer must keep the students focused on the information at hand. It is also important for the officer to know exactly when the period ends and to keep track of the time. Unlike other public presentations, the class is over when the bell rings.

Even though this is a serious topic, it is important for the officer to be human. There may be spots for a little humor when making a point. This helps keep students interested. The officer wants to avoid it becoming a lecture and should do anything possible to keep the students participating.

## Planning and Development of Seventh Grade Lessons

As mentioned earlier, original plans were to eliminate the high school lessons in lieu of a four day lesson sequence at the seventh grade level. There were two factors, however, that affected these plans. First, the four lessons written for the seventh grade level were all to be conducted by police officers. No teachers or administrators would be participating in the instruction. This would quadruple the workload for the officers involved. Second, when the suggested lessons were presented to school officials affiliated with the high school level effort, they insisted on keeping the ninth grade lessons. In fact, they advised us that they were including the Violence in America segment as a permanent part of their curriculum. These two factors meant that some additional planning and strategy meetings were necessary.

Perhaps the biggest concern was how the four lessons were going to be taught by three or four officers. The projected number of presentations would increase from just over 300 to 1200. Clearly, additional officers would have to be trained as presenters. The problem was compounded by the fact that these officers had other duties as well. They were not devoted solely to this program. Other ideas needed to be explored to accomplish our goals.

A decision was made to apply for a grant from the Maryland Juvenile Justice Advisory Council to help fund the Phase III effort. This decision was made very early in the process of developing the seventh grade lessons and, after successfully being awarded the grant, turned out to be the key to solving the problems. Minor adjustments to the original plan were made and satisfied the concerns of all. The seventh grade effort was to be consolidated into three lessons, and the ninth grade effort was to remain intact. Officers would be teaching a combined 1200 lessons during the school year. The grant included considerable funds earmarked for overtime. The overtime would allow officers to teach the HVRP lessons in an overtime mode and continue to perform their other duties as well.

The development of the seventh grade lessons began with committee meetings which again included school and police personnel. Objectives of the lessons were developed, and the police committee members were given the task to develop the lesson plans. The original objectives were very detailed and were geared for a four day lesson. The officers who developed the ninth grade lessons were assigned to consolidate the seventh grade effort into three lessons and complete the development of the lesson plans.

Approval to modify the seventh grade lessons was requested from the Coordinator of the Office of Social Studies. This was not difficult considering that it enabled the ninth grade effort to continue as school officials had requested. The Social Studies Coordinator sought and received approval from the Director of Middle School Instruction. Again, the Social Studies curriculum was chosen to be the location of the program. Approval from school officials allowed the development of the lessons to continue.

The officers researched written materials on the topic and viewed relevant videos and news footage. They met with some middle school teachers to determine what additional considerations needed to be addressed when teaching at the seventh grade level. They were able to consolidate the lessons by replacing student classroom work with homework assignments.

Since the school year had already ended, special arrangements had to be made to pilot the lessons once they were developed. The Director of Middle School Instruction and the Social Studies Coordinator were instrumental in arranging for a special class of students to attend a one day pilot of these lessons during the summer vacation. The police committee members assisted by arranging for incentives for students who attended the pilot. Incentives included a T-shirt bearing the program logo and a free lunch delivered by a popular pizza establishment. Attendance at the pilot was more than sufficient. In addition to the students, several teachers, school administrators, and police personnel were present to observe.

Following the pilot program, all of the teachers, administrators, and police personnel convened to critique the lessons. Concerns were aired, and suggestions were made. Very few areas requiring changes to the lessons were immediately apparent, and school officials were very pleased.

Over the remainder of the summer, the officers made the necessary adjustments to the lessons. The lesson plans were completed and submitted to the Office of Social Studies for final approval. Additionally, all officers to be involved in presenting these lessons were trained and began practicing them. In all, nine officers were trained to carry out the seventh grade lessons.

As the school year began, those officers who had been presenters of the ninth grade lesson the previous year were scheduled to teach the first classes. This allowed us to capitalize on their experience by providing opportunities for new presenters to actually observe lessons in action before they began teaching their own classes. It was the final stage of their preliminary training. After two weeks they were teaching classes on their own.

Training continues throughout the school year as the officers' classes are videotaped from time to time to provide a visual critique. The officers use the video to determine how their presentations can be improved and also to stimulate ideas which might enhance the lesson content.

It was determined following the 1990-91 school year that the seventh grade lessons were too long and detailed for students of that age group. On the other hand, the ninth grade program did not allow sufficient time for curriculum and discussion. To accommodate both grade levels, the lessons were modified so that both seventh and ninth grades each have two officer lessons. The new lessons were fully implemented during the 1991-92 and subsequent school years.

The actual lesson plans for the seventh grade presentations follow.

## How To Present the Seventh Grade Lessons

### *Lesson One: Taught by a police officer*

#### Objectives:

Following this lesson the students will be able:

- to realize the difference between *real violence* and *fictional violence*;
- to make responsible decisions when reacting to situations involving handguns knowing that they are vulnerable to gun accidents and violent crime; and
- to understand how handguns are glamorized in society through movies, T.V., and the media.

#### Procedures:

1. As a means of introduction, the officer leads the class in a discussion to define violence. The officer draws out all points to show that violence can be a deliberate act or an accident.
2. The officer uses current national and local statistics to relate the topic directly to the students:
  - One child under 14 dies each day in this country as a result of a firearms accident.
  - In Baltimore County in 1989, there were 22 victims under the age of 12 involved in firearms offenses and 200 victims in the age bracket of 13 to 18.
3. The officer then uses short video clips to depict *fictional violence*.
  - a) The officer tells the class that over the next couple of minutes they will be viewing a video and asks them to try to count the number of people that are killed in that video. (The video consists of several very short clips from approximately nine movies. Each of these clips show an assortment of violence, most of which involve guns.)

- b) The officer shows the video segment (approximately 1½ minutes long) and then begins to get the students numerical responses. After receiving several responses, the officer walks up to the chalkboard and writes a large "0." It is then explained that no one died in any of the videos as they were all acting out parts and no one was really killed.
  - c) The officer then shows another video segment which depicts a popular actor in the role of a cop. In this clip the actor observes a violent crime in progress where shots are fired. The actor walks out into street and meets the violence face to face and engages in a gun battle with the criminals. After each of the criminals are shot, the actor walks among the death and destruction and the shoot-out left as he holds his very large 44 Magnum handgun at his side.
  - d) The officer asks the class what is glamorized in this video clip to which the students reply "the handgun."
  - e) The officer explains to the class that police officers don't really walk out into the middle of such situations and challenge the violence.
  - f) The officer also explains that it is extremely unlikely that such a shoot-out could happen on a busy street without any innocent bystanders being hurt or killed.
4. The officer leads the class in a discussion about fictional violence pointing out fallacies of victimization, unrealistic character portrayal, unauthentic sounds, and how guns are glamorized.
5. The officer then shows a video clip depicting *real violence*.
- a) The officer explains that real violence is most accurately described as violence that occurs from criminal activity.
  - b) The officer shows a newsclip of a hostage situation that becomes an actual shoot-out between the police and the suspect.
  - c) The officer points out that none of the police officers involved in the shoot-out walk out into the open and challenge the violence. They instead are hiding behind buildings and cars just like any other human beings.



- d) The officer also points out that the sounds of the gunshots are much different than those in the movie clips. It is also noted that the officer who is shot in the situation does not get up, brush himself off, and go about his business afterwards.
  - e) Additionally, the students are taught that, unlike the movies, all of the people involved in this situation will have their lives altered in some way, particularly the family and friends of the officer who was shot.
6. The officer explains that criminal activity is not the only source of real violence. Real violence sometimes results accidentally. Another video segment is shown which portrays the last minutes in the life of Brian Darling. Brian's friend entices him to play with a real gun and as a result Brian is killed.
7. At the conclusion of the video, the handgun safety brochure is distributed to the students. They are told to come to class the next day prepared to talk about how Brian's death could have been prevented.

## *Lesson Two: Taught by a police officer*

### Objectives:

Following this lesson, the students will:

- understand that there are alternatives to resolving conflict in order to avoid violence, especially handgun violence;
- be fully aware of the laws and policies regarding carrying guns and the responsibility that comes with owning and using a handgun;
- know that gun accidents can occur anywhere, not just in the home, and there is a need for safe gun storage;
- be able to make clearer, more responsible decisions when reacting to situations involving handguns; and
- understand how they can improve their chances of surviving a violent attack by using the "RIGHT" approach.

### Procedures:

1. The officer begins by having someone in the class review what had been discussed in Lesson One.
2. The officer reviews what happened to Brian Darling.
3. The officer asks for several responses as to how Brian's death could have been avoided.
4. Through this discussion the students learn the responsible way in which a gun should be secured in the home:
  - a) Unloaded;
  - b) Locked up;
  - c) Bullets secured separately from the gun; and
  - d) Inaccessible to anyone in the family unfamiliar with its use.

5. The officer explains that gun accidents are not limited to children and death is not always the end result.
6. The officer then shows a video segment depicting a Baltimore County case in which a 15-year-old is paralyzed as result of a gun accident.
7. A group discussion ensues which deals with issues of peer pressure and gun safety.
8. Other video segments, scenarios, and news clippings are viewed to set the stage for classroom discussions concerning guns in schools and further comments about peer pressure and conflict resolution.
9. The officer then discusses with the class a final scenario in which they might become involved and which may not allow them time to think over their options. This scenario places the students in a fast food establishment eating their meal when two men enter. One of the men approaches the counter, displays a gun, and demands money. While this is happening, the other man approaches their table, pulls a shotgun from under his coat, and without actually pointing it at them, holds it in a ready position. He says nothing to them, but just stares at all of the people seated in the place.
10. The students are asked if they would try to be a hero or would more likely be a coward in this situation. They are also asked how specifically they would react.
11. The officer explains the "**RIGHT**" approach to take when confronted with a violent situation. This is best accomplished by highlighting the acronym "RIGHT" on the chalkboard in the following manner:

**R**emain calm

**F**ollow **I**nstructions

**G**o along with the situation unless or  
until you can safely react

**H**ave a non-threatening image

**T**hink (before, during, and after)

12. As the class ends, the officer reminds the students that they can do things that will make their personal lives a lot safer, and that they are coming to a point in their lives where they will be making decisions that will affect whether they get hurt or killed through violence.

## Special Considerations:

### **Flexibility**

When these lessons were first developed, each instructor taught the same material. Although consistency is important in such a program, we also recognized the need to remain flexible with things such as style in presenting. Certainly, no two people are alike and neither are their teaching styles. Some flexibility in this area is permitted, which helps the instructors feel comfortable in their roles. The important thing is that the material covered is the same.

### **Style**

Certain types of classes (e.g., special education) require the instructor to adjust their style somewhat. Also, classes comprised of students with behavioral problems require an adjustment in teaching style to maintain proper control of the class. The officer who is instructing these types of classes should be aware of this fact before the class begins and should even speak with the teacher to learn as much as possible about the students beforehand.

### **Community Needs**

Other factors that may affect the lessons are the special needs of the particular community in which the school is located. A certain community may be experiencing a high incidence of violence or gun related crime. Or a gun related incident may have occurred at the school. The officer responsible for conducting the program at that school should be aware of these factors and be well informed prior to beginning the program. If necessary, the officer may need to adjust the lessons somewhat to properly address the needs of the school or the community.

### **Adjustments**

Routine adjustments will need to be made each year to update statistics used in the lessons, or incidents referred to, and even the scenarios used.

### **Evaluation**

As a yearly evaluation of the program is conducted, certain changes may be indicated by the results. All changes should be carefully thought out and submitted through the school system for their approval.

## Scheduling

Scheduling should begin during the summer months. The supervisor of the instructors begins this process by obtaining a projected list of classes for the coming school year from the Department of Education. This list should provide the supervisor with the number of classes for each school at each grade level and the number of special education, cooperative education, and "gifted and talented" classes within each school.

The supervisor must also obtain a list of required testing dates for the upcoming school year and a list of school holidays. A determination of other school dates which will not be available for the officer to teach is also needed. Once these lists are accumulated, the supervisor begins assigning specific schools to each officer.

The officer then prepares a tentative schedule for each school based on the number of classes that can be conducted per day. It is important to realize that scheduling too many classes in a day may cause many problems later if a teaching day is cancelled. It is also noteworthy that the instructor will be talking virtually the entire time in the classroom, which allows for little time to give his/her voice a rest. School teachers that teach five, and sometimes six, classes a day have the benefit of giving the students class work or quizzes and tests which give them an occasional break. Such is not the case in this type of lesson. Generally, *four lessons per day* is appropriate for this program.

Once the officers have prepared their tentative schedules, they visit each assigned school to confirm the dates with the assistant principals or department chairpersons. Any necessary adjustments are made at that time. Each officer then submits the verified schedule of dates to the supervisor. It is important to note that only the dates are confirmed at this time, not the actual schedules of classes. (That phase of scheduling will not be possible until the new school year begins, since the department chairpersons and assistant principals must be able to discuss the final scheduling with the teachers involved.)

The supervisor then submits the list of tentative dates for each school to the Department of Education. Upon approval from the Department of Education, the assistant principals and department chairpersons for each school are formally notified by the school administration.

Once the school year begins, the officers then visit their schools to confirm the final schedule with the appropriate individuals (assistant principals or department chairpersons). This schedule includes the day, date, period number, times, room number, and teacher's name. The officer also attempts to learn which classes are gifted and talented, special education, or cooperative education, and which contain behavioral problem students.

The officer should schedule schools in the order in which they are to be completed. Schedules for the schools should be completed by the middle of the month previous to its assigned dates. It is recognized that this may not be possible for the first school scheduled for the officer at the beginning of the school year.

Final scheduling should also take into consideration those months that may be traditional winter weather months. The officer should arrange his/her schedule so that any extra teaching dates will fall during those bad weather months. This will allow for some flexibility should the schools be forced to close due to inclement weather and rescheduling becomes necessary.

The supervisor must be provided with a copy of finalized schedules promptly. This is necessary to make notifications in case of illness or to make arrangements for another officer to handle the assigned classes for any reason.

## CHAPTER THREE

# PROGRAM EVALUATION

### Methodology

A comprehensive three-year evaluation of the Baltimore County Police Department's Handgun Violence Reduction Program (HVRP) was conducted for the 1990/91 (Year I), 1991/92 (Year II), and 1992/93 (Year III) school years. The program evaluation combined the results of a detailed student survey, a school teacher evaluation, and Police Department instructor input over the three years of the study. Results were used to assess the overall effectiveness of the program and to indicate areas needing improvement.

#### *Student Surveys*

Student participant surveys were developed for the seventh and ninth grade programs in Year I. Minor changes were made in the surveys for Year II and again for Year III. The seventh grade instrument (see Appendix B) contains 18 multiple choice questions, including three identifier items, three exposure items, two attitude items, six knowledge items, and four behavioral projection items. The ninth grade instrument (see Appendix C) contains 17 items, including three identifier items, three exposure items, two attitude items, six knowledge items, and three behavioral projection items. One exposure question was eliminated after Year I, and the time frame was expanded from three months to one year. Due to revisions in the lesson plans, several knowledge questions were reworded or replaced. Other minor grammatical changes were made for clarity and ease of understanding.

Identifier questions were used to identify respondents without compromising confidentiality. Participants were asked to provide only their birth month, final two digits of their telephone number, and gender. Identification of respondents was made through

this information and school and class identifiers. No names or other identifying information was requested; anonymity was guaranteed.

Exposure items were designed to measure respondents' level of exposure to guns prior to and following HVRP. Questions involving gun usage, seeing a gun, and avoidance of gun-involved situations were asked of students in both grade levels. Analysis of these items reveals correlations between program effects and prior exposure to guns (i.e., does the program have a different effect on those who are already familiar with guns?). Also, differences in individual exposure scores over time reflect direct program effects (i.e., the program may cause those familiar with guns to reduce or eliminate their contact with guns).

Two attitude questions were included in both student surveys, which were designed to measure respondents' attitudes about guns and violence. Differences over time reflect attitude change as a program effect (i.e., attitudes against violence and guns might increase after program participation).

Knowledge items tested participants' knowledge of factual information presented in HVRP. Changes in individual knowledge scores over time indicate whether the program content increased participants' knowledge and for how long.

Behavioral Projection items asked respondents to predict how they might react to certain situations. Responses were expected to suggest whether program participation will affect future behavior.

The student surveys were administered prior to program participation (pretest), immediately upon completion of the program (posttest), and three to four months following participation (follow-up test). Results of the pretest provided insight into the level of seventh and ninth graders' gun awareness prior to HVRP. Posttest results, when compared to the pretest, demonstrated the amount of information gained as a result of the program. Whether immediate understanding led to short-term retention was measured by the results of the follow-up test (i.e., whether the effects of the program lasted at least several months).

A representative sample of HVRP participants was selected from schools receiving the program for all three years between December and March. For Years II and III, three middle schools (seventh grade) and three high schools (ninth grade) were selected to participate in the research project based upon geographic location. Six middle schools and five high schools were involved in the Year I sample, but this number proved unmanageable. Since only one-half of the students in each of the eleven Year I schools were surveyed, *all* students in the six Year II and Year III schools were included to produce a similar sample size. However, due to unanticipated data collection problems in Year III, that year's sample was approximately one-half as large as the first two years.



Within each of the eleven selected schools for Year I, one-half of the sections (classes) were chosen to complete the surveys. One-half of the special education, general, and advanced curriculum classes were selected from seven of the eleven schools. In the other four schools, time restrictions dictated the class selection regardless of class type.<sup>1</sup> The reduction in the number of schools involved in Years II and III, and the subsequent inclusion of all students at those schools, eliminated the selection problems and proved much more manageable.

The total (three-year) seventh grade sample of 746 students was distributed as follows:

- 72 (10%) Special Education
  - 560 (75%) General Curriculum (i.e., Basic and Standard classes)
  - 114 (15%) Advanced Curriculum (i.e., Gifted and Talented, Academically Talented, and Honors classes)
- 
- 560 completed pretest
  - 581 completed posttest
  - 551 completed follow-up test
  - 470 completed pretest and posttest
  - 428 completed pretest and follow-up test
  - 438 completed posttest and follow-up test

The ninth grade sample consisted of 930 students, distributed as follows:

- 45 (5%) Special education (including Cooperative Education classes)
  - 643 (69%) General Curriculum (i.e., Basic and Standard classes)
  - 242 (26%) Advanced Curriculum (i.e., Gifted and Talented, Academically Talented, and Honors classes)
- 
- 716 completed pretest
  - 686 completed posttest
  - 677 completed follow-up test
  - 576 completed pretest and posttest
  - 518 completed pretest and follow-up test
  - 502 completed posttest and follow-up test

For each class participating in the study, a Teacher Cover Sheet (see Appendix D) and an Instructor Cover Sheet (see Appendix E) were completed. Teacher Cover Sheets, completed by the school teacher, captured information regarding class size,

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<sup>1</sup> To preserve a proper geographic distribution while allowing sufficient time to complete the follow-up test by the end of the school year, the choice of classes available for testing was limited in some schools. As a result, general classes are slightly underrepresented in the Year I sample.

number of students completing the survey, and whether classes were combined for the HVRP presentation. Also, teachers were asked to report any unusual incidents (e.g., fire drill) or external factors (e.g., gun-related crime in area which may have heightened awareness) which may have affected survey responses. The Instructor Cover Sheet asked police officers presenting the program to report which scenarios were used, deviations from the lesson plan, unusual incidents, and external factors.

Results from the student surveys and accompanying cover sheets were analyzed by:

- Gender
- Class type (i.e., special education, general, advanced curricula)
- Prior exposure to guns

Bivariate analyses (e.g., whether program effects differed for students in special education, general, and advanced classes) were conducted, and correlations were tested for statistical significance.

Points were awarded for each correct (Knowledge, Behavioral Projection), affirmative (Exposure), or positive (Attitude) response on the student survey. Total scores for each type of question were computed for each respondent to yield Exposure, Attitude, Knowledge, and Behavioral Projection scales. Average total scores for each scale on the pretest, posttest, and follow-up test were analyzed to provide a composite view of program effects. For a more accurate examination of the effects of participation, individual-based analyses were conducted. Changes in scores for individual respondents who completed at least two surveys (i.e., pretest and posttest, pretest and follow-up test, posttest and follow-up test) provided a clear picture of knowledge gain or attitude change. Finally, results of a detailed question by question analysis (not included in this report) served as a validity test for the survey instruments and provided detailed feedback on specific program material.

### *Teacher Evaluations*

Teacher evaluation questionnaires (see Appendix F) were designed to solicit feedback from the school teachers participating in HVRP. The questionnaire contains questions regarding training, the need for a program, instructor performance, and program appropriateness. It also includes an overall program rating, on a scale from one to ten.

Teacher evaluations were distributed to school teachers that participated in the HVRP evaluation at the time HVRP was offered. A total of 99 and 71 teacher evaluations were completed in the three years for the seventh grade and the ninth grade programs, respectively.

Responses to the questions provided valuable input from "experts" regarding the educational value of HVRP. Teacher satisfaction with HVRP should serve as a clear indicator of program success. Conversely, constructive criticism of the program should provide concrete recommendations for improvement.

#### *Instructor Input*

An evaluation of HVRP would be incomplete without collecting the impressions of Police Department instructors. Those conducting presentations are in an excellent position to gauge the effectiveness of their message.

Accordingly, all HVRP instructors were asked to submit personal feedback on the program. Lists of what worked and what did not and recommendations for improvement lent substantial direction for planning HVRP for following school years. In conjunction with the teacher evaluations and student surveys, the HVRP planning staff now possesses substantive, empirical information upon which to improve HVRP.

## Results

### *Student Surveys*

All completed surveys were scored on four scales (i.e., Exposure, Attitude, Behavioral Projection, and Knowledge). Scores on the Exposure scale increase as contact with guns and gun-related situations increases. High scores on the Attitude scale reflect *positive* attitudes against gun misuse and violence. A high score on the Behavioral Projection scale reflects choosing the *most prudent* course of action for scenarios presented. The Knowledge scale is a measure of the number of correct responses on the content questions.

Scores on each scale were analyzed at the aggregate level and are represented below as a range from 1 to 100. Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, median, standard deviation) were produced for all pretests, posttests, and follow-up tests completed. The average score (across all three years) on each scale for each test in the seventh grade program is presented below:

|                          | PRETEST | POSTTEST | FOLLOW-UP TEST |
|--------------------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| Exposure                 | 30.7    | 30.1     | 30.8           |
| Attitude                 | 63.8    | 68.0     | 67.6           |
| Behavioral<br>Projection | 56.8    | 73.5     | 66.5           |
| Knowledge                | 27.8    | 56.4     | 47.5           |

The ninth grade program produced the following results:

|                          | PRETEST | POSTTEST | FOLLOW-UP TEST |
|--------------------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| Exposure                 | 35.1    | 37.3     | 37.4           |
| Attitude                 | 68.6    | 71.9     | 70.9           |
| Behavioral<br>Projection | 75.4    | 80.2     | 76.4           |
| Knowledge                | 34.4    | 63.0     | 53.5           |

Viewed graphically (see Charts #1, 2), the expected pattern of results is generally apparent in both grades when the results of the three years are combined. Except for the Exposure scale, all scores increased noticeably after participating in the program (posttest) and decreased somewhat in the three to four month period following HVRP

(follow-up test). However, scores remained well above results prior to the program (pretest) in both grades on the Attitude, Behavioral Projection, and Knowledge scales.

Clearly, HVRP resulted in an immediate positive attitude change and knowledge gain. Also, participants selected more prudent options when predicting future behavior immediately after the program. Despite the expected drop-off after three to four months, program effects were still evident. **This clearly demonstrates at least a short-term impact from participation in HVRP.**

Exposure scores exhibited a different pattern and varied in the two grade levels. The seventh grade average decreased by the posttest and increased by the follow-up test to a level slightly higher than the pretest. For ninth graders, Exposure scores increased between the pretest and posttest and continued to increase by the time of the follow-up test.

To produce a more accurate view of the effects on participants, an individual-based analysis was completed. Instead of comparing the scores of everyone taking each test, the change in individual's scores from one test to another was examined. The above figures include surveys completed by participants that may have only taken one of the tests. It compares all of the pretests with all of the posttests and follow-up tests. The individual-based analysis *below* focused only on individual participants' actual changes in scores. For those who completed more than one survey, differences were computed on each scale and are represented below as percentage increases/decreases. The seventh grade program produced the following average change scores across the three-year study period:

|                          | PRETEST TO<br>POSTTEST | POSTTEST TO<br>FOLLOW-UP TEST | PRETEST TO<br>FOLLOW-UP TEST |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Exposure                 | +0.8%                  | +6.3%                         | +5.4%                        |
| Attitude                 | +8.5%**                | -0.5%                         | +7.8%**                      |
| Behavioral<br>Projection | +32.4%****             | -9.2%****                     | +17.3%****                   |
| Knowledge                | +105.7%****            | -14.2%****                    | +75.8%****                   |

\* Significance level = 95% (i.e., you can be 95% confident that the results were due to program effects; similar results could happen purely by chance less than 5% of the time) ( $p < .05$ )

\*\* Significance level = 99% ( $p < .01$ )

\*\*\* Significance level = 99.5% ( $p < .005$ )

\*\*\*\* Significance level = 99.9% ( $p < .001$ )

The results from the ninth grade program follow:

|                          | PRETEST TO<br>POSTTEST | POSTTEST TO<br>FOLLOW-UP TEST | PRETEST TO<br>FOLLOW-UP TEST |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Exposure                 | +4.1%                  | +7.1%*                        | +5.5%                        |
| Attitude                 | +7.8%**                | -0.2%                         | +5.3%**                      |
| Behavioral<br>Projection | +7.3%**                | -2.7%*                        | +5.2%**                      |
| Knowledge                | +83.7%****             | -12.7%****                    | +61.6%****                   |

The pattern observed when aggregate scores were examined was generally reproduced by this individual change score analysis (see Charts #3, 4). Tests of the significance of these results (i.e., T-tests) revealed *very strong* program effects.

For the three years of study, positive attitude change in both grade levels was clearly demonstrated. Attitude scores increased considerably from pretest to posttest (9% for seventh grade, 8% for ninth grade). Despite minor decreases between the posttest and follow-up test, significant improvement in attitudes was still apparent in both grade levels several months after program participation. *HVRP participation is linked directly to a short-term (three to four months) positive change in attitudes about guns and violence.*

Highly significant changes were observed on the Behavioral Projection (32% increase for seventh grade, 7% for ninth grade) and Knowledge (106% increase for seventh grade, 84% for ninth grade) scales from pretest to posttest for both grades. These effects remained extremely strong despite the expected decreases from posttest to follow-up test. *Participation in HVRP clearly resulted in short-term (three to four months) retention of information and improved choices for future behavior.*

A moderately significant increase in Exposure scores from the posttest to the follow-up test was noted for the ninth grade sample. Other than that, exposure scores tended to increase slightly, but *not* significantly, as seventh and ninth graders got older.

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- \* Significance level = 95% (i.e., you can be 95% confident that the results were due to program effects; similar results could happen purely by chance less than 5% of the time) ( $p < .05$ )
  - \*\* Significance level = 99% ( $p < .01$ )
  - \*\*\* Significance level = 99.5% ( $p < .005$ )
  - \*\*\*\* Significance level = 99.9% ( $p < .001$ )

To gain further insight into program effects, separate bivariate analyses were conducted. Raw scores (aggregate) and change scores (individual) on the four scales were examined by gender, class type, and prior exposure to guns. Some interesting findings emerged. **Only statistically significant results are presented below.**

### Gender

Examination of the raw scores (aggregate) with respect to gender revealed that, for both grade levels, females scored significantly lower on the Exposure scale for all three tests (see Charts #5, 6). Also, females in both grades had higher Attitude and Behavioral Projection scores on all tests (see Charts #7, 8, 9, 10). Interestingly, there was no correlation observed between gender and Knowledge scores on the aggregate level for either grade.

Gender effects were not evident when individual change scores were analyzed with one notable exception. No correlations were found for change scores on the Exposure, Attitude, or Behavioral Projection scales for both grade levels. In other words, although females' Attitude and Behavioral Projection scores were higher than males' scores changed at the same rate as boys during the study. The same was *not* true for Knowledge scores. Even though Knowledge scores were *not* significantly higher for females overall, girls in both grades tended to increase their Knowledge scores more than boys (112% to 99% in seventh grade, 97% to 74% in ninth grade) from the pretest to the posttest. However, the dropoff in knowledge gain between the posttest and follow-up test was *greater* for girls, so the gender differences between Knowledge change scores from pretest to follow-up test were *not* significant (see Charts #11, 12). In other words, girls picked up more information from HVRP than boys, but they failed to retain most of that extra knowledge three months later.

### Class Type

Analyzing raw scores by class type (i.e., special education, general, and advanced curricula) produced some interesting results. For seventh grade participants, advanced curriculum students scored significantly lower on the Exposure scale on the pretest and posttest, but not the follow-up test. Seventh grade special education students scored significantly higher on the Exposure scale than other students for the pretest, but not the posttest or follow-up test (see Chart #13). By the time of the follow-up test, all seventh graders had virtually the same level of exposure to guns, regardless of class type.

Class type was not correlated with seventh grade Knowledge scores on the pretest. However, special education pupils scored very low on the posttest and follow-up test compared to other students (see Chart #14). In other words, all seventh graders started with the same level of gun awareness, but special education students did not learn as much as others from HVRP.

In the ninth grade sample, advanced curriculum students had very low Exposure scores (see Chart #15), very high Attitude scores (see Chart #16), and very high

Behavioral Projection scores (see Chart #17) on all three tests. Also, very high Knowledge scores were recorded by advanced curriculum students, and low scores were produced by special education students on the posttest and follow-up test, but not the pretest (see Chart #18). As in the seventh grade sample, all ninth graders began with a similar level of knowledge about guns, but special education pupils seemed to learn the least from HVRP.

When individual change scores were analyzed by class type, results were mixed, but generally supported these conclusions. Seventh grade general curriculum pupils demonstrated significantly higher increases in Behavioral Projection scores (34% increase, compared to 14% and 21% for special education and advanced students, respectively) from the pretest to posttest. But after greater decreases from posttest to follow-up test, general curriculum students had only slightly, and *not* significantly, higher change scores from pretest to follow-up test (see Chart #19).

Seventh graders in a general curriculum also showed significantly greater increases in Knowledge scores (121% increase, compared to 80% and 73% for special education and advanced students, respectively) from the pretest to the posttest. Unlike Behavioral Projection change scores, these results were maintained for the change in Knowledge scores from pretest to follow-up test (86% for general curriculum students, compared to 36% and 53% for special education and advanced students respectively) (see Chart #20). Clearly, special education seventh graders gained and retained the least, and general curriculum students the most, HVRP information.

In ninth grade, the special education students again had much smaller change scores on the Knowledge scale from pretest to posttest and pretest to follow-up test. Special education students gained the least information from HVRP among ninth graders, as well, and lost more of the knowledge gained by the time of the follow-up test than other students. For the ninth grade sample, the advanced curriculum group gained and retained the most HVRP information (see Chart #21).

### Exposure

Raw scores and change scores were also analyzed by pretest Exposure scores to determine if prior exposure influenced program effects. In both grades, participants with low Exposure scores scored highly on the Attitude scale on all three tests (see Charts #22, 23). In other words, students who lacked prior exposure to guns possessed more positive attitudes regarding gun safety and violence.

Seventh graders with low Exposure scores had higher Behavioral Projection scores on all three tests (see Chart #24). For these students, low exposure to guns was linked to more prudent choices regarding gun safety.

The only correlation found between prior Exposure and Knowledge scores was on the pretest for ninth graders. Those with little exposure to guns had the least *prior*



knowledge about guns and gun safety. Ninth graders with more exposure seemed to possess the most information prior to HVRP (see Chart #25).

However, ninth grade students with low Exposure scores demonstrated substantially greater increases in their Knowledge scores from the pretest to posttest and pretest to follow-up test (see Chart #26). Participants with little exposure tended to gain and retain much more program content. Ninth graders with little prior exposure to guns entered the program with less knowledge but became at least as informed as students with more prior exposure (and they retained that knowledge for at least several months).

### *Teacher Evaluations*

Simple descriptive statistics were computed for the 99 seventh grade teacher evaluations and 71 ninth grade evaluations completed during the three years of HVRP. In addition, written comments were categorized to provide input for program improvement.

The following results were produced by this analysis:

- Nearly all seventh grade teachers (97%) and ninth grade teachers (99%) reported a need for a school handgun safety program.
- 87% of those that responded felt that the seventh grade HVRP satisfied that need and 71% felt that way about the ninth grade program.
- Less than one-half (41%) of the teachers participated in a Police Department training session for seventh grade teachers.
- Of those participants, two-thirds (67%) felt the training provided sufficient explanation of the program.
- 70% of ninth grade teachers were satisfied with the level of preparatory information provided by the Police Department.
- An overwhelming majority (90% of seventh grade teachers and 95% of ninth grade teachers) thought the police officer's presentation to their students was clear and concise.
- Over four-fifths (82%) of respondents felt that the seventh grade program was properly placed at that level.
- Of those teachers with recommendations for other grade levels for the seventh grade program, 92% felt the program should be presented earlier (from fourth to sixth grade).

- 88% of ninth grade teachers felt that their program was properly placed at that level.
- Of the ninth grade teachers with recommendations for other grades, ten suggested earlier (sixth to eighth) and one suggested 12th grade.
- On the overall rating of the seventh grade program, the average was a 7.8 on a scale of one to ten. Over three-quarters (77%) gave the program a rating of seven or higher. Less than 10% rated the seventh grade program below five.
- The average on the overall rating of the ninth grade program was 7.9. A large majority (84%) gave the program a rating of seven or higher. Only 5% rated the ninth grade program below five.

Careful review of the comments provided by the seventh grade teachers produced the following recommendations (the number of similar comments in each year is presented in parentheses following the comment):

- Program should be expanded/lengthened or more detailed information should be presented (7 in Year I, 6 in Year II, 6 in Year III).
- Instructors should be provided more educational training regarding presenting information to children (5 in Year I, 1 in Year II, 3 in Year III).
- More "hands-on" materials should be used or approach should be more "nuts and bolts" (2 in Year I, 3 in Year II, 3 in Year III).
- Program should be ongoing, beginning at the elementary school level (4 in Year I, 1 in Year II, 2 in Year III).
- Drop the poster contest (2 in Year I, was dropped in Year II ).
- Expand the program to include family and community (1 in Year I, 1 in Year II).
- Program should more actively discourage gun ownership, not just promote safety (1 in Year I).
- Provisions should be made to hold students accountable for the information presented (1 in Year I).
- Teachers should be updated on program changes (1 in Year II).
- Program should be presented on consecutive days (1 in Year II).

Recommendations for improving the ninth grade program included:

- Program should be expanded/lengthened or time must be allotted for "Q and A" (22 in Year I, was expanded in Year II but 6 felt it should be expanded further, 5 in Year III).
- Materials for teachers should be updated and distributed each year or more school teacher preparation is needed (6 in Year I, 3 in Year II, 3 in Year III).
- Topic should be introduced earlier than ninth grade (4 in Year I, 4 in Year II, 3 in Year III).
- Administrator lesson was not conducted or ineffective (7 in Year I, eliminated in Year II).
- More visual aids, "hands-on" materials should be used for reinforcement (3 in Year I, 2 in Year II, 1 in Year III).
- The evaluation forms should be distributed at the time of the program, not the end of the school year (4 in Year I, was done in Year II).
- Greater emphasis on how to prevent becoming a victim (3 in Year II, 1 in Year III).
- A follow-up program should be offered in grade 12 (2 in Year I).
- Greater emphasis on conflict resolution (2 in Year II).
- Individual groups should be used instead of combining some classes (1 in Year I).
- Incorporate field trips into program (1 in Year I).
- When presenting opinions, as opposed to factual information, it should be made clear that it is the officer's personal opinion (1 in Year II).
- Greater emphasis on citizenship rights and responsibilities (1 in Year II).

### *Instructor Input*

Each police officer who served as an HVRP instructor in each year was asked to document their concerns, feelings, impressions, and recommendations for improvement. The following comments were obtained:

- Structure of lesson plan allows instructors to interject current events (Year I).

- Biggest problem with ninth grade program is the lack of time -- program should be extended to two officer sessions (Year I, accomplished in Year II).
- Scheduling created some problems -- most schools wanted the program at the beginning of the school year, three consecutive days is difficult for teachers to sacrifice (Year I, problems reduced in Year II due to increasing familiarity with routine by school administrators).
- Many schools did not conduct a Day Three presentation by school administrators (Year I, eliminated in Year II).
- The seventh grade lesson plan seemed effective for "gifted and talented" students, but it seemed too sophisticated for the average seventh grader or special education student (Year I).
- Responsibility for gun safety in the home was misplaced on the students originally. (Revisions already made appropriately redirected the responsibility to parents.) (Year I).
- The role-play on Day Two of the seventh grade program does not work, is too disruptive, and too time-consuming (Year I, eliminated in Year II).
- Dividing classes into small groups to discuss scenarios in the seventh grade program is not effective (Year I, eliminated in Year II).
- Relevant current events from newspaper articles and police reports should be included (Year I, increased in Year II).
- The quality of the videos should be improved (Year I, revisions made for Year II).
- Delete poster contest (Year I, replaced with bumper sticker contest in Year II).
- Seventh grade program too long, should be reduced to two days (Year I, shortened in Year II).
- Both seventh and ninth grade programs are better with two-day lesson plan (Year II).
- Need to plan a one-day lesson avoiding gun accidents for fourth grade (Year II).
- Outside sources of relevant statistics are limited and less meaningful than local data (Year II).

- Need to revise and update video for the seventh grade program (3 in Year III).
- Should consider a video for the ninth grade program (Year III).
- Should try discussing the causes of crime instead of using the chart on the board in the ninth grade program (Year III).
- Replace discussion of how to purchase guns legally with how to purchase illegally and how to combat easy access of guns on the street in the ninth grade program (Year III).

## Conclusions and Implications

The results discussed above from the student surveys, teacher evaluations, and instructor input contain a number of implications for the two HVRP programs. Evaluation results are virtually useless unless efforts are made to address some of the weaknesses identified. Accordingly, the HVRP planning staff has closely examined the results and is in the process of redesigning HVRP where appropriate.

The following important conclusions can be drawn from the comprehensive program evaluation:

- Both the seventh and ninth grade programs were highly successful in increasing participants' knowledge of guns and violence. Results clearly and overwhelmingly demonstrated immediate understanding *and* short-term retention of the information presented in both years.
- Participants in both grades demonstrated significantly more thoughtful and informed decisions after completing the program when predicting their future behavior in this area.
- Both programs succeeded in immediate attitude change. Attitudinal change did not dissipate completely for either grade in the three to four months following participation, linking HVRP to a short-term positive change in attitudes about guns and violence.
- Neither program tended to affect participants' exposure to guns or gun-related situations. Generally, exposure to guns increased slightly, but *not* significantly, as students in the two samples got older.
- Although females generally scored higher than males on the attitude and behavioral projection measures, program effects (i.e., increasing knowledge, changing attitudes) were found to be equal for both genders. Although the scores were higher for girls, their scores changed at the same rate as boys throughout the study period.
- Although there were no significant differences in prior knowledge level between genders, girls increased their knowledge more than boys immediately after HVRP. However, females failed to retain that extra knowledge three months later, producing *no* significant program effect differences between girls and boys overall.
- Various differences in raw scores were found among class types (i.e., special education, general, and advanced curricula), and the results also demonstrated program effects (information *gain and retention*) by class type. Advanced curriculum ninth graders improved their knowledge more than those in other curricula. For seventh grade, it was the general

curriculum students who exhibited the most knowledge gain. Also, special education students experienced significantly less knowledge gain than either of the other class types in both grades.

- Less prior exposure to guns appeared to translate into more positive attitudes regarding gun safety and violence in both grades. Seventh graders with low exposure to guns demonstrated more prudent decision-making regarding gun safety. Also, ninth graders with little exposure had the least knowledge about guns *prior* to HVRP.
- In the ninth grade, those with little or no prior exposure to guns experienced greater knowledge gain from the program. It seems that ninth grade students with little personal experience with guns got the most benefit from HVRP -- they entered the program with the least knowledge but became at least as informed as other students and retained that level of knowledge for several months.
- School teachers were overwhelmingly supportive of HVRP, but greater interaction/training with the Police Department was requested.
- Numerous minor revisions (discussed below) were suggested by teachers and instructors to improve the programs.
- After the first year, teachers and instructors overwhelmingly recommended expanding the police officer portion of the ninth grade program, although survey results indicated equal levels of effectiveness for both programs. Once expanded in Year II, a greater positive impact was noted on attitude change, but knowledge gain/retention and behavioral projection results were not affected.
- The reduction of the seventh grade program by one lesson in Year II did not seem to reduce effectiveness. On the contrary, changes in attitude and behavioral projection were much more positive in subsequent years, and knowledge gain and retention remained extremely high.

These conclusions lead to specific implications for HVRP program development. The following implications should be addressed by the HVRP planning staff and used to improve the program:

- The basic structure and content of the programs should be continued due to the solid program effects demonstrated.
- The lesson plans should be rewritten to be more applicable to students at lower functioning levels.
- Some efforts should be made to better reach those students with prior exposure to guns.

- Additional training/preparation should be provided to police instructors and school teachers involved in HVRP.
- Program materials should be updated, visual aids should be improved and expanded, and more "hands-on" and current events materials should be used.

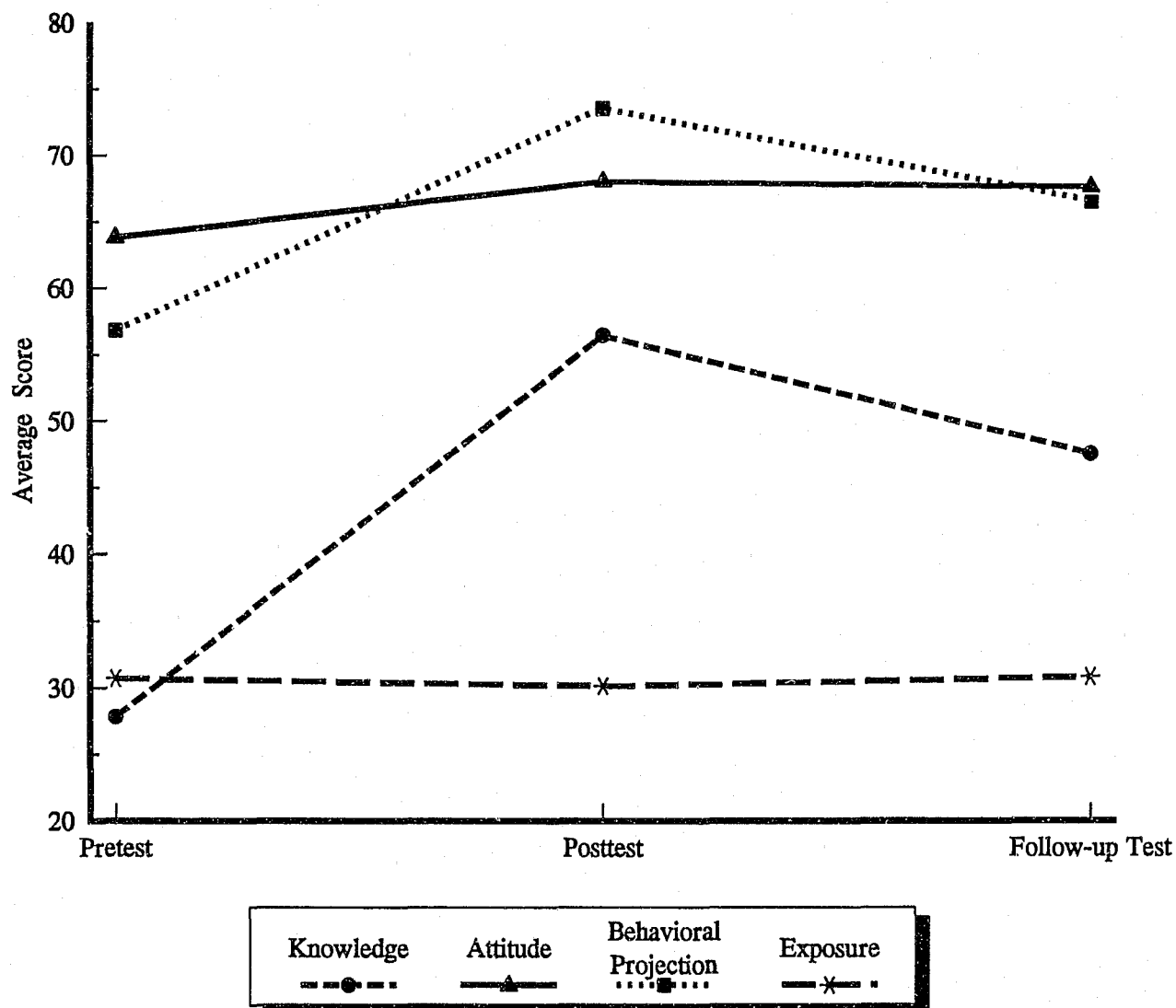
In conclusion, the comprehensive three-year program evaluation of HVRP provided some enlightening findings. Results strongly indicate that HVRP is a highly successful intervention with seventh and ninth graders. In addition to providing solid empirical evidence of the success of the Handgun Violence Reduction Program, the program evaluation led to numerous implications for improvement. The Baltimore County Police Department will take full advantage of these results to continue to develop the best possible handgun safety educational program.



# CHARTS

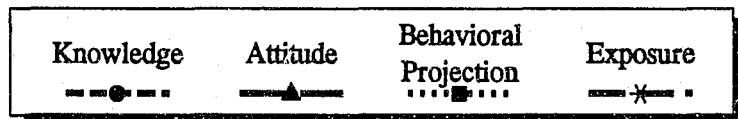
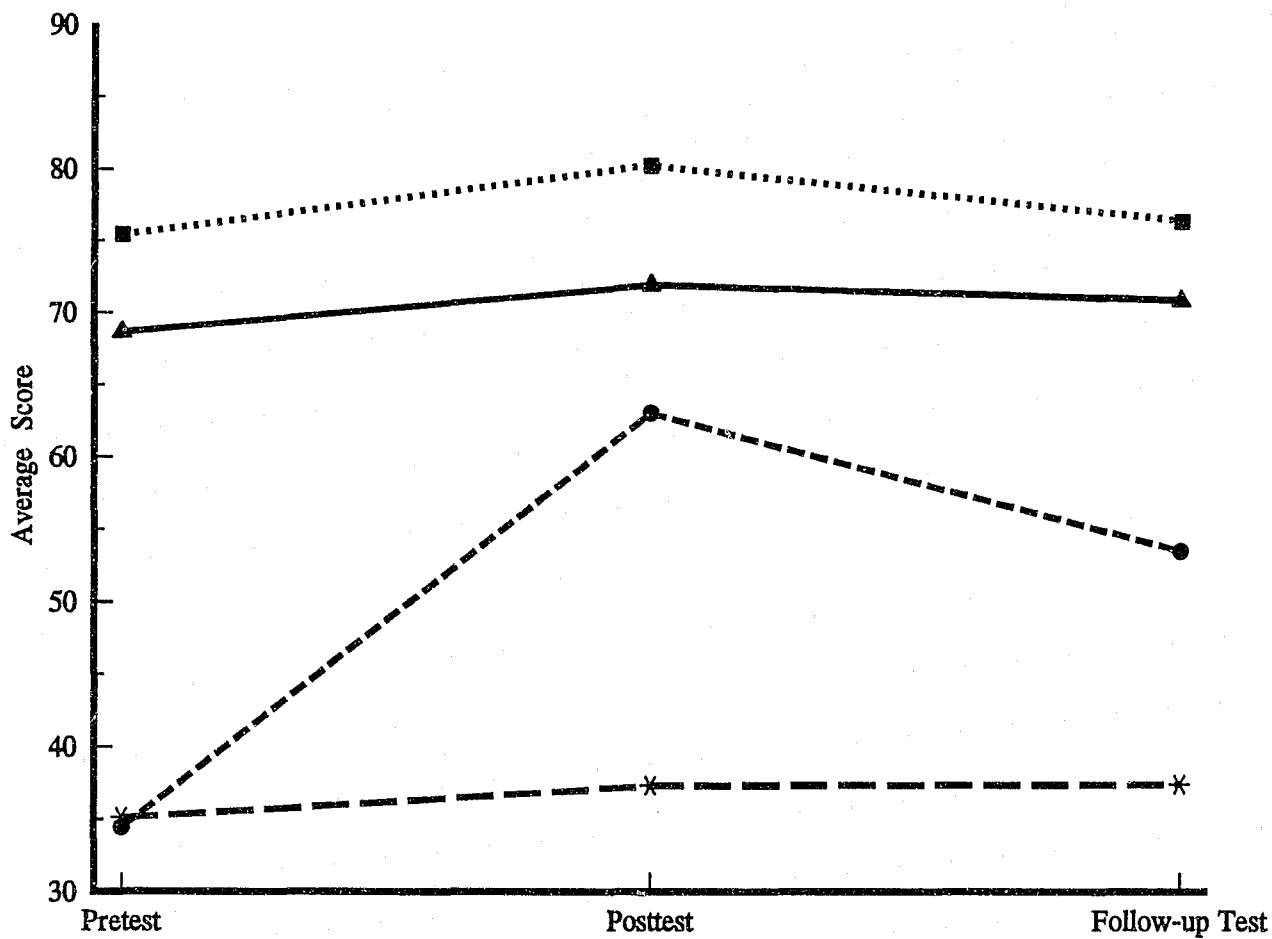
# **AVERAGE SCORES**

## *7th Grade*



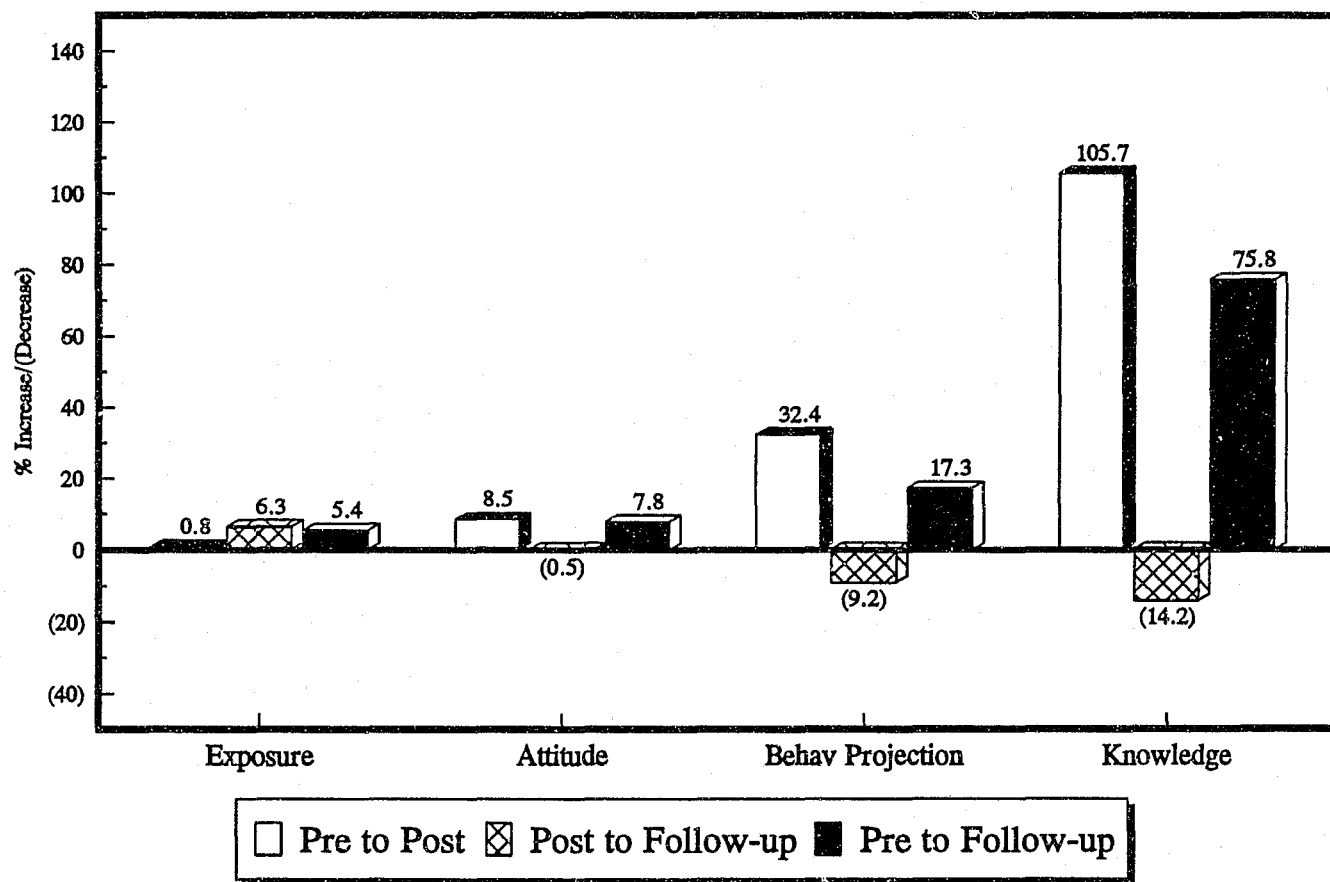
# AVERAGE SCORES

*9th Grade*



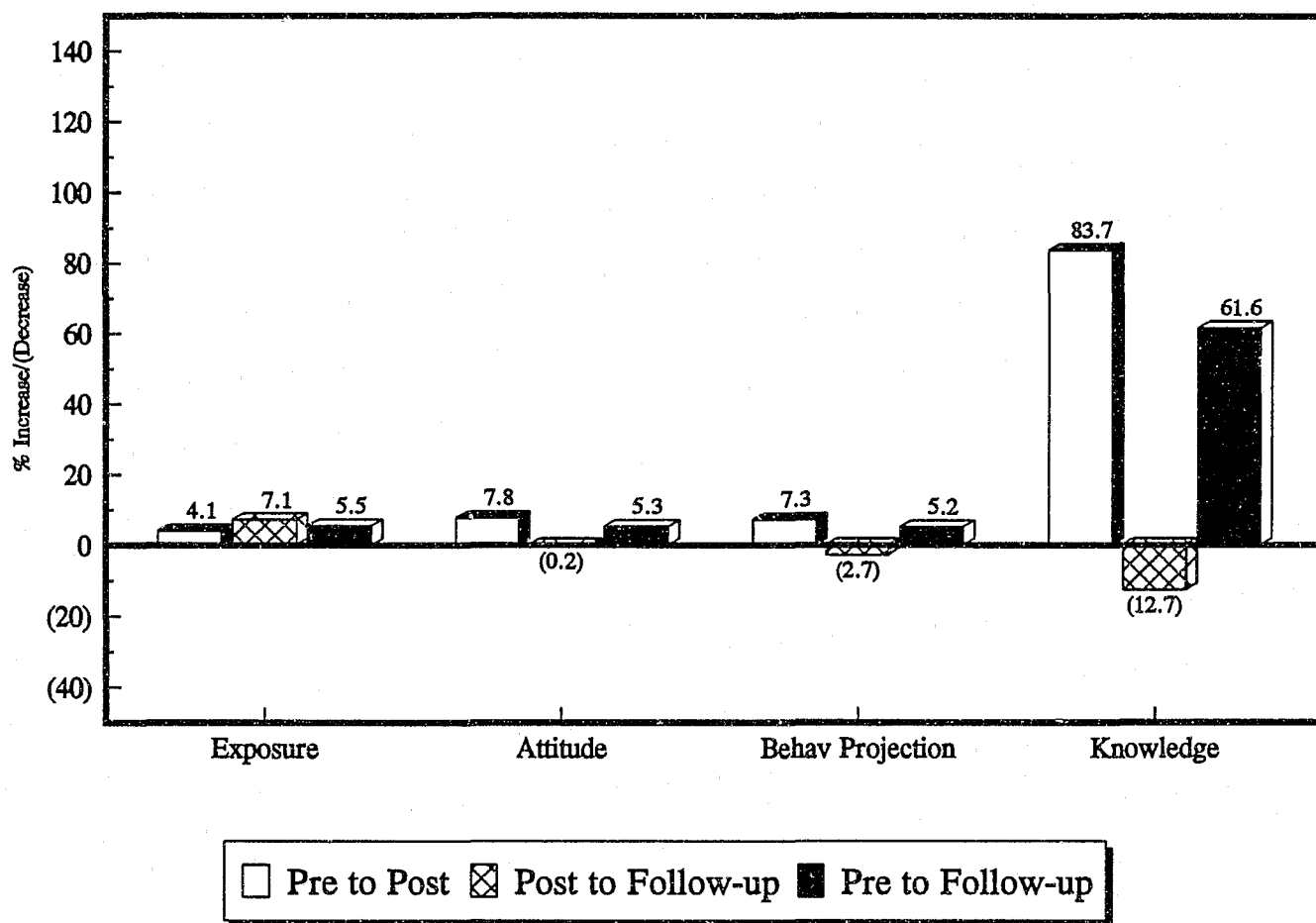
# PERCENTAGE INCREASE/DECREASE IN SCORES

*7th Grade*



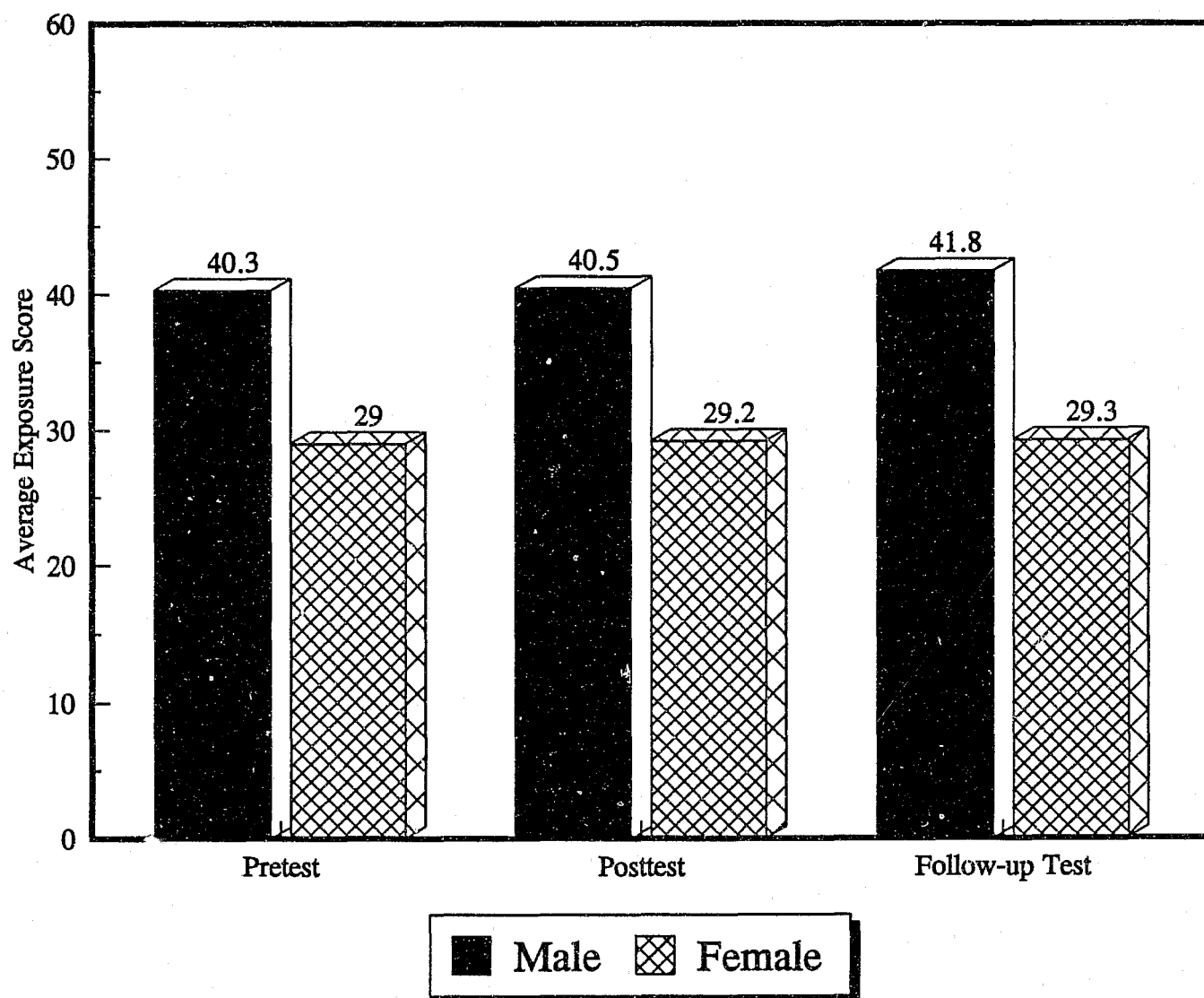
# PERCENTAGE INCREASE/DECREASE IN SCORES

*9th Grade*



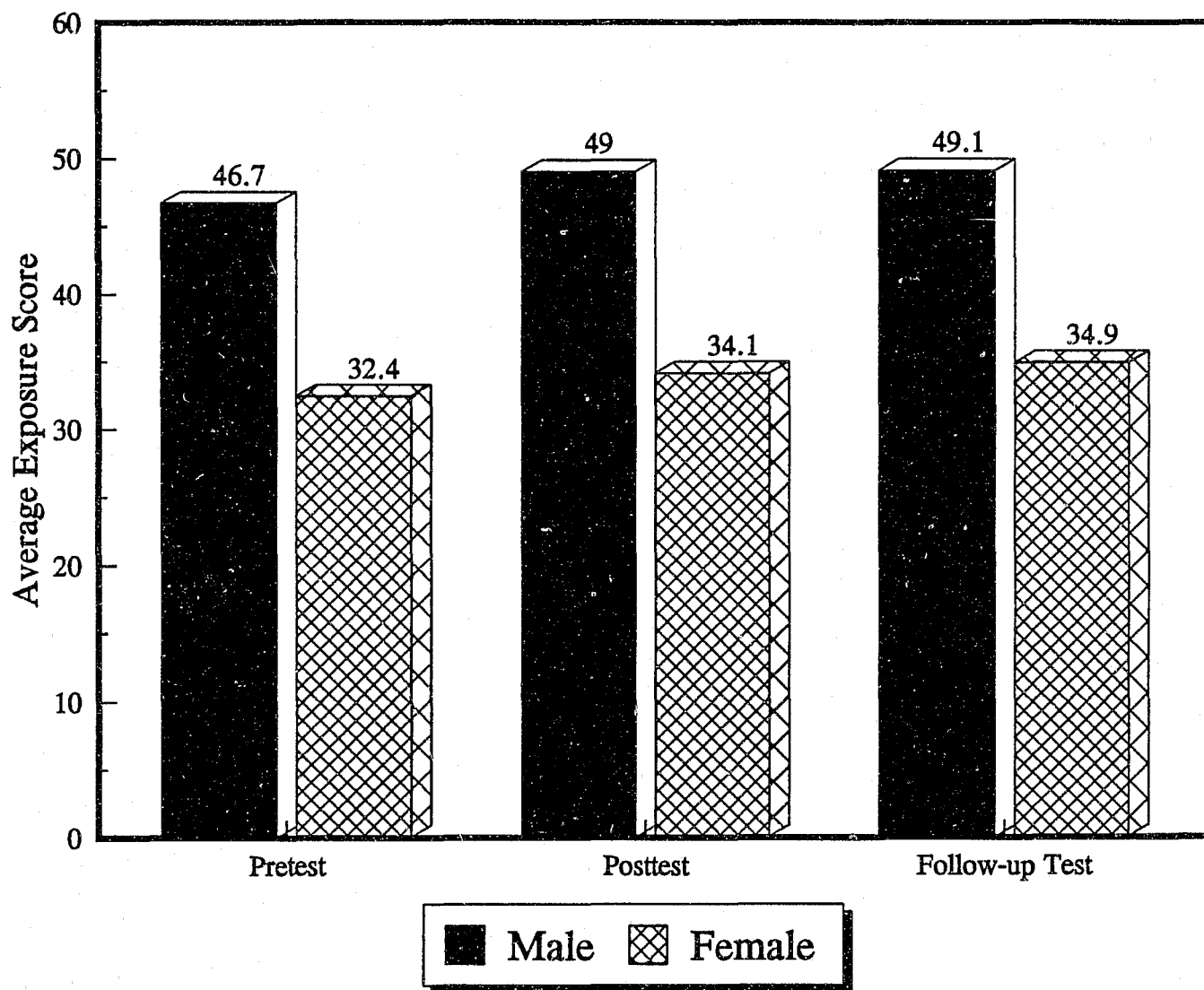
# **EXPOSURE SCORES BY GENDER**

*7th Grade*



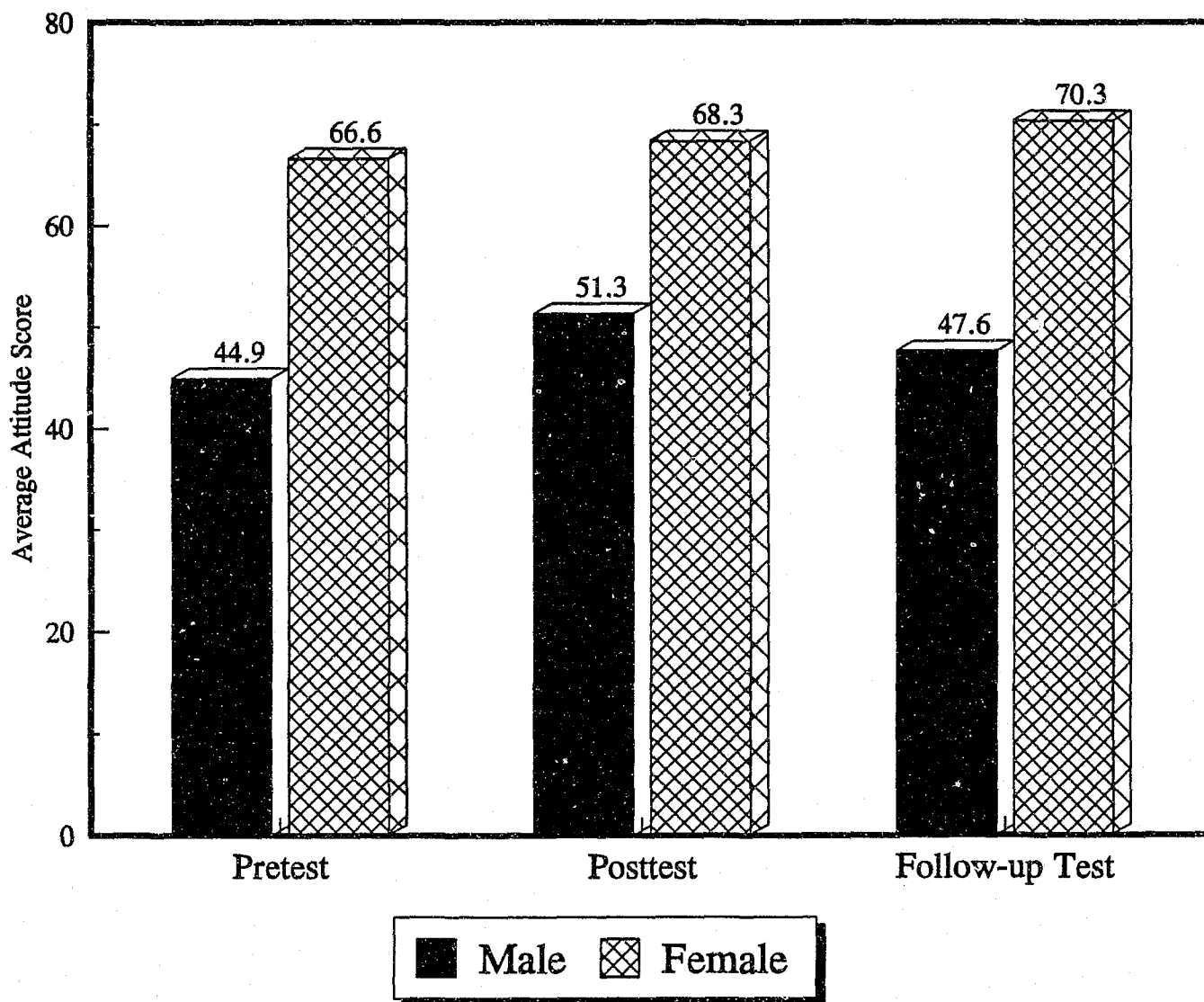
# EXPOSURE SCORES BY GENDER

*9th Grade*



# ATTITUDE SCORES BY GENDER

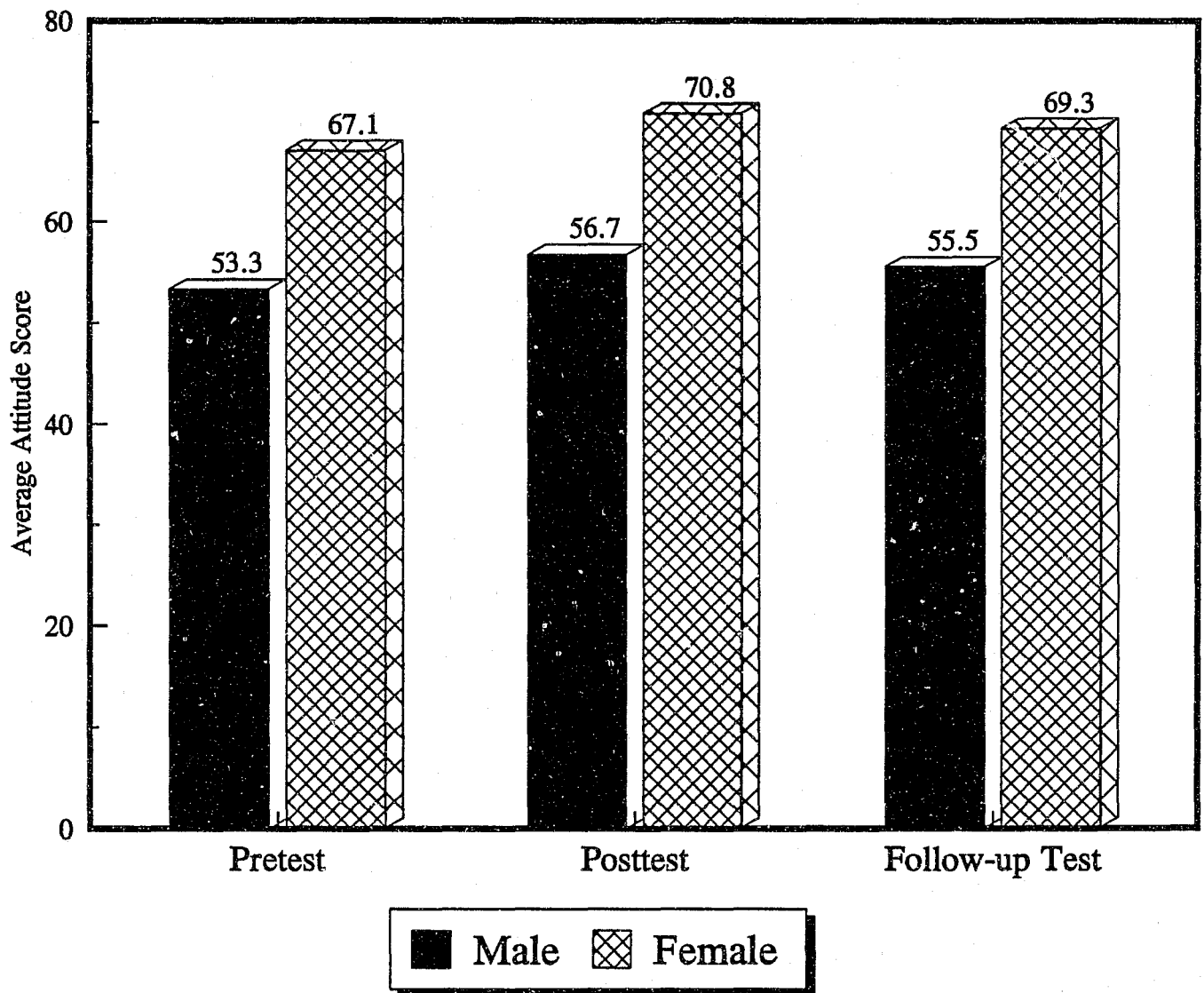
*7th Grade*





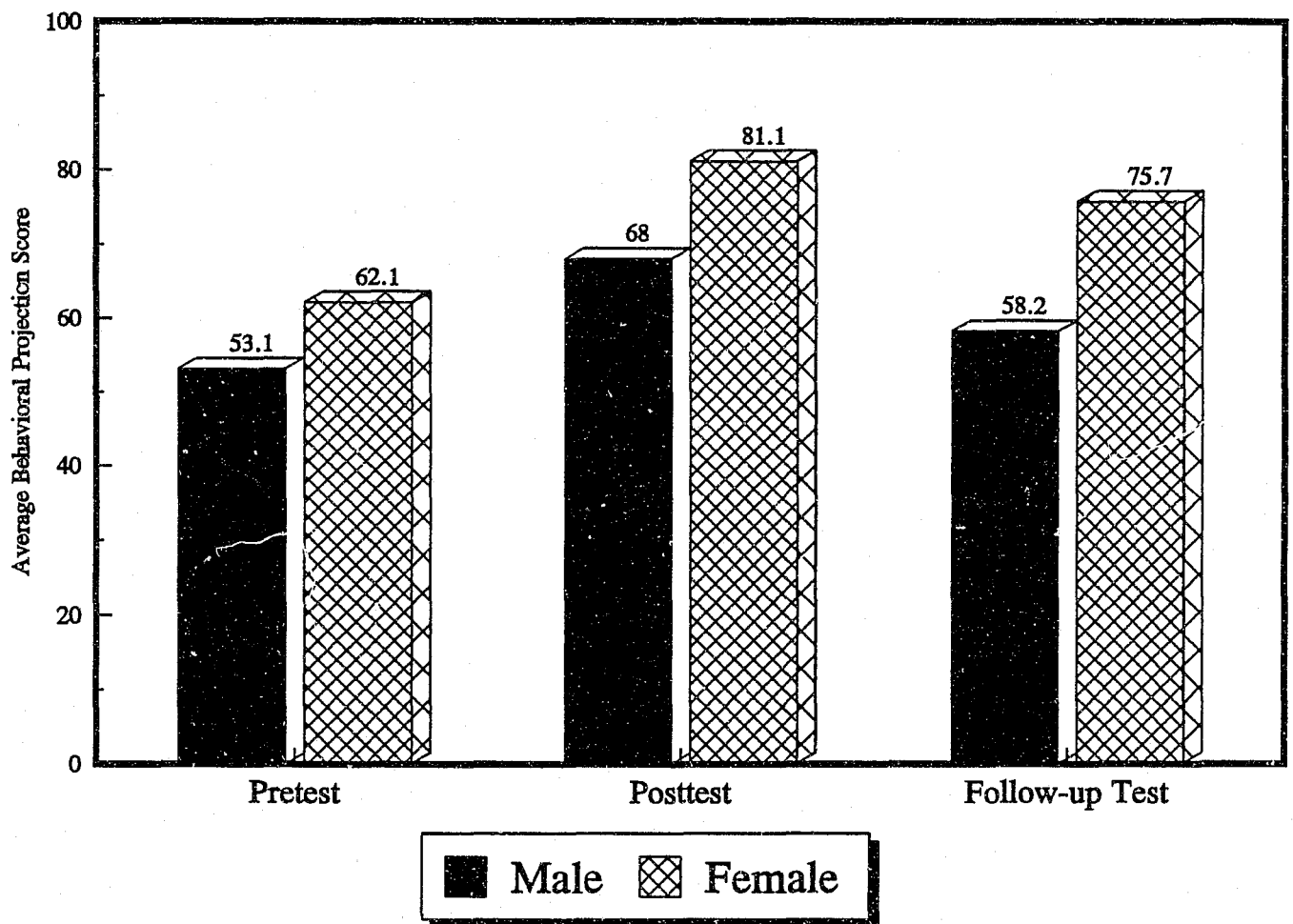
# ATTITUDE SCORES BY GENDER

*9th Grade*



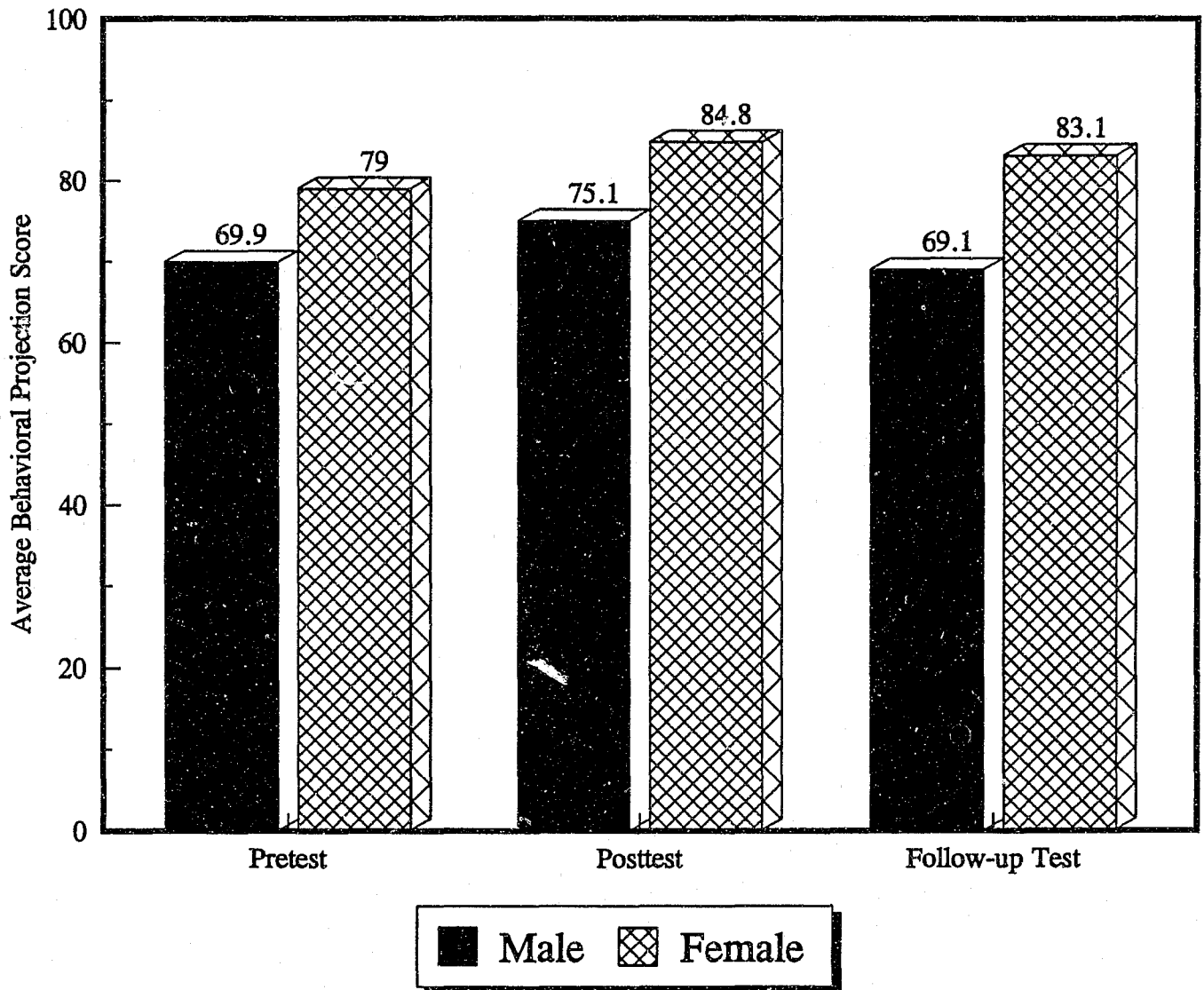
# **BEHAVIORAL PROJECTION SCORES BY GENDER**

*7th Grade*



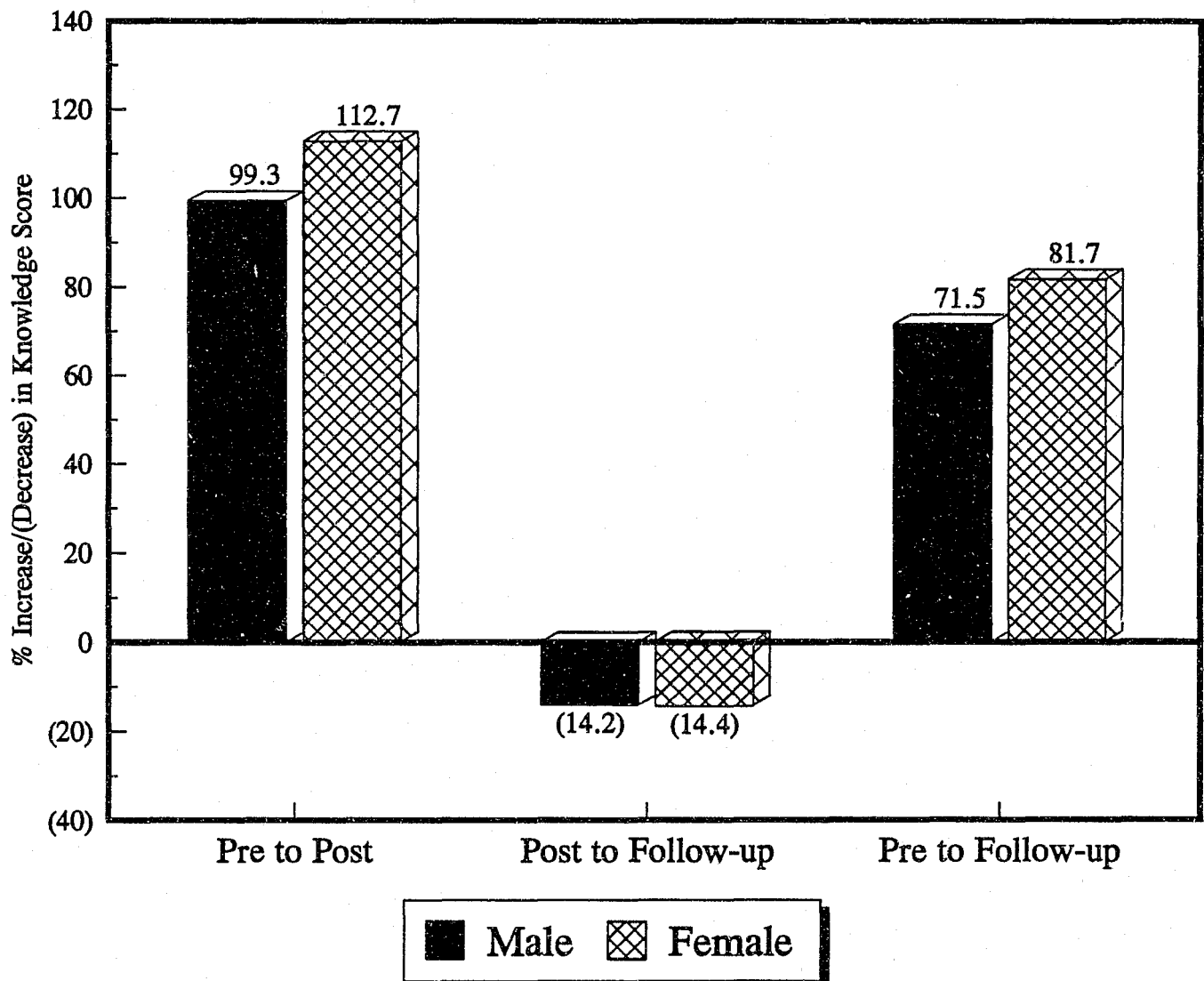
# **BEHAVIORAL PROJECTION SCORES BY GENDER**

*9th Grade*



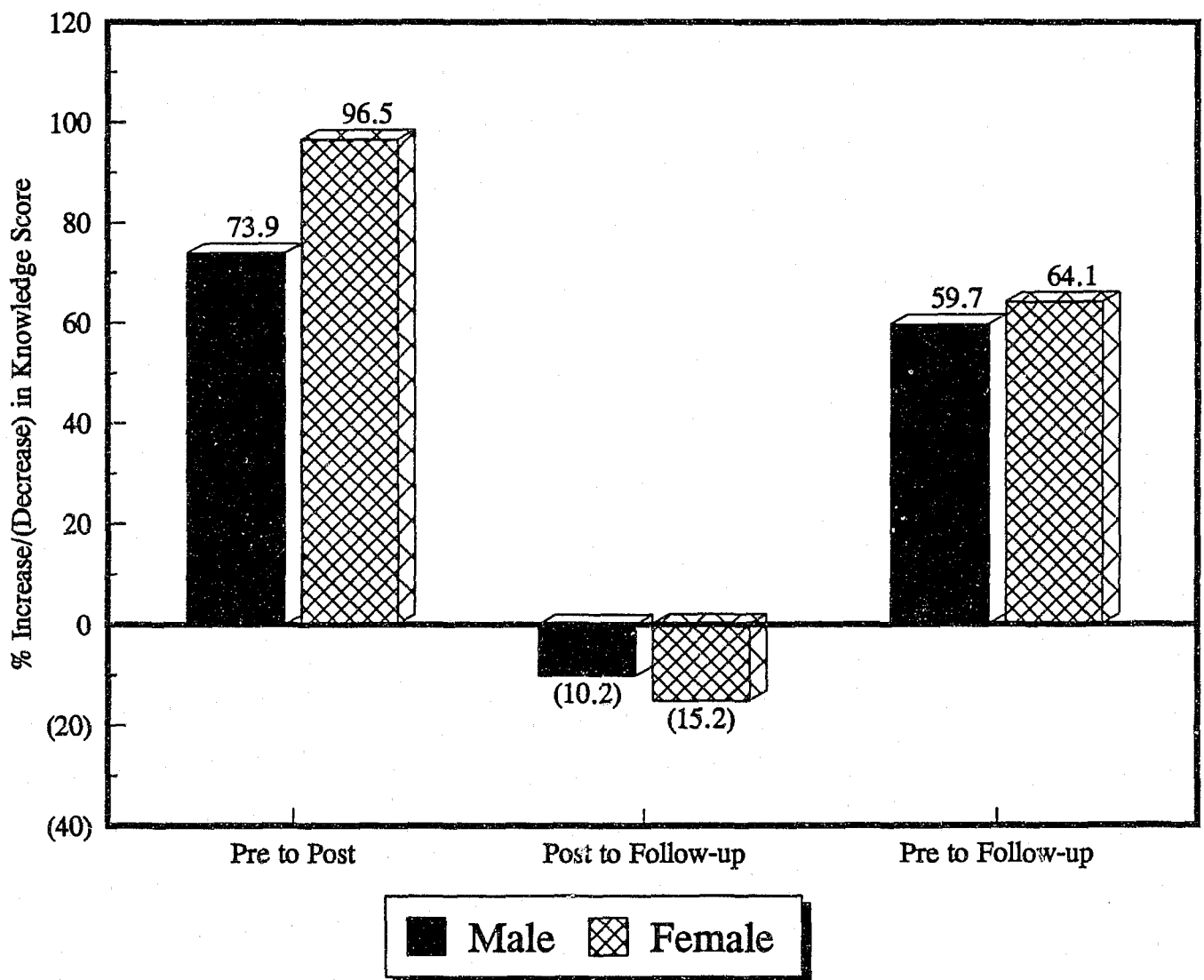
# KNOWLEDGE SCORES CHANGE BY GENDER

*7th Grade*



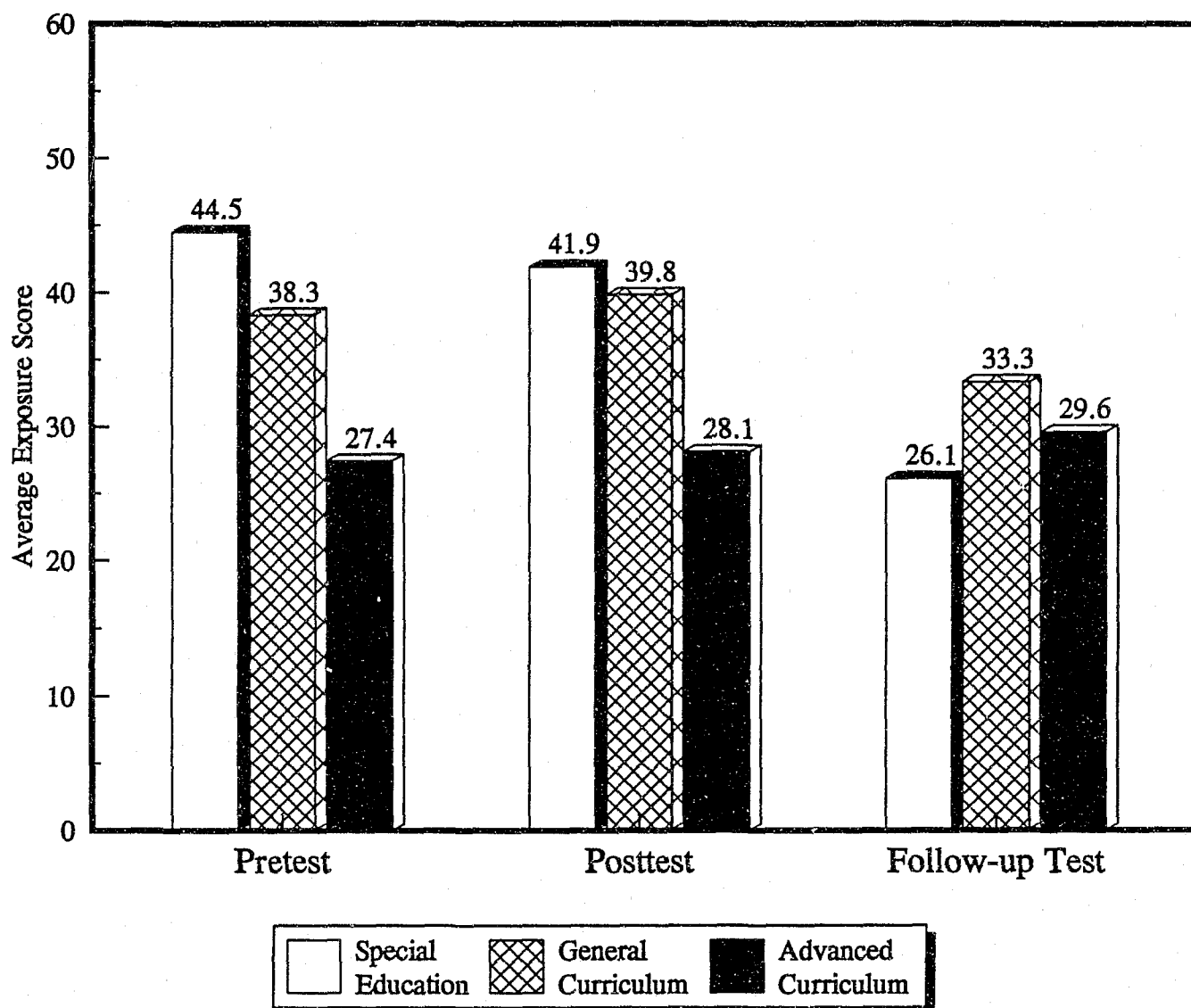
# KNOWLEDGE SCORES CHANGE BY GENDER

*9th Grade*



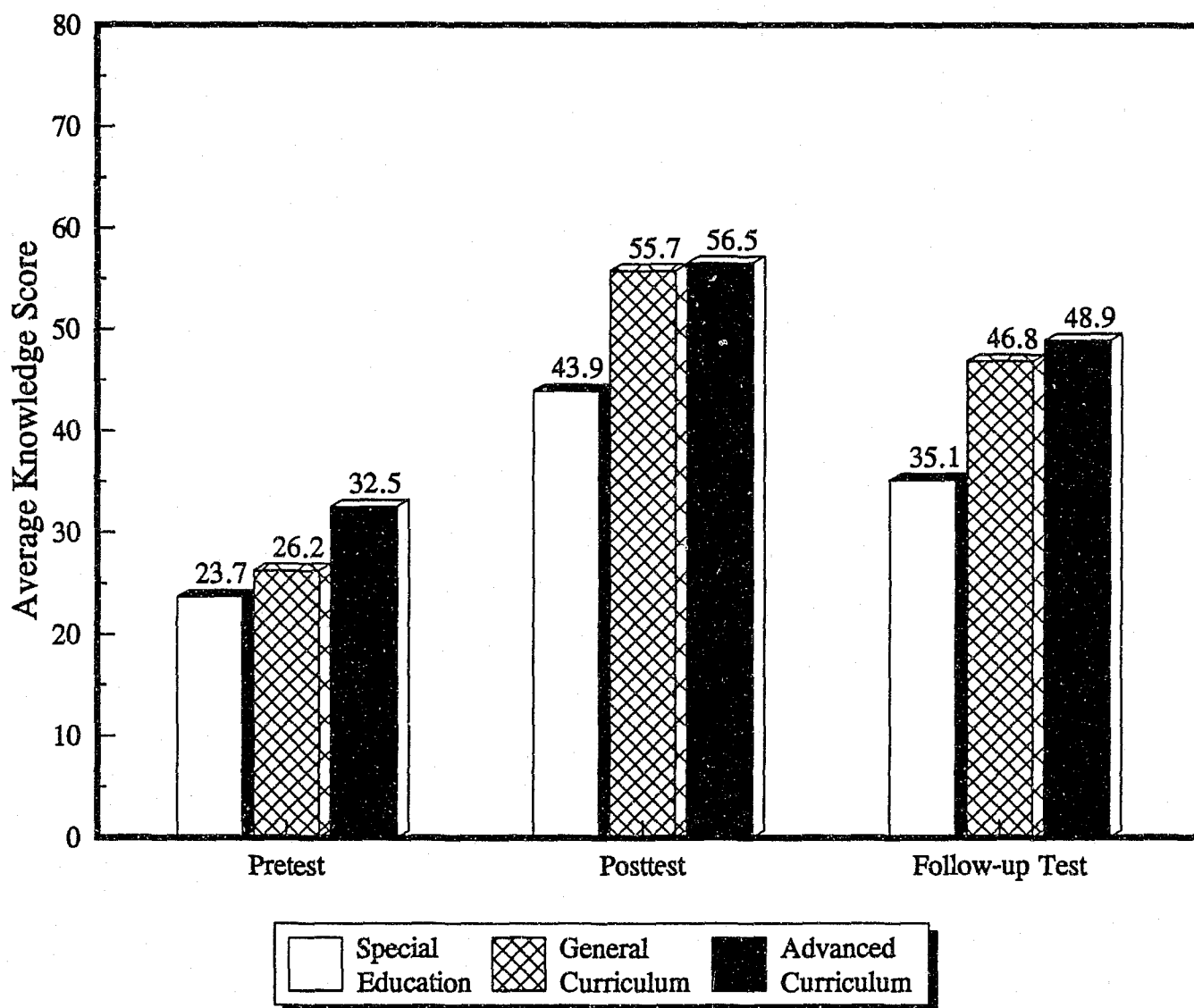
# EXPOSURE SCORES BY CLASS TYPE

*7th Grade*



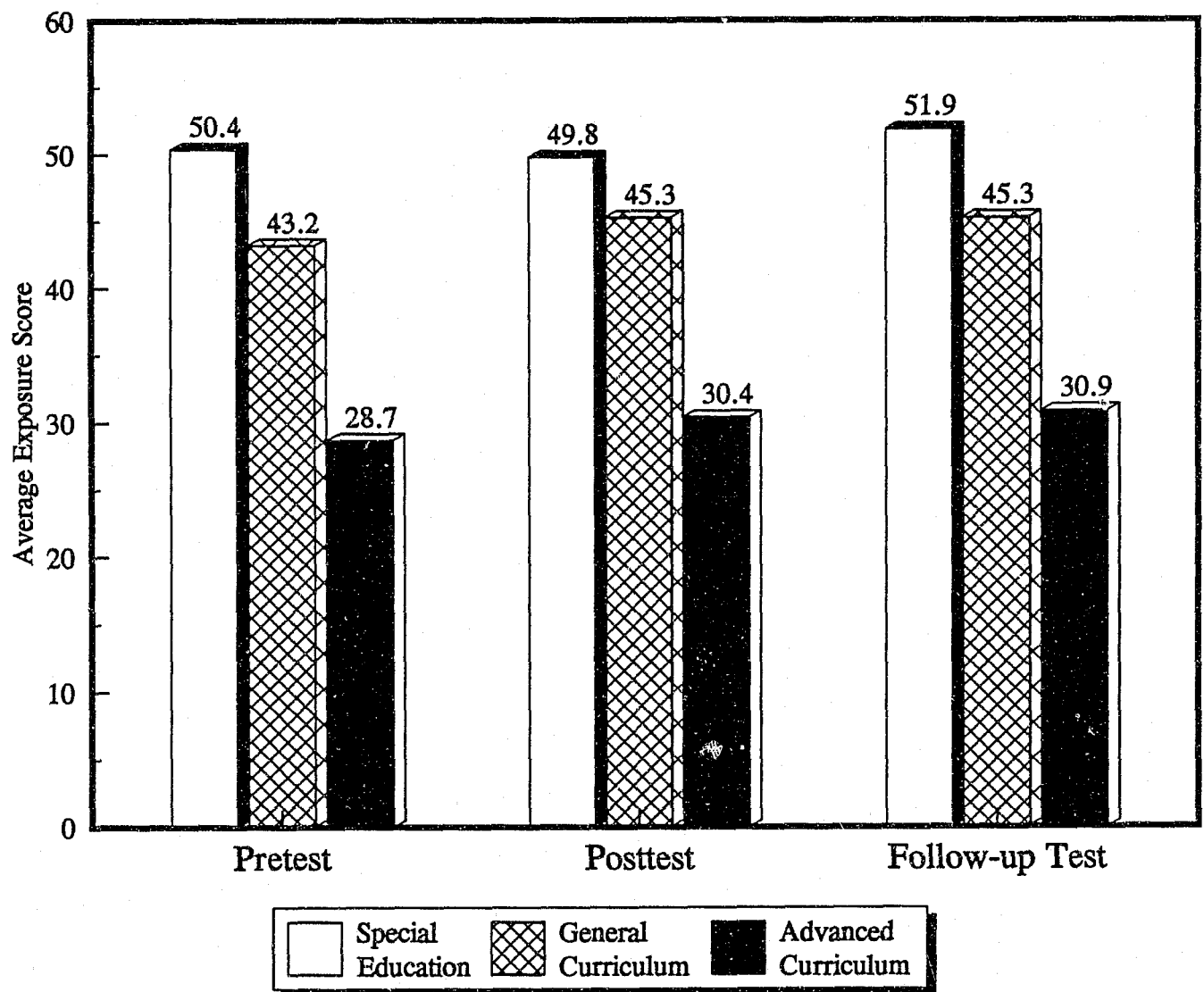
# KNOWLEDGE SCORES BY CLASS TYPE

*7th Grade*



## EXPOSURE SCORES BY CLASS TYPE

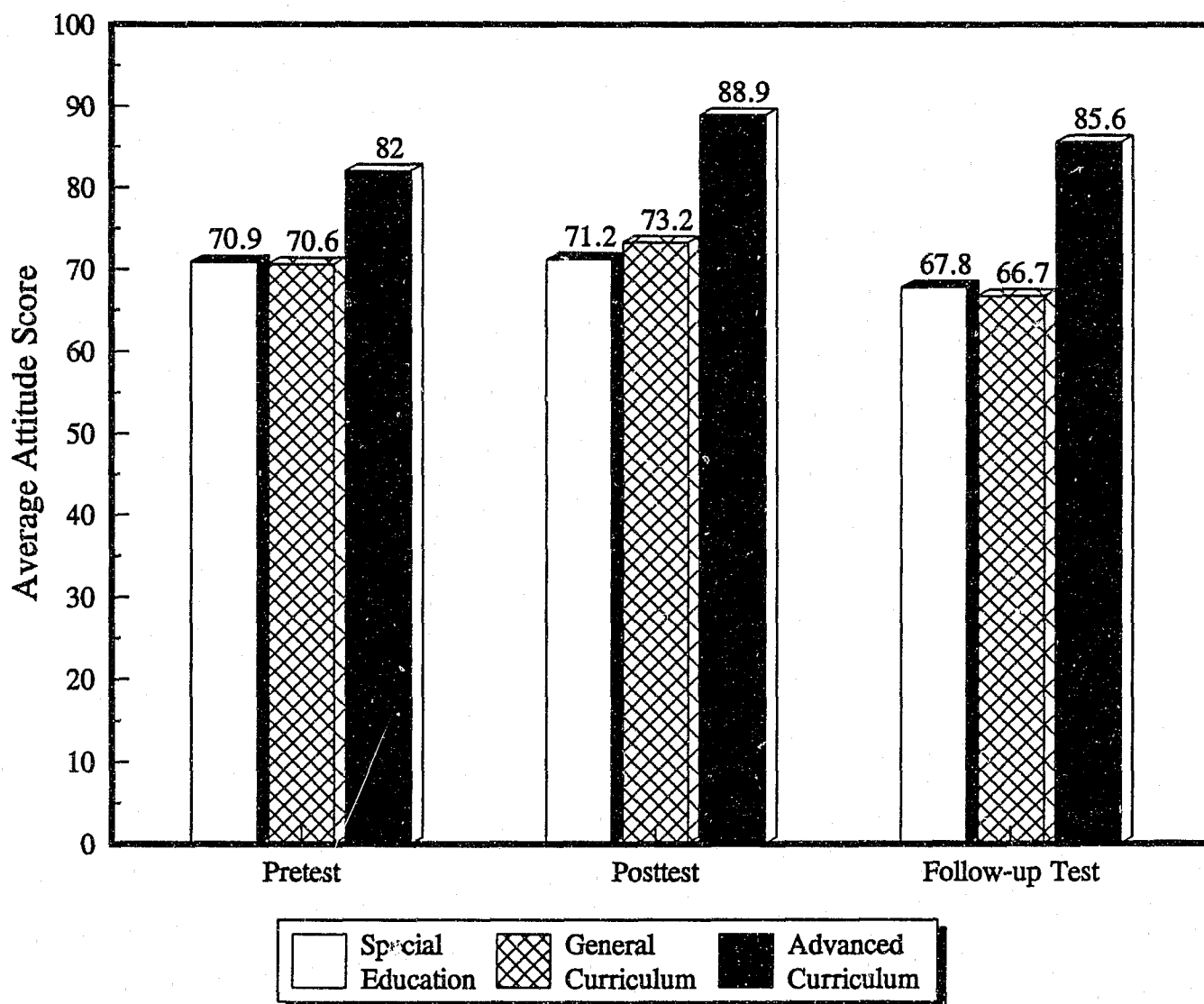
*9th Grade*





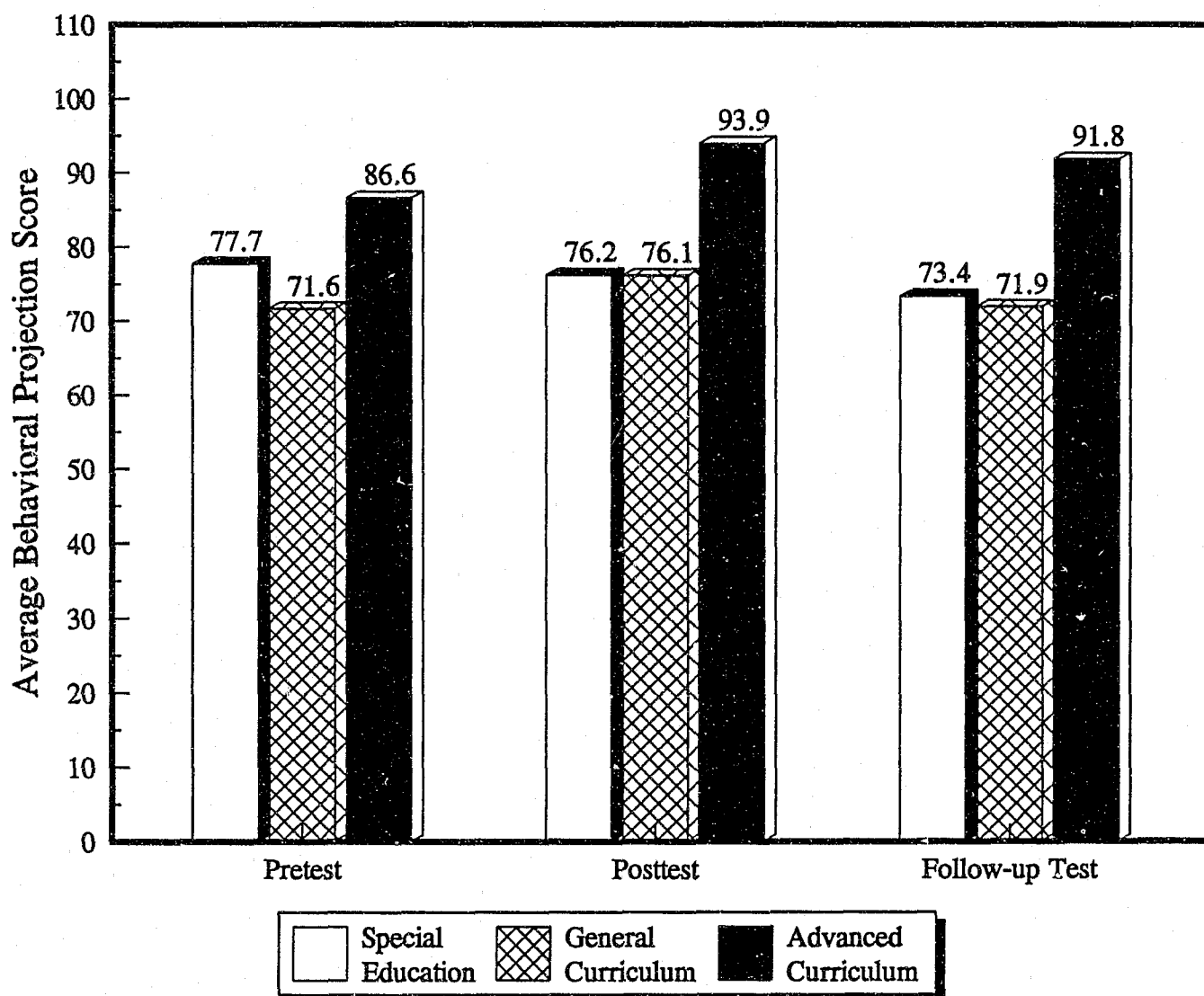
# ATTITUDE SCORES BY CLASS TYPE

*9th Grade*



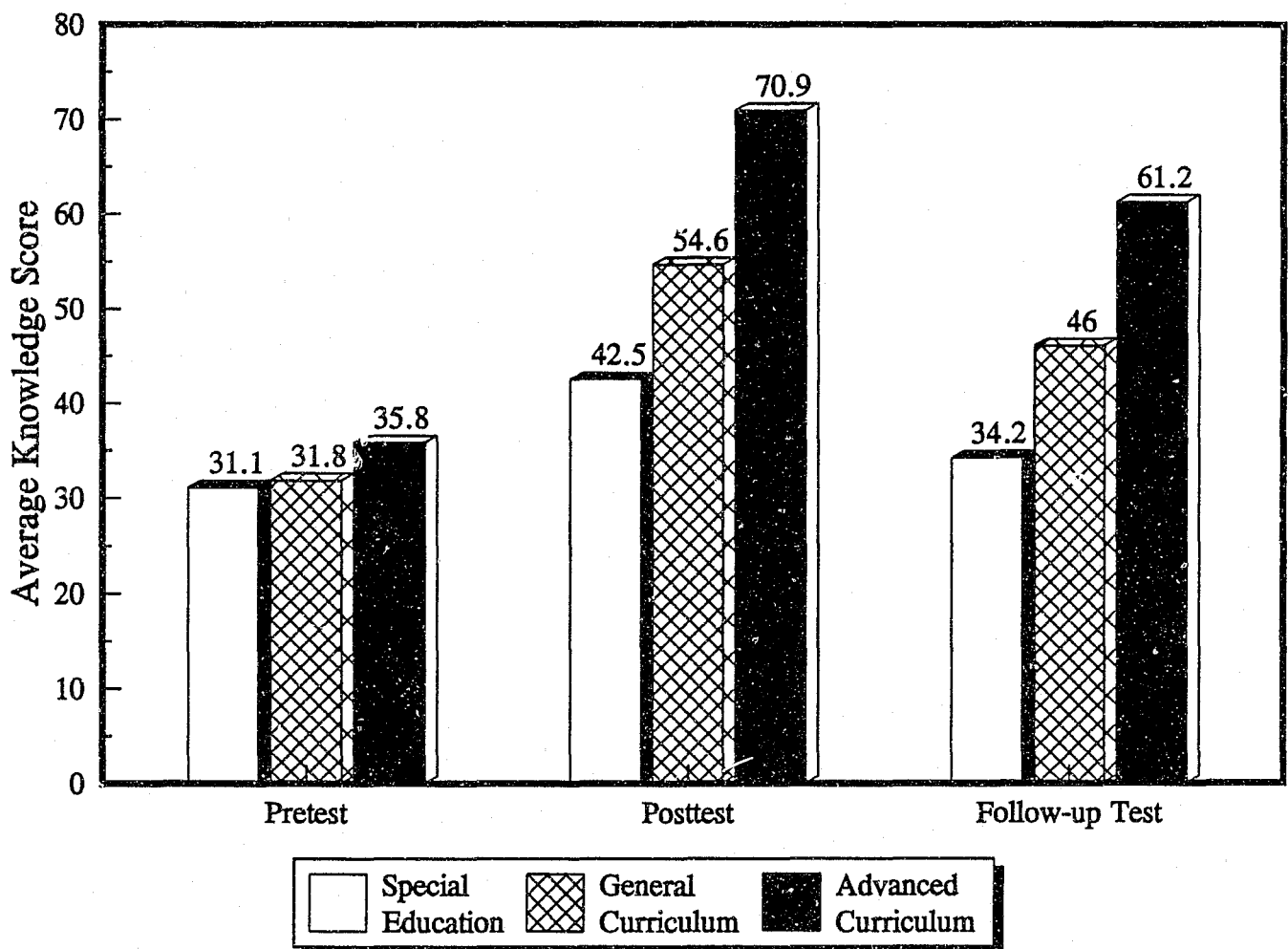
# BEHAVIORAL PROJECTION SCORES BY CLASS TYPE

*9th Grade*



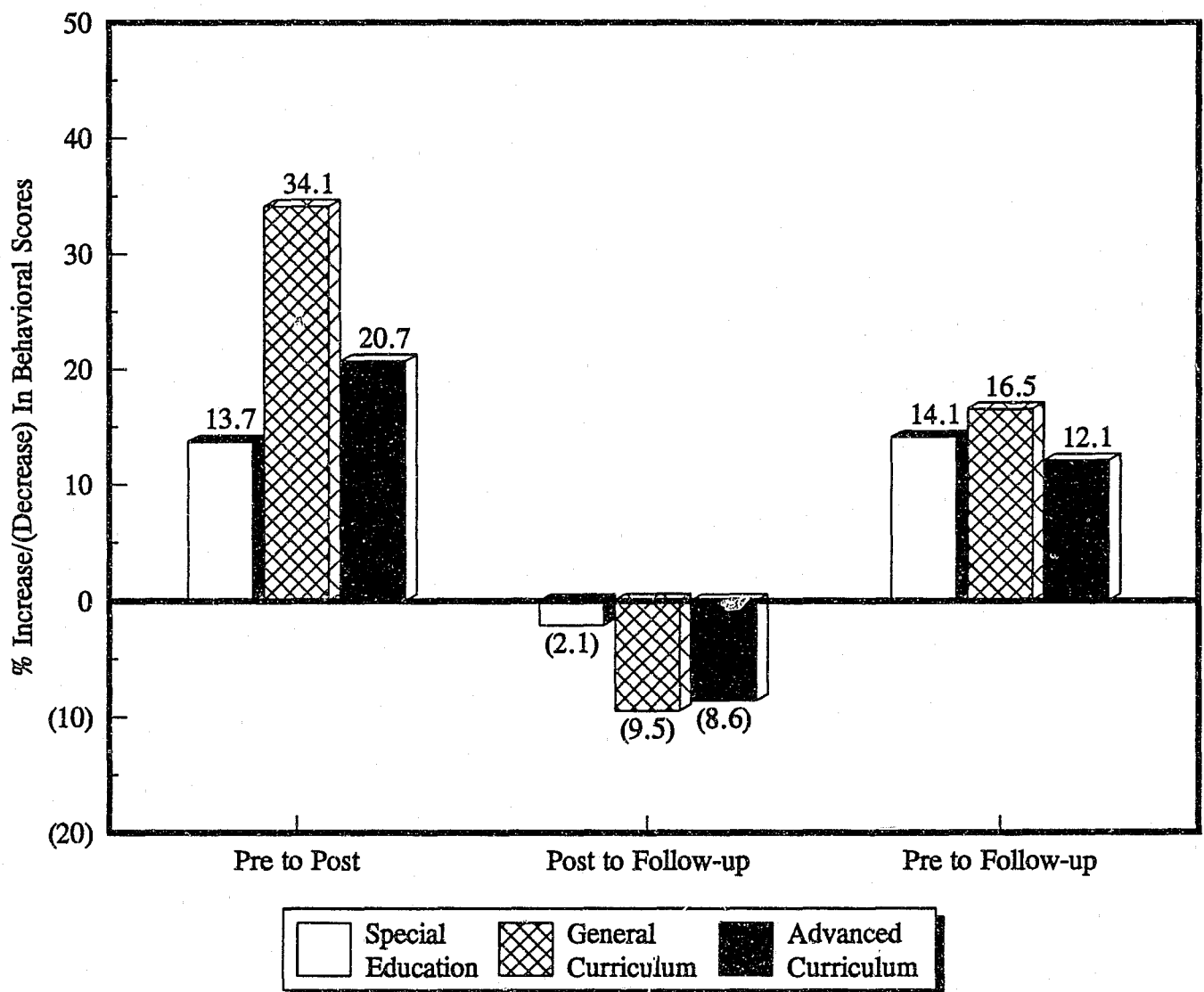
# KNOWLEDGE SCORES BY CLASS TYPE

*9th Grade*



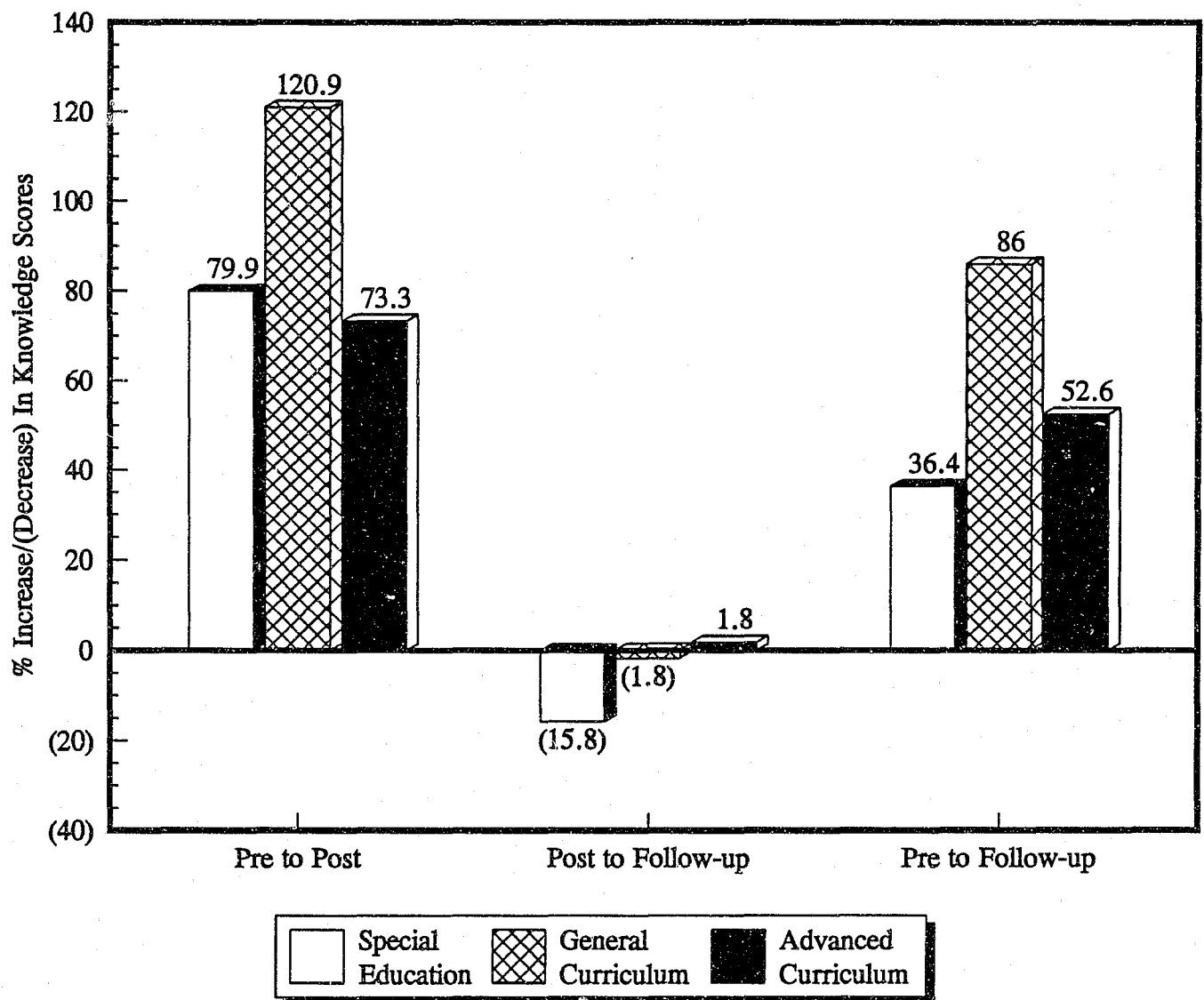
# BEHAVIORAL PROJECTION SCORES CHANGE BY CLASS TYPE

*7th Grade*



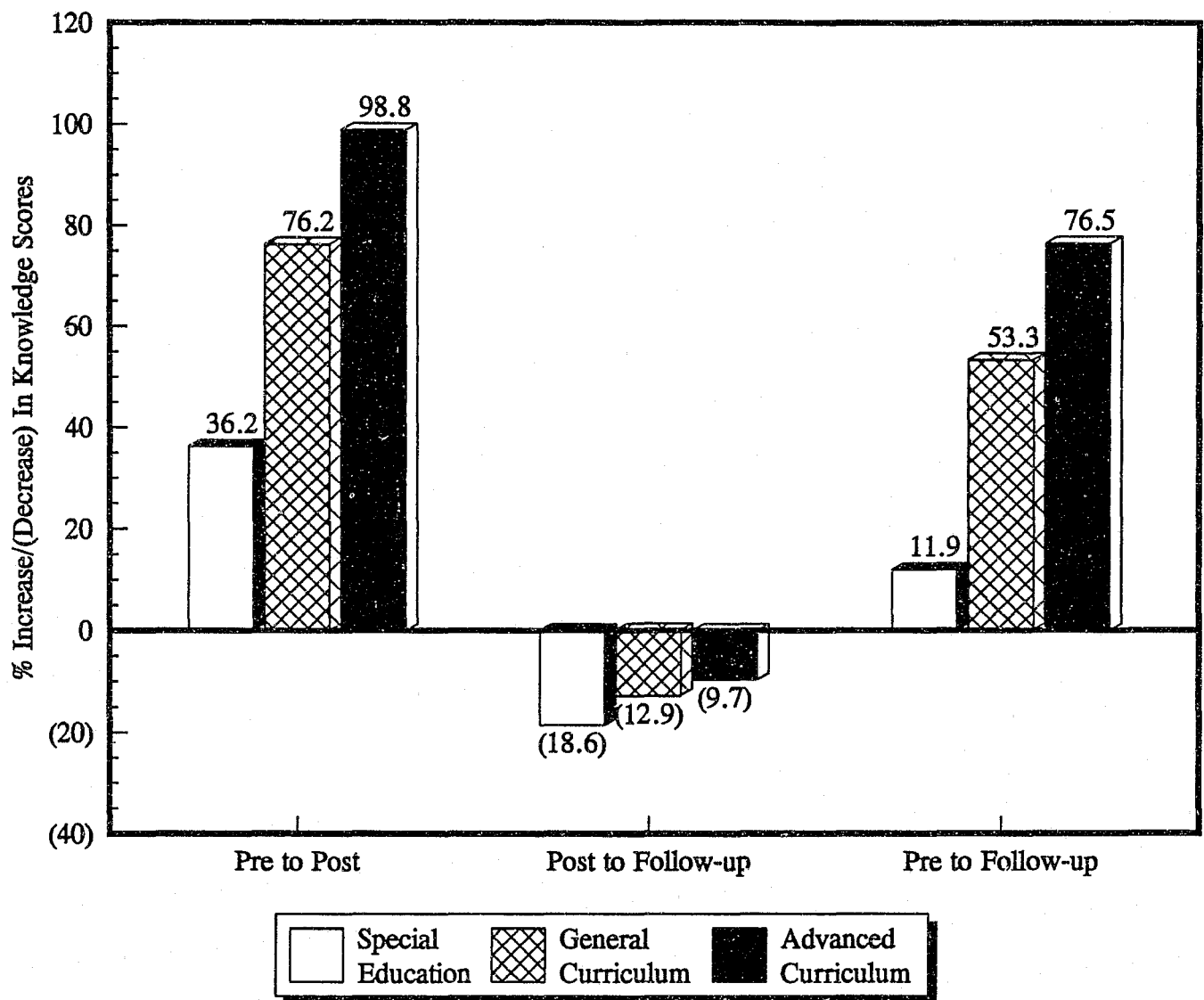
# KNOWLEDGE SCORES CHANGE BY CLASS TYPE

*7th Grade*



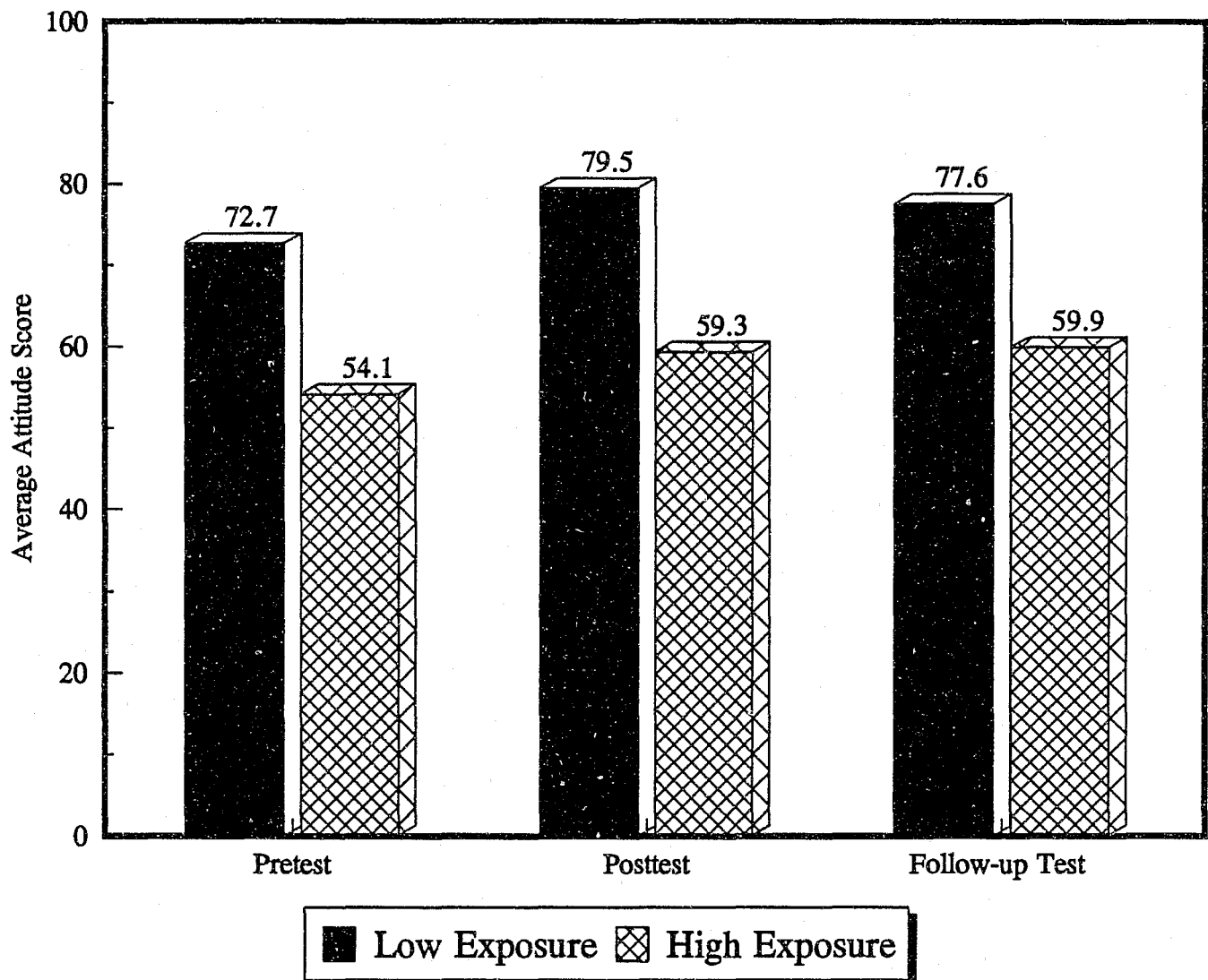
# KNOWLEDGE SCORES CHANGE BY CLASS TYPE

*9th Grade*



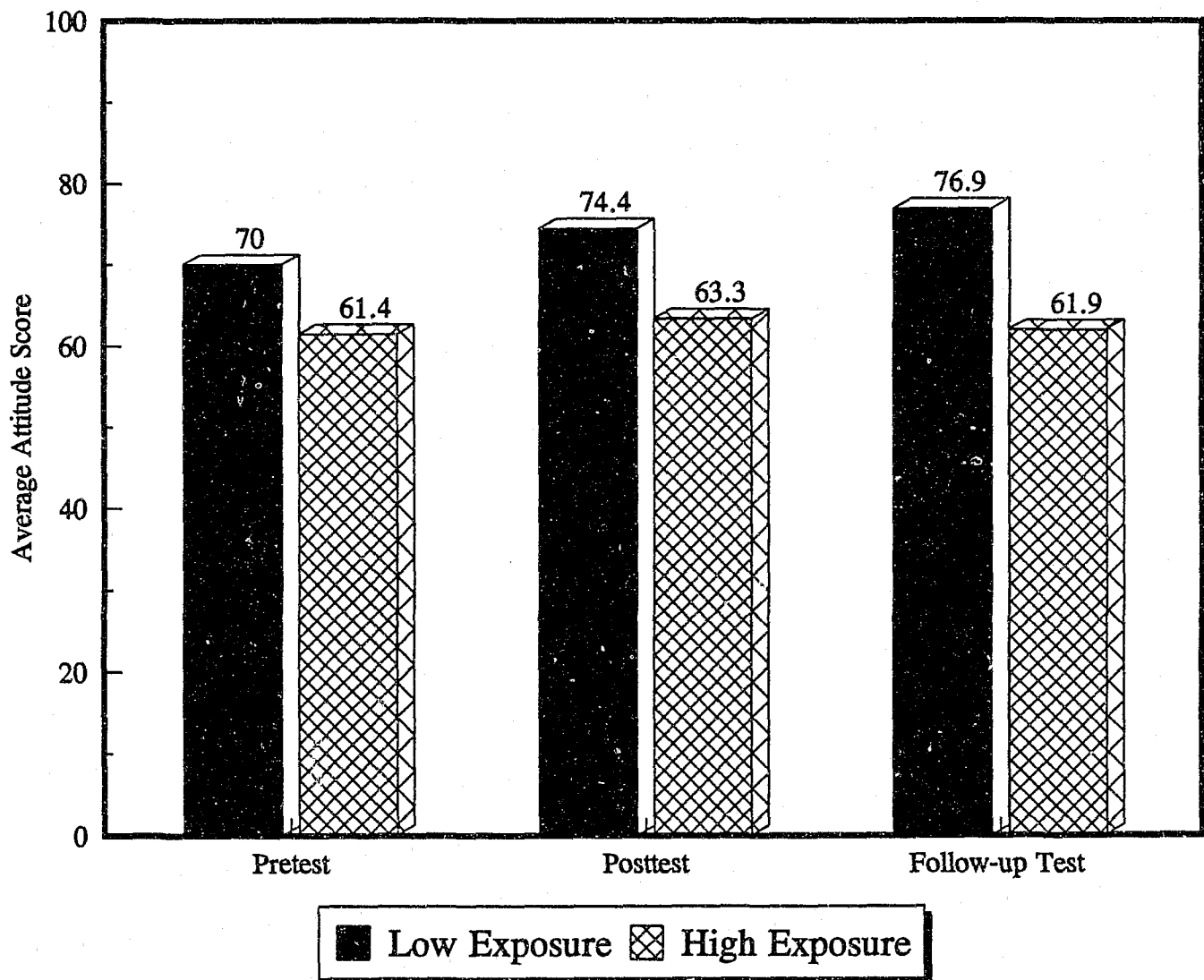
# ATTITUDE SCORES BY PRIOR EXPOSURE

*7th Grade*



# ATTITUDE SCORES BY PRIOR EXPOSURE

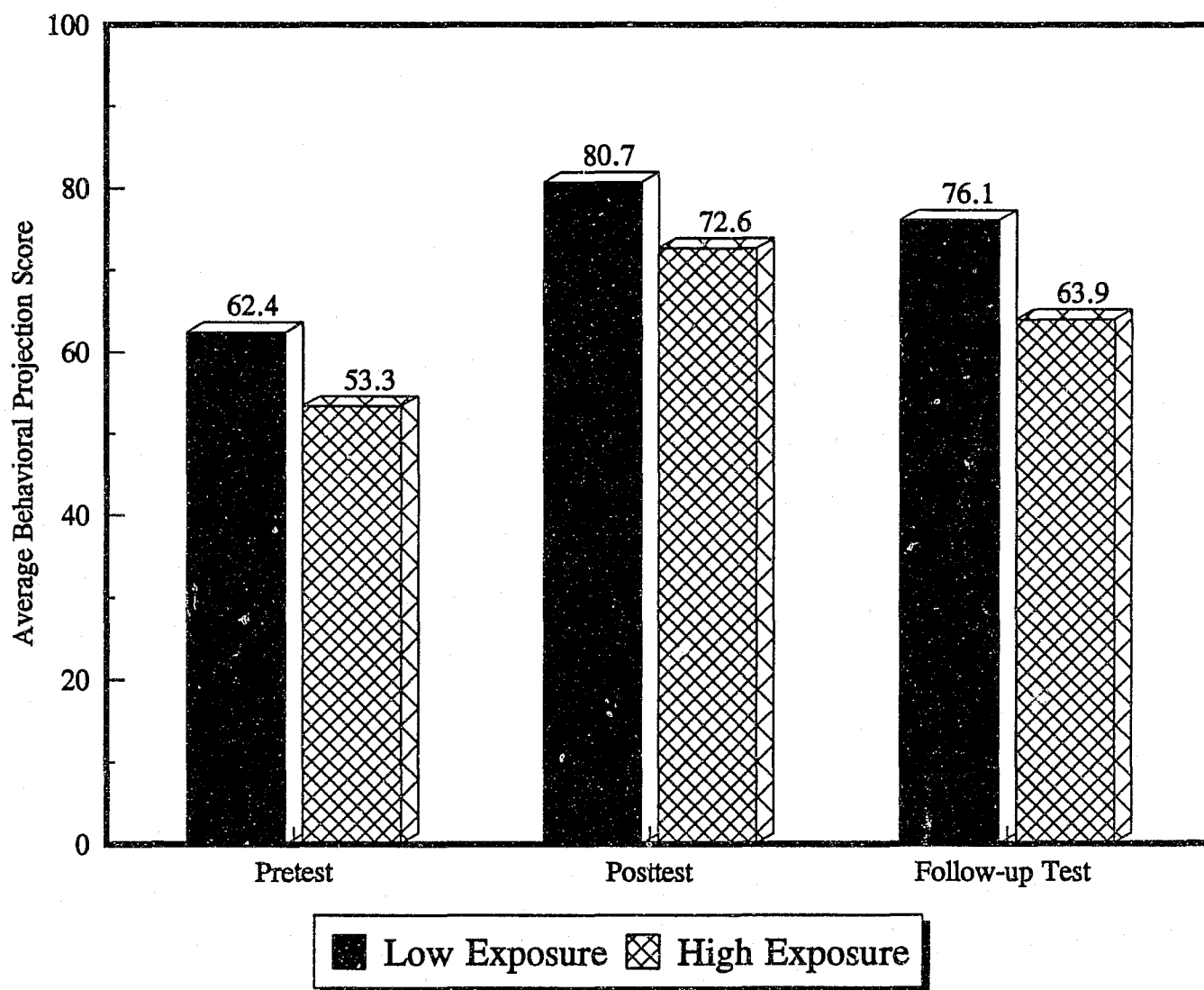
*9th Grade*





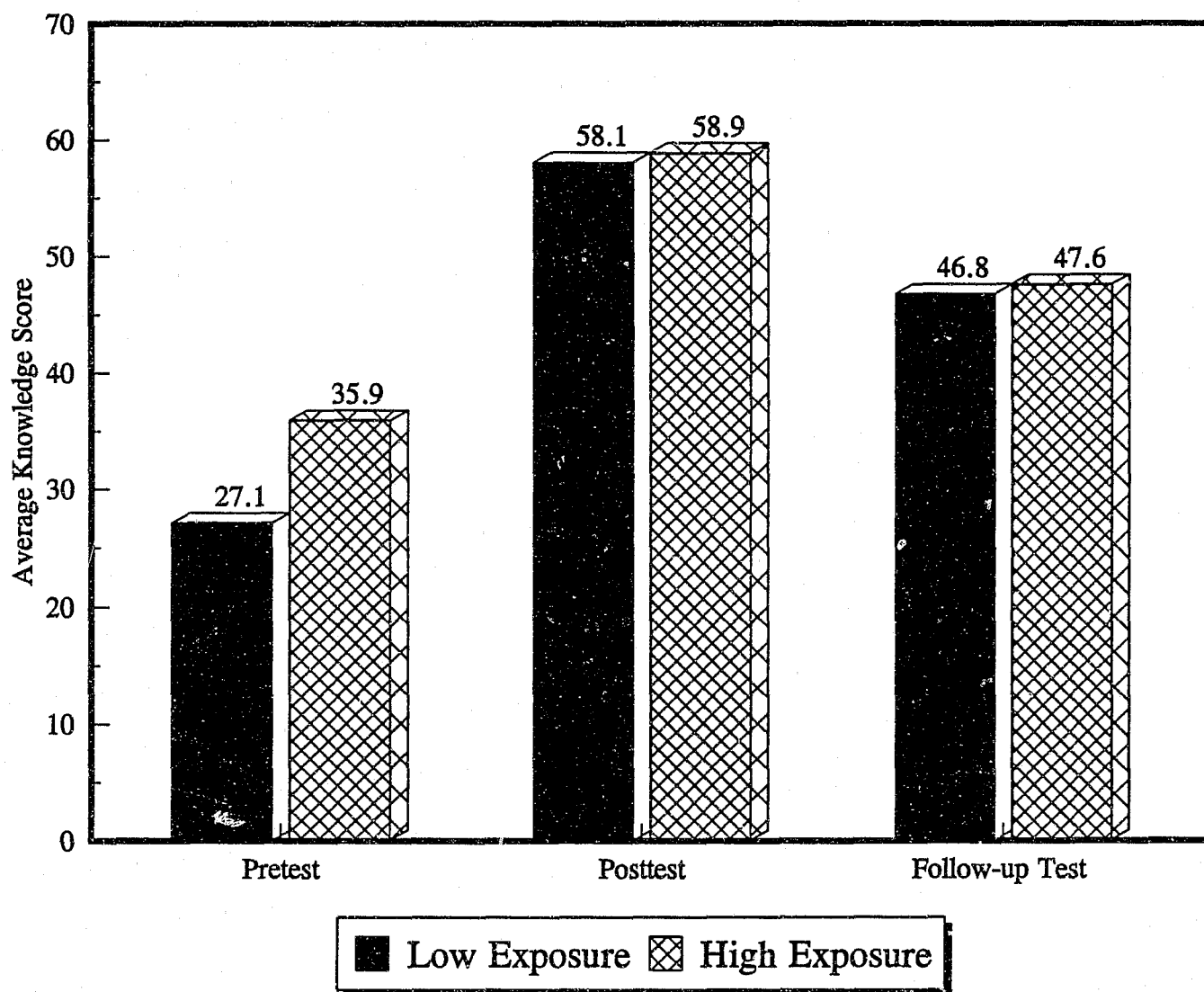
# **BEHAVIORAL PROJECTION SCORES BY PRIOR EXPOSURE**

*7th Grade*



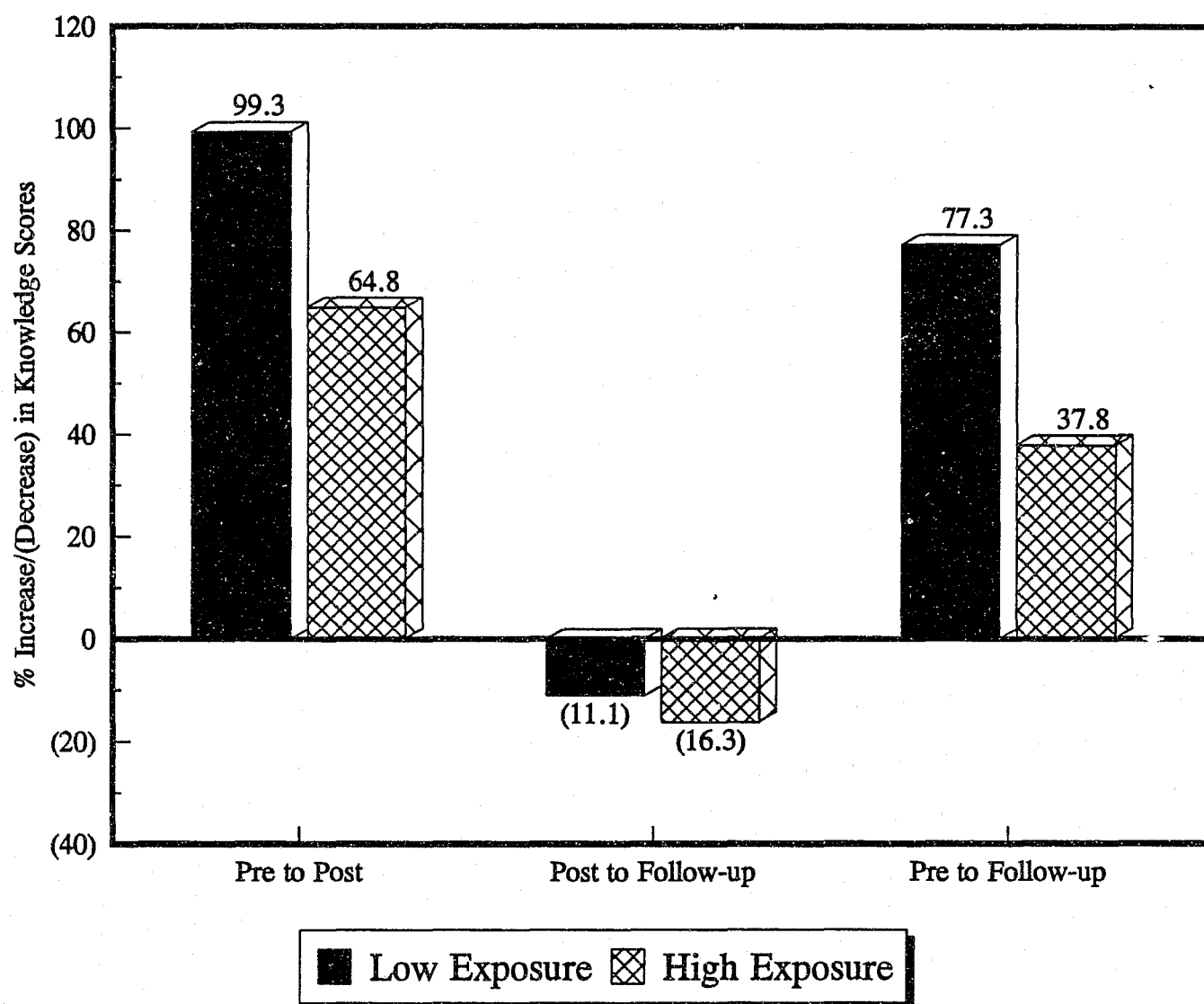
# KNOWLEDGE SCORES BY PRIOR EXPOSURE

*9th Grade*



# KNOWLEDGE SCORES CHANGE BY PRIOR EXPOSURE

*9th Grade*



# APPENDICES

## VIOLENCE IN OUR SOCIETY

| <b>SITUATION</b>   | <b>A</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>C</b> |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>What made the situation violent?</b>  |          |          |          |
| <b>Why did the violence occur?</b>   |          |          |          |
| <b>How did the victim feel about the violence?</b>   |          |          |          |
| <b>How could the situation have been handled non-violently?</b><br><br><b>(LIST 3 OR 4 ALTERNATIVES)</b> |          |          |          |

**DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM!****HANDGUN VIOLENCE**

This form asks important questions about how you feel about handguns and violence. The questions ask about your exposure to guns, attitudes about guns, and knowledge of handguns and violence in America.

Please help us learn what students think about handguns and violence. Your answers, along with those of many other students, will help us evaluate the Handgun Violence Reduction Program. The information will be used to improve the program for future students.

We do not want to identify individual students by name. We do want to compare your answers to those given at other times. To do this we need you to provide some unique information that will allow us to compare your answers without identifying you individually.

**All your answers will be anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your answers.**

Please read each question carefully. Select the answer that is closest to what you think, and write it in the blank provided on the right side of the page. Thank you for your help with this important project.

- 1) In what month were you born? (write the number of month in blank) → → → → → → → → \_\_\_\_\_
- |          |      |        |      |           |      |
|----------|------|--------|------|-----------|------|
| January  | (01) | May    | (05) | September | (09) |
| February | (02) | June   | (06) | October   | (10) |
| March    | (03) | July   | (07) | November  | (11) |
| April    | (04) | August | (08) | December  | (12) |
- 2) What are the last two numbers in your telephone number? (For example, if your number is 347-2246, enter "46") (write numbers in blank) → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Are you a female or male? (Write **F** or **M** in blank) → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → \_\_\_\_\_

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The next three questions ask you about things that happened during the last year. Before you answer, think of something important that happened one year ago (your birthday, a holiday, etc.) and tell us about things that have happened since that time.

4. During the last year, did you personally use a firearm (not including fake or BB guns) for hunting or any other purpose? (write Y or N in blank)

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_

5. During the last year, have you seen a real gun, in person, other than in a store, while hunting, or on a police officer? (write Y or N in blank)

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_

6. During the last year, have you intentionally avoided a place or situation because of possible gun violence? (write Y or N in blank)

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_

=====

7. In an average television fictional crime drama (e.g., Law & Order), how many people are killed with guns? (write letter in blank)

- a. 0
- b. 1 - 5
- c. 6 - 10
- d. 11 -20
- e. 20 or more
- f. don't know

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Is a news report on two armed robbers holding up a bank an example of real or fictional violence?: (write letter in blank)

- a. real
- b. fictional
- c. neither
- d. don't know

\_\_\_\_\_

9. When confronted with a violent situation, what should your first priority be? (write letter in blank)

\_\_\_\_\_

- a. to get a good look at the attacker(s), so you can identify them to police
- b. to remember every detail of the attack
- c. to survive the attack
- d. to seek revenge
- e. don't know

10. How many children under the age of 14 die in this country as a result of firearm accidents?  
(write letter in blank)
- a. five per day \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. one per day \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. one per week \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. two per month \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. don't know \_\_\_\_\_
11. Which is the safest way to store a gun at home?  
(write letter in blank)
- a. in the basement, so that it would be away from the destructive light of the sun \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. in a locked cabinet, with the ammunition stored separately \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. near or in the bedroom, so that it will be ready for quick use if the need arises \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. in a central location, so that all members of the family can use it \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. don't know \_\_\_\_\_
12. Can people's feelings about violence be influenced by things they see on television or in the movies? (write letter in blank)
- a. yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. no \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. don't know \_\_\_\_\_
13. I feel that guns are an acceptable way for me to resolve problems. (write letter in blank)
- a. strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. agree \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. disagree \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_
14. I admire people my age who have handguns and are willing to use them when the need arises.  
(write letter in blank)
- a. strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. agree \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. disagree \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. strongly disagree \_\_\_\_\_

**Imagine that the following things happen to you. What would you do if ...**

15. You are at a playground and find what looks like a real gun on the ground. You are not sure whether or not it is real. (write letter in blank)
- a. pick it up by the handle to see if it is real \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. pick it up with a stick, so that you won't disturb fingerprints \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. don't touch the gun at all \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. pick it up by the barrel, so that you won't touch the trigger \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. don't know \_\_\_\_\_

(over)



16. You go to a friend's house and other kids are passing around what appears to be a real gun. They want you to hold it. (write letter in blank) \_\_\_\_\_
- a. check to see if it is loaded before you hold it
  - b. leave immediately
  - c. take it from them and put it away
  - d. stay and participate, making sure that they do not point it at anyone
  - e. don't know
17. You are coming to school at the beginning of the day. You see someone that you don't know very well put a handgun in a locker and walk away. (write letter in blank) \_\_\_\_\_
- a. break into the locker and remove the gun
  - b. don't get involved because the person could be dangerous
  - c. try to find out why the person brought the gun into school
  - d. report it immediately to an authority
  - e. don't know
18. You are waiting in line at a convenience store with your girlfriend/boyfriend when two men wearing ski masks and carrying rifles approach the cash register. One armed man demands cash from the cashier while the other points his weapon at your friend. The rifle is within your reach. (write letter in blank) \_\_\_\_\_
- a. remain calm, follow instructions, and maintain a non-threatening image
  - b. grab the rifle, aim it at the other armed man, and shout: "Drop it or die" (or something similar)
  - c. run out of the store as fast as possible
  - d. try to talk the armed men out of hurting anyone
  - e. don't know

**DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM!****VIOLENCE IN AMERICA**

This form asks important questions about how you feel about violence. The questions ask about your exposure to guns, attitudes about violence, and knowledge of handguns and violence in America.

Please help us learn what students think about violence. Your answers, along with those of many other students, will help us evaluate the Handgun Violence Reduction Program. The information will be used to improve the program for future students.

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- 2) What are the last two numbers in your telephone number? (For example, if your number is 347-2246, enter "46") (write numbers in blank) → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Are you female or male? (Write **F** or **M** in blank) → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → \_\_\_\_\_
- Female                      Male

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

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The next three questions ask you about things that happened during the last year. Before you answer, think of something important that happened one year ago (your birthday, a holiday, etc.) and tell us about things that have happened since that time.

4. During the last year, did you personally use a firearm (not including fake or BB guns) for hunting or any other purpose? (write Y or N in blank)

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_

5. During the last year, have you seen a real gun, in person, other than in a store, while hunting, or on a police officer? (write Y or N in blank)

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_

6. During the last year, have you intentionally avoided a place or situation because of possible gun violence? (write Y or N in blank)

Yes

No

\_\_\_\_\_

=====

7. What type of firearm is most commonly used in violent crimes? (write letter in blank)

- a. rifle
- b. handgun
- c. assault weapon/automatic rifle
- d. shotgun
- e. don't know

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What country has the most handgun murders? (write letter in blank)

- a. Canada
- b. Great Britain
- c. Sweden
- d. United States
- e. don't know

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Which is the safest way to store a gun at home? (write letter in blank)

- a. in the basement, so that it would be away from the destructive light of the sun
- b. in a locked cabinet, with the ammunition stored separately
- c. near or in the bedroom, so that it will be ready for quick use if the need arises
- d. in a central location, so that all members of the family can use it
- e. don't know

\_\_\_\_\_

10. How can we help to reduce crime? (write letter in blank)

- a. Start taking the law into our own hands since the government's system isn't working
- b. Reduce the opportunity to commit crime by taking more precautions (e.g. locking doors, staying in groups)
- c. Keep prisoners in isolated cells so they can't learn crime tips from other prisoners.
- d. Lock up all criminals for life
- e. don't know

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Which of the following is not one of the ways we, as individuals, can reduce our chances of being victimized? (write letter in blank)
- a. secure guns better \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. carry a gun and show people that you are willing to use it
  - c. reduce vulnerability (i.e., not taking shortcuts, walking in groups)
  - d. secure homes better
  - e. don't know
12. When confronted with a violent situation, what should your first priority be? (write letter in blank)
- a. to get a good look at the attacker(s), so you can identify them to police \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. to remember every detail of the attack
  - c. to survive the attack
  - d. to seek revenge
  - e. don't know
13. I admire people my age who have weapons and are willing to use them when the need arises. (write letter in blank)
- a. strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. agree
  - c. disagree
  - d. strongly disagree
14. Violence is not a very serious problem in our country. (write letter in blank)
- a. strongly agree \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. agree
  - c. disagree
  - d. strongly disagree

**Imagine that the following things happen to you.**

15. Your friend has seemed depressed for the last few weeks, and she mentions something about killing herself. You know that she has access to a gun in her house. What do you say to her? (write letter in blank)
- a. say nothing, because it is a private matter \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. encourage her to talk about it and seek help
  - c. talk to her and tell her not to worry about it
  - d. try to cheer her up
  - e. don't know

(over)

16. You have turned 18, it is Election Day, and crime and violence are at an all time high in your community. What do you do? (write letter in blank) \_\_\_\_\_
- a. stay away from the polls, because your vote can't possibly make a difference
  - b. go to the polls and randomly flip levers, so you can say that you voted
  - c. vote for issues that you believe will help reduce the problem, because you believe that your vote can make a difference
  - d. vote only for the major office(s) up for election, because that is the only vote that matters
  - e. don't know
17. You are waiting in line at a convenience store with your girlfriend/boyfriend when two men wearing ski masks and carrying rifles approach the cash register. One armed man demands cash from the cashier while the other points his weapon at your friend. The rifle is within your reach. What do you do? (write letter in blank) \_\_\_\_\_
- a. remain calm, follow instructions, and maintain a non-threatening image
  - b. grab the rifle, aim it at the other armed man, and shout: "Drop it or die" (or something similar)
  - c. run out of the store as fast as possible
  - d. try to talk the armed men out of hurting anyone
  - e. don't know

BALTIMORE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT  
SCHOOL PROGRAMS UNIT  
HANDGUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM

APPENDIX D

Teacher Cover Sheet

Teacher name: \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class number: \_\_\_\_\_

Class type (circle one):

Special Education  
(incl. Coop. Ed.)

General  
(incl. Basic,  
Standard)

Gifted & Talented  
(incl. Honors)

Number of students enrolled in class: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of students completing survey: \_\_\_\_\_

Survey administration (circle one):

Pre-survey

Post-survey

Follow-up survey

Date survey administered: \_\_\_\_\_

Were two or more classes combined for the HVRP presentation? (circle one):

No

Yes

If yes, please provide other class number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Do any students in your class share the same birth month **AND** last two digits of their telephone number (e.g., twins)? (circle one):

No

Yes

(If yes, please write "#1" in upper right corner of page one of the oldest's survey, "#2" for the next oldest, etc.)

Comments/Unusual incidents (please use the space below for specific comments regarding the **survey** or to list major unusual incidents that may have affected the survey responses [e.g., major gun-related crime in area which has heightened awareness and sensitivity of gun issues, fire drill during administration of survey]):

HVRPTCU7.PLC

BALTIMORE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT  
SCHOOL SECTION  
HANDGUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM

APPENDIX E

Instructor Cover Sheet

Instructor name: \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class number: \_\_\_\_\_

Class type (circle one):

Special Education  
(incl. Coop. Ed.)

General  
(incl. Basic,  
Standard)

Gifted & Talented  
(incl. Honors)

Number of students received entire presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates program presented: \_\_\_\_\_

Were two or more classes combined for the HVRP presentation? (circle one):

No

Yes

If yes, please provide other class number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Which scenarios did you discuss during Day #2 of your 7th grade presentation? (list numbers [1-9]): \_\_\_\_\_

Deviations from lesson plan (please use the space below to list any deviations from the approved lesson plans [e.g., omission of a scenario or topic, altered method of presentation, addition of significant information or discussion]):

Unusual incidents during instruction (please use the space below to list major unusual incidents that may have significantly affected your presentation [e.g., fire drill, major disruption, shortened class period]):

External factors (please use the space below to list major external factors that may have significantly affected your presentation [e.g., recent gun-related crime in the area which has heightened awareness and sensitivity of gun issues, recent suicide/attempt involving a firearm in the area]):

BALTIMORE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT  
SCHOOL PROGRAMS UNIT  
HANDGUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM

Teacher Evaluation

Upon completion of the program, please respond to the following questions by writing your response in the space provided on the right side of the page. We would also like your comments and suggestions so that we may provide your students with the best program possible.

School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Officer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Is there a need for a school program that provides information to students about handgun safety?

Yes (if yes, answer question #2)

No (if no, skip question #2 and continue to question #3)

Comments Please: \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) Does this program satisfy that need?

Yes

No

Comments Please: \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) Is there anything more the Police Department should do to assist you with this program?

Yes

No

Comments Please: \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) Is the 7th grade the appropriate level for this program?

Yes (If yes, skip question #5 and continue to question #6)

No (If no, answer question #5)

Comments Please: \_\_\_\_\_

(over)



5) What is the most appropriate grade level? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments Please: \_\_\_\_\_

6) Overall, how would you rate the Handgun Violence Reduction Program? (Number 1: lowest rating and 10: highest)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose this rating?:

7) Specifically, how would rate the police officer's presentation/teaching skills? (Number 1: lowest rating and 10: highest)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the space below for any further comments or suggestions.

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Thank you for completing this evaluation. Your assistance is greatly appreciated!