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DULUTH--National attention has been directed to a Duluth experiment in improving attitudes among teen-age drivers found guilty of traffic violations.

The project was described by George A. Notthelfer, director of the Duluth Chamber of Commerce safety bureau and of the attitude study, in a recent article in "Traffic Safety," National Safety council quarterly.

Notthelfer conducted the experiment as part of an advanced UMD course in psychology, taught by Frank W. Hansen, instructor of psychology. A part-time UMD student, Notthelfer expects to receive the B. A. degree this spring.

Group discussions, lectures, role-playing and other techniques were used in presenting the subject of driver attitudes and their relation to traffic hazards, mishaps and violations.

Conducted in two-hour class sessions one evening a week for several months, the experiment won participant support ranging from "fair to very good," Notthelfer writes.

The group included 74 males and one female, ranging in age from 15 to 18 years. Participants were required to have an excuse from their physician or permission from the probation officer to be absent from class.

Among devices used was sentence completion. The participants were asked to finish such sentences as "It seems to me that my biggest problem in driving is . . .," "I wish that the police . . .," and "I think that drivers my age . . ."

Attitude measurement during the experiment showed significant change of attitude on most of the points involved in the study.

Notthelfer concludes, however, that the size of the sample group does not warrant broad conclusions and that any recurrence of violations among the group may be a more reliable criterion.

J. Stannard Baker, director, research and development, Northwestern University traffic institute, suggests in an analysis accompanying the article that a control group be established to further validate future experiments of this kind.

By comparing the driving experience of a control group not receiving the instruction with that of a group receiving the instruction, a more effective measurement may be made, Baker notes.