improve the academic performance of African American children and lead to better interracial relations.

1. Desegregation and the Contact Hypothesis

The *Brown* ruling set in motion widespread efforts to reduce prejudice and discrimination by legislation, culminating in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Among the many programs that emanated from this legislative effort, none was more controversial than the forced busing of schoolchildren to achieve racial integration. Under this program, many African American children were bused to predominantly European American schools and many European American students were bused to predominantly African American schools. Despite achieving some success (S. W. Cook, 1984, 1985), the promise of this program was never fully realized (Gerard, 1983; Schofield, 1979; Schofield & Francis, 1982). Moreover, the program was enormously controversial and sparked civil unrest and disobedience, as many European American families either refused to send their children to inner-city schools or fled to the suburbs to avoid having to do so. Forty years after the program was launched, it was abandoned.

2. Four Conditions Needed for Contact to Reduce Prejudice

With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to see why forced integration failed to achieve racial harmony. As first discussed by Allport (1954), interracial contact is apt to reduce prejudice only when certain conditions are met. Table 10.8 summarizes these conditions. First, the participants must be of equal status. In terms of schooling, this means they should be of comparable background, status, and ability. This condition was rarely met in the forced integration of schooling, as poor inner-city African American children were often placed into classrooms with European Americans who had enjoyed a privileged background and a better education.

The second condition is interdependence. This means the participants must work toward a common goal, with everyone contributing to the group’s success. Earlier we noted that Sherif and his colleagues (1961) were able to reduce prejudice at the Robbers Cave Boy’s Camp by having the campers work toward a common goal. For