Encouraging positive behavior at the elementary school level

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ENCOURAGING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

AT THE ELEMENTARY

SCHOOL LEVEL

by

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ABSTRACT

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Dr. Ronald Capasso
Educational Administration

The purpose of the study was to develop a behavior management program that addressed ways to eliminate infractions that interfered with the students' learning process. This addition to the curriculum did not eliminate the district's discipline policy but instilled in the student body an awareness of social expectations. It was hoped that the awareness gave students the opportunity to acquire the behaviors that were socially acceptable in school and in society.

The new program engaged the total educational family of staff, students, parents, and administrators. It was built on structure and harmony, allowing for flexibility of classroom instruction. The program, Skillstreaming, acquainted all students to social skills that encouraged them to choose other methods to gain control of their actions. The students were introduced to skills that enabled them to become socially accepted by their peers and teachers. Ownership was what drove the curriculum to full acceptance by school staff. It was the total acceptance that affected discipline wholly. The goal of this behavior management program was to make all discipline more proactive than reactive. With two years remaining on the implementation of this program, results will dictate the school's acceptance, based upon the records documenting success for future use.
MINI ABSTRACT

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The objective for instituting a new behavior management program, in an Elementary school was to monitor discipline and the effects it had on the socialization process of children. Consistency and structure drove the curriculum. This required complete ownership of the program, for that was the catalyst that determined its success.
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Chapter 1
Focus of the Study

Introduction:

Educators today are finding themselves expending much time and effort addressing discipline problems that interfere with day-to-day routines in the learning environment. Students who continually disregard school rules are depriving other children of their right to an education as well as their right to be educated. There are many reasons as to why children become disorderly, and not all discipline policies have the best solutions to rectify the problems. The answer is to find alternative methods that can work with children rather than against them.

School districts have in place a discipline code approved by the Board of Education to ensure a safe environment conducive to learning for all children. This is enforced by Statute 18A: 37 in the state of New Jersey regarding discipline of students. They are coming to school with problems associated with their home environment, with pressure from their peers, and to compound the problems, not knowing the appropriate skills to use to handle conflicts. Districts need to address the reasons why children are having such difficulties and what can be done to help them feel successful academically and socially.

The focus of this study targets an alternative method for encouraging students to become active participants in the management of their own behavior. In this way, the school's discipline policy as approved by the Board of Education is in effect to serve as a guide for what constitutes good behavior.
It also incorporates all facets of the school environment. This includes such areas as classroom management, transportation procedures and such routines associated with arrival and dismissal of students. Children need to understand that they are responsible for their actions whether good or bad. However, they also need to understand that there are appropriate steps to use that will facilitate positive management of their behavior.

When children lack the necessary behavior skills they need in order to perform well in school, the misbehavior interferes with their academic success. When their academic success is threatened, their self-esteem plummets and they literally have to fight the system in order for someone to notice them. So much is lost in the process because of insensitivity associated with the lack of knowledge necessary to implement such a plan.

In some instances, schools are the only safe havens children know. Many of them are coming from poorly supervised environments where learning appropriate social skills is not stressed nor encouraged. Children are taught to survive with whatever means they possess. They do not concern themselves with knowing how to say thankyou or how to give someone a compliment. Social skills are not given enough priority and children come to school ill equipped to handle basic means of communication with other children and adults. They sometimes barely survive within their own environment and therefore cannot be expected to exhibit proper behavior decorum. Children come to school with the expectations that they will someday contribute something positive to society. Until then, they have to be taught those skills that are socially acceptable. This can be accomplished with an acceptable behavior plan taught everyday in school with enthusiastic role playing by students and instructors.
When children are taught those skills that are basic to everyday school routines, they begin to learn structure in school. This structure bridges the gap between home and school and positive management begins to take place.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to monitor a positive behavior management plan as it relates to an existing school discipline policy. This program became an addition to the school curriculum in September 1998. It is by no means meant to replace the original discipline policy. It is structured in such a way so that it presents behavior and social skills to be taught during the school day. It is important for children to know and understand what positive behaviors are acceptable in today's society.

Outside of their family structure, the first micro society children are exposed to is the school environment. In school, they meet children of all ages and backgrounds and other adults as well. Many children are deficient in essential communication skills. They also are not sure how to handle peer pressure or possible physical conflicts. With this pressure facing children everyday, it somewhat diminishes their capabilities for academic success. Children spend a major part of the day in a social setting. It is very crucial to their self-esteem that they know they are accepted and can accept others. This takes precedence over their academics for now. When children know how to settle conflicts in an acceptable manner then learning can take place without interruptions.

Children can become easily confused when they are ignorant of basic social etiquette, especially when parental supervision is lacking and this is when social skills take prominence. Research has shown that the application of appropriate social skills reduces discipline problems and increases academic proficiency. The implementation of
this new behavior modification program was first initiated by a group of concerned teachers in the elementary school. They first heard of a similar program instituted at an elementary school in Margate, New Jersey. At the school's invitation, the interested group of teachers observed the morning routines at the school. Then the teachers were assigned a classroom to observe the social skills that were being taught. The teacher explained the steps to the class and a pair of students role-played situations in which they applied their homework strategies. Every student's name was placed on a chart that showed that they participated in the skill. The steps were repeated at the end of the class to bring closure. Each student was assigned homework in which they had to apply the skill with a member of their family. The next day they had to report to the class and review how they performed the skill. Children were very eager to offer solutions if a student was found to have some difficulty. It was a worthwhile learning experience for the entire class. Feeling very much impressed with the manner in which the school operated its daily routines, the teachers left the school feeling very positive about the entire program. What sold the program was the support of the administration and the other teachers who were for the program one hundred percent.

The purpose of this program is to teach children proper and acceptable ways to channel their behavior so that their academic learning will not be interrupted. This elementary school has experienced five different principals and five different vice-principals in nine years, with just as many revisions in the discipline code. With every new administration, the discipline code would be altered and revised. Teachers essentially disciplined their students based on the philosophy of what worked best for them. The code was enforced when it was necessary to address severe discipline
problems or situations. With this new skillstreaming plan now part of the curriculum, it would not matter how many times the discipline code would be revised. At least there would be a consistent behavior management plan established. Students are made aware of consequences in accordance with the discipline code. These consequences are punitive in nature, such as detentions, suspensions, and in extreme cases, expulsion. No where is it stated in the discipline code how students could improve their behavior or what steps they could take to prevent such infractions from taking place. This particular social skills program allows for direct instruction of appropriate steps that students can understand and relate to in the daily routines of school life.

The behavior of students in today's schools has changed drastically over the years. These young people are spending more time on their own outside of school and have less supervision. Many of the children are without proper role models and guidance. Students appear to be more disrespectful and non-compliant. School discipline needs to address those trends that trigger misbehavior in students. Success can be achieved when intervention strategies are included in the discipline code and are adapted to the needs of the particular school. The make-up of the community dictates what needs the school should focus upon, whether it's the physical needs of the school or the emotional needs of the children. When student behavior is working in harmony with other facets of the school environment, the likelihood that student academic success will continue on an upward spiral is very positive.

Children today appear to be deficient in the area of social skills, which is a necessary component for developing relationships with children their age and with other adults. Most discipline policies address the consequences associated with improper
conduct. When children receive detentions for disrupting the classroom environment or suspensions for fighting, the measures they should have used to avoid the confrontations are usually received too late. Children oftentimes do not know how to express anger appropriately or show common courtesy to others. They merely act on emotions not thinking about the consequences they might encounter. If children are without the proper supervision at home then inappropriate behavior becomes more of the norm in some schools. What then can schools do to ensure that the learning environment stays intact and children feel good about themselves and others? It is obvious that schools need an alternative plan to address social issues. This plan when used in conjunction with the discipline code makes for a healthy, safe learning environment.

Definitions

The following terms and definitions relate to the overall importance of this study. Understanding specific terminology relative to behavior modification is extremely indigenous to its success. With so much emphasis placed on establishing a foundation for instruction of social skills, adherence to a consistent methodology is crucial. Routines are the force behind the program. They give direction for the inner workings of the school. There are routines for arrival and dismissal to and from school, walking in the hallways, entering the cafeteria and attending assemblies. Children no longer take for granted that it is all right to walk down the middle of the hallway or run to the cafeteria to be first in line for lunch before other classes. Students now walk down the right side of the hallway and permit younger students to pass before them rather than pushing in front of them. Routines are just one area behavior management addresses in its curriculum. Rules accompany the specified routines. They are usually kept to a minimum so as not to
appear too overbearing. When incorporating a social skills plan into the curriculum, it is necessary to define role playing and modeling. **Modeling** is performed by two teachers who work through the steps of the skill in order for the students to have a better understanding of what is expected from them. The students who have been observing the particular steps of the skill to be acquired will then **role-play**. The students observing the modeling will take turns role playing each one of the steps for the particular skill. In addition to the classwork, there is also a homework assignment. The student targets a particular skill, works on the steps, and then explains the procedures that were carried out while the assignment was being completed. When the assignment is reviewed in class with the other students, they discuss whether the assignment was a success or a failure. Before continuing on to a new social skill, all the children in the class have to role play a particular situation. The situation can involve a problem at home, something associated with a school situation, or an activity occurring outside either environment.

When addressing social skills, it is crucial to note that there are basic areas in which students are instructed. It is within these areas that behavior management will feel its most success and hopefully will aid in a reduction of the majority of school discipline problems.

**Limitations of the Study**

The elementary school in Clayton, New Jersey has established this new program geared to establishing rules and routines for grade levels Pre-school through Sixth grade. This is intended to strengthen the discipline code that was adopted by the Board of Education. It by no means is meant to replace it. This study is confined to the elementary building only, even though there are two other schools in the district, a middle
school and a high school. Since this is the first year of the implementation of the program, generalizations about the success of it cannot be applied to the entire district. Perhaps when a few years have passed, hopefully, there will be seen a significant decrease in the number of major infractions across the board. In time, there should be even a decrease in the number of discipline problems in the middle and high school levels since the children will be graduating from the sixth grade to attend those schools.

This plan is designed to eliminate the need or the occasion to administer detentions or issue suspensions for every violation, specifically in fourth grade and below. All participants in the study will benefit from engaging in this program which will be instituted over a three-year period with occasional workshops and inservices. The inservices are required to set the framework for instituting the social skills program. Total commitment is the major requirement necessary for this program to become a positive force in the management of the elementary school. This social skills program is very optimistic in enhancing self-esteem, reducing violence, and promoting positive behavior not only in the classroom but also in society as well.

Setting of the Study

The community of Clayton, New Jersey, as an early settlement, was known for its fine farming land. In the middle of the nineteenth century, a passenger railroad made connections with Glassboro and Millville, New Jersey. The Fisler Glass Works was established during this time period as well. Clayton was not only a farming community but also a community who was proud of its prestigious glass factory. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the town began to develop and Clayton Township became known
as Clayton Borough. The town boasted of religious and social conservatism that is quite evident in the present Borough Council.

Clayton was once known as a thriving glass manufacturer but by the end of the 1920's, it could not quite compete with major factories in the towns of Glassboro and Malaga. Today there are no major industries in the borough of Clayton. The town does have quite a few small businesses including a supermarket and a bank. There is a borough hall and police station. Clayton has five churches, two drug stores, four convenience stores, and two pizza/sandwich shops. The borough also has its own volunteer fire department and ambulance squad. Education facilities are the district public schools, a Catholic elementary school and a primary private school. Two florist shops have recently opened in town. There are also major renovations taking place in the center of town to improve its appearance and give it a more historical flair. In addition, there is a small lumber store, post office, doctor and dentist, and a furniture store. For the young people in town, there is one recreational facility and well kept little league fields. In the off athletic seasons, there really are no activities for them. The majority of the community members are employed outside of the town in surrounding suburbs and cities. When the time arrived for the annual school elections, the results were not always favorable. In the years 1994 through 1998, the school budget was defeated three times and passed only twice. The citizens of Clayton are not usually receptive when it comes to voting in favor of the school budget. They do not want their taxes to increase and this has a profound effect on the school's educational needs. This makes for weak competition with surrounding school districts.
The Clayton Public School District is a factor B district in Gloucester County. The new elementary school opened in September 1989. The ethnic breakdown of the school is 73% Caucasian, 23% Black, 3% Hispanic, and 1% Asian and other. This is the school that has incorporated the new social skills program. Since 1989, the school has had three superintendents, including the present superintendent. It has had five principals and five vice principals. The administrative leadership has proven to be quite varied and policies have undergone extensive revisions. There are fifty faculty members serving the elementary school, forty of whom have Bachelor degrees, five with fifteen or more credits, and five members with a Master's degree. There are also three full time custodians and two part time custodians. The teachers attend extensive workshops in and out of the district. The school has a Reading Recovery Program and a computer lab that is hooked up to the Internet. The school has an extensive library, a science lab, gymnasium and an auditorium. The elementary school has a population of more than six hundred students. It was extremely important to establish a behavior management plan that could compliment the school discipline policy. It was March of 1998 when a core of teachers decided to investigate a social skills program in another district close to the shore. It was a very positive and structured program and it was because of this a decision was made to convince the board of education to have it incorporated into the school curriculum. In the mid-1990's, the curriculum was revised so all subjects were aligned to the Core Content Standards. To date the curriculum is again being addressed to meet current state standards.

The Technology committee is presently meeting to revise the district Technology Plan for the next three years. The Goals 2000 committee is conducting a survey to be
distributed to the students in the district concerning the use of computers in the home. This knowledge will aid in establishing a program of computer literacy for the benefit of the community.

Since the community is basically designated as an economically depressed area and many students come from single parent families, even adequate supervision is sometimes minimal. When a parent is the sole provider for the family and is not able to provide adequate supervision, children are left many times on their own. It is because of this that children can be deficient in some social skills. This is certainly a high price to pay for the expectations of our children who we assume will perform well in school.

**Significance of the Study**

A school incorporates a discipline policy in order to secure a safe learning environment. This policy is applicable to all residents of the school, from the administration, to the faculty and staff, and to the students. There are more critical issues facing schools separate from behavior problems. Today schools are finding that their students are deficient in appropriate social skills that are necessary for everyday communication. Also, there is mounting peer pressure associated with drugs and violence. With decreased support from parents because of less supervision at home and antisocial messages coming from the media, children in schools are finding themselves at a loss when it comes to making difficult decisions and choices without proper guidance.

The schools have a responsibility to develop strategies and guidelines for children. If one of the problems is insufficient supervision outside of school, then schools must initiate a plan in which students are taught suitable alternatives. This new behavior management program working in conjunction with the discipline policy will
seek a reduction in the number of referrals made for conflict resolution and the number of reports written and documented for fighting, assault, disrespect and vandalism. Overall, behavior problems for regular education students and those students considered at-risk should begin to lessen with every year the program is implemented. With society being less resilient and less patient to the pressures children face, schools cannot solely rely on discipline to correct the ills of society that are imposed upon students at an early age. Children start school more aggressive and with less social skills than ever before.

Students cannot be expected to make the right choices if they are not taught them. This social skills program should not expect results of success at least until the end of three years. The program seeks to provide suitable routines that will provide direction in the day to day workings of the school. The very first skill which children are taught is the skill of listening. Basic as it may seem, this first skill sets the pace for the remaining fifty skills taught throughout the year. Learning how to listen and then practice role modeling is pertinent to understanding the importance of the skill. Even the most basic of social skills addresses all grade levels from pre K through sixth grade.

When children are taught consistently and with guidance exactly what we as educators expect from them and we work with them, we can begin to look for success. This program is significant in that it targets those areas where children are having the most difficulty making the transition from home to school. What is distressing is that even so called good schools are also experiencing the same difficulties. Children need direction, stability, and structure. The new social skills program will increase self-esteem, bring respect to teachers and students and ensure a positive attitude all around.
The ultimate goal is to decrease the number of disruptive students in a classroom and raise the standard of learning so all children will become active life long learners.

**Organization of the Study**

The ensuing chapters will elucidate the structure for the remaining areas of the paper. Chapter Two will review literature that supports the rationale for instituting a much needed behavior management program. Chapter Three will focus on the design of the study and how it will develop based on the utilization of research instruments. There will also be an in-depth description of the sample as it is confined to the elementary school in the district. The data collection will consist of written reviews, surveys, and observations all recorded on a monthly basis. Chapter Four will focus on what research has found to support the theory that alternative methods to behavior management are oftentimes necessary to support other measures of discipline. If they do positively support and enhance discipline policies then perhaps schools should inquire about the logistics of such programs so they can be incorporated into a school's curriculum. Finally, Chapter Five will culminate in a discussion as to how this new social skills program will affect the school community. The study should indicate whether or not the school will want to continue with the program in the future after it has had a chance to be implemented. If the program can prove to be successful, it is very likely that it will become a permanent addition to the school curriculum and discipline policy. It will take much dedication and consistency on the part of the teachers and the staff to convince the board of education that it is important and necessary to have in order to provide for the best learning environment the school can give to its students. Chapter five will also stress the leadership qualities and communication skills necessary to engage this program. It
will concentrate on group processes, performance and instruction. The organizational management of the program will affect its evaluation and worth. Since positive behavior management programs are intrinsic to the structure of a school, it is significant to continue with the implementation of all strategies and proceed with future research that will support student behavior, conduct, and social interaction.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The philosophies of most schools focusing on discipline address the welfare of the students, the teaching staff, and the school as a whole. Schools' responsibilities are delegated to securing a safe and secure environment, which allow teachers to teach and students to learn in a manner which does not violate the best interest of any person in the school community. The purpose of this study is to document the importance of incorporating a social skills program with a school discipline policy. This review of literature will set the pace for the role of positive behavior management.

Traditional vs. Modern Methods

So much research, recently, has placed discipline on the negative side of the spectrum. It has always been associated with punishment in terms of attempting to change bad behavior to good behavior. Generations have experienced reprimands, detentions, suspensions, and corporal punishment. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it did not. Trying to control behavior meant disciplining those students who would not conform to rules and regulations set forth by the school policy and individual classroom teachers. Even though discipline policies are established for uniformity in schools, too often misinterpretation of the rules and consequences led to inconsistencies within a building. Teachers interpreted the rules to mean something other than what was stated and in turn established their own rules and consequences. When this occurs, it is unfortunate that the policy becomes reactive rather than proactive. New programs are
now being implemented to address discipline in the form of proactive strategies. These programs rely on a standard set of routines followed by rules with less emphasis on negative consequences. Discipline policies are meant to address behavior problems with subsequent outcomes ranging from warnings to detentions to suspensions. Today, these policies are in effect as a substitute to handle those offenders who can not adjust to the new pro-social/ life skills programs. Discipline codes will remain in effect to determine the consequences of repeated offenders. Positive behavior in schools should be modeled and reinforced in order for the student to be successful in actual social situations. This natural reinforcement will be more effective than a verbal reinforcement, thus relying on the student's memory not to repeat an unacceptable behavior. Educators desire discipline to be a positive force in a student's life. An environment conducive to learning encourages a student to perform well in class, such as being attentive and being responsible for his or her work. When pro-behavior skills are evident in the classroom, hallways, and in every area of the school environment, the entire student body will reap the benefits as well as the teachers and administration.

Establish a New Program

It is a realistic approach for a school and its constituents to establish an action plan that will employ methods to guide students to develop responsible and appropriate behavior. One popular approach to this method is the new pro-social skills program, which is making its way into schools across the nation. Many schools have adapted these programs under different names but the outcome is always the same: proactive behavior management developed as a school wide plan.
According to the National Crime Commission, safety and a positive learning atmosphere are most important in making sure that children in schools are afforded every chance to fully develop their talents, be it academic or otherwise. Teachers and administrators have a responsibility to see that this does exist. Children develop problems (Conflict Resolution, 1998) and can not always be expected to solve them in the same manner that adults would solve them. Children lacking the appropriate social skills for conflict resolution could be drawn into situations, which could cause them to react rather than think. Without proper role modeling by a dedicated teaching staff, verbal instruction is not sufficient. Children need to know that all types of skills are involved when interacting with people. The simple skill of knowing how to listen can become a bridge or wall if the proper steps are not practiced and followed. How many children know how to apologize and sincerely mean it and how many adults for that matter can do the same? Innovative life skills can help alleviate pressures children in school experience by challenging them to fully understand the principles of social behavior in a cooperative safe learning environment (Conflict Resolution, 1998).

Implementation of New Program

Much time and work is put into implementing social skills programs in schools especially when student behavior is dictated by the school's discipline policy. For a social skills program to become acceptable and compliment the discipline policy, it is necessary to target those students who lack the basic comprehension of what the program entails. Judith Osgood Smith (1995) of Purdue University Calumet states that there are two major deficits facing students; they are skill-based and performance-based deficits. A skill-based deficit identifies a student who has not been taught how to perform a
particular behavior. When this is observed in any given situation, a student not following rules is usually given a series of reprimands without knowing the solution to remedy the situation. Those students who are not able to accomplish a specific behavior need to be taught the skill before it is assumed he/she can perform it. According to Judith Smith (1995) if a child is not afforded the opportunity to experience a certain type of skill then the child needs positive reinforcement. This is why role modeling is such an important tool in skills programs as is practicing the skill to be learned. To strengthen any skill, it is necessary to always give direct instruction repeatedly.

The other deficit Judith Smith (1995) talks about is the performance-based deficit. This occurs when a student knows the skill but does not perform it or has no desire to perform it. A student who knows how the skill works but does not perform it apparently needs to be motivationally challenged to do so. This can be addressed by having an adult work with the student in question. If a student is able to recognize the desired skill to be learned (Smith, 1995), there may also be a problem in knowing when to exhibit the required skill. When this occurs, it may be necessary to extract certain bits of information in order to learn what the students are lacking and teach them how to apply it in certain social situations. This reinforces the anticipated behavior skill to be learned.

In Conjunction with Discipline Policy

The introduction of the new life/social skills programs is by no means meant to totally eliminate a school's discipline policy. Many schools do not choose to implement this into their curriculum, rather they select to modify their current discipline code. Budd Churchward (1995) who wrote the "Honor Level System: Discipline by Design", suggests that there are four steps to maintaining better classroom discipline. The
following steps are as follows: reminder, warning, infraction notice, and office. Budd Churchward (1995) explains the first step, the reminder, in this way. Children need to be repeatedly reminded about a certain expectation because they are children and to not let it expand into another dimension where they will not be able to control the situation. His second step involves giving reprimands or warnings, be they written or verbal. Churchward (1995) does warn, however, that teachers should not verbally admonish a student from across the room. They should approach the student in order for the student to receive and understand the warning. Once the teacher has approached the student, the written warning is in the form of an infraction slip. This slip serves as a visual reminder that the student is in control of his behavior at this point. If the student is able to get his behavior under control before the end of the day, the slip is removed. The purpose of this second step is to place the student's behavior within his own control. The third step involves the infraction slip if the warning did not evoke the expected behavior. Once the slip has been written (Churchward, 1995) describing the possible infractions, consequences will result with either detentions or if the behavior warrants it, suspensions. The fourth and final step involves sending the student to the office when all else fails. When the student is sent out the teacher always encourages better behavior for the next day. If consistency is applied in the classroom and in the school as a whole, most minor infractions remain minor. Budd Churchward (1995) also discovered techniques that he adapted from Thomas McDaniel. These techniques can easily be changed to fit into most social skills programs. It is important to remember to focus on every student in the classroom because direct instruction will occur when children know exactly what is expected of them. The next two steps are equally important; they are monitoring and
modeling. Circulating around the room will encourage the majority of the students to focus on the tasks and stay focused, while modeling by the teacher can foster the appropriate messages which will invite proper behavior. An effective teacher (Churchward, 1995) knows how to gain the children's attention in class when the social skills lesson is completed for the day. Keeping a low profile in the classroom works well with the students who somehow manage to get off task. With all things considered, a positive outlook for dealing with discipline will allow the students to know what is expected of them.

Management of Behavior

Necessary for establishing a social/life skills program, is knowledge of ways to manage inappropriate behavior. In an article written for the Council for Exceptional Children (1978), the atmosphere of a classroom must be conducive to enforcing the social skills through behavior management. With social skills, there are a limited number of routines and rules that must be followed. The best way to enforce this is to not have too many rules. Children who are skillfully taught reasonable ways to manage behavior become better listeners and are able to stay on task for longer periods of time without much distraction. When social skills (Lovitt, 1978) are being taught in conjunction with academic skills, students soon learn how one skill is contingent upon another. In the area of punishment, the application of social skills education attempts to minimize negative consequences unless there is a need in extreme cases. Too much negativity will counter effect the philosophy of the skills program (Lovitt, 1978) by directing a student's misinterpretation of the intended skill with the consequence given by a teacher. If the
atmosphere of the classroom is aimed toward positive behavior then students are more apt to want to learn.

With all that is said about new school programs, they are only as good as the administration that supports them. A responsible principal, according to an article written by Gary Hartzell and Thomas Petrie (1992) must control the issues of behavior at the building level. Three areas of concern for the principal are the organization of the school, the behavior of the staff, and the behavior of students. The majority of the children's problems usually occur outside of school, such as within the home or within the social group. If the behavior problem is then carried into school, it is usually the responsibility of the individual teacher to attempt to solve the problem. With each teacher's individual rules for the classroom, consistency suffers. This article explains how important it is for the "culture of the school" to exhibit reasonable expectations of acceptable behavior (Hartzell & Petrie, 1992). Values and beliefs, which are shared by the school community, are necessary to guide the relationships between adults and children.

According to research by Hartzell and Petrie (1992), the success of a school is evident in its philosophy concerning positive student behavior patterns. When skills are taught consistently by every teacher and staff member and reinforced by the building principal, the ratio of discipline problems to the total school population diminishes. According to this, the fewer discipline problems a school has the better the academic performance. With social skills being taught consistently in classrooms, every student will know what teachers expect from them. Consistent teaching of these skills will strengthen overall behavior. Important to social skills is the classification of its goals and standards.
Students are influenced by other factors (Hartzell & Petrie, 1992) outside of schools and if the schools have demonstrated a philosophy that will help them address the students, then the students will be more inclined to want to take more responsibility. What social skills programs want to reinforce is order in the school and classroom where there is little tolerance for misbehavior. These programs help to develop self-confidence and identity so not to interfere with everyday instruction. The article also reiterates that courtesy, accountability, and respect are mutual issues that should be taught at home and reinforced in school. The principal's responsibility is to see that these concerns are being addressed because they are critical to everyone's interest.

According to a report "Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-1997", principals stated that issues relating to discipline were the most alarming. The top three issues reported were student lateness, absenteeism, and physical conflicts among students. When students are taught how to properly handle skills they need to communicate with, many of the problems decrease. Also, in the principals' report (1997) there were fewer problems at the elementary level at eight percent compared to discipline problems at high school level at thirty-seven percent. Elementary schools usually are the pioneers in establishing new programs and that could be the reason why behavior problems are somewhat lower in middle and high school. However, at the elementary level, more conflicts among students were higher than those reported at the high school level. Young people who are not taught certain skills at home and then have to act upon them at school may find themselves having behavior problems. When a comparison was made in the years 1991 and 1997, there had been a definite increase in the discipline issues.
Schools As Communities

In an article written by Patrick Lawrence and Kent Olvey (1994) entitled "Discipline: A Skill Not a Punishment", they reiterate that discipline should be established with the entire school community in mind. There are five major areas that should be highlighted. They are (1) understanding, (2) consistency, (3) knowledge of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, (4) emergency instructions, and (5) high expectations.

With a news skills program being introduced in an elementary school it is important to have a school wide agreement on what the plan entails and how it will be implemented. When a committee is designated to begin sorting out routines and rules, they are acting in behalf of the entire teaching staff. Since it is a small town school, many of the faculty members themselves are parents. In a social skills program it is necessary to never use negative language, such as "bad behavior". The term inappropriate behavior is more acceptable and one can still specify the difference between "good" and "bad" (Lawrence & Olvey, 1994). When all rules and routines are explained clearly, students will know exactly what to expect and what is expected from them. Consistency is the keyword and when this effort is undertaken, procedures will run smoothly. The most important aspect of all (Lawrence & Olvey, 1994) is to maintain "high expectations for all students". When everyone is pursuing the same goal it makes for a school climate conducive to learning.

James Comer (1997), a professor of child psychiatry at Yale University, wrote "Building Schools as Communities". In this article, the mention of social skills programs was intended to show that schools could become communities within themselves.
Schools have become havens for the emotional and social development of children.
Within the community, respect is taught to children and modeled so that they learn to respect themselves and show respect to others. A universal assumption (Comer, 1997) is that children come to school already equipped with certain values. This is no longer true. What needs to be addressed is to start from the beginning with all children and lay the groundwork in order to give them a solid foundation. Schools must support those social skills that all children need in order to promote their emotional well being and make them productive citizens for the future. When children have a firm grip on their self-esteem and understand that they are very important, their academics will also become important to them. James Comer (1997) was quick to point out that there are those who feel if schools devote time to this instruction the children's studies will suffer. He feels that "creativity, personal discipline, and the ability to relate to other people" are all vital to building self-esteem. When children act out, many times teachers are not equipped to handle the outbursts and when they do, it is in a negative way. The problem now is how to control behavior that is inappropriate. The child is still unaware of what steps to use to control the situation before it gets out of hand. It is now important to build upon relationships in school in order for students to identify with those adults who will become their role models. Children who feel safe and secure (Comer, 1997) and are knowledgeable in how to communicate with people will come to respect those who are like them and those who may be different. One last very important issue James Comer (1997) reiterates over and over is that we are not to assume the role of the parents. We are to strengthen and reinforce those characteristics which parents have instilled in their children.
Socialization

An interesting abstract written by Ron Nelson (1997) entitled, "Designing Schools to Enhance the Academic and Social Outcomes of all Students" expounds upon the notion that discipline should primarily be an intervention program that responds to the behavior of students. It is stressed that most discipline problems are a result of inadequate socialization, which permeates every aspect of a student's academic learning. Nelson (1997) firmly believes that the best working model for intervention must be implemented across all areas in the school with students being instructed in all "acceptable social norms." These areas include hallways, cafeteria, gymnasium, and playgrounds as well as all classrooms. Another important aspect is for the models to be consistent with these expectations which are incorporated into the rules and routines of the program. This is to offset any behavior problems, which are apt to occur. Other areas that require concentration are those in which a large number of students will be congregating at the same time. Locations can prove to be a concern for unexpected behavior problems. Staggered lunch times for the grade levels alleviate potential problems. The key to having a successful behavior intervention program is to "catch" inappropriate behavior before it has a chance to fester. What makes this work is the dedication (Nelson, 1997) of the teachers and staff who constantly reinforce appropriate behavior without undermining the self-esteem of those students who are striving to succeed. The catch phrase for this discipline is to have "longitudinal programming." What this entails is to instruct students on fundamental skills, which will equip them to recognize undesirable actions, which will make for positive academic and social foundation. This hopefully will lead to better management of behavior and the ability to
discriminate between what is acceptable and what is not. Once students know what to do, the next step is to teach them which situations will require them to think before reacting. When a social skills program is implemented along with the school's discipline policy (Nelson, 1997) both will play a positive role in enhancing school wide academic performance.

Schools have always maintained a very social network of relationships, such as administrators to teachers, teachers to parents, students to teachers, and students to students. It is an ongoing chain of interaction. Any time a link in the chain becomes weak, the entire communication system falters. In an article written by Linda Latieri (1996), entitled, "The Road to Peace in Our Schools", she states that children are more exposed to negative surroundings now than at any other time. Schools should be one of the few remaining havens that children have. In recent times, however, this is not ringing true. How can children learn to resolve conflicts and grow into socially adjusted young adults if all they know is how to solve problems violently? Life Skills programs are one way in which children (Latieri, 1996) learn how to control and manage their social and emotional skills. Latieri (1996) states that schools need to transform themselves from strictly academic structures to nonviolent learning communities, which is what they should be, realistically speaking. Children from diverse backgrounds frequently come to school without knowing exactly what their responsibilities are. Children in lower grades if not taught at an early age develop negative habits. If this is not rectified by the time they approach middle school age, they do not have an inkling of what is socially acceptable behavior. Students need to know that within all communities, structure and order are necessary. Linda Lantieri (1996) maintains that a strong curriculum that targets
the teaching of social skills allows for cooperation and expression of feelings in positive ways. It also strengthens children's views on diversity and helps to negate certain biases they may harbor. It is necessary for administrators to be supportive with any new behavior management programs other than their district discipline policies. Parents need to know also that what they are teaching at home is reinforced on a daily basis within the school. When children know that they have means to control how they resolve conflicts, they will be able to succeed academically. This empowerment (Lantieri, 1996) will make schools the place where children want to go to learn and grow in a safe and secure environment.

At-Risk Students

According to the article, "Class Size and Students At Risk", written in April 1998, an important aspect that must not be overlooked is how to engage students so that their behavior propels them into the direction of learning. New life skills programs aim to do just that. Since students are more at risk than thought to be, they need structured direction. Programs need to address simple routines such as complying with school rules, coming to school on time and being prepared to work in class. Students have a need to feel they belong, and when this occurs they perform to the best of their abilities. It does not matter the grade level; they need to see the teacher exhibiting pro-social behavior as well. This article (Lieberg, 1998) states that there is help for bad manners in the classroom. Students' needs must be met first as people then as students and teachers must be in tune to this. Teachers set the tone for the classroom, and when they exhibit warmth and friendliness, they usually are greeted with the same.
In one profound document written by Stewart Purkey in 1986, he wrote that if there is organizational change in an existing structure, there should also be behavioral changes as well. The school will become a positive learning environment, which will promote positive life long skills. In most schools, the philosophy of discipline is to find the most appropriate way to control behavior without controlling the student. Discipline can only be improved upon (Purkey, 1986) when the approaches to the problem are addressed differently. Strong leadership certainly will dictate which schools have minimal problems. Students respond positively when they know what is expected from them and that happens when there is evidence of good, strong leadership.

**Internal Structure**

The one magic word that takes precedence throughout pro-behavior programs is consistency. Purkey (1986) stresses that it is crucial in engaging the entire staff to work toward a common goal. The goal is to have all students feel successful and this can be accomplished when routines and rules are consistently followed. The end result is that schools will have students who will become life long learners who will be successful contributors to society.

What should not happen is for any discipline policy to become an end in itself. What should transpire is a common bond that holds the entire staff together. In order to have this bond some very important points need to be addressed. First and foremost as with any new program being introduced, the leadership of administrators must be visible. They should automatically support the faculty and staff in implementing a social skills program. Resources and time management are also to be addressed, both of which are crucial to the success of the program. Purkey (1986) is quick to point out that schools are
communities with a common direction aimed toward academic goals, respect for authority, and proper management of behavior. It is a known fact that discipline, especially in its most positive form, is necessary for learning. Gone are the days of corporal punishment on students who broke the rules in school. Today, schools aim to address the problems and find ways to positively correct them. When a community, like a school, undergoes drastic changes, they are apt to be challenging at times. The best way to keep the philosophy on track is to align it with the curriculum, which will determine the success or failure of the program and to hold responsible those administrators who must show support to any new, innovative program dealing with discipline and social skills.

A report, based on an article entitled, "Managing Classroom Behavior", proceeds with certain vital questions pertaining to identification of basic discipline problems. If these problems are not addressed before implementing any discipline program, it will only prove futile to enforce one. Students appear to hold the key as to whether or not some discipline programs will work. Their good behavior or lack of it will determine the success or failure of any social skills program. Instructors need to realize that their training can target the weak areas that need focusing. A social or life skills curriculum gives reason for reflection when its primary focus is the student. It addresses such concerns, as what is the best way to communicate with students and have them respond to you in a non-violent manner? This is the first step for active communication. When teachers and students follow certain specified steps, negative reactions will begin to diffuse and permit better relationships to develop.
Shared Responsibility

Barbara Ries-Wager wrote an article called, "No More Suspension: Creating A Shared Ethical Culture," (1993). In this article, Wager (1993) expounds upon the idea that if a school community partakes in a value system it allows for the process of education to continue without interruption. When students are engaged in active learning, this is most productive. The focus remains on the academics only and not any disruptive behavior. The answer to most disruptive outbursts is usually to remove the offender from the situation. When a student is removed from the situation he is no longer a part of the learning environment. This should signal a red flag. Students are to be educated not only for the academics but also to become productive citizens in our society. Mismanagement of discipline (Wager, 1993) can have an adverse effect on the whole learning process. The answer is to find an alternative method to addressing discipline. Schools need to decide on what is the best approach to take, which will promote positive behavior management. When using alternative methods, avenues of communication are opened. Students learn routines and rules to follow. Wager (1993) stresses that students need reward occasionally and not always consequences. Motivation is crucial. Teachers have to buy into the program in order for failure to be replaced with success, and passive participation replaced with active participation. Consistency and structure rules.

One positive area concerning the teaching of social and life skills is that it can be incorporated into a school's discipline management program. Since these programs address all children, it is very positive for children who have special needs. Many classrooms (Wager, 1993) are no longer regular education classrooms. They are as diverse as the students who occupy the seats in the room. Many grade levels have
students mainstreamed from special education classes and some classes are strictly inclusion classes. These children are incorporated into regular education rooms and are being instructed in these programs along with everyone else. Instructing social skills programs require direct instruction of routines, rules, and skill steps. Children of all abilities benefit from instruction when there is interaction between teacher and student.

Application of Program

In the town of Clayton, New Jersey, a new life skills program is being introduced. Children in all grade levels are instructed on the same skills, such as Listening or Asking A Question. The age and the grade level dictate the methods on instruction and modeling. One positive aspect of this program is that it is structured and consistent throughout the school environment. Whether it is implemented in the same manner will determine the success or failure of the program. The manner in which the skill steps are introduced affects the acceptance or rejection of the program by the children and parents. When students receive direct instruction and knowledge on what is expected from them, they will respond appropriately. Social skills become effective when they are able to make a difference in the personality of the child.

Authors Arnold P. Goldstein and Ellen McGinnis (1997) are staunch believers in the development of the Skillstreaming program. What might be called Life Skills or Social Skills in schools, it still maintains the same philosophy. It is important to note that this behavior management program has been in effect for more than twenty years. It is a more positive discipline program in relation to the traditional discipline policies found in effect today in most schools. Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) put this program into perspective by stating that students who are most at risk benefit greatly from this
consistently structured program. It is now safe to say that all students, not just those at risk can benefit from learning to develop socially appropriate behavior. (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997). Today, many schools search for alternative methods to maintain the status quo for discipline. In an elementary school of almost seven hundred students in grades Pre K through Sixth Grade, there is more than ample opportunity for problems to arise even in the lower grades. Children beginning elementary school are thrust into relationships outside their families. There are different expectations for children beginning school and more often than not signs of aggression begin to develop. By the time children are ready to leave elementary school a pattern of positive social skills should be established and ready to take them into middle and high school. (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997). Skillstreaming is an ongoing learning process. It is something that is working in addition to an already established curriculum. The following central areas help to promote positive reinforcement of social skills to be implemented. They are encouragement, reassurance, and rewards. Everything that is positive about a behavior management program, skillstreaming is all that and more. Children who come to school with aggressive behavior know that there are teachers who will help them work through their aggressions with appropriate steps. It certainly takes more time to work with students by modeling the steps and providing situations to simulate possible problems. It is certainly worth the effort that the outcome will produce fewer detentions and suspensions.

Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) are quick to note that aggression takes form in early childhood. By the time children start school negative patterns have already been established. Skillstreaming counter balances the behavior children bring with them to
Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) show that children need to associate with others to form friendships and relationships outside the family. The opportunity for these relationships begins in schools. Schools that adhere strictly to a discipline code filled with only consequences are not teaching students how to adjust their behavior, or show them what they can do to substitute the negative actions with positive reactions. Results are achieved when steps are displayed, situations are modeled, and there is sufficient guidance to support day to day routines. (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997). In an elementary school, the foundation begins here. It is not a program that will be perfected in a day, month, or even a year. It takes time and commitment on everyone's part, from the staff to the teachers to the administration. Skillstreaming is not always popular at first. It needs to be incorporated into the teaching day, which means there is an additional subject to teach. If all participants involved, which includes every staff member and support staff member, give one hundred percent to the program, it will be the most successful addition to a school's curriculum and the most worthwhile.
Chapter 3

The Design of the Study

For this study, qualitative research was the most logical route to follow. Since this study focused on one specific school setting, it was also very ethnographic in nature. At this elementary school, the intern with the support of the administration and a committee of volunteers initiated a new social skills program. This new program that was observed at another elementary school was thought to be an excellent addition to the existing discipline policy at Simmons Elementary School. The consensus being students' infractions were due to a lack of knowledge of basic social skills. This ultimately led to numerous school detentions and suspensions as documented in the discipline reports (see Appendix A).

General Description of Design

The purpose of this design was to determine whether or not this social skills program has had a positive effect on discipline at the elementary level. The design in this particular study was very subjective due to the fact that it was not taking place in an experimental setting. All teachers, students, and members of the staff were participants in this new program. Everyone was an important asset and therefore consistency and structure remained a constant. It was also necessary in this situation to balance any form of bias, which could have surfaced. In addition, intervening variables, such as teacher style and student climate determined the success or failure of the program. No variables were manipulated and the school was constant by its very nature. The independent
variable in this particular case was the social skills program, while the dependent was discipline. The teachers and students remained the intervening variables.

The purpose of this research design was to find associations and explanations in order to answer those "why" questions. Its basic purpose was to solve a problem (behavior management) by answering specific questions targeted to that very purpose. Problems concerning the program can not be addressed wholly until the end of the three-year implementation time period. At the end of the three years, there will be a summative report to determine whether or not the program should continue.

**Description of the Instrument Design**

In order for the social skills program to be implemented, it was necessary to form a committee. The intern and the committee worked tirelessly to establish procedures that incorporated rules and routines. These rules and routines set the pace for the beginning of this program (see Appendix B). While the procedures were being worked on, it was inevitable that a parent letter had to be constructed and mailed before the beginning of school. This was necessary in order to persuade the parents that this was a worthwhile addition to the curriculum (see Appendix C).

This new program was designed to instruct students in social skills in order to reduce the number of discipline infractions incurred during the day. The routines centered on the following areas of the school. These included arrival and dismissal of students, both walkers and bus students, office and visitor routines, hallway transitions, cafeteria and auditorium. The skill-streaming committee, consisting of teachers from different grade levels and subject areas participated in formulating the steps necessary to implement the program. The procedures for Visitor/Parents and Office were divided into
sections that all parties followed explicitly and constantly. The guidelines written for arrival and dismissal were designed for teachers and staff.

Students were guided through the stages with instructions from their teachers. For this to work consistently, arrival and dismissal times had to be synchronized for exactness. The cafeteria staff was also included in the procedures due to the fact they were instrumental in the implementation of breakfast and lunch routines. Once again, the students became aware of this procedure through instruction from their classroom teachers with the support of the cafeteria staff.

The volatile area where routines were tested the most was the transition in the hallways. This occurred when several grade levels were passing in the hallways at the same time. The procedures were designed to allow smooth transition from one area of the school to another. All teachers in the school knew what was expected from the students. The structure of all routines was written so there was no misconception on anyone's part to misinterpret any procedures to follow. Even teachers who instructed special area subjects were included in all processes associated with implementations of routines. In this way every teacher, staff member, custodian, and secretary were instrumental in fostering consistency throughout the school.

Description of the Sample

The Social Skills curriculum was introduced in Simmons Elementary School in September 1998. Two inservices were held in June of 1998 conducted by Dr. Carolyn Hamlett. She introduced the program in June when a core of teachers requested a behavior management program that was proactive. The school community was searching
for an alternative method to control students' behavior. The consensus was that students lacked the necessary social skills that addressed everyday social situations.

The students in the elementary school were in grades Pre K through Sixth grade. In addition, there were two inclusion classes and four special education classes. The elementary school's population was over seven hundred, with a teaching staff of fifty-two and twenty support staff members. There was one superintendent for the district, a principal, a child study team, a school psychologist, and a nurse. The school had a transportation coordinator and a custodial and cafeteria staff. All teachers and staff members hold a vested interest in the program. In the past ten years, since the school was built, there were three superintendents, six principals, and three vice-principals. The different administrations had also brought different interpretations to the discipline policy. There had been in the past students suspended for infractions that were repeated offenses. These offenses accumulated because students did not know how to manage their behavior. They continued to repeat the same misbehaviors leading to higher levels of consequences.

The school needed an alternative program that did not rely on detentions and suspensions as a means of punishment for its elementary students. Unless the students were taught the appropriate avenues to use to control their misbehavior, they were apt to repeat the same mistakes. Hence, the need for a new program that would be more proactive than reactive. Furthermore, since the inception of the program in September teachers had observed a remarkable decrease in the number of infractions committed by younger students. Students in the upper grades, however, were still repeating actions that led to inappropriate behavior. Sometimes all it required was support from the teachers to
show them when they were doing a fine job. The same infractions being committed had
decreased due to the positive effect of the program (see Appendix D).

Data Collection

Before the social skills program could be implemented, the social skills
committee had to revise the routines and procedures over an eight-week period. The
Vice-Principal was also included to offer suggestions for areas of the school that needed
greater attention than others. Every area of the school had to be considered important
enough to warrant routines in order to have a safe and secure learning environment.
There was not always total agreement on which steps would supersede others for
immediate attention. There were many discussions, for example, on behavior
expectations by students in the hallways. The lower grade teachers stated behavior
expectations differently from upper grade teachers. Fortunately, a special area teacher
offered sound suggestions agreeable by both areas. This proved to be a very healthy
experience for all.

At the end of the eight-week period when a consensus was finally reached, a
packet of routines was correlated for every teacher and member of the staff of Simmons
Elementary School. It was necessary for all to have it before the beginning of school.
This permitted them to peruse the material and familiarize themselves with routines.
These routines were originally discussed at the two inservice meetings held in June. It
was because of these two meetings that the routines evolved. It was a total school effort,
from classroom teachers to secretaries, to bus drivers, and custodial staff. A commitment
on everyone's part was necessary to make this a successful part of the school's
curriculum. It will take three years to fully appreciate the effectiveness of the program
and to see positive results affecting the school's discipline policy. A decrease in the
number of detentions and suspensions was the goal of this program.

Prior to school opening in September, a packet of routines was mailed to every
parent whose child or children attended the elementary school. This packet included a
welcome back letter from the principal. It explained what the new skills program was
about and how it would impact the learning environment. It also explained how it would
increase self-esteem, promote positive behavior and reduce violence in the elementary
school.

Procedures that affected parents were the Visitor routines and Arrival and
Dismissal routines. Too many parents were visiting classrooms without prior permission
from the office staff or the classroom teacher. This was becoming a security issue and
needed to be addressed somewhat sternly. A simple stop at the office and a visitor pass
would give everyone a more secure feeling about the safety of the children. It was
anticipated that there would be some confusion related to these specific areas especially
in the first few weeks of school. Once school opened, a committee was formed to include
teachers and parents who were instrumental in addressing issues that affected the entire
school environment. We were all in agreement that it would take some time for
everything to come together. With monthly meetings, it was hoped that when problems
arose, they would be addressed quickly and efficiently.

Data Analysis

After five months of observing the social skills program, the consensus among
some of the staff members was that there were a few weak areas that needed to be
addressed immediately. When it appeared that routines needed to be tightened, a simple
reminder was all that it took to move everyone in the right direction again. There must be
one hundred percent support for this program to the curriculum in order to work.

After speaking with teachers and staff members, they felt that the program overall
had been successful. There was more respect being shown to adults than ever before, and
students were polite to one another more so than in the past. It was not only the routines
that were making a difference but also the social skills that were being taught in the
classroom everyday. With two teachers in the classroom role playing the steps for the
students, they had a better idea of what was expected from them. It did not always work,
but there was constant reinforcement throughout. Behavior management was the driving
force behind the program. There were appropriate lessons geared for specific grade
levels and those that were always ready for that "teachable moment." When students saw
that these were real skills to apply to their lives, it began to take on meaning they could
relate to. Students would lose enthusiasm if teachers did and that was why total support
from the administration was necessary to prolong the program. Sometimes it took only a
minority to become disenchanted. That was when total commitment to the program took
precedence. In spite of some tribulations, there was agreement that this new addition to
the curriculum had a positive effect on discipline.

Five months into the program a survey was sent to staff members in the school.
Of the sixty surveys that were distributed, fifty percent were returned. Of the fifty
percent returned, one third stated that the social skills program was having no effect on
discipline. Two thirds of the survey confirmed that it was definitely having a positive
effect on discipline (see Appendix D). It was enlightening to observe that perseverance
and faith obtained results. The number of school detentions and suspensions had slightly

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decreased from last year at this time. The number of infractions, such as pushing and rough housing on the playground had also decreased. This was certainly worth the effort for everyone.

The social interaction among the students was not perfect but it was showing a healthy change from previous years. Students had forgotten how to talk to one another and had taken to solving their problems with violence. It was starting at a much earlier age than ever before and this was quite frightening. Staff members were even beginning to notice a slight improvement in overall student behavior and manners. Would the social skills program continue to improve school wide discipline? The answer right now appeared to be very positive. Overnight success was not going to happen. We were working with seven hundred students. Consistency took time and patience. Support was vital from every nook and cranny in the school. It did work as long as we were adamant about having a safe and secure environment that was conducive to learning for everyone.
Chapter 4

Presentations of the Research Findings

Since the new behavior management program was instituted at the elementary school, routines and skill-streaming lessons have affected overall discipline. Students, teachers, and the entire staff at Simmons Elementary School have been involved with the social skills program since September.

While the school discipline policy is being closely examined for alignment with this program, routines are in effect every day. Any problems or issues concerning skill-streaming are addressed by the intern with the principal of the school. The social skills that are taught in the classroom reflect real life situations. In this way, it is hoped that students will adapt these models whenever they find themselves in precarious situations.

Many areas of the program are very proactive with alternative methods given for handling difficult moments. The students are given a new social skill to learn weekly with a series of steps to follow. When they feel comfortable with the skill they are working on, they discuss situations related to that skill. Once the steps are thoroughly reviewed in class, the students are given the opportunity to model the situations. These situations mirror activities they could encounter in school, at home, and with their peers. Sometimes there will be consensus in the classroom and sometimes disagreement. Nevertheless, the class works on a particular skill until everyone has had the chance to practice it. Since there are three levels of skill lessons appropriate for several grade levels, teachers are able to address those skills they deem necessary for the students.
With two teachers instructing the class, there are many opportunities for student and instructor interaction.

One positive aspect of this program is the consistency and structure of routines and skill lessons. From office routines, to dismissal routines, to hallway routines, they all contribute to the successful operation of the school. The routines are only successful so long as teachers and staff follow the established plan. The intern with a committee of teachers worked during the summer of 1998 to formulate these routines and to make them compatible with the discipline policy of the school. It is extremely important that this foundation remain intact. All of these routines are made with children and structure in mind. They were established in order to have a safe and secure environment. The wording of the routines is very simple so everyone understands the message. The students in all grade levels know what is expected of them when they are in certain areas of the school. All teachers can, at any time, remind students of the steps they should be following. If there is not 100% percent support for the program, consistency and structure mean absolutely nothing. Since this is a three year program, it will take that long to see the results of the entire group's efforts.

With each new administration, there was always a change in the way discipline was handled. The staff felt that discipline appeared to be losing some of effect on the students. The staff was searching for an alternative method that would have a positive and lasting effect on all students in all grades. The result was a social skills program that stressed communication with peers and adults. This program lists steps to follow in order to avoid potential weak areas such as running in the halls, talking too loudly in the cafeteria, or displaying inappropriate behavior in the auditorium during an assembly.
These problems are then discussed in class and situations re-enacted to show the best way to turn a negative condition into a positive one. At times, it is very difficult for adults to model certain situations for children. How adults react to something is totally different from children reacting. This is when dedication and patience for the program takes prominence. The adults must scale down those steps in order for the students to grasp the reality of that which is being taught. If children are not convinced that socialization is a key element to achieving success in society, then we need to keep looking for something that will show them the importance of being productive citizens in society. Too often, those social skills necessary for children to achieve success for themselves and others are often not taught at home. This can no longer be taken for granted. It has become the responsibility of educators to ensure that all children beginning in pre-kindergarten through adolescence are equipped with the proper social skills.

Documentation

The skill-streaming course of study was initiated at Herma Simmons Elementary School in September 1998. After persuading a few doubting staff members that this was a workable solution to the discipline problems, it became part of the school's curriculum. The day begins in every classroom for thirty minutes with the introduction of a social skill. Along with the skill, there are steps to follow with suggestions for easy explanation. There is time for a thorough discussion and modeling between the two adults in the classroom. Keep in mind that there are three levels of instruction. The method of instruction is contingent upon the age and grade level of the children.

Once the modeling by the adults has been completed then the children take turns working in pairs acting out specific situations given to them by the teacher. These
situations that are suggested are done so with the consent of the children and with
suggestions they may have to offer. Since this program is established for them, it is
important for them to have input as well. Ownership is extremely crucial for the success
of this curriculum. Children are given three areas that play a prominent role in their lives.
They are the school environment, their home, and their relationships with their peers and
other adults. It is hoped that with these skill lessons they will become more cognizant of
the expectations awaiting them as they begin and end each day. These are the same
social skills that they will be using as adults.

Halfway through the first year of its acceptance, a survey was distributed to the
teachers. The objective of the survey was to gather information related to the success or
nonsuccess of the routines and the instruction of the skills. Remember that this is a three-
year program. Even though some skeptical observers appear ready to dissolve this
because they are not seeing immediate results, the majority of the staff feels as though it
is making strides toward better behavior management. It is a change that will not happen
overnight. If the staff does not believe in the overall goal, then it is quite certain not to
succeed. Like anything new, everyone is enthusiastic in the beginning. It is hoped that
every class that leaves the elementary school will take with them a foundation of solid
social skills. It is expected that they will use these to their benefit when they are
attending the middle school and when they are ready to graduate and enter society as
adults. The results of this preliminary survey is compared to another survey at the end of
the school year. Those who were doubters of the program will have been persuaded to
but into the program with the other staff members. The survey will begin to tell the story
if this is going to be a positive structured avenue for discipline.
Of the sixty surveys that were distributed to teachers and staff, fifty percent were returned to the intern. There were ten questions asked of the staff with regard to routines, skill lessons, and overall feasibility of the program. The first question was concerned with the success of the program. The answers were very positive.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success of Skill-Streaming</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
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</table>

The staff felt it was working in spite of a few fretting staff members. At least the survey was beginning on a positive note. The second and third questions targeted which routines were successful and not successful. The results showed that the majority of the responses indicated that most routines were successful with hallway and arrival topping the list.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful Routines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hallway</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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With so many students in the hallways during the changing of classes, it is necessary to have these routines working like clockwork. An elementary school with a student population over six hundred must have hallway routines designed so that movement does not become a problem.

Some routines the staff felt dissatisfaction with were dismissal procedures and assembly routines.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unsuccessful Routines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dismissal procedures have always been a weak area in this school. With so many children exiting the building at the same time, they are apt to forget those steps that are stressed in skill-streaming classes. It is a safety issue at the end of the day with so many children leaving school at the same time. There had to be a resolution.

Usually, there are only a few staff members available at dismissal time. Adding to the problem and confusion are the large number of parents who descend upon the school to meet their children. Students who are walkers and those who get transported all convene at the same spot at the same time everyday. Needless to say, this can be dangerous at times especially when there is inclement weather. The majority of the
children do leave school in an orderly manner, but there are still some rough spots that need to be addressed. The other routine the staff feels is not as successful as it should be is the assembly routine. When you have more than three hundred students entering the auditorium, there definitely has to be order and decorum. Their behavior warrants constant monitoring and in doing so, the teachers very rarely get to appreciate the programs that are offered to the school. They are too busy watching students for inappropriate behavior. This routine needs much addressing and review throughout the year. This is the first year of the program so there is plenty of time to work on the weak areas.

The success of inclement weather routines was the fourth question. When it calls for children to enter the building before the start of school, there has to be a plan for them to follow. There are four major hallways in the school that are staffed by a handful of aides. Safety is the top issue and this is one routine that is working, perhaps because the children are there for only a limited time. Whatever the case, the safety of the children come first and proper supervision must be successful. There can be no margin of error when children are contained in a restricted area, especially when there are regular education children and special education children mingling in the hallway. Children have to follow a set plan to reduce the chance of problems erupting.

Questions five and six deal directly with the public. They are office routines and visitor routines. The office routines proved more successful than the visitor routines. The delivering of messages to teachers, helping the staff with day to day schedules, signing in late students, and establishing appointments remain stable for the most part. Visitor routines are still a very weak area. It is far from perfect. Parents feel that it is not
necessary to have to sign in the office to let the staff know of their reasons for being there. The teachers in the school feel that it is a security issue to have parents walking the halls without identification, such as a visitor’s pass. It is a few parents and visitors who do not identify themselves in the central office who are making this routine somewhat weak. In the summer, a copy of these routines was mailed to the parents of the students so they would know the proper steps to use. Somehow, not all of them are choosing to follow them. Sometimes it is difficult to convince a minority that rules are meant to be followed for the safety of all parties.

The seventh question asked teachers if they were comfortable working with their skill-streaming partner. An overwhelming majority gave a positive response to this. It is healthy to know that when all is said and done camaraderie remains present in the school among teachers and staff alike.

In addition to the routines, the students are taught social skills in the classroom. These skills, hopefully, will strengthen students' readiness for acceptance in society once they graduate from high school. The first skill taught to the students, Listening proved not to be as successful as once thought. Six months later, students must continually be reminded to follow the steps taught with this lesson. This is certainly something that can not be taught once and taken for granted that it will work. This is an ongoing process.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Effect on Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes 67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Students communicate better when they are first shown the proper steps to follow then permitted to role-play situations. How can this be anything but positive? Most of the students here at the school do not know the proper techniques to use for them to socialize. Since September, there has been much improvement in behavior management as witnessed by the last question of the survey. Two thirds of the surveys returned confirmed that skill-streaming has had an effect on discipline overall. Considering it has not been a complete school year, there is still ample time to witness positive results of areas that have showed weakness.

Significance of the Findings

Since the skill-streaming program was initiated in September, the acceptance of its totality will not be felt until the end of the three-year program. A survey distributed in January tabulated an overall acceptance of the program even though it showed a small number of staff who have not totally bought into the program. Administrators, the majority of teachers, custodians, staff and bus drivers show 100% support for the program. Though not everyone agrees on all routines as being successful, the school as a whole continues to follow the established plan.

When something new is added to the curriculum, specifically when it pertains to behavior management, many parties have their own opinion on whether or not it will work. There are a handful of teachers who feel the discipline policy should suffice in handling the majority of the discipline infractions. The major difference between the discipline policy and the skill-streaming program is the former is associated with consequences while the latter is very proactive with a variety of choices. It is these choices that permit students the opportunity to develop skills that are lacking elsewhere.
The skill-streaming program consists of two major areas. One area focuses on routines and the other area targets actual skill lessons introduced in class. The lessons taught in class are geared to three grade levels, Kindergarten, Elementary, and Adolescence. Those skills are aimed at being a good listener, knowing how to give compliments, knowing how to play in groups, and showing respect. Respect is the most difficult skill to discuss in the classroom. Teachers, with their skill-streaming partners, teach the students those skills necessary to communicate with in society. If the children are not being taught social skills in the home, then it is the school's responsibility to do so. How far the teachers progress with these skills depend upon the class's pace in their understanding of the skill.

It is all very relative. Skills are constantly being reinforced throughout the day and not restricted to the half-hour instruction in the class. If there is ever a problem with any skill, a teacher of any grade level is capable of reiterating the steps. The students could not ask for a better support system. Many times the students do not often believe that following the steps can actually help them. Not only can two teachers working in a class be beneficial but also the entire staff becomes the backbone for this program.

When the intern began to review the discipline reports, she took notice of the amount of infractions being committed over the months. The total number of infractions varied from twenty-seven in September and December to a high of thirty-eight in October and January. November, being a short month, had a total of twenty-five infractions. The bus incidents were at an all time high for the month with thirteen, while in January there were none. How has the skill-streaming curriculum affected behavior of the school? It is the staff members who become disenchanted with the program.
It is fortunate for the sake of the school that there is a majority who still believes this program is valuable. The intern believes that with only six months into the skill-streaming curriculum, it has been positive for behavior management. The key to its success must be consistency and structure. This curriculum is a three-year program and the results will become evident in the way children use their social skills to manage their behavior. When they are able to manage their behavior, it is hoped that major discipline problems will be at a minimum and pro-social behavior will be at a maximum.
Behavior management today is the latest rendition in school discipline. The majority of schools, especially elementary schools, are opting for programs that proclaim pro-behavior organization. Those infractions that demand detailed consequences will be addressed by the district discipline policy. This, however, still does not guarantee complete compliance to rules and regulations. The curriculum of behavior management stresses ownership for students, teaching staff, and administration. With the three major components in consensus, the program should operate smoothly and successful. However, that which is stated in writing and put into practice takes one hundred percent dedication and consistency. Ownership is the key element. If teachers and staff buy into it, then administration will do so as well. Students need to see enthusiasm from teachers that will influence them to claim something that is positive.

The change agents in this study are the teachers and the students. They either make or break the program, and considering this is a three-year study, the school could find themselves taking on more than they bargained for. The one underlying theme that permeates throughout is that of a win-win situation. Discipline no longer keeps score on who wins and who loses. It is obvious that the student is the one who loses out on the most important factor, that being a sound education. Granted there are times when a suspension or multiple detentions are warranted. This certainly is not pro-behavior management. However, this social skills program is for the entire school population.
There are always those students who follow rules and regulations and those who do not. The objective of the skill-streaming curriculum is to address social and emotional issues that confront children of all age and grade levels. It is hoped that children who learn to take command of these delicate issues will apply them to their own behavior management. Ownership becomes everyone’s responsibility. When you a part of something positive you do not want to take the chance of failure occurring anywhere along the way.

How can change take place in the way discipline is enforced? That which is occurring in the learning environment determines the course of action behavior management follows. Society is more demanding now than ever before. Children are less prepared to handle those social tasks that are necessary to enable them to feel productive. It can no longer be assumed that children come to school knowing their alphabet and how to count to ten. Children also come to school lacking certain social skills that are vital for communication with their peers and adults outside of the home. It has been documented that children who practice being good listeners have the foundation for accepting situations they ordinarily would not be prepared to handle. This includes the consequences associated with their actions. Too many times teachers had no other options but to send a student to the office after repeated warnings about their inappropriate behavior. The consequences were either several detentions or possible suspensions. Students often found themselves being punished with no other explanation but to return to their classroom and be prepared to serve the time. Detailed reasons why the behavior should not be repeated often escaped the student. They were left wondering how they could change their behavior so as not to become repeated offenders.
Any new addition to the school's curriculum concerning discipline is often met with trepidation. Teachers and staff are in the habit of following procedures associated with the customary discipline referrals to the office. When skill-streaming loses momentum with the students, more discipline reports are recorded for administrative action. Isolated incidents become more the norm than the exception. This new program, skill-streaming, addresses responsibility on the part of teachers, students, staff members, and administrators. It no longer becomes a single sided issue. When one student is disciplined outside of the classroom, it greatly affects the morale of the entire classroom. Teaching social skills to students enables everyone to be accountable for their emotions and behavior. This addition to the school day takes total commitment from everyone. It is the consistency and structure that builds the foundation for ownership.

The skill-streaming curriculum is the pulse of socialization throughout the school, as it is taught in every classroom in every grade. It touches upon all areas of the school environment, including school transportation. It is extremely important that it carries the message home to the parents. Parents need to feel as though they are a part of this program as well. After all, the school is merely enforcing those skills that should be taught at home. When parents buy into the program then it becomes a win-win situation. Instructing students on the process of social skills will not become an overnight success, nor can it be deemed a failure after only eight months. This is a three-year commitment and the results that the school is looking for will not be truly observed until that time. The instruction of social skills will not fix the discipline problems but it can teach students appropriate steps to use to handle possible problems that might jeopardize their good standing. So, where does it all begin? It begins first with total commitment.
Commitment with the administration is the ultimate form of support, as it filters into every vein of the school environment. Teachers, support staff, secretaries, cafeteria aides, and bus drivers all become change agents. The students receive the benefits from this program. Not only do they become conscious of their actions but also they learn to relate to their feelings and emotions. The goal of the program is to instill a sense of ownership in everyone. The social skills curriculum relies upon expert and dedicated modeling and repetition. The two adults in the classroom set the pace for the introduction of the specific skill to be taught that day. This is necessary in order for there to be assurance that behavior will affect socialization in a positive manner.

The bottom line in this study is to change the learning environment, so less time is spent disciplining inappropriate behavior. Students in the elementary school are very social beings and it is this that always takes precedence over their academics. What interferes is their lack of experience in handling social pressure that arises. In turn, this lack of experience interferes with their studies and social relationships. This hinders their process of promoting pro-social behavior.

Conclusions

A social skills program, which is incorporated into a school's curriculum, has a unique impact on the management of behavior. Any change or addition to the school's climate affects teachers, staff, and students. The result of this addition can have a positive or negative influence on the learning environment.

When educators have the responsibility of teaching children skills necessary for social acceptance, there is a certain amount of risk involved. When addressing students' basic knowledge of social mores, some really do not know how to communicate at all.
A behavior management program will not take the place of a school's discipline policy. Instead, it becomes part of the student's academic schedule. A student's academic performance is greatly affected by how the student can manage his or her behavior. Socialization becomes part of the student's behavior. When they exhibit inappropriate behavior, the time spent explaining why it happened detracts from the time on task activities.

It is the school's commitment to the social skills program that enables everyone to claim ownership. Children who receive consequences for misbehavior, such as detentions or suspensions, are seeing only one side to discipline. Somehow, they need to learn self-discipline, which will enable them to take control of their emotions and in turn, exhibit pro-active behavior.

The infusion of social skills instruction allows students in their classrooms the opportunity to share their experiences with their peers and teachers. The program is quite influential in that it begins with the simplest of skills. The children learn the appropriate steps to use to negotiate with their peers and to become a good listener. They also learn about the benefits of making good decisions. Children as young as kindergarten age learn how to use appropriate means that will enable them to socialize outside their family circle. Students in the sixth grade must also learn to communicate appropriately since they will be moving on from the reserved setting of the elementary school to a more independent climate in the middle school. All students need to recognize the fact that they are responsible for their actions and they really can avoid consequences if they would only heed what is being taught to them. Skill-streaming gives students the opportunity to role-play situations in which they find themselves vulnerable.
Social skills taught in the classroom also take prominence within the school as well. When the students are in the hallways, on the playground, in the cafeteria, or in the auditorium, there are specific routines or procedures that are followed. By doing so, it allows for order to permeate within the school. Hallway transitions allow for smooth passing of all classes. This routine has decreased the number of altercations that arise when too many people are in the same location together. The transition routines also permit quiet moving in the halls so other classes are not disturbed. The program's objective is to allow for ownership to transpire. Teachers, staff, and students work toward the same goal for structure and consistency. A climate conducive to learning takes priority. However, even the simplest of routines have to be supported. This is a school wide effort that requires assistance from the administration. It is important that the staff plays as a team for this program to succeed and all staff is encouraged to participate.

It is also necessary to involve parents in order for them to reinforce what is being taught in class. Parents are the school's chief partners. If something of educational value concerns their children, it is necessary to have them buy into the program as well. When children recognize that the school and their parents are working together for their benefit, it bridges the communication gap quite nicely. What is crucial to note is that a social skills program is not a quick fix for major discipline problems. It requires time to implement something of this magnitude, usually about three years of commitment. Routines and procedures that are working should continue and those that are not should be altered or abandoned for ineffectiveness. This is a very pro-active behavior management program and its success will determine whether or not it continues.
Implications

The skill-streaming program instituted at Simmons Elementary School is nearing the end of its first year. Since the summer of 1998, it has impacted the curriculum in the area of behavior control. The school has experienced both positive and negative effects because of this addition. Teachers who have been employed with the school for more than twenty years have some misgivings about the nature of the program. They really do have a difficult time with change especially in the realm of discipline. Many of them feel that if the school's discipline policy were enforced in the manner in which it was designed, it would not be necessary to use funds for another alternative to discipline.

Procedures and routines were established prior to the opening of school. It was needed in order for the students to develop self-reliance. With a school population close to 700 students, the behavior of the students had to be monitored. The staff was enthusiastic when some of the inappropriate behavior began to decrease. The program was brand new and the novelty of its newness began showing some success. The group who was difficult to convince in the beginning was the parents. They felt as though there was too much structure being placed on the children. However, the teachers and students were pleased with the overall outcomes. Skill-streaming also influenced arrival and dismissal routines. These routines were established to maintain safety in the school. It was important for the parents to see that their children's safety was a priority and not something to be taken lightly.

When it was time for dismissal, the school became flooded with parents crowding the lobby where the children would be passing. This was definitely a safety concern that had to be immediately addressed by the skill-streaming routines and it came to pass.
In this way, all students, beginning with the bus students would exit the school on staggered times. According to skill-streaming, bus students and walkers follow a set time for departure so as to alleviate congestion. This also permits parents, who pick up their children, ample time to leave the parking area before the second bus run is ready to be dismissed. It is a process that runs smoothly even in inclement weather.

Skill-streaming addressed the issue of safety due to the large numbers of parents and visitors who entered the school. In the past, parents could walk in without first stopping at the office explaining their intentions. At times, they would interrupt the teacher that would take time away from instruction. Now the parents must first sign in at the office and a message is delivered to the teacher informing him or her that a parent requests an appointment or a telephone call. If the parent needs to see a child then that child is called to the office. There are no more unannounced visitations without prior knowledge from the teacher. Eight months into the program shows that this procedure is working provided all teachers and staff demand consistency.

Skill-streaming classes are held every morning, five days a week for thirty minutes. Two teachers or staff members work together to discuss various skills with the students in the class. These skills address social and emotional processes. Many of the discussions taking place in the classroom reflect the relationships children experience everyday. For example, skills that are important for everyday classroom etiquette are stressed keeping the age of the children in mind. Other social skills can oftentimes be combined, such as "self-control" and "avoiding a fight." The objective of the social skills instruction is to bring to the forefront student's self-awareness of their behavior. This is to help them be more cognizant of their actions and how they affect others.
When students follow procedures and routines, the inner workings of the school environment operate smoothly. Students become more responsible for their own behavior and that of others. Administrators, teachers, and support staff observe the children's efforts as they apply this to their everyday routines. Children feel pride in knowing they are responsible for pro-active behavior. Teachers and staff are also instrumental in showing students commitment and consistency. All adults, from all areas of the school, are key players in the instrumentation of this program. Parents also are an important asset to skill-streaming because their children are receiving the benefits of this social instruction. When children learn to control their behavior and their emotions, they can usually handle their academic responsibilities as well.

Discipline has seen a reduction in the number of infractions reported to the central office. On the whole, the overall behavior patterns are not as severe as reported in the past. This social skills program is for three years and since this is only the first year of its inception, there is much anticipation for continued pro-active behavior for the remaining two years. The intern has been instrumental, along with the principal, in instituting this program. From the very beginning a skill-streaming committee forged ahead and re-organized the behavior program of the school. It is necessary to note that it is not a discipline policy and certainly not one that would take the place of the existing one. The intern communicated with the program's director, Dr. Carolyn Hamlet, who introduced the curriculum to the school. Communication was on going throughout the summer. With the opening of the school in September, routines and skill lessons were introduced and everyone was enthusiastic for this new program. A committee of teachers and parents was initiated to discuss issues related to the skill-streaming program. Members
meet once a month and review concerns that may have reason to be changed. The intern and teachers work together with the parents for consensus. All in all it is very productive and brings behavior management to the forefront.

Further Study

Behavior management is not new to education. It is a form of discipline that can be incorporated into a school's discipline policy or it can be the policy. Today, schools are searching for alternative methods that will address behavior in a positive light. Most, if not all schools, have a strict discipline code that is enforced for the safety of the children. Schools must maintain an environment conducive to learning and there are many alternatives available to see that this is carried through.

The majority of elementary schools contain Pre-School through Sixth Grade. All classes follow the same procedures and routines that are geared for their appropriate age and grade level. This includes regular education and special education students. How has a program, such as skill-streaming, affected these children? At this particular elementary school, the children attending special education classes team up with regular education classes. They receive the same instruction with their age group and participate in class discussions. These discussions revolve around skills targeted to socialization and communication. The program teaches various steps for the children to follow when attempting to learn a new skill. Having practiced those steps in the classroom and role-played the situations, the outcome of its success looks promising. Eight months into the program the skills are continuing to be taught with some slight reservations. There still is a need to constantly monitor students about skills they first learned in September.

Teachers and staff still have to look for consistency and perseverance everyday in school.
The intern monitors the program twice during the year to observe and record weaknesses and strengths. There also has to be feedback on the staff's feelings about the program, and whether or not it is feasible to continue with it. The teaching of social skills in the classroom reflects on the socialization process of the students. It is very obvious when you see the interaction among the students when everything is working as planned. The skill-streaming program has not been in effect long enough to validate its success. There is constant reminding of the students to practice those steps taught in the classroom.

As for the impact of the skill-streaming program on discipline, it will not be truly measured until the end of the three years. It does lend itself to further investigation on how discipline infractions have been affected by this social skills program. Month by month a discipline report is filed for documentation purposes. There is a comparison made from one month to another. Some of the infractions recorded were a direct reflection on the students who were not following their skill-streaming steps. The goal of the program is to prepare the children for societal acceptance. Skills taught and practiced reflect academic progress. Students who do poorly in school find themselves receiving consequences for inappropriate behavior. Students who have a clean behavior record usually are not struggling with their studies and are on the honor roll.

The effects of the program on special education students and their socialization skills have indicated that there has been some improvement from last year. Since the program is nearing the end of its first full year of indoctrination, the school has shown improvement with social and behavior outcomes. When it has come full circle at the end of three years, it will be gratifying to observe everyone's accomplishments.
REFERENCES


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Appendix A

Discipline Reports
NOVEMBER 1998

DISCIPLINE REPORT

NUMBER OF REPORTS:

For the month of November, there were a total of 25 Behavioral Incident Reports. This reflected a decrease of thirteen incidents since October. In the month of November, there were a total of 13 Bus Incidents reported, an increase of three since October.

RECIDIVISM:

Of the total 38 reported incidents, three students were reported more than once for infractions, one student was reported twice for bus infractions, and one student reported for a school and a bus infraction.

REPORT BY GRADE LEVEL:

There were 17 reported K through Three incidents compared to 19 last month and 8 Four through Six incidents compared to 10 reported last month. Bus incidents reported an increase in all grade levels, two more in K-3, and one more in 4-6 from last month.

LOCATION OF INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL:

Cafeteria- 7, Classroom-12, Gym-0, In line-0, Hallway-1, Lavatory-1, Library-0, Outside-1, Playground-3, Total-25.

COMPARATIVE DATA BY LEVEL - IN SCHOOL

Level 1-0, Level 2-12, Level 3-8, Level 4-1, Level 5-4

COMPARATIVE DATA BY LEVEL - ON BUS:

Level 1-3, Level 2-7, Level 3-3
TYPES OF ACTION-SCHOOL AND BUS:

ASAP- 9, Lunch Detention- 27, Suspension- 0, Warning- 2 = Total 38.

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT-TOTAL SCHOOL AND BUS:

White- 16, Black- 21, Hispanic- 1, Male- 31, Female- 2, Special Ed.- 5

AFTER SCHOOL ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINE PROGRAM:

INCIDENTS:

7 school infractions
2 bus infractions

GRADE LEVEL INCIDENTS:

Grade 1- 2 students
Grade 3- 3 students
Grade 5- 1 student
Grade 6- 3 students

SPECIAL EDUCATION MONTHLY:

Actions: 3 ASAP, 2 Ldet, 1 Warning
November 1998 Discipline Infractions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Bus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Series1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Location of Incidents in School
November 1998

- Classroom: 48%
- Cafeteria: 28%
- Playground: 12%
- Outside: 4%
- Lavatory: 4%
- Hallway: 4%
NUMBER OF REPORTS:

For the month of December, there were a total of 27 Behavioral Incidents, an increase of 2 from November. In the month of December, there were a total of 5 Bus Incidents, a decrease of 8 from November.

RECIDIVISM:

Of the total 32 reported incidents, there were two students who were reported for more than one incident.

REPORT BY GRADE LEVEL:

There were 8 reported incidents in grades K through Three compared to 17 in November and 14 reported incidents in grades Four through Six compared to 8 in November. Bus Incidents showed a decrease in all grade levels.

LOCATION OF INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL:

Cafeteria-5, Classroom-5, Hallway-3, Outside-7, Playground-5, Art Room-2

COMPARATIVE DATA BY LEVEL- IN SCHOOL

Level 1-0, Level 2-10, Level 3-10, Level 4-2, Level 5-5

COMPARATIVE DATA BY LEVEL- ON BUS

Level 1-0, Level 2-4, Level 3-1

TYPES OF ACTION-SCHOOL AND BUS

ASAP- 14, Suspension- 2, Lunch Detention- 20

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT-SCHOOL AND BUS

White-14, Black-18, Male-29, Female-3, Special Ed.-3
AFTER SCHOOL ALTERNATIVE PLAN

13 school infractions

1 bus infractions

GRADE LEVEL INCIDENTS

Kindergarten- 2 students

Grade 3- 2 students

Grade 4- 2 students

Grade 5- 3 students

Grade 6- 4 students

SPECIAL EDUCATION MONTHLY:

Actions: 2 ASAP, 3 Lunch Detention.
December 1998 Discipline Infractions

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<tr>
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Location of Incidents in School
December 1998

- Art: 7%
- Cafeteria: 19%
- Playground: 19%
- Classroom: 19%
- Outside: 25%
- Hallway: 11%
NUMBER OF REPORTS:

For the month of January, there was a total of 38 Behavioral Incidents, an increase of 11 from December. In the month of January, there were no Bus Incidents reported, compared to 5 in December.

RECIDIVISM:

Of the total 38 incidents, four students received more than one referral for infractions, and of the four, one of the students was reported twice for the same infraction.

REPORT BY GRADE LEVEL:

There were 12 reported incidents in grades K through 3 compared to 8 in December and 26 reported incidents in grades 4 through 6 compared to 14 in December.

LOCATION OF INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL:

Art-1, Auditorium-2, Cafeteria-8, Classroom-5, Crossing Corner-1, Dismissal-1, Gym-1, Hallway-2, Lavatory-3, Lobby-2, Lunch Detention-1, Playground-9, Science-1, Speech Class-1 = 38

COMPARATIVE DATA BY LEVEL:

Level 1-0, Level 2-16, Level 3-17, Level 4-0, Level 5-5.

TYPES OF ACTION:

ASAP- 13, Suspension- 1, Lunch Detention- 22, Warning-2
DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT:

Black- 22  White- 15  Hispanic- 1
Males- 33  Females- 5

GRADE LEVEL INCIDENTS:

Kindergarten-3  Grade 4-14
Grade 1-2  Grade 5-4
Grade 2-2  Grade 6-8
Grade 3-5

SPECIAL EDUCATION MONTHLY:

Actions: ASAP -5  Lunch Detention: -4

ASAP REPORT:

There were 13 ASAP incurred by students of whom 5 were Special Education.

Of the 13 incidents, there were no students who received an ASAP for the same offense.
## January 1999 Discipline Infractions

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</table>
Location of Incidents in School
January 1999

- Art: 3%
- Auditorium: 5%
- Cafeteria: 20%
- Classroom: 13%
- Gym: 3%
- Hallway: 11%
- Lavatory: 8%
- Lunch: 14%
- Detention: 3%
- Speech Class: 3%
- Science: 3%
- Playground: 28%
NUMBER OF REPORTS:

For the month of February, there was a total of 33 Behavioral Incidents, a decrease of five from January. In the month of February, there were 5 reported Bus Incidents, an increase of five compared to zero in January.

RECIDIVISM:

Of the total 33 incidents, six students were reported twice for infractions and of the six students, two students were reported for repeating the same offense.

REPORT BY GRADE LEVEL:

There were 11 reported incidents in grades K through 3 compared to 12 in January and 22 reported incidents in grades 4 through 6 compared to 26 in January.

LOCATION OF INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL:


COMPARATIVE DATA BY LEVEL: SCHOOL

Level 1- 0, Level 2- 7, Level 3- 15, Level 4- 0, Level 5- 11.

COMPARATIVE DATA BY LEVEL: BUS

Level 1- 0, Level 2- 2, Level 3- 3.
TYPES OF INFRACTIONS: BUS

ASAP - 4  Warning - 1

TYPES OF INFRACTIONS: SCHOOL

ASAP - 9, Lunch Detention - 16, Suspension - 7, Warning - 1
February 1999 Discipline Infractions

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<tr>
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<th>School</th>
<th>Bus</th>
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<tr>
<td>Series1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Location of Incidents in School
February 1999

- Classroom: 21%
- Gym: 9%
- Cafeteria: 22%
- Hallway: 6%
- Lunch Time: 3%
- Music Room: 3%
- Playground: 21%
- Bathrooms: 12%
- After School: 3%
Appendix B

Routines
SOCIAL SKILLS ROUTINES FOR VISITORS AND PARENTS

PARENT/VISITOR

If parent needs to drop off:

a. lunch money
b. gym clothes
c. homework/books
d. instruments

Label items with teacher and student names. Place in drop off box in office.

To communicate with child for any reason, contact the office.

To schedule an appointment or a visit with a teacher, call the office.

Office will send a written message to the teacher for the child.

Teacher will make a scheduled appointment.

OFFICE

Provide sign in book and request proper identification.

Visitor will sign in.

When leaving building, visitor will return to office with pass.

Office will collect pass.

If visitor needs assistance, return to the office.

VISITORS' PASS

NAME: ____________________ DATE: ________________ Time: ________________

Purpose of visit: ____________________________________________________________

Visitor's Signature: ____________________ Teacher's Signature: ____________________
BUS ARRIVAL AND STUDENT ROUTINES

All children on buses arriving prior to 8:15 go to cafeteria through Breakfast door.

Aides direct breakfast students to specified area and bus students to non-breakfast area.

At 8:15, bus students dismissed through breakfast door to grade level area.

Students follow arrival routines once outside.

EARLY ARRIVAL

Aide takes names of students on grounds before 8:15.

Names submitted to office.

Child's parent mailed warning notice of early arrival.

After third warning, children will be sent to "Just Kids".

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Students may enter building at 8:30.

Students go to cafeteria until 8:40.

Students dismissed to appropriate hallway.

Students wait in hallway supervised by aides.

Aides monitor hallways until teacher arrives.

BIKERS AND WALKERS

Students use crosswalks to walk to designated line-up area, walking on sidewalks.

Bikers lock bike in wing rack.

Duty teacher monitors walking and bike rack behavior.

Teacher reports inappropriate behavior to office.

Classroom teacher notified of insubordinate student.
LATE ARRIVAL ROUTINES

Students report directly to the main office through the front door for late pass.

Student receives first late pass with warning, and one sent to the parent.

Student reports to class for Skill-streaming lesson.

Students who are constantly late will be seen by Vice Principal.

Vice Principal counsels student.

BREAKFAST ROUTINES

At 8:15, aide receives students for breakfast outside cafeteria door.

Students enter in an orderly fashion.

Students proceed to assigned table.

Students walk to food line in single file and pick up utensils.

Student hands ticket or money to cashier, walks to assigned table, and eats properly.

Aides monitor students in cafeteria.

Students finish eating and walk to exit door.

Serving line end promptly at 8:50 and students are dismissed.

Students dismissed outside or to hallway depending on the weather.

MORNING NEWS ROUTINES

Students enter News Room at 8:40.

Teacher reviews news with the cast.

Students take place.

News Programming

Teachers read announcement board in Main Office and reports to class.

Students return to classroom promptly for Skill-streaming class.
HALLWAY ROUTINES

Students line up in classroom in single file.

Teacher accompanies line, gives frequent praise to students.

Line stays safely to right of hallway.

Line does not pass another class unless invited by another teacher.

Teachers give right of way to younger classes and adults.

Non-accompanied students will follow hallway procedures.

Teacher walks class to door of special or cafeteria.

Students enter at teacher's request.

Students walk quietly to assigned seat or area.

Special area teacher gets students lined up quietly after class.

Teachers pick up students promptly.

Students line up quickly and quietly.

Teacher dismisses the class to the classroom teacher.

HALL LAVATORY ROUTINE

All homeroom will take classes to lavatory once in the AM and once in the PM.

Teacher accompanies class to the lavatory.

Teacher appoints student monitor.

Monitors check lavatory for condition.

Teacher reports any problems to the main office.

Teacher sends no more than 4 students in to each lavatory.

Teacher maintains correct behavior in the hallway.

Class exits according to hallway routine.
CAFETERIA ROUTINES

Teacher keeps class outside door until bell rings.

Buyers walk into line to purchase lunch and non-buyers go directly to table.

Teacher leaves to eat lunch.

Students eat lunch at their tables.

Only one aide dismisses one table at a time to throw away trash.

Children line up at door to go out for recess.

Aides go outside with class and two aides stay inside and monitor next lunch.

Children go outside for recess and follow playground rules.

Whistle signals time to line up.

Children walk single file to designated line.

Aide leads quiet line to designated door and teacher meets class.

ASSEMBLY ROUTINES

Teachers establish procedures for lining up for assemblies and seating arrangements.

Teachers follow hallway routines to auditorium.

Students enter auditorium in a single line through the back doors.

Teacher leads line to assigned seats.

Administration welcomes everyone.

Wheelchairs exit first from the auditorium.

Teachers lead their classes out of the auditorium.

Students exit the auditorium through the rear doors.

Teachers lead their classes out of the auditorium.

Students follow hallway routines to return to the classroom.
EARLY BUS DISMISSAL ROUTINES

At 2:50 teacher prepares class for dismissal.

Early bus students line up at the door.

All teachers stand at the door and dismiss bus students.

Students walk in a single line on the their side of the hallway.

Bus drivers on bus to direct children.

Walkers are called to line up at the door.

Students walk single file to their bus.

DISMISSAL ROUTINES FOR BIKERS AND WALKERS

Students line up in classroom.

Teachers lead lines to appropriate wing door.

All students walk quietly to door with all supplies to be dismissed.

Teachers dismiss bikers and walkers out wing doors.

Students walk to bike racks and walk bikes to Chestnut and Erie Avenue.

Walkers walk in an orderly manner using sidewalks and crosswalks.

Teachers walk remaining students into building and dismiss to appropriate areas.
Appendix C

Parent Letter
September 10, 1998

Dear Parents,

Welcome back! Herma Simmons School is introducing a new Life Skills program to the students. As part of the curriculum, please note the routines that you will have to become familiar with. The staff hopes these routines will alleviate problems we have encountered in the past.

WHAT IS THE LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

Life Skills is a process that focuses on four direct principals of learning. These procedures include modeling, role-playing, feedback and transfer. Our teachers will use these procedures to address behavior skills, life skills and vocational skills. This proactive instruction will teach children the necessary social skills to succeed in a wide range of situations. These newly learned skills have proven to enhance self-esteem, reduce violence, and promote positive behavior in the classroom and beyond.

VISITOR ROUTINE

1. All visitors must enter main front door and stop at office.

2. Visitor labels item for their child and drops it off in the office.

3. Office personnel will deliver items to the child.

4. To communicate with your child, contact the office.

5. To schedule an appointment, contact the office.

6. To visit a classroom, sign in at the office and obtain a visitor's pass.

   Return pass to office when you sign out.
ARRIVAL ROUTINE - BUSES

1. Children arriving prior to 8:20 walk to cafeteria for supervision.
2. At 8:20, children are directed outside to wait for the bell.

ARRIVAL ROUTINE - WALKERS

1. Students use crosswalks and sidewalks to walk to designated area.
2. Bikers must walk bikes on school property, lock bikes by grade wings.
3. At 8:35, children line up at designated areas and wait to enter the building.
4. During inclement weather, children will enter school and go to their hallways.
5. The office will be notified of children arriving prior to 8:00. Parents will be called.

DISMISSAL - Bikers, Walkers, and Riders

1. At 3:10 teachers lead lines to appropriate wing doors.
2. Teachers will dismiss students by bike racks and crosswalks.
3. Any child remaining after school will be in the supervision of their teacher.
4. Children who are not picked up will be sent to the office for parent notification.

***** PARKING IS VERY LIMITED. PLEASE MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH YOUR CHILD TO MEET IN A PREDETERMINED SPOT. THE DROP-OFF AREA IS NOT FOR PARKING*****
Appendix D

Teacher Survey
MEMO

TO: ALL TEACHERS AND STAFF

FROM: MAUREEN CZBAS, ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN

RE: SKILLSTREAMING LESSONS AND ROUTINES

DATE: JANUARY 15, 1999

Since the introduction of the Skillstreaming program in September, I am very much interested in how you feel toward the program, routines, and skill lessons. I realize time is of the essence; however, I would appreciate it if you would answer this survey as honestly as possible. I would like to have some documentation to present to Dr. Hamlett when she visits the school again. If possible, I would like this survey by Wednesday, January 20, 1999. Thanks Again.
Simmons Elementary School
Skillstreaming Survey

Please fill out the survey and submit it to me no later than January 20, 1999.

You may also choose to do this at grade level rather than individually.

1. Up to this point in time, do you feel Skillstreaming has been successful?
   □ Yes
   □ No
   If no, give reason(s).

2. Which routines do you find to be successful?
   □ Hallway
   □ Cafeteria
   □ Assembly
   □ Arrival
   □ Dismissal
   □ Bathroom

3. Which routines do you not find successful?
   □ Hallway
   □ Cafeteria
   □ Assembly
   □ Arrival
   □ Dismissal
   □ Bathroom

4. Are you satisfied with the routines for inclement weather?
   □ Yes
   □ No
   If no, give reason(s).
5. Are you satisfied with the office routines?
   □ Yes
   □ No
   If no, give reason(s).

6. Are you satisfied with routines for visitors and parents?
   □ Yes
   □ No
   If no, give reason(s).

7. Are you and your Skillstreaming partner comfortable with role-playing?
   □ Yes
   □ No
   If no, explain.

8. Do you find the majority of the skills to be positive for your students?
   □ Yes
   □ No
   If yes, name three.

9. Are there any skills you have taught that you felt did not influence your students one way or another?

10. Do you feel Skillstreaming has had a positive effect on discipline?
    □ Yes
    □ No
    If no, give reason(s).

I thank you again.
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<th><strong>Biographical Data</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
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