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BEHAVIORAL CHANGE ENCOURAGED NONCOERCIVELY:
AN EFFECTIVENESS STUDY OF
RIVERSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL'S
TIME OUT ROOM

By
Dennis S. Perry

A Master's Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in The Graduate School of
Rowan University
5/1/99

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved

April 29, 1999

Abstract

Dennis S. Perry

Behavioral Change
Encouraged Noncoercively
1999
Dr. Theodore Johnson
Educational Administration

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the newly implemented time-out room in changing the negative behavior that is exhibited by some middle school children. The time-out room is similar to the traditional in-school suspension room. The rooms differ in the duration of time that a student spends in the room and the services that the child receives while there. The student who was sent to the time-out room for behavior deemed unacceptable developed a plan to prevent any future reoccurrence of a similar offense. The student who spent time in the time-out room also received assistance from a full-time, time-out room teacher whose responsibility it was to encourage the student to rational and maturely correct his actions. The study found that the time-out room had a statistically significant effect on changing the behavior of the middle school students as measured against the number of out-of-school suspensions from the previous year.

Mini-Abstract

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Focus of the Study

Riverside Middle School is a fully comprehensive school serving the children in grades 6-8 of Riverside Township, New Jersey. Riverside is not unlike every other town in the United States whereby children, particularly those enrolled in grades 6-8, try to test the limits of permissiveness. These children are not unique in the fact that they will make poor decisions concerning themselves and their actions.

The administration of the Riverside Middle School is interested in helping their students make better choices for themselves. Traditionally, when students in this school would make a wrong choice by neglecting to adhere to the rules and regulations of the school, they would be met with a punitive action. These actions, meant to coerce students into complying with the rules of the school, were found to be ineffective. Detentions and out-of-school suspensions were the only tools available to the administrators. The school effectively had two choices of punishment to apply to a wide variety of infractions. This bifurcation of the discipline code has left no middle ground for administrators to help students behave in a manner that is more conducive to their education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the newly implemented time-out room in changing the negative behavior that is exhibited by middle school students using a school-based action research design. The study will result in a report to inform teachers, administrators, and Board of Education members as to the effectiveness of the room and suggestions for improvement, if needed. The use of a time-out room means providing students with an opportunity to calmly and maturely act upon their own behavior, while at the same time allowing the teacher to continue the class uninterrupted.

By implementing and conducting this study the intern will benefit from the garnering of the following leadership competencies:

- Identify, reflect upon, and articulate ethical benefits and values
- Assume the roles and functions of school-based management
- Apply human relation skills in interacting effectively with others
- Analyze and solve problems using appropriate decision-making techniques
- Listen actively and respond appropriately to the ideas and opinions of others
- Use conflict resolution techniques

The expected organizational change that is intended by the study is to provide for a more positive school climate. If the study is effective, this will be accomplished by a lessening of discipline problems in the classrooms.

Definitions

The time-out room, which is referred to throughout this study, is an actual room designated by the district for the sole purpose of allowing students the needed moments

of contemplation. The room includes a bathroom and a water fountain, which the students may use without the distraction of leaving the room and possibly being thrust back into the behavior for which they became destined to the room. A veteran teacher who had volunteered to staff the room with the purpose of promoting more responsible behavior from the students is the time-out room supervisor. The teacher is given one preparatory period a day that he uses to collect assignments from the teachers of the students who are spending time in the time-out room. During the time-out room teacher's preparatory period, the intern staffs the time-out room. This allows the intern to monitor the data as it is collected. The time-out room teacher also receives his lunch period away from the time-out room. After being led to the cafeteria between lunch periods to receive their lunch, the students remain in the room to eat their lunch under the supervision of a teacher.

Limitations of the Study

The study will be conducted in the Riverside Middle School and will be restricted to include only Middle School students. This will alleviate a possible confounding of the data by attempting to impose the same discipline techniques on high school students as we would middle school students and expect similar results.

The findings of the study are limited only to generalizations about the Riverside Middle School. No inferences will be able to be gained about the time-out room's success with students of high school age. The study will ultimately be deemed successful if the number of students suspended out of school decreases from the previous year. Qualitative analysis of the data collected will yield insight into the project's success with

altering the level of responsibility found in repeat offenders. Because the morale of the staff very often affects the environment of the school, additional achievement will be measured by the perception of the staff as to the effectiveness of the time-out room.

This study is bounded by the constraints of the building in which it takes place. The entire Middle School resides in one building and will be the focal point for the study. The intern has included the entire Middle School, rather than using a sample, because with less than 300 students in the entire Middle School it is small enough to be observed.

In addition to the aforementioned delimitations, the success of the study rests primarily on the professionalism, wisdom, and strength of the time-out room teacher. The study has the full backing of the administration of the middle school and of the district, therefore, the intern does not anticipate anything less than full cooperation on the part of the teaching staff. It is the responsibility of the teaching staff, once contacted, to send work for the students who are spending time in the time-out room. However, with ever-growing time demands and constraints placed on educators, it is unreasonable to believe that this study will be free from indolence. The time-out room teacher may ultimately need to send for the work if it is found that the students do not have enough studies to maintain their productiveness.

Setting of the Study

The township of Riverside, once known as the town of Progress, is located in Burlington County, New Jersey along the banks of the Delaware River. The land area of the township is 1.54 square miles. Founded in 1851 by Samuel Bechtold, the township of Riverside was incorporated on February 20, 1894. It was originally settled as a resort

town for vacationers from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Riverside Historical Society, 1983). At that time, the population of the town did not exceed six hundred (Administrative Manual). Riverside is now a fully developed community with a mixture of residential, commercial and industrial land use. According to the 1990 census, the population of Riverside was 7,974. This represented only a .4% population increase since the 1980 census. Approximately 25% of the 1990 residents are under the age of eighteen years. The actual number of people that determine this cohort is 1,954 (1990 Census).

The Riverside Township residents who are 16 years of age and older has 68% of its population entered into the workforce. Of the population who is 25 years or older, 67.6% have a high school diploma or higher and 6.8% have a bachelor's degree or higher (1990 Census).

The median income for households in Riverside is \$31,718. It has been determined that five percent of the population has been classified in the poverty status. One in ten seniors in the town of Riverside lies below the poverty line. This makes it difficult for the district to pass the school budget at the time of elections. Accordingly, the district has only passed one budget in the past eight years. The budget that did pass, represented no monetary increase on the part of the local taxpayer. These defeated budgets limit the school district with respect to the programs and assistance that it can offer students who are in need of additional support.

The first school in Riverside opened in 1885. In 1893, a public sale of this school was held and the proceeds were used to build a school on Carroll Street, which opened in 1894. Over the years additions were made to add rooms to the school, but the school was

closed in the spring of 1938, due to unsafe conditions. In the meantime, the Washington Street school was expanded to meet the growing demands of increased enrollments. The Washington Street school experienced many expansions over the years. By 1948, grades K-12 were in one building. The same is true today, only now Pre-Kindergarten is also included in this one building school district.

The Riverside schools are divided into three segments: The Elementary School, which serves the Pre-K through fifth grade students of Riverside; the Middle School, which serves the sixth through eighth grade students of Riverside; and the High School, which serves the ninth through twelfth grade students of Riverside and also of the neighboring town of Delanco, which sends its high school students to Riverside to be educated. The philosophy of the Riverside School District is that "the faculty believes in the concept of equal educational opportunity for all students, and that the student growth that the faculty fosters proceeds according to varying individual aptitudes, interests, and needs. The educational program is a cooperative venture in which parents, students, teachers, administrators, and the Board of Education are active participants."

According to the Faculty Handbook of the Riverside Middle School, "The school curriculum must provide daily and long range opportunities which present learning as a lifelong process that is both valuable and enjoyable. Students are helped to develop skills, abilities, and appreciation, which lead to vocational, avocational and recreational fulfillment. All available facilities of the school and community are fully implemented to provide the students with a dynamic, realistic environment that will help them become happy, healthy, and productive members of a democratic society."

Riverside Township School District employs 158 employees. There are seven administrators: an Elementary School Principal, a Middle School Principal, a High School Principal, an Assistant Principal/Athletic Director, a Child Study Team Director, a School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, and a Superintendent. There are 116 certificated staff members. Sixty-five percent of this staff has their bachelor's degree and thirty-four percent have their master's degree. As of this writing the superintendent is the only staff member with his doctorate degree. In the Middle School, exactly one fourth of the teachers holds a Master's degree. The average age of a classroom teacher is forty-five years, with an average of thirteen years experience in the district. Twenty-seven percent of the district's staff are male teachers, while seventy-three percent are female. The school employs just one minority teacher and one minority teachers' aid. The Middle School employs twenty-three full-time teachers. Several of these teachers teach one or, at the most, two high school classes as well. Correspondingly, some of the thirty-one High School faculty teach a middle school class or two. Only thirty percent of the Middle School teaching staff is male. The average numbers of years that a teacher in the middle school has been teaching in the district is nine years (1997-98 Report of the Certificated Staff Status).

The support staff consist of eight classroom aides, four crossing guards, and two playground aides, eight transportation workers, fourteen custodial/maintenance workers and fourteen secretarial/clerical positions (Staff Directory). More than half of the support staff live in the towns of Riverside or Delanco, and many have several years of longevity invested in the district. The district has recently invested heavily in technology and as a consequence has purchased several computers for staff and student use. To facilitate

their use and to have the ability to trouble shoot computer system problems in-house, the district has hired a full-time technology supervisor. The district has also placed an emphasis on staff development to have the staff learn to use this new technology in a way that would be beneficial to the students.

The school district of Riverside Township employs many faculty and support staff who are related to each other, or to Board members. A possibly correct observation made about some of these appointments would be that they were a result of nepotism. There are negative and positive aspects of having such a close staff. For example, there are board members who cannot participate in contract negotiation sessions because their wives are members of the bargaining unit. Another difficulty arises when the need is there to make recommendations to the Board of Education that directly or indirectly concerns their wives, brothers, sisters, cousins, or even mothers. However, having a small staff often equates to having a family atmosphere amongst the members of the staff. The staff members at Riverside are generally sensitive, caring people. This makes for a warm, comfortable, welcoming place for the students to come and learn. Many of the staff members are also alumnus of the school and, therefore, have grown-up and gone to school with many of the parents of the children who now attend the school. This extends the family feel of the school to the surrounding community. It is not unusual to see many faculty and staff members in attendance at any given sporting event or production that includes the children of the school. While not addressed in particular in the mission statement for the district, the concept of a school as the center of the community, is certainly the key underlying concept that drives the daily workings of the

district. This is taken to such an extent that the culmination of each academic year is met with a Board of Education supplied dinner honoring the faculty and staff of the district.

Riverside Township School District is a Pre-K through grade twelve district in which all three schools are located in one building. Due to the fact that Riverside is less than two square miles, the school district is not required to provide transportation for students to and from school. All students walk to school except for the special education students, for whom transportation is specified in an Individualized Educational Plan. Neighboring school district, Delanco, sends its ninth through twelfth grade students to Riverside to receive their high school education. There are exactly 1,249 students on roll in the Riverside Township School District as of October, 15, 1998. Of that number, one hundred fourteen are Delanco Township residents. Approximately twenty-seven percent of the students on roll are classified as at-risk students and receive either free or reduced lunch (1998-99 Application for State School Aid).

The Riverside School District is not a very racially diverse school district. As reported on the New Jersey Department of Education 1998 school report card, the combined total number of students who fall under the category of Black is eighty-three. This number represents less than seven percent of the entire district population. The district also has a population of forty Hispanic students and eleven Asian/Pacific students. The Riverside Middle School, which is the focal point of this study, has nineteen students who are categorized as Black, ten who are categorized as Hispanic, and two who fall under the category of Asian/Pacific. The remaining students are categorized as White. The primary language that is spoken at home of the middle school students is English. Other languages that are spoken at home include Portuguese, which is spoken in

six percent of the households, and Spanish which is spoken at home in three percent of the households.

In an effort to service the Riverside Township students in the best possible manner, Riverside maintains resource centers and supplemental instruction in the district. During the 1998-99 school year, there were approximately 94 students in resource centers and 29 students receiving supplemental instruction. Twenty-five students attend the county's vocational school, for which Riverside is responsible for providing transportation. Twenty-three students are sent to the Burlington County Special Services School District for various classifications, which mostly include Emotionally Disturbed and Multiply Handicapped students. Only nine students are sent to other districts for different classifications including Perceptually Impaired, Auditorily Handicapped, Multiply Handicapped and Day Training Eligible (1998-99 Application for State School Aid). In addition to these services, the Riverside School District also provides non-public auxiliary and handicapped instructional service to the students who attend the two parochial schools in town, through the Chapter 192/193 funds.

Although scheduling difficulties arise due to an effort to keep class sizes small while experiencing a population increase among children in the school age cohort, the Riverside schools try to provide all students in the district with a well-rounded education.

The focus of this study will be the students enrolled in the Riverside Middle School. There are approximately 300 students who attend the middle school on a regular basis. The middle school consists of grades six, seven, and eight. The faculty of the middle school is a mixture of teachers who previously taught high school or elementary school. In 1994, the Riverside Board of Education created the middle school. Grades, seven and

eight, which had previously been part of the high school, and grade six which had previously been part of the elementary school, were taken from their respective schools and fused to form the Riverside Middle School. This created a school with two primary modalities. The teachers who had spent their previous years as high school teachers tended to be more subject oriented, while the teachers whose previous experience had been in the elementary school tended to be more child oriented and therefore more nurturing. This meshing of styles aided in the overall philosophy behind the formation of the Middle School which was to give children of this age an opportunity to ease the transition into the High School.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies with its benefit to the existing literature, the school, and most importantly, the students. There has been a tremendous amount of literature on the effectiveness of in-school suspension programs. But the pool of information is significantly diminished when altering the in-school suspension idea into the time-out room concept.

Students throughout the country have a difficult time navigating through the changes that they experience personally and socially in the years that they are enrolled in middle school. For many, virtually every event has the potential to become a crisis. Children of this age will see best buddies become quondam friends, and enemies become confidants. These students, at times, need an opportunity to take time out of their busy lives and look at situations in less emotional and more rational perspectives.

The time-out room and the support that students will receive while there, will help students think through and plan out better behaviors for coping with the aforementioned changes. The time-out room is not punishment, it is simply the anticipated consequence of irresponsible behavior. Students will remain there as long as it takes them to plan new behaviors, while receiving assistance from the time-out room teacher (J. A. Ferner, personal communication, September 1, 1998).

Organization of the Study

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a background about the Riverside Township School District and its relationship to the students it serves within the community and also to establish the need for this study to be effectuated.

The second chapter provides a background of the literature, which helps to substantiate this study. Additionally, chapter two guides the evolution of the study from the great minds who fathomed and examined differentiating points of view, to the psychologist who first envisioned the time-out room concept.

Chapter three describes in detail the design of the study. In addressing the research design of this study, chapter three will include a description of the development and design of the research instruments used in this study, the data collection approach, and the data analysis plan. It is in this chapter that the foundation will be established for determining the impact of the time-out room on the original notions from which it was created.

Chapter four addresses the data gathered through following the design described in chapter three. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study and will answer the following two questions: What information was found? What does it mean?

Chapter five manifests the study's major conclusions and what they imply. This fifth and final chapter will state the conclusions and implications for further study. Furthermore, this chapter will highlight the conclusions and implications of the study on the intern's leadership development. The final chapter will also discuss ramifications for how the study could result in an organizational change for the district. Finally, the fifth chapter will address the need for further study.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

“I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized” (Ginott, 1972, p.15). While some would agree and others disagree with the aforementioned view of classroom management, it does offer up a concern that all educators struggle with during their careers- how to create a classroom climate whereby the students can all learn in an environment that is completely and conclusively conducive to learning; an environment that is free from distractions and students who are discipline problems.

Maintaining discipline in a school has become an increasing dilemma. Schools must adhere to the rights of the disruptive students as well as to the rights of the non-disruptive students. Attempting to balance these rights fairly has put many schools in an inextricable position. Finding a solution to this quagmire has been debated for years and has seen many valiant attempts at being solved. These attempts have thus far fallen short of expectations and have undergone many modifications in an effort to find a solution to the discipline problems in the schools. Schools must also appease a public that is

increasingly skeptical of decisions made by schools, particularly when these decisions involve the coercion of students. Society is quick to point to the lack of discipline in a school as well as to when it is felt that discipline is meted out too severely.

Schools have very little choice when it comes to disciplining a disruptive child. Detentions, Saturday School, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions continue to be the primary means of discipline employed by the majority of this nation's schools. These punitive measures are effective for some children and ineffective for others (Thorbahn, 1995).

Middle school children require varied discipline techniques. A time-out room is one such variation. It is similar to the in-school suspension program that is employed at many schools. A typical in-school suspension program would involve having the student, who was sent there for a discipline infraction, sitting for the entire day while working on assignments that were sent there by his teachers. While in this room the student would have little to no interaction with the supervisor of the room and would not receive counseling. The time-out room and the in-school suspension room differ in the duration of time that the student must stay in the room. A student sent to a time-out room could be there for one period, for the full day, or any amount of time assigned. They also differ in the quantity and quality of interaction that the student has with the room supervisor. While in the time-out room the student will develop a plan to modify his/her behavior with the help of the room proctor.

Districts throughout the country have struggled with philosophies designed to maximize student learning. In the last thirty years alone, schools have attempted to implement different philosophical approaches, for instance Perennialism, Essentialism,

Progressivism, and Social Reconstructionism (Ornstein & Levine, 1997, chap.1). Along with these came different educational practices like open classrooms, phonic education, whole language, cooperative learning, back to basics, and a plethora of others. While many of these attempts have merit, and while many good things have come about as a result of these movements, not one of these can claim success when it comes to the question of education for all. We practice the doctrine of compulsory education in our schools. To compensate for this, schools are organized in such a manner that we attempt to teach to the masses. However the masses are not reached, instead we only succeed in educating seventy-four percent (Dunn & Griggs, 1989).

A student who is distracted in the classroom cannot learn all that is offered in that day's lesson. Distractions hinder a child's learning style. Learning style is the way people concentrate on, internalize, and remember new and difficult knowledge or skills. Learning style is composed of cognitive, motivational, and physiological elements that affect each person's ability to perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment (Dunn & Griggs, 1989). Basically, it is how a person learns. The environment of the school, which includes classroom climate to a great extent, enable the cultivation of a student's learning style. This environment is precisely what makes it crucial to have a class free from the unruly child.

Many reasons are given for children who, on any given day, have difficulty behaving in a manner that is considered appropriate by the classroom teacher. A broken home, relationship problems, detachment theory, and problems with authority are just a few of the overabundance of excuses given for classroom aggression, hostility, and passivity. Sigmund Freud was a pioneering psychologist who "believed that all behavior-whether

normal or abnormal-is influenced by psychological motives, often unconscious ones” (Sdorow, 1998, p.12). Freudian psychoanalysis has been so extraordinarily influential that a 1981 survey of chairpersons of graduate psychology departments found that they considered Freud to be the most important figure in the history of psychology (Davis, Thomas, & Weaver, 1982).

Claiming that all behaviors are influenced by unconscious motives seems to be somewhat of an overstatement. This would, and has, given people a built-in excuse for not taking responsibility for their actions. Schools are designed to produce productive citizens that adhere to the norms of our society. If our schools promote a sense of helplessness to influence one's own destiny and, instead, surmise that their destiny is left in the hands of one's own unconscious mind, then these citizenship factories are producing a society of irresponsible, helpless beings. Freud and the people who buy into his beliefs have enabled people for the second half of the twentieth century to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. Seemingly, every human defection from the norms of society has become some sort of illness and, therefore, in need of acceptance rather than in need of correction. Many people have become unwilling or perhaps even unable to take responsibility for their actions. Schools have a moral obligation to produce students who are responsible citizens.

William Glasser, author of many books and journal articles, has developed a theory that is completely antithetical to that of Freud. In his book Reality Therapy, Glasser stresses the importance of what might be called the psychiatric version of the three R's: reality, responsibility, and right-and-wrong.

Glasser claims that people who behave in a manner that is inconsistent with society, do so out of a failure to satisfy their needs. This may seem to correlate with the beliefs of Freud, however for Glasser these basic human needs are for relatedness and respect. Freud, on the other hand, claimed that the unfulfilled needs were those deriving from sex and aggression.

In expounding upon the ideas of relatedness and respect Glasser writes, “To be worthwhile we must maintain a satisfactory standard of behavior. To do so we must learn to correct ourselves when we do wrong and to credit ourselves when we do right. If we do not act to improve our conduct where it is below our standards, we will not fulfill our needs to be worthwhile and will suffer as acutely as when we fail to love or be loved. Morals, standards, the fulfillment of our needs for self-worth are a necessary part of Reality Therapy” (1965).

Responsibility is often cited by teachers as a missing component in the personality traits of students who cause classroom disruptions or who simply mentally withdraw and refuse to adhere to the rules of the classroom. “Responsibility, a concept basic to Reality Therapy, is defined as the ability to fulfill one’s needs, and to do so in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill their needs. A responsible person also does that which gives him a feeling of self-worth and a feeling that he is worthwhile to others. He is motivated to strive and perhaps endure privation to attain self-worth. When a responsible man says that he will perform a job for us, he will try to accomplish what was asked, both for us and so that he may gain a measure of self-worth for himself. An irresponsible person may or may not do what he says, depending upon how he feels, the

effort he has to make, and what is in it for him. He gains neither our respect nor his own, and in time he will suffer or cause others to suffer”(Glasser, 1965, p.20).

Effectively, what Glasser is saying is that people, (for the purposes of this study, students), need to develop a sense of self-efficacy. Albert Bandura developed Social-Cognitive Theory. In his theory, Bandura defined self-efficacy to be the “extent to which a person believes that she can perform behaviors that are necessary to bring about a desired outcome” (Sdorow,1998, p.458). Self-efficacy determines our choice of activities, our intensity of effort, and our persistence in the face of obstacles and unpleasant experience, in part by reducing the anxiety that might interfere with engaging in the activity (Bandura, Reese, & Adams, 1982). Self-efficacy has been shown to promote higher achievement in academic courses (Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995).

An acknowledgement of the true reality is what Glasser believes to be the most important missing ingredient to the irresponsible person. He writes, “In their unsuccessful effort to fulfill their needs no matter what behavior they choose, all patients have a common characteristic: They all deny the reality of the world around them. Some break the law, denying the rules of society; some claim their neighbors are plotting against them, denying the improbability of such behavior. Some are afraid of crowded places, close quarters, airplanes, or elevators, yet they freely admit the irrationality of their fears. Millions drink to blot out the inadequacy they feel but that need not exist if they could learn to be different; and far too many people choose suicide rather than face the reality that they could solve their problems by more responsible behavior”(Glasser, 1965).

The misconception of reality is common to the student who is disruptive in class. A short discussion with a student who was recently asked to leave class because he caused a disruption will yield a far different story of the events than what had actually happened. This misinterpretation of the events is due to the lack of responsibility on the part of the child.

Glasser has refined his original Reality Therapy theories to be better utilized by schools. This new theory, Choice Theory, is the basis for his concept of a Quality School. According to this theory, "Our behavior is almost always motivated by a stimulus that exists outside of ourselves. For example, most people believe that students stop talking because the teacher asks for silence or that jail sentences deter crime, but control theory points out that this is not the case. Students keep quiet only when they believe it is to their benefit to do as the teacher asks; otherwise they keep talking. And our jails are filled with lawbreakers who have been there before and have not been deterred by that experience"(Glasser, 1992, p.40).

Glasser's theory is inconsistent with the traditional Stimulus-Response approach to discipline that has been the norm for so long in schools. Stimulus-Response Theory tells us that we do not control our own behavior, rather, our behavior is in response to a stimulus from outside ourselves. Thus, we answer a phone because it rings. Relating this theory to a school setting has students sitting quietly because they were told to do it. Choice Theory states that we never answer a phone because it rings, instead we answer it because it is the most satisfying choice for us at the time. "If we find something better to do, we let it ring" (Glasser,1997). Correspondingly the students sit quietly because it is the most satisfying thing for them to do at that time.

Choice Theory is easily assimilated into the classroom. This is accomplished by having the teacher act in a manner that is more conducive to helping children grow and less in a manner that is more indicative of a manager. Instead of forcing children to do as the manager-teacher wishes, strive to have the children learn and behave because it is satisfying for them to do so. This will allow for the teacher to become more of a facilitator of learning and life skills.

William Glasser has introduced his concept of a Quality School to over two hundred school systems. A Quality School is a school that has implemented Choice Theory into the classroom. He cites two, with whom he has worked personally, as successes in becoming Quality Schools. Schwab Middle School, a seventh and eighth grade school that is part of the Cincinnati Public School System implemented the Quality School concepts in the 1994-95 school year. By using Choice Theory to relate to the students, this school of 600 regularly attending students, greatly increased the quality of the work that was performed by all students. In addition, discipline problems that had led to 1,500 suspensions in the previous year slowly came under control and ceased to be a significant concern by the end of the school year (Glasser, 1997). Huntington Woods Elementary School in Wyoming, Michigan is a 300 student K-5 school located in a small middle-class town and was the first to be designated a Quality School. Since implementing Choice Theory all students are doing competent schoolwork, as measured by the Michigan Education Assessment Program. Also, while there are occasional discipline incidents, there are no longer any reoccurring discipline problems (Glasser, 1997).

There are many positive attributes to Glasser's Quality School concept. However, he has gone too far in giving away to the students the proverbial store. A happy medium

must be reached whereby the students can develop a sense of self-efficacy and responsibility yet maintain the structure of a top-down curriculum designed to meet educational goals. Glasser would have the students learn only what the students deemed satisfying to them. Unfortunately, most students lack the wisdom of experience to determine what is important, relevant, and ultimately useful.

Kohn (1996) mimics Glasser in many facets. Kohn contends that the teacher, as manager, is not the best way to nurture the growth of students' maturity. Kohn states, "Misbehavior will diminish when children feel less controlled. Kids tend to be more respectful when their need to make decisions is respected; they are likely to be better behaved when there is no need for them to struggle to assert their autonomy. Specifically, students are more likely to go along with a request, all things being equal, when they have some choice about how to carry it out." An example that Kohn holds up as testament to this willingness is the following: Consider the thought process of a teacher whose elementary students are late in returning from recess. The teacher might try to manipulate their behavior with the usual methods:

- Threatening punitive consequences ("Folks, if it takes as long to get seated after recess today as it did yesterday, you can forget about seeing that movie later")
- Threatening punitive consequences but pretending they're logical ("...there won't be time for us to see that movie")
- Dangling collective rewards ("If everyone gets settled quickly after recess every day this week, we'll get to have a popcorn party on Friday!")

- Holding up individual students as examples in order to control the behavior of everyone else (“I see that Marjorie is already in her seat! Who else is ready?”) (Kohn,1996, p.82).

Even if our goal is just to get students in their chairs quickly, giving them some choice in the matter is likely once again to be more effective than using bribes or threats (Kohn, 1996). The purpose of person-to-person dialogue is to advance mutual understanding between teacher and student. When employing this strategy, the teacher engages in a private dialogue with the student, mainly using honest “I” statements (Harmin 1995).

The widespread use of punitive disciplinary methods, including out-of-school suspension and expulsion, can estrange students from schools, negatively label affected students, and burden communities with unsupervised youths. Rehabilitative forms of discipline for students include in-school suspension and behavior contracts (Adams, 1992).

In schools where an In-School Suspension program has been implemented, it has been shown that out-of-school suspensions decrease (Gordon, 1990). In-School Suspension programs has revealed an impressive improvement in the behavior of children in need of academic structure (Novell, 1994). Children cannot learn if they are not in school, therefore it is in the best interest of the child for the school district to avoid having to suspend them at home.

The concept of a Time-Out Room is a combination of person-to-person dialog, in-school suspension, and a behavior contract. "The Time-Out Room is not punishment, it is simply the anticipated consequence of irresponsible behavior. Students will remain

there as long as it takes them to plan new behaviors, while receiving assistance from the Time-Out Room Teacher" (J. A. Ferner, personal communication, September 1, 1998).

Most middle school students are not yet capable of devising a plan of improvement without assistance. If they were capable of determining better choices for themselves, they would not have been referred to the principal for disciplinary reasons in the first place. "It is good when older students have the chance to make decisions. It is better when younger ones, too, get that opportunity. Of course children can handle more freedom and make better choices as they get older. Who could deny that a 16-year-old can approach a decision in a more sophisticated way than a 6-year-old, and therefore can usually be entrusted with more responsibility?" (Kohn, 1996). Having the students, with help, contemplate and then formulate a plan for improvement has been shown to be successful in changing behavior. "Using behavior modification techniques to change the behavior of disruptive students has been found to be very successful" (Schutte, 1990).

In-school suspension is not always considered punitive. Often the original intent is to incorporate an opportunity for students to determine a better more positive path to follow. Unfortunately, in most instances, the in-school suspension program is used as a daylong lock-up, whose purpose is to isolate its residents from the rest of the rule-abiding student population. A better use of in-school suspension would be to allow "students to keep up with classwork and ... include a counseling intervention aimed at improving problem-solving skills, developing personal goals, or improving self-esteem" (Costenbader and Markson, 1994). Involving counseling into the in-school suspension program has been successful with regards to rehabilitative measures as well as to punitive ones (Guindon, 1992).

Time-out is a strategy that is often used with younger children; it consists of setting the child apart from the rest of the classroom and all the positive reinforcers it contains. When using this type of negative consequence, it is important to ensure that what is being removed has sufficient appeal for the students that it will be missed, and that the time-out area is free of attractive distractions. Studies show that this strategy is especially promising for those who misbehave out of a need for attention (Educational Research Service, 1996).

According to Kohn (1996) in his book, Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community, "Punishment actually impedes the process of ethical development." A child threatened with an aversive consequence for failing to comply with someone's wishes or rules is led to ask, "What do they want me to do, and what happens to me if I don't do it?" This question is completely different from the more responsible question of, "What kind of person do I want to be?" or "What kind of community do we want to create?" (Kohn, 1996). Kohn's assertion is that we want children to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do, and not because of the punitive consequences of failing to act responsibly. "When disciplinarians talk about imposing consequences for a student's action -and inducing him to think about those consequences ahead of time- they almost always mean the consequences to him." (Kohn, 1996). The focus is on how the student will get in trouble for breaking the rule. Instead, the focus should be to help the student understand how his behavior effects others.

Ethical sophistication consists of some blend of principles and caring, of knowing how one ought to act and being concerned about others. Punishment does absolutely nothing to promote either of these things. In fact, it tends to undermine good values by fostering

a preoccupation with self-interest (McCord, 1991). The students' focal point remains on the negative consequence to themselves rather than on how their actions act upon others.

Rewards are often used as a method to entice students to comply with rules. This method is doomed to fail because it is simply a masking of the manager as teacher. Offering rewards for good behavior may appear to be antithetical to punitive measures for not following the rules, however, both approaches are meant to force or seduce children to comply blindly with regulations that they may not agree with or don't understand. As Glasser states, "It is not the reward but the person's evaluation of how much he or she wants the reward that determines behavior. Managers who use rewards achieve more than managers who use punishment because rewards tend to be more need-satisfying, but workers may still resent the manager's power to give or withhold the reward. They may challenge that power by not doing as much as the manager wants, even at the risk of losing the reward altogether" (1992). Whether the teacher uses rewards or punishment, each is an attempt at being coercive and thus, will ultimately fall short of expectations.

The time-out room concept is the compilation of many educationally based theories. It is not simply a haphazard attempt to try the very first quixotic revelation that is imagined. The time-out room is an opportunity to lead students to more altruistic behaviors. This temporary removal of the student from the classroom is often cited as a positive step toward disarming a situation. While in the time-out room the student will have the opportunity to contemplate the actions and events that placed him/her there. The student will discuss this situation with the time-out room teacher and develop a plan that will ultimately guide the student to behave in a manner that is better for himself and

for the people affected by his actions. The student will develop a sense of self-efficacy, self-control, and responsibility for one's self. The student will then become a responsible citizen, fulfilling the aim of education.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

General Description of the Research Design

The study has as its design an action-based research design, whereby the intern is an active participant not only in the collection of the data but also with respect to the guidance that is given to the students who are spending time in the time-out room. The intern's function in this role will in no way prove to be confounding in any part of the research for two primary reasons. The first reason is the fact that the overall time that the intern actually spends in the time-out room, fulfilling the aforementioned duties, equates to approximately twelve and one-half percent of the total time that a student spends in this room. This brief stay is not long enough to significantly alter the data and thereby cancel out the effects of the full-time time-out room teacher. The second, and most cogent argument against the confounding of data by the interns presence, is that the very nature of the intern's professional responsibilities does not alter simply because the intern is studying the effects of the time-out room. Any other staff member assigned to the room in place of the intern would be acting under the same guise as that of the intern. That staff member would be required to fulfill the duties of the time-out room teacher in the place of his absence.

As stated in Chapter One, the study intends to ascertain the effectiveness of the time-out room on the improvement of the overall school climate. Specifically assessed will be the areas of decreased overall discipline problems in the school and the corresponding

perception on the part of the faculty as to the effects that the time-out room has had on changing the school's climate.

To precisely answer these questions the intern has decided to utilize a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. The final conclusions with respect to the study will be made in a qualitative nature because it is expected that the data will point to a definite conclusion and will need to be expounded upon. Whether this conclusion is that the time-out room had a positive or negative effect on the school's climate will not be speculated upon at this time. However, the intern feels that definite conclusions will be able to be drawn.

Development and Design of the research instrumentation

In an effort to utilize the time-out room as a non-coercive attempt to correct inappropriate behavior, the intern met with the principal and the time-out room teacher to develop a mode of conduct and universal expectations for the students who are sent to the time-out room. The result of our efforts is a survey that will be filled out by the student immediately upon arrival to the time-out room. This survey is meant as a starting point to open up the channels of communication with the students and the time-out room teacher. With the assistance of the time-out room teacher, the student will identify strategies to prevent a reoccurrence of the inappropriate behavior that resulted in the student's placement in the time-out room. The student will develop and then write a plan to prevent any further disciplinary measures for similar offenses in the future.

The intern will interview the principal of the Middle School to determine the level of success that this administrator gives the time-out room on affecting the climate of the

school. The faculty of the Middle School will be asked to represent their feelings with respect to the time-out room's affect on the school climate as well.

Explanation of the Population

The intern chose as the population of the study all students who are enrolled in the Riverside School District Middle School during the 1998-99 school year. No attempt was made to select a sample due to the relatively small size of the population.

Description of Data Collection Approach

Prior to the 1998-99 school year the only means of outwardly visible disciplinary correction efforts that were at the disposal of the Middle School Principal were the use of after-school detentions and out-of-school suspensions. The intern will use as quantitative information the number of students who were suspended out-of-school during the 1997-98 and the 1998-99 school years. A comparison of these numbers will result in an answer as to the impact that the time-out room has had on the number of students suspended out-of-school. A qualitative analysis of this data, taken on an individual case basis, will result in a narrative of any changes found in the numbers of students who repeatedly were the recipients of discipline measures.

The surveys of the staff will be compiled and analyzed. The intern is interested in the mean number, which will correspond to the statement of effectiveness that the time-out room had on the faculty's perception of climate change. From this data the intern will derive the impact that the time-out room has had on the school's climate. The intern will

also use the interview with the Middle School Principal to determine any change in this perception.

Further evidence as to the effectiveness of the implementation of the time-out room on the discipline of the students will be determined by a qualitative analysis of the surveys and plans that are developed by the students. The intern is particularly interested in the exhibits of maturational growth shown by students that are as a result of their stay in the time-out room. Although this is not specified as an indicator of the success of the time-out room, it is of interest to the intern. As a result of this interest, the intern will comment on these findings in chapter five, when making recommendations for further study.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Research Findings

Effectiveness of the time-out room's ability to decrease out-of-school suspensions

The number of students who were suspended-out-of school for the 1997-98 school years was 169. This number represents the total number of times that a student was suspended out-of-school and considers students who were repeatedly suspended out-of-school as different suspensions.

Table 1

MONTH 1997-98	STUDENTS SUSPENDED OUT OF SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER	3
OCTOBER	27
NOVEMBER	19
DECEMBER	11
JANUARY	18
FEBRUARY	20
MARCH	13
APRIL	24
MAY	22
JUNE	12

The breakdown of students suspended out-of-school by month is as follows and is included in table 1: September-3 students, October-27 students, November-19 students, December-11 students, January-18 students, February-20 students, March-13 students, April-24 students, May-22 students, and June-12 students.

The findings for this paper were collected the second week of February 1999. As of that time, the total number of students suspended out-of-school was 63. The number of students who served out-of-school suspensions as of this time the previous year was 88. This represents a 28.4% decrease in the number of students suspended out-of-school from the previous year. The number of students suspended out-of-school, by month, is represented in table 2.

Table 2

MONTH 1998-99	STUDENTS SUSPENDED OUR OF SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER	0
OCTOBER	14
NOVEMBER	5
DECEMBER	18
JANUARY	21
FEBRUARY 1 st TWO WEEKS	5

Data of Middle School students who have been sent to the time-out room

As of this writing, the number of middle school students sent to the time-out room for behavior that was deemed either inappropriate or irresponsible was sixty-three. Of these, thirty-five students were sent to the time-out room, developed a plan and did not return to the time-out room again prior to the conclusion of this study. Twelve students, who developed a plan, had to return at a later date for a similar offense. To date, these twelve students have not returned since the development of their second plan for more appropriate behavior.

Riverside Middle School has sixteen students who have been sent to the time-out room more than two times. Out of these sixteen students, thirteen have been sent four or more times, ten have been sent five or more times, four have been sent six or more times. In fact these same four students have been sent to the time-out room seven or more times. Two of these students have been sent eight times, while one has been sent to the time-out room nine times. The sixteen multiple offenders represent approximately 5% of the student population for the Middle School. The four students who were sent to the time-out room on six or more occasions represents less than 1.5% of the total Middle School population.

Table 3

OFFENSE NUMBER	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
ONE	63
TWO	28
THREE	16
FOUR	13
FIVE	10
SIX	4
SEVEN	4
EIGHT	3
NINE	1

Middle School Principal's perception of the time-out room

The middle school principal believes that that time-out room has been a very valuable tool to assist the students of this school to correct their own behavior. She points to the decrease in the number of out-of-school suspensions for the Middle School since the previous year. As support for her claim, the principal also asserts that the amount of time that she spends on discipline has drastically reduced since the implementation of the time-out room. "Students are making better decisions in general; this is particularly

noticeable in the students who have spent some time in the time-out room thinking of better ways to approach situations." While the principal acknowledges that there are four students who have been sent to the time-out room numerous times for numerous offenses, she contends that with some students it simply takes longer for them to concede that it is their own behavior that needs to be changed. The principal feels that these non-coercive attempts to alter inappropriate behavior should not be stopped simply because they didn't work the first few times. Instead, these efforts should continue and possibly even increase.

The Time-Out Room Teacher's perception on the effectiveness of the time-out room

The time-out room teacher is a veteran of thirty-five years with the district. He volunteered for the position of time-out room teacher because of his desire to help children act responsibly. He lists as his objectives for the time-out room the following: to build good character, instill a positive mental approach, respect, responsibility and accountability, and to encourage good manners, dedication, and integrity. After discussing all aspects of the time-out room with this teacher, the intern has deduced that the time-out room teacher believes that it is a worthwhile endeavor. The time-out room teacher cites the success that the room has had with the forty-seven students who have not returned for a third time. As far as the level of effectiveness that he attributes to the time-out room for bringing about a more positive out-look from our students, the time-out room teacher equates only moderate success. He is disheartened by the small number of students who are repeatedly sent to the time-out room. The time-out room teacher believes that more options need to be available for the students who have difficulty

conforming to the rules of the time-out room or who are repeatedly sent to the time-out room.

The intern asked the time-out room teacher to speculate on the level of effectiveness that the time-out room would have on middle school students as the year progressed. His response was that he felt that even without more options added for disciplining the unruly, combative child, the time-out room would increase in effectiveness. When the intern questioned his prediction, the time-out room teacher responded that as the year progressed the time-out room would contribute to the normal maturational growth that children encounter.

Survey of the Middle School teachers on the level of effectiveness of the time-out room

There are twenty-three full-time middle school teaching staff members, eighteen of these teachers responded to the survey. This 78% return rate was after the intern repeatedly reminded the staff to return them. In an attempt to minimize the Hawthorn Effect the intern chose to conduct this as a blind survey, therefore the intern had no way to determine who did not respond. The mean score for the faculty's perception that the time-out room was effectiveness in bringing about a positive change in their students was 5.5. This number, which was determined on a nine-point scale, correlates to a slightly higher perception, rather than to a lower perception, on the part of the faculty that the time-out room was successful in bring about more responsible behavior from their students.

Table 4

Number Of Respondents	Improved Behavior	No Behavioral Change	Worse Behavior	No Basis/ No Answer
18	9	5	1	3

The number of teachers who believed that the school climate, with respect to the aspect of discipline, improved from the previous year was 9. This represents half of the total number of respondents. The number of teachers who believed that there had been no change in the school climate from that of the previous year was 5. This represents slightly more than one-fourth of the Middle School teaching staff. Only one teacher believed that the climate with respect to discipline had become worse from that of the previous year. Two teachers were first year teachers and as a result had no basis of comparison. One teacher chose not to answer stating that the teachers were never informed who was in the time-out room and why they were there. This teacher continued to say that, "this year's seventh grade is composed of a nice mix of students who like each other." This teacher hand delivered the survey to the intern; this gave the intern an opportunity to question this teacher. Her feeling is that she had no idea when the time-out room was being utilized and, therefore, could not comment on its contribution to the school climate. When accounting for the respondents, who could not or chose not to

respond to the question of school climate, the percent of teachers who felt that the school climate had improved over that of the previous year was 60%.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

Major Conclusions and their Corresponding Implications

The concept of the time-out room was born out of the belief that punitive measures were not the only means of correcting inappropriate behavior among children of middle school age. Furthermore, it was believed that coercive measures such as detention and out-of-school suspension, were not effective nor were they desirable in changing student behaviors. William Glasser, in his work The Quality School, outlined the idea of a time-out room to give students an opportunity to contemplate their actions. The Riverside Middle School implemented this idea in an effort to assist children through these years of potential turmoil and growth.

Chapter One outlined the criteria for assessing the success of the time-out room. It stated that the time-out room would ultimately be deemed successful if the number of students suspended out-of-school decreased from the previous year. As stated in Chapter Four, the number of students suspended out-of-school during the months of September 1997 through the middle of February 1998 was 88. This number fell to 63 during the same time period the following year. This decrease represented a 28.4% drop in the number of students suspended out-of-school. This decrease is statistically significant and, by the criterion of the study, indicates that the time-out room was a successful endeavor.

A qualitative analysis of the plans written by students while in the time-out room signifies that the students were successful in thinking through their problems and deriving coherent strategies to prevent a reoccurrence. The students' ability to learn and grow as a result of their time spent in the time-out room is demonstrated by the number of students who did not visit the time-out room more than once. Only 16, or 5.3 %, of the middle school population returned to the time-out room for a third time. Examples of student plans are in the appendix.

As a future administrator, it was important to the intern to ascertain the level of effectiveness that the time-out room has had on teachers' perception of the school climate. The faculty responded with a moderately favorable perception that the time-out room affected the school climate positively. This perception, however, could be a very skewed actual overall perception. It is the intern's belief that if the survey that collected these perceptions had been administered two weeks prior to the actual administration, then the responses would have been more favorable. This would have been as a result of the proximity that the survey would have had with the winter break in the school calendar. This break gave teachers an opportunity to unwind from their hectic teaching schedules. Similarly, if the survey had been dispensed two weeks later than it had been, then the response would have been less favorable. This would have been as a result of the long stretch of consecutive teaching days which often makes teachers tired and possibly less optimistic. The reasoning behind the intern's inclination is that the teachers are actually too close to the situation to notice the overall effect and that teachers very often suffer from an inability to see beyond their own classrooms. This survey relied too heavily on the events in each teachers' classroom on the particular day that the survey

was administered, and not on the overall picture. This study would have been better served by administering the survey in the summer, when teachers have had an opportunity to use self-reflection and ponder the previous year.

Organizational Change as a Result of the Study

Prior to the implementation of the time-out room the school district had as its only means of changing student behavior the utilization of punitive measures. The time-out room has given the Riverside School District and particularly the Riverside Middle School, a non-coercive means for changing student behavior. The cost of this change in monetary terms was the hiring of a first year teacher to replace the veteran teacher who became the full-time time-out room teacher. The cost with respect to the facilities was the forfeiture of a small special education classroom with a capacity for 20 students. This is actually of great cost to the district because the building, which houses the Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, is near capacity. This is demonstrated by the need to change the 1999-2000 school day to include a staggered beginning and ending of the day.

The Need for Further Study

This study, which was conducted using the middle school students of the Riverside School District, has shown that the time-out room is a successful tool in changing the behavior of children of this age. However, like with any attempt to change the way that people do things, it was not one hundred percent effective. Not all children learned from their periods of contemplation. Some students even preferred the time-out room as an

opportunity to make-up work that they had fallen behind on completing. However, the vast majority of the students used their time to improve their behavior.

Further study needs to be done in this school over the next years to determine both the long-term effects, if any, and to determine if the number of out-of-school suspensions begins to rise once the novelty of the time-out room passes. Also, further study should be done using populations from other suburban schools to determine if this success is simply confined to this school or if other districts benefit from this experiment.

This study did not include students from the Riverside High School, although students from this school shared the room and its amenities with students from the middle school. A future study should be conducted to determine the effects that the time-out room has had on improving the behavior of the high school students. It is the intern's belief that the findings of that study would look favorably upon the time-out room's ability to improve behavior. The intern believes this because as an observer this past year, the intern has noticed that few high school students return to the time-out room for additional offenses. However, this is partly because, in the view of the intern, the time-out room was under utilized as a means of altering behavior for high school students.

Implications of the Study on the Intern's Leadership Development

As a result of conducting this study and the accompanying administrative internship, the intern has experienced growth in the leadership competencies that are outlined in Chapter One. To summarize, the intern has garnered the ability to identify, reflect upon, and articulate ethical benefits and values. As a part-time time-out room teacher the intern had the experience of facilitating the students' ability to align their value systems with the

norms of the community and of society. The intern was able to assume the roles and functions of school-based management by becoming an integral part of the design and implementation of the time-out room survey and plan. The intern gained valuable experience by applying human relation skills in interacting effectively with students, teachers, and administrators. While functioning in the role of the time-out room teacher, the intern was called upon daily to analyze and solve problems using appropriate decision making techniques to assist the students in deriving their own tailored plans for improved behavior. The intern also was able to use conflict resolution techniques and listen actively and respond appropriately to the ideas and opinions of others. These abilities became particularly useful when assisting students, but also when it was necessary to resolve situations with staff members who wanted to know every intricate detail of student plans.

Recommendations for Change

This was the first year that the time-out room has been used as a means of a non-coercive attempt to improve student behavior. As stated previously in this chapter, the time-out room was a successful endeavor; one that was both statistically significant and also effective from a monetary point of view. The district, particularly the Superintendent and the Board of Education believe this to be true and demonstrate support for the endeavor by including the time-out room in the budget for the following year.

However, after studying the time-out room for this year and after discussions with numerous staff members as well as the time-out room teacher, the middle school

principal, the high school principal, and the superintendent, the intern offers the following as recommendations for future years. There needs to be a better line of communication in place between the teaching staff and the administration as to the work that is required of the students who are in the time-out room. This concern was echoed by a few teachers who often did not have an opportunity to check their mailboxes until late in the day. This could easily be solved by using an office-runner, a student who uses their free period to run errands for the office, to bring to the teachers a time-out room work request form. This is the same form that is put into their mailboxes, but now it can be placed on their desks to make them aware of it. The best time to take care of this would be homeroom when teachers are not engaged in curriculum based education.

The intern and anyone who works with children of middle school age understands that middle school children often react without thinking and often react based solely upon emotion. It is this primary reason that the time-out room has seen multiple offenders. It is expected, however, that after repeated opportunities to contemplate and think through their actions and the possible alternative reactions, that children who spend time in the time-out room will become better at choosing correct behaviors. As the study pointed out there were a few students who were sent to the time-out room as many as eight times. For these students, more intervention is needed. Obviously, their needs are not being met. To continuously send these children to the time-out room certainly is of some benefit to them, but more needs to be done. One possible solution is to enlist the guidance department to recommend counseling for these students.

The middle school principal began, in late October, to use the time-out room as the return point for students who were suspended out-of-school. This was, in the intern's

view, a very effective measure. This gave the students, who very often did not receive the parental counseling while home from school, an opportunity to think things through and develop a plan for better behavior in the future.

The findings of this study were presented to a very pleased superintendent. In his formation of the time-out room, he was looking for a non-coercive means to assist in the normal, maturational growth that is adolescence. Previously in his career, the superintendent had utilized an in-school suspension program as an alternative to out-of-school suspension. He was not entirely satisfied with the results or the manner in which it was utilized. One main point of contention was the lack of a full-time staff member to remain in the in-school suspension room for the full day. Having sometimes up to eight different teachers and thus an equal number of philosophies and personalities, doomed that experiment for failure. The superintendent attributes a degree of the success that the time-out room has had on the fact that there is a full-time faculty member to staff the room. He attributes more success to the strong personality, in-depth pedagogical knowledge, caring psyche, and solid community ties of the time-out room teacher.

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Appendix A
Examples of Student Plans

3rd offense
2-8-99

RIVERSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT TIME-OUT PLAN

Name: _____

Grade: 6 7 8

Date: 2/99

You are in the Time-Out area because your behavior was inappropriate and/or disruptive.

While you are here:

- You must sit at a desk and remain quiet
- You may do school work
- You may read
- You may sit and think
- **You must write a plan before you return to class.**

The amount of time you spend in Time-Out is up to the Principal.

You may return to class once your plan has been approved, by the administration.

I plan to:

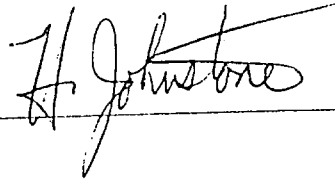
My plan to stop getting put in the time out room and go to assigned detentions and not be late. I am late almost every day and they always build up to hour detentions. I have to start to get up and get ready earlier than I normally do because I am always late. I have to start taking my shower at night instead of the morning. I usually take long showers in the morning and that makes me late. The other thing is that I have three sisters and one brother. They are the ones that almost 95% of the time make me late. I always wait for my mom to take me to school with everyone but instead of that, know

Great idea!

I will ~~go~~ either walk to school or get my mom to take me at an earlier time when I have detention after school I have to start going. I don't go sometimes because I don't want to but sometimes because I babysit after school. I have to start telling them to meet me at the ~~old~~ detention room after school so then they can stay there with me. Then by the time the detention is over and I get home, I'm done babysitting and done my homework. I will follow the above strategies and not be sent to the time-out room for the remainder of the year. I do not want to miss class time by being sent to the time-out room to develop a behavior plan. Teaching time is more important so I will be on time to school.

This plan is a commitment to help me become a more responsible student.

Plan approved by:



Student's signature: _____

Teacher's signature: _____

5th offense
3-11-99

RIVERSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT TIME-OUT PLAN

Name: _____ Grade: 6 7 8

Date: March, 1999

You are in the Time-Out area because your behavior was inappropriate and/or disruptive.

While you are here:

- You must sit at a desk and remain quiet
- You may do school work
- You may read
- You may sit and think
- **You must write a plan before you return to class**

The amount of time you spend in Time-Out is up to the Principal.

You may return to class once your plan has been approved, by the administration.

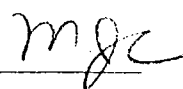
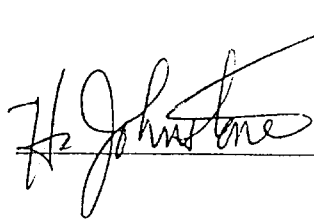
I plan to:

Not to be disruptive in math any more. I will not throw food in lunch any more. I will not say damn, bitch, or hell directed to Mrs. Stein. I will not direct any bad words to any one. I will apologize to Mrs. Stein for using bad language (profanity) towards her. I will not be disruptive in my class any more. If I start to get in trouble I will ask the teacher to move me to another seat. I realize my behavior and attitude must be more positive and I plan on working on a positive mental

attitude in all my classes. Being polite is one of my strategies. Being accountable is another strategy and being respectful to teachers is another strategy. I do not want to be sent to the time out room to write another behavior plan. I've been here four times before and writing a plan takes away from learning time in the classroom. I will behave for the remainder of the school year.

This plan is a commitment to help me become a more responsible student.

Plan approved by:



Student's signature: _____

Teacher's signature: _____

9th offense 708
2-4-99

RIVERSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT TIME-OUT PLAN

Name: _____

Grade: ⑥ 7 8

Date: 2/1/99

You are in the Time-Out area because your behavior was inappropriate and/or disruptive.

While you are here:

- You must sit at a desk and remain quiet
- You may do school work
- You may read
- You may sit and think
- **You must write a plan before you return to class.**

The amount of time you spend in Time-Out is up to the Principal.

You may return to class once your plan has been approved, by the administration.

I plan to:

I was ~~sent~~ Sent to the timeout room for spitting on a kid named Joey. This is my 9th time in the time out room. To handle the situation better they could have given me an hour ~~detention~~ to avoid the situation. I could have walked away or told the teacher. I was put in the time-out room for the same reason. In the future if this happens again I will tell the teacher. I will not pick on kids or spit on anyone. I will respect the teacher and student. I am sorry for what

I d.d. I realize that spitting on anyone is a dirty, filthy habit that ~~spits~~ ~~is~~ I must correct. It is unhealthy and improper behavior. I will not bully any student for the remainder of the school year.

This plan is a commitment to help me become a more responsible student.

Plan approved by: H. Johnstone

Student's signature: _____

Teacher's signature: _____

Appendix B
Time-Out Room Survey

Time Out Room Survey

Name:

Describe in detail the event occurred that placed you into this room.

What was your part in this event?

What did the teacher/principal do to help/hurt the situation?

What could you have done to avoid or to better handle the situation?

What could the teacher/principal have done to avoid or to better handle the situation?

Have you been sent to the Time Out Room before for the same reason?

If so, did you attempt the strategies that you discovered the last time that you were in the Time Out Room?

List at least three strategies that you will use to prevent this event from happening in the future?

Appendix C

Survey of Middle School Teachers

Survey of Middle School Teachers

I would like to thank all of you for your continued support and encouragement throughout my internship this year. You have all been eager to help and quick with suggestions. I have one final request of you. If you would please take just a few minutes out of your increasingly busy schedule to reflect upon and then answer the following survey, I would greatly appreciate it. Please return this to my mailbox upon completion.

Thank you,

Dennis Perry

1. How many years have you been teaching in this district? _____

2. In your opinion, has the school climate with respect to the aspect of discipline, improved, worsened, or has it gone unchanged from the 1997-98 school year to the 1998-99 school year?
_____.

3. Please circle the number that best indicates your perception of the time-out room's effectiveness in bringing about a positive change in our students.
(9 would indicate that you feel that the time-out room was very effective and a 1 would indicate that you felt that the time-out room was ineffective)

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Biographical Data

Name: Dennis S. Perry

Date and Place of Birth: August 28, 1969
Levittown, Pennsylvania

High School: Pennsbury High School
Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania

College: Shippensburg University
Shippensburg, Pennsylvania
Bachelors of Science in
Education, 1991

Graduate: Rowan University
Glassboro, New Jersey
Masters of Arts in School
Administration, 1999

Present Position: Teacher of Mathematics
Riverside Township Public
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