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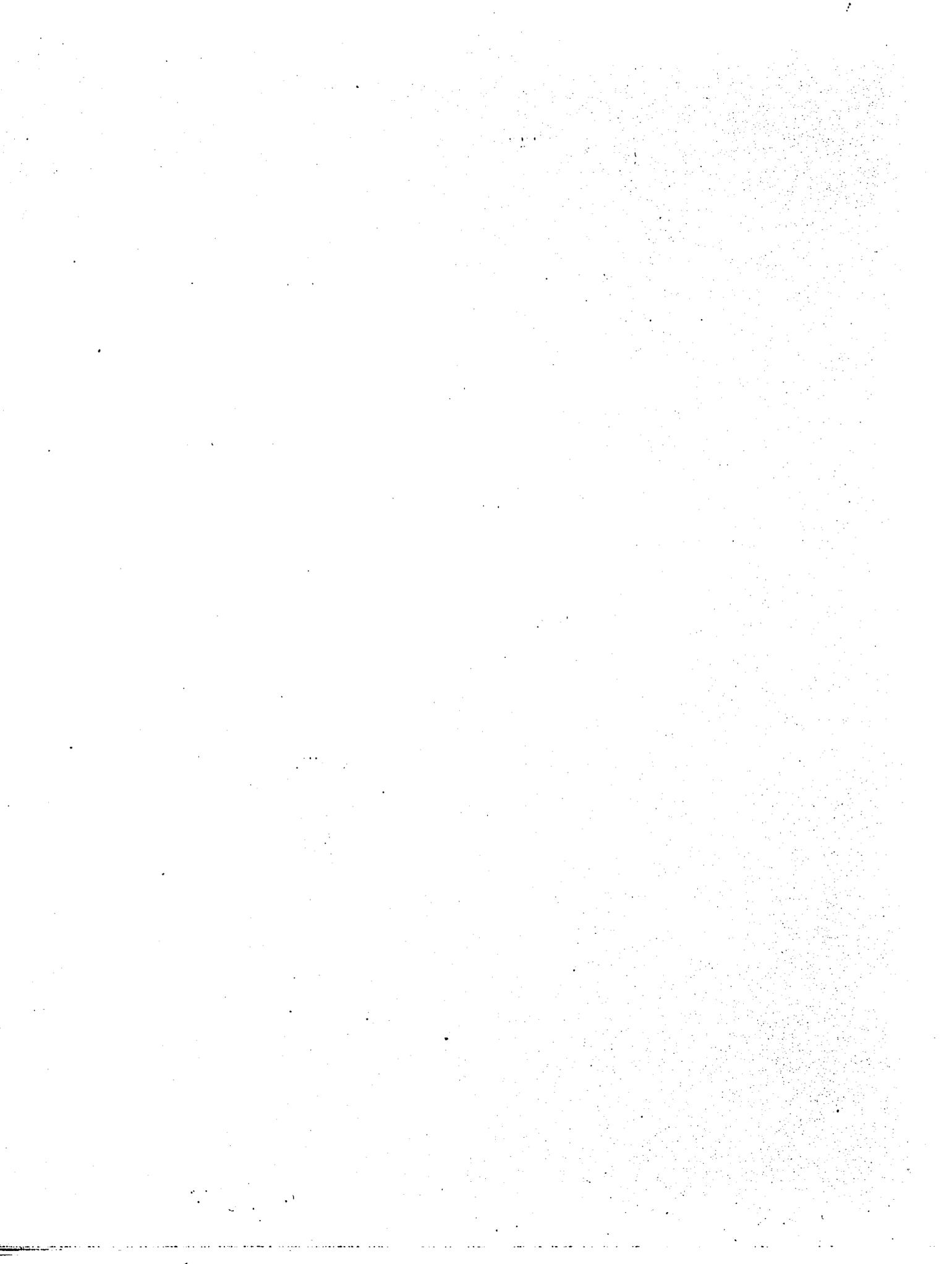
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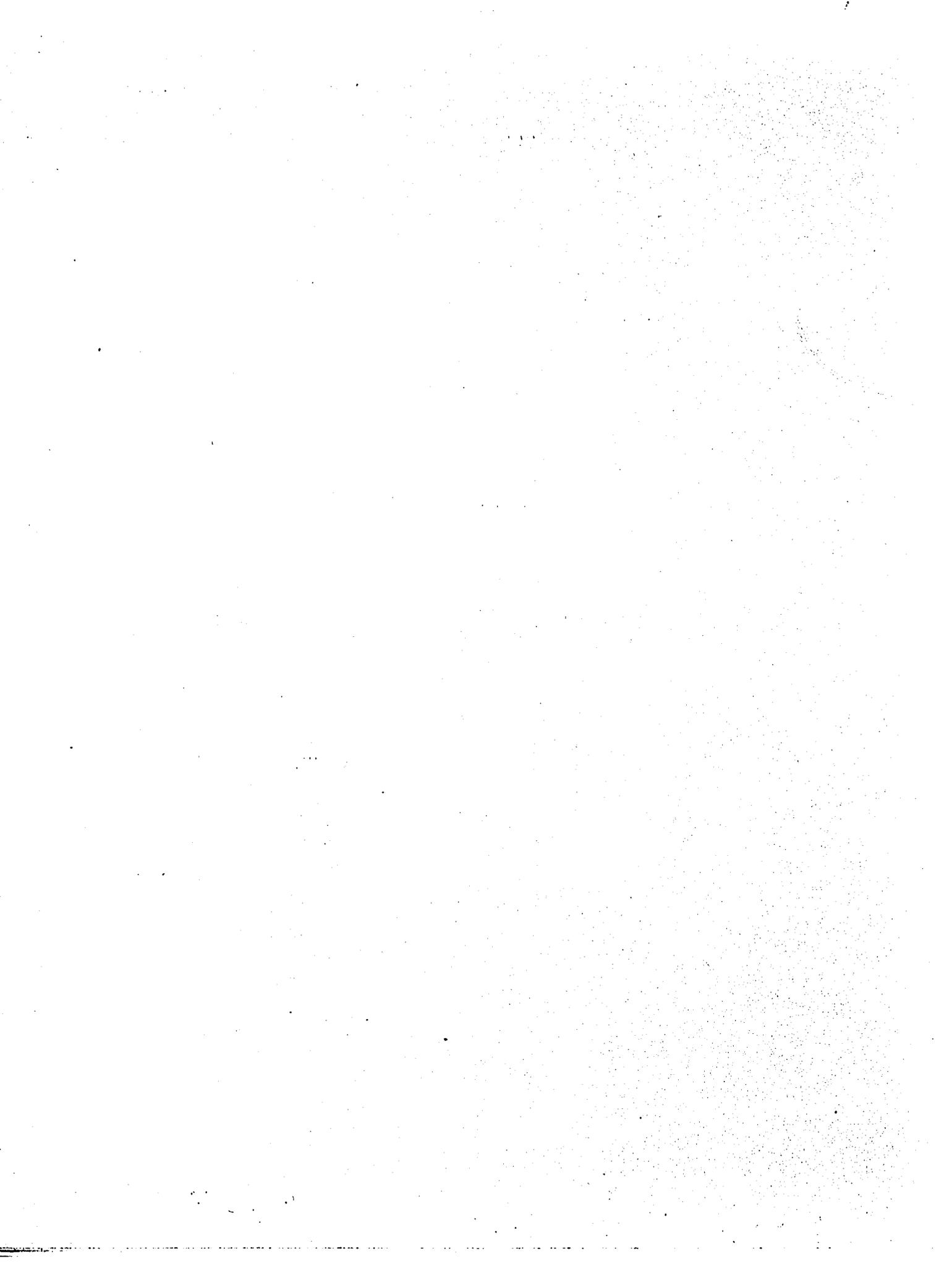
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**Assertive discipline portrait of an effective elementary school
discipline program**

Garrett, Elizabeth Anne Gentry, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1988

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ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE
PORTRAIT OF AN EFFECTIVE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

by

Elizabeth Anne Gentry Garrett

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
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of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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Approved by



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The purpose of this study is to expose administrators and teachers to a competency-based systematic approach to discipline. The program, known as Lee Canter's Approach to Assertive Discipline, is presently used at North Canton Elementary School in Canton, North Carolina. It is grounded in the commitment to a positive educational environment for both teachers and students.

Through the use of portraiture, a qualitative research methodology, the researcher will present a detailed description of the program. Included are guidelines for developing and implementing the program in public schools. This study will demonstrate how educators can effectively deal with student behavior problems in a confident, take-charge manner. Administrators and teachers will be interested in the findings of this study because student behavior issues surface daily. Also, educators can establish firm, consistent limits for all students and a positive educational environment for both teachers and students.

Basic assumptions of the investigation are as follows:

1. Teachers with consistent limits in their classrooms are more effective than they would be without such limits.
2. By setting uniform standards of behavior for all students in all areas of the school, students will clearly know how they are expected to behave.
3. Assertive Discipline involves determining rewards and consequences for students who do or do not follow the rules. Therefore, students are taught to be responsible for their own behavior.
4. Effective management of student behavior results in more student and teacher time on task.
5. Assertive Discipline can be an effective alternative to corporal punishment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| APPROVAL PAGE | i |
| CHAPTER | |
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Statement of the Problem | 1 |
| Need for the Study | 3 |
| Methodology | 11 |
| Questions to Guide Portraiture | 12 |
| Definition of Terms | 15 |
| Professional Autobiography | 16 |
| Basic Assumptions of the Investigation | 23 |
| Map of the Remainder of Study | 25 |
| II. REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE | 26 |
| III. ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE DESCRIPTION | 40 |
| Introduction | 40 |
| Description of the Facility, Faculty and Community | 41 |
| Implementation Process | 43 |
| Leadership | 46 |
| Interviews | 47 |
| IV. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS | 60 |
| Perceptions of School Administrators | 60 |
| Perceptions of Central Office, Board Members, and Consultants from the Western Regional Education Center | 62 |
| Perceptions of Teachers | 64 |
| Perceptions of Parents | 64 |
| Perceptions of Students | 65 |
| Suggestions and Guidelines | 66 |
| V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS | 72 |
| Summary | 72 |
| Conclusion | 75 |
| Programmatic Recommendations | 77 |
| Recommendations for Further Study | 77 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 78 |

| | Page |
|--|------|
| APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | 83 |
| APPENDIX B-1. PARTICIPANT EVALUATION OF THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY SD-26A | 88 |
| APPENDIX B-2. ANALYSIS OF SD-26 | 89 |
| APPENDIX C-1. YEAR-END TEACHER EVALUATION FORM. | 91 |
| APPENDIX C-2. ANALYSIS. | 94 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

The Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (Dellinger, p.34), has listed discipline as the number one problem in education for 12 out of the past 13 years of the survey.

It is estimated that from 15 to 30% of all students exhibit inappropriate, disruptive behavior periodically during the school year. Over 90% of these students are in regular classrooms, not in educationally or emotionally handicapped classrooms (Canter, 1979, p. 33).

In a study of classrooms in San Diego, California, (Canter and Associates, 1979), there was an average of over 40 distractions per 58 minutes of observation, the majority caused by three or four students. Verbal interruptions accounted for 25% of those distractions.

The problem which exists in today's classroom is discipline. There is a need to expose administrators and teachers to a possible solution to the discipline problems in schools. The solution is Assertive Discipline and the goals include: 1) Providing the teacher with a systematic approach to handling discipline problems, 2) To develop an alternative behavior-management approach to discipline problems, 3) When used consistently, it provides a natural protection for students against physical and psychological abuse, and 4) The inherent balance of negative consequences and positive reinforcement helps teachers maintain order and teach appropriate behavior with the students' best interest in mind.

In the March, 1982, issue of The Reading Teacher, a 20 week study of 105 primary grade students found that 33% of actual in-classroom time was spent in nonproductive areas with another 29% spent non-productively outside the classroom for lunch, recess, and going to and from activities. This meant that 53% of the students' school day was not used for academic instruction.

Teachers and administrators have simply not received training to deal with the behavior problems today's students present. In the January, 1982, issue of Phi Delta Kappan, a study of 19 educational psychology textbooks from 12 major publishers, published between 1968-1980, revealed that only 2.1% of the pages contained material on discipline and only .2% contained material on obedience. When discipline is discussed in texts, another problem arises: textbook authors do not agree on whose opinions and research are relevant to the topic. Diversity of sources alone does not prove that these textbooks cover the topics of discipline divergently. "But how much consensus can we expect when 95% of the references to primary materials are different in each textbook? An educational problem that the public sees as paramount might be expected to merit more extensive coverage" (Zern, 1982, p. 359).

One method of discipline that teachers resort to is corporal punishment. A national poll (1985) of teachers cited 70% of the respondents from the South as having used corporal punishment in the preceding year, compared with 54% of respondents from the Midwest and 34% from the East. The North Carolina Association of Educators helps to defend about 35 teachers per year who are accused of excessive corporal punishment. Only five states forbid corporal punishment by state statute. The term corporal punishment does not appear in any North Carolina statute. However, North Carolina educators feel that the reasonable force statute authorizes this form of discipline. The reasonable force

statute G.S. 115C-390 contemplates such force as is necessary to prevent a violation from occurring.

Need for the Study

In 1986 North Canton Elementary School spent considerable time examining a program called "Assertive Discipline," researched and developed in California by Lee Canter and Associates. The focus of Assertive Discipline is on developing administrative and teacher competencies to deal with discipline in schools. Canter stresses, and recent polls verify, that discipline is the primary concern of parents and educators. As Canter perceives the situation, "Poor discipline is reducing educational credibility among parents and influencing teacher effectiveness in the classroom" (Loss, 1981, p. 34). One of Canter's (1979) most startling research statistics is that teachers spend only seven minutes of every hour actually teaching. The balance of time is spent dealing with disruptive students and taking care of minor nuisances. Canter says that teachers must be and can be the "boss" in the classroom if they will follow a plan he has titled Assertive Discipline. It requires that the teacher develop four basic competencies:

1. The teacher must identify his/her needs in order to create an optimal learning environment.
2. The teacher must clearly identify and request appropriate behavior from students and work to reinforce positive social behavior of students.
3. The teacher must set effective and consistent limits and administer consequences for poor behavior.
4. The teacher must work with the principal, staff, parents and students in establishing and maintaining an Assertive Discipline Program.

Assertive Discipline is not new but is a supplement to ongoing discipline plans; it is not a panacea for all discipline problems. An Assertive Discipline Program requires preliminary planning, implementation procedures, staff inservice and ongoing maintenance.

The premise of Assertive Discipline is that teachers must establish a discipline plan which consists of rules, consequences and rewards. If students choose to follow rules they are rewarded but if they choose to break rules they receive consequences. The ultimate goal is to teach students to be responsible for their own behavior.

Reports from such books as How Children Fail, The Troubled Crusade, A Nation At Risk, and Curriculum Theorizing The Reconceptualists, set the mood for the nation to get tough and shape up education. Failure in a success-oriented culture is hard to take. We are failing and our children are failing in our schools at an alarming rate. Even children who achieve enviable grades are failing to learn much of what we hope to teach them: abstraction, curiosity, and most of all, responsibility.

Some adults destroy most of the intellectual and creative capacity of children by the things they do to them or make them do.

We destroy this capacity above all by making them afraid, afraid of not doing what other people want, of not pleasing, of making mistakes, of failing, of being wrong. Thus, we make them afraid to experiment, afraid to try the difficult and the unknown (Holt, 1964, p. 167).

The idea of painless, non-threatening coercion is an illusion. Fear is the inseparable companion of coercion, and its inescapable consequence. If you think it is your duty to make children do what you want, whether they will or not, follows inexorably that you must make them afraid of what will happen to them if they don't do what you want. You can do this in the old-fashioned way, openly and avowedly, with the threat of harsh words, infringement of liberty and physical punishment. Or you can do it in the modern way, subtly, smoothly, quietly by withholding the acceptance and approval which you and others have trained the children to depend on; or by making them feel that some retribution awaits them in

the future, too vague to imagine but too implacable to escape (Holt, 1964, pp. 179-180).

On the other hand, competent teachers learn to tap with a word, a gesture, a look, even a smile, the great reservoir of fear, shame and guilt that today's children carry around inside them.

Many view schools as institutions that have failed, and as obstacles to the future; this is the central theme in Diane Ravitch's The Troubled Crusade (1983). This book is a reform on the state of the crusade against ignorance during a tumultuous time in American history. Ravitch tells us three things: 1) American schools and colleges have not always had the production of intelligence as their primary aim; 2) American schools have often been the testing grounds of political activity; and 3) American education is resilient and capable of change for better or for worse. The extraordinary stress in the society outside the schools has created nearly intolerable strains within many schools in terms of student resistance to traditional authority. Ravitch notes that as authority in the larger society eroded, authority in the schools also came under attack; discipline problems increased, as did truancy and vandalism. The loosening of adult authority exacerbated the public's perception that lack of discipline was the most important problem in the schools and contributed to the steady decline of public confidence in the schools.

One problem defined in A Nation At Risk (1983) is classroom management. "A California study of individual classrooms found that because of poor management of classroom time, some elementary students received only one-fifth of the instruction others received in reading comprehension" (The National Commission of Excellence In Education, 1983, p. 22). The commission recommended:

The burden on teachers for maintaining discipline should be reduced through the development of firm and fair codes of student conduct that are enforced consistently and by considering alternative classroom programs and schools to meet the needs of continually disruptive students (The National Commission Of Excellence In Education, 1983, pp. 23-24).

William Pinar (1975), also criticizes the schools. He states that during the last 25 years the school has been especially incisive, at times virulent. One theme common to almost all criticism is the contention that the school experience is a dehumanizing one. He further states that whatever native intelligence or goodness exists deteriorates under the impact of the school.

Critics of public education abound. The unfortunate thing is, many educators are beginning to believe them.

We used to handle discipline with a ruler or a switch...but we learned that beating on kids doesn't work. In America we have a society which prevents that kind of treatment to animals. Why do some people still think it will work on children? (Hutchins, 1981, p. 1).

Student discipline is the number one problem perceived facing the schools. Teachers and administrators have not received training to deal with the behavior problems today's students present. If we are to improve discipline in our schools, we must first agree that a problem exists. "Research indicates that the discipline problem in the United States is severe enough that it should concern educators" (Baker, 1985, p. 482). Educators must be concerned about the lack of discipline in the schools because an educational environment depends on good discipline.

Although many schools have taken steps to improve their disciplinary climate, one continuing cause of the persistence of discipline problems remains, the failure of many educators to face the problem squarely, to recognize its importance, and to take steps to improve conditions in the schools (p. 487).

One can see that reports concerning discipline and student behavior are commonplace. Whenever you pick up a newspaper some group or individual is

criticizing the discipline that exists in the schools. Many inside and outside the system are ready to place blame. In order to understand the school ills, we must first describe school wellness, that is, what really works.

Educators need to be aware of the discipline problems in the schools and do something about the issue. One way of making the schools better is viewing the ideas of Tom Peters and Nancy Austin in their 1985 sequel, A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference. A bias for action and a genuine concern for their customers and their employees distinguish between excellent and poor enterprises. The excellent enterprises provide unparalleled quality, service and reliability, but, most important, they listen to their clients. It is this prescription which educational leaders must analyze, modify and adopt in their search for excellence. "Management By Wandering Around" can assist schools of education to overcome the many "ills" of education. Organizations move toward excellence once leaders begin simply wandering around - listening, emphasizing and staying in touch with clients, vendors and employees. M.B.W.A. keeps you in touch with people; this is essential for creating and sustaining superior performance. Educators can benefit from this simple approach toward excellence. Excellence can be achieved by people who maintain face-to-face contact with others, namely, customers and colleagues. Peters and Austin paint a portrait which points out what works in the business world. These same traits are also present in effective schools. Educators could easily adapt this theme and thus create an environment in which teachers can teach and students can learn.

"Constructive attention to our schools would be enhanced if more of us could resist blaming the ills of schooling on rampant 'isms'" (Goodlad, 1984, p. 174). The data collected by Goodlad and his colleagues on teachers' beliefs about their work conclude that teachers agree that good teacher-student relations are enhanced

when the teacher is clearly in charge of classroom activities, maintains classroom order and control and assures that students are kept busy. There was also high agreement that teachers enhance learning when they praise generously the accomplishment of individual students. The best learning atmosphere exists when the teacher takes an active interest in the learning problems of students and students participate in planning.

Goodlad (1984) portrays the "context of widespread disaffection with schooling in the United States has shifted to one much less easily characterized" (p. XV). Criticism abounds, to be sure, but the indiscriminate giving of it has become less fashionable. According to Goodlad, there is a trend that some schools are beginning to improve rather than get worse. His premise is that conditions in our schools have "bottomed out." Significant educational improvement of schooling, requires that the focus be placed on entire schools. "It is important that we realize that teachers, principals, curricula, organization, school and community relations and more are connected. If we change one element, it will ultimately affect the others" (p, XVI). Consequently, it is necessary to focus on one place where all elements come together, the individual school. "Therefore, if we are to improve schooling, we must first improve individual schools" (p. XVII). Criticism is focused less on schools than on the system of schooling. "Perhaps this is just part of the general decline of faith in our institutions and especially the bureaucratic insensitivity they are perceived to represent" (p. XV).

There is a tendency to focus on what is wrong or what is missing in the schools rather than what is working well and therefore worth preserving. Our challenge is to center ourselves and our inquiry as much as possible thus achieving a balanced perspective (D. Brubaker, lecture, U.N.C.-A., September 16, 1986).

Put on one pair of glasses and our schools appear to be the worst of places. Put on another pair and they appear to be the best. The rose-tinted lenses emerge when we associate schooling with the rapid evolution of the country to global eminence. Faith in schooling has gone hand in hand with the American belief in unlimited opportunities (Goodlad, 1984, p. 10).

In The Good High School, Lightfoot (1983), explores what's good in our schools by bringing the empathetic regard and discerning gaze of the portraitist to six schools. Lightfoot is an intelligent, sensitive observer of human nature and interprets the meaning of cultural webs of significance. Good schools tend to have inspired principals, superior teachers who are given the respect they deserve, sensible attitudes toward adolescents, institutional integrity and coherent objectives. These characteristics may not always be present in her portraits. However, each school can be judged with reference to its particular circumstance.

A lot of good things are taking place in the schools. Teachers and administrators need help and direction, not destructive criticism. There is much about the six schools that we do not learn from The Good High School: the quality of the teaching, the character of the curriculum, classroom management and discipline, the adequacy of the evaluation procedures teachers use and the satisfaction and disenchantments of the students. "This is neither an error of omission nor commission, for no work can do everything. The book's subtitle is "Portraits of Character and Culture," Lightfoot has given us these and she has done so with intelligence and style" (Eisner, 1984, p. 200). Our perspective on the elementary school should recognize the changes over time, consciousness about weaknesses, the motivation to act, and the vision of future goals.

Here goodness not only reflects the current workings of the school but also how far it has come and where it is headed. The concern with evidence of institutional transformation is also linked with a

definition of goodness that permits imperfection. The assumption is that no school will ever achieve perfection.

Weakness, made visible, can be confronted directly and worked with over time. Goodness, in schools, therefore, anticipates change and imperfection, and the former usually ushers in the disorientation and imbalance of the latter (Lightfoot, 1983, pp. 24-25).

Many ills exist in the schools but one problem is especially evident - classroom management. Teachers and administrators are not adequately prepared to effectively deal with inappropriate student behavior. Canter (1979) studied master teachers who have the talent for discipling students and Assertive Discipline was the result. The basic question of the research was, how can teachers get students to behave appropriately in the classroom? To find the answer, master teachers were studied. It was concluded that master teachers respond to their students in an "assertive" manner, by which is meant, that they clearly express their needs and are prepared to back up their words by action. The investigator asked 75 teachers the question, what college course prepared you to handle discipline problems in your classroom? The overwhelming response was they had not had any courses to prepare them to deal with discipline problems. Four special education teachers stated they had been exposed to behavior disorders and management, but only briefly. Veteran teachers responded by saying that when they began teaching, students were respectful. If there was a problem, they simply contacted the parents.

Administrators are not able to handle these problems any better than the teachers. They rely on "tricks of the trade" and their "power" to maintain a good learning environment, free from behavior problems. This research will demonstrate how students can successfully and consistently be managed. It will also provide a systematic procedure for establishing rules, consequences and rewards.

During the last two years this researcher has conducted five workshops on Assertive Discipline which taught the essential elements of the program to parents, teachers, substitutes, administrators, secretaries, bus-drivers, cafeteria workers, and custodians. The feedback has been very positive concerning this type of program and training.

There is a need to expose administrators and teachers to a system of discipline that consistently emphasizes the rules, consequences and rewards. This study will expose the reader to a program that has been consistently successful for the past ten years. The researcher will present the program, explain how it works, analyze its strengths and weaknesses and then present guidelines for developing this program in other elementary schools.

Methodology

This is a qualitative, not a quantitative study. The methodology used is that of portraiture. This methodology was used by Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, the 1984 winner of the American Educational Research Association Award for her book, The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture, (1983).

In determining the methodology for this dissertation, the investigator found Lightfoot's book very helpful. In the first chapter of her book, Lightfoot states:

I suggested we call our pieces "portraits" because I thought it would allow us a measure of freedom from the traditions and constraints of disciplined research methods, and because I hoped that our work would be defined by aesthetic, as well as empirical and analytic dimensions. (p. 13)

She further stated that her past research training supported the development of this inquiry. The following statement from Lightfoot's book explains the reason for selecting this methodology:

It is in the conscious expression of personal, intellectual, and value positions that one sees some of the differences between "pure" research and portraiture. In the former, the investigator behaves in a counterintuitive manner, always the consummate skeptic. He tries not to let personal inclinations shape the inquiry. Portraiture, on the other hand, permits these same inclinations to flourish, admits the shaping of the artist, and is less concerned with anticipated problems of replication (Lightfoot, 1983, p. 14).

Questions to Guide Portraiture

The following questions were used to guide portraiture as a research methodology:

1. How can I remind myself to be committed to holistic, complex, contextual descriptions of reality?

2. How can I reinforce my belief that environments and processes should be examined from the outsider's more distant perspective and the insider's immediate, subjective view?

3. How can I remember that "the truth" lies in the integration of various perspectives rather than in the choice of one as dominant and "objective"?

4. How can I listen to the deviant voice as an important version of "the truth" (and as a useful indicator of what the culture or social group defines as normal), not disregard it as outside of the central pattern?

5. How can I be critical and generous, allowing subjects to reveal their many dimensions and strengths, but also attempting to pierce through the smooth and correct veneers?

6. How can I primarily move from the inside out in doing portraits, search out unspoken (often unrecognized) institutional and interpersonal conflicts, listen for minority voices and deviant views, and seek to capture the essences, rather than the visible symbols, of school life?

7. How can I remind myself that as I shape the portrait I will also be shaped by the context or setting? (Lightfoot, 1983, pp. 13-14)

The term "portraiture" used by Lightfoot is descriptive of a process or idea that has been used in literature for the past six or seven years. In doing portraiture, the researcher utilizes his life's experiences to help the reader understand the development and shape of the portrait.

Eisner (1979) identified this form of qualitative inquiry as "educational criticism." By "criticism" he does not refer to the negative appraisal but rather the illumination of something's qualities so that an appraisal can be made. Eisner states:

The critics in this view are not primarily the issuance of a judgment but rather the difficult task of "lifting the veils" that keep the eyes from seeing. Doctoral programs socialize students to believe that the most dependable procedure one can obtain knowledge is through science and that respectable inquiry, is scientific in character. To use other methods, to employ metaphor, analogy, simile or other poetic devices, is to lack vigor (p. 192).

Eisner (1979), identifies three aspects of educational criticism in explaining this type of qualitative research. First, is the descriptive aspect of educational criticism, an attempt to identify and characterize, portray, or render in language the relevant qualities of educational life. Second is the interpretive aspect of criticism, in which ideas from the social sciences most frequently comes into play. These ideas form the conceptual maps that enable the educational critic to account for the events that have occurred and to predict some of their consequences. Third, are the evaluative aspects of educational criticism which distinguish the work of the educational critic from that of the social scientist.

Eisner (1979) systematically investigates the areas of reliability, validity, generalization and other concerns of inference. He presents a very strong

argument for the legitimacy of this qualitative method of inquiry. This "criticism" is precisely what takes place in the use of portraiture. We call on our experiences presented in the autobiography and use them to help paint the portrait.

Our infatuation with performance objectives, criterion referenced testing, competency-based education, and the so-called basics lends itself to standardization, operationalism, and behaviorism as the virtually exclusive concern of schooling. Such a focus is, I believe, far too narrow and not in the best interest of students, teachers, or the society within which students live (Eisner, 1979, p. 269).

The issue is not qualitative as opposed to quantitative, but how one approaches the educational world. It is to the artistic to which we must turn, not as a rejection of the scientific, but because with both we can achieve binocular vision. As Eisner so aptly states, "Looking through one eye never did provide much depth of field" (p. 10).

For the past ten years this researcher has worked with young children. Five years were spent teaching at the junior high school, three years as assistant principal, one year as principal and one year as supervisor. This type of inquiry will allow the researcher to remain personally involved with her dissertation and at the same time give her the impetus to develop a document of personal and professional growth.

The portraiture for this dissertation was created by interviews with the administration, faculty, students and community members of North Canton Elementary School, located in Canton, North Carolina. The focus was on the planning in which North Canton was involved and how the administration and staff perceive the school, wish it to be perceived, and attempt to create the desired perceptions. The researcher then examined the perception held of the school by its various publics: central office staff, school board members and consultants from the Western Regional Educational Center.

In assessing the perceptions of the Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton Elementary School, the design included interviews. Each faculty member was interviewed. The student population for this school is 520, 20 percent of both students and parents were selected to participate in the interview process. The selection for students and parents consisted of selecting every fifth person from the student enrollment and parent roster. The elementary supervisor, associate superintendent of curriculum and superintendent participated from the central office. Consultants from the Western Regional Educational Center included professionals from the areas of: language arts, mathematics, science and testing.

The interviews were used as "gathering sessions with parameters and depth defined by the respondent" (Lightfoot, 1983, p. 17). During each interview detailed notes were recorded and an attempt was made to record the exact wording of the respondents (A sample of interview questions may be found in Appendix A).

Definition of Terms

Some specific terms often used in Assertive Discipline and in this study are listed for clarification.

1. Behavior: The manner of conducting oneself.
2. Discipline: To train or develop by instruction and exercise, especially in self-control.
3. Assertive Discipline: Competency-based discipline designed to provide teachers the skills and confidence necessary to enable them to maximize their potential to get their needs met in today's classroom without violating the needs and wants of students.

4. Rules: Clear, consistent directions as to student behavior that is and isn't acceptable.

5. Rewards: Tangible appreciation given for positive behavior. Rewards might include praise, stickers, candy and extra computer time.

6. Consequences: Results given when students choose to break rules. Consequences might include isolation or staying after school.

7. Classroom management: Teachers and students are on task; teachers are teaching and students are learning.

8. Assertive Teachers: Proactive teachers who respond in a manner which enables them to get their needs met in the classroom, but do not violate the best interest of students.

9. Nonassertive Teachers: Do not clearly or firmly communicate their wants and needs to their students, or if they do they are not prepared to back up words with actions.

10. Hostile Teachers: Respond in a manner which enables them to get their needs met but violates the best interest of their students.

11. Corporal Punishment: Any form of punishment that inflicts physical pain.

Professional Autobiography

This section of the chapter draws on the writings of Dale Brubaker, and Seymour Sarason. These researchers agree that all research is subjective in the sense that the scholar brings autobiographical perspective to his actions. A person's view as to what is possible and obtainable depends on the spectrum of his or her experiences.

Brubaker (1982) stresses that it is useful to think of curriculum planners as having maps in their heads - "maps that order their perceptions so that they make sense" (p. 9). As professionals in education we share these maps thus attaining "reciprocity of perspectives." We are a network of relationships - we help create these relationships and thus enhance our sense of efficacy and community.

The perception of the past is a powerful influence on our present behavior. Each person's perception and definition of resources is a critical aspect of an educator's process. Tom Peters and Nancy Austin (1986) wrote in A Passion for Excellence, "...perception is all there is. There is no reality as such. There is only perceived reality...The real is what we perceive" (p. 71). Glenn Tecker (1982) in a workshop concerning performance appraisal said, "What is perceived is." Erving Goffman (1959) in Presentation of Self in Everyday Life talks about individuals presenting themselves and how this presentation helps to create perceptions.

Praxis (reflective action) is the word that best connotes the desirability of interaction between theory and practice. Theory and action are webbed through reflective action experiences. Conversely, they are not webbed through study alone (Sarason, 1978, p. 15).

From theory and our practical experiences we form a praxis.

All theories are embedded in pre-theoretical assumptions. You never see the universe from outside the universe. What our ideas are related to is total life, our total presuppositions, our attitudes, our values, our past history. Your understanding is what you stand on underneath the whole thing, it is the stage or platform one is on now" (James B. Macdonald , Interview by D. Brubaker, 1980).

What does the creation of settings mean? Seymour Sarason (1978) defines it as "any instance when two or more people come together in new and sustained

relationships to achieve certain goals" (p. IX). How one describes and understands the creation depends on one's relationship to it.

There is no one picture, but there are many related and overlapping ones, and one of the serious consequences of narrow partisanship is that it is conducive to the belief that there is one picture, one truth, and all else is hearsay.

Just as we do not get identical pictures from those involved in creating a setting, the passage of time permits one to see the differing pictures in new patterns (Sarason, 1978, p. 182).

An autobiography allows an individual to present a set of ideas stemming from personal experiences in different roles in different instances of the creation of a setting.

Identifying and understanding one's perceptions is an important goal for doing one's professional autobiography. A reciprocity of perspectives is achieved when autobiographical perceptions are shared.

As a 31-year old elementary supervisor in a small county in Western North Carolina, I reflect my native heritage. Like my classmates, I swung my book satchel and sauntered along the dirt road, scuffing at clods. Reading, writing and arithmetic lessons at Maggie Valley School were not the most adventurous items on the agenda, but walking home with the other children provided entertainment.

Growing up in Maggie Valley, North Carolina, the school was the focal point. Living here was to my advantage since the community was greatly involved with the school and with learning. My two brothers, a sister and I were taught at an early age to respect education and educators. We knew if we disobeyed the rules at school, then the consequences would await us at home.

I was always very enthusiastic about school, and was successful because it was enjoyable. I mastered the formal skills of life: relating with peers according to rules, progressing from free play to structured play and

comprehending content areas. Self-discipline was a part of my early school days; homework always had to be completed before free time. I desired to do well in school because I yearned to go to college and enter the field of education.

I greatly respected my elementary teachers, especially Mrs. Moody. I shall never forget her, she had a great influence on my life. Mrs. Moody had the knack for being an outstanding teacher because she cared about the students in her classroom. This teacher often said, "I am thankful each day for the unique opportunity I have as a teacher to shape and mold young lives into being all that they can be." She instilled in her students the rationale that young people need to be treated with kindness and respect. When shoving and pushing occurred on the playground, Mrs. Moody often reminded us to treat others as we would like to be treated. Elementary school was a very pleasant experience.

The junior high years were also successful. Mrs. Stuart, my seventh grade social studies teacher, made it clear that each student had worth. This teacher found goodness in all students and reinforced it daily. By the end of seventh grade all her students felt good about themselves. Somehow, each student was given positive reinforcement. Sometimes, one received a pat on the back, a smile or even class recognition for good work. Mrs. Stuart had rules which we obeyed but she also had rewards when the rules were obeyed. Mrs. Stuart was consistent and we knew what to expect from her; she had the knack.

During tenth grade, life became filled with socializing. I was actively involved in all aspects of the high school campus. During this time another teacher had a great impact on my future. Mr. John Goebel, a geometry teacher, also found "goodness" in his students, encouraging them and respecting their worth and dignity. He also was consistent, praising the students when they deserved it and punishing them when necessary. Punishment was a frown given by

the teacher or staying after class for a "pep" talk; this resulted in the student feeling disappointed with his/her behavior. Expectations were evident from the beginning of school, Mr. Goebel often stated, "You are here to learn and I am here to insure that you learn." We always knew what the expectations were in his classroom; he too had the knack.

Due to teachers like Mrs. Moody, Mrs. Stuart and Mr. Goebel, I mastered the basic skills and it was time to think about college. I received a full scholarship to Western Carolina University.

Upon entry into college, I selected art as a major and middle grade education as a minor; I lined up courses to prepare for a degree. The art building was within hearing distance of the Camp Laboratory School. I could hear cries of pleasure while watching the children on the playground. Upon completion of the freshman year, I decided that a career working with children was unavoidable. I switched my major to middle grade education with a minor in art.

As time passed, this student was allowed to do "third hand" experiences at the Camp Laboratory School; love and gentleness were easy to give to the students. Also, there was excitement every day since one never knew what these fourth and fifth graders would do. Fourth grade is a very difficult period for children and a sense of belonging is important. Consistency in a child's life is a key element.

I completed student teaching at North Canton Elementary. There, under the guidance of Miss Thompson, I was able to put some of my ideas into practice. Miss Thompson had a classroom of 24 students, consisting of fourth and fifth graders. She had high expectations for these students, and wouldn't tolerate inappropriate behavior; she always maintained excellent control. She had a

hierarchy of classroom rules and consequences. This teacher was consistent in all aspects of classroom management and discipline. She successfully ran a well-managed classroom. Students loved and respected Miss Thompson and showed success academically. She had the knack for being an effective teacher.

With student teaching behind I entered the real world. My first job was at Bethel Junior High. The building was modern with beautiful work spaces, offices and classrooms. My responsibility was to teach seventh and eighth grade students language arts and mathematics. Other duties consisted of sponsoring the Honor Club, annual and newspaper. The students ranged from high achievers and academically gifted to slow learners; it was a challenge to teach these students. I was faced with student disorder and reading levels ranging from second to tenth grade. Despite all the special training and experiences obtained in college I was still not properly equipped to deal with these students. An immediate return to graduate school in the evenings for a master's degree in reading helped some. The knack I had seen in others seemed to be missing from my own classroom. At this time I married Gary, whom I had dated for five years.

After two more years of trial and error, I made progress towards developing consistent rules and consequences in my classroom. However, something was still missing; I still had not mastered the knack. It was during the third year of teaching that I discovered the missing element - rewards. Students needed to be rewarded for good behavior. This was an item that I had taken for granted, expecting students to behave in the classroom. Upon discovering this missing element, I grew to be successful in the classroom. After three years, it was time for a change, which consisted of returning to college and working toward an Ed. S. in administration. During the fifth year of teaching, I was interviewed and offered a job as assistant principal at the school where my

student teaching had been completed. During the four years at this school, I respected and admired the principal, Mrs. Bird. She too, had the knack and the gift of foreseeing the future needs of students and teachers. Her professionalism and guidance had a tremendous influence on my life. She instilled in me the rationale that before decisions are made it is important to consider the impact they will have on the students.

Upon completion of three years as assistant principal, I was asked to be principal at Morningstar Elementary. The position would be available for one year, after which the school would be consolidated and I would return to the assistant principalship. At Morningstar I learned many valuable lessons. Being an instructional leader and a facilitator for the curriculum were the main objectives.

I attended an 80-hour workshop on Assertive Discipline and realized that it was necessary to examine the guidelines of our classroom management plans and to make adjustments. The schools needed a positive healthy environment so teachers could teach and students could develop to their potential. While working as an administrator in the elementary schools, it was obvious that teachers lacked consistency in student management. The teachers all had classroom management techniques but they lacked the consistency in disciplining students. Each teacher kept a record of all corporal punishment administered. Also, the principal and the assistant principal used the same record-keeping devices. The number of corporal punishment incidents made abundantly clear that staff training was needed in the area of student management. I established a ten-hour workshop for the teachers, assistants, administrators, substitutes, and secretarial personnel. It became a challenge to work with teachers and attempt to explain that the management of students didn't have to be a problem. Indeed, students can be dealt with effectively in a calm, consistent, and rational manner.

In July, 1987, I became an elementary supervisor for six elementary schools. During August and September of 1987, I conducted workshops and inservices on Assertive Discipline for five elementary schools which later implemented the program. Assertive Discipline allows the teacher to be consistent in classroom management. Today I am attempting to put together a document that will support this claim.

Basic Assumptions of the Investigation

National polls, educational research, and empirical evidence all indicate that classroom discipline is a major problem in current American education. The Assertive Discipline method promoted by Canter and used by North Canton Elementary School provides one practical answer to the problem. Thus a study which analyzes the Assertive Discipline practice and purports to assess its impact on classroom practice will be a significant addition to professional literature. Administrators and teachers will be interested in the findings of this study because student management issues surface daily. Research shows teachers with consistent limits in their classrooms are more effective. Assertive Discipline is based on a very simple, sensible premise - that setting uniform standards of behavior for all students in all areas of the school will resolve questions as to how students are to behave. Assertive Discipline involves establishing rules, consequences and rewards for students, by which we teach students to take responsibility for their own behavior. They are given a clear choice - to follow the rules and enjoy the rewards or to break the rules and receive the consequences. Teachers with a good understanding of Assertive Discipline can be consistent in handling discipline problems and this can result in more time on task for both teachers and students.

I have received 80 hours of training and have conducted numerous workshops on Assertive Discipline. The techniques, premises and materials used were taken from Lee Canter's Assertive Discipline: "A Take-Charge Approach For Today's Educator." Teachers and administrators who have completed the workshops and inservices have reported successful implementation of the techniques in their classroom, in the hallway and school-wide. They have also expressed a desire for further information.

Effective classroom management creates a good learning atmosphere for both teachers and students. A study by Compton Unified School District (1984) found that classroom teachers had more time for instruction in better controlled classrooms and experienced less stress in the performance of their professional tasks. Fewer students were referred to the office, and principals had more time to perform other tasks. Also, parents reported that their children's behavior reflected a marked improvement in terms of accepting responsibility. Further information to support these assumptions will be presented in the review of literature section of this study.

Boards of education, both local and state, write and revise discipline policies. Topics such as corporal punishment and due process are always evident. Today there is an impact on school discipline policies by parents and guardians. Therefore, if a consistent student management program could be established that provides for rules, consequences and rewards, it would be of great interest to everyone involved. The management program should protect the worth, dignity and rights of students and at the same time effectively manage student behavior.

Map of the Remainder of Study

Chapter II will contain a review of selected literature with an investigation of the following key indicators: Assertive Discipline and Elementary Schools. An explanation of how the researcher gathered information will come next, followed by a summary of the chapter.

Chapter III will contain a detailed description of the Assertive Discipline Program utilized at North Canton Elementary School. It will also contain the portrait of the facility, its administration, staff, students and the various publics.

Chapter IV will contain an analysis of findings. It will also contain guidelines for implementation of this program in other elementary schools.

Chapter V will contain a summary, conclusions and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Having conducted an ERIC search, consulted dissertation abstracts and read widely from 1976 to 1988 in journals such as Behavior Disorders Journal, Educational Leadership, Phi Delta Kappan, Journal of Genetic Psychology, Journal of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, Instructor and Young Children, the investigator found that the literature is flooded with information pertaining to discipline and corporal punishment. Thus it was necessary to narrow the scope and direction of the literature review. References and information cited have been limited to those pertinent to the dissertation. This chapter will review selected literature with a focus on the following key indicators: Assertive Discipline and Elementary Schools.

The use of Assertive Discipline as a schoolwide response to classroom problems is gaining nationwide support. Forty states currently have utilized this program (Districtwide Use of Assertive Discipline - Partial Listing, obtained from Canter and Associates). The program is designed to provide teachers and administrators with the competence and confidence necessary to assert their influence and deal effectively with discipline problems (Canter and Associates, 1979, p. 9).

Benjamin Bloom (1978) points out "rarely do teachers, students and the school authorities develop a school code of behavior that is consistent from year to year, and from classroom to classroom (p. 563). As a result, "teachers devote more time and attention to discipline and managing classroom behavior than appears to be the case in other countries of the world" (p. 564).

Assertive Discipline is a method of maintaining consistent school-wide discipline and was introduced by Lee Canter in 1976 with the publication of his book, Assertive Discipline: A Take-Charge Approach For Today's Educator. It was written after seven years of observing master teachers. The purpose of Assertive Discipline is to prevent misbehavior rather than simply to give punishment. It is based on a hierarchy of rules, consequences and rewards. The goals are (a) to increase students' time on task, (b) to minimize distracting and disruptive behavior, (c) to reduce the likelihood of more serious disciplinary problems, (d) to minimize the teacher's effort in maintaining discipline, and (e) to achieve these goals with the least possible use of serious punishment.

"Normally when students demonstrate good behavior, it goes without acknowledgment from the teacher. Assertive Discipline stresses the importance of responding assertively to good behavior" (McCormack, 1985, p. 4). Furthermore, it is the teacher's responsibility to inform the student of the choices; the consequences of choosing not to respond appropriately or the rewards for choosing to behave appropriately. "The teacher selects consequences that are not physically or psychologically harmful, but ones that the student does not like" (Canter, 1986, p. 5). The rewards are selected by the teacher, student or both.

The Assertive Discipline Program requires that firm, consistent limits be set for the students, while at the same time it supports the student's need for warmth and positive support. The involvement of parent and principal is essential, and is part of the Assertive Discipline plan to which the teacher and the principal agreed (Canter, 1988, p. 2).

Assertive Discipline, its proponents say, is useful in dealing with virtually all students. Some educators believe that there are certain students for whom it is appropriate to make disciplinary exceptions - those with emotional problems,

those from broken homes, and those who are economically deprived. Conversely, Canter and his Associates (1979) claim that Assertive Discipline works with all students at all grade levels. All students can behave and control their behavior except those with organic problems such as epilepsy or brain damage. As a result, no longer are students with emotional problems, students whose parents do not support school discipline, students with low socioeconomic background, low achievers or educationally handicapped students exempt from good behavior.

In order to facilitate teachers' reaching all students, Canter's (1979) trainers instruct teachers to (a) tolerate no student preventing another student from learning, (b) tolerate no student stopping the teaching process, (c) tolerate no student engaging in any behavior that is not in the student's best interest and in the best interest of others, and most important, (d) immediately recognize and reinforce for appropriate behavior.

The Assertive Discipline Program suggests a variety of methods for student management, including "the broken record." This method simply advocates that the teacher repeat expectations without allowing the student to divert attention. This is accompanied by a sequence of actions including direct eye contact, non-threatening gestures, saying the student's name, and perhaps the teacher touching the student's shoulder. The teacher uses a quiet, insistent voice and, in one or two words directs the student back to work. The teacher remains until the student responds, then moves away and in a sincere tone says "thank you."

Once classroom rules are established, a teacher can stop inappropriate behavior without interrupting the teaching process. An example, the teacher writes the name of the misbehaving student on the chalkboard, or in some non-verbal way indicates to the student that a rule has been broken. At the same time the teacher can praise another student for not doing the inappropriate

behavior. For example, "I like the way Johnny raises his hand before responding." This brings to the student's attention that misbehavior - breaking of a known rule - is occurring. Later in the same day if a student again chooses to break a rule, the teacher places a check next to the student's name and so on.

With the publication of the recent article entitled "Assertive Discipline: Unhealthy for Children and Other Living Things," (1987) questions arise about whether or not this systematic discipline program is appropriate for elementary schools. An increasing number of school districts are training their personnel in the Canter (1976) mode of Assertive Discipline. The Canter model has become popular because it provides methods for the teacher to "assertively take control of the classroom." Gartrell (1987) notes that administrators drawn to this model like it because it is a consistent approach for all teachers and because it provides a calculated in control response to problem behavior. Although advocates praise the model's ability to reduce disruptive behavior, "Critics maintain that it is a quick fix that has long-term negative effects on children's attitudes" (Gartrell, p. 11). Gartrell says that he is "troubled by the growing number of districts that are using the mode (Assertive Discipline) as an official policy. Classrooms that use Assertive Discipline are ones where students fear...public punishment" (p. 11). Some educators trained in Assertive Discipline begin the program with good intentions, but they fail to implement some elements of the program and concentrate on the negatives. Consequently, Assertive Discipline may acquire a negative reputation because it is not used as designed, as reported by such critics as Gartrell (1987). A concern is that Assertive Discipline tends to turn professional teachers into people managing technicians.

This model provides little direction for teachers to become problem solvers, provide individual guidance, or use professional judgement to alter curriculum to match young minds and bodies. The Canter model of Assertive Discipline is a tool for quelling developmentally

natural child reactions to experimentally irrelevant content and methods. Teachers and administrators need to be reminded that there are more positive models for classroom guidance and management. For preschool and primary children, at the least, alternative, developmentally appropriate methods should be developed, used and supported (Gartrell, 1987, p. 11).

Consistent reinforcement is as important for good behavior as it is for inappropriate behavior. As McCormack states, "non-verbal teachers' actions, tangible rewards and notes sent home about good work, all constitute positive reinforcement. The important thing is that the student always knows why the positive or negative consequence is given" (1985, p. 7).

The Assertive Discipline training program has been presented to over 400,000 educators throughout the United States. Eleven research projects (ten dissertations and one university study) have examined it. Most literature and research about Assertive Discipline are based on descriptive designs and personal opinions, rather than experimentation. One study experimentally manipulated classroom control methods to determine positive and negative effects of Assertive Discipline (Mandlebaum, Russell, Krous, and Gonter, 1983). Another empirical study was based on systematic classroom observations of student behavior as a primary feature of its experimental design (McCormack, 1985).

Other research projects based on surveys of students and teachers, show a positive relationship between Assertive Discipline and (a) reduction in time devoted to discipline referrals, (b) improvement in classroom discipline and improvement in student behavior, and (c) improvement of the teachers' and students' self concept. These findings are supported by observation reports of school district teachers and administrations. School authorities in California, Arizona and Minnesota reported that administrative time devoted to discipline referrals dropped as much as 20 percent after the implementation of the Assertive

Discipline Program (Loss, 1981; Lubow, 1978). Teachers and administrators who attended Assertive Discipline training workshops in Minnesota, California, Ohio, Indiana, Oregon and Texas reported significant improvements in student behavior after the Assertive Discipline Program was implemented (Becker, 1980; Moffett, Jurenka, and Koran, 1982; Ward, 1983; Webb, 1983). Follow-up surveys indicated that observable student behavior continued to improve after two to five years (Bauer, 1982; Becker, 1980; Crawley, 1982).

Linda Mandlebaum and colleagues (1983) at Bowling Green University manipulated classroom control and examined the results of implementing Assertive Discipline. The researchers implemented the program in a third-grade classroom in a mid-west metropolitan school district. The classroom teacher, with 20 years of experience, evidenced poor control of student behavior prior to the institution of the program and, as a result, was in danger of losing her position. The researchers found a classroom reduction of two problematic student behaviors, out-of-seat behavior and talking were affected positively by the Assertive Discipline Program. This supports Canter's contentions regarding the efficacy of the program.

A primary goal of Assertive Discipline is to eliminate student misbehavior. The teacher who looks for, finds and reinforces appropriate desirable student behaviors, is the key to successful discipline. Beginning with a balance between the positive and negative reinforcements, the emphasis shifts to more positive reinforcement as negative behaviors diminish (McCormack, 1985, p. 9).

The second empirical study was conducted in 36 Oregon third-grade classrooms (McCormack, 1985). The intent of the research was to analyze data about off-task behavior collected from two groups of students. One group consisted of 18 classrooms where Assertive Discipline was not used. The groups of teachers - those who used and those who did not use Assertive Discipline - were

virtually identical. The research studied the hypothesis that if Assertive Discipline were used by teachers, then students time-off-task would be lower than if Assertive Discipline were not used by teachers. The study employed a quasi-experimental, static group comparison design, using observational data about off-task behavior collected from two groups of third grade students: one group in 18 classrooms where Assertive Discipline was used and the other group in 18 classrooms where Assertive Discipline was not used. The study validated the hypothesis. The off-task behavior of students in classrooms where Assertive Discipline was not used was repeatedly higher than the mean level of classrooms where Assertive Discipline was present. Students in classrooms where Assertive Discipline was not used were off-task twelve and a half percent of the time observed. Students in classrooms with Assertive Discipline were off-task five percent less. The use of Assertive Discipline by teachers was an effective means to increase on-task behavior of students.

A third area of research about Assertive Discipline examines improvement of teachers' and students' self-concept. This link was found by Bauer (1982), Ersavas, (1980) and Henderson (1982), in their doctoral research projects. Ersavas was the first researcher to use pre-test and post-test surveys in the study of Assertive Discipline. She began by surveying four elementary schools where Assertive Discipline was not used. She then introduced the program to the staff of those schools and teachers implemented it. She not only found improved self-concept of students and teachers at each of the four elementary schools, but also validated Canter's claim of improved classroom discipline.

Bauer's purpose (1982) of research was to measure the effectiveness of Lee Canter's Assertive Discipline in reducing discipline problems, increasing teacher satisfaction and improving student attitudes toward school. Null

hypotheses were formulated and a quasi-experimental design, static-group comparison, was used to test the hypotheses. The following question was considered for investigation: When implemented on a school-wide basis, does Canter's Assertive Discipline reduce behavior problems, increase teacher satisfaction and develop positive student attitudes toward school? The data revealed that Assertive Discipline is effective in reducing classroom discipline problems. Furthermore, teachers in the schools using Assertive Discipline reported greater satisfaction with their roles in the classroom compared to teachers from the school using various methods of classroom discipline.

Henderson (1982) wanted to determine whether differences with respect to self-control, locus of control, pupil control ideology and assertive teacher characteristics existed among elementary school classrooms teachers who trained and implemented the Assertive Discipline Program over one academic year and classroom teachers not trained and not implementing the Assertive Discipline Program, within the same school system. A second group of classroom teachers outside the school system not trained or implementing Assertive Discipline were used as a comparison group. The findings suggest that:

- (1) Elementary school classroom teachers trained and implementing the Assertive Discipline over one academic year displayed significant positive differences with regard to locus of control, pupil control ideology, and higher mean scores with respect to self-concept and asserive teacher personality characteristics were greater than elementary school classroom teachers not trained or implementing Assertive Discipline within the same school district and a second group of elementary school classroom teachers outside the school system not trained or implementing the Assertive Discipline Program.

(2) Several significant relationships among variables through the use of the Pearson-product moment correlations emerged among self-concept, locus of control, pupil control ideology and assertive teacher personality characteristics.

Improved teacher and student self-concept was also reported after implementing the Assertive Discipline Program in schools (McCormack, 1985; and Swanson, 1984). Other positive self-concept findings were reported in 1984 when the Compton (California) Unified District (approximately 1340 teachers) examined the results of implementing the Assertive Discipline Program in an entire school district. Students, parents, teachers and administrators, expressed general satisfaction with the progress this program had made in the classrooms. Parents clearly expressed that their children's behavior reflected a marked improvement in terms of accepting responsibility for homework as well as becoming more responsive toward achieving success for their future endeavors. Classroom teachers stated they had more time for instruction and were experiencing less stress in the performance of their professional tasks. Principals indicated that fewer students were referred to the office and this allowed them more time to perform other demands of their assignment.

While there was minimal criticism of the program, there was some criticism of student consequences. It was recognized that long-formed habits are sometimes difficult to change. There were concerns expressed regarding the way the program consultants were used and suggested changes for next year. However, the Assertive Discipline Program in the Compton School District was perceived as a success. The goals and objectives of this program have been achieved to a significant extent. The outcomes have been positive and are a direct result of the constructive commitment and dedication of the District's total staff (Swanson, 1984, p. 12).

The Lennox School District (California, 1978) sought to obtain staff perceptions of the improvement in general discipline, classroom disruptions and playground or cafeteria incidents. After completion of one year of the program,

the district conducted an evaluative study with the teachers. Respondents were asked to assess the various aspects of the school Assertive Discipline plan as indicating improvement on three levels: (1) somewhat, (2) in an observable degree and (3) totally improved. Seventy-three responses were received showing the perception that the overall school Assertive Discipline plan had brought about improvement in student behavior as follows: (1) somewhat 17%, (2) in an observable degree 49%, and (3) totally 34%. A conclusion drawn from the sampling indicated that 83% felt that student behavior was observably or totally improved according to their Assertive Discipline plan. The remaining 17% felt student behavior was somewhat improved.

Crawley (1982) conducted a study to investigate the relationships between (1) the perceptions of teachers trained in Assertive Discipline methods and the perceptions of teachers who did not receive the training in this program with respect to classroom conditions, procedures and student behavior, and (2) the perceptions of students in classes of teachers trained in Assertive Discipline methods and the perceptions of students in classes of teachers not receiving that training with respect to classroom conditions, procedures and student behavior. Students in classes where teachers were trained in Assertive Discipline felt their attitudes toward school had improved but felt they were subjected to negative consequences to a greater extent than students in classes of teachers who were not trained in Assertive Discipline. There were some slight differences on some items of the survey. Basically both groups of teachers indicated similar perceptions of their classroom environments.

The first conclusion indicated that there were no benefits measured by the study derived from Assertive Discipline training. Secondly, there was a possibility that over a period of time the traditionally trained teachers experienced positive

benefits from Assertive Discipline trained teachers and their classrooms tended to become like their colleagues. Finally, the research may not have been properly designed to avoid contamination from variables not controlled.

Wess (1983) conducted a study to assess the extent to which Lee Canter's Assertive Discipline Program was perceived effective by professional staff. Of the respondents, 85.8% agreed that they liked Assertive Discipline as a disciplinary plan and student behavior was perceived as improved by 81.55% of the respondents. Control of student behavior was perceived as improved by 76.59% of the respondents. Student behavior was not perceived as being long lasting in nature as agreement was only 43.27%. All survey items showed a positive relationship to firm, fair and consistent rules. The majority of the professional staff perceived Assertive Discipline as an effective behavior modification technique. It was concluded that the Assertive Discipline Program was an effective and practical behavior management strategy that could yield socially valid outcomes.

King (1987) presented a paper at the National Association of School Psychologists Annual Convention, March 4-8, 1987, in New Orleans, Louisiana. She stated that discipline was a matter of learning how to behave. "Making decisions regarding appropriate responses to behavioral incidents is an on-going part of being an educator" (p. 2). She further stated,

Since discipline can be learned, instruction in discipline can greatly influence a person's whole life. Assertive Discipline, developed by Canter and Canter (1976) is viewed as an effective tool to teach such self-discipline and encourage cooperation (p. 9).

King described the implementation of Assertive Discipline at Morgan County Primary School (Georgia), a school with 52 teachers and 840 students in kindergarten through grade three. The purpose of the study was to examine in

detail the effects Assertive Discipline had on the overall school situation at this school. King concluded that the Assertive Discipline Program had a positive effect on students, parents, teachers and administrators. It was further indicated that behavioral problems diminished by 75% (pp. 16-17).

The Assertive Discipline Program at John Swett Elementary (Martinez Unified School District, California, 1983) clearly established student behavior expectations and consequences. In addition to these two outcomes, the program offered varying degrees of positive acknowledgment for students meeting or exceeding the expectations (Feria, 1983, p. 3). The program was initiated during the 1979-1980 school year. The program goals were to improve student behavior, increase student time-on-task, and improve school climate by acknowledging students' positive behaviors. Statistics were kept for the program. During the 1979-1980 school year, with a student population of 356 students, a total of 350 were referred to the office for disciplinary reasons. During the 1982-1983 school year 247 students visited the office out of a total of 365 students. This was a 30% reduction in student referrals. The nature of referrals changed from interpersonal problems to those related to on-tasks behaviors. On-tasks behavior problems shifted from gross class disruptions to not being on task when expected to be. This document was selected by the Association of California School Administrators Task Force on Public Confidence as descriptive of a promising practice of exemplary project worthy of highlighting for the California educational community.

The Cartwright School District (1981-1982) (report obtained from Lee Canter and Associates) wanted to determine if the discipline handbook was compatible with Lee Canter's Assertive Discipline Program which had been adopted by the board during the 1981-1982 school year. The study was divided

into two sections: (1) a comparison of the number of discipline cases being reported during 1980 and 1981, and (2) a survey of educators to determine their opinions regarding the district's discipline program. An analysis of the comparison figures for 1980 and 1981 during the first four months of each year reflected that the program had a definite effect in most of the problem areas. The analysis of the survey indicated the following:

1. Teachers appreciate the support they received with discipline.
2. The inservice was well received.
3. Money would have to be spent for reward/award items.
4. The handbook was compatible, with some minor revisions or inclusions necessary.
5. Parents were receptive to the board's direction and the steps taken by administrators and teachers.
6. Additional inservice was needed in dealing with "problem" students and assisting parents of "problem" students.
7. The program was used most of the time by their teachers.

In summation, the direction and subsequent action lead to a positive result (pp. 2-3).

Ward (1983) tested the following hypotheses: (H, 1) Teachers as a heterogeneous group, after they initiate Assertive Discipline in their classrooms, will report a significant decrease in classroom disruptions caused by students that force them to stop the teaching process. (H, 2) The amount of change after the initiation of Assertive Discipline is independent of teachers': (1) sex; (2) experience; (3) degree; (4) level taught; (5) attitude toward corporal punishment; (6) attitude toward Assertive Discipline; and (7) size of school.

A t-test was used to test the first hypothesis, the results supported the hypothesis. There was a reduction in classroom disruptions caused by students. For a six period day there was a mean average of 17.09 disruptions per one hundred students per day before Assertive Discipline. After Assertive Discipline was in use, the mean average dropped to 10.44 per day per 100 students for a decrease of 6.65 in classroom disruptions per day.

The second hypothesis stated that teachers' sex, years of experience, highest degree earned, grade level taught, attitude toward corporal punishment, attitude toward Assertive Discipline, and school size would make no difference. A chi-square was used to test each of these variables. The data established that each of these variables did make a significant difference.

There is evidence in the analysis of the research to support the position that the effects of the presence of Assertive Discipline merits positive consideration when looking at students' off-task behavior, self-concept and responsibility. This researcher will show, in light of the research cited above, that Assertive Discipline used effectively can provide educators with the competence and confidence necessary to assert their influence and deal effectively with discipline problems.

Chapter III will contain a detailed description of the Assertive Discipline Program utilized at the North Canton Elementary School. It will also contain the portrait of the facility, its staff and administration, students and the various publics.

CHAPTER III
ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton Elementary School, Canton, North Carolina, was established as a result of a philosophy to provide teachers and administrators with the competence and confidence necessary to assert their influence and deal effectively with discipline problems. It was created as a means to provide consistency among discipline plans and consequences for student misbehavior.

The Assertive Discipline Program has been well perceived since its inception both in terms of providing consistent discipline plans and reducing student misbehavior. These successful results can be attributed to the entire program and the quality of the people working in it.

This researcher taught five years at a junior high school. After leaving this position, she spent the next five years as an administrator in two elementary schools. During those ten years she worked with and served on various school and county-wide discipline committees. These experiences allowed her to become familiar with different discipline plans and board policies for Haywood County Schools.

A question frequently raised in education is, "Why do we wait until students are behavior problems before we teach them the skills necessary to be responsible for their actions?" The students who participate in the Assertive Discipline Program develop the skills and attitudes necessary to be responsible citizens.

Description of the Facility, Faculty and Community

Not only was North Canton Elementary the first school in Haywood County to implement Assertive Discipline it was the first to implement any comprehensive cognitive/behavioral approach to student management.

When the first North Canton School was built in 1909, it was thought to be the most modern school building in the state - and indeed it was, for that time. One can imagine the pride the community felt in passing a red brick building constructed on a hill overlooking the new Champion Fibre Company Plant. Then known as Canton Graded School, it included grades one through ten.

As enrollment grew, other schools were built to accommodate the overflow of students. Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed in the 1920's and was followed by Beaverdam, Morning Star, and Patton Schools. When a new building was constructed for the high school in 1931, grades one through eight were left in what then became known as North Canton School. By the early 1960's the need for a new building became evident. The cafeteria space was inadequate, and there was no space available for the activities associated with operating a modern school. A site of 13.2 acres on Thompson Street was chosen and a modern one-story building was constructed and ready for occupancy in the fall of 1966. With an increase in enrollment due partly to the addition of state-sponsored kindergarten classes, an addition was added in 1974. This building houses kindergarten and first grade classes. In 1972, Patton School was closed and students were assigned to North Canton School. Beaverdam School was closed in August of 1983 and students from that area were returned to North Canton. In 1984-1985, North Canton School celebrated seventy-five years of service to the youth of Canton.

North Canton School is a modern, one-story brick building located in Canton, North Carolina, on a large tract that provides opportunities for varied outdoor activities and future expansion. The design provides individual rooms for grades kindergarten through sixth with classrooms for Special Education and Emotionally Handicapped students. Each room contains a sink area and grades kindergarten through three are equipped with bathrooms. A carpeted media center and a modern cafeteria serve the needs of the student body. A multi-purpose room is used as a gym for indoor physical education classes as well as an auditorium large enough to accommodate the entire student body. The median age of the teaching staff falls between 36 to 40 years of age with a median of 19 years of experience. Twenty-five teachers hold Bachelor's Degrees, eight hold Master's Degrees and one holds an Ed.S. Degree in Middle Grade Education. The principal and assistant principal hold Ed.S. Degrees in Administration. Each teacher is teaching in his or her area of certification and all teachers participate in inservice programs. The ethnic composition for the faculty and staff consists of 99% White and 1% Black. Specialists from the Western Regional Educational Center assist in conducting workshops in areas of need and interest. The aides, volunteers and substitute teachers have had inservice training in their specific areas. The school system has a contract with the Smoky Mountain Mental Health Center for psychological services. A registered nurse and a dentist serve the school. All food service workers take special workshops offered by the Haywood County School Food Services. Social workers assist the school when needed. A full-time custodian, a maid and a part-time custodian are employed.

A strong parent involvement program helps to combat apathy among the parents. The Parent Teacher Association works closely with the school to

provide materials, support and volunteer services for projects and special programs.

Ethnic composition for the student population consist of .01% American Indian, .02% Asian, .002% Hispanic, 1.9% Black and 97.44% White. There has been no significant change in the ethnic composition of the student population during the past five years. However, there has been a slight increase in the population of Mexican/American migrant students. These students are enrolled during the early fall and spring of the school year.

The Haywood County community expects the school system to provide a comprehensive program with full educational opportunity for children of all ability levels and to demonstrate an excellence in quality. A school board member stated,

There is the expectation that equal opportunity and equivalent degrees of excellence will be afforded all children regardless of geographic location or the schools they attend. This places a major responsibility upon all school personnel and the local Board of Education to provide top quality opportunity and instruction at every point from preschool screening through terminal vocational education.

Agriculture, industry and tourism are of primary importance to the economic and social life of Haywood County. Major crops of burley tobacco, trellised tomatoes and apples help boost the agriculture revenue to approximately \$421,000,000. The estimated annual income from the travel industry is an additional \$21,000,000 while annual payrolls from industry total \$161,000,000.

Implementation Process

Teachers and administrators felt a need to be consistent in their discipline plans because classroom management varied in each room. Due to the large percentage of students who were chronically misbehaving, the faculty and

administrators felt a need to examine alternative methods of discipline. Another concern expressed by the teachers was the negative interactions with students. A lot of time was being spent disciplining students, this took time away from the teaching process. The topic of discipline and classroom management was a popular topic at staff meetings. Therefore, grade chairpersons and the administrators visited William Estes Elementary, in Buncombe County, to examine their discipline method, which was Assertive Discipline. Those who visited the school were very impressed with the school atmosphere and they shared their perceptions with other staff members.

To present a comprehensive view of the Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton, it is imperative that the issues of the program content and implementation be addressed. In July, 1986, the researcher attended an 80-hour training session conducted by Canter Associates. The workshop enabled her to conduct a ten-hour Assertive Discipline inservice for all staff members at North Canton Elementary School. The purpose of the inservice was to demonstrate how to effectively utilize the principles of Assertive Discipline. The inservice included six videotapes, workbook assignments, and formal and informal discussions. Program topics included:

1. What is assertive discipline?
2. Roadblocks to assertive discipline
3. Limit - setting in the classroom
4. Positive consequences
5. How to start the first day and schoolwide discipline
6. Follow-up

In addition to the videotapes, each participant read Assertive Discipline: A Take-Charge Approach For Today's Educator. Also, each participant developed

a discipline plan which included rules, consequences and rewards; this was later approved by the principal and a copy was sent home to the parents. Upon completion of the ten-hour inservice the participants completed an evaluation form (The instrument and analysis may be found in Appendix B-1 and B-2).

In May, 1987, session six of the inservice was completed. This session focused on assisting participants in evaluating the use of Assertive Discipline skills in their classroom. Thus, the final session was conducted after the participants had sufficient experience utilizing the skills learned in sessions one through five. During this session participants evaluated their progress (The evaluation form and analysis may be found in Appendix C-1 and C-2).

In addition to individual classroom plans, the principal selected representatives to form a discipline committee to develop a rough draft of a schoolwide discipline plan for cafeteria, hallway and bus behavior. The rough draft plan was later approved by the faculty and parents were sent copies of the schoolwide plan. In September, 1986, an Open House was conducted at North Canton at which time parents were informed of the philosophy and rationale for class and schoolwide plans.

At each staff meeting a time block lasting five to ten minutes was set aside to discuss problems of Assertive Discipline. Grade level chairpersons placed this item on their agendas. Each faculty member was given a memo in September, 1986, which contained a summary of Assertive Discipline. The memo included the following:

Assertive Discipline is based upon the following principles:

1. Students can behave appropriately.
2. Teachers must know and communicate to students what they want them to do.

3. Teachers must provide negative consequences every time students disrupt.
4. Teachers must consistently reinforce appropriate behavior.
5. Teachers must ask for help from parents and principals. (Canter, 1981, p. 43).

Leadership

Bennis and Naus (1985) state, "Leaders seem to retain many of the positive characteristics of the child: enthusiasm for people, spontaneity, imagination and an unlimited capacity to learn new behavior" (p. 65). Jane Bird, the principal at North Canton, indeed has all these qualities and in copious amounts. Peters and Austin (1986) in their analysis of effective leaders, state, "The best bosses are neither exclusively tough nor exclusively tender, an asset in life, but a deterrent to effective leadership" (p. XVIII). Bird is an effective leader and her leadership is reflected throughout the school; she is highly visible in the classrooms and hallways. She can be described in much the same way Peters and Austin (1986) describe successful leaders, "Tough as nails, uncompromising about their value system and at the same time they care deeply about and respect their people" (p. XVIII). Bird is a small, thoughtful woman with enormous energy. She is a strong administrator and is definitely considered the instructional leader by the staff. Her ability to adequately handle difficult situations is a strength in the overall Assertive Discipline Program. Teachers who are ineffective and functioning inadequately are not allowed to stifle the overall effectiveness of the school program. In describing Bird, the researcher bases her opinions and observations on personal contact over a ten year period.

The staff at North Canton is a mixture of talents and personalities. A very warm and friendly atmosphere exists at the school, and there is very little staff turnover, which contributes to the effectiveness of the Assertive Discipline Program. Peters and Austin (1986) described the successful work place as a "No excuses environment where radical decentralization frees people to make anything happen — training is provided and extraordinary results are routinely expected" (p. XVIII).

High expectations for teachers are evident at this school, yet an aura of freedom to experiment is visible. A primary teacher said, "The principal is not threatened or intimidated by the teachers; therefore, she allows us the freedom to make decisions and suggestions. We are treated as professionals and this atmosphere remains constant."

Interviews

The design for assessing the perceptions of the Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton Elementary School included interviews with board members, central office staff, Western Regional Educational Center consultants, administrators, faculty members, parents and students. Twenty percent of the students and parents were selected to participate in the interview process. The selection for students and parents consisted of selecting every fifth person from the student and parent roster. Each person interviewed be not be included in this section because the information is repetitive. Instead the researcher will attempt to use as many different perceptions as possible from the participants.

The school board members unanimously agreed that Assertive Discipline was very effective as a means of controlling student behavior. They did indicate

that the junior high and high schools needed to examine the program. Also, one board member stated, "We need to educate the parents. I know this was done at North Canton and it was most helpful. Parents need to understand the program, its components and the rationale." Another board member stated "North Canton has set a precedent for the other schools to follow. Everything I've heard has been very positive supporting the Assertive Discipline Program." He further stated, "Assertive Discipline can reduce corporal punishment incidents. It also lets a child know what the expectations are in the classroom."

The superintendent for Haywood County Schools, who is a very large man, about 6'4" and 270 pounds, discussed Assertive Discipline at length. "I first heard of this years ago at an administrators' conference; a lot of schools were using this. I'm glad we got around to using it in this county." He further talked about corporal punishment and the legalities. He thought Assertive Discipline could be an alternative form of discipline.

At the discretion of the principal, corporal punishment could be eliminated. We are constantly trying to teach children to be responsible for their actions and to be self-disciplined. I really believe Assertive Discipline is one of the best forms of student management I've seen. I like it because children choose to behave and receive rewards or they choose to misbehave and receive the consequences.

He indicated that he would like to see other principals examine the components of Assertive Discipline. "I'm glad Jane Bird had the insight to recognize a good program. Assertive Discipline worked well at North Canton and it can be successful at other schools."

"Assertive Discipline is not a new trend but it has just become popular in some states, especially North Carolina," stated the Associate Superintendent of Curriculum. This man is very conservative and deliberate in the decision-making process. He stressed that educators and psychologists had identified certain

practices that teachers use in the classroom that can psychologically harm students; excessive name calling, angry looks, belittling a student in front of classmates, sarcastic and hostile comments. Ignoring students or responding to them only when they behave poorly constitutes abuse as well. When these abuses are frequent they can cause serious emotional problems, poor grades and a phobia about school. He further stated that educators need to examine closely the form of discipline they are using and be sure it is in no way physically or psychologically harmful to students. "I think most important we need to keep in mind while maintaining order, one also wants to create a positive, healthy environment in the school so that teachers can teach and students can learn."

"Several of the schools I work with have recently implemented Assertive Discipline," stated the very energetic elementary supervisor, who has held her position for seven years. "It almost seems like a trend and everyone's hopping on board; that's why we need to examine the program and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses." Assertive Discipline can be a positive disciplinary method if conducted appropriately, "but I don't believe this program works for every child. I believe kindergarten through grade two teachers should not use this method of management because it inhibits the child." She further elaborated that a teacher can determine if a noise level reflects 'work noise' or 'useless noise'. "We don't need to stifle these youngsters. Our purpose is to teach in a healthy environment. I question whether Assertive Discipline promotes this atmosphere."

Jane Bird, the principal at North Canton has had a varied background in her career. She has taught grades one, two and six, was an elementary supervisor and has been in her present position since 1975. She became familiar with Assertive Discipline in the spring of 1986.

I received some literature from Canter and Associates, it sounded very interesting. Next, I got in touch with William Estes Elementary

which is located in Buncombe County and took some teachers and went to observe the program. We were most impressed by the school atmosphere and especially the time on task for both teachers and students.

She spoke with her staff regarding the program and implementation. "There was a need for an alternative form of discipline especially with the new guidelines for corporal punishment and the legalities involved in this form of discipline." She further stated that the only barrier had been consistency. "To make the program work all teachers have to be consistent in establishing and following up on their rules, consequences and even rewards." She indicated that she had observed a remarkable difference in student behavior since the implementation of Assertive Discipline.

She informed parents of the program at an Open House held in the fall of 1986. "We have had more parent support this year than ever before. Assertive Discipline requires that you stay in touch with parents for both appropriate and inappropriate behavior." The faculty share their ideas and concerns about the discipline program at weekly staff meetings. "I set aside five to ten minutes per meeting to let the teachers share their ideas and opinions concerning Assertive Discipline." She further stressed, "Assertive Discipline has been a great success and I would recommend the program to other schools.

Larry Plemmons, the assistant principal came to the school in 1987. Prior to this he was a principal in a neighboring county.

I attended a workshop two years ago and was very impressed with Assertive Discipline. I'm glad North Canton is involved in the program. Even though I was not here when the plan was initiated, I can definitely say that it works and it is the best discipline program around.

The science coordinator from the Western Regional Center had two perspectives to share concerning Assertive Discipline.

As a parent I don't approve of Assertive Discipline - it stifles children. My son came home from school very upset because he got a check beside his name. This is very humiliating for any child to have their name put on the board and for their peers to ridicule them.

She further stated that her child was academically gifted and the program stifled his creativity.

The other day he got three checks because he wouldn't clean his desk. I've asked that he be removed from this classroom but the principal won't change him. I simply think that my child has a personality conflict with the teacher. As an educator, I think someone just came up with Assertive Discipline - it's not based on research. There is not any evidence to support Canter's claims.

On the other hand, other consultants from the Western Regional Educational Center were very positive and supported Assertive Discipline. The language coordinator, who has a lovely Scottish accent stated that "A form of this was used when I was in grade school in Scotland - I really liked it because there were never any surprises; we knew what to expect." She further stated, "If used consistently Assertive Discipline can help with classroom management and provide more time on task for both teachers and students." She had observed Assertive Discipline throughout this educational region, "You can tell when entering a school if the school has Assertive Discipline. I think it's the best management system I've seen."

The testing coordinator, a short round fellow who is very philosophical had this to say,

Children need a balanced perspective in their daily lives and especially the time they spend at school. Do you realize the schools have children for one-third of the day? I believe children should behave while they are in school but paddling a child is inhumane and not a successful form of discipline.

He further explained, if students behave in class, then teachers don't have to be interrupted when teaching; therefore, there's more time on task. "I believe Canter's premise, 'No child should ever stop another student from learning or the teacher from teaching!'"

The Research Program Developer at North Canton, who brings 34 years of experience into the classroom, defined Assertive Discipline as "a systematic approach allowing me to increase my influence in the classroom by being more assertive, being able to firmly communicate my wants and needs to my students and being prepared to reinforce my words with appropriate action." This is the first time she has implemented a program which utilizes the positive approach in solving disciplinary problems. She further stated that she spends less time disciplining students and more time teaching. The changes she has observed include: a different atmosphere and more time on task for both teacher and student.

I clearly establish the behaviors I want the first day of school and I allow students time to discuss the rules, consequences and rewards. This way I know that each student clearly understands that I will not tolerate disruptive behavior.

The large number of rewards used for good behavior and parents' awareness of the rules, are in her opinion real pluses for the program.

A special education teacher with a strong clinical psychology background defined Assertive Discipline as "a consistent controlled method of discipline." The program fits in nicely with her present plan of student management. She keeps a card for each child and this card goes to each class where the child is mainstreamed. Her most effective techniques include letters to the parents and a homework raffle. "A real strength of the program is students know what to expect and we don't double punish them. If a student misbehaves in the hallway or

lunchroom - whoever sees him deals directly with him." She further stated, "This program is an excellent source of parental contact - it's cut and dried and there's no hidden agenda."

A sixth grade lead teacher defined Assertive Discipline as an "equitable, consistent system of discipline." This program fits into her present plan of discipline because for numerous years she has used a demerit system in which students get a certain number of points removed from their citizenship grade for misbehavior. Several techniques are used in this classroom which include: a Star Jar (for good behavior student names are placed in the jar, every six weeks two names are drawn from the jar and they receive a special treat, this might include a dinner out or a trip to the movies), homework raffles (this is similar to the Star Jar but the reward is no homework), and special field trips. This teacher used to spend 5% of her day on discipline; she now spends 15% but "the majority of the time is spent planning rewards and incentives, sending positive notes and telephone calls to parents." Students appear pleased when they receive awards for good behavior, but "the various rewards have to be changed so the student will not become bored." She further added "If carried out consistently, Assertive Discipline is the most effective means - consistency is the key. Also, there is less corporal punishment because we now have an alternative - Assertive Discipline." This teacher was recently nominated as a candidate for Haywood County's Teacher of the Year.

A kindergarten teacher of ten years stated "Assertive Discipline is a consistent system of rewards and consequences." This was not the first time she had used a program which utilized the positive approach to solving disciplinary problems. However, "this approach is the best, simply because it allows a teacher to be consistent." Some of the techniques she used for rewards included: Super

Kid award for good behavior, teddy bear counters and stickers. Her most effective consequence is time out - this is a section of the room, located beside the filing cabinet which contains a timer and a chair; a child is sent here when he obtains two checks beside his name.

I actually spend more time on discipline now than before, by this I mean planning rewards and special treats for my students who exhibit good behavior. Before I spent 10% per day disciplining students; today I spend 15%, but it's worth it.

When asked about her overall perception she said, "Sometimes I get slack but I catch myself - consistency is the key. Also I know my parents better and I especially like not using corporal punishment."

Teachers and administrators appreciate the support they receive from the majority of parents in the community. Last year the Parent Teacher Association raised \$5,000 to purchase computer materials. Also, each teacher received \$10 from this organization to purchase materials to support Assertive Discipline. The majority of parents I talked with supported Assertive Discipline. The Parent Teacher Association president was quite an unusual person. She has two sons in school, goes to school full-time at the local technical college and is a bookkeeper for her husband's corporation; yet she found the time and energy to be involved in the school process. She attended the Open House earlier in the fall and was first exposed to Assertive Discipline.

This is the best thing that's happened to North Canton - we need a discipline program that is fair for each child. Assertive Discipline lets a student know what to do and what not to do. I have two sons--one in second grade and one in fourth grade. You would not believe how the program has helped them.

She elaborated that her sons actually take responsibility at home and she doesn't have to keep yelling at them to do their work. "Instead of screaming at them, all I have to do is remind them of the consequences and give them a warning. I guess

what I'm trying to say is that I'm consistent with my children." She further explained that it was a challenge every day for her boys to receive rewards. "You wouldn't believe what a sticker can do to motivate my children to behave."

Another parent who has visited the school four times this year said that all her visitations at the school were not for her child's bad behavior but that two of the visits had been to watch her child receive an award at the assembly program.

This program has had a big effect on the school - my child has trouble behaving on the bus. Last year he was suspended and not allowed to ride the bus, I had to bring him to school. But since Assertive Discipline came to North Canton this is not a problem anymore.

She added that at the parent-teacher conference the teacher actually asked how she liked this program. "The teacher was real sincere and I felt like she really wanted to know how I felt. Well, I really like the discipline program because it makes kids want to behave."

A parent who has two children and is a school board member had a concern about the use of Assertive Discipline, "I have had several parents call me concerning the rigidity of the program. Also, shouldn't children be dealt with on an individual basis?" He further stated that he thought the program was very appropriate for elementary students and he thought his children had adjusted well. He further added, "It might be a good idea to conduct parent sessions concerning Assertive Discipline. I think there's a filmstrip or videotape available for this. Also, sometimes I think the term Assertive Discipline is connotated in the negative aspect." However, he was quick to add,

Assertive Discipline is basically a sound discipline program with many advantages - it provides consistency in the consequences and most important, it rewards children for good behavior. I would recommend the program be considered for other elementary schools in the county.

The majority of the parents I talked with were very supportive of the Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton, and they were convinced it should continue. They also felt the program was teaching their children to be responsible for their own actions.

The majority of students at North Canton spoke favorably of the discipline program and especially the rewards. Amy, a pretty blonde kindergarten student skipped down the hall as we talked about the school. She seemed very anxious to tell me everything except about Assertive Discipline. She told me about the happy faces her teacher gave at the end of each day. "When I go home mommy asks me if I got a happy face; sometimes I get candy." Another kindergarten child said he got a bookmark in the library "'Cause I was good."

Jack, a first grade student, was notorious because of his misbehavior in the lunchroom. "I used to get my name on the board. Now I get to help the teacher." He also said his mother was proud of him. Recently, he received an award at the assembly program for "Most Improved Cafeteria Behavior."

Chris, an energetic second grader who has a severe speech defect liked Assertive Discipline. "I got two awards this year because I was good." This student had a behavior problem because he could not keep his hands and feet to himself. He was constantly hitting or biting his fellow classmates. "My teacher has rules on the bulletin board and if I do something bad, she puts my name on the board - this year I didn't get a whipping. Last year I got ten whippings."

Third grade students at North Canton seemed to have a good understanding of the discipline program. One concern they had was not getting to participate in physical education. Jimmy, who plays on a little league baseball team had this to say about Assertive Discipline,

It's ok but you shouldn't have to miss p.e. That's the best part of school. This year I've had to miss it two times, but some of my

friends have had to sit out more times than me. Why don't they take math away instead of p.e.?

The third grade teachers agreed to use physical education as an incentive. If an entire physical education period is missed, they are required to provide the student with some form of physical activity.

Another third grade student especially liked the assembly programs which are held every six weeks. "This program's ok. I really like the assembly program when we get rewards. Last time I got a tee shirt and a certificate." He also stated that "teachers don't yell anymore; they just write your name on the board."

The fourth, fifth and sixth grade students at North Canton are housed on a separate hall which has bathroom facilities and is accessible to the gymnasium. Because of their age and maturity, these students had a better understanding of the Assertive Discipline Program.

Heidi, a fourth grader, who has never been in trouble at school stated, "My mom likes the program; she uses it on my little brother. I guess it's ok. My mom says it's supposed to teach us to be better citizens." However, Jeremy, a freckle-faced mischievous fourth grader said, "I had to call my mom at work when I got three checks by my name. Boy was she mad! She said if I ever called her again, I was dead meat." When asked why he got three checks he said, "I didn't used to do homework, but I do now." He further explained he now had to do his homework and his mom checked it before he got to go outside to play. Jeremy told me his teacher sent home a progress report every week to his mother and it had to be signed and brought back to school. "So far I haven't got an award at the assembly program but I think I will the next time."

Bryan, a tall, lanky fifth grader explained that Assertive Discipline was "Rules that the teacher and the class made up. We also got to vote on the

consequences and the rewards." Bryan recently won a trip to the mall and a dinner at the Pizza Hut because of his good behavior. Bryan further explained that his mom had a copy of the class rules and she often reminded him to obey the rules at school.

According to his teacher, William, a sixth grade student, has shown more improvement in his behavior than his fellow classmates.

William used to be the worst- behaved student in the entire school. He comes from a bad home environment. Teachers used to feel sorry for William and bent the rules for him, but Assertive Discipline treats him like everybody else. I can honestly call William "Sweet William" and mean it. I think his change in behavior is credited to the Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton.

William had this to say,

It was hard at first I never got any rewards and I always had to call my mom for misbehaving, but the other kids in my room helped me. They wanted to win an ice cream party and I had to be good and not get any checks so the kids could have ice cream.

He went on to say "My teacher is trying to teach me to be responsible for my actions. I may get an award at the assembly program this time." Another sixth grade student, Sherri said,

I used to get three checks beside my name every day because that meant no p.e. I hate p.e. Well, I got to do this for a week and then I had to start calling my mom - boy was she mad. Also, I had to stay after school and the teacher took me home. All the kids on my street saw me get out of the teacher's car. I was embarrassed.

This past six weeks Sherri won a pencil and a certificate. "My mom was surprised when I got that stuff. She couldn't believe it. Me neither!"

There are some indications that board members, central office, Western Regional Center coordinators, administrators, teachers, parents and students feel the need for a consistent discipline program and they want to create a plan with which rewards and consequences are equally distributed. This past year's

Assertive Discipline was initiated by administrators, teachers and students at North Canton and they were pleased by the results. Most teachers appear responsive and respectful of students, actively encouraging students to be responsive individuals. When students demonstrate disruptive behavior, teachers are quick to act. Bird claims, "My work would not be possible without the active support of teachers. They respond confidently and professionally." Students have high visibility and acclaim, and their success shapes the perceptions of North Canton. For those students who are not selected for the Honor Roll or Good Citizen awards, Assertive Discipline recognizes these students; North Canton is a place where each student is recognized.

Chapter IV will present an analysis of the research findings. In addition, ideas, suggestions and specific guidelines to be considered in reference to program implementation will be included.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The design for assessing the impact of the Assertive Discipline Program included the development and administration of interview questions to various groups of people closely involved with the program. Interviews were conducted for five groups of people. The groups interviewed included: 1) school administrators, 2) central office staff, board members and consultants from the Western Regional Educational Center, 3) teachers, 4) parents, and 5) students.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton Elementary School after the first year of implementation. The findings are presented in five sections. Each section reflects the interview results from the group sampled.

Perceptions of School Administrators

The principal and assistant principal at North Canton were interviewed. The summary of findings indicate that there is strong evidence these administrators possessed knowledge of the Assertive Discipline Program prior to its implementation. In response to the question, "When did you inform your staff of the purpose, guidelines, and operational procedures of the Assertive Discipline Program?" The principal responded that a ten-hour inservice had been provided to all staff members. The principal used several methods to obtain a commitment from staff members. The methods included: 1) Involving the staff in the initial planning stages of the program, 2) Establishing a committee to address problems

and concerns, and 3) Faculty commitment because there was a need to change the present disciplinary process.

The principal indicated that she had not faced any major problems in implementing the program. Some minor problems included: 1) Teachers not being consistent in their plans, 2) Too many programs implemented simultaneously during this school year, and 3) Difficulty of overcoming long-formed habits by some teachers. The assistant principal indicated that he was not located at the school the previous year. Therefore, he had no basis for determining improvement in student behavior.

The principal reported that she had informed parents of the purpose and implementation procedures of the program in September, 1986. She also stated that communication to the parents was an ongoing process. Parents were informed and kept current through meetings, bulletins and letters.

When asked, "Did you discuss the success or lack of success of the program at each staff meeting?" The principal said that five to ten minutes per faculty meeting was designated for discussion of the Assertive Discipline Program.

After examining the results obtained from the interviews, it is evident that the Assertive Discipline Program was implemented according to program guidelines. Appropriate steps were taken to avoid major problems. The administrators assumed the responsibility of monitoring the program. Positive outcomes from the program included: 1) Observing positive behavior changes of students in the classrooms, 2) Reduction in the number of students referred to the office, and 3) Positive feedback from the teachers, parents and students.

When asked, "Does the program require more time than you feel you can take from your other duties?" Both the principal and the assistant principal felt that the rewards were great enough to justify the administrative time needed to

implement the program. The most significant reward reported was the increase in instructional time for teachers. The administrators felt that most teachers indicated their jobs had been made less frustrating. Although the program required additional time for the teachers to be consistent and follow the necessary steps in the program, the administrators felt it was worth the effort.

Perceptions of Central Office, Board Members, and Consultants From the
Western Regional Educational Center

Three central office staff members, nine board members and three Western Regional Education Center consultants were interviewed. The summary of findings indicates that there is strong evidence these people possessed knowledge of the Assertive Discipline Program prior to its implementation at North Canton. Many had previously read, studied portions of the program, or had observed the program in other educational units.

In response to the question, "Are you familiar with the guidelines and operational procedures of the Assertive Discipline Program?" All of the responding groups indicated they were aware of the procedures. A board member and a consultant from the Western Regional Educational Center gained familiarity because their children attended North Canton. Others gained familiarity because the superintendent and the school principal told them about the program.

The majority of this group indicated this was a good means to manage student behavior. An elementary supervisor and a consultant from the Western Regional Educational Center indicated concerns they had. Basically, their concern was the program stifled the creativity of children. Another concern was the relative newness of the program and there was not sufficient research to support its effectiveness.

A board member indicated that a possible barrier to the program was that parents did not fully understand the concepts or procedures. He stated that parent sessions concerning Assertive Discipline should be held frequently. Also, the term "assertive" may be connoted with negative perceptions. These were the only barriers indicated.

The majority of the group had observed better classroom management at North Canton. One consultant from the Western Regional Educational Center indicated that she had not noticed a difference.

In response to, "Have parents expressed concerns about the program?" A board member stated that several parents had contacted him because of the rigidity of the program. He indicated that he had told the parents about the program and then asked them to contact the principal. From a parent's viewpoint, the Western Regional Educational consultant showed a concern about the Assertive Discipline Program. She indicated that the program stifled her child's creativity because it was too strict.

The majority of the group indicated that other schools should be encouraged to implement Assertive Discipline. The elementary supervisor indicated that due to immaturity, grades kindergarten through two should not be included in the program. A consultant from the Western Regional Educational Center did not have a comment concerning this question.

It was unanimous that a need existed for Haywood County Schools to develop guidelines for student behavior. All members of the group except one agreed that Assertive Discipline could be an alternative discipline program.

Perceptions of Teachers

All teachers at North Canton were interviewed. The teacher responses to the interviews verify they were knowledgeable of the goals and objectives of the program. They indicated the inservice training was sufficient to implement the programs successfully. According to the analysis obtained from the inservice, 100% of the teachers felt the inservice was a successful training experience and the concepts could be easily adapted in their own classrooms.

More than half of the teachers indicated they had previously utilized a program emphasizing the positive approach to the disciplinary process. When teachers were asked specifically, "What three techniques seem to have the most effect on student behavior?" The summarized responses included: 1) The use of rewards and or awards, 2) Positive reinforcement/verbal praise, 3) Contacting parents, 4) Establishing standards, 5) Placing student names on the chalkboard and adding checks, and 6) Consistency.

Since the program was implemented, the majority of teachers indicated they were able to dedicate more professional time to instruction each day. The teachers were asked to indicate changes they had observed since implementing Assertive Discipline. The responses included: 1) The classroom atmosphere is less tense, 2) Students seem to like the program, 3) More time for instruction, and 4) Students and parents seem to have a better attitude toward school. It was apparent from the interviews that most teachers recognize and feel rewarded by the great improvement in the disciplinary process.

Perceptions of Parents

Twenty percent of the parent population was interviewed. Every fifth person from the parent roster was included in the process. Approximately 100

responded to the interview questions. All parents learned of the Assertive Discipline Program during an Open House conducted by the principal and teachers at North Canton. Also, information was presented at meetings and letters were sent home to the parents.

Parents were asked, "Has your child noticed any changes in the teacher's approach to disciplinary problems?" The majority stated that their children had noticed a change in the discipline codes and that everyone received the same consequences and rewards. It is noteworthy that more than half of the parents interviewed had children who brought home rewards for good behavior.

Eighty-seven parents made comments about the Assertive Discipline Program. Six stated that they were not familiar enough with the program to make an accurate assessment. Seven people chose not to participate in the interview. The majority of the comments reflected varying degrees of appreciation for the program and the success it had manifested. The following statements summarize comments from these parents: 1) The total school atmosphere has improved, 2) It keeps the parents aware of their children's behavior, 3) The attitudes of children concerning school and especially discipline has been very positive, 4) Children are actually being rewarded for good behavior, and 5) Thanks for helping parents discipline their children.

Perceptions of Students

Twenty percent of the student population was interviewed. Every fifth person from the student roster was included in the process. Approximately 100 responded to the interview questions. Students were asked basic questions relating to their experiences of being disciplined in a positive manner and receiving awards, rewards, and/or positive reinforcement for good behavior and

consequences for negative behavior. This sample group of students represented students from kindergarten to grade six. It is significant to note that the student responses were congruent with those of parents and teachers in the way they viewed the Assertive Discipline Program. Ninety students felt good about the program. Only ten responded that their feelings about the program was "Not so good." A majority of the students further indicated a positive regard for the program by indicating that they liked school better now that their teachers used the Assertive Discipline and they especially liked the assembly programs. Seventy students stated their teachers had called their parents to say something good about them, only ten had had physical education taken from them because of something they had done. When asked, "How many times have you been removed from your classroom for something you did?" An overwhelming majority responded that they had not been removed from the classroom.

The students overall feelings about the Assertive Discipline Program were positive. Most students indicated that they said good things to their parents about the program.

Suggestions and Guidelines

The Assertive Discipline Program describes a process not an event. Symbolized as a journey from the abstract to the concrete, this program began with a general idea of intent and progressed to the specifics of implementation. As the superintendent stated, "Jane Bird had the insight into investigating a good discipline program. She pursued a goal and the end result was very successful."

To create a plan for implementing Assertive Discipline in elementary schools requires the systematic analysis of the needs of students and teachers within the environment. The process of formulating and reformulating a plan for

effective student management need not rely on trial and error methods or tricks of the trade. Instead, numerous theoretical constructs apply directly to student management. The integration of these constructs can generate a systematic and consistent approach to discipline.

The essence of Assertive Discipline stresses pre-planning, taking the offensive and setting direction. "The program (1) sets clear, consistent limits and consequences for students; (2) provides uniform follow-through; and (3) offers warmth, support and rewards for appropriate student behavior" (Moffett, 1982, p. 25).

All schools have a policy, procedure or strategy for discipline. Though these discipline policies range from an informal set of rules for control and obedience behaviors to a complex set of rules and consequences, the quality of the school program is reflected by its approach to discipline. In other words, the value a school places on the legal, ethical and human rights of students is expressed most directly through its system of discipline. The fundamental premise is this: educational environments conducive to learning do not evolve naturally within the school setting; rather they are created. The question now becomes: "How does one create an effective student discipline program?" Several factors are critical to this process and will be explained in the following guidelines:

1. Successful program implementation is contingent upon clear support and endorsement by administration. The administration must reflect an attitude for a discipline program which advocates the best interest of students. With this type of position firmly displayed, implementation enlists the full cooperation of the staff, community and other professionals. This guideline was reflected by the principal's philosophy, plan for implementation, and involvement of the faculty.

2. The program development must radically transform the disciplinary philosophy so that it is solidly grounded on the principles of encouragement, emotional neutrality, and logical consequences. This requires a systematic formal policy which addresses both positive and negative behaviors, thereby creating a humanistic approach to behavior change which addresses the needs of all students. Formal articulation of the discipline policy focuses on the establishment of expectations which are clear and consistent. These elements were evident during the planning and implementation process of Assertive Discipline at North Canton. Both rewards and consequences were vital proponents of the discipline program.

3. The program ultimately generates a set of rules which express the social climate of the school. Specifying consequences for behavior, individuals must learn and accept the rules to function effectively within the school. When the program emphasizes the principles of encouragement, emotional neutrality, and logical consequences, the first signs of an effective school atmosphere appear. Relationships between teachers and students improve; students become more relaxed in the program, and teachers express a greater interest in appropriate behavior development than simple behavior control. Beginning the first day of school students were aware of the rules, consequences and rewards at North Canton.

Experience indicates that several practical issues are helpful at this point in the development of the discipline program. First, student accessibility to the discipline policy reduces anxiety by making expectations a matter of public knowledge. Second, social expectations must be reasonable. To encourage students, success must be within their capabilities and skills. And, third, consistency is vital.

An actual model that could be used for the implementation of student management is Assertive Discipline. The program is based on key guidelines identified by teachers, administrators, and others:

1. An assertive, pre-planned approach to discipline on the part of the teachers and the total school community is very helpful. Discipline becomes planned because potential problems are thought through before they happen. The teacher and the school have a lesson plan for discipline, as there would be for the teaching of reading.

2. A clear statement of class and school rules should be evident. The number of rules are kept to a minimum; five for a classroom, possibly ten for a schoolyard play area. Rules are stated precisely so that all parents, students and staff understand them.

3. A clearly defined hierarchy of consequences or rule violations needs to be reviewed with the students and a copy sent home to the parents. The hierarchy typically has four levels of increasingly severe consequences.

4. A clearly defined hierarchy of positive reinforcement for adherence to rules should also be reviewed with the students and a copy sent home to the parents. This hierarchy typically contains a number of levels of increasingly desirable rewards.

These guidelines were evident at North Canton Elementary School as the faculty planned and implemented the Assertive Discipline Program. Reflections of these guidelines have provided consistency in the daily routine of the school day. Therefore, students know what to expect and teachers have a plan in which to follow.

One year after the implementation of the program, Jane Bird, principal at North Canton Elementary School, proudly boasted of the continued success with

the discipline program. Students who behave appropriately at school were rewarded with special assemblies, Citizen of the Month certificates, video presentations, and lots praise. In addition every week each teacher wrote a positive letter to parents about their child and Bird personally signed them. This, she says, is one of the best things she has done to build morale and a positive working relationship with the parents. Parents stop Bird on the street and in the grocery store to tell her they like the Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton Elementary.

Jane Bird firmly believes that Assertive Discipline is a vehicle towards a more effective school, "Without order," she says, "there is no way teachers can educate our students." She also stressed that,

Assertive Discipline is the future. While it may be difficult to effect major changes in the older students, with the younger ones I hope this positive approach to behavior management will instill pride in them and pride in their school.

She indicated that she does not have all the solutions, "but my faculty and I are determined to make this program a success because we believe in it."

The Assertive Discipline Program has received some criticism particularly about the impact the program has on the self-concept of children, the learning atmosphere of the classroom and the sensibilities of professional teachers. Another concern was the stigma of public punishment. A final concern was that,

Assertive Discipline tends to turn professionals into people managing technicians. The model provides little direction for teachers to become problem solvers, provide individual guidance, or use professional judgment to alter curriculum to match young minds and bodies (Gartrell, 1987, p. 11).

However, different people have different perceptions concerning student management and classroom discipline. Educators must look at the total Assertive

Discipline Program, determine if it fits their philosophy and style of teaching, make adjustments, and then, if desired, implement the program.

North Canton's commitment to Assertive Discipline is a reflection of a much larger commitment.

Assertive Discipline is just one part of helping youngsters develop the qualities necessary for their participation in a democratic society. This system, our academic programs and the total educational process all stress helping students develop self-esteem, confidence and respect for other's feelings as well as for property (Moffett, 1982, p. 27).

Therefore, Assertive Discipline greatly enhances the character development of our children.

This study is an attempt to enlighten readers and make them cognizant of an effective discipline program that can be successfully implemented in elementary schools. Chapter IV has provided an analysis on the research findings, issues, ideas and specific guidelines to be considered in the Assertive Discipline Program.

Chapter V will present the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to describe for administrators and teachers a systematic and consistent program of student discipline that emphasized the positive; a system that was founded on consistency and based on research. The program known as Assertive Discipline is presently used at North Canton Elementary School.

The Assertive Discipline Program was implemented with the belief that classroom management is important to quality instruction. When summarizing the findings of the assessment, it was evident that each of the five groups questioned expressed general satisfaction with the Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton Elementary School. Parents clearly expressed that their children's behavior reflected a marked improvement in terms of accepting responsibilities for homework, as well as becoming more responsive toward achieving success in their future endeavors. Classroom teachers found more time for instruction in better controlled classrooms and are experiencing better student relationships in the performance of their professional tasks. Since fewer students are referred to the office, administrators have more time to perform the many other demands of their assignments. The majority of the central office, board members, and consultants from the Western Regional Education, expressed their satisfaction with the program and they recommended it be implemented in other elementary schools.

The program was criticized for its rigidity, which, it was contended, stifled student creativity. Other criticism was that the program had a negative impact on the self-concepts of students, the learning atmosphere and the sensibilities teachers.

The researcher included her professional autobiography that described influences that helped shape her perspective and to enhance the reader's ability to understand the foundation upon which this study rests. Through the use of portraiture the researcher presented detailed descriptions of the Assertive Discipline Program, the facility studied, and the leadership style of the school's principal. Also included were guidelines for developing and implementing the program in othelementary schools.

The study demonstrated how students in the setting described were successfully disciplined and were rewarded for their good behavior. The research presented suggests that teachers in the setting studied, with a good understanding of Assertive Discipline were more effective in their classrooms. The inservice and training used in the program provided teachers and administrators the necessary skills they needed to implement the program.

The research also provided selective evidence in which effectively disciplined students spent more time on task because teachers were not disturbed during the teaching process. Reduced time spent on student management will result in more student and teacher time on task. The teachers reported a definite improvement in student behavior. When students chose to misbehave they were dealt with swiftly, consistently, and fairly.

The students who participated in the Assertive Discipline Program developed the skills and attitudes necessary to be responsible citizens. These skills and attitudes should be as easily developed in other elementary schools.

Why should we wait until the student misbehaves before we teach him the skills necessary to adjust in the world of adolescence?

If the outcomes described in the situation researched are valid, the elements of Assertive Discipline can and should be operating in other elementary schools. The training received by North Canton's staff should be experienced by other teachers and administrators regardless of their level of instruction.

This researcher, having worked at North Canton Elementary as an assistant principal for three years, brought the knowledge and experiences to her present elementary supervisory role. By using these techniques and elements of Assertive Discipline, her effectiveness in dealing with inappropriate behaviors of students has increased; this information has been shared with other elementary schools. She has also been able to direct teachers and administrators in the use of Assertive Discipline skills to increase their effectiveness in the classroom. Since the conclusion of the first year's implementation inservices for five elementary schools have been conducted and the program has been successfully implemented. The teachers and administrators using Assertive Discipline report fewer problems, less severe behavior problems, better self-control, a more positive attitude and more time on task.

The successful implementation of this program in elementary schools will depend, to a great extent, on the commitment of the faculty and administrators. This study has described the perceptions of North Canton's faculty, administrators, community, students and other professionals, and pointed out its strengths and weaknesses in a specific environment.

With proper commitment, the components of Assertive Discipline can be incorporated into the current structure of elementary schools. Properly implemented, the program could become a viable set of rules which could govern

the behavior of those involved in the educational environment of the school. At its most effective moments, the program could become a pervasive force in student behavior. This could culminate in the creation of a program where the primary perception by staff and students is to emphasize more time on task.

Conclusion

Based upon an analysis of the data the following conclusions are presented:

1. Assertive Discipline is an alternative behavior-management technique. When used consistently, it provides a natural protection for students against physical and psychological abuse. The inherent balance of negative consequences and positive reinforcement helps teachers maintain order and teach appropriate behavior with the students' best interest in mind. The teachers' attitude should never sink to the level of verbal attack or ridicule.

2. Assertive Discipline can be an alternative to corporal punishment. "Without an alternative, our fear is that teachers will resort to psychological abuse. Though there aren't any visible scars, this type of abuse can be just as damaging to students as corporal punishment" (Canter, 1988, p. 2).

3. The Assertive Discipline Program at North Canton Elementary School was definitely perceived as a success. The goals and objectives of this program have been achieved to a significant extent. The outcomes have been positive and are a direct result of the constructive commitment and dedication of the administration and faculty.

Freedom without discipline is anarchy; discipline without freedom is tyranny. The crucial duty imposed on society is to determine the proper weight of order, individual creativity, and equality. Society thus has a vital stake in

the education of its young people in acceptable principles of behavior. It entrusts the burden of the task to parents, but it also expresses its interest through the schools. "As microcosms of society, the schools must not only teach discipline, but also create an environment conducive to learning" (Calhoun and Cames, 1984, p. 1). Disruptions in the classroom interrupt the instructional process. Yet, too much control reduces the thrill of discovering new ideas. The difficulty of the schools is to determine how much discipline to provide the students, for in that balance hang intellectual principles of originality, creativity, and scholarship.

Ginott (1972), speaking on issues of educating children, struck a note in this research which had great impact on her educational philosophy. Ginott was speaking about teachers' impact on children, but his wisdom stretches beyond the issues of the teachers' impact, and casts a ray of light on the entire classroom. This researcher has chosen to end this section with a quotation from Ginott because he helped focus attention on what the teacher's primary responsibility should be, to make learning a joy in which there exists a classroom free of fear and uncertainty. He states:

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 the power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. In all situations it is my response that decides whether crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized (p. 323).

We, as educators, have great influence over the lives of the children in our classrooms. Compassion needs to be demonstrated in our schools and there should be consistency in our daily dealings with behavior problems.

Programmatic Recommendations

Based upon an analysis of the data the following recommendation for North Canton Elementary School are presented:

1. The principal and assistant principal should continue to monitor and supervise the program for the next school year.
2. More parents should be encouraged to participate in the school's program since they are interested in the success and continuation of it.
3. Statistics for student discipline would be useful if student incidents were documented before and after implementing Assertive Discipline.
4. Educators should closely examine the form of discipline they are now using and be sure it is in no way physically or psychologically harmful to students. Keep in mind that while maintaining order, one also wants to create a positive, healthy environment in the schools so that teachers can teach and students can develop to their fullest potential.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based upon an analysis of the data the following recommendations for further study are presented:

1. Longitudinal studies over a three to five year period could determine if Assertive Discipline has long-lasting effects for student behavior.
2. Assessment of pre-test and post-test surveys or interviews would add to important research data.
3. A study to determine the relationship between number of student discipline incidents in classrooms where Assertive Discipline is implemented and number of student discipline incidents in classrooms where Assertive Discipline is not implemented could assist in determining the effectiveness of the program.

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Appendix A

Assertive Discipline Interview Questions

School Administrators

1. How and when did you first learn about the Assertive Discipline Program?
2. When did you inform your staff of the purpose, guidelines and operational procedures of the Assertive Discipline Program?
3. What approach did you use to obtain your staff's commitment to the program?
4. What problems or barriers have you faced in operationalizing the program?
5. Have you observed better controlled classrooms since the implementation of the program in your school?
6. Did you inform parents of the purpose and intent of the program? When? How?
7. Did you seek parent participation in implementing the program? If so, how?
8. Did you discuss the success or lack of success of the program at staff meetings?
9. How would you rate the need for the Assertive Discipline Program in your school?
10. Does your staff seem to be implementing the program without major problems?
11. Briefly describe your perceptions in determining the effectiveness of the program?

Assertive Discipline Interview Questions

Central Office, Board Members and Western Regional Educational Center

1. How and when did you first learn about the Assertive Discipline Program?
2. Are you familiar with the guidelines and operational procedures of the Assertive Discipline Program?
3. Is this a good means to manage student behavior? If so, why? If not, why not?
4. What problems or barriers have you observed at North Canton Elementary?
5. Have you observed better classroom management since the implementation of the program at North Canton Elementary?
6. Have parents expressed concerns about the program?
7. Will other schools be encouraged to implement Assertive Discipline?
8. How would you rate the need for Assertive Discipline in your school district?
9. Describe your perceptions of the effectiveness of Assertive Discipline at North Canton.

Assertive Discipline Interview Questions

Teacher

1. What is your understanding of the Assertive Discipline Program?
2. Is this your first time implementing a program utilizing the positive approach to solving disciplinary problems?
3. Was the training sufficient enough to allow you to implement the program without experiencing major problems?
4. What three techniques seem to have the most effect?
5. Approximately what percent of your time was spent per day disciplining students before implementing Assertive Discipline? After implementing Assertive Discipline?
6. Do students appear to be pleased when they receive an award for good behavior?
7. Indicate the changes you have observed since using Assertive Discipline?
8. What is your overall perception of the Assertive Discipline Program?

Assertive Discipline Interview Questions

Student

1. How do you feel about the Assertive Discipline Program?
2. Do you like the school better now that your teacher uses Assertive Discipline?
3. Has your teacher called your parents about your behavior?
4. Did your teacher call to say something good about you, or not so good about you?
5. Have you had free time taken away from you because of something you did?
6. Have you ever been removed from your class for something you did?
7. How many awards have you received for good behavior?
8. Do you say good things about the program to your parents?

Assertive Discipline Interview Questions

Parents

1. When did you first learn about the Assertive Discipline Program?
2. Who explained the Assertive Discipline Program to you?
3. What changes have you noticed in your child that you believe are the result of the program?
4. Has your child noticed any changes in the teacher's approach to disciplinary problems?
5. Has your child brought home awards for good behavior this year?
6. Have you had the opportunity to be involved in this program at North Canton Elementary?
7. What opportunities have you had to tell how you feel about this program orally or in writing?
8. Based upon your understanding of the Assertive Discipline Program, what is your overall perception of the program?
9. Any further comments.

Appendix B-1 SD26A

Participant Evaluation Of The Staff Development Activity

Instructions

Each participant in this staff development activity should evaluate the activity by writing whether he/she: Strongly Agrees, Agrees, is Undecided, Disagrees or Strongly Disagrees with each of the statements below. (The director of the activity should summarize for the group and record the results in Section H of the Evaluation Report Form SD-26).

1. Materials, supplies, and equipment were ready at the beginning of the training activity.
2. Participants were introduced to the specific learning objectives.
3. The content of the workshop reflected careful planning and organization.
4. The presenter was well prepared.
5. The presenter provided for a variety of learning styles.
6. The presenter modeled effective time use.
7. The sessions were conducted at a brisk pace.
8. The experiences of participants were utilized as a resource for learning.
9. Provisions were made to actively involve participants.
10. Adequate time was allowed for participants to ask questions.
11. Questions and concerns were handled appropriately.
12. Participants were provided feedback.
13. Visual aids and handouts were useful.
14. Adequate provisions were made for participant comfort.
15. Administrative procedural concerns were handled smoothly.

Appendix B-2
Analysis of SD-26

| <u>Strongly Agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. 98% | 2% |
| 2. 100% | |
| 3. 93% | 7% |
| 4. 100% | |
| 5. 98% | 2% |
| 6. 100% | |
| 7. 90% | 10% |
| 8. 100% | |
| 9. 100% | |
| 10. 100% | |
| 11. 98% | 2% |
| 12. 97% | 3% |
| 13. 95% | 5% |
| 14. 100% | |
| 15. 100% | |
| 16. 100% | |

Additional comments included:

1. A - ok!
2. Best ever
3. I enjoyed the workshop
4. Excellent presentation of subject matter

5. This was the best inservice I've attended and I intend to use the concepts that were presented.
6. Very interesting and well presented
7. Excellent program with outstanding results - a must for all teachers
8. Very good
9. Excellent instructor!

Appendix C-1

Year-End Teacher Evaluation Form

U= Unsatisfactory S= Satisfactory O= Outstanding

Name

Class

Date

1. Develop and post a Classroom Discipline Plan.

U. Does not have a plan; has a plan but does not use it; has plan but plan isn't effective.

S. Has plan and utilizes it.

O. Has plan and uses it consistently; modifies plan as needed.

Comments:

2. Give specific directions for each classroom situation.

U. Rarely gives directions; students do not understand what is expected of them.

S. Usually gives specific directions; students know what is expected of them.

O. Always gives specific directions; students always know what is expected of them.

Comments:

3. Provide positive reinforcement for appropriate and on-task behavior.

U. Rarely provides positive reinforcement for appropriate and on task behavior; provides praise in a sarcastic manner.

S. Usually provides positive reinforcement for appropriate and on task behavior.

O. Demonstrates expertise in ability to praise students. Backs up praise with nonverbal positive reinforcement.

Comments:

4. Provide disciplinary consequences for disruptive or continually off task behavior.

U. Rarely or inconsistently provides consequences for disruptive or continually off task behavior; responds in hostile manner; does not follow through with consequences.

S. Usually provides consequences in assertive manner; follows plan, though may have difficulty with severe discipline problems.

O. Always provides disciplinary consequences in assertive manner; always follows plan; is capable of modifying plan as need arises.

Comments:

5. Works with principal.

U. Never asks for help; uses administrative support inappropriately.

S. Usually asks for help regarding classroom behavior.

O. Always uses principal's support but only after all other means have been used.

Comments:

6. Communicates with parents.

U. Communicates with parents during parent-teacher conference times only; communicates ineffectively with parents.

S. Usually contacts parents before problems get out of hand.

O. Always contacts parents at first sign of problem; sends home positive notes; works intensively with parents to solve problems; elicits support from all parents.

Comments:

7. Develop Individualized Discipline Plan for students with severe behavior problems.

U. Avoids confrontations with students with severe problems; allows problems to continue without taking action; does not seek administrator's support when needed. Confronts students in hostile manner.

S. Has plan for severely disruptive students; attempts to deal with those students; elicits administrative and parental support when needed.

O. Because of careful planning is able to effectively deal with all behavior problems.

Comments:

8. Document chronic behavior.

U. Never documents student misbehavior or the action teacher takes.

S. Makes an effort to document chronic behavior.

O. Always documents chronic behavior and presents accurate records at all meetings regarding severely disruptive students.

Comments:

9. Work with substitutes.

U. Never leaves plan for substitutes, never follows up on return.

S. Usually leaves plan for substitutes and follows through with consequences.

O. Always leaves plan for substitutes and follows through with consequences.

Appendix C-2

Analysis

1. U= 0% S= 2% O= 98%

Comments: 1. I changed the Assertive Discipline rules to go along with the demerit system that I am presently using. 2. Verbal warnings given now for first offenses. 3. I don't always use it; I need to be more consistent. 4. Need to be more consistent. 5. Do not have room to post plan but it is utilized. Need to be more consistent.

2. U= 0% S= 1% O= 99%

Comments: 1. Before beginning anything I give specific directions, next I review what I have done. 2. We make the students repeat these directions back to us.

3. U= 0 S= 64% O= 36%

Comments: 1. Give verbal praise, certificates in some classes. 2. Praise verbally every day, provide many treats such as meals out, shopping trips, praise pots, free talk and prizes. 3. Winks, hugs, ok sign and candy. 4. I've really worked on this one this year.

4. U= 0% S= 60% O= 40%

Comments: 1. Sometimes I fudged a little in order to get on with the lessons but on the whole I used it. 2. They must miss the first part of lunch when they get a check by their name; they don't like this. 3. No arguing allowed.

5. U= 0% S= 20% O= 80%

Comments: 1. Haven't needed to use the principal. 2. I try at all times to let Jane and Anne know what I'm doing. 3. Haven't had to ask for principal's

assistance. 4. Office is the last resort for negative consequences, I use the office as a reward sometimes.

6. U= 0% S= 88% O= 12%

Comments: 1. But not always - I have phoned more parents this year than during my entire career - and written more notes - both positive and negative. 2. This was what I did my Professional Development Plan on - I kept a record of calls, conferences and notes on a daily basis. 3. I used calls, sunshine notes, folders of student work and conferences - these were very effective.

7. U= 0% S= 84% O= 16%

Comments: 1. No severe problems. 2. Only one student needed this and he moved. 3. Haven't had any severe ones. 4. I only found it necessary to make one modified plan and it worked. 5. Can avoid behavior problems if you know your students well enough.

8. U= 4% S= 28% O= 68%

Comments: 1. Notebook and check-cards are kept. 2. This has been especially important this year since I have a student in a custody battle. 3. Parents are aware of behavior when phone calls are made. 4. Used a card system and found it effective. 5. I keep a list each six weeks of incidents of misbehavior.

9. U= 0% S= 38% O= 72%

Comments: 1. Plans are left and directions are given. 2. I have had little occasion to work with a substitute. 3. This is great - it provides consistency even if the teacher is absent from school.