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Determining Successful Discipline Approaches: Reducing Student Tardiness

Larrilyn Lawrence

DETERMINING SUCCESSFUL DISCIPLINE APPROACHES:
REDUCING STUDENT TARDINESS

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Digest

Determining Successful Discipline Approaches:
Reducing Student Tardiness was designed to determine
what approaches administrators might employ to aid
high school students in reducing excessive tardies.
For nine weeks, randomly selected subjects were placed
into one of three treatment groups. The null hypothesis
was:

There is no statistically significant dif-
ference at the 0.01 level in the recidivism
rate among three groups of students:

1. Those referred to an administrator's
   office for excessive tardies who are
   cited the tardy policy and assigned a
   detention. (Treatment Group Number One)

2. Those referred to an administrator's
   office for excessive tardies who are
   engaged in up to two instructional dis-
   cussions concerning the effects of
   tardiness and punctuality. (Treatment
   Group Number Two)

3. Those referred to an administrator's

office for excessive tardies who are
cited the tardy policy and warned that
an additional referral will result in
an assigned detention. (Treatment
Group Number Three)

After the study was concluded, the Chi-square
statistical test was applied to the data. It was
determined that the null hypothesis could be rejected,
and the three groups were significantly different at
the 0.01 statistical level. Subjects in Treatment
Group Number Two, those engaged in up to two instruc-
tional discussions, had a significantly lower recid-
ivism rate than the subjects in groups one or three.
There was a 10% recidivism rate for Treatment Group
Number Two. The recidivism rate for Treatment Group
Number One, those cited the tardy policy and assigned
a detention, was 58%, and the recidivism rate for
Treatment Group Number Three, those cited the tardy
policy and warned that an additional referral would
result in an assigned detention, was 56%.

The study, designed to determine which of three
treatments would be the most effective approach in
reducing student tardiness, determined that:

1. Applying a rule in a "blanket fashion" was
   the least successful treatment.

2. Providing a warning was only a moderately successful treatment.

3. Engaging students in instructional discussions that included an explanation of the reason for the existing tardy policy and a dialogue regarding the effects of tardiness and punctuality have on the individual, the teacher, classmates and the total school climate was a highly successful treatment.

The significantly low recidivism rate for Treatment Group Number Two suggested that when high school students were involved in instructional discussions, they were capable of 1) understanding the reasons for the existing rule, 2) internalizing information, and 3) modifying behavior or, specifically, reducing tardies.

DETERMINING SUCCESSFUL DISCIPLINE APPROACHES:

REDUCING STUDENT TARDINESS

Larrilyn Lawrence

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Introduction

Guided by generally accepted standards of be-
havior, by law, and by sociological and psychological
research, boards of education create policies of dir-
ection for their school systems, and attendance is
virtually always addressed in such policies. Atten-
dance has such sub-categories as absenteeism, truancy,
and tardiness.

> Students will be expected to attend classes
> regularly and to be on time in order to
> receive maximum benefit from the instruc-
> tional program, to develop habits of punc-
> tuality, self-discipline and responsibility,
> and to assist in keeping disruption of the
> educational environment to a minimum.
> (Bartlett & Others, 1978, p. 3)

As far back as 1643, a statute in the Commonwealth of
Massachusetts stated that parents had the responsi-
bility to see that their children attended school in
order to learn skills that would lead to gainful em-
ployment (Kane, 1963). The first reference to state
law regarding compulsory education also came from
Massachusetts. The law stated that children, ages

eight through fourteen, must attend school 12 weeks per year. Later in 1867, the United States Department of Education was formed to "show the progress of education and diffuse information regarding management of school" (Kane, 1964, pp. 223-224).

Economists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) would agree that compulsory education was created to instill in individuals self-discipline, specifically in terms of punctuality. But they suggest that the compulsory education system was devised by business owners whose greatest concern was high productivity which in turn yielded large profits. Citizens who are trained to be punctual will help insure the business owners' personal goals.

Others believe attending school may provide meaningful benefits to school children. Larry Bartlett et al. (1978) describe some of the benefits in Absences: A Model Policy and Rules:

> Students who have good attendance habits
> are most likely to achieve higher grades,
> enjoy school life to a greater degree,
> and have more employment opportunities
> after leaving school. (p. 3)

Again there is a reference to employment, but in this case the reference seems to take on a positive tone as the word employment is coupled with the term "opportunities." There are the additional suggestions

that children who attend school regularly will ex-
perience a sense of achievement by attaining high
grades and will enjoy school life, which includes
not only the academic program but also the social
relationships formed during school years. This state-
ment suggests that total human development is an ad-
vantage gained by regular attendance. In a sense,
Sybil Richardson (1956) echoes the idea of total human
development in Discipline for Today's Children and
Youths when she writes that the primary goal for edu-
cation is the "fullest realization of everyone's po-
tential" (p. 5).

Regardless of whether the reason for attending
school is to gain a sense of achievement, to develop
social skills, to acquire the behaviors that will aid
in attaining gainful employment, or to reach full in-
dividual potential, all to some degree require that
children be at school and on time to classes to ac-
complish any or all of these outcomes. Larry Bartlett
(1978) explains that school is a place where "[l]ife
long patterns of responsibility and self-discipline
of regular attendance and promptness are fostered by
the attention given to them during the years of school-
ing" (p. 3).

These desired outcomes, coupled with the fact

that the United States has compulsory school atten-
dance laws, lead school officials to produce poli-
cies that guide the school's citizens, the students,
regarding matters of attendance and specifically its
sub-category tardiness. Commonly found in such poli-
cies are the phrases "reasonable behavior," "self-
direction," and "self-discipline" (Bartlett, 1978;
Larson, 1980). The question arises about the best
way to respond to students who do not demonstrate
"reasonable behavior"; that is, they are found to be
excessively tardy and may thus lessen their chances
to learn, achieve, develop social skills, eventually
have limited access to employment opportunities, and
in general become less productive citizens than their
potential suggests they could be.

To better insure the development of potential,
attendance policies often have attached to them pen-
alties students must face if they continue to be ex-
cessively tardy. Knute Larson (1969) suggests that
policies be specific in that the offenses and the
penalties for the offenses be stated clearly. Another
educator, Sybil Richardson (1956), feels there is a
need to consider what approach will help individuals
make long-term behavior changes. Though educators
express different points of view about how to approach

attendance matters, the majority do speak to the issue.

The Problem

The existence of the aforementioned philosophies and the thousands of references to attendance found in school behavior codes across the nation suggest that public school educators place a high value on punctuality as it is generally considered to be a demonstration of responsible behavior, and behaving in such a way may in turn yield students maximum educational benefits. Yet in classrooms and administrators' offices across the United States, personnel are faced with the issue of student tardiness--that is, entering class after instruction has begun. Rules are designed to guide teachers and administrators as they respond to students who commit infractions of school rules, but the implementation of rules and penalties may or may not result in changed behavior on the students' parts. Though rules exist as statements of direction, they do not cite individual circumstances that may lead to infractions, nor do rules take into consideration the feelings of human beings who believe the infractions may be based on unique sets of circumstances.

Other than locating tardy policies that describe in a "blanket fashion" infractions and accompanying penalties, the researcher found little information about the specific issue of student tardiness. A search of the broader topic, discipline in public schools, yielded general statements of philosophy. These ranged from be fair, firm and consistent (New York Education Department, 1979) and be firm but flexible (Jackson, 1979) to consider the individual's dignity and work toward self-discipline (Larson, 1969). While working within the framework of a school where a specific tardy policy exists, the researcher's concern is to test which of three treatments will best encourage students to reduce incidences of tardiness.

Definition of Terms

1. Absenteeism--the failure to attend school classes for one or more hours in a day, a full day, or a series of days.

2. Administration--a group of certified personnel who carry out board policy by creating rules and regulations supportive of board policy and enforce such rules and regulations as they apply to student behavior.

3. Advisor--any certified teaching and admin-

istrative personnel assigned to aid students with
school related activities, i.e., scheduling classes,
developing career goals, and discussing rules and
regulations.

4. _Anti-dialogue_--the use of words to dominate
human beings.

5. _Attendance_--the expectation that a student
is present in all classes listed on his or her
schedule.

6. _The California Test of Basic Skills_--a
standardized examination that in part determines a
student's reading comprehension level.

7. _Cite_--to read or state orally a rule as it
is written in school guidelines.

8. _Compulsory Education_--mandatory school at-
tendance as required by law.

9. _Corporal Punishment_--a form of discipline
inflicted directly on the body.

10. _Detention_--a mandatory supervised after-
school attendance period of seventy minutes duration
assigned to students for committing infractions of
various school rules.

11. _Discipline_--training that develops self-
control, character, or efficiency.

12. _Discretion_--an interpretation of rules taking into consideration differences in circumstances, personalities, and philosophies.

13. _Excessive Tardies_--two or more late entrances to a class as signaled by the ringing of a bell and recorded by the teacher.

14. _Grade Point Average_--the average numerical value on a scale of 0-4 to letter grades, i.e., A, B, C, D, F, earned by students in classes at school.

15. _Instructional Discussion_--an explanation of a rule and a dialogue including the effects tardiness and punctuality have on the individual, the teacher, classmates, and the total school climate intended to teach the student to internalize information and redirect behavior accordingly.

16. _National %ile_--a nationwide comparison of any value in a series dividing the distribution of its numbers into one hundred groups of equal frequency.

17. _Policy_--a general statement of direction given by a board of directors to all concerned.

18. _Positive Dialogue_--a discussion that includes such qualities as love, humility, faith, trust, hope, and critical thinking.

19. _Recidivism Rate_--the degree to which undesirable behavior is again manifested after punishment/

rehabilitation is designed to eradicate it.

20. _Rule_--a statement that defines and specifies the procedures by which a policy is to be carried out; the details and applications of a policy specific to circumstances.

21. _School Climate_--the perceived prevailing condition, mood, or atmosphere in a given school determined in part by verbal and non-verbal behavior of students and teachers.

22. _School Community_--a group including certified personnel, students, and parents.

23. _Students_--persons in grades nine through twelve who are in attendance at a school and who are guided by the policies and rules stated by the board of education, administrators, and teachers.

24. _Tardiness_--refers to a student who is not in his or her assigned seat when the bell sounds that signals the beginning of the period of instruction.

25. _Teacher_--certified school instructors, counselors, and administrators, including principals, assistant principals, and deans.

26. _Truancy_--non-attendance for full or part days stated as required attendance days without parent permission.

The Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level in the recidivism rate among three groups of students:

1. Those referred to an administrator's office for excessive tardies who are cited the tardy policy and assigned a detention. (Treatment Group Number One)

2. Those referred to an administrator's office for excessive tardies who are engaged in up to two instructional discussions concerning the effects of tardiness and punctuality. (Treatment Group Number Two)

3. Those referred to an administrator's office for excessive tardies who are cited the tardy policy and are warned that an additional referral will result in an assigned deten- tion. (Treatment Group Number Three)

Limitations of the Study

1. The students selected for the study were limited to one building site.

2. The students selected for the study were limited to grades nine through twelve.

3. The students selected for the study were determined by random numbers.

4. The length (nine weeks) and the size of the
   study were determined by random numbers.

5. The tardy policy was written by administra-
   tors and presented to the school community,
   parents, students, and teachers prior to
   the commencement of the study.

6. Serving after school detention was determined
   to be the penalty for excessive tardiness
   prior to the commencement of the study.

7. The researcher had to wait for teacher re-
   ferrals to commence and continue the study.

8. The researcher who was originally assigned
   to work with students in grades nine and
   eleven exclusively began working with stu-
   dents in grades ten and twelve at the com-
   mencement of the study.

Experimental Setting

The nine-week study was conducted in a senior
high school that included grades nine through twelve,
located in a suburb in St. Louis County. The total
student population was 1,630. The Caucasian children
comprised 76% of the total student body. These child-
ren came from families whose parents were primarily
middle class skilled and semi-skilled workers. The

major minority group was black, and this group comprised 24% of the total student body. The majority of the black students lived in an impoverished area that was annexed to the existing school district through a court ordered desegregation ruling in 1975.

A point to be noted concerned the school climate. The teaching staff had excellent rapport with the student body. Students were encouraged to ask questions of an academic nature and were invited to discuss problems of academic and personal natures. Furthermore, the school had an Advisement Program which enhanced positive student-teacher relations. Each of the certified personnel served as an advisor for 15 to 18 students over a four-year period. The advisor was a special contact person who aided advisees with program planning, academic and career goal setting, decision making, and academic and personal problems. The school climate was further enhanced by a strong student relations program and an extracurricular activities program.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Introduction

In order to understand the issues surrounding student tardiness, the subject under study, one must first examine its origins and its relationships to discipline in general. The review of literature has been divided into four sections. They include:

1. Legal Issues

2. The Issue of Tardiness in Public Schools

3. Educators' Responses to Discipline Problems

4. A Summary of Considerations for Developing Successful Discipline Policies

Legal Issues

One of the first references to compulsory education occurred in the literature as far back as 1624. The statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts included a statement citing the need for compulsory education due to "parent and master neglect to provide learning and labor and other employment which may be profitable to the Common Wealth" (Kane, 1963,

p. 223). Later, the first President of the United
States, George Washington, brought the issue of the
importance of education to the public's attention
when he said, ". . . promote then as an object of
primary importance institutions for the general dif-
fusion of knowledge" (Bartlett, 1978, p. 1). The
first state law also came from Massachusetts where
it was written that compulsory education laws applied
under three conditions: 1) Children who were between
the ages of eight to fourteen were to attend school;
2) Children between these ages were to attend school
12 weeks per year; 3) Compulsory education laws ap-
plied to areas where there were clusters of people
who could provide a tax base for expenses incurred
(Encyclopedia of Education, 1971). In 1867, the
United States Department of Education was formed to
"show the progress of education and diffuse informa-
tion regarding the management of schools (Kane, 1963).

When education became compulsory, it resulted in
bringing together increasingly larger groups of youths.
If the purpose in bringing children together was to
provide them with knowledge, then it was necessary
that a system be devised which fostered that purpose.
In early years, school was a "home away from home" in
that attending such institutions meant children had

school lessons not only in academics but also in discipline. It was accepted educational practice to teach children to be disciplined, and in light of this fact the legal concept "in loco parentis" was born. According to Gordon Gee and David Sperra in their book, Education Law and the Public School, "in loco parentis" originally meant that "under certain conditions, public school teachers assume the status of the child's parents" (1978, I-1). The authors further stated that this concept gave "parameters and certainty to the powers teachers could wield over students" (I-1). This power allowed teachers to administer corporal punishment as a means of keeping order. Corporal punishment allowed the "inflicting of physical punishment to the body . . . in the form of paddling, spanking and the use of pillory devices" (C-41). In the early days, compulsory education and the term "in loco parentis" were complementary. Parents expected their children to learn lessons in behavior at school, and if children were in the teacher's care, it was logical that the teacher be given the power to provide such lessons.

Laws regarding compulsory education still exist, but the definition of "in loco parentis" has been modified. Today it is "used to denote that teachers

owe certain rights and duties to the children in their care" (I-1). Guidelines have been established as a result of court decisions, and it has been determined that just as parents are restricted by "standards of reasonableness," so also are teachers. Standards of reasonableness dictate that teachers, while they are serving as substitute parents, "adapt the punishment to the circumstances, using moderate means and methods" (I-3). Even this definition is being challenged as cases coming before the courts question whether parents are giving teachers the right to replace them during school hours when, in fact, compulsory education laws force parents to place children in the schools. It is further argued that the "in loco parentis" concept is "inconsistent with current values including the application of due process standards to students" (I-3). Because of varied legal interpretations and continuing litigation, it seems important that there be a generally accepted set of expected behaviors to guide students and certified school personnel. The need for a set of expected behaviors has been fulfilled as in virtually every set of public school guidelines where there exists a behavior code, rules regarding such actions as truancy, tardiness, and various forms of disruptive

behavior and their penalties are clearly defined.

Attitudes about corporal punishment have changed too. In one court opinion, the Supreme Court of Illinois stated, "we fully recognize the desirability and indeed the absolute necessity that teachers be able to maintain discipline in schools including the use of corporal punishment" (I-3). The court opinion goes on to place emphasis on the word "reasonable": "We think it follows that teachers should be subject to the same standard of reasonableness which has long been applicable to parents in disciplining their children" (I-3).

Generally, society does not tend to support the use of corporal punishment as did generations in the past. M. Chester Nolte, in his book Duties and Liabilities of School Administrators, explains that "there has been a growing effort to reduce the effect or eliminate entirely corporal punishment in public schools with the growth of humanitarianism and of psychological knowledge" (1973, p. 130) He goes on to explain that parents are filing lawsuits in cases where they feel corporal punishment has been applied excessively or unnecessarily. The lawsuits are based on the assertions that corporal punishment is "cruel and inhuman punishment," and it is no less than

"assault and battery" (p. 131). Courts have hesi-
tated to "disallow corporal punishment for fear that
it would result in complete loss of control over
school children by the staff" (p. 131), but on the
other hand, legislatures have not produced laws that
clearly state who, how, and when it is correct to
apply corporal punishment. The only guideline seems
to be the word "reasonable" or the case law derived
from litigation that has challenged such aspects of
corporal punishment as administrator motive, severity,
gravity of the offense, disposition, and the age, sex,
and size of the child (Gee & Sperra, 1978). Gordon
Gee and David Sperra (1978) note that even case law
is of little help since

> each case must depend on its own circum-
> stances, previous court cases deciding
> whether a particular kind of punishment
> was excessive or moderate are not always
> binding, although decisions that have held
> a particular kind of punishment to be in-
> herently reasonable or unreasonable may
> be invoked. (C-43)

The questions surrounding the interpretation of
"in loco parentis" and the use of corporal punish-
ment, in and of themselves, seem to be enough reason
for school administrators to seek alternative forms
of punishment to maintain order in schools. Regard-
less of these questions, most parents and school

personnel still would agree that a reasonable degree
of order must be maintained in order for children to
receive a meaningful education. Legal questions
coupled with the desire to maintain order have led
public school administrators across the country to
rely heavily on another form of punishment as a pen-
alty for such misbehaviors as acting out in class,
being late for class, and being unprepared for class.
This form of punishment is labeled "detention."

Detention programs vary in structure. While
some programs run all day so the offenders can begin
to pay their debts immediately, other programs consist
of an "after school hours" detention period. Regard-
less of the program design, the status of detention
as a form of punishment has the general support of
the courts:

> The use of detention as a method of punish-
> ing pupils for the infraction of reasonable
> rules and regulations is very common and
> enjoys the strong support of the courts.
> (Gee & Sperra, 1979, D-9)

In support of this statement, Gordon Gee and David
Sperra quote the court's opinion in the case of
Fertich vs. Michener:

> The detention or keeping in of pupils for
> a short time after the rest of the class
> have been dismissed or the school has
> closed, as a penalty for some misconduct,
> shortcoming, or mere omission, has been

very generally adopted by the schools,
especially those of the lower grades, and
it is now one of the recognized methods
of enforcing discipline. (D-9)

Besides being widely used by school personnel
and recognized by the courts as reasonable, the rules
administrators must abide by to make detention an ac-
ceptable form of punishment are minimal. According
to Gordon Gee and David Sperra (D-10), limitations
include the following:

1. Students may not be detained beyond a
   given amount of time.

2. Parents must be informed when detention
   takes place after school hours.

3. School officials must never be alone
   with a student.

4. Students may not be detained when such
   detention would interfere with scheduled
   transportation services.

5. Detention of students must not infringe
   upon the orderly operation of scheduled
   food services.

6. Teachers must have administration ap-
   proval before detaining an individual
   student.

If a goal of public education is to diffuse know-
ledge to increasing numbers of youths, there must be
some semblance of order maintained to accomplish the
goal. While in decades past parents expected children
to receive lessons in academic subject areas and les-
sons of a disciplinary nature when necessary, the

changing social climate has caused parents, courts,
and boards of education to review the issue of the
appropriate use of discipline in schools. Today, the
use of corporal punishment has lessened in acceptance
as sociological and psychological research reports
that this form of punishment may have detrimental ef-
fects on children. The use of detention as a form of
punishment for misbehavior has become the method of
choice. This form of punishment is considered to be
"reasonable," and the guidelines are relatively simple.
Where misbehaviors are of a minor nature (that is,
they do not call for suspension or expulsion), school
personnel are choosing detention as the penalty of
choice.

The Issue of Tardiness in Public Schools

The use of detention as a means of enforcing
legitimate rules and regulations leads to the ques-
tion of what is legitimate or reasonable. This,
coupled with the generally accepted idea that child-
ren can receive the maximum benefits from their
schooling if they attend regularly, is supported by
Larry Bartlett (1978) in Absences: A Model Policy
and Rules:

> Students who have good attendance habits
> are most likely to achieve higher grades,
> enjoy school life to a greater degree and

have more employment opportunities after
leaving school. (p. 3)

The desire for children to receive maximum benefits
during their years in school results in the creation
of policies that speak directly to attendance habits.
Some statements even go so far as to suggest that
failure to attend classes regularly and to be on time
will impede the educational process:

Students will be expected to attend classes
regularly and to be on time in order to
receive maximum benefit from the instruc-
tional program, to develop habits of punc-
tuality, self-discipline and responsibility,
and to assist in keeping the disruption of
the educational environment to a minimum.
(Bartlett, 1978, p. 3)

The "rules" section of the same policy includes
a sub-section entitled "Tardiness." The rule clearly
states the procedure teachers and students are to
follow:

Students tardy to class will not be ad-
mitted to class without written permission
to enter class from the office or from the
school employee responsible for the tardi-
ness. (Bartlett, 1978, p. 4)

The Santa Maria Joint Junior High School Handbook
(1983) contains a "Student Responsibilities" section
aimed, in part, at eliminating instances of tardiness.
It simply directs students to "be on time to all
classes" (p. 1). The "Attendance" section of the same
policy details penalties for excessive tardies (p. 3):

```
2 tardies - Handled by the classroom teacher.
3 tardies - Student referred to on-campus
           suspension for one hour.
4 tardies - Student referred to on-campus
           suspension for three days from
           the class in which the student
           is tardy.  Parent notified.
5 tardies - Student referred to on-campus
           suspension.  Student not to re-
           turn to the class without a par-
           ent conference with the teacher,
           counselor, and attendance dir-
           ector.
6 tardies - Student referred to Assistant
           Principal.
```

A third policy printed in the McCluer North Teacher

Handbook (1984-1985) also defines the tardy rule

clearly:

> A student is tardy if he/she is not in the
> assigned seat when the tardy bell rings.
> Teachers give one warning for unexcused
> tardiness and will assign a detention for
> the second and subsequent tardies. (p. 9)

In Detroit, the public school administrators have

developed an Interview Guide (1981) that includes a

follow-up questionnaire to determine whether the

city-wide attendance program is effective (pp. 7, 17).

Some of the questions to be answered in the follow-

up report are:

> Are the staff members recording and report-
> ing student absences and tardiness?
>
> What constitutes valid reasons for tardiness
> to school or class?
>
> Do documentation and procedures for estab-
> lishing valid reasons for tardiness exist?
>
> Is there a procedure for reporting unexcused
> tardiness?

These examples of attendance programs, philoso-
phies, and rules reinforce the fact that tardiness
is an issue being discussed and dealt with in public
schools. The existence of such documents suggests
that punctuality is valued in our society, and there
is the further suggestion that tardiness may impede
educational progress to some extent.

Educators' Responses to Discipline Problems

Generally, educators can come to consensus about
the purposes for attending school. Many also agree
that discipline problems, including absenteeism, tru-
ancy, and tardiness, may reduce children's chances
for success in school. Though descriptions about
how to approach discipline problems vary slightly,
educators again tend to agree about detrimental and
helpful approaches.

In the revised edition of Discipline for Today's
Children and Youth, Sybil Richardson (1956) states:
"Most people would readily agree that in our times
the primary goal of all education, at home as well as
in school, is the fullest realization of everyone's
potential" (p. 5). The New York State Education De-
partment's report, entitled Positive Approaches Toward
Discipline (1979), broadens Richardson's statement by

placing individuals in an expanded setting: "Our
schools are the training grounds upon which the
nation's young people are prepared for life in
society" (p. 1). The report goes on to say: "From
a more pragmatic viewpoint, good discipline and order
in the schools must be maintained if learning is to
take place" (p. 1). Philosophical statements such
as these are supported with written behavior codes
that include rules, regulations, and penalties to be
paid for misbehavior.

Regardless of written philosophies and the pub-
lication of behavior codes, the enforcement of rules
and regulations is another matter entirely.

> In times of stress, there is often a ten-
> dency for schools to turn to a quasi-military
> model of discipline characterized by repres-
> sive strategies. . . . Discipline should be
> a means through which constructive behavioral
> change takes place. In this sense, disci-
> pline is viewed as a component of the learn-
> ing process. Realizing that punishment, as
> opposed to discipline, is most often destruc-
> tive and often useless as a deterrent, we
> hope that schools will develop programs and
> policies based on promoting positive and
> constructive disciplinary strategies. Unlike
> punishment, discipline is founded on the pre-
> mise that school is a place for learning and
> the discipline, in a constructive sense, pro-
> vides educators with an opportunity to re-
> direct students' behavior toward more posi-
> tive ends. (New York State Education De-
> Partment, 1979, pp. 2-3)

This section of the New York State Education Depart-
ment's report clearly defines the difference between

the terms punishment and discipline. The fact that
a set of rules and respective punishments exist and
are administered does not guarantee behavior changes.
The previous statement suggests that students can
learn about "discipline" as they do about other sub-
ject matters.

Generally, educators agree that punishment may
only get temporary response or may get no response at
all. Sybil Richardson (1956) describes the inade-
quacies of harsh punishment:

> coercive techniques as a return to "wood-
> shed whippings," military marching in
> school, more drills in the 3 R's . . .
> are appealing solutions because they seem
> simple and definite. They are ineffective
> in the long run, however, because they do
> not teach children right ways of behaving
> when coercion is removed. (pp. 1-2)

Knute Larson (1969) concurs with this opinion in his
discussion of corporal punishment at the secondary
level: "The adolescent child, however recalcitrant,
has a peculiar brand of dignity. If destroyed, there
can be real trouble" (p. 47). In his book, School
Discipline: A Socially Literate Solution, Alfred S.
Alschular (1980) discusses dialogue as it is used as
a type of punishment. He quotes Paulo Friere who
explains that "dialogue must not serve as a crafty
instrument for the domination of one person by

another" (p. 57). Alschular coins the term "anti-
dialogue" and defines it as "the use of words to
dominate people by mocking, mimicking, and bribing
them, by sarcasm and embarrassment, and by admonish-
ing, ordering, and threatening them." Emelee Ruth
Dodge (1969) supports the idea that threats are of
little value in changing behavior:

> Don't threaten unless you can, and intend
> to, fulfill the threat. Don't promise un-
> less you can, and intend to, fulfill the
> promise. It will only take one unfulfilled
> threat or promise to assure boys and girls
> that you are no exception to their rapidly
> crystallizing conviction that adults are
> three quarters hot air. (p. 57)

These educators have definite ideas about what
will not work when administrators come face to face
with students who have misbehaved. It is question-
able whether harsh punishment, threats, and negative
dialogue will affect short term behavior changes, and
it is highly unlikely that such treatments will affect
any long term behavior changes.

On the other hand, educators feel approaching
the issue of discipline as a part of the learning
process supported by positive discipline strategies
will result in long term behavior changes. If, ac-
cording to Sybil Richardson (1956), the goal of edu-
cation is to allow people to reach their potential,

then individuals must, at times, "subjugate [their] personal inclinations, whims, comforts, and even some of [their] personal liberties to bigger goals than personal ones" (p. 1). In order to keep misbehavior from blocking this or other educational goals, children need to be made aware of behavioral goals and given the opportunity to "internalize" information so they can modify behavior accordingly.

Sybil Richardson (1956) explains that young adults are capable of internalizing information and modifying behavior accordingly. She describes stages of human development beginning with the "self-centeredness and self-love characterized by infants" (p. 7). Later, during the adolescent stage, children's society is much broader: "Social problems which concern the adult do not have much meaning for the younger person" (p. 7). In the next stage, young adults develop "interests in the affairs and welfare of [their] community" (p. 7). The question arises whether high school age students are considered adolescents or young adults. Richardson explains:

> No clear cut lines mark these developmental steps. Some of the traits characteristic of an early stage may continue side by side with some of the more advanced achievements of our personality. (p. 8)

The New York State Education Department's report,

entitled <u>Positive Approaches Toward Student Disci-</u>

<u>pline</u> (1979), written 14 years after Richardson's

publication, also speaks to the issue of whether

high school age children can be considered young

adults capable of internalizing information and

modifying behavior.

> Recent studies show that adolescents are
> maturing at a faster rate than ever before.
> They are assuming increasing amounts of
> responsibility. . . . Students' capacity
> for handling problems and making sound
> judgments are often underestimated. (p. 2)

Furthermore, many educators suggest students can

learn about discipline, as they do other subject mat-

ters, in a democratic setting where the individual

and group welfare are in harmony.

> In a democracy there is no real conflict
> between the value placed on the individual
> and the idea of group life. Only as each
> individual's potential is realized can the
> optimum welfare for all be approached.
> (Richardson, 1956, p. 7)

Knute Larson (1969) concurs with this idea and says

that students will have a better chance to reach

larger educational goals if administrators consider

some basic democratic principles when writing and

enforcing rules and regulations. For example, he

suggests administrators should:

> 1. Develop a respect for the rights and
>   dignity of the individual and equal
>   justice and humanitarianism for all.

2. Emphasize the responsibilities as well
    as the rights of the individual.

3. Be positive and directed to the goal
    of self-discipline. (p. 48)

A reason Richardson (1956) gives for encouraging self-

direction and self-discipline is so children do not

base actions "upon unquestioning obedience to a

leader. . . . As a nation we have confidence in the

capacity of all to learn cooperation and mutual re-

spect" (p. 7).

To achieve a school climate where individual and

group welfare are enhanced, educators suggest students

be encouraged to demonstrate respect for one another.

> Therefore: Our schools provide a climate
> in which mutual respect and trust are pos-
> sible. Young people learn to respect one
> another when they themselves have been
> treated with respect by understanding
> adults. (Richardson, 1956, p. 11)

The "Student Responsibilities" section of the Santa

Maria Joint Junior High Handbook (1983) reiterates

the same tenet:

> Respect, cooperation, and responsibility
> are the basics of a successful program for
> your high school career. No one can give
> you an education, only an opportunity. So
> take your responsibilities seriously, for
> your school's sake--and your own.
>
> 1. Protect the rights of others to study
>   and work.
>
> 2. Attend classes daily unless legally
>   excused.

3. Be on time for all classes. (p. 2)

In order for students to do more than follow rules blindly, to truly understand mutual respect, and to develop self-discipline, educators propose that students be involved in the decision making process concerning the development of discipline codes. As Richardson (1956) states: "We believe in the right of people to have a voice in the plans and policies which directly affect them" (p. 13). Similarly, the New York State Education Department's report section on "General Recommendation" notes:

> Involve representatives of the student
> body, the faculty and the administration
> in a joint effort to: determine codes
> of acceptable and unacceptable behavior;
> establish an enforcement system; and es-
> tablish mechanisms for handling grievances
> and appeals. (p. 7, #1)

Regardless of efforts to create a climate where democratic principles are inherent, rules will still be broken. According to Sybil Richardson (1956), "All human beings retain some degree of self-centered-ness and it is at these times that rules may be brok-en" (p. 6). Maurice A. Jackson (1979) agrees and explains that an enormous number of outside forces, including economic, social, psychological, safety, achievement, recognition, and self-actualization,

may affect behavior.

When misbehavior does occur, educators provide strategies which place an emphasis on students' abilities to reason, internalize, and behave accordingly in a democratic setting. In his book, School Discipline: A Socially Literate Solution, Alfred A. Alschular (1980) quotes Paulo Friere in an effort to describe "positive dialogue," a technique administrators can employ when working directly with students who have misbehaved. According to Alschular, Friere names six attributes that define positive discussion. They include love, humility, faith, trust, hope, and critical thinking. Alschular also describes Friere's meaning of "word." According to Friere, there is a difference between "empty words" and "true words":

> Empty words let the external world stay
> the way it is. A TRUE word involves
> transforming action. To truly speak a
> word is to say it and do it, to mouth it
> and body it, to make sounds and to change
> things.
>
> 1. True words are spoken or written.
> 2. True words name problems.
> 3. True words are heard. More precisely,
>   true words get reactions.
> 4. True words are embedded in dialogue.
>   Lecturing is not dialogue. (pp. 72-73)

Another educator, William MacKechnie (1967), describes a process critical to "positive dialogue." Emphasis

should be placed on the "process of knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 3). The objective is to move beyond "order," which he defines as "a position where rules are made by some external party and enforced by him where necessary by sanctions such as punishment," to discipline, which he defines as "a position where rules have been accepted by children as right and desirable in themselves. They have in a sense internalized" (pp. 4-5).

In addition to administrators accepting some basic democratic principles and demonstrating them through positive dialogue, many educators agree that some additional qualities should be present when working directly with children who have misbehaved. First, both Maurice A. Jackson (1979) and William I. MacKechnie (1967) urge administrators to be firm but flexible. That is, they must set standards and generally abide by them, but they need to consider individual circumstances as well (Dodge, 1965; Mac-Kechnie, 1976). Next, a way to take individual's circumstances into consideration is to apply "due process":

> Provide procedural due process for each
> student prior to disciplinary action as
> guaranteed under the 14th amendment of
> the constitution and by <u>Goss vs. Lopez</u>,
> 419 U.S. 565, 42 L.Ed. 2d 725, 95 S.Ct.
> 729. (New York State Education Department, 1972, p. 7, #6).

Though an offense such as tardiness does not require
the application of due process, administrators can
make it known that they believe in democratic prin-
ciples by giving children a chance to describe situa-
tions as they see them. Alfred S. Alschular (1980)
simply says, "Listen to students' views" (p. 69).
Most educators also agree that human beings want to
be treated as individuals and though their reasons
for breaking rules may be very commonplace, they see
them as special. By applying due process, adminis-
trators can determine whether "unusual circumstances"
have intervened and can further determine if flexi-
bility is in order. Finally, if circumstances fall
under the category of unacceptable behavior, adminis-
trators have a chance to help children modify behavior
by discussing, through positive dialogue, educational
and behavioral goals, and rights and responsibilities.
Simply, they can lead children to the stage of in-
ternalization that will in turn lead to behavior
modification (Alschular, 1980; Larson, 1980; Mac-
Kechnie, 1976). Alfred Alschular (1980) capsulizes
many educators' opinions when he says: "Dialogue
can resolve conflicts," and "it involves mutual re-
spect" (p. 69).

Society places a high value on punctuality as

seen through school codes that contain rules and
regulations about attendance and tardiness in par-
ticular. Many educators feel that high school age
students are capable of reasoning and internalizing
information. Positive dialogue gives administrators
and students the chance to define and explain educa-
tional and behavioral goals, explain how misbehavior
diminishes the accomplishment of these goals, exper-
ience due process, demonstrate democratic principles,
and set goals to modify behavior.

A Summary of Considerations for the Development of Successful Discipline Policies

First, many educators agree with Knute Larson's
(1980) philosophy that "discipline policies should be
in harmony with the principles of a democratic society"
(p. 48). Readings on the subject emphasize such terms
as rights, responsibilities, self-direction, and self-
discipline. Just as these apply to the citizens of
the United States, so do they apply to the citizens
who attend public school--the students (Richardson,
1956). The New York State Education Department (1979)
also supports this view:

> Encourage students to assume responsibility
> for their behavior and to fully use their
> educational experience. Informal discus-
> sions or formal discussions focusing on the
> necessity for self-discipline and for as-
> suming responsibility for consequences re-

sulting from their actions are strongly
encouraged. (p. 12)

Second, when creating policies of discipline,
educators suggest that the policies be in harmony
with studies in psychology and sociology, that poli-
cies be preventive in nature, and that policies be
widely publicized. In addition, written policies
should be specific in that the offenses and the pen-
alties for offenses be stated clearly (Jackson, 1979;
Larson, 1969; New York State Education Department,
1979).

Next, before administrators actually begin seeing
students about misbehavior, they need to consider what
approach will help children make long term behavior
changes. This, in part, requires that administrators
view students as individuals (New York State Educa-
tion Department, 1979; Richardson, 1965). The pro-
cess can be enhanced by affording offenders "due
process" and engaging them in "positive dialogue"
(Alschular, 1980).

Also, if administrators must apply punitive
measures, it is suggested that "disciplinary practices
be applied fairly and consistently" (New York State
Education Department, 1979), that diagnosis of a
situation and the decision regarding punishment be
made as soon as possible, and that punishment take

place as soon after the offense as possible (LaGrand, 1969). In conclusion,

> The Student must never feel that "all is lost" because of your use of punishment. He must know that he has a chance--no matter how many times he has been an offender. He must never give up or feel you have given up on him. (LaGrand, 1969, p. 179)

Summary

The first references to compulsory education occurred decades ago. Just as the United States' legal system has become more complex, so has the branch of education law. As a result of continuing litigation, new court decisions, and changes in social climate resulting from sociological and psychological studies, laws continue to change. Federal, state, and local laws exist to guide school personnel regarding rights and responsibilities as they are related to public school children. One phase of rights and responsibilities is associated with discipline, and such terms as "in loco parentis" and "due process" come to have special meaning in education law. Though not all state and local laws are alike, school personnel do have two guidelines that are directly related to matters of discipline. First, in matters of discipline, the guiding term should be "reasonable." The punishment should fit the offense. Second, at

this point in time for such discipline matters as tardiness, school administrators are supported by the courts in their use of detention as a punishment.

The attention paid to tardiness in schools reflects the prevalent attitude that punctuality is desirable. Educators suggest that the development of such a habit early on will help children better develop their individual potential, will offer them greater employment opportunities in the future, and will, in general, help them become better adjusted adults in society. As a result of such beliefs, nearly all public schools have behavior codes that include statements regarding tardiness, and these codes frequently spell out penalties for infractions of rules.

The issue of discipline discussed in school philosophies and described in behavior codes can be effective if they are based on sound democratic principles. Furthermore, if school personnel see discipline as a learning process and administer it through the use of positive dialogue, students are more likely to internalize information and modify behavior.

Introduction

The theoretical foundation presented in the
preceding chapter suggests that "as adolescents
mature, they begin to develop the capacity to do
more than follow rules blindly" (Richardson, 1956,
p. 7). It also suggests positive discussion, dia-
logue based on reason, can enable students to in-
ternalize the "whys" upon which rules are based and
thus modify behavior to act within the limits es-
tablished by the rules (Alschular, 1980). High
school administrators might be able to aid students
in changing behavior, specifically to reduce exces-
sive tardies, by structuring a positive instruction-
al discussion which emphasizes the effects tardiness
and punctuality have on the individual, the teacher,
classmates, and the total school climate.

Using the information ascertained from a search
of the literature, the researcher conducted an ex-

perimental study applying three treatments to three groups of randomly selected students in grades nine through twelve who were referred to the office for excessive tardies.

Treatment Procedures

Three different treatments were applied to randomly selected subjects. The following section outlines the procedures for each treatment:

Treatment Group Number One

1. Developing a rapport through greetings and introductions.

2. Describing the infraction by displaying the teacher referral slip and reading the infraction aloud.

3. Asking for the reason and listening to the student's explanation for committing the infraction.

4. Citing the tardy policy.

5. Assigning a detention to take place as soon after the interview as possible.

6. Following-up Referrals:

   a. Sending a written form to the referring teacher describing the action taken.

   b. Sending a written form to the student's advisor describing the infraction and action taken.

    c. Calling the student's parent to describe the
infraction and to set a detention date, <u>or</u>
if the parent cannot be reached by telephone,
sending a letter home via the student that
describes the infraction, sets a detention
date, requires a parent signature, and re-
quires the letter be returned before first
period class the following day.

7. Future Referrals:

    a. Assigning one detention per infraction up to
five.

    b. Assigning a suspension on the sixth infrac-
tion to remain in effect until the parent
comes to school to confer with the Attendance
Dean.

8. Following-up Future Referrals:

    a. The same as numbers 6a, 6b, and 6c through
the fifth infraction.

    b. For the sixth infraction, steps include num-
bers 6a and 6b and a suspension letter to
the parent.

<u>Treatment Group Number Two</u>

1. Developing rapport through greetings and intro-
ductions.

2. Describing the infraction by displaying the
   referral slip and reading the infraction aloud.

3. Asking for the reason and listening to the stu-
   dent's explanation for committing the infraction.

4. Engaging the student in an instructional discus-
   sion which includes dialogue about the existing
   tardy policy and the effects tardiness and punc-
   tuality have on the individual, the teacher,
   classmates, and the total school climate.

5. Encouraging the student to be on time to all
   classes.

6. Following-up:

   a. Sending a written form to the referring
      teacher describing the action taken.

   b. Sending a written form to the student's
      advisor describing the action taken.

7. The Second Referral:

   a. Repeating steps 1 through 3.

   b. Engaging the student in a conversation in
      which the student reviews for the adminis-
      trator the effects tardiness and punctuality
      have on all parties concerned. If the stu-
      dent cannot recall or can only partly recall
      the first instructional discussion, the ad-
      ministrator provides missing information.

     c. Encouraging the student to be on time for
        all classes.

8. Following-up is the same as number 6a and 6b.

9. Future Referrals:

     a. Assigning a detention for infractions 3
        through 5.

     b. Assigning a suspension on the sixth infrac-
        tion to remain in effect until the parent
        comes to school to confer with the Attendance
        Dean.

10. Following-up Future Referrals is the same as
     numbers 6a, 6b, 6c or 8a and 8b for Treatment
     Group Number One.

Treatment Group Number Three

1. Developing rapport through greetings and intro-
     ductions.

2. Describing the infraction by displaying the
     teacher referral slip and reading the infraction
     aloud.

3. Asking for the reason and listening to the stu-
     dent's explanation for committing the infraction.

4. Citing the tardy policy.

5. Warning the student that an additional referral
     will result in an assigned detention.

6. Following-up:

   a. Sending a written form to the referring
      teacher describing the action taken.

   b. Sending a written form to the student's ad-
      visor describing the infraction and the ac-
      tion taken.

7. Future Referrals:

   a. Assigning a detention for infractions 2
      through 5.

   b. Assigning a suspension on the sixth infrac-
      tion to remain in effect until the parent
      comes to school to confer with the Atten-
      dance Dean.

8. Following-up Future Referrals is the same as
   numbers 6a, 6b, 6c or 7a and 7b for Treatment
   Group Number One.

Data Collection

     The data collection was based on random numbers.
The collection period was nine weeks in length. Every
fifth subject received Treatment Number One; every
seventh subject received Treatment Number Two; and
every sixth subject received Treatment Number Three.
A three-by-five index card was kept for each subject
which included the following information:

1. Treatment group number

2. Name

3. Grade in school

4. The student's advisor's name

5. The referring teacher's name(s)

6. The date(s) of referral(s)

7. The number of tardies on the first referral
   slip

8. The number of tardies on subsequent referral
   slip

9. The class hour the infraction(s) occurred

10. The student's reason for committing the in-
    fraction.

11. The action(s) taken

Additional Data Collection

After the nine-week research period ended, addi-
tional data were collected to determine if the three
groups of subjects were comparable. The information
included the following:

1. Grade in school

2. Sex

3. Race

4. The current grade point average for the first
   semester of the 1984-1985 school year

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5. The number of days absent for the first
   semester of the 1984-1985 school year
6. The California Test of Basic Skills National
   %ile Reading Comprehension Score for the
   preceding school year
7. The number of parents in the home
8. The number of working parents

Treatment of Data

The Chi-square statistical test was chosen to
examine the data as it applies to situations where
items are countable. It was used to determine whether
the null hypothesis would be accepted or rejected.
The additional data collected to determine whether
the three groups of subjects were comparable was de-
termined by percentages, %iles, and medians.

Chapter IV: Presentation and

Discussion of Data and Results

Introduction

Since excessive tardies may reduce the chances

for students to realize their educational potential,

schools across the nation have included in their

behavior codes statements regarding late arrivals

to class. In an effort to determine an approach

administrators might use to aid students in reducing

excessive tardies, randomly selected subjects were

placed into three treatment groups. Chapter IV is

comprised of the following sections:

1. The Hypothesis and Treatments

2. The Test of the Hypothesis and Statistical
    Tables

3. The Description of Additional Data Collected
    to Determine Group Comparability

4. The Discussion of Findings

The Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant difference

at the 0.01 level in the recidivism rate among three

groups of students:

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1. Those referred to an administrator's office for excessive tardies who are cited the tardy policy and assigned a detention. (Treatment Group Number One)

2. Those referred to an administrator's office for excessive tardies who are engaged in up to two instructional discussions concerning the effects of tardiness and punctuality. (Treatment Group Number Two)

3. Those referred to an administrator's office for excessive tardies who are cited the tardy policy and are warned that an additional referral will result in an assigned detention. (Treatment Group Number Three)

Test of the Hypothesis

The Chi-square statistical test was used to determine the comparability of the three experimental groups. Application of Chi-square determined the following:

1. $X^2 = 11.8$ with two degrees of freedom at the 0.01 statistical level.

2. The expected Chi-square statistic at the 0.01 significance level is 9.210.

3. Therefore, the data results are significant at the 0.01 level.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 describe the Chi-square distribution, the X^2 expected values, and X^2 as it applies to the three treatment groups respectively.

Table 1: The X^2 Distribution

df	X^2 0.05	X^2 0.01	df
1	3.841	6.635	1
2	5.991	9.210	2
3	7.815	11.345	3
4	9.488	13.277	4
5	11.070	15.086	5
6	12.592	16.812	6
7	14.067	18.475	7
8	15.507	20.090	8
9	16.919	21.666	9
10	18.307	23.209	10
11	19.675	24.725	11
12	21.026	26.217	12
13	22.362	27.688	13
14	23.685	29.141	14
15	24.996	30.578	15
16	26.296	32.000	16
17	27.587	33.409	17
18	28.869	34.805	18
19	30.144	36.191	19
20	31.410	37.566	20
21	32.671	38.932	21
22	33.924	40.289	22
23	35.172	41.638	23
24	36.415	42.980	24
25	37.652	44.314	25
26	38.885	45.642	26
27	40.113	46.963	27
28	41.377	48.278	28
29	52.557	49.588	29
30	32.773	50.892	30

Table 2
X^2 Expected Values of Recidivism Rates

Group	Yes[a]	No[b]	Total
I	7.6	11.4	29
II	8.0	12.0	20
III	6.4	9.6	16
Total	22.0	33.0	55

[a]Yes = The number of students expected to return for additional referrals.

[b]No = The number of students not expected to return for additional referrals.

Table 3
X^2 Recidivism Rates for Treatment Groups

Group	Yes[a]	No[b]	Total
I	11	8	19
II	2	18	20
III	9	7	16
Total	22	33	55

X^2 = 11.8 with two degrees of freedom.

Test statistic at the 0.01 significance level is 9.210. Therefore, data is significant at the 0.01 level.

[a]Yes = The number of students who returned due to additional referrals.

[b]No = The number of students who did not have additional referrals.

Additional Data Collected

After the nine-week experimental study ended, additional data were obtained from school records and examined to determine if the three treatment groups were comparable. The data included the following:

1. The percentage of each grade 9-12 in each treatment group

2. The percentage of males and females in each treatment group

3. The percentage of the two major racial groups (Caucasian and Black) in each treatment group

4. The median current grade point average for the first semester of the 1984-1985 school year for each treatment group

5. The number of days absent for the first semester of the 1984-1985 school year for each treatment group

6. The median California Test of Basic Skills National %ile Reading Comprehension score for the preceding school year for each treatment group

7. The percentage of one or two parent families for each treatment group

8. The percentage of working parents in fami-
    lies for each treatment group

Table 4 (page 53) describes the findings for each of
the three experimental groups and indicates that the
groups are essentially similar. It must be noted
that no effort was made to control the members of
the experimental groups. Subjects were assigned to
treatment groups randomly, and the collection and
examination of the additional data was done after
the nine-week study was completed.

Summary

After the nine-week study period ended, the
Chi-square statistical test was applied at the 0.01
level, and it was determined that the null hypothesis
could be rejected. Examination of additional data
collected for each of the subjects determined that
the treatment groups were essentially similar.

More specifically, the subjects in Treatment
Group Number One demonstrated that applying a rule
in a "blanket fashion" did not reduce excessive
tardies to any significant degree. The subjects in
Treatment Group Number Three demonstrated that "warn-
ings" were only moderately successful in reducing
excessive tardies. The subjects in Treatment Group
Number Two overwhelmingly demonstrated that instruc-

Table 4: Group Comparability Data

Group	Grade	%	Sex	%	Race	%	Median G.P.A.	Number Days Absent	%	Median CTBS Reading %ile	Number of Parents	%	Number of Working Parents	%
I	9	42.1						3 or less	31.6				0	31.6
	10	36.8	M	63.2	W	42.1	1.5	3–10	52.6	40	1	52.6	1	36.8
	11	21.1	F	36.8	B	57.9		10 or more	15.8		2	47.4	2	31.6
	12	0												
II	9	40.0						3 or less	45.0				0	15.0
	10	20.0	M	75.0	W	45.0	1.7	3–10	40.0	27	1	35.0	1	45.0
	11	25.0	F	25.0	B	55.0		10 or more	15.0		2	65.0	2	40.0
	12	15.0												
III	9	31.25						3 or less	50.0				0	18.75
	10	50.0	M	62.5	W	50.0	2.0	3–10	37.5	50	1	37.5	1	43.75
	11	18.75	F	37.5	B	50.0		10 or more	12.5		2	62.5	2	37.5
	12	15.0												

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tional discussions led to a significant decrease in excessive tardies.

The subjects in Treatment Group Number Two were given the opportunity to:

1. Hear an explanation of why a particular rule exists

2. Discuss the effects excessive tardies and punctuality have on the individual, the teacher, classmates, and the total school climate

3. Take time to internalize information and modify behavior.

It should be noted that of the 20 subjects in Treatment Group Number Two, 18 were never assigned a detention. Of those 18, 16 were only engaged in one of the two allowed instructional discussions. Thus, according to this study, high school students were capable of understanding and internalizing information and modifying behavior when given the opportunity to do so.

Chapter V: Summary, Discussion,

and Recommendation for Further Study

Summary

For nine weeks, randomly selected students re-
ferred to an administrator's office for excessive
tardies were placed into one of three treatment groups.
Members of Treatment Group Number One were cited the
tardy policy and assigned a detention. Members of
Treatment Group Number Two were engaged in up to two
instructional discussions concerning the effects of
tardiness and punctuality. Members of Treatment
Group Number Three were cited the tardy policy and
warned that an additional referral would result in
an assigned detention. The Chi-square statistical
test determined that the null hypothesis could be
rejected and that there was a statistically signi-
ficant difference among the three treatment groups
at the 0.01 level. The randomly chosen subjects who
were engaged in up to two instructional discussions
demonstrated that they could internalize information
and modify behavior accordingly, therefore eliminating

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behaviors that were causing their tardies.

General Discussion

The Socialization Process. Peer interest may have an effect on tardiness. During the period of adolescence, children develop strong interests in friendships, in social grouping, and in the opposite sex. Students congregate in hallways between periods to talk with current friends and to create new friend-ships. The strong motivation "to belong" may be one explanation for excessive tardies.

According to the group comparability data, the number of black students referred for excessive tar-dies, 54.5%, is in high proportion to their repre-sentative percentage of the total population, which is 24%. Of the 55 subjects seen during the nine-week study period, 30 were black males and 10 were black females.

For black students, it is possible that peer interest is compounded by additional social/cultural factors, and the result is a disproportionate number of referrals. Black students congregate in the halls as do other students, but when blacks, or any group for that matter, are the minority in a total popula-tion, they tend to congregate for support. Further-

more, congregating to socialize is an accepted
social/cultural activity in the black community,
and the extent to which this is done may be enhanced
by the fact that the black students come from an
economically depressed area, one in which there is
a high incidence of unemployment. Thus, the emphasis
placed on punctuality may be limited. Finally,
another factor to be considered is "styling." In
this case, individuals want to make others aware of
their presence, and arriving late to class, in part,
enables them to do so.

Another issue revealed by the group comparabil-
ity data and related to the socialization process
concerns the number of males referred for excessive
tardies during the nine-week study period. The total
number of males, 67%, is in high proportion to their
representative percentage of the total school popu-
lation, which consists of 842 males and 849 females.
The male/female socialization process begins at birth.
Where females are generally presented with a more pas-
sive environment and passive activities, such as read-
ing books and playing house, males are generally pre-
sented with a more active environment and are offered
more physical activities, such as playing ball. While

behaving nicely is stressed for females, action and
independence are encouraged in males. When children
enter school, teachers often applaud those who can
sit quietly and remain in their seats on task for
long periods of time. The socialization process fe-
males experience tends to make them more adept at
such behavior.

Though the women's movement has brought about
change in the "female image" over past decades and
has rejected such terms as "passive" and "dependent"
as they are applied to female roles, the change is
far from complete. It may be that males are encour-
aged to and still do exercise independence to a
greater degree than do females. This may influence
males' ability to adjust to rules as readily as fe-
males and this, in part, might explain more frequent
referrals of males for excessive tardies.

Student Ability and Teacher Response. Another
area of the study under examination involves stu-
dents' academic ability and teachers' response to
academic ability as it may be related to tardiness.
For all three treatment groups, the median grade
point average is 2.0 or less on a 4.0 scale. Speci-
fically, the median grade point averages are 1.5,

1.7, and 2.0 for treatment groups one, two, and three respectively.

Teachers may favor more academically oriented students in terms of application of the tardy rule. Students with high grade point averages may be late less frequently or if, in fact, they are tardy, this does not seem to affect their grades. Educators theorize that teachers perceive students who demonstrate academic achievement to be persons who make positive decisions and display positive behavior, and thus teachers are less likely to question these students' behaviors. On the other hand, teachers may apply the tardy rule more stringently to students with average or below average grades because they feel these students need every minute of instruction offered to attain passing grades. In the case of average and below average students, teachers may see tardiness as a factor that reduces the development of full potential.

In keeping with the issue of academic ability, the comparability data shows that for all three groups the median reading comprehension on the California Test of Basic Skills is at or below the 50 %ile. The median scores were 40, 27, and 50 for

treatment groups one, two, and three respectively.
The average mean scores for grades nine, ten, and
eleven for the 1983-1984 school year are 60, 56, and
56 respectively. (Median scores were not available.)
Some educators suggest that there is a correlation
between reading comprehension scores and incidences
of suspension. One might speculate that a similar
relationship may exist between reading ability and
tardiness. Since reading comprehension skills are
required almost hourly in school, students who do
not read well may be less motivated to "get started,"
and this may result in tardiness. Since reading
ability is part of the total academic picture, again
teachers may apply the tardy rule to students who
have limited reading skills, and they also fall into
the group of less academically oriented students.

When one considers academic ability as desig-
nated by grade point average and reading comprehen-
sion scores and adds to that an absenteeism factor,
another issue arises for consideration. Those sub-
jects who fall into the category of three to ten
absences per semester had the greatest number of
tardy referrals. Again, students who demonstrate
excellent attendance habits suggest to their teachers
that they are concerned about education and punctual-

ity. As students approach more excessive absences, are earning grades of "C" or below, and are frequently tardy, teachers may begin to stress punctuality in an effort to offset potential academic failures. Stressing punctuality on the days these students are present may be done in an effort to aid students in receiving maximum educational benefits.

Though it was not part of the original study, the researcher noted that a small percentage of the total teacher population accounted for a substantial number of tardy referrals. The likelihood of students in these teachers' classes being referred for tardies may increase regardless of the group comparability factors and may increase even more if the comparability factors are taken into consideration. Added to educators' theories about teachers' perceptions of academically able students is the fact that in any given group of teachers there exists a variety of teaching styles. The styles range from those who exhibit inflexibility, to those who seek control, and finally to those who communicate effectively. As a result of differences in styles, there may have been variances in the interpretation of the tardy rule. Some of the factors that may have influenced the results of the study

are as follows:

1. According to some subjects, the teacher did
   not provide the student with an oral warn-
   ing on the first incidence of tardiness.

2. Some teachers specifically requested that a
   student be or not be given a detention, and
   in some cases this excluded the subject
   from the study.

3. Some teacher referrals did not occur until
   well after the two tardy limit stated in
   the tardy policy.

4. Written follow-up and oral contact with the
   referring teacher and the teacher/advisor
   may have influenced a reduction or increase
   in tardiness.

Discussion of Conclusions Based on the Hypothesis

Some conclusions can be drawn based strictly
on the three treatments applied to the three randomly
selected groups of subjects.

1. Applying a rule and its stated penalty as
   it is published in a behavior code equally
   to all students may not result in changed
   behavior in terms of reducing excessive
   tardies.

2. Using "warnings" to aid students in modify-
   ing behavior or specifically in reducing
   excessive tardies does not yield significant
   results.

3. A reduction of excessive tardies can be
   accomplished by taking the following steps:
   a. Providing students with an explanation
      of "why" a specific rule exists.
   b. Engaging students in instructional dis-
      cussions concerning the effects tardiness
      and punctuality have on the individual,
      the teacher, classmates, and the total
      school climate.
   c. Allowing students time to internalize
      information.
   d. Allowing students an opportunity to
      exercise self-control.

The results of this study strongly suggest that
it is important to maximize situations where students
can exercise control over their own behavior. Many
educators suggest that high school age students are
capable of reasoning, internalizing information, and
modifying behavior. Educators further suggest strate-
gies that make possible meaningful student/administra-

tor dialogue. These, coupled with administrators involving students in the process of identifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and in creating school behavior codes, may make the issue of tardiness and punctuality more meaningful to students.

Recommendations for Replication of the Study

Based on the limitations described in Chapter I of this thesis, the following considerations are offered to those who may want to replicate this study:

1. Increase the length of the study.

2. Apply the study to more than one building site.

3. Reduce the number and/or types of treatments.

4. Have a male replicate the study to try to determine if gender has any bearing on the results.

5. Have an assistant principal or principal replicate the study to determine if rank/title has any bearing on the results.

6. Provide a student orientation discussion for a group of subjects on the topic of the effects of tardiness and punctuality to create a control group.

7. Restrict the study to one grade, sex, or

race, and use the remaining group(s) as a
control group(s).

Recommendations for Further Study

In addition, the research findings suggest that
further investigation of the theoretical implications
and applied procedures may provide additional infor-
mation. Some of the suggestions are:

1. Review stages of human development, placing
an emphasis on the adolescent stage of growth.

2. Review the theory that adolescents are cap-
able of reasoning, internalizing information,
modifying behavior, and demonstrating self-
discipline.

3. Assess the importance of punctuality in the
public school.

4. Evaluate the process by which policy adop-
tion is done in relation to behavior codes.

5. Develop an inservice program to inform and
train administrators about how to respond
to excessive tardies.

6. Implement a program to train teachers about
how to respond to tardiness in the classroom.

7. Establish a student awareness program that
orients students to the issue of the effects
of tardiness and punctuality.

Appendix A

Sample Treatment Groups Dialogues

Treatment Group Number One

Hello. My name is _____ (administrator's name), and your name is _____? (student's name). Response. How are you today? Response. You are here today because _____ (teacher's name) referred you to my office for being tardy to his/her class _____ (#) times. What was the particular reason(s) for your tardiness? Response. _____ (student's name), the school tardy policy states that "a student is tardy if he/she is not in the assigned seat when the tardy bell rings. Teachers will give students one warning for unexcused tardiness and will assign a detention for the second and subsequent tardies. Teachers will inform the student that detention will be assigned and then will report the student's name to the attendance office." If I can reach one of your parents by telephone now, we can set up a detention date. If not, I will

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send a note home with you explaining the situation and setting a detention date. (Phone call takes place or note is written.) Thank you for coming in to see me. Response.

Treatment Group Number Two

Hello. My name is _____ (administrator's name), and your name is _____? (student's name). Response. How are you today? Response. You are here today because _____ (teacher's name) referred you to my office for being tardy to his/her class _____ (#) times. What was the particular reason(s) for your tardiness? Response. I would like to take a few minutes to discuss being late and being on time to class. Can you think of any problems that occur as a result of your being late to class? Response. That is true, and I would like to add _____ (any problems omitted). What advantages do you feel there will be for you if you arrive to class on time? Response. What advantages will there be for your teacher and classmates? Response. How do you feel being on time for class will effect the overall school setting? Response. (Administrator fills in whenever the student cannot respond.) I would like to see you have

as much success as possible in your _____ (name) class and in all your classes for that matter. I would like to see you attain the highest grades you feel you are capable of attaining. You may have a better chance to do so if you are in your assigned seat and ready to begin your studies when the tardy bell rings. Any future effort you make to be on time will not only help you, but it will help the teacher, your classmates, and the total school climate. I would really like to see you try to be on time for all of your classes in the future. I appreciate you coming in to see me. Have a nice day. Response.

Treatment Group Number Two Second Referral

Hello. _____ (student's name), we have talked once before about being tardy to class. This time _____ (teacher's name) has referred you for tardiness. When we last talked, we discussed some of the effects of being late and being on time to class. Can you recall some of the problems being late causes? Response. Can you recall some of the advantages being on time has? Response. (The administrator fills in information where necessary.) Considering what we have just discussed, I would again like to encourage you to be on time to all of your classes. Have a nice day. Response.

Treatment Group Number Three

Hello. My name is _____ (administrator's name), and your name is _____? (student's name). Response. How are you today? Response. You are here today because _____ (teacher's name) referred you to my office for being tardy to his/her class _____ (#) times. What was the particular reason(s) for your tardiness? Response. _____ (student's name), the school tardy policy states that "a student is tardy if he/she is not in the assigned seat when the tardy bell rings. Teachers will give students one warning for unexcused tardiness and will assign a detention for the second and subsequent tardies. Teachers will inform the student that detention will be assigned and then will report the student's name to the attendance office." Since this is your first referral, I will not assign a detention today, but please understand that any future referrals will result in a detention. Do you understand? Response. Thank you for coming in to see me, and have a nice day. Response.

Appendix B

Sample Referral Forms

Referring Teacher Form

Teacher's Name _____ Date _____

Your student _____ was referred to

my office for _____. The following

action was taken: _____.

The following contacts were made:

Advisor_____ Parent_____ Principal_____ Counselor_____

_____

Dean of Attendance

Advisor Contact Form

Advisor's Name _____ Date _____

Your advisee _____ was referred to

my office by _____ for the following

reason:

    A. Truant from school on _____.

    B. Skipping his _____ hour class on _____.

    C. Tardy to his _____ hour class _____ times.

Please contact this advisee at your earliest conven-

ience and give this matter top priority. Thank you.

_____

Dean of Attendance

Counselor Referral Form

In speaking to _____ about _____,
I noted that there may be some underlying issues that
require further counseling. Please contact me so we
can discuss this matter in more depth. Thank you.

_____
Dean of Attendance

Principal Referral Form

After seeing _____ many times and

discussing the matter of _____ at a

parent conference, I feel detention and short term

suspension are ineffective. I would appreciate you

contacting me about the details of this student's

behavior and place him/her on your caseload.

Thank you.

_____
Dean of Attendance

Parent Notification of Assigned Detention

Dear Parent:

Your son/daughter, _____, will be

assigned detention(s) for _____.

The detention date(s) are _____.

Since I could not reach you by telephone, please
acknowledge the fact that your child will remain
at school until 4:00 p.m. on the date(s) stated
above. Transportation will be provided for your
child if he or she normally rides a bus home.
This note is to be returned by your child before
the beginning of first period class tomorrow.

If you have any questions, please call me at _____.

Sincerely,

_____
Dean of Attendance

Parent Signature _____

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