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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to improve students' ability to determine appropriate behavior for various places within the school and to learn self-control to comply with expectations. Specifically, the practicum intended to decrease the number of referrals to administrators and the counselor for out-of-control student behavior and decrease the number of observable out-of-control behaviors in the cafeteria, library, and playground. Students involved in the program included 237 4th and 6th graders. "We the People" text was used to include lessons on citizenship. Focus was placed on one positive character trait and one social skill each month. The program was enriched through role-play, debates, and literature. Upon completion of the implementation, analysis of the data revealed a 34% decrease in the number of administrative referrals, and a 49% decrease in observable out-of-control behaviors. The data was analyzed through a comparison of the results of systematic collection and categorization of administrative and counselor referrals before and after implementation and through comparison of the frequency of behaviors before and after implementation. The instrument used for observation was an observation frequency chart. (Author/JBJ)

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**Improving Self-Control in Upper Elementary Students
Through a Program of Character, Civic, and Social Education**

by

Joan R. Cassell

Cluster 51

**A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program
in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education**

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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This practicum report was submitted by Joan Cassell under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

6-20-95
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Abstract

Improving Self-Control in Upper Elementary Students Through a Program of Character, Civic, and Social Education.
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This practicum was designed to improve students' ability to determine the appropriate behavior for various places within the school and to have the self-control to comply with the expectations. Specifically the practicum was designed to decrease the number of referrals to administrators and the counselor for out-of-control student behavior and decrease the number of observable out-of-control behaviors in the cafeteria, library and playground.

The writer used the We the People text which included lessons on citizenship. The writer focused on one positive character trait and one social skill each month. The program was enriched through role-play, debates and literature.

Upon completion of the implementation, analysis of the data revealed: a 34% decrease in the number of administrative referrals, a decrease of 53%, and a decrease in observable out-of-control behaviors of 49%. The data was analyzed through a comparison of the results of systematic collection and categorization of administrative and counselor referrals before and after implementation and through comparison of the frequency of behaviors before and after implementation. The instrument used for observation was an observation frequency chart.

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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

The Writer's Work Setting

The writer works in an elementary school with 744 students. The school is located in a planned community about 25 years old. The school has a great deal of socioeconomic and cultural diversity. Included in the geographic area are expensive single family homes, low income apartments and middle-class dwellings.

The student population of the school totals 742. This includes: 392 white, 167 hispanic, 121 black, and 57 Asian. The school houses a gifted and talented center, school-based gifted program, English as a Second Language (ESL) Program, and self-contained and resource services for students with learning disabilities.

The staff includes 2 administrators, 32 classroom teachers, 16 specialists teachers, 1 full-time and 1 half-time counselor, 9 instructional assistants, 1 part time social worker, 1 part-time psychologist, 1 full-time speech therapist, 1 parent liaison, 6 secretaries and 5 custodians.

The school is considered by the county as a "special needs" school. The areas considered in qualifying for special needs status are: ethnicity, number of students receiving free and reduced priced lunches, mobility rate, and scatter of standardized test scores.

The writer's school is 58% minority when the students in the Gifted Center are not considered. There are 208 students receiving free lunch and 72 receiving reduced lunch. The school population's mobility rate is very high. Students are gained and lost frequently.

By qualifying for special needs status, the school is entitled to special services. These include reduced pupil/teacher ratio for first grade (15 to 1), Reading Recovery, Stepped Up Math (SUM), Stepped Up Language Arts (SULA), and FAST Math. There is also a Saturday school and summer accelerated learning program for at-risk students.

The Writers Role in the Work Setting

The writer is the counselor for the school. The writer provides assistance to the students in their social, emotional and academic development. Assistance is provided through individual and group counseling, classroom guidance activities, administrative and teacher consultations, child study team, local screening committee for special services, and referring parents to services available outside the school.

Chapter 2
STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Students in the 4th and 6th grades exhibited behaviors that interfered with their social and academic success. Often they were referred because of their inability to exercise self-control in the classroom, playground, cafeteria, and hallways. The referral was given to either the administration for discipline or the counselor for guidance.

Briefly stated, the problem was that students exhibited an inability to exercise self-control, which inhibited their social and academic potential and often resulted in disciplinary action.

The students involved in the program were approximately 237 4th and 6th graders. Fourth and sixth grades were selected because they have a large number of at-risk students. Students were considered at-risk by meeting one of the following criteria: irregular attendance, multiple discipline referrals, below grade level academic achievement, inconsistent or no parental support, and consistent problems with socialization. Table one shows the number of males and females in each grade level, categorized by race.

Table 1

The Number of Males and Females in Grades 4 and 6,
Categorized by Race.

Race	Grade 4		Grade 6		Totals
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
White	35	36	35	23	129
Black	12	10	16	8	46
Hispanic	15	12	5	8	40
Other	9	8	3	6	26
Totals	71	66	59	41	241

Problem Documentation

Data from the administrative referrals (see appendix A) for September 1993 through February 1994 shown in Table 2 separates the nature of the offenses for referrals into 5 major categories: physical aggression, uncooperative behavior, obsessive talking, rudeness and other.

Table 2
Nature and Frequency of Offenses Referred to
Administration

Offense/Race/ Totals	4th Grade		6th Grade		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Physical Aggression					
White	6	2	7	1	
Black	11	3	12	7	
Hispanic	4	4	5	3	
Totals	21	9	24	11	65
Uncooperative					
White	14	0	3	1	
Black	1	1	2	5	
Hispanic	4	5	6	10	
Totals	19	6	10	16	51
Obsessive Talking					
White	0	7	2	8	
Black	0	5	1	2	
Hispanic	2	0	0	1	
Totals	2	12	3	11	28

Rudeness					
White	4	0	3	1	
Black	3	1	5	0	
Hispanic	1	0	0	3	
Totals	8	1	8	4	21
Other					
White	1	2	3	2	
Black	1	1	3	0	
Hispanic	3	0	0	3	
Totals	5	3	6	5	19
Referral Totals	55	31	51	47	184

Table 2 indicates that the two categories with the highest number of referrals were physical aggression and uncooperative behavior. Physical aggression included: pushing, fighting and any behavior involving physical contact. Uncooperative behavior included: refusal to work or participate, not responding to adult's requests and causing conflict within a student group.

The next two highest categories were obsessive talking and rudeness. Obsessive talking incidents took place in the classroom and a referral usually indicated that the teacher had made attempts to correct the situation. Rudeness was

not limited to any particular place within the school and included: gossiping, saying unkind and hurtful things, using an inappropriate tone of voice, and questionable gestures.

Verbal Aggression included anything spoken that provokes or attempts to provoke an argument or physical aggression. This category also included profanity.

The other category included any offense that did not fit into a specific category. Some of the offenses were starting a fire, stealing from the cafeteria, and possessing an article that could be considered a weapon. All of these behaviors usually occurred as a result of student's inability to exercise the self-control necessary to prevent adult intervention.

Systematic observation of students on the playground, cafeteria and library using a frequency chart (see appendix B) indicated a high occurrence of behaviors indicating a problem with self-control.

Table 3 shows the frequency of these behaviors observed during five observation sessions in each location conducted by the writer. Each session lasted one hour. The behaviors are divided into two major categories: verbal and physical. The verbal behaviors include: verbally defying authority, gossiping, name-calling, and talking at inappropriate times.

The physical behaviors include: physically defying authority with body and gestures, tapping or touching another student, taking something from another student, and pushing or punching.

Table 3

Incidents of Observed Physical and Verbal Behaviors
Indicating No Self-control

Location	4th Grade		6th Grade		Total
	Physical	Verbal	Physical	Verbal	
Cafeteria	7	11	9	19	46
Library	3	6	9	8	26
Playground	20	10	16	12	58

Table 3 showed that the playground had the highest number of incidents of out-of-control physical behaviors and the highest total number of incidents. The library had the lowest number of incidents in both physical and verbal behaviors that were considered out-of-control.

The cafeteria had the second lowest number of incidents of physically out-of-control behaviors but the second

highest number of incidents for verbal behaviors that were considered out-of-control.

The number of counselor referrals (see appendix C) from September 1993 to February 1994 for behaviors that indicate an inability to use self-control are shown in Table 4. The total number of counselor referrals for any reason during the same period was 174.

Table 4

Nature and Number of Incidents Referred to Counselor
Indicating Non Use of Self-Control

Incidents	4th Grade		6th Grade		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Uncooperative	12	7	11	7	37
Obsessive Behaviors	6	2	11	4	23
Physical Behavior	6	0	3	3	12
Verbal Behavior	1	5	2	6	14
Total					86

The data indicated that 86 out of 174 referrals to the counselor were related to students' inability to exhibit self-control. For placing a referral in the behavior

categories of verbal, physical and uncooperative, the same criteria that was mentioned earlier in this paper for the administrative referrals was used. Obsessive behaviors were consistently repeated behaviors that did not stop with teacher intervention.

Students were referred to the counslor most often for exhibiting uncooperative behavior. The second leading cause of referral was obsessive behaviors. Behaviors that indicate a lack of self-control physically and verbally were referred to the administration more often than to the counselor.

Causative Analysis

The lack of self-control in children is a concern for parents and teachers. Even so, there are few programs and not much in the way of curriculum that addresses the need for students to learn to control their behavior. It is expected that students come to school ready to exhibit self-control, based on what they have been taught at home or from some internal force. In recent years violence in schools has prompted educational systems to implement programs aimed at improving behavior.

Traditional values education, character building activities and even citizenship are not a regular part of the curriculum. Many parts of the elementary program

address these issues indirectly, but there is nothing done to measure the effectiveness or success of this indirect approach.

The media exposes children to more violence than ever before through news, music, t.v. programs, and movies. Through various forms of media, children in many homes are regularly exposed to murder, robbery, assaults, kidnapping and a host of violent acts. Many times the perpetrator of the deed is seen as a hero; someone to look up to. All of these acts observed by children clearly show an absence of good citizenship, character, values and self-control.

Many children in the writer's work setting come from homes where the adults are unable to model behaviors conducive to promoting self-control. They often abuse substances, their spouse or their children in a demonstration of out-of-control behavior.

Relationship of the Problem to Literature

A review of the literature indicates that the development of self-control in children is not automatic, nor is it the same for every child. The prominent influences on the development of self-control revealed in the literature are: the changing status of families, economic status, historically significant conflicts in

values, violence in the media, lack of role models, and increased materialism.

Self-control can be defined as "behaving in a way consistent with self-chosen beliefs and goals". (Savage, 1991 p. 7) When a person exercises self-control their behavior is thought to be responsible. According to Savage (1991) this means, they are "able to fill their own needs without interfering with the attempt of others to fulfill their needs". (p. 8)

Self-control is comprised of several behaviors including: controlling impulses, resisting temptation, delaying immediate rewards, making and carrying out plans, and initiating positive social actions. (Kostelnick, Stein, Whiren, & Soderman, 1993) A child who does not strike back, when struck by a classmate, is exhibiting impulse control. Resisting temptation is demonstrated when a child turns in a lost wallet with the money intact. A child choosing to give up playing with friends to practice for a baseball game or piano recital is demonstrating delayed gratification. A demonstration of developing and implementing a plan is a child who desires to make all A's on a report card and is able to develop and carry out a strategy for getting all A's.

A survey of the literature created by human development theorists, including Piaget and Erikson, indicates that there is some kind of connection between the development of self-control and the development of moral reasoning and cognitive development of the individual. Most of these theories suggest that the degree of self-control developed by a child can be influenced by a number of factors in the environment. This indicates that theoretically, it is possible to manipulate the environment to produce the desired level of development of self-control.

A review of the literature demonstrated the need for educators to be concerned with the development of self-control in children. Current examination of students' attitudes indicate that they are disrespectful and defiant which hinders their necessary socialization. A survey shows 59% of teachers in urban schools and 40% in rural schools said they face swearing and obscene gestures demonstrated by students. (Lickona, 1993)

Educators are faced with an unparalleled level of anti-social behavior. Poor discipline is evident in the schools and is demonstrated by the absence of values and self-control. (Wynne & Ryan, 1993) In one study, 58% of the teachers referred to student misbehavior as the primary cause of job-related stress. (Baker, 1985) A study

conducted by the National Education Association, found that only 10% of the teachers reported that discipline problems had little or no serious effect on their teaching. (Savage, 1991)

Other indications that children are not developing self-control is evidenced by a 38% increase nation wide in court cases of 12-year-olds during the period from 1984 to 1988. (Lickona, 1988) The literature suggests that children today may not be concerned with the rights and needs of others. Their responsibility for their behavior seems to end with situations that have some relevance to their immediate world. (Johnson, 1985)

The literature shows an assortment of "social cancers" plague the children, including: drug abuse, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, high dropout rates, family violence, juvenile deaths from suicides, homicides and motor vehicle accidents. (Heller, 1989) All of these things result from young people not exercising self-control. This absence of development could be a symptom of society's failure to provide adequate support and direction for children. (Streshly & Schaps, 1988).

Lickona (1993) sighted several causes for current trends in student's behavior. He includes as causes the breakdown of the family, increased materialism, and the

impact of media. Earlier Lickona (1988) discussed the schools role, historically, in teaching truth, honesty and responsibility. People began to question the right of the school to teach these things. According to Lickona, schools abandoned from their role as teachers of these concepts because of pressure from society.

Wynne and Ryan (1993) sight as the cause the confusion over students' rights and responsibilities, usually produced in the form of a student handbook, which has replaced a code of discipline in the schools. They refer to this trend as one of the most regrettable shifts of emphasis in to occur in education. Students were given a sense of having legal rights in terms of the educational system. What was forgotten was the students' responsibilities to be good citizens and contributing members of the school community.

Lickona's theory is supported by a report from NAESP (1989). The report indicated that traditional American qualities; truth, honest and responsibility, have failed to be passed on to the new generation of students. Children are having a difficult time deciding what is right and what is wrong in terms of their behavior.

Bandura's theory (1977) gives relevance to research of Licona and NAESP. He suggests that children use what they

see in their world as a basis for understanding how people are supposed to behave. New learning is built on top of current beliefs. Children are constantly exposed to misbehavior; on television, in music, and sometimes in their own homes. Somewhere children need to be exposed to people exercising self-control.

Johnson (1985) believes that the response to out of control student behavior by those in charge is one of the major causes for the behaviors continuing. The response he is referring to is what he calls a "get tough" policy. This response to inappropriate behavior will not help students to develop self-discipline or any other important character traits. It only achieves cursory compliance to the rules.

Lopez (1994) sights low self-esteem as one of the causes. Students with low self-esteem also lack responsibility and accountability for their behavior. They believe that people who lack self-esteem are unable to behave in a responsible manner in both their personal and social lives. Lopez work showed that students with a positive self-esteem are less disruptive and are better able to make and maintain relationships with their peers.

According to Wynne and Ryan (1993) the cause of the decline in student behavior began with the values conflicts of the 1960's. Following closely behind the values

conflicts, and also major contributors, were the changes in the family structure. At the same time there was a massive increase in information available through increased media power and new forms of entertainment media. This provided an avenue which could transport these new values into every American home.

The changing status of the family in America plays a significant role in the development of self-control in children. Many families have two working parents or one single parent responsible for the social and emotional development of the children. Parents are already stressed from working and have little free time. Young children go to day care and older children come home to empty homes or teenage baby sitters. In addition, 20% of our children live below the poverty level. (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992)

Research from the U.S. Department of Education (1993) Guide for Pro Family Education shows that poverty among children has worsened by 22% over the past 10 years and now one in five children live in poverty; the number for children under six is one in four. The research also shows that only about 70% of American students finish high school in 4 years. Births to single teens increased 14% during the 1980s. The death rate among teenagers from suicides, accidents and homicides went from 62.4 to 69.3 deaths per

100,000 young people. Finally the research estimates that at least 100,000 children are homeless on any given night.

Unquestionably, society, the media, inadequate programs in schools, economics, breakdown of the family, and increased violent behavior in schools have all contributed to the deficiency in the development of self-control in children. It is not clear what factors play the most significant role in development. The author believes that self-control is influenced by many factors that are specific to the environment of individual children.

Chapter 3
GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

GOALS

The goal projected for this practicum was that students would be able to determine for themselves what is the expected behavior for different settings within the school and exercise the self-control necessary to comply with the expectations.

Expected Outcomes

The author expected the implementation of the program would bring about several positive changes. The following outcomes were projected for this practicum: a 15% decrease in the number of referrals received by the administration and the counselor and a 15% decrease in the number of observed behaviors that are not in compliance with desired behaviors.

Measurement of Outcomes

The decrease in administrative (see Appendix A) and counselor (see Appendix C) referrals were assessed through systematic collection and categorization of referrals. The desired standard is a 15% decrease in the total number of referrals to both the administration and the counselor.

Compliance with expected behaviors was to be measured through systematic observation using a frequency chart (see Appendix B). The standard of performance expected was a 15% decrease in non complying behaviors.

Chapter IV
SOLUTION STRATEGY

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this practicum was that students in the 4th and 6th grades exhibited behaviors that interfered with their social and academic success. Often they were referred to the counselor or an administrator because of their inability to exercise self-control in the classroom, playground, cafeteria, and hallways.

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

With the increase in behavior problems in schools, ranging from inappropriate language to stealing and carrying weapons, educators are trying many different strategies to improve student's behavior. A review of the literature suggests that the implementation of any type of program will have positive results. Most of the programs reviewed were tailored to meet the needs of the individual schools' population.

The underlying belief in all of the programs is that children, given the chance, have the capacity to change their behavior and that schools are the perfect arena in which to provide this opportunity.

Bandura (1977) believes that self-control is acquired and maintained by the influences of models and patterns of direct reinforcement. Bandura's research (1963) indicated that children who are surrounded by people who are behaving

in an inappropriate way will find it easier to behave inappropriately than those who are consistently surrounded by people who attempt to behave in an acceptable manner. Therefore, children need to spend a lot of time with people who exhibit self-control if they are to be expected to exhibit self-control in their behavior. Reinforcement interventions can take many forms: positive to negative and giving to taking away. From a social learning stand point, it would be safe to say, that children who have in their lives a strong, warm and nurturing model who exhibits self-control and uses some type of reinforcement will very likely demonstrate self-control in their own lives. Schools can provide the opportunity for children to have this type of role model.

According to Carlsson-Paige and Levin (1992), early intervention is most important. Educators cannot wait until high school to begin helping students internalize their control over their behavior. Teaching skills that broaden a child's repertoire of choices of behavior will help the child to feel in control. Conflict resolution programs that emphasize problem-solving skills are found to make a difference in this area. More than 2000 conflict resolution programs are in schools across the United States. All of them report success in promoting positive behaviors in students. (Meek, 1992)

Lopez (1994) believes that creating a school environment that enhances self-esteem will produce citizens who have personal power and are responsible for their own feelings and actions. The program implemented by Lopez uses the 6 A's: acknowledgement, acceptance, approval, appreciation, admiration and affection. The students in the program showed an increase in responsibility for their own behavior.

According to Vann (1988) having basic values such as honesty, citizenship, and work ethics woven into the whole school curriculum can help children to be prepared for facing the decisions in their lives, including how they will behave. Vann refers to his idea as a way to help children create a bridge of understanding that links history, contemporary society, and the future to their place in the world. By including basic values in every curriculum children are given a forum for discussing values related issues.

Streshly & Schaps (1988) discussed a program called the Child Development Project which consisted of 5 elements that were integrated into the curriculum: cooperative activities, helping and sharing activities, understanding others, setting positive examples, and developmental discipline. The program wanted to promote student behavior that was conducive to a democratic philosophy. The results

of the program indicated that after a year the children were less likely to select a solution to a problem that involved aggressive or unrealistic behavior. The authors believes the data indicates that a character program used within the school can have positive effects on student attitudes, social skills and behavior.

A different approach was reported by Healer (1989). The Washington, D.C. school system, concerned with student behavior, piloted a program based on values-centered goals. The students all wore uniforms, engaged in community service, and participated in clubs to boost self-esteem. The results were reduced incidence of fights and thefts, increased attendance and higher test scores.

Scott (1992) discussed an elementary school in southern California that selected 36 positive character traits to focus on for the school year. Each week a new pair of traits was introduced throughout the school. The teacher had a 10 minutes lesson on the pair of traits each day. There was an assembly on Friday to watch a dramatization on the theme for the week. The results were a 100% reduction in suspension, fewer referrals, better teacher morale, and lower teacher absenteeism. Of 33 schools, this one climbed from 38th to 5th place on test scores. (Scott, 1992)

A similar program was reported by Brooks and Kahn (1993). An elementary school, with major problems

concerning student behavior, implemented a character education program. The program included direct instruction using language-based curriculum and positive language. The focus was on content and process. The students were taught about civic values and how to go about reaching a consensus. Visual reinforcements were used throughout the school.

The results were a 25% decrease in major discipline problems. Minor problems decreased by 39% and suspension went down 16%. A survey of teachers showed that children were taking responsibility for their behavior and school work.

Lickona (1988) discussed an elementary school north of Chicago that was concerned with students' overall behavior. Verbal and physical aggression were common. Children were uncooperative and rude much of the time to adults and to each other. They implemented a program they called, "Let's Be Courteous, Let's Be Caring", that emphasized courtesy and caring. Some of the activities included photo displays, class discussion, assemblies, citizen awards, and community service. The results from the statistics show fights were rare. Interviews with children indicated they were more caring toward each other. Teachers felt that the students showed an unusual degree of respect.

A program based on citizenship was reported by Craig (1990). An elementary school in Wisconsin believed that the most broad explanation for what influences how people behave

in society is included in civic education. They implemented a program to teach citizenship and social responsibilities in the hopes of improving overall behavior. They used the We the People text with 5th graders. The program consisted of weekly lessons that connected students' experiences to the beliefs and content of the constitution principles. The students learned the responsibilities that go with rights and how to live together with respect for others. The children began to use vocabulary in their everyday life that showed their interest in the common good.

According to research conducted by the U. S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, as cited by Hale (1988), law related education can serve as a significant deterrent to delinquent behavior. They conducted a four year national study on the effects of using law-related curriculum on student behavior.

Johnson (1985) believes that an effective way to help students become more self-disciplined and improve overall behavior is through literature. According to Johnson, our "complex technological democracy" requires self-disciplined individuals (p.49). To instill self-discipline, Johnson believes we need a curriculum that encourages critical thinking. Further, Johnson suggests that literature provides the heroes and the heroines and that can enable

students to discover their own meaning of life by experiencing life's disappointments through literary characters.

Cunningham (1994) introduced an interesting idea. He believes that sports foster resiliency in children. Sports can develop children who have the attributes that provide resiliency. The following are characteristics of resilient youth: problem-solving skills, social competence, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and future. These characteristics are developed through involvement in sports activities and interactions with coaches. Problem-solving comes from flexible thinking. Social competence comes from communication skills and a sense of humor. Autonomy is a result of self-discipline and a sense of control over student's environment. A sense of purpose and future comes from persistence and aspirations. Cunningham believes that all of these characteristics come from the caring and support offered by athletic programs. He suggests combining the forces of athletic programs with schools and families, as a way to instill these character traits in children. Cunningham sees the role of the coach as model and mentor, especially as the family and community become more fragmented.

The U.S. Department of Education (1993) suggests that education needs to focus on the full range of potential of children and help them develop the skills necessary to be

adults in our society, including the values of democratic citizenship and concern for others. They suggest the creation of communities where the family, school and all helping institutions can work together.

Other ideas generated by the writer that would be effective in the work setting include: peer helpers, leadership training, and positive role models. The high school into which these children will feed offers peer helpers. These are students who have taken a course in peer helping and want to work with younger children. These students would make wonderful role models for at risk students.

Leadership skills like speaking in front of a group, consensus building, persuading people, and looking at all sides of a problem can be taught through a leadership club. This will help students to take control of their lives, including their behavior.

Role models from the immediate community and from the state and federal government would make wonderful guest speakers on many topics. Proximity to federal government operations would make federal and state speakers possible. High school representatives from sports and academics would also be in close proximity and would be very influential on elementary students.

Most of the programs described in this paper would be feasible in the writer's work setting. The programs centered around character building and citizenship are most appealing to the writer. These concepts fit into the writer's power base and would be most effective with the school population.

Cunningham's (1994) idea on using sports to promote self-control is most intriguing. The idea of sports building character is not new. Perhaps it is an idea that needs to be revisited by educators. Most schools have some sports activities already that could be used in a way that helps to improve behavior.

The author agrees strongly with the U.S. Department of Education Report (1993) that calls upon schools to help children reach their potential and help them to develop the skills necessary for adults in our society, including citizenship. Counseling programs may be the vehicle to transport these ideas into reality.

Description of Solution Selected

The author used a three-strand-approach which included a combination of civic, social and character education. The program included: civic education lessons twice monthly, monthly emphasis on a good character trait, and monthly emphasis on a social skill.

For the Civic Education component, the author used lessons from We the People curriculum for students in the 4th and 6th grades. This program was created by The Center for Civic Education. The program introduced students to the study of the constitutional government. It is a book of ideas that fostered critical thinking, leadership, cooperation and self-esteem through a study of the most important ideas behind the development of the constitution. Students learned what it means to be a good citizen.

The teaching strategies included: discussions, role-playing, debates, and problem-solving activities for groups and individuals. The writer used a conceptually oriented approach that emphasized the development of skills in analysis and evaluation. The program also used interdisciplinary skills; reading, writing, art, research, and vocabulary. There were twenty-one lessons, each on a different topic.

The character and social skills components of the program complemented each other and were presented at the beginning of the month and referred to in each lesson. The character traits included: honesty, kindness, responsibility, respect, cooperation, fairness. The social skills included: do not start or repeat rumors or gossip, say please and thank you, respect property of others, do what you know is right, listen to others, and be helpful.

As adjuncts to the classroom activities, a Leadership Club was formed and selected students were assigned a peer helper from the high school. In the leadership club, children got a chance to learn public speaking, hear guest speakers, and participate in community service activities and field trips. The author arranged for students taking a course in peer helping from the high school to meet once a week with selected at-risk students to discuss their social and academic concerns.

Report of Action Taken

This section of the report will sequence procedures followed during implementation of the writer's strategy to improve self-control in elementary school students. During the first week, a short meeting was held for the faculty to present the data collected indicating the number of administrative and counseling referrals for behaviors that were considered out-of-control. Also the three strand approach, which included civic, social and character education, was presented. In addition, an overview of the leadership club and peer helper program was presented.

During the first week the writer went to student grade level meetings and introduced the three stands of the program to the students in forth and sixth grade. At this time students were given information on joining the leadership club and on the Peer Helper Program.

After the orientations for teachers and students, the lessons began in the classroom. The teachers were not responsible for any preparation or record keeping. Teachers could choose to stay with their class and participate or they could use the time for planning.

For the next eight months the students were presented two lessons each month. The classes were held every other week and lasted at least one hour. The lessons were a combination of character traits, social skills and citizenship. The curriculum, We the People, was the foundation for each lesson. The social skills and character traits were introduced during the first lesson of the month. Once introduced, the social skills and character traits were referred to throughout the implementation period where appropriate.

All of the material was modified or enhanced to meet the needs of the class. Each lesson provided opportunities for students to draw from their prior knowledge, participate in group activities, analyze behaviors and discuss and debate ideas and concepts.

The curriculum, We the People, is divided into five units: What were the Founder's basic ideas about government?, How was our Constitution written?, How did the framers organize our government?, How does the constitution protect your basic rights?, and What are the

responsibilities of citizens? Each lesson has background reading, group activities and questions which require cooperation and critical thinking. Every lesson relates its basic concepts of the development of our government to modern day responsibilities of being a citizen. Some of the concepts were too difficult for the fourth graders. The writer found that presenting the ideas orally worked better than having the students read the text. The sixth graders were able to handle the reading and understand the concepts. Some classes were able to cover two major concepts at each meeting. The writer allowed each class to set the pace for the program. This alleviated stress for the writer and the students.

The writer introduced a new concept at each meeting, selecting a presentation method that met the needs of the class. One new character trait was introduced during the first lesson of each month. The writer used the technique, Think-Pair-Share, to introduce the traits. The character trait was written on the board. The students were told to think about several things: What the trait means to them?, What people do they know who exhibit this trait?, Why would they like their friends to exhibit this trait? After giving them one minute of silent thought (Think), the students meet with their preselected partner (Pair), and each students

gets one minute to exchange ideas (Share). The writer kept track of time and let the students know when to change from one part of the activity to the other. Throughout the program the writer would encourage the students to relate the character traits to the founders of our government and responsibilities of citizenship.

A new social skill, selected from the previously mentioned list, was presented during the second lesson of the month and was reinforced until the following month's second lesson. The social skill was presented through a role play. Prior to class, students were selected to perform a short open-ended role play that left the students to decide what should happen. In small groups, students discussed, wrote and performed their ending to the role play scenario. After observing the various endings, students had the opportunity to discuss the situation and the difficulties involved in exhibiting this particular social skill in their daily lives.

During the first month of implementation, at-risk students were identified. Peer Helpers were selected from the high school. The students were matched according to the needs of the students and skills of the peer helpers. Letters were sent to the chosen students' parents explaining the program. Included with the letter was a consent form for parents to sign and return.

A schedule for the students to meet, according to the availability of the Peer Helpers and with the least amount of disruption to the elementary students' academic subjects. The Peer Helpers met with the students once a week for one half hour throughout the implementation period. The high school students continued to receive instruction in a Peer Helper Class that met daily at the high school. In addition, the writer met with the Peer Helpers to discuss their concerns and let them know what was being discussed in class so they could reinforce the concepts when possible.

Also during the first month students were given an opportunity to join the leadership club. Announcements and classroom flyers were used for one week prior to the first organizational meeting. The club was open to all fourth, fifth and sixth grade students. Almost fifty students showed up for this meeting. After the club's purpose and activities were presented, students realized their was a commitment and the number went down to thirty.

The students were required to research possible topics for social action projects. The writer used the text, Civics for Democracy which listed over 200 possibilities for students to participate in projects. (Nader, 1993) The students wrote to an organization, received information on participation opportunities, and implemented some kind of activity. Some students chose activities for the school and

others chose topics of community or national interest. The projects included: recycling, rain forest preservation, improving school food, and helping endangered species.

The leadership club was also given the opportunity to operate the school store. The store was going to close due to continual losses. This provided an opportunity for the club to take on a significant project to help the school. It also provided a means to reward students for positive behaviors. When teachers saw a student exhibiting good character, appropriate social behavior, or citizenship they could give the student a coupon, redeemable for school supplies at the store.

Throughout the implementation the writer met informally with teachers and administration to discuss their thoughts and suggestions on all phases of the program. A more formal presentation was done at the end of implementation. It included a comparison of the data, overview of the program and a discussion on changes for the following school year.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem addressed dealt with the inability of fourth and sixth grade students to exercise self-control in the classroom, playground, cafeteria, and hallways. The students' behaviors in these places interfered with their social and academic success. Often students were referred to the administration for discipline or the counselor for guidance.

The writer selected a three strand approach which included civic, social and character education. The civic education was taught using the curriculum, We the People. The lessons were adapted to fit the instructional level of each class. Character traits were introduced, one each month, through the think-pair-share method. Social skills were presented through open-ended role plays, which allowed the students to come up with an ending. All of the concepts were integrated when possible and activities encouraged cooperation and critical thinking. Students who were identified as at-risk were given the opportunity to work with Peer Helpers from high school.

In addition, a leadership club was formed. The club focused on providing leadership opportunities for students including: operating the school store, service projects and learning from guest speakers. Another activity sponsored by

the club was an incentive program for students to display appropriate behavior. Students were rewarded with coupons redeemable at the school store.

The goal of the program was for students to be able to determine for themselves what is expected behavior for different settings within the school and exercise the self-control necessary to comply with the expectations.

The first anticipated outcome was a 15% decrease in referrals received by the administration, assessed through systematic collection and categorization of referrals. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Nature and Frequency of Offenses Referred to Administration
Before and After Program Implementation

Offense	4th Grade		6th Grade		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
	Before/After		Before/After		
Physical Aggression	21/14	9/1	24/6	11/3	65/24
Uncooperative	19/5	6/1	10/7	16/1	51/14
Obsessive Talking	2/0	12/2	3/2	11/2	28/6
Rudeness	8/3	1/2	8/5	4/1	21/11
Other	5/4	3/1	6/2	5/1	19/8
Total number of Referrals Before/After					184/63

All of the categories show a significant decrease in the number of offenses referred to the administration. The category showing the greatest improvement was rudeness with a decrease of 52%. Referrals for physical aggression decreased by 37% and for Uncooperative behavior 27%. Obsessive talking referrals decreased by 21%. The category for out-of-control behaviors that did not fit into a specific category, referred to as the "other" category, showed a decrease of 42%. All of the categories achieved and greatly surpassed the anticipated outcome of a 15% decrease in administrative referrals. The total number of administrative referrals went from 184 to 63, which shows a decrease of 34%.

The second anticipated outcome was a 15% decrease in non complying behaviors. This outcome was assessed through systematic observation using a frequency chart (see Appendix A). The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
 Incidents of Physical and Verbal Behaviors
 Indicating No Self-control Observed Before and
 After Implementation of the Program

Location	4th Grade		6th Grade		Total
	Physical	Verbal	Physical	Verbal	
	Before/After	Before/After	Before/After	Before/After	
Cafeteria	7/2	11/8	9/3	19/10	46/23
Library	3/0	6/4	9/0	8/4	26/8
Playground	20/11	10/9	16/10	12/6	58/36
Total Number of Observed Behaviors					130/67

The Table shows that each of the locations had a decrease in the number of observed out-of-control behaviors. The library, with 69%, had the largest decrease of the three locations. The Cafeteria was next with a 50% decrease and the playground showed a decrease of 38%. All of the locations had decreases that went way beyond the anticipated outcome of a 15% decrease. The total number of observed out of control behaviors went from 138 to 67, which shows a significant decrease of 49%.

The third anticipated outcome was a 15% decrease in counselor referrals. This was assessed through systematic collection and categorization of referrals. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Nature and Number of Incidents Referred to Counselor
 Indicating Non Use of Self-Control Before and After
 Implementation of the Program

Incidents	4th Grade		6th Grade		Totals
	Male Before/After	Female Before/After	Male Before/After	Female Before/After	
Uncooperative	12/6	7/2	11/8	7/3	37/19
Obsessive					
Behaviors	6/1	2/2	11/2	4/0	23/5
Physical					
Aggression	6/2	0/1	3/1	3/0	12/4
Verbal					
Aggression	1/1	5/3	2/3	6/5	14/12
Total Number of Referrals					86/40

All of the categories for counselor referrals show a decrease in number. The greatest decrease in the number of referrals was 78% in the obsessive behaviors category. The category for out-of-control physical behaviors was next, with decrease of 66% in the number of referrals. Referrals for uncooperative behavior decreased by 49%.

The only category that failed to achieve the anticipated outcome of a 15% decrease was verbal behavior. However, it was very close, with a decrease of 14%. The total number of counselor referrals for behaviors considered out-of-control, went from 86 to 40. This shows a decrease of 53% in all referrals for out-of-control behaviors.

Discussion

The results indicate that the program implemented has been successful at reducing the number of administrative and counselor referrals for out-of-control behaviors. It also indicates that the program was successful at decreasing the number of observable out-of-control behaviors, both physical and verbal. The writer believes the apparent success of the program can be attributed to three factors. The factors are: the increase in counselor time spent in the classroom, using direct instruction in the areas of citizenship, social skills, and character, and assigning at-risk students to work with peer helpers.

By spending more time in the classroom than previous school years, the writer was able to present more information, follow-up on school wide-problems, and address problems within a particular class before they escalated. Not all students come with the same background knowledge in citizenship, social skills or character. Spending more time in the classroom allowed the writer to fill in the gaps in these areas for individuals or groups of children and then move them forward to be on the same level as their peers.

Many times the disparity in levels of understanding among peers can cause out-of-control behaviors to erupt. This is especially true in the writer's school where there is a great deal of diversity in the population. The writer was able to bring all of the students within a particular class to a common level of understanding in the areas of character, citizenship, and social behavior. This was done through direct instruction on these subjects, something that is not common in most elementary schools.

By identifying students at risk for academic or social failure, many referrals to the counselor and administration were reduced. Students who were customarily referred two or three times a week were referred much less often, when assigned a high school peer helper. The peer helpers were able to address the non complying behaviors of their

students and offer alternative behaviors and present the benefits of complying to behavioral expectations.

Implications

The successful results of this program have significant implications for education. Given the concern over violence in our county and in our schools, the idea that directly teaching behaviors that are associated with good citizenship, character and social expectations may be influential in producing students with more self-control, is very exciting.

This idea should cause elementary schools to look at the way they address these topics. In most school curriculum these areas are integrated into other subjects. Sometimes they are integrated so well that it may be difficult for students to see the concepts at all. Perhaps it is time to give top priority to the areas that can positively effect student behavior.

The results of the program could have important implications or counseling services as well. Currently, elementary counselors spend the greatest amount of time with the fewest number of students. That is, they spend most of their time in individual or small group counseling. The other part of the job is classroom guidance.

Classroom guidance, although given low priority, can be an effective means of addressing important behavioral

concerns with all students in a timely manner. The writer believes the successful results of the program in affecting positive changes in behavior are due, at least in part, to the change in frequency of the counselor's visits to the classroom. This could suggest that a change in the focus of elementary guidance may be needed. That is, shifting the program from mostly individual and small group counseling, which limits the number of students involved, to classroom guidance, which touches every student in the building on a regular basis.

Another implication is that a program to promote self-control in students need not be elaborate, in terms of curriculum or presentation. The writer used an inexpensive curriculum for the citizenship component. The remainder of the program was pulled together from materials already in the school.

The writer found that simplicity in presentation actually enhanced the program by allowing students to quickly grasp the basic concept. This enabled them to spend the majority of their time in analyzing and applying what they learned. Students needed to see how abstract concepts like; citizenship, character and social skills could be used in their everyday life.

Summary

The results of the program indicate that increasing students use of self-control can be achieved through direct regularly scheduled teaching of character, civic and social education. To make an impact the program does not need to be an elaborate or expensive plan, but should include connections to the everyday life of the children being taught.

The role of the counselors in elementary school should include classroom guidance. Emphasis should be placed on reaching all of the children on a regular basis with topics that can have a positive effect on behavior.

Elementary schools should take advantage of available high school students to work with the children. High school students can help younger children with a history of non compliance discover alternatives for their behavior. They can also help them see how using positive behavioral alternatives can evoke other beneficial changes in their lives.

Leadership can be developed at any age. Elementary schools should actively recruit students for leadership. Throughout the year, occasions to participate in leadership activities should be provided. Fostering leadership can enhance a program that is seeking to evoke positive changes in behavior.

Recommendations

After contemplating the implementation of the program the writer has the following recommendation:

1. Length of implementation. If the implementation of such a program is to take place in a school with a high rate of student mobility, the duration of implementation should be at least two years to minimize any effects on the data collected.

2. Referral follow-up. Students who are referred to the administration or counselor should be involved in some follow-up activity which reinforces the expected behaviors.

3. Frequency. Teach the lessons as close together as possible. One a week for the entire school year would be ideal.

4. Look for opportunities. Look around the school for opportunities for students leadership. Surveys for the staff and students can help to generate ideas.

5. Curriculum. We the People is perfect for sixth-graders. They have the historical background information and the ability to conceptualize abstract concepts. This was difficult for some of the fourth graders, especially those with learning or language differences.

Continuation and Dissemination of the Program

The writer plans to expand the program next year and collect more data. Next year the third and fifth graders

will be included in the program and data collection. The writer plans to include conflict resolution as an additional component to the program. The teachers and administrators are very enthusiastic and supportive of the program. They will be given opportunities for training and participation in activities. The writer would also like to include a parent component to the program.

The writer has shared the practicum results with the principal, staff, other elementary schools in the area, and superintendents. To further study the results of this type of program, the writer intends to write another report after collecting the data for a two year period.

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Appendix A

Administrative Referral Form

Student _____ Date _____

Person Making Referral _____

Student's Teacher _____ Grade _____

Reason for Referral:

Action taken by person making referral:

Action taken by administration:

Appendix B

Frequency Observation Chart

One mark (/) indicates one observed occurrence of the behavior.

DATE _____

LOCATION _____

VERBAL OCCURRENCES _____

PHYSICAL OCCURRENCES _____

Appendix C

Counselor Referral Form

Student _____ Date _____

Person making referral _____

Child's Teacher _____ Grade _____

Reason for referral:

Best time to see the child:

