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Behavior Management Strategies that Reduce Incidents of Students Referrals in Middle School

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**Behavior Management Strategies that Reduce
Incidents of Students Referrals in
Middle School**

**A Research Project
Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Department of
Occupational and Technical Studies
Old Dominion University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the
Masters of Science in
Occupational and Technical Studies**

By

**Robert Wylie Jr.
September 2009**

APPROVAL PAGE

Robert Wylie Jr. prepared this research paper under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science.

APPROVAL BY: John M. Ritz 9-7-09
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

No Child Left Behind (2001) has placed greater pressure on teachers to have higher expectations that all students can be successful and achieve federal and state academic benchmarks. One of the major obstacles to accomplishing this mandate is managing challenging students' behaviors that prevent or hinder teachers in the delivery of instruction. Discipline problems in schools—especially disruptions by a small number of chronic troublemakers—continue to be a huge obstacle toward improving student achievement, according to a new report from Public Agenda, a New York City-based opinion research organization (<http://www.publicagenda.com/articles>).

Many teachers have been using various teaching and learning strategies to manage behaviors, however many were not taught how to incorporate behavioral and classroom management strategies into their lessons. In addition, many schools have a diverse population with students coming from different backgrounds where positive and appropriate behavioral practices are not modeled. Each school and each teacher will have a different set of behavioral circumstances that requires new and innovative methods of treatment. A major challenge for teachers is to identify the behavior and pairing the proper behavioral strategy to correct or change the behavior.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine if implementing behavioral management strategies will reduce middle school discipline problems and improve the school's academic environment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions used to guide this study were:

1. Will providing teachers with professional development training in behavioral management and classroom management motivate them to employ these new strategies?
2. Will implementing behavioral and classroom management strategies change students' attitudes toward displaying inappropriate behaviors in the classroom?
3. Does training in behavioral management strategies reduce the number of discipline problem occurrences?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Nearly seven out of ten middle and high school teachers say their schools have serious problems with students who disrupt classes (<http://www.publicagenda.com>). Even more say their schools have persistent troublemakers who should be removed from regular schooling. Parents worry that the education of the majority suffers because of a misbehaving few. Surveys of high school students provide the dispiriting details. Large majorities say they often hear cursing in the hallways at their schools. More than a third say there is a serious fight at least once a month. Barely one in five says most classmates treat teachers with respect (Johnson, 2004).

This study came about from the need for teachers to provide a safe and secure school where students can learn and be productive in a non-threatening environment. In addition, many teachers are not properly equipped to deal with some of the challenging behaviors that are displayed in classrooms. Problem behaviors in classrooms are one of

the most difficult aspects of a teacher's job. They interrupt their lesson plans, try their patience, interfere with the other children's learning environments, and leave many teachers feeling overwhelmed, helpless, and out of control (<http://www.sensory-processing-disorder.com>, 2009).

Higher rates of office discipline referrals (ODRs) are associated with problematic behavioral climates in schools (Irwin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). Several studies (Larsen, Steele, & Sailor, in press; McIntosh, 2005; Tobin & Sugai, 1999) have found relationships between academic performance and problem behavior across grade levels. With full implementation of school-wide positive behavior support, a behaviorally competent school would have the following conditions: a) classroom management and curriculum variables would be adapted so academic tasks become less aversive; b) reduction in ODRs would mean more minutes spent on academic instruction; c) the minutes spent in academic instruction would be more effective; d) there would be less peer support for academic failure; and e) there would be an increase in the structured prompts, contingent feedback, and support for academic behavior. It might be hypothesized that with these conditions in place, a school could affect the academic gains of students (<http://www.pbis.org>, 2009).

Most schools create and implement a school accountability plan. This plan is designed to improve conditions or areas that are counterproductive to a positive and thriving learning environment. One of the major objectives of this study is to reduce discipline problems in all grade levels. During brain storming sessions, it was consistently stated that challenging behaviors are the first items that teachers address.

LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were used in this study:

1. The behavior incidents for the 2007-2008 school year were compared to incidents for the 2008-2009 school year.
2. The students during the 2007-2008 school years will not be the same students during the 2008-2009 school years with the exception of those students who were retained due to not fulfilling academic requirements.
3. The data for the 2008-2009 school year to be used will come from the second and third semesters and they will be compared against the data obtained from the 2007-2008 school year. The discipline incidents will be limited to disruption, insubordination, profanity, disrespect, and fighting.
4. Due to social and emotional limitations outside of the school's control, the researcher will not be able to predict behaviors that are not school or classroom induced.

ASSUMPTIONS

The results of this study were based on the following assumptions:

1. Professional development training in classroom management will decrease the number of discipline problems.
2. Students academic performance will increase if the number of behavioral problems decrease.
3. By reducing the number of discipline problems, the stress level of teachers will be reduced.

PROCEDURES

This study will focus on the seventh grade teachers and students. The teachers that are included in this study will be receiving or would have received professional development training during a two-year period. Training will be conducted annually during the two year period. The data will compare the 2007- 2008 school year and the 2008-2009 school year. During the school year the teacher's will be trained based on experience and needs of the school. The teachers who do not receive either training will be mentored or receive in house training conducted by the content department head. Discipline data will be used from the 2007-2008 school years to determine if there were any changes in the number of discipline data or referrals received during the 2008-2009 school year. Each quarter the data will be obtained from the school's discipline files and categorized by incident, location, time, and teacher. The data will be analyzed and compared to determine if the training resulted in reduced discipline incidents.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined to assist the reader:

ISS = In School Suspension. The student will serve suspension in an alternative location in the school building.

OSS = Out of School Suspension. The student will serve their suspension at home, out of the building.

The Kounin Model: The ripple effect, when you correct one pupil's behavior, it tends to change the behavior of others.

The Ginott Model: Discipline is little-by-little, step-by-step. The teacher's self-discipline is key. Model the behavior you want in students.

At Risk Students: Students who are low achieving because of poor home environment, low self-image, or low ability.

Assertive Discipline: A behavior management plan for the classroom that lets the students know the behavioral expectations of the teacher.

Behavior Modification: The learning theory that rewards good behavior and punishes bad behavior with the idea that by doing so a student's behavior will eventually change.

Modeling: Demonstrating exactly what the student is to do by providing an example.

Self-Esteem: The way students view themselves.

Time-out: A method of discipline whereby a student is sent to a designated spot in the classroom or school for a specified length of time.

STAR BASE: Computer software system where all student data are entered and stored.

Data Warehouse: Computer software system where the student data are manipulated and retrieved.

SUMMARY

This study was undertaken to determine if behavioral management training will reduce discipline problems for seventh graders for the 2008-2009 school year. The study became necessary due to increases in discipline problems which directly affected the academic performance of students as well as increased teachers' stress levels. Sixteen of the teachers will receive professional development training in classroom management and behavioral management strategies. The remaining teachers will not receive any training. The discipline data will be obtained from the school's discipline database. The data will be gathered and analyzed to cover the first and second semester grading period. In order

to understand the strategies that will be used, various terms and phrases were defined. Factors that originated outside the school's control will not be taken into account as probable reasons for possible disciplines problems.

OVERVIEW

In Chapters II, III, IV, V additional information will be provided to give a general overview of what takes place in the study. Chapter II will review and discuss some of the literature covering difference strategies and how they relate to specific behaviors. In Chapter III, Methods and Procedures will explain how the study will be conducted in a local middle school which has been experiencing an increase in discipline referrals. The teachers will be trained on various discipline strategies and the discipline data will be analyzed to determine if there has been any increases or decreases in the number of discipline referrals submitted. In Chapter IV the data will be reviewed and analyzed. The discipline data will be limited to insubordination, disruption, and fighting. Lastly, in Chapter V conclusions will be drawn and the information will be summarized and recommendations will be developed for future studies or development.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will review various perspectives on behavior problems that plague our schools and the negative impact they have on students' academic performance and on teachers and students well being. It will also cover resources that contain strategies and techniques that can aide in reducing and/or eliminating of discipline referrals in middle schools.

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

Public Agenda (2004) has reported for years what the AFT has long pointed out the insidious problems of unruly students. More than three-quarters of the teachers surveyed say that students who cause persistent behavior problems and should be removed from school grounds are not removed. Almost the same number, 77 percent, indicate that their teaching would be a lot more effective if they did not have to spend so much time dealing with disruptive students. The ATF (2004) compiled the following data on student behaviors (The following are the percent of teachers who say the following items are a "very" or "somewhat" serious problem in schools):

Talking out and horseplay, 69%

Students treating teachers with lack of respect, 60%

Cheating, 58%

Students showing up late to class, 57%

Rowdiness in common areas (hallways, lunchrooms), 51%

Truancy and cutting class, 45%

(http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_teacher/classnotes.htm, 2004)

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

There are many known strategies in the area of behavior management, so the objective of the review is to attempt to match up students' behaviors with a possible solution. The main drive behind finding solutions to the increase in discipline referrals is the lack of performance and under achievement of students on exams and test. These increases in referrals are due to the inappropriate behaviors of students. The students that are causing the behavior problems are also causing the other students to get off task as well. The inappropriate behaviors are causing teachers to be ineffective in delivery of instruction as well as having increased stress levels.

According to Demerg (1998), a child's misbehavior is often a response to a need. Misbehaviors generally reflect a need for attention, power, revenge, and a display of inadequacy. The existence of discipline problems in a school may contribute to an environment that facilitates school violence and crime. In the School Survey on Crime and Safety (2004), school principals were asked how often certain disciplinary problems happen in their schools. This indicator examines the daily or weekly occurrence of student racial tensions, bullying, sexual harassment of other students, verbal abuse of teachers, widespread classroom disorder, and acts of disrespect for teachers in public schools. National random samples of both middle and high school teachers and parents of those students agree that the lack of discipline is pervasive and poisoning the atmosphere. The vast majority of kids are suffering because of the behavior of a few persistent classroom troublemakers who cause too many students to lose critical opportunities for learning and teachers to abandon their profession (Wadsworth, 2004).

RULES AND REGULATIONS

When Johns Hopkins University researchers Gary D. Gottfredson and Denise C. Gottfredson (1989) analyzed data from over 600 of the nation's secondary schools, they found that the following school characteristics were associated with discipline problems: Rules were unclear or perceived as unfairly or inconsistently enforced; students did not believe in the rules; teachers and administrators did not know what the rules were or disagreed on the proper responses to student misconduct; teacher-administration cooperation was poor or the administration inactive; teachers tended to have punitive attitudes; misconduct was ignored; and schools were large or lacked adequate resources for teaching.

OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS

Mendler (1997) stated that “70 to 80 percent of challenging student behavior in school is primarily attributable to outside factors such as dysfunctional families, violence in our culture, the effects of drugs and alcohol and fragmented communities “ (p. 4). Mendler and Curwin (1983) state that although it is best to resolve most behavioral problems in the classroom, certain types of behavior that are severe and problematic need to be dealt with outside the classroom setting, such as student violence or blatant defiance. In situations where student behavior requires outside support, enlisting the collaborative help of the administration, parents, law, and social agencies may all be required. By attempting to resolve problematic behavior with the student first, a teacher demonstrates to the students that he is in charge, he has their best interests at heart, and he is willing to work with them and strive to develop a mutual respect.

In order to prescribe or implement a solution, the possible root cause of the problem must be identified. Dreikurs (2004) states that after observing thousands of children, many of whom showed a wide range of behaviors, he identified the following as four goals of children's misbehavior. The primary goals are to get attention, power, revenge, and purposefully display inadequacy.

TEACHING RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIORS

Canter (2001) said that highly effective teachers take the time and teach the students exactly how they want the students to behave in all classroom situations. The teachers must teach and re-teach until each student knows how to behave for all classroom activities. It was said that the more time that is spent in the beginning of the school year teaching procedures, the fewer discipline problems will be displayed in the classrooms. Each instructional setting will require some basic and specific rules and the teacher will be required to develop them according to those settings.

RESOLVING CONFLICT

In many situations there are procedures and methods, but without the proper steps to address them, many times an effective solution is not possible. The teachers must be able to resolve conflict between students and between teachers and students. Gordon (1980) states that the six step problem solving process is an unique problem solving application that was proposed by John Dewey that will eventually lead to a resolution of the conflict. The following are the steps that the teacher could teach his or her class to

solve possible problems. Defining the problem, generating possible solutions, evaluating the solutions, making the decision, determining how to implement the decision, and assessing the success of the solution are steps for problem solving (Gordon, 1980). Many students have very little experience at knowing how to solve the problem, so it is the teacher's responsibility to teach and model the process and be consistent in its application.

TEACHING AND MOTIVATION

It is very important to have effective and appropriate procedures in place to help students manage their behaviors and resolve conflict, but an important factor is how to get students to use the strategies and incorporate them on a consistent basis. The key to this is motivation. There are two types of motivation that the students need to acquire: internal and external motivation. When a student is externally motivated the behavior will most likely be temporary because there is not a reason for the person to continue the desired behavior once the stimuli is removed or absent. However, if the student is internally motivated they are doing so because they desire and want to perform the desired behavior. No external stimuli is required to keep the students performing the desired behavior. The key to helping students be more successful is for them to be internally motivated, which will cause them to follow the rules and procedures in the absence of an authority figure or teacher.

UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES

It has been documented that African-American males are subjected to more disciplinary actions than many other groups. There are many theories why this is

happening, but the primary objective is to provide teachers with communication methods to help better understand the students to prevent this misunderstanding that leads to unwarranted discipline actions. While the majority of students, including those from minority groups, learn, accept, and conform to the rules of schools, cultural differences may play an important role in apparent discipline problems in the school. These differences cannot account for all student misbehavior, yet many discipline problems may result from students' failure to know, accept, or conform to school norms which are either divergent or incongruous with their cultural or communicative norms (Taylor, 1990).

SUMMARY

This review provided the basic foundation for which to build and conduct the research. The issue of discipline problems in the schools is a very complex one and the detrimental aspect of these discipline problems is that it decreases students academic performance and prevents teachers from effectively delivering instruction and academic benchmarks being met. The research agrees that this is a major problem but many have not been able to completely eliminate the problems. In this study the main objective was to reduce the number of discipline problems and provide a more productive and effective learning environment. Most of the data verifies that schools have behavioral problems and another contributing factor is the fact that many of the teachers have not had proper training or are not using the strategies to reduce or eliminate these problems.

In Chapter III, Methods and Procedures, it will cover how the study will take place in a local middle school that has been experiencing an increase in discipline referrals. The teachers will be trained on various discipline strategies via professional

development training sessions. The discipline data will be entered into the Data Warehouse computer system. The data will then be analyzed to determine how effective the training was by comparing the data to see if there has been any increase or decrease in discipline referrals.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter will review and contain the methods and procedures that were used in accomplishing this study. The study's purpose was to determine if teachers receiving behavioral management training would decrease the number of referrals written due to discipline incidents. The following items will be covered in this chapter: population, instrument design, methods of data collections, statistical analysis, and summary.

POPULATION

In this study the population will be the 18 classroom teachers and 275-300 students assigned to their classes based on enrollments and dis-enrolments. The incident referrals that may be written will originate from teachers from diverse backgrounds and education. The teachers are male and female, African Americans and Caucasians, and their experience ranged from first year teacher to a teacher with at least thirty years of teaching experiences, and education ranged from a Bachelor to Master's degree. Teacher will receive several types of training. Programs and services included: New Teacher Orientation; BEST: Beginning Educator Support Team for Novice Teachers; COMP: Classroom Organization and Management program for second year teachers and those new to the system; TESA: Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement for third year teachers; and the Teacher Mentoring program. Teachers will also receive professional development training and departmental training throughout the school year based on the needs of the school. The students that will participate in the study will be 7th grade males and females and be predominantly African-American and a small Caucasian and Other population, ranging in age from 11- 16 years old. The total number of 7th grade students

were between 250-300 students during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years. These numbers fluctuated due to student transfers and disenrollment.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

Norfolk Public School uses a form called an Incident Referral. The incident referral is used to document inappropriate behaviors that are in violation of the students code of conduct and Norfolk Public Schools Rules and Regulations. The instrument is inputted into the data collection system called STAR BASE. Once the incident referrals are processed, they are entered in STAR BASE by the processing administrator. The Star Base data collection system can manipulate and compile the data. Once the data are entered the administrator can query the data base on offense, time and location of offense, teacher writing the incident referral, and by race or gender. See Appendix A for a sample of the incident referral form.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

As part of each teacher's in-service and professional development, they were given a copy of the school discipline procedures which contains the requirements and steps for submitting discipline referrals. When a teacher writes a discipline referral on a student, the referral is submitted to the floor administrator for processing. Based on the students code of conduct and discipline regulations that are written by the school district and school's policy, a discipline outcome is rendered. When the consequence is determined it is entered into the discipline data base. The administrator can retrieve the data from the data warehouse based and be displayed in time and location of offense, teacher writing the referral, whether the student committing the incident is a regular education or a special education student, and by the different offenses.

METHODS OF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data will be retrieved in a format that is listed by the offense, the time and date, and the teacher who wrote the referral. The same data will be compiled for both school years and then compared. The number of referrals submitted and frequency will be unable to be determined based on the unpredictability of the student displaying inappropriate behaviors. After the data is compiled and analyzed, the data will be reviewed to look for any trends that highlight a particular time and location of the occurrence, and teacher submitting the referrals could be determined. The comparisons will be placed into figures that will display both number of incident and category. This will make comparison very simple. At this point it will be easy to determine where the increases or decrease took place. The data will be analyzed by comparing the number of incidents reported and look for either an increase or a decrease. In addition, it will show which teacher is writing more or less incident referrals.

SUMMARY

This chapter gave an overview of the methods and procedures for conducting this study. It also contained the participants who will be involved. The data that will be gathered in this study is from the 2007-2008 and the 2008-2009 school years and will be analyzed and compared. This information will be presented in Chapter IV, Findings. Chapter IV displays the discipline data in major groups and sub-groups. It also lists the number of how many referral infractions were written. The figures will display the data for the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this study the researcher wanted to determine if implementing behavioral and classroom management strategies will reduce middle school discipline problems and improve the school's academic environment. The following data are provided that were collected over the course of two years. Data from the 2007-2008 school year were collected prior to starting the study. Data from the 2008-2009 school year were collected after the researcher started the study.

DATA

Over the two years that the study took place, there were 18 teacher involved. During the 2007-2008 school year there were 17 females and 1 male teachers and during the 2008-2009 school year there was 14 females and 4 male teachers. The student numbers during the 2007-2008 averaged between 250-275 and the number of students during the 2008-2009 ranged from 275 to 300. The number of students receiving discipline referrals during the 2007-2008 school year were 90 and the number of students receiving discipline referrals during the 2008-2009 school year were 115.

Results

The following are the total number of discipline referrals incidents submitted in each of the categories for the 2007 and 2008 school years:

	School Year 2007	School Year 2008
Disrespect	7	12
Disruption	76	137
Harassment	27	29
Insubordination	43	83
Fighting	7	19

Figures 1-6 display the data collected for the 2007- 2008 and 2008-2009 school years. Figure 1 displays the number of students that received incident referrals and it is divided by race and gender. The number of students committing offenses that warranted a referral were about the same for both school years. There was however an increase in the number of female receiving a referral from 2007 to 2008 by 20 students. The school is predominantly African American. This is why a large number of African American students received referrals.

Figure 2 displays the number of students receiving referrals for disrespect. There were not a large number of disrespect infractions for both of the school years; however, there was still a slight increase.

In Figure 3 are the referrals submitted for disruption. The number of disruptions infractions increased in all areas but in the area (other) which decreased by six. The area that showed the most significant increase was multi disruptive behaviors which increased by thirty infractions.

Figure 4 shows the harassment categories. Three out of the five areas increased for the 2008-2009 school year. The infraction of hitting another student and shoving and kicking decreased.

Figure 5. display the referrals submitted for insubordination. Four out of the five areas did increase. The one area that did not increase was refuses detention. The decrease was mainly due to the fact that in school detention was not available.

In figure 6 is shown how the number of fighting incidents increased from 2007 to 2008 by 12 incidents.

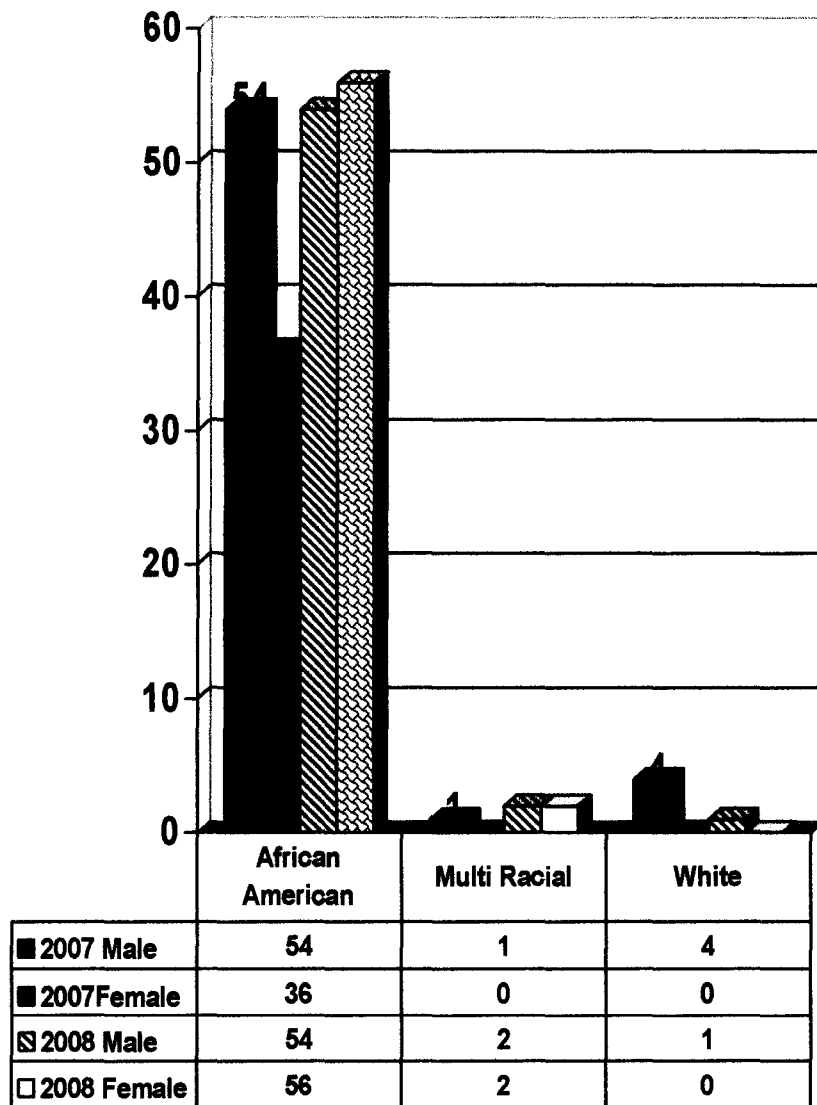


Figure 1. 2007 & 2008 Incidents by Student Population

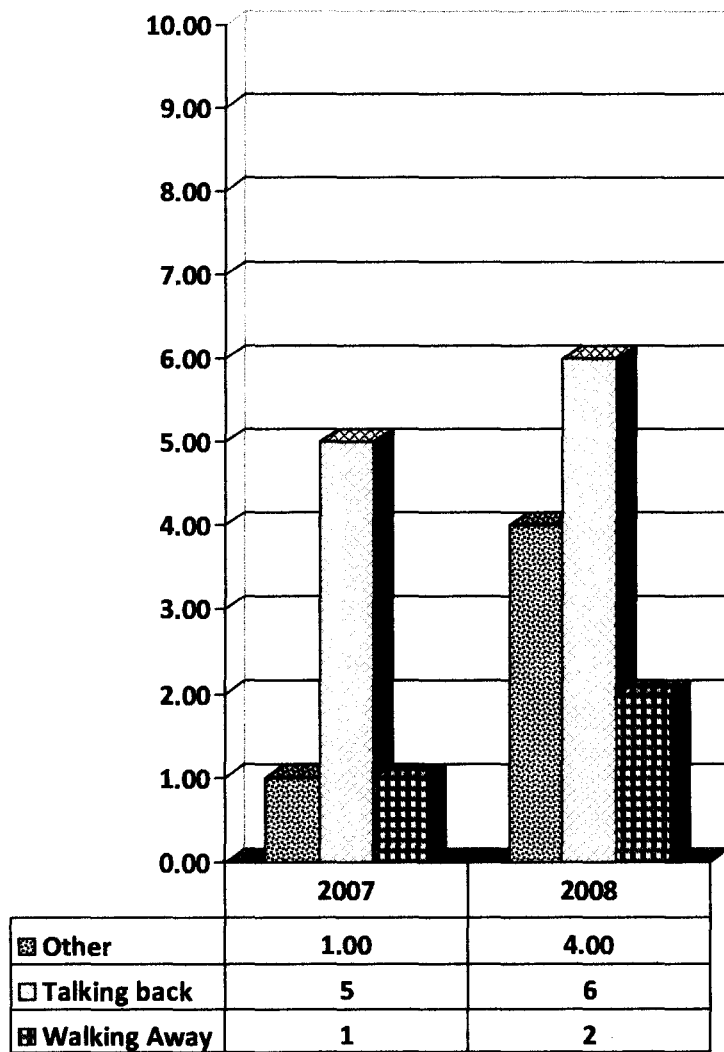


Figure 2. 2007&2008 Disrespect sub-categories incidents totals.

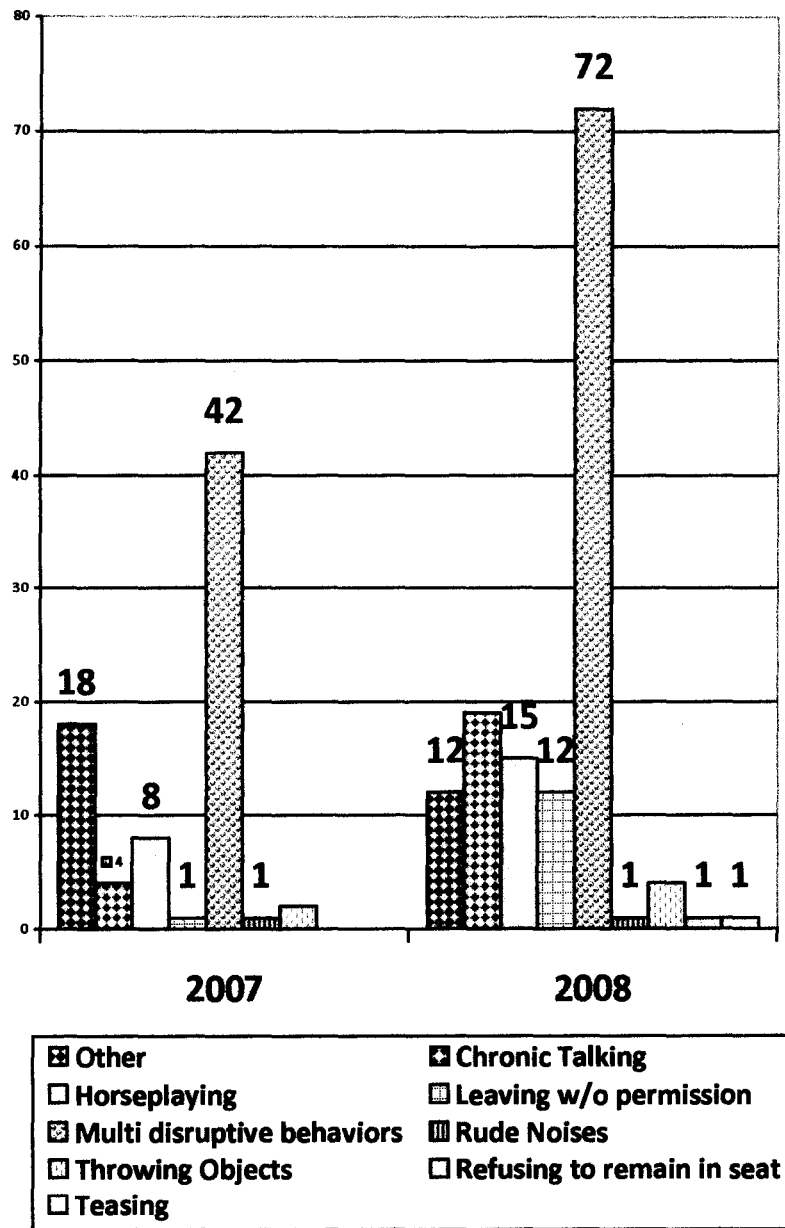


Figure 3. Disruption sub-categories incidents totals.

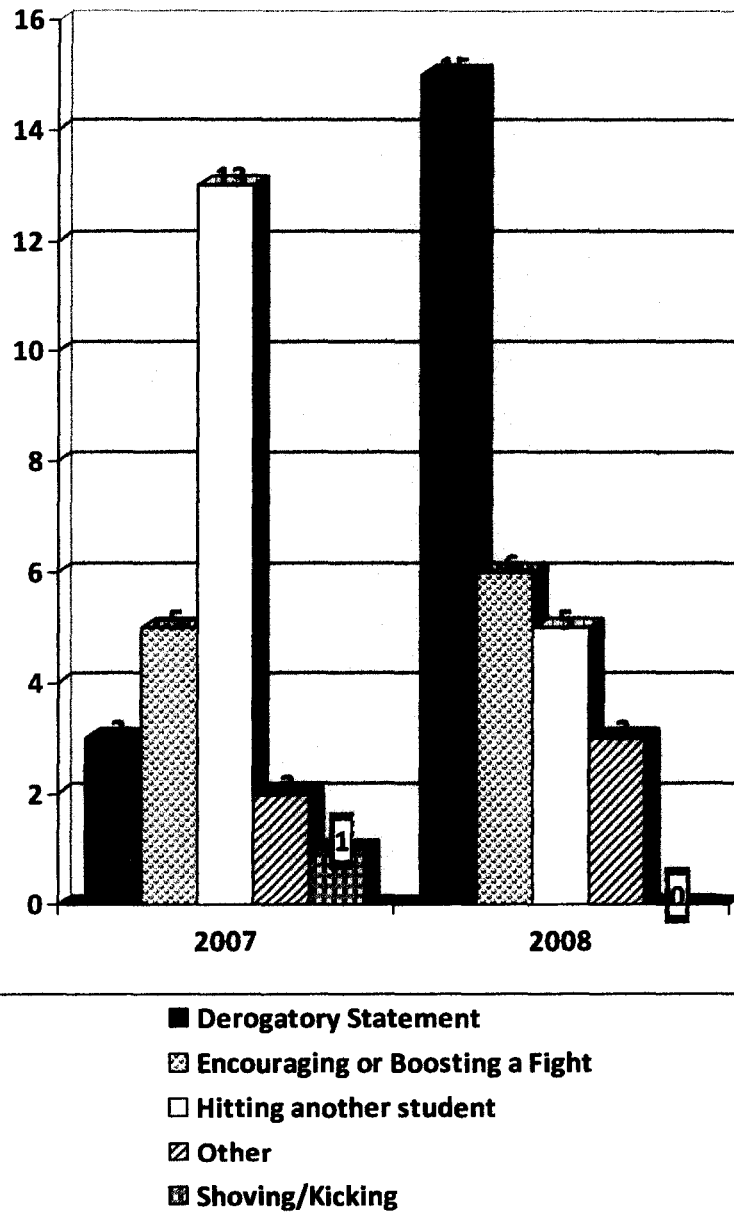


Figure 4. Harassment sub-categories incidents totals

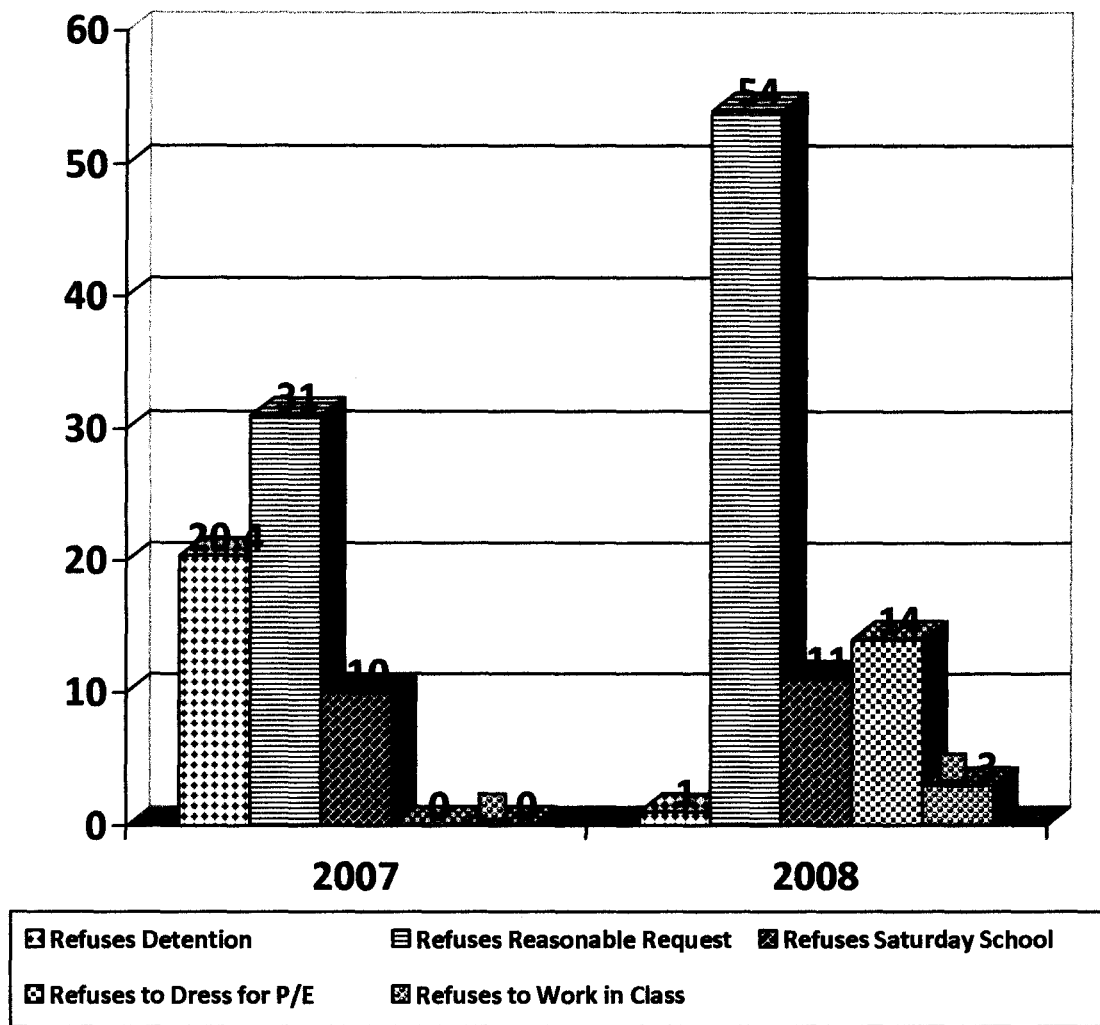


Figure 5. Insubordination sub-categories incidents totals

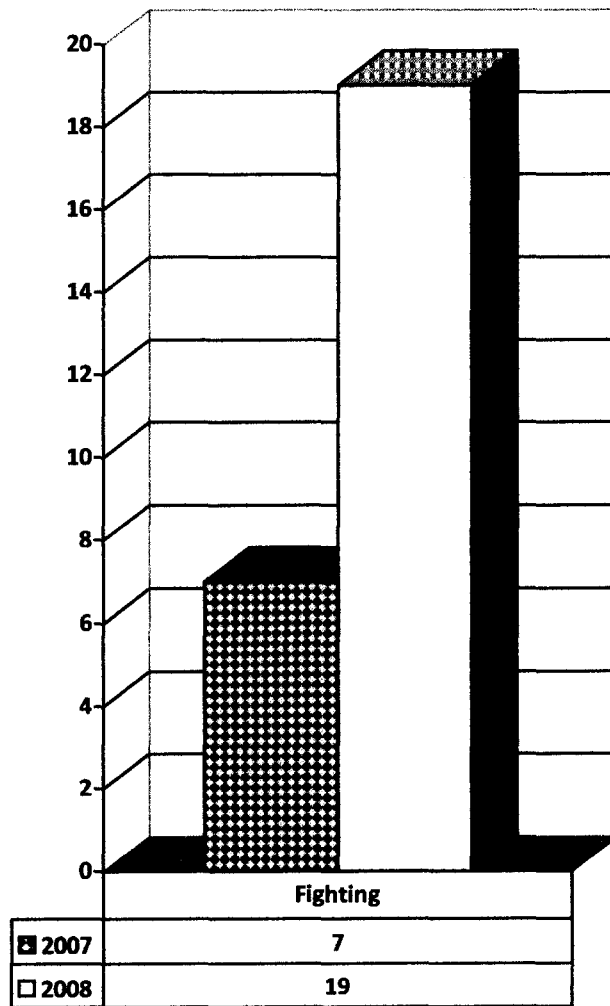


Figure 6. Fighting incidents totals

TEACHERS USE OF TRAINING RESOURCES

Many of the teachers welcomed the training and they attempted to use the skills and strategies that they acquired. However, some felt as though they needed more time to master these skills as well as the number of students who displayed inappropriate discipline issues being fewer.

STUDENTS' RECEPTIVENESS TO TEACHERS USE OF STRATEGIES

Many students were receptive to the teachers using the new strategies in the classroom. It was evident by the number of students who acknowledge that many of their classmates have behavioral issues. Figure 2 shows that disrespect may be an indicator that students were somewhat receptive because of the low number of talking back incidents that were reported. The students receptiveness to teachers strategies was also evident by the number of students who were one-time offenders.

REDUCTION IN INCIDENT REFERRALS

There was an overall increase in the number of referrals that were written as shown in Figure 1, but this is due to the increased number of repeat offenders and the number of students that displayed inappropriate behaviors because of immaturity and poor social skills. Figure 1 also shows an increase in the number of females that received referrals.

SUMMARY

The total number of incidents per category increased in all areas. Some of the students who were responsible for the incidents were repeat offenders and there was also a high correlation of behavior problems and low academic achievement. There were

also several teachers who wrote more incidents reports than others. It is possible that the increased number of referrals written could be attributed to poor classroom management skills. Due to the limited access to the discipline data on the total number of incidents referrals each teacher wrote and the students who were repeat offenders, specific data were not available. Chapter V will cover summary, conclusions, and recommendations. The chapter will give the reader an overview of the study and what has taken place.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V will cover the outcomes of this study and the positive and negative results of it. In addition, it will include possible solutions and suggestions of how to achieve the intended goals and improve future studies in this area.

SUMMARY

The problem of this study was to determine if implementing behavioral management strategies will reduce middle school discipline problems and improve the school's academic environment. The goals of the study were: will providing teachers with professional development training in behavioral management and classroom management motivate them to employ these new strategies, will implementing behavioral and classroom management strategies change students' attitudes toward displaying inappropriate behaviors in the classroom, and does training in behavioral management strategies reduce the number of discipline occurrences?

The significant behind this study was that students' inappropriate behaviors caused teachers increased stress and decreased academic performance. It was determined that more professional development training in classroom management and behavioral management would be beneficial and alleviate some of these concerns. Some of the limitations of the study were that the data will be limited to the third and fourth quarters and the 2007-2008 school year data and be compared to the 2008-2009 school year data. The behaviors that were observed and compared were insubordination,

disrespect, disruption, profanity, and fighting. There were 18 teachers that received the training and wrote the incident referrals. Their experience ranged from first year teaching through thirty years of teaching experience. Of the 18 teachers, there were four males and 14 females, nine African-Americans and nine Caucasians, and 13 regular and five special education teachers. The students were between the ages of 12 -16, male and female, predominately African-American, with a very small Caucasian, Hispanic, and Asian population. During the two-year period, the number of students ranged from 250 to 300. The numbers varied due to students transferring in and out of the school.

The instrument used to record the behaviors was the incident referral form and it is input into the STAR BASE data collection computer system by the grade level administrator. The data for the 2007-2008 school year were compared to the data for 2008-2009 school year. Each of the infraction categories were compared to determine if the number of incidents either increased or decreased.

CONCLUSIONS

In the study there were three research questions that were developed and the following are answers to these questions.

Research Question 1: Will providing teachers with professional development training in behavioral management and classroom management motivate them to employ these strategies? The teachers were provided with professional development training in behavioral and classroom management. Many of the teachers were motivated and did use the strategies learned. Some of the main strategies that were to be employed were to be consistence and follow through with the appropriate consequences. This was also evident

by the overall increase in the number of referrals written.

Research Question 2: Will implementing behavioral and classroom management strategies change students' attitude displaying inappropriate behaviors in the classroom?

There were also indications that many of the students were responding to the new strategies that were being implemented. This was also noted by several of the students being one time offenders. Another key fact was that there were many repeat offenders who received multiple incident referrals.

Research Question 3: Does training in behavioral management strategies reduce the number of discipline problems occurrences? Even through behavioral management and classroom management training were conducted, the number of referrals written and inappropriate behaviors did not decrease. Actually the number of inappropriate behaviors increased significantly.

After reviewing the data from the two school years, there was a total increase in the number of incident referrals that were written. Some of the sub-topics that were addressed during the study did not increased from school year 2007 to 2008. The teachers stress level increased from the school year 2008 to the 2009 school year. This was mainly attributed to the increase in students inappropriate behaviors which led to the writing of the incident referrals. It was also expressed by many that these behaviors were more disruptive than the previous school years. One of the objectives was to determine if decreasing the behaviors would show an increase in students' academic performance. The preliminary results of The Standards of Learning Examinations did indicate a slight increase in the number of students passing the SOL, as well as some of the individual scores being higher.

The training that took place was very valuable and the researcher believed it did benefit many of the teachers. Many of the teachers expressed this comment. One major factor that could not be accounted for was the number of students that displayed inappropriate behaviors and committed infractions that caused the teachers to write incident referrals. The students that were part of the study for the 2008-2009 school year were very active and aggressive over all and displayed more inappropriate behaviors than past 7th graders. In some classrooms, if there were a manageable number of students committing acts that required interventions, the training the teachers received would have seemed more effective and fewer referrals would had been written.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study may have had a more positive outcome if the teachers and the students were the same over the course of the two-year study. One thing that may have helped to make a more accurate comparison was that the 6th and 7th grade teachers received the same training at the same time. When the new sixth grade students completed the sixth grade and were promoted to the seventh grade, data can be obtained and stored. Then when the next set of sixth graders were promoted to seventh grade, data could be compiled and stored. This data could be correlated to see if there were any relationships between the training and decrease in behavioral incidents. This study will then take place over a two to four year period.

Another recommendation would be to select a specific behavior to observe and determine if there were any significant changes in those behaviors. In addition, a selected teacher could be chosen and observed. The teacher to be observed would be the one who was having the most discipline problems and were submitting the most incident referrals.

The behaviors of the students and the number of incidents changed from year to year and group to group. During the course of the study it was predicted that this group of sixth grade students being promoted to seventh grade for the 2008-2009 school year would be more difficult to manage than the students from the 2007-2008 school year. The observation was noted from the sixth graders during the 2007-2008 school year. It could be recommended that when it was known that a difficult to manage group was predicted, then the staff could look for specific teachers and behaviors to be observed. There were some behaviors that were more disruptive than others and these impeded the learning process, so those specific behaviors would be the ones to be studied.

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APPENDIX A
Norfolk Public Schools
INFRACTION REFERRAL FORM
To be completed by Referring Staff Member

Infraction Date: _____ Time Am Pm Location _____

Student Name: _____ Student Number: _____

Referred By: _____ Bus Route Number _____

Reason for Referral:

Prior Intervention(s) For This Action (Check one or more)

Instruction Program Modification	Conference/ Warning	Behavior Essay
Behavioral Modification Plan	Time-out/Isolation	Grade/Cluster Conference
Referred to Counselor	Teacher Detention	Conduct Notice
Parent Contact	Previous Referral	Other

Recommended Action; (optional)

Signature: _____ Date Reported: _____

Information below to be completed By office

Administrator/Dean: _____ Starbase Incident# _____

Disposition/Documentation: _____

Infraction Category /Infraction Subcategory:

Location Code:

Disposition:

Date/Time/Code: Date/Time/Code: Date/Time/Code: Date/Time/Code:

Signature:

Date:

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