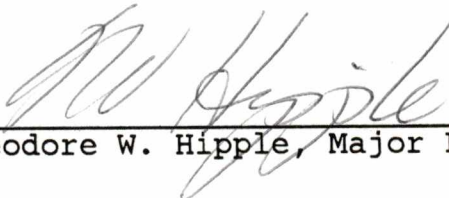


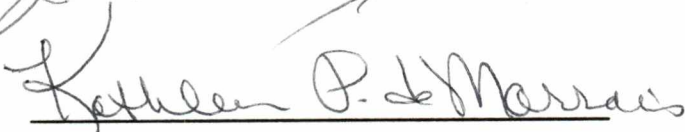
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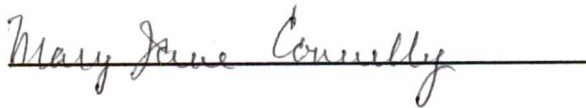
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Catana L. Turner entitled "Teachers' Perception of Effective Classroom Management Within An Inner-City Middle School." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education with a major in Curriculum and Instruction.


Theodore W. Hipple, Major Professor

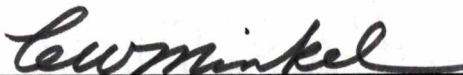
We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:







Accepted for the Council:


Vice Provost
and Dean of the Graduate School

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
WITHIN AN INNER-CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Catana L. Turner

December 1991

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Retha, and my father, Eugene,
who instilled within me a deep and abiding love
for education.

and

To the dear friends
who helped to sustain me through this sometimes
arduous process.

Thank you is not enough,
so again I give you
my love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. Ted Hipple, my major professor, I would like to express my deep gratitude for your constant support, guidance, and encouragement. I am especially grateful to you for helping me to maintain a realistic perspective on this process. To Dr. J. Estill Alexander, my sincere appreciation for your sustained understanding throughout my doctoral program. Thank you for all the interest, care, and help you so generously extended to this fellow Kentuckian. To Dr. Mary Jane Connelly, thank you for your many words of advice and support. I sincerely appreciated your graciousness and your kindness. To Dr. Kathleen deMarrais, thank you for the considerable technical guidance and advice that you offered me during this process. I appreciated the challenge, and I did appreciate your efforts on my behalf.

Finally, to the teachers who so kindly volunteered for this project, I cannot express enough appreciation. Thank you for your honesty and openness. Hopefully, some of the information gained from this study can be used to help others become aware of the many complexities of teaching within an inner-city school.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gain descriptive information about teachers' perceptions of effective classroom management within an inner-city middle school. Thirteen teachers, all currently teaching within one Tennessee inner-city middle school, were interviewed about their classroom management behaviors. All of the interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed for data analysis.

Data obtained from a demographic survey revealed that the number of years of teaching experience acquired by these teachers ranged from a minimum of three years to a maximum of nineteen with the average equaling approximately ten years. The number of years of teaching experience acquired within this one inner-city school ranged from a minimum of one year to a maximum of fourteen years with the average equaling approximately six years.

Transcripts of the interviews were subjected to content analysis to discover themes in the teachers' responses. All categories that emerged from this analysis underwent a process of peer examination as a means of ensuring internal reliability. Findings from this process indicated that these teachers based their perceptions of effective classroom management upon an elaborate system of beliefs. The following themes emerged from the data analysis:

1. Teachers expressed the belief that effective classroom management within an inner-city school hinged first on a heavy emphasis of controlling student behavior and secondly on planning and organizing academic concerns. Based upon that belief, the teachers demonstrated an overwhelming concern with constructing and enforcing rules and with restricting students' interactions and movements.

2. Teachers expressed the belief that because inner-city students' home and social backgrounds were so lacking, these students could not be expected to perform or behave at a level comparable to students in other school settings. Consequently, teachers indicated that they had significantly lowered academic and behavioral expectations.

3. Teachers expressed the belief that the home environment of inner-city students was the major source of behavioral and academic problems manifested by students in the school setting and that the values taught in the home environment were often contradictory and detrimental to the values taught in the school environment.

Overall, the findings of this study support the body of literature related to the negative perceptions of teachers who teach within inner-city schools. A major implication derived from this study is that prospective and current teachers need training in multicultural education in order to function effectively within inner-city schools.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Chapter

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

ASSUMPTIONS

LIMITATIONS

DELIMITATIONS

DEFINITIONS

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Background for the Study

The population of minority students in urban areas of the United States has dramatically increased to such an extent that many researchers are predicting that by the year 2000 the percentage of minority children under the age of eighteen will be at least thirty-eight percent (Beckum, Zimny, and Fox, 1989). Other researchers have already noted major changes in the nation's demographics. For example, Burstein and Cabello (1989) reported that in 1970 in California minorities made up only about twenty-seven percent of the population, whereas in 1988 approximately

fifty-one percent of the population were minorities. The Quality Education For Minorities Project in its report Education That Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities (1990) indicated that at the time this report was assembled, approximately twenty percent of the residents of the United States were minorities, mainly African-American, Hispanic, American Indian, or Alaskan Native; however, the report went on to predict that by the year 2020 well over thirty-three percent of the population of the United States would be of minority descent. The report further stated that in the public schools of the United States, at least thirty percent of the students are currently members of minority groups. The authors of this report also indicated that the states of Mississippi and New Mexico now have public school systems in which whites are in the minority and that in the near future the states of California and Texas will also develop school systems in which minorities dominate school enrollment. The authors further reported that in this country, twenty-two of the twenty-five largest urban school districts are composed predominantly of minority students. This comprehensive report concluded with the pronouncement that the white population, which was once considered the dominate population, is quickly disappearing from urban areas.

The above references clearly indicate that the minority population of the United States is increasing, but this fact

alone is not in itself a major cause of concern to educators. A major concern for most educators is the clear evidence that minority children living and attending schools in inner-city urban areas tend to have many academic difficulties. For example, students attending predominantly minority inner-city schools have lower test scores, higher dropout rates, more grade retentions, and a disproportionately higher representation in special education classes than students who live in other areas (Fillmore, 1986). Maeroff (1988) described "the dismal panorama of urban schools" (pg. 633) as follows:

In big city after big city, minority students by the tens of thousands leave school each year - some as dropouts, some as graduates - utterly unprepared to participate in and contribute to a democratic society. They lack the skills that will allow them to obtain gainful employment, and they are devoid of the preparation that will lead to success in further education. (pg. 633)

Statement of the Problem

Although some individuals have attributed the academic problems of inner-city students to deficits in home situations and in the students themselves, researchers such as Burstein and Cabello (1989) have contended that the problems reside in the school environment. Agreeing with Burstein and Cabello, the Quality Education for Minorities Project (1990) suggested that the problems inner-city

students face have not been adequately addressed in the public schools. Problems of the inner-city school enumerated in the report of this project include: racism, poverty, language differences, cultural barriers, low teacher expectations, and teachers unprepared for and inexperienced in teaching in the inner-city environment. Kati Haycock, former Executive Director of the California Achievement Council, was cited in this report and stated that:

The cause of the gap (educational attainment gap) is not that these children are inherently different, but that the schools they attend have less of everything we believe makes a difference; lacking good teachers, a rich curriculum, equipped facilities, and most important of all, a belief that these youngsters can really learn. (pg. 13)

Whether or not one believes that students' academic problems are attributable to nature, nurture, home or school environments, racism, or a combination of all of these factors, it is essential that teachers strive to provide a high quality education for all students. However, providing a high quality education for inner-city students is especially vital since students within this environment have so great a need. In this respect, Robinson (1985) proposed that teachers must become sensitive to the cultural differences of inner-city students and that teachers need the knowledge and skills that would enable them to adapt

their educational practices to the special needs of the inner-city student.

Prerequisite to high quality instruction is the necessity for effective classroom management. That is, student achievement cannot be optimized in an atmosphere of misbehavior and confusion. Ornstein and Levine (1989) pointed out the following about the inner-city school's learning environment:

As lower working-class and under-class students fall further behind academically, and as both teachers and students experience frustration and discouragement, behavior problems increase in the classrooms, and teachers find it still more difficult to provide a productive learning environment. The terms "battle fatigue," "battle pay," and "blackboard jungle" have been used to describe the teaching conditions in some inner-city schools. (pg. 20)

It is a generally accepted idea in educational thought that the better a classroom is managed, the more time students can spend actively engaged academically. That is, students can focus more time on academic matters when behavioral concerns are minimized. In this light, Hawley and Rosenholtz (1984) proposed that effective classroom management skills are directly related to student achievement in that student performance is higher when behaviors incompatible with learning are reduced. Given this assumption, it seems logical that a major step in providing a high quality education for inner-city students is to first provide a classroom environment which

facilitates student learning. To be more specific, teachers working within inner-city schools need to become aware of those teacher behaviors and actions which can facilitate effective classroom management.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain descriptive information about teachers' perceptions of effective classroom management within an inner-city school. To attain this purpose teachers, who were currently teaching within an inner-city school middle school, were interviewed about their classroom management behaviors within the particular environment of one specific inner-city school. Furthermore, these classroom teachers were also asked to describe any strategies they report to be effective for them in promoting and maintaining order in the classroom.

Significance of the Study

Ornstein and Levine (1989) concluded that classroom management, especially classroom discipline, is considered the most important school problem that inner-city teachers face. Haberman and Rickards (1990) stated that mainly because of discipline problems and other management problems, urban schools are losing teachers just at the point they are becoming effective teachers. These

researchers indicated that half the teachers who begin teaching in inner-city schools leave within three to four years, just when competence levels would be expected to have reached a level that would enable teachers to be successful. In this study Haberman and Rickards asked inner-city teachers in Milwaukee why teachers quit their jobs. The respondents ranked in the following order the twelve major reasons that they perceived contributed to their resignations:

1. Discipline
2. Inadequate support from administrators and supervisors
3. Heavy load - inadequate preparation time
4. Lack of parental support
5. Underachieving students
6. Clerical burden
7. Dealing with students' different cultural backgrounds
8. Inadequate support staff
9. Inadequate resources and supplies
10. Salary
11. Communications with staff of different cultural backgrounds
12. Class size (pg. 300)

Haberman and Rickards concluded the report of their study by recommending that teacher education could amend some of these perceived problems by providing training in the following three areas: "...discipline, underachieving students, and working with students of various cultural backgrounds" (pg. 303).

Asking inner-city teachers to describe their perceptions of effective classroom management based upon personal experience can yield potentially valuable

insights about classroom management in inner-city classrooms. Ornstein and Levine (1989) stated that "good teaching involves experience, values, insights, imagination, and appreciation" (pg. 22). Asking inner-city teachers to share their experiences, insights, and perceptions of "what works" in classroom management can provide information about the prevention of discipline problems, ways to cope with problems that do occur, and possible means of structuring classrooms and classroom interactions for maximum academic engagement time and minimum disorder. Such information would prove useful both for beginning teachers and for those teachers who feel they are ineffective in working within inner-city classrooms.

Assumptions

Assumption of the study were:

1. Respondents responded to questions in a manner consistent with their true feelings and experiences as they perceived them. The nature of the questions did not lead respondents to believe that there was any one right, wrong, or socially desirable answer to questions posed.
2. Respondents felt no need to provide responses they felt would please the interviewer. The manner of the interviewer did not lead the respondents into believing that the interviewer had preconceived

notions concerning acceptable or preferable responses.

Limitations

Limitations of the study were:

1. The interviewer's behavior in asking questions and encouraging responses might have appeared leading to some respondents and, consequently, encouraged them to respond in a particular direction. Although every effort was made to insure the interviewer's neutrality, the information collected was no doubt influenced at least in some measure by the personality of the interviewer and the interpretation by respondents of the interviewer's behavior.
2. The audiotaping of interviews might have inhibited some respondents; however, every effort was made to record responses in as unobtrusive a manner as possible.

Delimitations

The participants of the study consisted of thirteen teachers drawn from one Tennessee inner-city middle school. (See Chapter III on Methodology for detailed selection process.) Participant selection was based upon:

1. Principal's recommendation,
2. Individual participant's expression of willingness to become involved in the study,
3. Individual participant's length of service as a classroom teacher.
4. Individual participant's service as a regular classroom teacher as opposed to a teacher in a special education classroom.

Definitions

Minority - "Refers to group of people who compromise a small proportion of the total population who are easily distinguished by physical or cultural characteristics..." (Bennett and LeCompte, 1990, pg. 220). The term for this study is primarily reserved for designating individuals of African-American descent.

African-American - Black American individuals of African heritage, most of whom were born in the United States and who make up the largest non-white group in the United States.

Effective Classroom Management - "...the ability to establish, maintain, and (when necessary) restore the classroom as an effective environment for teaching and learning..." (Brophy, 1986, pg. 182).

Inner-City School - School located in an urban area with a student population which is predominantly composed of minorities.

Urban School - School located in an urban area with a student population which is not predominantly composed of minorities.

Suburban School - School located in area adjacent to urban area with a student population which is not predominantly composed of minorities.

Rural School - School located in farming area with a student population which is not predominantly composed of minorities.

Upper Class - socioeconomic status of individuals from very affluent families.

Upper Middle Class - socioeconomic status of individuals from well-to-do professional working families.

Middle Class - socioeconomic status of individuals from average working families.

Lower Middle Class - socioeconomic status of individuals from lower or under-paid working families.

Lower Class - socioeconomic status of individuals from unemployed families.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five major chapters.

Chapter I - provides an introduction to the study and contains the following divisions: (1) Overview of the Chapter, (2.) Background for the Study, (3) Statement of the Problem, (4) Purpose of the Study, (5) Significance of the Study, (6) Assumptions, (7) Limitations, (8) Delimitations, (9) Definitions, and (10) Organization of the Study.

Chapter II - presents a review of the literature relevant to the study and contains the following divisions: (1) Overview of the Chapter, (2.) Introduction, (3) General Definitions and Components of Classroom Management, (4) General Concerns and Approaches to Classroom Management, (5) The Inner-City Environment and the At-Risk Label, (6) School and Classroom Management Within Inner-City Schools, and (7) Summary.

Chapter III - presents the methodology used in the study and contains the following divisions: (1) Overview of the Chapter, (2.) Design of the Study, (3) Selection of Participants, (4) Procedures Related to Interview Process, (5) Description of the Site, (6) Description of the Participants, (7) Data Collection, and (8) Data Analysis.

Chapter IV - presents the findings drawn from the study and contains the following divisions: (1) Overview of the Chapter, (2) Introduction, (3) Descriptive Context of Management Systems, (4) Teacher Expectations, (5) Keeping

the Lid on Conflict, (6) The Role of Leadership, and (7) The Influence of the Home Environment.

Chapter V - provides a summary of the study and contains the following divisions: (1) Overview of the Chapter, (2) Overview of the Study, (3) Major Findings and Conclusions, (4) Implications for Practice, and (5) Recommendations for Further Study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview of the Chapter

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL DEFINITIONS AND COMPONENTS OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

GENERAL CONCERNS AND APPROACHES TO CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

- Concern for Students' Characteristics
- Concern for Teachers' Characteristics
- Approaches and Concerns Related to Discipline
 - Control Theory
 - Assertive Discipline
 - Preventing Misbehavior
 - Coping with Misbehavior
- Importance of Beginning-of-Year Activities
- Establishment and Maintenance of Procedures
- Establishment of a Productive Learning Environment
 - A Climate for Learning
 - Positive Reinforcement
 - On-Task Time
 - High Expectations for All Students

THE INNER-CITY ENVIRONMENT AND THE AT-RISK LABEL

- Definitions of the At-Risk Student
- Needs of Inner-City Youths
- Redefining the Cause of the Problem
- Condition of the Schools

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT WITHIN INNER-CITY SCHOOLS

- Restructuring School Management
- Respect for Cultural Diversity
- The Issues of Order and Safety
- Time Management and Classroom Organization
- High Expectations for Students

SUMMARY

Introduction

Classroom management and discipline have consistently been listed as major concerns of teachers in every classroom setting as well as by the general public. Elam (1990), citing data obtained from the 22nd Annual Gallup Poll, indicated that from 1986 through 1990 discipline was rated by both parents and educators as second only to drug abuse as the biggest problem facing public schools today. Except for the year 1971 when the lack of proper financing was ranked first, from 1969 through 1985 discipline has been repeatedly identified by the public through the Gallup Polls as the biggest problem facing local schools (Gallup, Elam, 1988). Reflecting this public concern for discipline in the schools, one of the six national educational goals for the nineties issued at the conclusion of President George Bush's conference with the governors of all fifty states clearly illustrated a desire to create a safe and disciplined environment in the nation's schools (Elam, 1990). This goal, although vague and broad, was determined to be one of the nation's educational priorities for the nineties:

By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. (pg. 42)

Many school principals assert that the best way of predicting the success of a beginning teacher is to look at his or her ability to manage the classroom (Johnson,

Collins, Dupuis, & Johansen, 1991). On this note, Arends (1988) contended that classroom management is possibly the most important challenge facing beginning teachers. In like manner, Arlin (1979) also contended that if teachers are able to provide good classroom management, students are more likely to meet their academic and social needs and teachers are more capable of focusing on concerns other than discipline.

For decades many approaches to classroom management and solutions to discipline problems have been proposed by educators and psychologists. Reflecting on this accumulated information, Lasley (1989) commented that "some of these approaches synthesize management techniques that have been prevalent in classroom practice; others suggest techniques that are packaged as new" (pg. 36). Although it is beyond the scope of this study to comprehensively investigate every organized aspect of the instructional environment, this review will focus on: (1) general definitions and components associated with classroom management, (2) general concerns and approaches associated with classroom management (3) the inner-city environment and the at-risk label, and (4) school and classroom management within inner-city schools. Throughout the literature, the terms "classroom management" and "discipline" are used interchangeably as referring to maintaining an orderly learning environment. This synthesis of the terminology was deemed necessary since

the term "discipline" was generally used when researchers referred to maintaining order in the general context of the school and/or classroom.

General Definitions and Components of Classroom Management

Good and Brophy (1973) defined classroom management in the following manner:

...under classroom management we include the teacher functions variously described as discipline, control, keeping order, motivation, and establishing a positive attitude toward learning, among others.
(pg. 162)

Others such as Duke (1982) used the terms "classroom management" and "discipline" interchangeably when making the reference that teachers always want to teach but maintaining discipline, managing the classroom, often consumes valuable time and energy. Duke further asserted that the "greater intent in classroom management is to foster pupils' development of their own discipline, their own self-control, their own understanding" (pg. vi).

Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, and Johansen (1991) considered classroom management to encompass all of the following components: (1) lesson planning, (2) utilization of the physical environment, (3) student evaluation, and (4) discipline. Thus, these researchers contended that keeping order is not enough and that a total classroom

management plan must also include an implementation of organizational competencies.

In a synthesis of literature concerning classroom management, Bellon, Bellon, and Blank (1986) determined that "a comprehensive management system is needed that includes both instructional and behavioral management" (pg. 55). The authors listed the effective utilization of the following as components of a comprehensive management system:

- (1) establishing a climate for learning,
- (2) teacher skills and characteristics,
- (3) student characteristics,
- (4) beginning of year activities,
- (5) organization of instruction, and
- (6) behavior management. (pg. 55)

Arends (1988), as well as Bellon, Bellon, and Blank (1986), also stated that classroom management and effective teaching are closely related and cannot be separated.

Jones (1982) further stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to classroom management instead of the "patchwork approach" (pg. 53) which emphasizes "simplistic, gimmicky cure-alls" (pg. 53). He contended that such quick approaches fail to provide teachers with a range of competencies and that these approaches are not consistently effective. He also stated that simplistic approaches often focus on methods of controlling children instead of on "creating student attitudes and skills that enable students to respond more productively in a variety of settings" (pg. 54).

General Concerns and Approaches to Classroom Management

Any comprehensive classroom management system should include a concern for instructional as well as behavioral management. Such a system should also take into account the following: concern for students' characteristics, concern for teachers' characteristics, approaches and concerns related to discipline, importance of beginning-of-year activities, establishment and maintenance of procedures, and establishment of a productive learning environment.

Concern for Students' Characteristics

Lasley (1989) noted that any approach to classroom management and discipline must depend on the classroom context; that is, who is being taught and who is doing the teaching. He contended that three developmental levels of student self-management ability exist. Level one involves the young child who requires a great deal of teacher structure and can benefit from behavior modification and assertive discipline management techniques. Level two is a time when maturation begins to occur and teachers can begin to promote student involvement in decision-making while still maintaining boundaries. The management approaches listed for level two students were cognitive behavior modification, anecdotal monitoring, and logical consequences. In level three, involving more mature students, self-direction of behavior occurs. The management

approaches listed for level three students were talking to students, using principles inherent in teacher effectiveness training, and/or utilizing transactional analysis approaches. Lasley did not specify ages or grade levels and appeared to contend that students will vary in age when the different levels are attained.

Similar to the suggestions of Lasley reported above, Brophy (1982) concluded that:

...a comprehensive approach to classroom management must include attention to relevant student characteristics and individual differences...and deal with students' personal adjustment problems. (pg. 49)

Brophy further proposed using group management techniques which emphasize respect for student's individuality and tolerance for their differences. He identified four stages of intellectual and social development having implications for classroom management. These stages are summarized below:

- (1) Kindergarten through grade two or three. Formal instructions, rules, and routines are necessary for students.
- (2) Grade two or three through grade five or six. Students are generally familiar with rules and routines and require minimal cueing and reminding.
- (3) Grade five or six through grade nine or ten. Students enter adolescence and become less oriented

toward pleasing teachers and more apt to question authority.

- (4) After grade nine or ten. Most students are personally settled and oriented toward academic learning.

Erikson (1963) also described several stages of human development that extend from infancy through adolescence and adulthood. In each stage of development, he identified the "ego identity" (pg. 261) as central and emerging in the developmental process. Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development appear to have implications for the development of appropriate instructional and behavioral classroom management goals. His theory proposed that human development proceeds according to a predetermined sequence of steps; therefore, any classroom management of instruction should take into consideration the readiness of the individual for particular tasks. Also inherent in Erikson's developmental stages theory is the implication that in the management of the instructional environment, teachers must take into account the need of every young person to generate for himself or herself some central perspective and direction, which in turn gives one a meaningful sense of unity and purpose. A logical conclusion relative to Erikson's stages and the evolving sense of identity associated with these stages is that this sense of identity is profoundly effected by how people important to the

developing child (sometimes referred to as "significant others" in the literature) treat the child and what they expect of the child. Obviously, among the important people in a child's life would be, of course, the child's classroom teacher.

Concern for Teachers' Characteristics

Lasley (1989) further indicated that management strategies used by teachers also depend on personal predispositions and skills. Similarly, Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) developed a three-way classification system related to teachers' management orientation. Teachers were classed as either being (1) interventionist - oriented toward power and personal authority, (2) interactionalist - oriented toward problem solving and open to group discussion and development of rules, or (3) noninterventionist - completely nondirective with regard to rules and regulations.

Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) further provided a teacher behavior continuum (TBC) which depicts seven teacher behaviors for minimizing student misbehavior. These teacher management behaviors range from the least amount of teacher intervention to actual physical intervention by the teacher. The researchers contended that the TBC may be utilized by teachers to support their individual teaching styles and philosophies. Following is a summary of the TBC, listed

from the least amount of teacher intervention to the greatest amount of teacher intervention: (1) visually looking on, (2) nondirective statements, (3) questions, (4) directive statements, (5) modeling, (6) reinforcement, and (7) physical intervention and isolation. According to the researchers, responses of teachers to disruptive behavior varies according to each teacher's orientation. The researchers contended that problems can occur between teachers and students when the teacher's orientation appears inappropriate relative to the developmental level of the students.

Lasley (1989) suggested that the type of management strategies used by a teacher varies according to the pedagogical competence of the teacher. He defined this as "their capacity to prevent, anticipate, and deal with management problems" (pg. 37). For example, teachers operating at the "survival level" (pg. 37) do not begin with a great deal of managerial competence. Lasley further proposed that regardless of a teacher's level:

...the greater the repertoire of management techniques that a teacher knows and can effectively use, the fewer recurrences of problem behaviors there will be. (pg. 38)

Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, and Johansen (1991) contended that classroom management behaviors of teachers are greatly affected by their teaching style and philosophy. These researchers suggested that classroom management:

...is not a matter of only one approach being good or bad. It is rather a question of deciding what choice(s) may be acceptable because one's personality complements a certain classroom management strategy, just as is the case with teaching styles. (pg. 451)

Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, and Johansen concluded that classroom management strategies "exist on a continuum" (pg. 451) ranging from the most nonauthoritarian educational philosophies to the more authoritative views.

Approaches and Concerns Related to Discipline

Control Theory. Glasser (1986) proposed that classroom discipline can best be understood in terms of control theory. He proposed that "control theory contends that we choose most of our total behaviors to try to gain control of people or ourselves" (pg. 47). Glasser's control theory further proposed that teachers cannot truly make students do anything, but rather it is the teacher's job to make it easier for students to see a relationship or connection between what they are asked to do in school and those things that they believe are useful or worth doing. According to this theory, if students are convinced that the work they are asked to do in school satisfies their own needs, they will actually choose for themselves to do the work. In this respect, all student behavior is a direct result of the students' desires to address their own internal needs. Glasser theorized that attempts at modifying behavior cannot be successful unless the teacher, working with students,

counselors, and principals, takes into account this basic human desire.

Assertive Discipline. Canter (1989) recommended a three-step method of behavioral management based on a assertive discipline plan. The steps are summarized as follows:

- (1) When teachers want students to follow certain directions, they must teach the specific desired behaviors.
- (2) After teaching the expected and desired behaviors, teachers must use positive repetition to reinforce these positive behaviors.
- (3) If a student misbehaves after a teacher has taught the appropriate behavior and positive repetition has occurred, then the teacher is advised to present the offender with negative consequences. In this context, it becomes the offender's responsibility to avoid negative consequences.

Canter's assertive discipline approach emphasized that the role of the teacher is to set up and teach the guidelines for students' behavior and that students know and understand the logical consequences for violating those guidelines. It then becomes a matter of students choosing to keep their behaviors within the acceptable boundaries of those guidelines. Canter maintained that "every student has

the right to a learning environment that is free from disruption" (pg. 59) and that many students would not be labeled as behavior problems if their teachers had taught them how to behave appropriately. He also stressed that one of the strongest cases for utilizing an assertive discipline approach for classroom management is that this approach ensures consistency and fairness when dealing with student behavior problems. Although Canter's assertive discipline seemed to accentuate the negative consequences for unacceptable behavior, he stated that the true key for the success of any assertive discipline plan "is catching students being good - and letting them know that you like it" (pg. 58).

Preventing Misbehavior. Good and Brophy (1973) and Brophy (1982) determined that prevention is the most essential ingredient of classroom management since "teachers do not have to deal with misbehavior that never occurs" (pg. 188). Evertson, Anderson, Anderson, and Brophy (1980) concluded that effective teachers, "manage their classes efficiently, and tend to 'nip trouble in the bud,' stopping a disturbance before it can seriously disrupt the class" (pg. 58). Brophy (1982) contended that teachers are effective as a result of:

...a systematic approach to classroom management, which starts with advanced preparation and planning before the school year begins, is implemented initially through systematic communication of expectations and establish-

ment of routines at the beginning of the year, and is maintained through the year, not only by consistency in following up on stated expectations, but by presenting students with a continuous stream of well-chosen and well-prepared academic activities that focus their attention during group lessons and engage their concentrated efforts during independent work times. (pg. 32)

Good and Brophy (1973) suggested techniques for prevention of everyday minor problems such as "inattention and disruption caused by boredom, fatigue, distraction, or other situational variables" (pg. 183). The following is a summary of these researchers' suggestions:

- (1) Teachers should gain attention when beginning lessons and provide a brief overview, an advance organizer.
- (2) Teachers should keep lessons moving at a good pace and avoid unnecessary delays.
- (3) Teachers should monitor attention during lessons.
- (4) Teachers should show variety in asking questions.
- (5) Teachers should stimulate attention periodically.
- (6) Teachers should terminate lessons before they go on too long.

Coping with Misbehavior. In addition to making suggestions about preventing misbehavior in the classroom, Good and Brophy (1973) presented ways of coping effectively with problems that do occur. These researchers indicated that most major disruptions start as minor misbehaviors and that teachers need to gain experience in stopping minor

problems quickly in the least disruptive manner. Good and Brophy indicated that direct intervention is necessary only when misbehavior interrupts the flow of regular classroom activity. The nondisruptive management techniques described below, according to Good and Brophy can greatly reduce classroom disruptions when implemented effectively:

...eye contact, touch or gesture, moving closer to the students involved, calling on an inattentive student, or praising the appropriate behavior of a student seated near the one who is misbehaving. (pg. 239)

When nondisruptive techniques appear inadequate, direct action must be taken immediately by the classroom teacher to stop inappropriate behavior. The following guidelines were suggested by Good and Brophy (1973):

- (1) Intervention should be brief and direct.
- (2) Intervention should focus on the expected desirable behavior rather than the misbehavior.
- (3) Threats, harshness, and nagging should be avoided.
- (4) Questioning and/or discussion concerning inappropriate behavior should be conducted privately.
- (5) All relevant facts should be gathered and positive action taken to prevent repetition of the misbehavior in the future. Rules may need to be reclarified or new rules established.
- (6) Punishment should be used only as a last resort.

Seeman (1988) offered the following suggestions for returning the class to normal operation after discipline problems have been encountered:

- (1) Teachers need to make an effort to cease making miscalls. A miscall is when a problem was caused or accelerated through miscalculation on the part of the teacher. Examples: overreacting to a situation, prejudicial behavior toward a student, angry reactions to student behavior, etc.
- (2) Teachers need to be congruent in their behaviors. Students need to know how teachers feel and hear them express their honest feelings.
- (3) Teachers need to follow-through. Threats should not be made that cannot or will not be carried out.
- (4) Teachers need to be fair with students. Rules should be the same for every student. Teachers need to apologize if they make errors in judgement.

Importance of Beginning-of-Year Activities

Based on two year-long descriptive studies of management methods, Evertson and Emmer (1982) indicated that any effective classroom management system would require that teachers plan and implement key management features early in the school year. Furthermore, this planning process should include measures for the maintenance of the system

throughout the school year. Specific suggestions made by Evertson and Emmer are summarized below:

- (1) Planning before the school year begins should occur by determining expected behaviors, translating expectations into procedures and rules, and identifying consequences.
- (2) Activities at the beginning of the school year should include: (a) setting aside time during the first day for a discussion of rules, (b) teaching rules as systematically as any other learning objective, (c) teaching rules as they are needed by students to help maintain a positive classroom setting, (d) involving students in tasks designed to promote a high rate of success in the early days of school.
- (3) Maintaining an effective management system throughout the year should include monitoring students' behaviors, managing inappropriate behaviors, and developing students' accountability for their own behaviors.

Establishment and Maintenance of Procedures

While studying discipline in the classroom, Kounin (1970) concluded that the key for controlling students' behaviors was not so much the way teachers controlled individual students but rather how the teacher managed the

group. Through classroom observation of forty-nine upper elementary teachers, Kounin correlated selected teacher management behaviors and children's behaviors in recitation and seatwork settings. Kounin indicated that teachers who established and maintained consistent methods for managing classroom procedures and group interactions had fewer behavior problems.

Sanford (1984) studied the relationship between teacher behaviors and student on-task behavior in twenty-six middle schools. Sanford concluded that the best managers monitored students closely by walking around the room while maintaining specific procedures for responding to student verbalizations and student movements. In Sanford's study, the least effective managers had chaotic laboratory activities and inconsistent procedures for assigning, collecting, and checking work. The establishment of rules and procedures and the arrangement of the classroom were also emphasized by Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, and Johansen (1991) and Good and Brophy (1973) as key components to the prevention of inappropriate behavior.

Establishment of a Productive Learning Environment

A Climate for Learning. According to Arends (1988), a productive learning environment has the following characteristics:

- (1) students feel positive about themselves, their peers, and the class as a group.
- (2) students feel that their needs are satisfied.
- (3) students persist with academic tasks.
- (4) students work in cooperative ways with the teacher and other students.
- (3) students acquire group and interpersonal skills with which to accomplish academic and group demands.

Positive Reinforcement. Good and Brophy (1973)

stressed the importance of cueing and reinforcing appropriate behavior. These researchers indicated that:

Students will be encouraged by a teacher and motivated to work...if they know that (the teacher) appreciates their efforts and progress. Teachers can create this condition by making a concerted effort to praise student effort and progress, using natural, genuine language and describing the behavior being praised in specific terms. (pg. 182)

Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, and Johansen (1991) also emphasized that students who are positively reinforced for their good efforts and are treated with dignity develop strong self-esteem.

Dollard and Miller (1950) described motivation in terms of approach and avoidance tendencies. The researchers suggested the following implications: (1) the closer a student feels to achieving success - the greater the tendency to approach the task, and (2) the more negative a

stimulus (task or teacher) appears - the greater the student's tendency to find ways to avoid it.

Other psychologists, perhaps inspired by Dollard and Miller, attribute higher order motives to student behavior rather than merely primary drives. For example, Robert White (1959) proposed a concept that human motivation can be related to the desire to achieve a goal simply for its own sake. White further proposed that many higher order motives for behavior such as play, curiosity, and the desire for competence, may all be subsumed under "an intrinsic need to deal with the environment" (pg. 319).

On-Task Time. Evertson (1986) reported that the relationship between student achievement and classroom management appears to pivot on the effective use of class time. That is, the more time students spend engaged in academic tasks, the greater the opportunity for learning to occur. Evertson enumerated the following key classroom management areas which create conditions that facilitate effective teaching and student learning:

- (1) structuring the physical space in classrooms,
- (2) managing physical movement around and in and out of classrooms,
- (3) developing procedures and routines for handling nonacademic business,
- (4) managing student behavior, and
- (5) managing instructional times, including pacing instruction and student work, and maintaining student focus of attention. (pg. 198)

High Expectations for all Students. Glasser (1990) suggested that superintendents, principals, and teachers need a new method of management that focuses on positive reinforcement for quality work. He cited the management systems prevalent in Japan as an example of an approach for generating high expectations for, and consequently obtaining, high quality products from all workers. Glasser concluded that managerial success in Japan is due primarily to the acceptance of a "control theory" (pg. 426) approach, which focuses on quality from all workers and for all people. He further concluded that the concept of control theory can be brought as effectively into the schools as it was into the Japanese economy and society. Glasser proposed that:

...instead of the elitist system we now have, in which just a few students are producing high quality work, almost all students will have this experience. Once they have this experience, which for almost all students is a totally new one, they will find it highly satisfying. They will no more turn down the chance to continue doing this kind of work than does the well-managed factory worker.
(pg. 426)

Glasser (1990) further proposed many ways in which quality can become central to the educational process. Several of Glasser's suggestions for promoting quality were:

- (1) Teachers should send a clear message that low quality work is not acceptable.

- (2) Teachers should expend effort to demonstrate that work is not boring and that it is connected to what is important and useful in life.

For workers, including students, to do high-quality work, they must be managed in a way that convinces them that the work they are asked to do satisfies their needs. The more it does, the harder they will work.
(pg. 429)

- (3) Teachers should manage students without coercion. "Lead management" (pg. 428) is preferable to "boss management" (pg. 428).
- (4) Teachers should focus on cooperative learning and problem solving. Student motivation comes through the discovery that they can do quality work. Further, "learning together as a team satisfies the needs for power and for belonging much better than does learning alone" (pg. 432).
- (5) Teachers should be leaders that serve as facilitators for learning and models of quality work and good work habits.

The Inner-City Environment and the At-Risk Label

Definitions of the At-Risk Student

Much attention has been focused in the last decade on improving education for all children. In particular, increased attention has been given to improving education

for children who are considered at risk. Frymier and Gansneder (1989) defined at-risk students as those who are:

...likely to fail - either in school or in life... If a student fails a course in school, is retained in grade, or drops out of school, that student is at risk. Likewise, if a child uses drugs, has been physically or sexually abused, or has contemplated or attempted suicide, that child is also at risk. (pg. 142)

Ralph (1989) contended that being at risk is the result of many cumulative factors. He suggested that any one factor such as growing up in poverty, living in a single-parent home, or living in an inner-city neighborhood:

...may be weakly correlated with school failure but together they create a more formidable set of obstacles to academic success. Children with all the at-risk factors have been identified as America's urban underclass, the truly disadvantaged. (pg. 400)

Inner-city youths have been consistently described as at risk for dropping out of school. LeCompte (1987) stated that even though "dropping out is a hot topic for contemporary educators" (pg. 227) many projects designed to address this problem have not been successful and are among the first to be eliminated from school funding budgets. LeCompte also estimated that in most major cities anywhere from twenty-five percent to sixty percent of the students become dropouts. She further determined that the dropout problem has not been solved because schools have not changed along with the socioculture of the school population. In this light, she stated that "the real problem is that

society has changed dramatically and the schools have not" (pg. 245).

LeCompte and Goebel (1987) suggested that the term "dropout" has been ill-defined and that the actual number of total dropouts has been minimized. These researchers challenged the record-keeping and tracking techniques used to establish the number of dropouts. To address those who would question the legitimacy of such concerns, LeCompte and Goebel retorted: "If at-risk students can't be identified, tracked, or described, how can programs be developed for them" (pg. 263)?

Knapp and Shields (1990) identified the most prevalent at-risk or disadvantaged group of children as being "from families in poverty" (pg. 753), and one of the most prevalent setting for at-risk or disadvantaged students as the inner-city environment. These researchers also stressed that before formulating any viable approaches to teaching these students, teachers should first develop an understanding of these students' cultural background.

Needs of Inner-City Youths

A multitude of serious social problems generally affect at-risk, inner-city youths. Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, and Johansen (1991) reported that "schools cannot adequately meet the educational needs of their students without considering the society in which the young people live" (pg.

175). These researchers indicated that for a variety of reasons many inner-city students are "at risk of dropping out of school, attempting suicide, misusing chemicals, becoming homeless, or experiencing delinquency problems" (pg. 175). They further stated that "teachers must be sensitive to the needs of these students and plan actions to meet those needs" (pg. 176). In like manner, Ralph (1989) had stated earlier that successful inner-city programs would be difficult to achieve unless educators have specific knowledge of the many different needs that disadvantaged students bring to the classroom and find out what motivates some inner-city youths to stay in school while many of their peers choose to drop out.

Reed and Sautter (1990) addressed the concerns of the American public for at-risk children and the special efforts needed in their behalf in a Kappan special report entitled "Children of Poverty" (pg. K1). They reported that:

...the public schools are given the burden of overcoming economic and social inequities, usually without adequate resources....Many reformers believe that, instead of another add-on program, the schools need a coordinated and concerted societal effort to deal with these problems. Still, all across the nation, educators are struggling to meet the crisis with innovative solutions and more of their legendary dedication. The many examples of their efforts fall into two major categories: mobilizing parents and integrating community and health resources into the school. (pg. K8)

Strother (1990) interviewed Larry Cuban and discussed leadership in the schools. As part of that interview,

Strother asked Cuban how urban schools could be improved. Cuban stated that there are no pat formulas but called for more experimentation in the schools to try to find some approaches that might prove effective. He indicated that possibly any one or a combination of any of the following four strategies could made a positive difference in urban schools:

- (1) Compensatory programs for children not yet in kindergarten, or after-school programs, should be intensified and higher standards should be set for achievement.
- (2) Schooling should be made part of a package of social services with the school as the community center.
- (3) Schools should be completely restructured to smaller, ungraded schools composed of staff members more culturally responsive to students.
- (4) In extreme cases, children should be taken out of their environment and place them in residential schools.

Redefining the Cause of the Problem

Cuban (1989) contended that both educators and public officials have incorrectly defined the causes of academic low achievement in at-risk students. He stated that many educators have made a mistake in believing that at-risk

students do poorly in school because they "lack ability, character, or motivation" (pg. 781) and family support. He further stated that public officials are also mistaken in believing the reason at-risk children fail is because the school ignores the culture of the students and degrades their backgrounds. Cuban said that the inflexibility of the school, exemplified by the graded school, is the major cause of at-risk students failing. He stated that the graded school "has trapped both staff members and at-risk students in a web of shared failure" (pg. 801) and that:

No significant improvement will occur in the school careers of at-risk students without fundamental changes in the graded school, and current restructuring proposals will not achieve that end. (pg. 799)

Condition of the Schools

Piccigallo (1989) pointed out that inner-city schools are "dismal portrait(s) of... shattered windows; leaky roofs; plumbing so corroded that teachers and students warn visitors of the occasional rodent existing under toilets" (pg. 402). He contended that students cannot be told that they are special or beautiful and expected to perform quality work and display responsible behavior when the school environment is a picture of hopelessness and despair. According to Piccigallo, two question should immediately come to one's mind:

To what degree can city youths be expected to believe that education is the principal

route out of urban squalor and despair
 when society appears unable or unwilling to
 rescue their schools from similar conditions?
 And what message of self-worth and societal
 expectation does the abysmal physical state
 of inner-city schools convey to students who
 have no choice but to attend them or drop out?
 (pg. 406)

School and Classroom Management Within Inner-City Schools

Restructuring School Management

The Quality Education for Minorities Project (1990) report maintained that an overall restructuring of school management is needed before the academic performance of minority students can be greatly improved. The Project report described a model developed at the Yale Child Study Center by James Comer, which over a fifteen year period greatly improved the academic performance of two inner-city schools located in New Haven, Connecticut. The students involved in the experimental schools were compared with a control group of students who spent the same period in another New Haven School. In accounting for significantly higher test scores, superior attendance records, and the lack of serious behavior problems, the Project reported that:

Comer's answer seems simple: these schools paid attention to child development and established a basic participatory school management system in which the principals shared power with parents, teachers, and professional support staff. To a significant degree, Comer's success came about because he created processes and structures that changed attitudes, incentive struc-

tures, and behavior. One of the most important attitudinal changes was to convince teachers, parents, and school administrators and the students themselves, that with proper attitudes and hard work these students could learn as much as anybody. (pg. 49-50)

The Project report stated that Comer realized the children's home and social development could not match the mainstream values evident in most school environments. On the contrary, he contended that it was easier for the school to adjust to the needs of the child than to expect the child living in poverty to adjust to the school. Comer and his colleagues organized a governance and management team in each school, led by the principal and made up of teachers, parents, mental health professionals, and representatives from nonprofessional support staff. The teams concentrated on problem-solving instead of blame-fixing. Consensus-building reportedly eased communications between parents and school and gave teachers expert professional help in dealing with student behavior problems. The most important finding of the Project was reported to be as follows: "behavior problems result mainly from unmet needs rather than from willful badness - and that actions can be taken to meet these needs" (pg. 50).

Cistone, Fernandez, and Tornillo, (1990) determined that education reform in Dade County, Florida, had focused on the professionalization of teaching and the restructuring of the system by which schools are governed and decisions are made. This "bottom up" (pg. 395) reform has revolved

around school-based management and shared decision making (SBM/SDM). In 1987-88 thirty-three schools participated in the project; in 1988-89 eleven more participated; researchers anticipated that in the 1989-90 academic year over one hundred schools would be involved with the project.

Reed and Sautter (1990) also stated their belief that restructuring school management could help to promote a positive relationship between the home and school. Furthermore, this positive relationship would in turn help to improve academic achievement in inner-city schools and provide needed home support for the maintenance of a safe and orderly school environment. These researchers reported that as many as one hundred inner-city schools across the United States are attempting to improve the educational and home environment for high-risk youths by creating management teams made up of parents, teachers, and mental health professionals. Reed and Sautter further reported efforts in California and Missouri schools to establish "Accelerated Schools Program(s)" (pg. K9) involving inner-city parents in their children's education and attempting to raise parental expectations about what their children can do.

Respect for Cultural Diversity

Glenn (1989) contended that more effective teaching and learning will not result for minority children simply as a result of adopting new requirements or issuing new

instructions for teachers. He stated that three approaches must be taken with regard to multicultural education:

- (1) Educators must learn to educate poor and minority students in the same settings as middle class students.
- (2) When diverse groups of students are brought together to form a common school, the staff in the school "must be allowed to create a distinctive program that reflects their own convictions and those of parents" (pg. 779).
- (3) "The cultural diversity of children must be taken into account in the school and classroom" (pg. 779).

Pine and Hilliard (1990) maintained that schools still have a long way to go before cultural diversity is appreciated and that "we must learn how to tap the rich vein of cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity to improve education for all" (pg. 597). These researchers contended that "racism, prejudice, and discrimination are (still) shamefully sabotaging our nation's efforts to provide a high-quality education for all children" (pg. 593). They stated that racism in education can be combated by (1) confronting and challenging racism, (2) increasing the pool of minority teachers, (3) developing and implementing a multicultural curriculum, (4) improving pedagogical

practice, and (5) teaching character development and improving self-esteem.

The Issues of Order and Safety

Sachar (1991) illustrated the experiences that she had as a New York City junior high school teacher working in the inner city. She indicated that she was faced with overcrowded classrooms, organizational nightmares, disruptive and sometimes violent students, and uncaring and ineffectual administrators. She also described her awareness of the following:

For the first time in my adult life, I would be living and working every day in a place where black adults and children far outnumbered those of any other ethnic group. Of the schools' 1,711 students, 89 percent were black and another 8 percent were Hispanic. (pg. 42)

Sachar (1991) commented that for many of her students, school appeared to be "primarily a place to act out - to vent all their anger and confusion about life at home and the world around them" (pg. 46). She stated that there was a critical balance in the inner-city classroom between making class enjoyable and maintaining control. She further contended that the mark of an excellent teacher in the inner-city environment is to be able to stimulate the interest of the students and make them feel, at least some of the time, that the class is enjoyable and relevant to their lives.

Haberman and Rickards (1990) conducted a study of Milwaukee teachers who had resigned from their teaching positions in 1988. These researchers learned from responses of those teachers to questionnaires and telephone interviews that at the time of their resignation discipline had been perceived as the number one problem they had encountered in the schools. Since the vast majority of these teachers accepted employment in other school systems, the researchers concluded that one implication of the research is that "urban schools may be losing teachers at the very point they are becoming effective professionals" (pg. 297).

Upon returning to high school teaching after a sixteen year absence, during which time he was a professor of education at Stanford University, Cuban (1990):

...wanted to see if at least one class of students labeled as sorely deficient in academic skills in 1988-89 could handle the same ideas and skills, which are usually reserved for regular classrooms. (pg. 480)

Cuban's return to high school teaching took place in two inner-city high schools in Washington, D. C. After completing this inner-city teaching experience, Cuban stated that: (1) there was no way to circumvent the necessity of establishing order and motivation in the classroom; (2) grouping practices that place students in separate, low ability classes affect teacher expectation and student achievement; (3) to survive, teachers must be efficient because teacher and student relationships are affected by

teacher workload and the school schedule; and (4) teaching is improvisational and teachers often need emotional reassurance and confidence building.

Montero-Sieburth (1989) reported that inner-city schools can often mirror ongoing hostilities which develop within the communities they serve. In her observations she noted that these schools sometimes become "arenas of conflict" (pg. 335) for the larger conflicts occurring within the inner-city environment. As she discovered,

Disputes arising from issues of limited housing, joblessness, school drop-out, and teenage pregnancy are often acted out by students and tend to exacerbate the difficulties at already overburdened inner-city schools. (pg. 335)

Other researchers studying the violence that occurs in inner-city schools have also noted a relationship between school violence and community violence, but the results from some of these studies revealed that inner-city schools can be relative zones of safety within the communities they serve. For example, Menacker, Weldon, and Hurwitz (1989), sponsored by The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the United States Department of Justice, conducted studies over a two year period which involved four public inner-city elementary schools in one of the poorest sections of Chicago with one of the highest crime rates. These researchers concluded that although "lawlessness, danger, and lack of discipline are perceived to be rampant

in inner-city public schools that serve low-income minority children....the public school is an island of relative safety in an ocean of danger that surrounds the school" (pg. 39). The researchers conclusions from this study were generally supported by data obtained in an earlier study entitled, Safe Schools-Violent Schools (1978) which was sponsored by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. However, Menacker, Weldon, and Hurwitz (1989) determined that, although the Safe Schools study indicated that many crimes took place outside of school rather than in the school, the study did not reflect the "extent and seriousness of out-of-school crime and violence" (pg. 40). According to the researchers, "understanding conditions in the broader community is central to understanding and treating school crime and disorder" (pg. 40). Further, they stated that "substantial improvement can only be realized by interventions that address conditions within both the schools and their communities" (pg. 55).

Elliott, Huizinga, and Ageton (1985) also implied in their research that inner-city schools can be relative zones of safety in communities that are plagued with violence and drugs. In their longitudinal study they found that an association with delinquent peers to be the strongest predictor of future delinquency and that students forming a

strong association with schools decreased their likelihood of becoming involved with delinquency and drug use.

Time Management and Classroom Organization

Knapp and Shields (1990) pointed out that maximizing on-task time for children from poverty-ridden communities such as inner cities is likely to enhance achievement. Although indicating that maximizing on-task time is important for all students, the researchers stated that it is especially important for students who face so many potential environmental distractions from academic work.

Knapp and Shields (1990) also commented that students from poverty-ridden communities such as inner cities "will not be able to assume responsibility for their own learning overnight, nor should we expect them to do so" (pg. 756). However, the researchers further stressed that these students can be systematically taught to be more responsible for their own learning. For example, they contended that cooperative learning skills can be utilized in schools serving such students. Knapp and Shields also suggested that teachers working with such students should possibly begin with an emphasis on teacher directed instruction, structured learning tasks, and homogeneous whole-class or small-group formats in order to establish and maintain order in the classroom. However, once students have adjusted to a classroom environment of relative order, structure, and

balance, and also one in which distractions are kept to a minimum, teachers should then urge and allow students to begin assuming as much responsibility as possible for their own learning.

High Expectations for Students

Overall, Knapp and Shields (1990) emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive and supportive learning environment in schools located in high poverty areas such as inner cities. They further asserted that part of maintaining this positive and supportive environment is for teachers to have high expectations for all students, including disadvantaged students. Knapp and Shields stated:

Tackling this ambitious agenda for the future will be worth the effort only if we accept the premise that the children of poverty are capable of more than educators typically expect of them. Evidence to support this premise ranges from advances in understanding student cognition to such dramatic demonstrations of results as the performance of inner-city youths on advanced placement tests of calculus. Assuming that this segment of the student population is capable of doing more, the ultimate criterion for any changes in current practice is whether they promise to impart to the children of poverty the analytical skills, communicative competence, and general knowledge necessary for full participation in a technological society. To do anything less is to sell these children short.
(pg. 757-758)

In agreement with the above statement, Johnson, Collins, Dupuis, and Johansen (1991) also contended that teachers can impact the degree to which at-risk students develop self-

esteem, accept responsibility for their own actions, and pursue healthy social relationships.

Parish, Eubanks, Aquila, and Walker (1989) also reflected on the need for high expectations for all students within inner-city schools. After working closely with teachers and principals in urban schools, they determined that inner-city children are being turned into "deserving victims" (pg. 386). These researchers contended that inner-city children have brains that work but often the schools they attend turn them into "children who have brains that don't work very well" (pg. 386). They also stated that many educators have the attitude that no matter what is done for inner-city students, it will not make any difference in their achievement level or in the quality of their lives. These researchers contended that schools need to demonstrate to their students a faith in their ability to achieve and not lower expectations or goals. Parish, Eubanks, Aquila, and Walker further suggested the necessity of a radical change in American culture which would put all children and their learning first and in turn totally reform American education. According to these researchers this change is imperative for the survival of the United States in the 21st century. As they asserted:

First, we must help all segments of our society to understand that America can not survive as a world-class culture into the 21st century unless we change....If we are to remain vigorous as a culture in the 21st

century, we must develop the intellectual wealth of all our citizens....We have no choice but to argue that the fundamental reform of schooling and of school cultures is essential to the survival of the American dream. (pg. 393-394)

Summary

Overall analysis of the literature reviewed for this study indicated that a sound body of research and expert opinion exists concerning what is considered to be effective and efficient approaches to general classroom management. This same literature also implied that the basic principles involved in general classroom management would be appropriate for classroom management within any school setting; however, the literature was very sparse in directly linking management theories and approaches to specific practices within particular school environments or settings. This lack of linkage between theory and practice was especially apparent concerning the topic of classroom management within an inner-city school.

The literature pertaining to inner-city schools placed an emphasis on the many problems that these schools face in attempting to educate students. Much of this literature also indicated that these problems stem from other deeper social problems. This literature also placed a greater emphasize on understanding the needs of the students and the problems of the community. Therefore, most of this

literature advocated classroom management approaches that stressed the importance of understanding cultural diversity, establishing a safe and orderly classroom environment, providing positive reinforcement to students, increasing students' self-esteem, maximizing on-task time, and maintaining overall high expectations for all students. However, once again this body of literature was very generalized and lacked information on specific means of incorporating those theoretical concerns into actual classroom management practices.

Taken together, both sets of literature reviewed for this study illustrated a need for more information about the specific classroom management practices that are actually utilized within inner-city schools. One means to obtain more of that type of information would be to directly ask teachers who work within these schools about their classroom management behaviors and their perceptions of effective classroom management methods and procedures. Consequently, this study was undertaken with the purpose of expanding the knowledge available about classroom management practices that are actually utilized within an inner-city school environment.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Chapter

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Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain descriptive information about teachers' perceptions of effective classroom management within an inner-city school. To attain this purpose, the study was designed in a qualitative manner in that its primary structure was based on an interview format. Specifically, the thirteen participants in the study, who were all teachers currently teaching within one Tennessee inner-city middle school, were asked a series of open-ended interview questions related to their classroom management behaviors. Furthermore, these inner-city classroom teachers were also asked to elaborate on any strategies they report to be effective for them in promoting

and maintaining order in the classroom. These interview questions were purposely designed to be broad and expansive in scope in order to encourage the participants to openly express their perceptions without any undue influence or direction from the researcher. (See Appendix A for Interview Schedule.) All interviews, which lasted from a minimum of an hour to a maximum of two hours, were audiotaped and later transcribed for data analysis.

The primary objective of this interview format was to allow the participants the opportunity to fully describe their perceptions of effective teacher behaviors associated with classroom management in an inner-city school environment. By utilizing this approach, the data derived from these interviews yielded a wealth of rich, descriptive, and highly specific information related to effective classroom management within the environment of this one specific school.

Selection of Participants

All participants who agreed to be interviewed for this study were currently teaching within one middle school located in an inner-city area. The initial selection of the individual participants was based upon the principal's recommendation. After reaching a decision on the particular school that would be appropriate for this study, the

researcher arranged a meeting with the principal of the selected school to explain the purpose of the study, the procedures that would be utilized to obtain the data from teachers, and the study's guidelines for participants' selection. Those guidelines included not only a participant's expression of a willingness to become involved in the interview process but also the stipulation that each individual interviewed would have served as a regular classroom teacher for a minimum of three years, one of which could include the current year of this study. It was further explained that this stipulation did not restrict selection to only those individuals who had gained their minimum experience within the specific inner-city school chosen for this study, but it could also include individuals who had gained their experience within other school settings. The principal was also assured that the school's and teachers' anonymity would be preserved. After being informed of the scope and nature of the study, the principal granted approval for the researcher to approach teachers concerning possible participation in this study. Furthermore, the principal provided a list of teachers who met the minimum experience guideline and would probably agree to the interview process. The principal also indicated that the teachers whose names appeared on this list had maintained good classroom discipline and control

and that when observed these teachers illustrated effective procedures for maximizing student learning.

After receiving the principal's recommendations, the researcher placed letters in each teacher's school mailbox which explained the purpose and procedures of the study. These letters also informed the teachers that the researcher would personally contact each individual to ascertain if he or she would agree to be interviewed. All thirteen teachers contacted agreed to become participants of the study and arrangements were then made concerning the specific dates on which to conduct the interviews.

Procedures Related to Interview Process

As indicated above, all participants within this study were volunteers; therefore, before beginning the interview process, all potential participants were given an information sheet which briefly explained the purpose of the study and procedures related to the confidentiality of the information obtained from the interviews. Within this information sheet potential participants were also furnished the name, address, and telephone number of the researcher. The sheet was retained by each actual participant and was intended to serve as a reference in case the participant wished at some future date to contact the researcher. Potential participants who did agree to volunteer for

interviews were requested at the beginning of the interview process to sign a consent form indicating their understanding of their roles within this study. Pertinent demographic information concerning teaching experience and other descriptive and relevant information was obtained at the beginning of the interview process by asking each participant to respond in writing to a series of questions on a brief demographic survey. (See Appendix B for Demographic Survey.)

Interviews with participants began in March 1991 and were completed by the middle of April of the same year. All interviews were conducted on the school site and either occurred during participants' planning periods or after students had been dismissed from school. Most interviews were completed in one sitting, but on two occasions interviews were interrupted and had to be concluded at a later date.

Description of the Site

The inner-city middle school selected for this study was located within walking distance of a large government subsidized housing project and generally maintained an enrollment of approximately 450-500 sixth through eighth grade students. Due to the school's proximity to the housing project, the student population was primarily

composed of individuals from a low income family background. Furthermore, at the time of this study this enrollment also included a significant minority student population in that approximately sixty-five percent of the students attending this school were African-American.

Thirty-one teachers were assigned to this school and of this number seven taught in the sixth grade, six taught in the seventh grade, and five taught in the eighth grade. In addition to these traditional classroom teachers, three teachers were special education teachers, two were in-school resource teachers, and two were physical education teachers. One teacher was assigned to each of the specialty areas of art, music, health, industrial education, computer education, and library instruction (librarian). The teachers at the school were predominantly white females, and at the time of this study the principal was also a white female.

The original school structure, which was completed in 1936 by the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, consisted of a basement, two floors, and an attached first floor gymnasium. Over the years various wings were added to the building to accommodate the need for additional classroom space so that the current structure included an auditorium, a vocational shop, and specialty classrooms (art, music, health, etc.). At the time of this study all seven of the sixth grade classes were housed on the second

floor of the original building, the majority of the six classes of the seventh grade were housed on the first floor of the original building, and all five of the eighth grade classes were located in the newest wing, which was far separated from the original building as a result of the past additions. The cafeteria was located in the basement of the old structure as were two classrooms which accommodated classes for in-school resource students. The main office was placed near the center and the library at the far end of the first floor of the old building. The second floor of the old building also housed a computer laboratory.

Description of the Participants

Thirteen teachers participated in this study and of this number three were sixth grade teachers, two were seventh grade teachers, and four were eighth grade teachers. In addition to these regular classroom teachers four teachers were interviewed from the specialty areas, in-school resource, and physical education. No special education teachers were selected as participants. This limitation was deemed necessary in order to eliminate the variance that can occur between the classroom management approaches of teachers working within traditional instructional areas and those assigned to the unique setting of the special education classroom.

Of all thirteen participants interviewed, twelve were female and only one was male. As indicated earlier, this female dominance was also evident in the overall gender distribution of the teachers employed within this school. Also representative of the racial distribution of teachers was the fact that of the thirteen participating in the study, eleven were white and only two were African-American. All the teachers volunteering for this study reported that they had completed at least a bachelor's degree with two indicating completion of a master's degree. (See Appendix C for summary of demographic information related to participants' gender, race, and highest degree completed.)

The teachers' age ranged from thirty to forty-four, and the teaching experience of the teachers ranged from three to nineteen years. Only one teacher reported to have been teaching only three full years counting the current year; however, this teacher, who was forty-four at the time of this study, also reported that she had served as a substitute teacher for a number of years prior to beginning a full-time teaching career. The average full-time teaching experience for all teachers interviewed was 10.3 years. With the exception of only two teachers, all participants indicated that all their teaching experience had been obtained while employed within public middle schools (sixth through eighth grades) as opposed to private middle schools. (See Appendix C for summary of demographic information on

participants' age, number of years teaching experience, and teaching experience in private schools.)

Of the number of years reported for teaching experience, the average for the number of years taught within this one inner-city school was 6.1 years. This average encompassed a range from a minimum of one year to a maximum of fourteen years. Two teachers, one seventh grade and one eighth grade, were currently just finishing their first year within this school, while one sixth grade teacher was just finishing her second year. Five teachers, one African-American and four white, with an average of 9.4 years of experience indicated that all of their combined forty-seven years of teaching experience had been gained within this one inner-city school. Two other teachers, one African-American and one white, with an average of 14.5 years of experience responded that all of their combined twenty-nine years of teaching experience had been gained within an inner-city school setting, although not all this experience had been obtained within this one particular inner-city school. For the remaining six teachers, who were all white and possessed a combined total of fifty-eight years of teaching experience, their average of 9.7 total years of experience also revealed that 6.7 years of this experience had been acquired in other school settings (urban, suburban, or rural) while 3.0 years of experience had been gained within this one inner-city school. A

further analysis of this data illustrated that of this 6.7 years of experience acquired within other school settings, an average of 3.2 years had been acquired within a suburban setting, 2.3 years within a rural setting, and 1.2 years within a urban setting. (See Appendix D for summary of years of teaching experience related to school settings.)

When asked in the demographic survey to classify the predominant family backgrounds of students enrolled in any school in which they had previously taught, only two teachers, both white, indicated that they had worked with students drawn from all socioeconomic levels. Three teachers, all white, responded that their previous teaching experiences had involved working with students whose socioeconomic family backgrounds were representative of the middle class, lower middle class, and lower class. Two teachers indicated that all their past teaching experiences had been obtained in schools they classed as containing a student population belonging to only one socioeconomic level. One of these two teacher, a white female, denoted that her previous teaching experience had been obtained while working strictly with students from a middle class family background. The other teacher, an African-American female, denoted that her experience had been obtained while working strictly with students from a lower class family background. One other teacher, a white male, checked that he had only worked with students whose families could be

designated as belonging to the socioeconomic levels of the lower middle class and lower class. As reported earlier, five of the teachers, four white and one African-American, indicated that they had not previously taught in any other school and that all their teaching experience had been acquired within this one inner-city school. (See Appendix E for participants' responses related to the levels of the socioeconomic family backgrounds of students previously taught in other schools.)

When teachers were asked a question in the demographic survey related to the schools they attended when they were enrolled in kindergarten through the twelfth grade, not one indicated any kindergarten attendance, and all except two of the thirteen indicated that they had never attended an inner-city school at any time during their school career. Of the two indicating attending an inner-city school, both were African-American, and of these two, one participant reported attending all twelve years of school in an inner-city school while the other participant reported attending seven years with the remain five years in attendance in an urban school. Five of the teachers responded that they had attended all twelve years of school in a suburban setting while three teachers responded that all their years of schooling had been obtained in an urban setting. The remaining three participants indicated that they had split attendance between a suburban and rural school. (See

Appendix F for a summary of type of schools attended by participants when enrolled in grades 1 - 12.)

Data Collection

All of the interviews with participants were audiotaped and transcribed for data analysis. Furthermore, the researcher kept a series of brief field notes during each interview. Primarily those notes were utilized in assisting with clarifying any misunderstandings that arose from the audiotaping process. They were also used as a means of adding information to the data collection in that they contained environmental information that would have been impossible to capture on any audio recording.

The information obtained from all participants was handled in a confidential manner. Specifically, all audiotapes, demographic surveys, transcripts, and field notes that could have potentially identified any of the specific identities of participants were coded by a series of numbers. Code numbers were in turn arranged on a master list that corresponded to the names of the participants, and this master list was the only means to specifically identify any participant in the study. Only the researcher had access to this master list, and this master list was kept securely locked in a file cabinet location within the researcher's home. Upon completion of the study, this

master list was destroyed along with any other materials which could have potentially identify any individual participant.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was an ongoing process in that as soon as interviews were transcribed and double checked for accuracy against the actual audiotape recording, the resulting transcripts were then read and scanned to discover any obvious patters or regularities in the participants' responses. During this initial process, the researcher cross-checked all transcripts with any field notes taken during the interviews. Specifically, this content analysis (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) approach involved the process of matching, comparing, and contrasting the individual responses of each participant in order to discover if any commonalities existed in the answers to the interview questions. From this process of grouping responses according to similarities and/or differences, broad categories emerged from the data. From these categories, the researcher began to form a baseline description (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) of the participants' perceptions of effective classroom management within an inner-city school. In this respect no preconceived categories were imposed on

the data, but rather the descriptive categories emerged from the data.

As this researcher continued to read and then reread the interview transcripts, more detailed and descriptive subcategories began to appear from the data. Therefore, as a method of ensuring that all descriptive categories and subcategories accurately reflected information found within the actual data, a form of peer examination (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) was used as a means of addressing the question of internal reliability. Specifically, this peer examination process, which was initiated in two stages, involved the incorporation of other individuals as readers of the data. Since the researcher was currently a member of a qualitative research group, the other members of this group served as peer examiners of the data. Furthermore, a member of the researcher's doctoral committee, who is highly qualified in qualitative research methods and data analysis, also assisted in the data analysis process by providing independent readings and comments related to the data.

In stage one of the peer examination process, and after the researcher had developed a few initial categories drawn from a content analysis of the data, independent readers were given random interview transcripts and asked to search the data to discover any response patterns of the participants. After identifying any response patterns, the readers were then asked to develop categories for these

patterns. Any patterns or categories derived from this process was then compared with the researcher's initial categories, and all revisions were made according to the information derived from this peer examination.

In the second stage of the peer examination process, and after the researcher had subjected all transcripts to an intense content analysis, independent readers were given a listing of the categories and subcategories of the individual responses of each participant to each interview question. These other readers were then asked if they concurred with the placement of each response under a specific descriptive category. Once again revisions were made according to input from this peer examination.

The final process involved in the data analysis was to cross-check the information drawn from the interviews with the participants' information obtained from the demographic survey. This process was undertaken in order to reveal if any possible relationships existed between a participant's responses to the interview questions and the participant's background.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

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Introduction

Within this study the term "perception" is used in its broadest form; that is, a perception is what one believes to be a truth or a reality and is not necessarily in itself a verifiable truth or reality. So it was with the teachers in this study in that the findings presented in this chapter reflect their unique perceptions founded upon beliefs formulated from working with students drawn from the environment of an inner-city school. These beliefs, as with all human beliefs, were created from, among other factors, a combination of their experiences of teaching within this environment and their own individual cultural backgrounds. By necessity, both of these factors had an influence on their perceptions of effective classroom management behaviors of teachers who work within an inner-city school. Therefore, any presentation of the findings of this study must include a discussion of not only the obvious perceptions expressed by these teachers but also any references made by them related to any underlying belief systems. The rationale for utilizing this approach to the presentation of the findings is grounded in the concept that all human beings derive their truths and realities from

their own unique perspectives. This tenet is especially applicable to the field of education. As one researcher commented:

The delightful aspect of an area such as education is just that it is so subjective. There are no governing equations, no unifying principles or theories, no experiments that remain invariant under given transformational rules. Education must be dealt with in words, with feelings, and from a human perspective. Each of us perceives the educational process from our own frame of reference, and from that vantage we confer meaning on it. The sum of the communal subjectivity must be included in the whole view of education and cannot be ignored in any objective analysis of it.
(Hansgen, 1991, pg. 694)

Therefore, to simply present these teachers' perspectives without comment on any underlying belief systems would be a superficial data analysis. This approach does not lessen the possible conclusions that can be drawn from the data. On the contrary, the beliefs expressed by these teachers add dimension and depth to their various perceptions of working with students within an inner-city environment. Overall, this approach to data analysis assists in expanding and clarifying the body of knowledge related to classroom management within the specific environment of an inner-city school.

Descriptive Context of School and Classroom Management Systems

School-Wide Management Systems

The First Day of School. On the very first day of each and every school year, besides receiving instructions on filling out the paperwork related to medical emergencies, free lunch applications, etc., all the students in each grade level at this school were required to attend an assembly during which they were given an orientation to school rules and the specific rules and rewards procedures associated with each individual grade level. The primary objective for this assembly was to go over completely all the rules of the school and to ensure that all the students understood very early and clearly exactly what was expected of them in terms of acceptable behavior. This assembly was utilized as a means to set the tone that within this inner-city school the primary emphasis was placed first on students behaving in an appropriate manner and secondly on their academic performance. This approach was deemed necessary because of the underlying belief of almost all of the teachers and administrators that within this environment it was vital to deal with controlling student behavior before attempting to involve students with any academic concerns. In this regard, most of the teachers explained that they believed that any hope of focusing students on academics hinged first and foremost on establishing order

within the school and within each classroom. As one teacher said directly, "We start at the first of the year with our behavior because of course that's one of our number one concerns...because behavior is just such an issue here." Another teacher simply said, "...the discipline is a real problem in this school; it is the worst problem of ours."

One teacher remembered that her students were very upset after attending this orientation, and many of their comments to each other after returning to their own classroom reflected their intense dislike of the stated rules. This teacher said she was at first surprised by the students' reaction, but then she said that she decided that she should address their grumblings. As she said reflecting back on that scene:

I remember very specifically coming back and the children complaining, not particularly to me but to one another, "...this is going to be just like prison. These (grade level) teachers think they're so bad....I can't believe they are going to treat us like we're sixth graders." The kids have never rebelled so immediately against our...processes....I answered the charges, you know, and I talked to them about it and tried to make them understand. I accentuated the positive as much as I could, and I said, "We may have gone about telling you about it the wrong way. We should have told you about the really good stuff first instead of telling you about how to avoid the good stuff." But, you know, I tried to make them feel a little more comfortable. I didn't want them to come in hating it, being miserable...

Nevertheless, the first day at this school was clearly dominated by the message that if students were to avoid

problems, they had to behave in an a manner that administrators and teachers viewed as acceptable.

Construction of Rules. Classroom rules for each grade level, which were posted in all regular classrooms and often given to students on individual copies, were constructed as a team effort by all the teachers working within each individual grade. For the most part, students had no input regarding the construction of any of these rules. These rules and consequences for breaking these rules varied slightly from grade level to grade level, but all of the regular classroom teachers expressed a general belief that a team approach among teachers was an effective means of formulating and enforcing rules. As one teacher stated:

...we all have the same rules, and that our expectations for them are very much the same. Each...of us has the same rules; we expect children to obey those rules, and if they don't, they know what the consequences are.

Another teacher, who was just completing her first year at this school, indicated that a team approach to student discipline had been very helpful for her in controlling student behavior in her classroom. She explained that if any student broke any rule in her classroom, the teachers would work together as a group in solving the discipline problem. As she said:

...the consequences are a procedure that we all follow in this group. We have to write comment cards and then if two teachers write comment cards on the same student, we have a conference with that student. So it's consistent....But

we have a good support system down here and since we are consistent they (students) know what's going to happen (if a rule is broken). ...So I don't have to deal with it.

Another experienced teacher indicated that she believed that the team approach was effective in controlling student behavior and in the long run could be beneficial for the offending student as well. As she commented:

Basically as far as our...grade team, we work really well together. I think by working as well together as we do, that has saved us a lot of grief and helped a lot. Because if one teacher has a problem with a child, we all have a problem with the child, and sometimes just having a conference with the student, if it's a student that does extremely well in my class, I can turn around and say, "Oh, you're doing so well; I'm surprised to hear that you're giving (teacher's name) such a hard time or that you're having such a hard time in (specific class)...but that doesn't excuse you for the behavior, the talking out, the not following directions, the poor attitude, the talking back, disturbing class," that kind of stuff. Lots of times just having a few teachers say a lot of good things about the kid and saying, "I know you can act better," sometimes that's just a little bit of a motivation (for the student to behave better).

As far as the actual content of the grade level rules is concerned, all the teachers supported the educational theory that all classroom rules should be brief, simple, clear, and few in number in order for students to comprehend and master behavioral expectations. Furthermore, all the teachers indicated that rules should be posted and actually taught to students. As one teacher stated:

It's not just a set of rules I hand them and that's it. Who knows if they'll read it; they won't read it. Or they'll have it and it's

gone the next day, but children have to be taught how to behave; have to be taught your expectations...

Another teacher responded that it was essential for students in an inner-city school to acquire a "visual and a verbal awareness" of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and actions. Although the wording of these rules varied from grade level to grade level, the general structure of the rules is illustrated in the following example:

1. Follow the teacher's first request.
2. Be prepared when the teacher enters the room (be in class on time, be in your seat, have paper and pencil, have materials ready, etc.).
3. Ignore inappropriate behavior (of other students).
4. Keep hands and objects to yourself.
5. You are to be dismissed by the teacher.
6. Candy and gum are not allowed.

As stated earlier, students had no input to rules construction; however, one specialty area teacher said that on that first day of school she always tried to involve her students in creating their own rules for the classroom. She indicated that she believed this approach ensured that students felt some type of ownership for the rules that they had to obey while in her room. As she commented:

...I tell them, "This classroom is yours and it's mine and we're going to live here as a family, and it's important that you be a part of making these rules....You're the ones that will have to follow these rules, so let's make some realistic rules...that we can follow... that will have some consequences that we both feel good about."

When asked if she ever lead or suggested rules to the students, the teacher stated that in most instances she

didn't have to exert much of an influence over the students as they constructed the rules because they really knew what was expected of them. As she explained:

...They've been coming up through school, and they've had teachers, and they know about rules. So I try to let them come up with these rules; I really do. I may change the wording in such a way that...all can understand and know, but I let them come up with their rules.

From the above comment, it appears that in reality these "students' rules" were just generally understood "teachers' rules" voiced by the students.

Punishments and Rewards. In responding to questions dealing with punishments and rewards for student behavior, most of the teachers had a tendency to divide their comments between talking about the more informal, "personalized" punishments/rewards system of their own individual classrooms and talking about the highly structured, formalized school-wide punishments/reward systems. As the teachers explained, the procedures associated with the formalized school-wide punishments/rewards system were associated closely with the formal rules constructed for each grade level.

As detailed in the section on rules construction, all the grade levels of this school had their own separate set of rules, which were constructed as a team effort by all of the teachers in each grade level. All these grade level rules had built into them a series of steps for dealing with

disruptive students, and the school office became involved in punishment only in extreme cases (students fighting, bringing knives to school, etc.) or after the teachers had taken a problem student through all the steps. According to the teachers, this process was designed to keep control of discipline within each grade level and only have the school administration become involved when all other options for correcting a student's behavior had been exhausted.

Generally the first formal step for punishing a student began with a teacher writing what was referred to as either a referral or a comment card, depending upon the grade level. Basically a referral or comment card would be written on a student for his or her refusal to obey a teacher's request. For example, a student who refused to stop talking, or to stop arguing with others, or to do class work, etc. would usually receive a remark on a referral or comment card. After a student had received one or two of these warnings, he or she was then required to attend school detention. If after attending detention the student did not improve, then he or she had to attend a conference with all of the teachers in that grade level. If the behavior still did not improve, then the student had to attend a conference with all of his or her teachers and a parent. If the behavior did not change after that conference, then the student would be referred to the school office. At that

point disciplining a student became the administration's responsibility.

All of the teachers indicated that they believed the system worked well because students could clearly see and understand that the teachers and the office were united in efforts to ensure that students behaved appropriately in the school. However, a few speciality area teachers indicated that since they at some time or other worked with all grade levels, they sometimes found it difficult to remember the separate procedures for each grade level. According to these teachers, slight procedural variations did exist between the separate grades. These variations were based on perceived differences in the maturity level of the students. For example, the sixth graders, because they were perceived to need immediate feedback, had to serve after-school detention immediately after receiving two referrals. However, the eighth graders would serve their detention every other Friday after receiving only one remark on a comment card. The detention for the eighth graders was also held during an "activities period" which took place the last half hour of every other Friday. This activities period was utilized as a reward for not receiving any remarks on comment cards and consisted of all of the eighth grade classes being allowed to be together to talk and buy soft drinks and candy bars. The money from the sale of these items was in turn used to finance a big eighth grade dance

and field trip at the end of the year. Those who had received a single remark on a comment card had to spend this time in a detention room and were not allowed to join their class during this activities period. The eighth grade teachers all indicated that they believed that depriving a student of this socialization time was an effective means of punishing and eventually correcting inappropriate behavior.

Field trips were also an integral part of the school-wide reward system. In all classes those students who did not receive any referrals or comment cards for an entire six weeks were allowed to go on some type of field trip with their individual class. These reward field trips were either educational in nature, such as attending some special exhibit, or were "just for fun" trips, such as going bowling or playing putt-putt golf. While on these field trips, the groups always stopped somewhere to eat, and the teachers stated that for many of their students that seemed to be the most enjoyable part of the trips.

As mentioned above the eighth grade class, using the money obtained from the activities period, usually had a big field trip at the end of the year for those students who had been able to avoid receiving any comment cards for the entire year. As one teacher explained:

There's a big, big, big, trip at the end of the year. This year we're going to Six Flags, and we take all of the kids, and they go for free. Or, you know, we charge them very little. We charge them as little as we can get by with,

usually, you know, they have to give us a few dollars to pay for the bus. But that's for the kids who haven't been in trouble at all. There are very few.

This teacher went on to say that because so very few students made it to the end of the year without receiving comment cards, the school sometimes ran into a problem when the time arrived for students to take this big field trip. As she remarked:

Last year they had to make concessions, and it had to be kids who had gotten two comment cards, instead of kids who had gotten none, because they didn't have enough to go.

Based on the above comment, it seems evident that students found it extremely difficult to avoid disobeying any and all school and classroom rules for an entire year.

Besides rewarding students with field trips for acceptable behavior, students could also receive a free school jacket for superior academic performance. If a student made first or second honors with all A's and B's, then that student was awarded a school jacket. The money for this project came from a grant that had been obtained by the principal. However, once again several teachers made a reference to how few students were able to achieve the honors level. When asked why they thought there were so few, many of the teachers responded that they believed that often the students themselves were at fault. As one teacher commented:

That's the hardest thing for me is the fact that there are students here that are extremely

bright that do nothing, and that really bothers me because they have a sharp mind. They just have no motivation or incentive, no self-motivation at all, and they don't really care.

Classroom Management Systems

Attendance. In terms of attendance, the vast majority of the teachers stated that they used a seating chart for taking the roll rather than calling out individual names. These seating charts were not generally constructed on an alphabetical basis, although a very few teachers did say they arranged their students that way. When asked why they utilized a seating chart, these teachers responded that the chart, besides being the most practical means to quickly learn the students' names, cuts down on the time necessary to take attendance. According to them, they believed that taking attendance verbally simply took up too much time and provided a clear opportunity for students to become involved in inappropriate behaviors. As one teacher said very directly, "I don't call out roll every single day; that's too disruptive; it's too much dead time." Another teacher commented:

In the beginning of the year...I always started my class with taking roll....I found it wasn't working real well because I was losing a lot of time, and if I didn't get right in here and get started immediately, I had a hard time getting the children started.

While the seating charts did cut down on the time necessary to take attendance and in turn what the teachers' perceived as the opportunity for students to become involved

in disruptive behavior, most of the teachers who used this method said that they still needed a few minutes to look around the room in order to check their roll book and take care of minor details before beginning the daily lesson. To obtain that time and to quickly get students on task, many of the teachers had developed a five to seven minute routine which required students to write in daily journals. In some classes students could select their own journal topics, and in other classes the daily topic would be selected by the teacher and written on the board so that students could see the topic as they walked into the room and immediately get started writing. As one teacher explained:

Normally, my routine is when I come in the morning, I'll put my journal topic on the board. When my first class comes in...they know to immediately sit down and start writing in their journals....After the first three or four weeks, I don't tell them, "You need to write in your journals." They know...and that is part of the reason I have a journal on the board. It's something to get them started so that I don't immediately have to get up and say, "Okay, okay." That usually keeps them occupied for about five minutes....I will take roll then.

Another teacher who also utilized journal writing said that if time permitted and she didn't have too many procedural things to take care of, she too would spend time writing in her own journal. As she described this time:

While they are writing, I will take roll. If someone has been absent, I will sign their excuse and take those notes back, and get rid of that procedural kind of stuff, and then I will try to write with them every single day also.

So part of that writing time, I'm writing with them. Then after the journal time is up, we try to spend a few minutes talking about what they wrote about, and they do have time to express their opinions or express their feelings.

All the teachers using this method indicated that students would receive some type of class credit for writing in these journals. Most also said that, unless time was really short, they would try to spend a few minutes talking with the students about the things they had written. Nevertheless, the primary reason given for utilizing this method and any associated seating chart was tied to a perception that every effort needed to be made to control students' behavior within the classroom.

Finally, one teacher gave what she considered a very practical reason for using a seating chart rather than verbally calling the roll. Her comment indicated her perception of definite cultural differences when she explained that in this school students' names were often very unusual compared to the ones she found familiar. Therefore, having a seating chart, especially at the beginning of the year, enabled her to subtly and gradually learn to pronounce correctly each of her students' names.

Grading Structure. In terms of informing students about procedures related to grading their academic work, most teachers said that starting at the first of the year, they gave the students detailed verbal instructions concerning grading procedures. Most indicated that they

also gave students very detailed written explanations of their grading systems on specific documents such as grading information sheets, class syllabi, and sheets containing sample grade computations. One teacher indicated that she even had students take notes over grading procedures, and students were required to keep these notes at all times in their class folders.

Teacher after teacher indicated that students were informed and expected to understand that academic achievement in any class depended primarily on completing classroom work, completing homework, class participation, displaying effort, and adhering to acceptable behavioral rules. Students were further informed that scores on tests over subject matter, while important to the overall grade a student would receive, were not in themselves a main factor in the determination of a student's grade. Students were also told that homework, which almost all of the teachers said they gave and expected students to complete, was an essential element in determining a class grade; however, as many of the teachers explained, for the most part homework was simply work started in class and if possible completed in class. Because of the extended remarks of the teachers concerning tests and homework, these two components of the grading structure will be discussed in-depth in a following section detailing teacher expectations.

Planning. Most of the teachers provided very little detailed description on the ways they planned their daily lessons; however, most did stress that within this school they felt that it was vital to be highly prepared and organized at the beginning of each class. As indicated earlier, teachers believed that the longer it took a teacher to engage students in classroom work, the easier it became for students to become involved in inappropriate behaviors and for the teacher to lose control of the classroom. Therefore, if a teacher planned for appropriate activities to start as soon as students entered the classroom, then the students would have less opportunity to create disruptions. This belief is clearly evident in the two following comments made by teachers.

They're (reference to any new teachers) going to have to be super organized; they've got to handle every aspect of being totally prepared. These children cannot come in and wait five or ten minutes. You've got to be ready to go right then. Everything's got to be laid out; you cannot feel your way through as you can at maybe some other school. You've got to have your head screwed on straight. You've got to have your materials ready to go. You need to have thought through that lesson and maybe practiced it out a little bit at home...

If you let any time elapse...it's very easy to lose control of the classroom. If you're not prepared yourself, if you're not ready when they come in, if you don't have their period planned, "we're going to do writing and then we're going to check homework..." then it's very easy for them to just get into the habit of "I'm not going to bring any (paper, pencil, book) because I'm not going to need it." So they have to...expect you

to have something for them every day, or they will quickly just not do anything.

However, along with needing to be well organized and prepared, several teachers also stated that teachers within this school had to be very flexible in planning because things could happen so quickly to alter plans. As an example, one teacher described a day in which a major fight erupted in the hall, and teachers were asked to hold their classes until the administration could calm the situation down. The end result of this incident was that this particular teacher had one of her classes for almost two hours and wasn't able to meet with her next class. Another teacher reflecting on the need for flexibility simply said, "For this school that's the biggest thing, be organized and be prepared for anything, and be flexible because things change." Still another said, "Starting in this school, be flexible. Don't get bent out of shape with anything, just change your plans if something is not working." Another teacher reflected:

How do you explain it? You can't. I would tell them (reference to any new teachers) to be very, very organized, but if they're very organized, they'll go crazy here. Be very flexible, keep good records in spite of everything."

Finally, many of the teachers commented that in planning their daily lesson activities, they tried to use as much hands-on and visual aids (especially overhead transparencies) materials as possible. When asked why,

these teachers said that they believed the use of these materials helped to control and concentrate students' attention on the lesson rather than letting it stray to other things or even other students. Furthermore, they felt that if they could keep students' hands and eyes involved in the lesson, there was less of an opportunity for students to become involved in inappropriate behaviors. As one teacher said:

I like to use a lot of things, anything that I can let them play with their hands, to use some of their energy. Hands-on; right here! It seems like their hands are always moving like this or their feet like that (indicated always moving or flailing around) so if you have them right here, it concentrates their hands....I have small chalkboards that they use a lot. They like the small chalkboards ...they've got a piece of chalk, they've got an eraser, and they've got the chalkboard, and it's all right here, and even if they're doodling, it's legal. They're not hitting the next person or talking or whatever.

Once again, it seems apparent from this teacher's comment that controlling students' behavior was far more important than the students actually working on academic tasks.

Punishments and Rewards. When the teachers started discussing their individual classroom punishments/rewards systems, it became clear that philosophically they were split between those who believed that tangible and intangible rewards were effective measures to use in reinforcing positive student behavior and those who believed

that only intangible rewards were necessary. As one teacher who used tangible rewards remarked:

Now the rewards. Oh, I believe in rewarding; that's the big key....For example...I can't stand to walk on paper on my floor in the classroom. I would tell them, "This is your house; you should keep your house clean." So each class competed and each class could earn a party, and we had a little chart on the side, and we would check the classroom. But it was a team effort...everyone had to pitch in....It took them a while to earn it, and after they did we had a party, and they just enjoyed it; they loved it! The first group had the party first and then the second group... and it kind of caught on.

This teacher also used reward "tickets" to reinforce positive student behavior. As she explained:

I use tickets too...if I like the way they came in the room, they got a ticket. They wrote their name on the ticket and put it in a box....They would come in, and I'd give them a ticket if they had their materials, if they raised their hand. Then at the end of the day I would draw at least three or four names out of it and buy them pencils or maybe even buy them a coke. That kind of got expensive.

Another teacher stated that she had found that tangible rewards had proven to be very effective with some students. As she recalled:

...the boy was a real basketball fan of our team. He came to all of our games, which is rare. So we gave him a free pass to the rest of the games for the season, and a free candy bar and coke at activity period. We did the same for the girl; we gave her a free candy bar and coke at activity period, and sent a note home to her mother, explaining to her mother how much better she was doing in class. Well, it worked because these kids have been wonderful ever since.

Of the teachers who indicated that intangible rewards worked best with their students, most seemed to believe that their students had a great psychological need for verbal praise. As one teacher said, "You just try to compliment them on anything they're doing correctly academically ...that makes a big difference with some of them." As another teacher said:

They need a lot of praise. They need to know. So you find the smallest thing to compliment somebody, the smallest thing, but make sure you compliment. You have to dig for things sometimes, but I try everyday to praise every child in some way.

Another teacher's comments also indicated that she believed that intangible rewards worked best with her students. As she remarked:

I do a lot of praising. You know, "You did a good job." ...and I don't give out a lot of junk either; I don't give out candy and all that. I may pat them on the back, literally touch them or whatever, and it seems to work with this group. I don't know why.

However, whether the preferential rewards were tangible or intangible, it became apparent from the responses of the teachers that they believed that providing external rewards was the most effective means in reinforcing positive student behaviors. That is, at no point did any of the teachers make any reference about trying to help students build within themselves their own internal reward system. All rewards, whether tangible or intangible, were dispensed by

the teacher and were therefore dependent upon the teacher's judgements of correct and appropriate behaviors.

Teacher Expectations

Behavioral Expectations of Students

In responding to questions related to expectations, the teachers had the option of focusing first on either student behavioral expectations or academic expectations. In eleven of the thirteen responses the teachers focused first on the expectations and rules associated with students' behavior. Three of these eleven even asked when presented with the first question related to expectations if the term "expectations" applied to students' behavior or academics. They were informed that they could make their own choice, and all three chose to discuss behavioral expectations first.

As indicated in the previous section on management systems, all of the teachers, even the two who first discussed their academic expectations for students, indicated that they believed that within this inner-city school it was imperative to first deal with controlling student behavior before focusing on any academic concerns. As one teacher explained after stressing an emphasis on controlling student behavior, "...we can't get to our academics in many cases because we do have more than...three

in every class that are strong disruptives. I mean they're good at it..."

In first-of-the-year activities the teachers indicated that they would spend many hours "teaching" students the behavioral rules and expectations of the classroom. This "teaching of the rules" procedure would generally encompass such activities as teachers verbally going over the rules, providing hypothetical examples of how the rules could be broken, role modeling acceptable and unacceptable behavior, using incidents that happened in the classroom to illustrate how students could have avoided problems, and even having students practice performing acceptable behaviors. For example, one teacher indicated that one first-of-the-year activity would involve students in practicing "...sitting down where they're supposed to sit." Along this line, another teacher said:

They don't know appropriate behavior in class or anywhere....A lot of it is ignorance, and it has to be taught from the very beginning... Lots of times I talk about it when an incident happens, then that makes it relevant right now to them because they see and they discuss it in class. Then they understand...

When teachers were asked questions to probe for descriptions of other behavioral expectations conveyed to students that were not necessary in a written form such as rules, several responded that they expected the students to behave in a respectful manner toward their role as the teacher. The following sample comments reflect the

overwhelming concern of all of the teachers that students should be required to behave in what was often defined as being respectful.

I expect them to be able to be respectful... to communicate with respect to me. In other words, I will respect them if they respect me.

They know that they're not suppose to talk back to me or they will face the consequences. ...If a student called me a particular name or cussed at me, we won't tolerate that. They know what to expect from that.

...they know that "I mean what I say...I have my expectations...I want you to do what I say... these are the school rules, these are my classroom rules, and as long as you follow these, and respect me the way I respect you right now, we won't have a problem."

I expect them to respect me...I expect them to raise their hand before speaking out...I expect them not to talk back, and I have explained to them that it is not that they can't question me. I love students to ask questions, but they do not do it in a hostile manner....I expect them to treat me the way I treat them. I try very hard to always say please, and to always say thank you....I feel that I can't expect them to behave the way I want them to behave if I don't behave that way because I do believe that you teach by example.

...if it's just one or two students...I'll take whoever out in the hall and I'll just have a little conference myself and say, "Hey, this is what I expect, this is what you will do, your choices are, I want to be treated the way I'll treat you, but if you're going to dish it out, you'd better be able to take it because I'm a lot tougher than you are and I have the authority, so get your act together or you'll find yourself getting out." With some students, at least here I've found, you have to show them the bottom line. The bottom line is "I'm not going to tolerate any more. You know how to act, these are the

rules, you've chosen not to abide by them so the consequences are..."

Evidently, as implied in this last comment, any perceived defiance of a teacher's authority was deemed disrespectful and therefore warranted disciplinary action.

The teachers also expressed an expectation that the students treat each other with respect. However, the motivation for this expectation was clearly related not to any concept of a so-called "golden rule" but rather to the belief that disrespectful remarks between students would quickly lead to a classroom discipline problem. As one teacher explained:

I really harp on their behavior toward each other. I cannot stand a bully. We have quite a bit of that over here. I don't let them do it. I can't. I'll jump on that more than anything else because if I don't I'm sure to have trouble. I can kind of look over a lot of things, but not that.

However, many teachers also indicated that they did not believe that it was always necessary to call attention to all of the inappropriate behaviors exhibited by students. As these teachers explained, at times they simply ignored some inappropriate, but not necessarily in their definition, disruptive behaviors. For example, one teacher, who was completing her first year at this school, gave the following description of students working at their desks.

I have to answer a lot of questions, and they all want me at the same time. Getting them to relax and calm down, realizing that I cannot stand right by their desks and do all of the problems with them...that's the most difficult

thing....A lot of the students will say, "Well, if you can't help me now, I'm just not going to do it." (I'll say) "Oh okay, well, I'll still be with you as soon as I can." I just ignore it and I'm over there as soon as I can, and then they calm right down as soon as you're there. They didn't mean it anyway; they didn't mean they weren't going to do it. They just meant, "I'm so frustrated, I don't want to do it."

One experienced teacher had these comments related to ignoring students' language and behaviors:

You have to try to ignore a lot, a lot, a lot that probably teachers in the suburbs could not do. I have to ignore a lot of language, unless of course it's directed at me or directed at another child. I have to ignore a lot of attention getting behaviors. There are a lot of things that you just have to ignore or I'd be writing comment cards, or I'd be outside in the hall talking to a kid constantly.

Finally, one new teacher made a remark related to the practicality of ignoring some student behaviors.

...the other schools usually, you know, if you had a kid that talks back, you send them to the office. Well, you can't do that here or you'd have a whole school full of kids in the office. So you have to learn to take a lot more than you would have to in the other schools.

Evidently this teacher, as it seemed with many of the teachers in this school, did not expect that these students were capable of behaving in the same manner as students in other school settings.

Academic Expectations of Students

A de-emphasis on test scores in relationship to an overall grade was apparent in many of the comments made by the teachers. As one remarked:

I give them a syllabus at the beginning of the course, and that gives them their grading scale and the weight on the grades, that sixty percent of their grades will be daily work, twenty percent will be test average, and twenty percent will be their six weeks test....So most of the work that they do in the classroom is the extent of it....I explain to them that we have journal topics every day, and...if they turn them in and they have all five, they get a hundred, if they don't they get a zero. Tests will come from their class work, from what we've studied. We'll have a study day before the six weeks test, so they know exactly what is expected of them as far as grades.

Two other teachers also commented about the emphasis they placed on class work over test scores.

I make them keep a folder...with their work and when it's time to study for a test, they'll have the materials to study. And I count their folder as fifteen percent of their grade....At the end of the six weeks they have to turn their folders in and their assignments have to be titled, numbered in order, and they all have to be there, and they have to have a neat folder....For the students that are not as academically inclined that really bomb out on tests...that really boosts their grade... That's where the folders come in and participation grades by bringing in your book... following procedure...it really boosts them up to the point where they can end up doing real well. Their daily grades...count as fifty percent of their grade...then their tests only count as twenty percent, but then their six weeks test counts as fifteen percent.

Then I show them that a test grade will not ruin the week. We average them up and divide. It's all on a point system, and at the end of the six weeks a particular class might have a possibility of having seven hundred point. Well, only two hundred of those would be on tests, probably depending on how many unit test we've done. It would be easy to make a very good grade without making a hundred on a test.

When asked why test scores were de-emphasized, most of the teachers indicated that their students did not generally do well on tests, and consequently if a large percentage of students' grades was based on test scores, then most of their students would simply fail the courses. From these remarks it was implied that students were capable of accomplishing work in class work but not capable of mastering or retaining the work learned in class.

When the teachers began to discuss the topic of homework, it quickly became apparent that for almost all of them, their utilization of the procedure differed somewhat from the so-called traditional practice of giving students extra or additional academic work to be completed away from the classroom. Teacher after teacher explained that homework for their students often meant the completion of assignments started in class. As one teacher stated very clearly after being probed about homework procedures:

Basically my thing is if I give it, I start it in class, and I give them like fifteen problems. If they don't finish it, then they bring it back the next day. Some of them finish the whole amount; some of them don't. It takes care of the people who are slow learners.

Just as the teacher quoted above indicated that homework should be utilized primarily as a means to help "slow learners" in mastering academic materials, other teachers stated totally different reasons for limiting

outside academic work. The following quote illustrates another teacher's reasons for limiting homework assignments.

I don't give that much homework....When I give them an assignment, I'll give them class time to work on it, and one reason I do that is because the vocabulary in the book is extremely difficult for a lot of them. The reading level is a lot higher in the book than most of these students are reading on....if they don't finish their assignment, it's homework for that night.

When probed about why she used a book with a reading level that she perceived to be too high for her students, this teacher added that she felt that she had very little control over the selection of the texts used in her class. As she explained, all the textbooks on the "approved textbook list" for the county system had reading levels that were far too advanced for her students.

In addition to explaining their expectations associated with homework/extended class work, a few teachers also made comments about how they dealt with students who did not return with this work on the following day. As two teachers explained in the following quotes, they were determined that their students would not just get by without doing their "homework" assignments.

....if they say they don't have their homework, or they don't have a paper or whatever, then I will say, "Well, what do you think the answer is?" They don't just get by with, "I don't have it; I didn't do it." I say, "What's the answer anyway?" And if they didn't do it, that's really embarrassing because now they have to open that book and look and try to give me an answer. So they don't get by with,

"Well, I didn't do it," because a lot of them won't do homework at all. Most of the time when I give homework, they have enough time to finish it in class...

In this setting it's hard, it's difficult getting any kind of homework from students, and I tell them and talk with them and give them plenty of time (in class), but if they came in - I had a rule that if you came to class without homework, you had to stand while we checked it. You had to stand up. I have them stand on that piece of tape (pointed to strip of masking tape at back of classroom), and I tell them, "I stand when I teach you, and so I just don't feel that I'm asking you to do anything that I wouldn't do." They don't want to be singled out as standing, and it works. I've found it to be very effective...they'll remember the next time to have their homework. I really don't think it's humiliating...and I don't think it's degrading because I'm standing with them...as I teach.

Possibly students did not feel humiliated from these teachers' actions, but it seems that both of the teachers cited above believed that utilizing procedures that forced students to stand out in front of their peers for not completing an academic task was a practical means of ensuring that students would complete "homework."

Finally, several teachers mentioned the common practice of students not bringing pencils or paper to class. These teachers indicated that in other schools that practice might be a rarity, but in this school it was the norm. Therefore, they said that they had learned to adapt to the situation.

As one teacher stated:

A lot of teachers write kids up for not having pencils and paper. Well, that takes too much time for me, and I just have pencils and paper; I just hand them out. I get tired of

it. I mean it comes to a point of where's the benefit? I want to teach, and that's hindering me to teach, and it's hindering other students to learn, so I just give out pencils and paper. I don't know if it's good or bad. I just do it.

Whether "good or bad," the implication is very clear that this teacher has in effect lowered her expectations for even the minor student behaviors associated with academic achievement.

Teachers' Expectations of Their Own Behaviors

Over and over again, teachers emphasized that consistency and fairness were essential elements in working with and disciplining inner-city students. Also coupled with consistency, they indicated that any teacher within this school should be prepared to always follow through on any consequences for students' violations of any rules or expectations. As one teacher said very directly and simply, "Definitely consistency. I think that...if you say you're going to do it, then do it and be prepared to face your own consequences..." This concept associated with consistency was definitely related to a belief that if a teacher maintained this consistency, students would receive the clear message that the teacher was fair, dependable, and a person who kept his or her word. This belief was represented clearly in the comments made by several teachers and echoed in the comments made by many others. As many of

them said when they offered advice to any hypothetically new teachers coming into this school:

...you need to be consistent. If you say things, you need to hold forth....Don't tell them something that you can't follow through ...(or) something that you can't handle. If you tell them they're going to stay after school for two hours, you'd better be able to stay after school for two hours, and don't threaten with the administration because you don't know what the administration is going to do....When you took it down there (office) you say you can't control it anymore, then it is their place to control it, and they may not do it the way you'd like....You have to be fair but you have to be stern. They have to know that you mean business; you're going to follow through and that you care. I think that just kind of comes out by being consistent, by being fair, they know that they can depend on you.

Be firm; don't let things go by....When you call a student down the hall, if they're doing something wrong and you call them down, you make sure that they see that you're calling them and that they come right then. I guess that's the main thing. Make your word good.

...let them know you mean business. The first one that's talking when you're talking or after you've asked them not (to talk), take them out of the classroom.

...they need to be consistent; they need to be fair...you've got to know what your consequences are going to be, what your rewards are going to be, and then you have to stick to them and follow through with it because if you do one thing for one child and do something else for another child, the kids are going to get mixed signals...so be fair, treat everybody the same, be consistent with your rules, let the students know what you expect and make them follow through....Don't come down in your expectations; make them rise to your expectations....If you don't

give ground on that, then they'll come up to what you expect...

This last statement in the above quote seemed somewhat contradictory to most of the remarks made by the teachers in this entire section. That is, contrary to this teacher's pronouncement that a teacher should never come down in his or her expectations, it was apparent from comments made by most of the teachers that for these inner-city students, behavioral and academic expectations had been lowered significantly.

Keeping the Lid on Conflict

The Potential for Conflict

Teacher after teacher in their responses to several interview questions expressed an overwhelming concern with trying to control student-to-student and student-to-teacher conflicts. In many of their comments they indicated a strong belief that because inner-city students were so volatile, the potential for major confrontations was far greater within this school than possibly it was in other school settings. As one teacher said:

Here it's just explosive! It's like holding down a volcano sometimes with all these kids because they are so volatile. It's real hard to know what's going to happen next. A lot of times you think everything is under control. You think everything is fine, and then something will just go haywire....You don't know what's bothering them. You don't know what's going to set them off....

Since they believed the potential was so great, many teachers stated that they made a determined effort to try to head off conflict before it could occur. This "nip it in the bud" approach was evident in many of their comments; however, when reflecting back on major confrontations that had occurred in their classrooms, most teachers remarked that they found it easier to remember and comment first on those conflicts in which they had failed to recognize factors which had increased the likelihood of fostering or escalating the conflict.

Factors That Will Increase the Likelihood of Conflict

Teacher Anger. The most resounding and consistent pattern that emerged from the teachers' comments was their belief that the potential for conflict increased if they became angry when confronting a student. That is, the teachers expressed the belief that if they lost their tempers as a conflict unfolded with a student, then more likely than not they would also lose the ability to remain objective and unclouded in judgment. Furthermore, most of the teachers indicated that often their anger had been triggered by overacting to a minor incident. For example, one teacher candidly said:

Okay, all teachers I'd say, if they were honest, they would say they probably cause as many of their discipline problems, I mean their blow-ups, than not....You know, you'll make a mountain out of a mole hill, and pretty soon then you're in a shouting match....just

forcing the issue when you could make a joke about it and handle it another way.

Other teachers expanded on this idea by indicating that teachers cannot only cause minor problems to become major ones, but they can also force a student into such a combative position that when the conflict is finally over, the student is forced to suffer a greater penalty than possibly his or her misbehavior initially warranted. For example, one teacher related a story in which she believed her reaction to a student suspected of stealing was the true cause of the student's suspension later in the day. As she described the incident, she had privately confronted a student that she said she knew had stolen some candy from her desk, but the student had vehemently denied that he had taken any candy. At this point the teacher said that she had felt anger that the student wouldn't confess. As she went on to recall the confrontation:

I said, "(name), there's nothing I can say right now because I know you did it, and you know you did it too, and I don't know why you won't own up to it." ...and he huffed and puffed and came into the room, and oh, he just disrupted class and got worse...I eventually had to just send him out of the room, and he never admitted it, and I just knew I would get him to confess, and he never admitted it....I believe later that day he got into something and got suspended. I think it just triggered him; it just went downhill from there. He never owned up to it; never did, and he threatened to fight a lot of students in there, and he started picking on others all that day. It just set him off.

It is interesting to note that even though this teacher did acknowledge her role in the escalation of the conflict, she still seemed to believe that the student's own failure to profess guilt was the major cause of his later suspension.

Many teachers also echoed this belief that a teacher's expressed anger at a student can be the primary trigger that escalates a minor confrontation with a student into a major one. As one teacher commented:

I think the ones that end so bad are the ones that we get so upset that we cause them to get upset, and then they do things that we don't want them to do. Yet we've made them do it by stepping in their little private area, and so it ends up an office referral and they get suspended.

When probed further as to what had caused their anger, many of the teachers indicated a linkage of their anger to a perceived act or statement of disrespect from a student. For example, as indicated above in many cases the initial misbehavior of a student often involved only a minor infraction, but because the student responded to a teacher's correction with what the teacher perceived as disrespect, the teacher became angry and the entire incident quickly escalated to a major confrontation. As one teacher said when reflecting back to a confrontation with a student:

...it was mainly the nitpicky little bitsy stuff; it wasn't anything to go to the office over. It was just a persistent problem I was having with him....I felt like I was really bending over backwards, and I had talked to

him and talked to him, and he just kept pushing me as far as - I mean he would just push... to the point where I became so upset that one day when I was out in the hall, he just said he wasn't going to do anything that I said... I just reached the point where I was so frustrated with him that...I just pretty much let out all my frustrations on him by telling him that I had had it with him; that I had tried everything I could try, and I raised my voice at him, and I didn't like that. I didn't feel good about how I went off on him because I'm an adult and I can deal with it. I don't have to put him down, but I felt like I really did pretty much dish out more than what I really needed to, but there are times when the stress gets to the point where - I don't know, when I went off that day on that child, it was just me letting off steam, and I really didn't feel good about that.

As another teacher said when also reflecting back to a confrontation with a student.

This one particular child...he not only gave me problems, but this one particular day he was doing something (misbehaving), and I told him, "Go stand over there and stand there until I can get to you." When I went over to him and we were talking, he was so belligerent and defiant, and I guess it was sort of like we were going through a power struggle there, and I didn't like it because it was happening in the classroom and then I just said, "Get out; just get out!" Then I thought I should have handled that differently. I should have just let him do what he was doing in his seat until I was able to get to a point where I could have taken him outside of the classroom. I should not have lost my temper.

Within this last teacher's comments was also the clear implication that a teacher was not only likely to become angry if a student displayed a perceived lack of respect but especially if this display occurred in front of other students. Since this theme seemed to emerge in many of the

teachers' comments, it will be discussed at length in a later section.

Unawareness. Another pattern that emerged from the teachers' comments illustrated a belief that confrontations were not only more likely to end on a negative note if the teacher became angry but also if the teacher simply responded to a student's misbehavior from a position which could best be described as "unawareness." Time and time again many teachers made references to reacting to a student's minor misbehavior in a mild manner they believed to be typical or appropriate for the situation; however, the student, rather than complying with comments directed at correcting his or her behavior, violently reacted to the teacher's corrective actions. Many of the teachers went on to explain that very often they believed that possibly as a teacher they had just been a "target" of a student's misplaced hostility or frustration. Nevertheless, many of these teachers said that they felt that if they had been a little more in tune or aware of the student's initial reaction to their corrective actions, maybe they could have adjusted their approach and prevented a major conflict. In these teachers' opinions their lack of awareness to the visible responses of a student undergoing corrective measures often compounded a behavior problem and fostered the escalation of the confrontation. A story from one of

the teachers was highly graphic in representing this belief.

As she recalled:

I was on bus duty one morning and it was cold, and I guess it was in January or February, and this particular child had just come back from maybe being at the alternative learning center or some place; he had been some place and had come back in the building this morning. He had this big huge coat on and he had this hood on that had fur all over it, and he was going to breakfast, and I asked him, "Please remove your hood." He kept walking, and I moved up a little bit, and I called him by name and said, "Please remove your hood." He still didn't do it so I asked him the third time, and he ignored me again so I thought, "Well, I'll just go up and just remove it from his head." He was a very tall boy, and he started lunging at me, and I was backing up, and he was yelling at me, and I was the only teacher in the hall at the time, and I really thought he was going to rearrange my face. I really did, and then two other teachers came up...and they were able to restrain him and get him away....I came very close to being in trouble with him ...but I did not handle that one well. I should have just gone on and followed him on down and gotten maybe another teacher...I had not had him in my classroom that particular year; I had him the previous year or so. So I knew he was a very troubled child, a very violent child....That's the thing you really don't know when you make a quick decision like that. You really don't know if it's going to work this time. It may work this time; it may not work next time. I mean I did not touch him; I just slipped the hood off of his head and he did not like that. I think maybe he was looking for a reason, and I just happened to be in that position.

Physical Contact. A central issue to the above teacher's story was the fact that she reached out and physically removed the student's hood. According to her story, her touch was the trigger that provoked that

particular student's hostile actions. Over and over again, many teachers made references to a belief that a student could become volatile if they accidentally reached out and touched a student during a confrontation. As they remarked, this unawareness of touching a student would almost always result in a student becoming more hostile and the conflict becoming more explosive and negative. To illustrate that belief, one teacher conveyed a very vivid memory of a confrontation with a student in which she had absentmindedly reached out and touch the student. As she remembered:

There was a girl that would not stop talking back to me; I mean she was going to get the last word in if it was the last thing she did. And she would not leave the room; she just kept going on and on to give her friends a show because all of her friends were right there too, and she would not stop. So I took her out in the hallway and I said, "Look at me." And she wouldn't look at me, and I put my hand here (indicated to the side of face) and I said, "Look at me." ...It was not a slap or anything, but I just moved her face like this (indicated turning face forward), just to turn her to look at me, and she just went to pieces; just went to pieces! And I thought, "What did I do?" I just kept saying, "What did I do?" Because that's what I do with my children when they're not looking at me, I just turn their heads to look at me. I could not understand what I did. Well, to her, to these kids here you do not touch them because...I guess it's something to do with at home; they get hit or whatever a lot. And maybe she was thinking about it...and she just went to pieces....So anyway, touching her face was not good; I remember that....My hands are not near these students.

Presence of Other Students. In the above story reference was made to a common belief echoed in the comments

of many of the teachers that the presence of other students during a confrontation cannot only complicate an incident but can also serve to escalate the conflict. As one teacher said:

Once they get started it's like they have no control, and they just go on and on. A lot of it is to get the attention of their friends. It builds their image up they think in their friends' minds. You know, "I beat the teacher," that kind of thing.

The implication in the above quote seems to be that often students are deliberately wanting confrontation with the teacher as a means of impressing peers.

In connection with this belief that students want to impress their peers by resisting or combating the teacher, many teachers also indicated that they felt that if they ignored a student's obviously disrespectful behavior, other students would be more likely to also be disrespectful and disruptive in their behaviors. The following stories conveyed by two teachers clearly make reference to this belief that a teacher must respond decisively to any student who voices disrespect in front of other students.

One student, he just wouldn't be quiet; he wouldn't be quiet....and finally today, when I finally said, "You're going to sit down or I'm going to have to write a referral," and instead of sitting down he made a smart-alecky remark to me. Well, in front of the other kids, I realize that that's not as bad for him as it is for some because that's the only way he's ever been taught to respond, but you can't let him do that in front of everybody else because you're going to have trouble.

I asked a student to leave the room. He cursed me as he walked out the door. I didn't hear him, but the other kids did and told me what he said. I went out in the hallway to try to talk to him about the behavior. As I came to him to try to talk to him, he turned around...stood at my door and was reading the journal topic out loud, to talk over me....He didn't pay any attention, so I said, "Come on; let's go to the office." ...Took us fifteen minutes to get from here to the office because that was the pace he was walking at. By the time I got to the office, I was so angry that I was near tears. I sat him in the outer office, and I went back into the principal's office, and they were both there (principal and vice principal), and I just exploded. I said that I cannot tolerate this....Told them what he'd said when he left the classroom; I told them why I had asked him to leave the classroom in the first place....He got suspended.

Finally in ending this section on factors which can escalate conflicts, one teacher related a story which illustrated well many of the common perceptions that the teachers associated with student confrontations. In her story this teacher indicated clearly her belief that the presence of other students, a perceived lack of respect, her unawareness, anger, other outside influences, and the combative nature of the student all combined to create a very explosive confrontation. As she explained:

...I had a problem with a group of boys, and I kept them when everybody else went to lunch to talk about their bad behavior. They wouldn't sit down; they were refusing to follow every request I gave them, and there was a brand new boy that day I had never seen before. He had just enrolled that day and he was a resource student...I found out later he'd been in like sixteen different schools....So I sent everybody upstairs except for this group, and they got worse, and this boy made a comment or was laughing, and I said, "What are you laughing

at?" And he said, "I laugh at whatever I want to." And I said, "What's your name?" And he said, "(name), you want me to spell it for you?" ...very belligerent and hostile, so I punched the button for (assistant principal) to come down here...by the time he got down here this boy was saying, "I'm going to beat you up, you bitch, you honky bitch." And that sacred me very badly because that's never, ever happened before, and I don't think I've ever been afraid of any child I have taught, but that boy, he was not from here. He shouldn't have been here. He was completely out of it! ...it escalated very quickly because he had an audience, and some of them knew him anyway, and he was saving face. He had done this so many times before. He was under the Department of Human Services; they were his guardians. He had no home life at all. I don't know where his family was. He was a large black boy, and he wasn't going to take any crap off some white woman. He very quickly showed off...At the beginning I just treated him like I treated everybody else. I was saying, "When I tell you to sit down or put that up or whatever, then you have to do that, and I don't appreciate having all this problem and treating everything like a joke..." He immediately became volatile...and he just got worse and worse, and the boys that were in here...they made him worse. They laughed; they jeered; they made comments to him. They all got suspended, the whole group of them...

Factors That Will Decrease the Likelihood of Conflict

The Control of Student Interactions. A recurring theme of all of the teachers was a clear belief that they could decrease conflict in the classroom if they actively sought to control many of the verbal and physical interactions among students. For example, all the teachers stated that they were always on the alert for any type of loud verbal disagreement or hostile physical contact between students and would always respond immediately to these interactions.

Furthermore, teachers indicated that they believed that if they did not quickly stop these interactions between students, a fight would surely develop. The following comments made by three of the teachers are representative of the many references made to this belief.

The first problems I get are the ones that involve physical contact (between students). Even if I can see somebody cheating on a spelling test, I'll go with physical contact problems first because I don't want a fight in the room.

Verbal abuse to other students or to myself. If they start verbally abusing anyone. They're terrible about making fun of each other, and that disturbs class....Somebody will make fun of somebody else or take something of somebody else's and that gets them started....I have to take care of it immediately because if I didn't, well, they're going to hurt another person.

...or if they won't stop. A lot of times they'll put each other down...and they won't settle down. Just a constant back and forth between two or three people. You know, "your mamma" and that type of stuff. I'll say, "Okay, this is it!" ...and I'll have to move them to another table...because they're just going to hurt someone else or (go) out of control.

As implied in the second comment above, another interaction between students which many teachers felt demanded the immediate reaction of a teacher was any perceived act of stealing. As one teacher explained:

Problems with stealing, we have to take care of immediately because you need to find the object, whether it's money or somebody's poster or a New Kids on the Block book; you have to find it before you leave the class. I guess you deal with the problems that are

going to erupt immediately. Sometimes we'll have kids who all of a sudden their face gets red, and they're blowing up because somebody's picking on them, or somebody's said something, or somebody took something. Personally, I try to get to those students before they explode.

The teachers also indicated that teachers should demand that students treat each other with respect. Again, this demand did not seem to relate to any concept of a "golden rule," but rather to a belief that if teachers did not convey and persistently reinforce this idea to their students, confrontation could quickly develop between students and that confrontation would quickly escalate to a classroom discipline problem. For example, as one teacher explained:

One thing that I don't allow in my classroom is to put each other down. That's a no-no. When a child comes to my classroom they know Ms. (teacher's name) is not going to put up with that. Anytime there's a conflict of any kind, I'm always - my ears are open to conflict, my eyes are open to conflict because you can't learn when you're feeling bad, somebody is intimidating you and making you feel less than a person. And so that's one of the things I address at the beginning of the school year...I don't allow any child to be belittled, intimidated. That's out, and if that happens then I blow it out of proportion. I mean I make it real big the first time so that I know it's not going to happen again. I don't just brush it off because when you brush things off like that, later on it's going to be too big and "he said," "she said," and "your mamma's" will come in. I just stop it right at the beginning.

As another teacher also said in reference to verbal interactions between students:

...so I basically said, "If someone does say something to you, ignore it because if they

get a reaction from you then they know they're getting your goat, and they're going to continue to push you and say things....Here we (can) get "your mamma." That's a big provoker. That's all they have to say and they'll start swinging. I have never understood the rationale behind "your mamma," but it happens. That's just here.

Two other teachers gave the following comments related to controlling interactions between students.

Some of them lots of times, they've just gotten upset if there's some confrontation (between two students) going back and forth, a kid will come in and say (to another student) "you like a blown up pig, you ugly old" back and forth, that kind of thing. And somebody will get really upset about it or hot about it, and I'll say "that's enough!" And if it doesn't stop, then I'll take them out one at a time and let them just kind of cool off.

...if something is going on in one of our classes we'll forewarn the other teachers and say, "Hey, watch out for this situation; don't let them sit together," or "separate these two today," or things like that. And it helps the kids kind of keep themselves under control...

And finally one teacher in reference to controlling the interactions between students gave the following illustration as an example of how she tried to "teach" students about respecting each others' space.

I teach them about space. "Well, this is your space and that's my space, and we must respect each others' space. If I don't...there can be trouble....I tell them, "I don't expect you to come in my space and go through my things, and I won't come to your space and go through your things." And we discuss that rule and what it means and so forth.

The Control of Teacher Anger. As possibly one could expect from a previous section, the teachers indicated that they believed that maintaining their temper in a combative situation with a student had been a key to a successful conflict resolution. As an example, one of the specialty area teachers reflected on an incident in which one student had deliberately hit another much smaller student with a ball. As this teacher remembered, he felt that by keeping his anger under control he was able to deliver some very straight and vital messages to the offending student.

He was standing right beside the kid....He wound up and just fired that ball and hit the boy hard. Hurt him! And boy I just - everybody got still. They knew I - they thought I was going to go off. So I took him back there...and I had to count to twenty. I was mad; I was real mad! ...and I said, "(name), I'm ready to clean this...floor with you!" I said, "That's what you need...(but) that would put me on your level." I really made the boy feel bad about what he did, and he needed to be made to feel bad because what he did was bad. And I told him, "(name), you're a good kid; you're a likeable person... everybody likes you...you've got a good personality...and you've been blessed with athletic ability...but how do you think that made that boy feel when you hurt him like that in front of everybody?" And for the first time I saw some feelings in that boy come out...because he put himself on that boy's level, and he saw how that boy would have felt....Ever since then he's...never exhibited that behavior, and I think that's probably all it took; just somebody telling him.

Another teacher also recalled a conflict with a student in which she had started losing her temper but managed to correct her own behavior before pushing the student into a

higher confrontation. Again, she felt that maintaining control of her anger had allowed her to deliver straight messages to the student about unacceptable behavior. As the conflict unfolded, this teacher also became aware that backing away from the student involved in the combative situation had increased the odds of a positive conflict resolution. As she reflected on the incident:

I had to remove a child from the classroom, not particularly for anything serious, just a disturbance....I removed the child to the hallway with a blank comment card and started talking to the child at a fair distance. "I'm going to write this comment card because of 'such-and-such' behavior." Well, the child became belligerent; "I didn't do anything!" And just started going on an on. Well, I got in her face, knowing as I was doing it, this is not what I'm suppose to do. With my finger (indicated pointed at face), "You're not going to talk to me this way; you're not going to do this!" And then it came to me, "back off, back off, back off," because this child was swelling up, and it was like, "Get away!" And I did; I backed off...I took a few steps back and realized that I was getting angry and that was only going to make the situation worse. I had the comment card in my hand, and I said, "I'm going to give you a few minutes." I came back in and taught the rest of the class...and then went back into the hall a half hour later, and the child had been crying. And I went over and sat down beside the child and put my arm around her shoulder and apologized. I said, "I should not have gotten in your face, and I apologize for that, but you made me mad." And I said, "I'm sorry I made you mad, but do you understand why I put you out herein the first place?" She said yes, that she did. I said, "I'm going to write the comment card because of your behavior in the classroom." She said okay...so it turned out fine. It could have been much worse because I was at fault. I should not have gotten in her face, but boy,

sometimes you forget when they make you mad...
I'm human just like they are.

Teachers' Use of Movement to Control Students. Another pattern that emerged from the teachers' responses involved the belief of several teachers that the likelihood of conflict could be reduced if a teacher constantly moved about the classroom while at the same time he or she limited the movements of the students. One teacher very clearly indicated this belief when she said, "...each time they (students) go from point A to point B is where your discipline problems occur." Another teacher said:

I try to keep the students in their seats as much as possible, and I'll do most of the moving rather than have them come up to hand papers in. It seems that whenever they do that they can't help but slap somebody on the back or kick somebody, knock somebody's book off of a desk....It just seems like they just can't keep their hands off of each other.

Based upon that belief, all the teachers, except for one specialty area teacher, reported that they very rarely sat down within their classrooms. On the contrary, they indicated that for the most part they were always up and walking around the room. As one teacher commented:

I very rarely sit down in my classroom so
I'm always walking, and I tell them (students)
I cover thousands of miles a year and never
leave this room.

Most of the reasoning for this movement seemed to revolve around the common assumption that as one teacher said, "...walking around the room seems to be the best way

to keep control." Another teacher went further in her response and said:

I don't like to sit. I like to be higher than they are visually. I like for them to have to look up to me. Because a lot of times, if I'm seated...they would not know I was here. When I sit down, it's as if I am not here....I don't know why it helps. I think because, well...it helps with classroom management....The best way for me to maintain management of the children when they're doing seat work, or when I'm lecturing, or when they're copying notes off the board, or whatever, is for me to walk around... But I think being higher than they are makes them aware that I'm in charge. I don't know why, but as I said, when I sit here (indicating teacher's desk), I might as well not be here.

In the same light but with even more of an emphasis placed on proximity control, several teachers stated that their constant movement around the room helped to keep student behavior under control, in that the students were never really sure where the teacher was at any given moment. The following comments given by several teachers clearly illustrate this belief.

I just move a lot and that controls because the kids don't know where I'm going to be next and that kind of deters some of the problems if they think that I'm going to get over there to them. They don't know when I'm going to, so they keep looking; they have to be reserved.

Well, the thing is, it makes them aware that I'm aware and again I don't see a lot, but they don't know that. And so it makes them aware that I'm on top of what I'm doing... "I'm there to watch what you're doing." And I see a lot and I miss a lot, and I'm not saying that I see everything. There are days when I just walk; I don't even look but...they know I'm there. They can feel my presence, and

that's basically why I walk. I'm tired at the end of the day, and there are days when I sit down because they don't know that I'm not going to get up and walk, but there are days when I'm tired. I'm human but most of the time I'm up in some way. Letting them just know that they never know; that's keeping them on their toes.

I stay up. I stay up. They know I can see them all of the time. They know I'm there. There's not a second that I can't see all of them. I'll be behind them, in front of them, beside them.

I try to stay moving, that's something I learned. If they never know where you're going to be next, it's an advantage, and you can see what they're doing if you're moving... I had students say to me, "Aren't you ever going to sit down?" They don't say that anymore because they're used to it.

As well as controlling student behavior and thereby reducing conflict, many of the teachers made reference to a belief that the constant movement of a teacher about a room helps to keep students on task. As two of the teachers said:

I don't sit, period! Better not. I seriously do not sit because I need to see, they need to see me looking at what they're doing. I go around the room walking and kind of keep everybody - help to keep them on task. It really does; it makes it a little bit more difficult for them to get off task if you're walking by every single student. I may not get a chance to stop at every desk, you know, check every answer, but I know who's working and who's not and they know that I know... I think that's important...by the time it's sitting time, the class is over with. So I really don't sit during class time at all.

...I walk up and down the room, back and forth, in a circle all the way around to let them know that I'm right there and "I'm going to see you if you're writing a note or if you're doing your math homework or any-

thing else." Sometimes I might perch on an empty desk to rest, but...I generally try to walk among them and stay visible.

Many teachers also indicated that they felt that walking around the classroom was not only essential for monitoring students as they worked but also an excellent way to provide positive reinforcement and personal contact. As one teacher stated, "...they need me to pat them on the back and say 'you're doing a good job' and so I go walk around the room." Two other teachers said:

...I'll walk around and the students will raise their hands, and I'll try to get around to everybody. I'll try to get around to everybody regardless of whether or not they need help.

When I first start, I start right up here in the center front and then I try to reach everyone. I try to touch them in some way or either write a little note...and slip it on the child's desk, but I do go by every child's desk. It all depends, I may start there, and I may be here, and sometimes if there's an empty seat I'll just sit in a desk and talk with them...

The one specialty area teacher, who had indicated that she did not necessarily walk around the classroom that much, responded that most of the time her immediate presence wasn't needed by the students because they were so engaged with hands-on work that they had little interest or time to become involved in inappropriate behaviors that could lead to conflict. Furthermore, as a personal note she explained:

I remember when I was in high school, I hated my teacher to come and look over my shoulder. I couldn't stand it because it made me so nervous. So I try not to look over them. The way

the room is arranged, I can sit at my desk and I can watch what every child is doing. A lot of times I don't walk around unless it's a lesson that I need to monitor and adjust, and once they're into their lesson then I sit down and I just watch them because I enjoy seeing them, how they interact with one another. And so I just take a seat and I watch and monitor from there.

However, even though this teacher was able to limit her movements about the room because she felt that she could accurately monitor her students from her desk, the majority of the teachers seemed to believe that it was best for a teacher to always be up and walking about the classroom. Only in this fashion could students be closely watched in order to head off inappropriate behaviors and possible conflicts.

The Control of Space. The teachers' responses to questions related to classroom arrangement were quite similar in that all, except for one specialty area teacher, indicated that the best arrangement of students' desks or tables was one which facilitated the highest possible degree of spacing between students. The one specialty area teacher, who indicated that spacing was not a problem in her classroom, explained that because of limitations associated with certain facilities, students had to sit fairly close to each other and that this closeness did not really pose a problem since students were always highly involved in using hands-on materials. As already alluded to in the previous section, many teachers also felt that the farther apart

students could be placed from each other, the easier it was to monitor students' actions. However, the overall responses to questions related to classroom arrangement reflected the teachers' overwhelming concern for managing and controlling student behavior and thereby in their opinions reducing the possibility for conflict. As three teachers said:

I find that the individual desk helps with keeping on task and not talking to other people simply because they are distanced a little bit. If the desks are all pushed together in a row and they're sitting right by each other that, I think, invites trouble because of the proximity, just because they are so close together. My desks are arranged individually like that (indicating wide spacing of desks) just for that reason.

They have assigned seats. That way you can separate the one that, you know, can't sit by each other. That, you know, egg each other on, get everybody else started. I've constantly kind of changed that around. And I spread them out....I'll spread them out, and they'll know exactly where they're supposed to sit.

I like a classroom arranged where the children can get to the materials without having to stumble over things and bother and mess in anybody's desk.

Frustration at the lack of space in some classrooms was voiced by two teachers as the following excerpts illustrate.

The room I'm in now, the only way I can arrange it is one way because the boards are in the front...but we are overcrowded at this point so the rooms aren't conducive... There's one group...and its a big group, it's (indicated number) children, and its too big. There's too many kids, and I do

assign seats because it's a very, very big temptation because they're real good friends.

I had at the beginning of the year...my largest class is (indicated number) and these classrooms were built for no more than twenty. I had all my desks smooshed together...everybody was touching everybody else. That did not work! It took me six weeks to figure that it didn't work, but it didn't. They were just too close together, just too close ...and it didn't work for me; it didn't work for them.

It seems clear from these teachers' remarks that their major concern for lack of space in their classrooms is directly related to an inability to control interactions between students.

Another teacher did not indicate that her classroom was necessarily too small for her classes, but she did express displeasure at the design of the room.

...usually my classroom is spaced out, but I have six rows of four desks each because it is a narrow room. The board is on the long side so I have to spread them out that way... If it's something I don't mind them working together on, I'll let them kind of line up like that (indicated four desks pulled together in a cube form) and they can talk quietly; they can attempt to talk quietly. I've just found with this group, more so than in some of the other schools where I used to (be), this group - they're extremely loud. They don't know how to keep their voices down and how to whisper.

Again, this teacher seemed to indicate that she believed that any time she allowed students to sit in close proximity, problems would soon occur.

Several teachers stated that they had special desks set aside in their rooms in order to separate or isolate

individual students with behavioral problems from other students. These teachers seemed to believe that keeping these students away from other students could be beneficial for all concerned. As two of the teachers said:

There are a few students that have assigned seats, and I have two desks that are basically loners, and when a student just cannot - I have to repeatedly ask him to be quiet or to quit throwing paper wads or "don't disturb others, stay on task, do your work." I'll just move him to one of those seats and say, "This is yours for quite a while; don't move until I tell you to move." Once they get into one of those seats then they know that they're going to really be on their best behavior in order to get out of it, and they like to have their freedom of choosing their own seats.

I just need to isolate them away because they are that disruptive....And they do not intend to do any work, and so I could move them away... Most of the kids now want to do so well that they will ignore extreme behavior problems if I separate them so far away that they really can't get to them. They can hear them mumbling under their breath over there, but they'll ignore them for the most part.

All of the sixth grade teachers interviewed reported that rather than the students moving from room to room as class periods changed, they, the teachers, were the ones to move. This changing of rooms was unique to the sixth grade classes at this school, and according to these teachers at times it presented some unusual problems related to classroom arrangement and thereby classroom control. As one teacher reported:

That's another disadvantage this year. We change classes, the teachers do....I feel like this is not my room. I come into their

(students') room; I'm on their turf, and it's not good for management either. I think you set the tone, if you're standing outside your door, and your desk is in a certain area, and you have more control over the seating chart ...but when you're working with seven other teachers, we have to kind of go with the flow... Then also, I don't want the kids messing with the blinds, or the windows, I do not like that, I never have, and yet I can control that in my room, but if other teachers let them in these rooms, then really in your thirty minutes you can't come in and say, "You can't do that."

According to the sixth grade teachers interviewed for this study, this unusual procedure of having middle school teachers change classes rather than the students was a result of trying to control problems that they believed were associated with the maturity levels of the students. As one teacher explained:

...I think the reason we've all gone with this and not had our own rooms is because we can't get them into class if we let them out. They're too immature, and maybe this will make them worse in the seventh grade. This is an experiment this year, maybe it'll be worse, but at the first of the year we had it planned where we would have...a morning break...(with) seven teachers out in the hall, a ten to fifteen minute break would turn into a...twenty-five minute break. And I know you're sitting there thinking, "Surely you all could do better." But that's the way it was with us, and we tried real hard. Real hard!

One specialty area teacher, who worked with students from all the grade levels, also commented on the perceived maturity level of the sixth grade students. As this teacher remarked:

Sixth grade shouldn't be in middle school! They shouldn't start middle school until seventh grade. That's my opinion. They're

not mature enough to change classes. They can't handle the freedom.

However, in closing this section it is worth noting that one sixth grade teacher had discovered a means to use this unusual situation to her advantage. She simply incorporated it as part of her reward system for good student behavior. As she explained:

I try to cater to what they want, to get what I want....I'll move them around. These kids are in this room all day long. I would not want to be in this one seat all day long. So if they express a desire to move, and if their behavior is very good, then I'll let them move. But I'll tell them, "You will need to move back when the next teacher comes in here."

In short, this teacher indicated that controlling the placement of students in the classroom could be utilized to manipulate student behavior.

Subtle Means of Control. Whereas all of the teachers responded that a few inappropriate behaviors required the immediate attention of a teacher, they also indicated that other inappropriate behaviors could be handled in subtler ways in order to reduce conflict within the classroom. They expressed the belief that often they could avoid embarrassing a student or pushing a student into a confrontation if they tried first to quietly correct the student's behavior. As one teacher remarked, "Your cheating problems, problems of writing notes...we try to deal with problems like this in private to avoid embarrassing a student." Two other teachers said:

I believe that many children, all they need is a good hard look, and that takes care of them or, you know, just a whisper....Or sometimes they need to see their names on the board. I'll use that approach sometimes, just their name up there, and if there's no more misbehavior for the period, the name gets erased or something. But they need a warning...

I'm teaching as I walk and often I'll just touch them on the shoulder or stand beside a particular student. Or if I see one playing with something, I'll just take it and just put it in my pocket and I won't say a word to them.

However, this last teacher went on to add that if the student did not respond to the subtler means to correct the behavior, she would use more direct methods.

Sometimes I tell a kid, "I've called you down five times," or "I've stood here," or "I've asked you nicely to quit," or whatever. "Next time I write out a referral and send it to the office." I don't have many referrals. I think a lot of what I do is "nip it in the bud," and I don't let it get to that point that it's overdone.

Another teacher made a very similar response when she said:

...I mean little things, I would just call on and not say any more about it. I would go on and if it continued I would say, "Sorry, I'm going to have to write you up." And I would just write them up. Because if I'm in the middle of explaining, I can't come out in the hallway and talk to them like I would like to.

Other teachers made references to trying not to overact to the minor inappropriate behaviors of students. As one commented, "...but little words between each other, I try not to overact to because I'd be overacting all of the time.

...usually it'll work itself out." Another teacher remarked:

If it's a minor infraction, I'll joke; I'll kind of make a joke, you know. If you can joke about it...let them know by a joking manner that they've done wrong, lots of times that will stop them, and it'll straighten out.

Teachers' Admission of Own Inappropriate Behaviors.

Several teachers also pointed out another factor they believed could reduce or lessen conflict in the classroom. This factor was associated with a teacher's ability to apologize to a student for the teacher's own inappropriate behavior. These teachers expressed the belief that the ability of the teacher to apologize not only models correct, acceptable behavior, it also helps in establishing a positive rapport with students and on some level "humanizes" the teacher. As two teachers illustrated:

...and I later went to that child, and she was huffy and puffy, you know, kind of huffed up. And I talked with her...went to her personally, and I told her..."I'm sorry if you indeed weren't talking. I'm sorry, you know, because I thought you were." ...I tried to explain my point of view to her, and it worked very well....I tried to tell her all I could, what I was seeing, what I was making my judgment on, and that's the way I called it, and if she really wasn't talking, I was sorry, but that's the only thing I knew at that point. And I said, "If you weren't talking, I'm sorry, but I had to do something, move you or something." And she was, you know, she said it was fine, and that worked out well.

Usually I try to make the kids feel good about themselves rather than making them feel bad, but I have bad days too, and if I'm wrong, if I said something or done something to maybe hurt a student's feelings, I'll come back and

say, "Hey, I was really upset with you, and I really didn't mean this. What I don't like is the way you were acting. It's not that I don't like you; it's that I really didn't like the way you were behaving, and there's a difference." I'll explain that to them, and they'll - I feel like I have a pretty good rapport with the kids. I think we get along pretty well.

However, what is really clear in the above remarks is that these teachers didn't really admit or believe that they had wrongly accused the offending students but rather that they simply presented their accusation in an inappropriate manner.

The Struggle for Power

Most of the teachers indicated that they truly believed that most of their student-to-teacher conflicts arose because so many of their students were constantly engaged in a struggle for power or control of the classroom, and therefore students were constantly testing teachers to see if they would remain consistent in enforcing classroom rules and procedures. Many referred to this testing process as a student game. As one teacher in a specialty area said, "...they're doing it (misbehavior) just to see if they can get me started; to see how far they can push me." The following examples are also highly representative of the many references made by the teachers of the games students played to test teachers.

And they tested me every second to see what I was going to do, and what I learned real fast was not to react to everything; to ignore a lot of the behaviors that weren't real-

ly directed at me. Because if they thought they could get to you, then they would just keep going. If they thought it wasn't going to bother me, then they wouldn't do it because it wasn't fun any more....The major things were handled consistently. The more they saw I was consistent, the more they realized I was serious. (teacher completing first year at the school)

...it has now become a game to see if "you can get Ms. (teacher's name) to say shut up" because I will not do it. I've said it twice in the one hundred days, more or less, that I've been here, and they're keeping count... because the second time I said it they turned around and said, "See, she said it!" (another teacher completing first year at the school)

...they test you all year long; like I said, if they can get you into a pattern of "let's have free time," or "let's do this," or "let's do that." Yes, they're constantly testing me. They're testing me like that, and they're also testing their limits on behavior; "What can I say; how much can I say; how far can I go with her?" And I think I'm pretty straightforward and truthful about the kind of person I am and what I'm going to take and what I'm not (going to take), and I don't think it takes them long to figure out how to approach me and how they should act. (teacher with several years of experience at the school)

But if you get to the point in the classroom where they know you're angry and they know you're out of control, then they know they've got you, and that's right where they want you. And I've watch other kids do it on purpose to other teachers....They know they're doing it...I've even told them to stop, you know, but they'll look at her (another teacher), you know, and say, "She's going to do this, or she's going to get angry about that." And they can do it. They'll do it on purpose to you. (another teacher with several years of experience at the school)

Evidently the teachers also understood the concept of games within a classroom. As an example of the many

references teachers made to dealing with students in a fair and consistent manner, one experienced teacher said:

...I think that they understand that I play no favorites and I play a fair game. A lot of the kids will come to me and say, "So-and-so is being unfair," and I will say, "Well, I can't handle that classroom; in my room things will be fair, and I can't handle what's going on in another classroom." I really think fairness is a big key and consistency. You have to say the same thing every day, day in and day out.

Another pattern that emerged from several of the teachers' comments related to the struggle for power in the classroom was a belief that some students often tried to intimidate teachers by threatening them with parents. Most of the teachers indicated that these "threats" should never under any circumstances be ignored. As one experienced teacher strongly recommended:

One important thing, if a student ever threatens you with their parents, don't wait, don't ignore it, don't ever ignore that. You take that student if you can to the office to call home, and you let that parent know that the child made the threat because often the child gets home to the parent before the teacher gets to the parent and...some children can poison their parents' mind....If a child threatens you just go take care of it right then....Don't be intimidated. They will intimidate you...and a new teacher could be intimidated by that. Say, "Okay, let's go call them (parents) now." Call their bluff in other words.

Another experienced teacher also commented on her belief that students try to intimidate teachers as she

reflected on her first few days within this school. As she said:

...I was a new teacher here and the first time a kid said, "I'll bring my mamma up here after you," and "you're prejudiced," and all that stuff, I was real, real intimidated. I let it get to me, so I would tell the (new) teacher first of all not to be intimidated; that this is normal for...them to say that....I'd tell them first of all...they (teachers) are the boss, and that they are in control, and that they have to take control, and that by taking control doesn't mean showing it down their (students') throats as much as just being consistent.

This last remark is clearly representative of the predominate belief of the teachers in this school that all power, authority, and ultimately all control had to reside with the teachers and that students had to submit to this control.

The Role of Leadership

The School Office - The Last Resort

As indicated in an earlier section, the teachers stated that the school administration was primarily utilized by them only as a last effort in disciplining a student. That is, the school office was brought into the discipline process only if a student had reached the end of all procedures related to disciplining within an individual teacher's classroom or if a student had displayed some major or potentially dangerous behavior (fighting, bringing a

weapon to school, bringing drugs to school, etc.). As one teacher said, "...the only times I use the office are for potentially volatile situations and just to expedite the process." Or as another teacher said:

...the major things, the knives that they (students) bring in to school, or if it's a fight, or if they harass somebody; those are major and the office takes care of them.

In relation to the school office being utilized as a last resort, still another teacher said:

...I would not be there if I had not tried everything. That's the last resort....I like to handle the problems that are in my classroom, using what resources (I have), but sometimes it doesn't work, and it has to go to the office.

Furthermore, all of the teachers stated that when a discipline problem was referred to the school office, they felt that at this school the administration, especially the principal, had been very supportive of teachers in their positions as front line disciplinarians. They went on to explain in depth their meaning for the term "supportive" and expanded their explanations to include their beliefs concerning the appropriate or best roles for administrations within an inner-city school.

Supportive Administrators

The term "supportive" took on many meanings to these teachers, and one meaning dealt with the principal (or vice principal) displaying support for a teacher's decision to

bring a discipline problem to the office. As one teacher explained, "I want them to have the attitude that I did all I could. I tried everything with this child, and I need their help." Or as another teacher said, "...when I take a kid down there, they know that I have used every means possible...and I'm open to their suggestions if they've got one..."

Other teachers expanded on this idea and stated that they wanted the administration to not only support their decision to bring a student to the office but also to display in front of that problem student support for a teacher's disciplinary actions. In these teachers' opinions they expected that if they were forced to refer students to the office that the administration would convey a message to these problem students that teachers' disciplinary procedures had the backing of the school office. As two teachers stated:

I think the administrators simply need to back up the teacher,...and just let the child know, "We're standing behind the teacher. You have to follow the rules. You're not able to call them names. You're not able to back talk."

(Administrators need to)... support you in what you're doing, be it right or wrong. When you are confronted with a child...they need to support you and in private if it's not the way they want to handle it, then in private discuss it with you, but support is what I look for.

Based upon these comments, "supportive" to these teachers seemed to mean that school administrators should function as the primary enforcers for teachers' disciplinary decisions so that students would receive the clear message that a teacher's authority was never to be questioned.

Displaying support for a teacher's action in front of a problem student also extended to displaying support in front of the student's parent. As one teacher said in connection with the principal of this particular school:

Whenever we (teachers) have a conference that we think, "Oh, this parent; it's just going to go crazy," we'll ask her to come, and she (the principal) is just so supportive....I've never seen that kind of support in any school I've ever been in. They (administrators) usually are afraid of the parents from where I've been. They have been afraid of the parents, and they won't stand up for the teachers....She really stands up to these parents and tells them exactly what she sees. I mean a lot of principals won't have enough guts to do that....(She will tell them) "You're not following through at home" or "You're not praising this child." I mean some of these parents will come in and verbally abuse them (students) right in front of you...and she'll point that right out. You know, "Listen to yourself; do you understand what you're doing?" ...She (is not) afraid... because parents can (be)...so quick to go to court...but she's really trying to help, and I think they (the parents) realize she is really trying to help.

Therefore, "supportive" to this teacher seemed to mean that school administrators were to stand up to parents for the teachers and if necessary lecture parents on the correct measures to take with their own children. It is also interesting that this teacher seemed to imply that parents

were generally considered to be adversaries in the disciplining process.

High Visibility of Administrators

Another point brought out by these teachers was their assertion that building level administrators should be highly visible to students. As one teacher stated, "...administration needs to be visible. They need to be waking around the halls; they need to be popping in classrooms." The main assumption connected to this belief was the idea that possibly the more visible the administrators were in the school, the less the discipline problems could be. Several teachers expressed such a belief as the follow excerpt illustrates.

I think the administration needs to make themselves visible in the school and in the classroom and walk right in here....I don't mind that at all, some teachers do, but I don't...I would like them to be more visible in the classroom, and in the halls, and at school functions. I think they need to do this because the kids know if they're not here; they know. Even if they (students) don't act out, they know who's in charge and who's not, and when they're present and when they're not present.

Again, the implication in this last comment seemed to be that school administrators should represent the head disciplinarian in a school composed of many teacher disciplinarians.

One teacher even expressed the opinion that part of this high visibility for an administrator within an inner-

city school should include the administering of corporal punishment. This teacher, while definitely in the minority, stated very strongly that:

I'm a firm believer in paddling, personally. I don't like to do it; nobody likes to do it, but we've not been paddling this year, and our discipline is worse than it's ever been....the assistant principal (used to) do it.

When probed with another question as to why this experienced teacher, who had gained all teaching experience within inner-city schools, thought paddling was so important in relationship to discipline, the response was:

In an inner-city school you're going to get some bully kids; you're going to get some mean kids, bad kids....There's a hard cord of five or ten percent that's bad kids. You know what I mean by bad? The good kids aren't allowed to learn, and that's what really burns me up. And there's not (enough) room in the alternative learning school for them....We have a lot of kids going around school and they're scared; they're intimidated. And we used to get the badest, the meanest boy in the school, and take him out in the hall, you know, if he (had) hit somebody, or intimidated somebody, or scared somebody, and we would paddle him....The assistant principal did it. You take the biggest, badest, meanest kid in school out there in the hall and give him two licks... and that thing will resound all the way down the hall and...it helps discipline in a place like this. These inner-city kids are tough...

Evidently in this teacher's opinion the utilization of corporal punishment was an effective means of disciplining a student and possibly the best way to spread the word that in this school teachers and administrators were the real bosses.

Teachers were also quick to point out those things that could interfere with the high visibility of administrators.

As two commented:

I think it's hard in this day and time. All these bureaucratic mess(es) they've got now for the administration to do; what they're suppose to do to administrate the schools. You know, they're having to deal with so many tangents (such as) career ladder, evaluations, and paperwork.

I think they (administrators) are swamped. I think that there are so many problems that no one, no two people, and that's what we have, could handle it. I think they need some help... I think they do an admirable job, given that they only have twenty-four hours in their day like everyone else....They have to deal with so many things that don't even have anything to do with school. They deal with getting clothes for the children, and being sure that they have food, and being sure that we can take them to (special school for behavioral problems). And we don't just deal with the normal school functions here. (We try to) be sure they have Christmas presents, I mean we deal with it all. And maybe they do at other schools, but I don't think they do on this magnitude.

It appears that in these teachers' opinions, administrators in this particular inner-city school needed to be far more than "paper pushers."

Administrators as "Social Workers"

As alluded to in the last quote, a few teachers seemed to imply that they believed that it was possibly necessary and unavoidable for administrators in an inner-city school to be very concerned about and involved in students' home situations. As two of teachers commented:

...she (principal) works all the time on calling to get special help for these kids. ...but she's truly a social worker from the heart. She's getting help for these families, and trying to do her best in that respect, and trying to keep the lid on the school, and she's done an excellent job.

...she (principal) knows a lot of programs to get these kid into as far as counseling, as far as getting clothes for them and so on. Runaway shelters, she hooks kids up with that if she thinks they're being abused. I just think she's excellent as far as getting programs started in and out of the school.

The assumption in the above comments seemed to be that if administrations were successful in finding help for students' families, then students would stand a better chance of being successful in school. However, once again a few teachers made references to a belief that building level administrators were limited in their capacity to perform other job functions because of interference from the central administration. The teacher who earlier in this section made a reference to a problem of building administrators having to deal with so much "bureaucratic mess" went on to comment, "I think people in downtown administration need to be aware that their administrators (principal, vice principle) are not being able to do their jobs." Another said:

Now as far as administration downtown, that's another problem we have....I'm sure if I worked downtown in administration that I would realize what all those people were doing, but as it is now we see these people come in and out of this building, and they can't get us materials, and they can't do this, and they can't do that, and we don't realize maybe what

their jobs are, and if they do anything. I think there should be less administration downtown and more administration in the schools ...but I think that's an inner-city (teacher's) attitude.

Administrators as True Leaders

It is worth noting that several teachers made reference to a desire for the members of the administration to serve as true leaders of the school. These teachers expressed the belief that in this capacity the administrators, especially the principal, should work with teachers in finding real solutions to overall school problems. As one teacher said:

I think that the principal should set the tone of the school....I think that he or she should encourage teachers to have more interaction, plan different activities that will develop high self-esteem, have periodic assemblies telling the students what he or she expects, and that we are not going to settle for anything less, and talk with the teachers... speak with others and try to come up with all kinds of plans that will help our school and make us all real proud.

Another teacher was even more direct and blunt in expressing her desire for leadership from administrators.

As she remarked:

...We are the principal's classroom, and we need to have that guidance. We need to know when we're doing something right and when we're doing something wrong instead of when it comes to the time of getting our hand slapped....I just feel the administrators need to come around and make observations, check on the teachers, see what's going on, see what working. We need to sit down and have active workshops where we sit there and we work. We don't need to have people coming in to handle our problems, like...all these wonderful assertive discipline programs that may work in other

schools. We know what works here, and we need to sit down, and we need to work together...

This teacher's comments clearly expressed her belief that school administrators should take an active role in finding real solutions to discipline problems. Furthermore, her comments, as with many of the comments from other teachers, also reflected the belief that these real solutions would not be derived from outside sources but could only come from the teachers and administrators working within the school. Evidently students and parents were not considered as possible contributors in the process of finding solutions to the problems within this inner-city school.

The Influence of the Home Environment

Home as a Source of School Problems

In almost every response to questions related to student behavior and academic achievement, teachers continually expressed the perception that for most of their inner-city students the true source of students' misbehavior and lack of academic achievement could be found in the home life of the students. That is, the teachers clearly indicated a strong belief that students' home environment was a primary contributor to students' lack of academic success and the inappropriate and sometime violent behaviors manifested by students within the school environment.

Because of the perception of the home environment as being threatening or nonsupportive, most of the teachers indicated that they had altered many of their behavioral and academic expectations of students.

A Threatening Environment

As indicated in an earlier section, teachers expressed a definite belief that it was necessary and essential to first control student behavior before attempting to address academic concerns. When teachers were questioned further as to why they thought students' behavior was such as a problem at this school, several made reference to a belief that some students couldn't help misbehaving because of things that were happening to them at home. These teachers indicated that they felt that many of their students were forced to face severe and sometimes threatening problems in the home and that whenever these students walked into school, those problems often came with them. As one teacher said, "I mean if they have emotional problems or if they have a lot of things going on at home, they can just go off." Many teachers went further in their comments and stated that they believed that students often became violent in the school simply as a means of releasing anger generated from the home situation. As one teacher commented concerning an incident in which she was almost physically attacked by a student:

...he was a very troubled child, a very violent child, but a lot of times coming

from home first thing in the morning, I don't know what the child has been through. That's the thing you really don't know when you make a quick decision. I think maybe he was looking for a reason, and I just happened to be in that position....I think it's the children in general that we're working with today. They've got so many problems that they're coming to school with, and we don't know what's gone on the night before...or exactly what their home life is like.

Two other teachers also made remarks concerning their perceptions of students' threatening home situations:

...there are so many things that we don't know about these children as teachers, and I've learned about them just by being in this position...these children come to school some days, and they may have seen their mother get beaten up or their father shoot drugs or their brother shot, and you can't teach a child in that state of mind....

Oh, they have just got so much hate inside from home situations. They have so much hate inside that we (teachers) have to deal with... We had so many fights....It's because of the home situations, I think. They have a lot to deal with.

Still another teacher related a story in which she felt strongly that a student's outbreak of severe hostility at school probably stemmed from a terrible home environment. As she stated:

...but I had a student...a smart young lady who was being sexually and physically abused at home by a stepfather....and her mother was into drugs or alcohol...and I think she had been taken out of the home on several occasions, she and her sister. She was a very angry, bitter young lady, very confused, very mixed up....One day she became agitated (with another student)...there wasn't a whole lot I could do except tell the office a fight was getting ready to start...I just stood in front of her and backed up and then when I saw the

assistant principal coming, I just let her go, and he grabbed her and she started fighting. I didn't know then how she felt about men, and I didn't know that she had been abused, but when that happened, she just really got upset.

A few teachers said that they believed that sometimes their students were given very different messages from their school and their home on the appropriateness of fighting.

As two pointed out:

We had a conference yesterday, and the mother told us..."I teach my son to hit back if anybody bothers him!" Well, she doesn't see him in class throwing paper wads at everybody, and then he says so-and-so hit me, so he hits them back....I could be encouraging something that the parents do not encourage. Like I strongly disagree with fighting in school, but if the parent has told them....Most of the time it's the fathers who are concerned about this area, and they don't want their child to be a wimp, and they don't want their child to be picked on so they encourage fighting.

...A lot of it I think they've gotten from home. They feel like, "Hey, somebody does something to me man, forget it. It's my right." They have been taught at home you don't take anything from anybody...

From the above comments these teachers really seemed to be saying that many of the values taught in the home environment were often contradictory to those that they perceived to be the acceptable and appropriate values taught in the school.

A few teachers even indicated that they believed that the parents themselves were often the source of students' hostile behaviors and inappropriate language. As two commented:

I have found that most of the parents I have met don't understand themselves how to handle their own behaviors, and so we see it in their child.

They get yelled at so much at home and the reason I know that they do is because when the parents come over here for a parent conference, I've seen a parent come over and knock their child up and down the hall. We've had to stop one parent from doing that, physical abuse here at school. Then...you can hear the parent cussing the child out, doing it in front of all of us. A parent will absolutely raise their voice, yell and cuss that child out up one side and down the other and just tell them, "I'm not going to put up with this bull," and a lot worse. They just really cuss them out, then they wonder where the child comes off using that kind of language at school and being very vocal and stuff.

Three other teachers also reflected on the belief that the home life of students was often the real source of the inappropriate language and behavior of many of their students. As they said:

I've been told from some of the kids, "Hey, Ms. (teacher's name) let me just tell you, if you're in our apartment and somebody's on the phone, our apartment's got two bedrooms and a living room and a kitchen, and you've got to talk over the T.V. and the people and you've got to yell to be heard." And I guess I started thinking about that and after taking a few of the kids home and seeing where they live and their situation, I can see where they would be louder...

Lots of times I talk to them and a lot don't know what they're doing. They'll come up and start yelling and that's because they yell at their family, their parents, and here they're yelling at us (teachers), and they don't even realize they're yelling so you just kind of say, "Wait a minute, how are we suppose to talk?"

...What I'm talking mostly is behavior, you know that these kids...they'll say something back where, you know, if it happened in any other school...the people would probably say, "Oh, I can't believe that!" But here...they don't really mean anything by it; they've just got to say something. I think they get that mostly from the home.

In closing this section it seemed evident that the overall perception of the teachers was that they couldn't expect their inner-city students to behave in the same manner as students within another school environment. Primarily, teachers seemed to believe that because students were often taught inappropriate behaviors in the home or because students were so emotionally traumatized from home situations, they couldn't be expected to behave in an acceptable fashion in the school. Consequently, teachers in many cases indicated that they had simply lowered their behavioral expectations.

Lack of Academic Support

Many teachers when asked about their academic expectations and procedures made reference to a belief that often students' home life was not supportive or conducive to academic achievement. As one said very directly:

...they don't have adequate support at home, and maybe they don't have a place, and their motivation is not there...that's a lacking feature of this environment, but I feel that they can gain more while they're here because I can give them the proper support.

Another teacher was much more blunt in stating her beliefs about the home life of students who consistently

made low grades in her class. As with the teacher above, she speculated that influences from students' home life were contributing factors to their indifference to academics. As she commented:

I don't think they see the value in education at all. I don't think they think it's necessary for them. I don't think they think they need it....They say, "I can read enough to read road signs. I can read enough to...order something at McDonald's. So what do I need an education for?" They place no value on it at all. A lot of the reason, I think, is because their parents did not get an education, or if they did, they had a very bad experience in school, or they're not working now and still drawing a check. So that's what I think. I don't think they see any reason for, you know, "Why should I do that. I have to be here, but I don't have to do anything, and you can't make me." And I can't, and they know that.

Besides implying that parents passed along an indifference to education, this teacher also implied that some parents instilled in their children a dislike for school because possibly they had had a "very bad experience" in their past schooling. What this teacher seemed to be saying was that she believed her inner-city students often reflected the perpetuation of many parents' hostile attitude toward education in general. She made no reference to the possibility that this cycle could be broken if teachers tried to focus on making students' experiences more positive within the school environment.

Another teacher talked briefly about her experiences in trying to enlist parental help in getting students to tu

in their class work. Her frustration was very apparent as the following excerpt illustrates.

Lots of times I'll call home and tell the parents...if a child is giving me trouble whether it's behavior or academics....Lots of times I'll get work that way; I've gotten some parental help that way, at least for a week or so. It doesn't really work that well, the parents kind of slide on it as well or they'll say, it's a lot of, "Yes, we'll do this; we'll do that." And they don't; they don't follow through.

Again the implication in the above comment was that often parents didn't seem to care whether or not their children performed well in school.

One teacher, while talking about her procedures related to homework, speculated that possibly some teachers were unrealistic in their demands for students to turn in vast amounts of homework each day. As she explained:

I don't give very much homework. We have other teachers who do, and I feel like it's important. I think we should give homework to teach them responsibility, but it is a real burden here to ask for homework because there is such a large majority that will not bring it back....One thing, when my children at home bring homework, my husband helps, or I'll help, and they can go to their room away from the television set, and they can get it done. Where these children, they live in homes where maybe three generations are, nobody that will help, and no place to do it, and they have not been taught responsibility in any way. So it's an extra burden on them.

Apparently from this teacher's remarks she truly believed that vast differences exist between the home life of her own children and that of her inner-city students. Furthermore,

because of these perceived differences she had lowered her academic expectations for her students. She seemed certain that for most of her students, there was no one in the home environment who would or could help students on homework assignments.

Just as the teacher above, many of the teachers indicated that they had lowered their academic expectations because they believed that students did not and could not receive adequate support from the home environment. For example, another teacher when questioned on the subject of homework responded that she felt that her supervision was desperately needed in helping students understand the academic material, since that supervision and help was often not available in students' home environment. As she explained:

Okay, well it's not actually technically "homework." Each day they are given ample time to complete it in class with my supervision because that's what they need. They need me to be there to say, "Oh wait, see what you're doing?" I give them more time in class to do the assignment - let's call it that rather than homework - in this school than I would in another school primarily because...a lot of these children don't have a parent or a model at home who can help them, so they need me here...

One other teacher clearly echoed the above quote as she said:

You know of course we're all homework oriented, but I've found that that was more of a hassle, and so if I have something to do, I find that I can accomplish more by setting

aside time in class...and to help them because that's basically what homework is. It's reinforcement time, and if you have trouble, somebody is there to help....So I know that they're getting the adequate time, and they're getting the help....So I'm not a big advocate on homework, and again that just because I've learned it becomes a hassle ...but it works in some situations...like in math, but they need that adequate help at home, and it's just not there in most cases. So why frustrate them and me when I can get more out of them in the classroom?

In summary, it was clear from the teachers' responses that they did not require nor did they expect their inner-city students to perform as well academically as possibly students within another school environment. Primarily, most teachers seemed to base their academic expectations on a belief that adequate academic support was just not available in the home environment, and since that support was not available they simply did not assign extra academic work or they assigned very little.

Lack of Emotional Support

Many teachers also indicated that they believed that many of their inner-city students received very little emotional support within the home environment and that this lack of support often kept students from even believing that they could be successful in school. For example, one teacher said:

A lot of it is self-esteem, and they don't feel like they're ever going to make it... Some of the home situations aren't real good so it's a little bit more understandable when you see that there's nobody at home

pushing or giving you a value for education... Where you have someone at home that is continuously putting you down and more of a mental type of abuse, "You can't do anything and will never be anything." It's the old "criticize the child" type of thing.

Other teachers indicated that they believed verbal praise was very effective for controlling and reinforcing positive student behavior simply because students received very little if any praise at home. As one teacher commented, "A lot of it is just praise verbally. They don't get that (at home), and so I just baby them to death if I think they're doing well." Another teacher was much more direct in her remarks related to a particular student's home life and why praise at school worked so well with this student. As she said:

I think that in (student's name) case just having somebody to say - "You're improving; you're doing a real good job, and we really like the way you're improving." - I think she needed that because she has two older sisters that go to (a high school), and they laid out constantly. One of them is sixteen and pregnant and taking up all the attention at home... That's the way you get attention evidently at home is that you stay in trouble or you lay out of school. She's never been a behavior problem, but she just wouldn't come to school, and I think just having somebody say - "We really like that you're coming to school, and you're doing

your work" - and just that positive attention, I think she craved that more than anything.

Finally, one other teacher made the following comment related to praise and students' life outside the school.

I've reached the point now that if I see someone who often times has difficulty staying in their seat, I will say to them, "I like

the way you're sitting in your seat today," or "Great, you've brought your books." I mean anything. Most of these children are so starved for attention, it is unbelievable! They don't know how to take a compliment because they have received so few in their lives, and they don't believe you because nobody has ever said anything good to them or about them...

As a closing note, many teachers mentioned the problem of maintaining consistency in their discipline procedures when they had so many students who were so emotionally disturbed as a result of severe problems occurring within the home environment. Although they had earlier stressed the belief that consistency in enforcing rules was essential with inner-city students, they stated that at times it was often difficult to require the same behaviors from some very troubled students. Again, they indicated a belief that the roots for some of their students' emotional problems were to be found in the home. Nevertheless, the end result was that teachers often found themselves contradicting their own beliefs about consistency and sometimes feeling very frustrated in the process. The following quotes from several teachers are highly representative of the many comments made regarding this problem.

You get to know certain students. We have some students who have some emotional handicaps here that you don't handle maybe in the same way you handle other kids. Usually it's the same kind of basic procedure, but there are some that you have to adapt to and change because of either outbursts, or, you know, something that's happening with them in the home. Not everything is black and white, not all the time. It can't be. Although consis-

tency is probably the best thing, and it is good; you have to be very, very consistent, but sometimes there are other situations that do come up, and you have to take other things into account such as what's happening in the home...and it's better sometimes if you can address those differences not in front of the whole group so everyone else doesn't get to know you're bending the rules.

So we adapt the system if there are specific kids that we can see are really making strives or having a really hard time. We will adapt our procedures...by either going straight to the administration with a child who is exhibiting horrible behaviors that are not changing no matter what we do, and hopefully have them recommend either a social worker to work with them and their home situation or go on to a different program. If they're exhibiting very positive behaviors, we try to do something very positive for them because they probably don't get that in the home, but on the whole that program (grade level rules) is my consistency...because I follow that procedure as best as I can.

And in several of the classes we have some (students) that wander around all the time, but they're not suitable for the classroom. They've got so many problems in the home. One student ...he was just a problem child, and when we sent him to (school name) they sent him back because they said they could not handle him. Well, I'm not a special ed. major, and yet this really was a special ed. school, and it's discouraging if they can't handle him and send him back... Obviously he can't go by a set of rules... So that's my discipline problem, that not everybody is on the same road, and they're never going to be, because they've got so many problems especially in the home, and yet it's hard to draw the line. Who do we make go to detention; who is not capable of following this discipline procedure? Students that are capable...don't understand it. One student in the class is bothering everybody, and he's not getting punished on a daily basis like they would be. So as usual the world is not fair, and it's a real problem...

So once again, as illustrated by these last remarks, many teachers indicated that they felt that they had been forced to lower their behavioral expectations for many of their students because these students had been so severely damaged by the home environment.

CHAPTER V

OVERVIEW, MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the Chapter

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Introduction
- Controlling Students
- Teacher Expectations
- The Home Influence
- Closing Remark

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain descriptive information about teachers' perceptions of effective classroom management within an inner-city middle school. Thirteen teachers, who were all currently teaching within one inner-city middle school in Tennessee, were interviewed about their classroom management behaviors.

Initial selection of teachers for the study was based on the principal's recommendation and on the teachers' expressed willingness to be interviewed. All those who volunteered to be interviewed had served as regular classroom teachers for at least three years, although those

three years of service were not necessarily obtained within this one particular inner-city middle school. Pertinent demographic information was acquired at the beginning of each interview by requesting each teacher to respond in writing to questions on a demographic survey. All interviews, which lasted from a minimum of an hour to a maximum of two hours, were audiotaped and later transcribed for data analysis. Furthermore, a series of field notes was kept by the researcher as a means cross-checking and clarifying all information obtained from the interviews. The data from the interviews were subjected to content analysis (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) in an effort to discover the patterns or themes in the teachers' responses. Categories that emerged from this analysis underwent a process of peer examination (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) as a means of ensuring internal reliability.

Major Findings and Conclusions

Introduction

It was apparent from the interviews that teachers within this inner-city school based their perceptions of effective classroom management upon an elaborate system of beliefs. These beliefs were in turn reflected in their classroom management strategies. From their discussions of these strategies three major themes emerged from the data.

These three themes were concerned with concepts related to the establishment and maintenance of student control, teacher expectations, and the influences of the home environment. The following three sections present the major findings and conclusions drawn from three major themes.

Controlling Students

A central theme that emerged from the data was the teachers' belief that effective classroom management within an inner-city environment hinged first on a heavy emphasis of controlling student behavior to establish order in the classroom and secondly on planning and organizing academic concerns. In this respect this finding concurs with the findings of several other researchers (Rist, 1972; Rist, 1973; Ogbu, 1974; Nespor, 1986; Rothstein, 1986) in that these teachers were overwhelmingly concerned with the construction and enforcement of rules, limiting the verbal and physical interactions between students, restricting students' movement, and maintaining complete power or authority over students.

The teachers further indicated that the primary motivation for their actions was founded within another belief that these controlling measures would help in eliminating or decreasing inappropriate student behaviors and student-to-student and/or student-to-teacher conflicts within the classroom and the school as a whole. However,

even after professing this belief, most of the teachers went on to state that inappropriate student behaviors and conflicts remained major problems within the school. Many also indicated that within their individual classroom they were constantly trying to cope with students' misbehavior and confrontations. Based upon these findings, it seems evident that their correcting procedures had done little to alleviate or lessen the intensity of these problems.

Teacher Expectations

Another major theme that emerged from the data was related to the finding that teachers had significantly lowered their behavioral and academic expectations for their students. Once again this finding agrees with the findings of other researchers (Rist, 1973; Rist, 1978; Grant and Sleeter, 1986; Maneroff, 1988; Grant, 1989) in that teachers within inner-city schools have a strong tendency to lower their behavioral and academic expectations for students. Although most of the teachers indicated that they strongly believed that a teacher should never lower his or her expectations for inner-city students, all the teachers revealed that in practice they had modified or adapted their classroom procedures in such a way as to lessen behavioral and academic requirements.

In referring to their academic expectations, many teachers candidly stated that because of perceived home and

community influences, they did not expect these students to be able to perform in the same manner as students drawn from another school environment. Consequently, teachers placed a low emphasis on test scores in relationship to students' overall grades and required very little if any real homework. Most of the teachers indicated that these students did not perform well on tests, and therefore, if they based a large percent of students' grades on test scores, most of these students would simply fail the courses. Furthermore, homework for these students consisted of the completion of assignments that had not been finished in class. That is, teachers would often assign work in class with the full intent that students should finish the work before leaving the classroom, and, as many teachers said, students would be given teacher assistance and ample time to complete the work. However, if they did not complete these assignments then this class work became "homework."

Teachers also indicated that even though they placed a heavy emphasis on their behavioral expectations of students, they often found themselves modifying these expectations based upon assumptions about the perceived cultural differences in the students' lives outside the school environment. For example, many teachers reported that they had learned to ignore students' behaviors that in their belief they would have been deemed inappropriate behaviors

in other school settings. Furthermore, many of the teachers also indicated that they believed that some of their students had severe emotional problems stemming from problems arising in the home. Consequently, they found it difficult to discipline all students in the same manner, and therefore, consistency, which the teachers had earlier stated that they felt was so vital in the disciplining process of inner-city students, was lacking in the teachers' own practices in the classroom.

Overall the teachers' stated classroom practices contradicted any statements given by them that behavioral and academic expectations should never be lower for inner-city students and that disciplining procedures should remain consistent. It was apparent from the teachers' responses that for whatever the given reasons these inner-city students were not expected nor required to behave or perform at a level that would be expected or required from students in other school settings.

The Home Influence

Another central theme that emerged from the data was the teachers' belief that often the home environment of inner-city students was the major source of many of the behavioral and academic problems manifested by students in the school. All the teachers displayed a strong tendency to place the blame for student misbehavior and/or academic

failure on influences drawn from students' family backgrounds. Overall, this tendency to place blame for student failure on outside influences, especially the home influence, permeated and at times dominated the comments of all the teachers. In this respect this finding supports the findings of several other researchers (Ryan, 1971; Rist, 1972; Rist, 1973; Ogbu, 1974; Rist, 1978; Grant and Sleeter, 1986; Nespor, 1986) in that teachers viewed most school problems arising from sources outside the school environment, and consequently that any hope of correcting or controlling these problems was beyond the scope of the school's or teachers' ability.

In terms of academic achievement very often teachers made reference to beliefs that students were not encouraged or motivated within their home environment to do well in school or that their home environment lacked even the basic physical components that would support students in academic study. In many respects the teachers' comments echoed the concept that these inner-city students were culturally deprived or culturally disadvantaged, and therefore because of this background, they were handicapped in their efforts to succeed academically within the school setting. The phrase culturally deprived or culturally disadvantaged is used in this case to mean that often the teachers implied that these students did not come from families with the same values or socioeconomic levels as students drawn from

predominantly white, middle-class families. This tendency for "blaming the victim" (Ryan, 1971) for academic failure because of family background was common among the teachers.

Most teachers perceived that there were major differences between the values advanced and reinforced in the home environment of their inner-city students and those values advanced and reinforced in the school environment. However, rather than acknowledging these differences as just differences, many of the teachers seemed to imply that the students' home values were inferior to school values. Many of the comments of the teachers suggested a highly negative judgment of those values that seemed to contradict the traditional white, middle-class values so often prevalent in any school setting. Once again, this finding strongly agrees with the findings of several other researchers (Herriott and St. John, 1966; Lohman, 1967; Rist, 1978; Banks, 1981; Gilmore, 1985; Grant and Sleeter, 1986; Noblit, 1986; Fordham, 1988; Cuban, 1989). Since most of these teachers were from white, middle-class backgrounds, it is possible that at least on an unconscious level they did reflect negative messages to students concerning students' home background and values.

In regard to inappropriate or violent student behaviors, many teachers made reference to a belief that often their inner-city students were merely venting in the school environment the anger and frustration caused by

hostile or threatening home environments. Several teachers indicated that they believed that in many cases the students' parents were the true source of inappropriate behaviors. According to many of the teachers, inner-city parents did not possess nor understand themselves appropriate behaviors. Teachers also made references to a belief that many of their students were physically and emotionally abused by parents. Furthermore, the teachers indicated that parents were viewed as adversaries to the disciplining process and at times to the entire educational purpose of the school. This finding associated with negative teachers' perceptions of inner-city parents concurs with the findings of several other researchers (Ryan, 1971; Rist, 1972; Nespor, 1986).

In summary, it seemed evident in these teachers' remarks that they firmly believed that for the most part the home influences of their inner-city students acted as a detriment to the goals of the school. It was striking that not one teacher ever made even one distinct positive comment about the home life of these students. On the contrary, all the comments offered on this subject were similar in that these inner-city students were portrayed as being subjected to extremely negative and ultimately destructive home influences.

Closing Remark

In closing this section on findings and conclusions, it seems appropriate to summarize many of the possibly unvoiced or unconscious, but nevertheless implied, beliefs that emerged from the data analysis of the teachers' responses to interview questions. While not trying to place blame on these teachers, it did seem that just below the surface of their outward remarks were some hidden beliefs on which they based their perceptions of effective classroom management within an inner-city school. These beliefs are best summarized by Rist (1973):

Middle-class students can learn, lower-class students cannot;...control is necessary, freedom is anarchy; violence works, persuasion does not; teachers can save a few, but will lose many; the school tries, the home will not; and finally, only the naive would dispute these beliefs, as the wise knows. (pg. 241)

Wise or not, one is left wondering if these beliefs can truly assist teachers in facilitating effective approaches to classroom management.

Implications for Practice

The most striking impression that one could draw from these teachers' interviews is that they truly believed that they were doing the best that they could under some very difficult conditions. At times they expressed surprise at the sudden outburst of students and students' resistance to even the smallest requests related the functioning of the

classroom. It was as if on some level they took for granted that students enrolled in this inner-city school, as with any school, should naturally understand and want those things that traditionally schools have to offer. These teachers, besides expressing frustration that everything they tried did not seem to work consistently, were obviously perplexed as to why those things at times did not work at all. Consequently, they appeared to retreat into positions which forced them to advocate a heavy emphasis on controlling student behavior, lowering their academic and behavioral expectations, and blaming the students' home environment for possibly the ultimate failure of convincing students that school provided those things one would need to succeed in white, middle-class society. It seems on the whole that these teachers were "...well-meaning people...who were not used to thinking in terms of pluralism and had little, if any preparation for doing so" (Grant and Sleeter, 1986, pg. 235). However, before dismissing these teachers as simply being an unknowing part of the continuing problem of the inner-city school, it would be wise to reflect on the idea that:

...focusing just on the abysmal quality of teaching in the inner city minimizes the very real difficulties involved in trying to teach there, difficulties that do have something to do with the kinds of children who are there and something to do with the climate and structure of such schools. Stretch forth your hand in kindness and you may draw back a nub. The same climate that teaches a seventh-grade

boy that there is no reason to do homework may teach his teacher that there is no point in trying to reach out. (Payne, 1989, pg. 114)

In responding to questions on the demographic survey and in subsequent answers to interview question, teachers did not indicate that in any way that their experiential/cultural background determined or influenced any of their actions within the classroom. However, a few teachers did make verbal references to how very different their backgrounds were from their students, and their written responses on the demographic survey certainly illustrated that point. The majority were white females who had attended predominantly white, middle-class schools. Only two teachers, who were African-Americans, indicated that they had ever attended at any time in their school career an inner-city school. These facts alone are similar to the statistical information cited by other researchers (Fine, 1986; Graham, 1987; Haberman, 1989), and as Grant (1989) commented about prospective new teachers entering urban schools:

If it hasn't happened already, urban teachers will soon find that the new teacher across the hall or the new teacher next door will be a white female whose first choice for a teaching assignment was a suburban school. These new colleagues may have some of the knowledge, understandings, and attitudes necessary for teaching urban students, but, for the most part, their backgrounds will be limited and superficial. Their attitudes will have been shaped by a society that is biased along the lines of race, gender, and class. While in college, they probably heard a few lectures on the "minority child," and the "at-risk

student," and the "second-language student." But they probably didn't take those lectures seriously...and they probably retained enough information in those lectures to regurgitate it on subsequent exams. (pg. 765)

In short, for this study on classroom management, it is not difficult to see that the teachers working in this inner-city school had little in common with the cultural backgrounds of their students, and if these teachers received the type of training indicated above, it is easy to understand that their backgrounds were so ingrained in them that they simply took for granted the values inherent in such backgrounds. Their biases were probably unconscious, and therefore they were unaware of how those biases affected their functioning within an inner-city school.

So the question arises concerning the knowledge that would truly help these teachers understand and cope with the sometimes difficult task of classroom management within an inner-city school. In many respects the answer seems simple. That is, teachers need to interrogate their own beliefs and values and develop an awareness and understanding of the cultural differences that exist between their backgrounds and lifestyles and those of their students. Furthermore, they need a chance to begin this examination before they begin their teaching careers. Consequently, the most obvious response to this need would be for colleges of education to provide realistic courses on multicultural education before students of education

actually become teachers. Colleges of education also need to provide those teachers already practicing their profession an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of not only the realization that cultural differences do exist but also the realization that often they as teachers have internalized an unconscious resistance to these cultural differences.

This call for a multicultural or multiethnic training for future teachers and for teachers already practicing their profession is supported by the works of many researchers (Banks, 1981; Grant and Sleeter, 1986; Noblit, 1986; Haberman, 1987; Burstein and Cabello, 1989; Grant, 1989; Montero-Sieburth, 1989; Bennett and LeCompte, 1990). This type of training would recognize that future and present teachers, besides needing a strong foundation in academic subject matter and the methods and skills of presenting that subject matter, would also need to be exposed to a curriculum that helps them develop an awareness and understanding of culturally diverse student populations. As Montero-Sieburth (1989) stated:

Thus, what constitutes a "good" teacher in urban schools today? Such a teacher cannot be simply skill-oriented and subject-matter knowledgeable, he or she must also be culturally sensitive and sensible. Urban teachers must be able to use cultural information responsibly to discern the quality of such information, and to stimulate student learning through creative multicultural processes... The urban teachers' role in the perpetuation of the self-fulfilling prophecy of failure,

prompted by the transmission of lower-order skills and even lower expectations and academic challenge, must be abandoned. Instead, knowledge must be generated that encourages and assists teachers...to convey positive behaviors, skills, and opportunities to urban students. Effective teacher education for the urban context is that which develops teachers who can, in assuming their roles as arbitrators between the demands of mainstream culture and those of underrepresented groups, transform urban school failure into success. (pg. 344)

Transforming inner-city school failure into success, as is already too well known, will not be an easy or quickly accomplished task, but possibly the process can begin by first exposing prospective and current teachers to educational training that recognizes that their awareness of cultural diversity is essential if students within inner-city schools are to succeed.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Since this study only addressed the question of the perceptions of teachers concerning effective classroom management within an inner-city school, it would be useful to also conduct an interview study which would address the perceptions of inner-city students themselves. A comparison of the two different sets of perceptions could yield some interesting similarities and differences.
2. Since this study was limited to asking teachers for their perceptions of effective classroom management

within an inner-city school, it would be useful to also conduct an observational study which would focus on close observation of inner-city teachers as they actually worked with students. An analysis of the observational data from such a study could yield descriptive information related to classroom management as specific interactions occurred between these teachers and students.

3. Since the teachers in this study made several references to the critical role of the administrators within this inner-city school, a study that focused on inner-city school administrators as they worked with teachers, students, and parents could provide very useful information related to overall classroom management.
4. Since one of the major premises advanced in this study was that multicultural training would be beneficial for teachers, it would be useful to conduct a study in which two sets of teachers, composed of those who had received multicultural training and those who had not received training, were observed and the results from these observations compared to discern any similarities or differences in the ways they managed their classrooms.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule for Teachers.

Code Number _____

1. What expectations do you have of your students and how do you inform your students of these expectations?

- Probes - How do you let students know what you expect of them when they talk and work with other students and with you as the teacher?
- How do you let students know what you expect of them in regard to grades, homework, etc.?

2. How do you construct the rules (procedures, routines, etc.) of your classroom and how do you inform your students about these rules?

- Probes - At what times (school year, day, etc.) do you inform students of classroom rules?
- Do you inform students about your classroom rules in verbal or written form or both?

3. Describe how you manage day-to-day activities and routines in your classroom.

- Probes - How do you plan each day's activities?
- How do you take attendance?
 - How do you handle homework?

4. Describe your processes in dealing with rewards and punishments for student behavior.

- Probes - Do you establish a set pattern for rewards and punishments?
- How do you change or adapt your procedures concerning rewards and punishments?
 - At what point will you call attention to unacceptable student behavior?
 - Do you always respond immediately to a noted misbehavior?

5. Describe your physical movements as you work with students within the classroom.

Probes - Where do you position yourself when lecturing, during question and answer sessions, during seat-work, during tests, etc.?

6. Describe how you arrange your classroom.

Probes - How do you arrange students' chairs, your desk, etc.?
- Do you have any particular reasons for the way you arrange your classroom?

7. Think back to the opening day of this school year and briefly describe what you did with your first class.

Probes - What were your opening remarks to the class?
- What did you request of the students?
- What interactions took place between you and the students?

8. Think back to a particular confrontation (conflict) with a student which you felt you handled well and describe that event in detail.

Probes - At what point did you tell the student that his/her behavior was unacceptable?
- What did you say to the student?
- What did the student say to you?
- Describe the tone and volume of the verbal exchange.
- What nonverbal interactions (eye contact, facial expressions, movements, etc.) took place?
- What were the reactions of other students?
- At any point did you touch the student?
- How was the situation finally resolved?

9. Think back to a particular confrontation (conflict) with a student which you felt you did not handle well and describe that event in detail.

Probes - At what point did you tell the student that his/her behavior was unacceptable?
- What did you say to the student?
- What did the student say to you?

- Describe the tone and volume of the verbal exchange.
- What nonverbal interactions (eye contact, facial expressions, movements, etc.) took place?
- What were the reactions of other students?
- At any point did you touch the student?
- How was the situation finally resolved?

10. What roles do school administrators (principals, vice principals, etc.) play in your classroom management procedures?

Probe - When, if ever, do you involve the principal in disciplining a student?

11. What specific advice related to classroom management would you offer to any new teacher within this school?

APPENDIX B

Demographic Survey.

Code Number _____

The answers to the following questions will provide basic information that could prove to be immense value to this study. Please answer each question appropriately by circling the letter(s) of your choice and/or by filling in the blank.

1. What is your gender?

A. Female

B. Male

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your race?

A. White American, Caucasian

B. African American

C. Native American

D. Hispanic American

E. Asian American

F. Other - Please Specify. _____

4. What is the highest educational degree you have obtained?

A. Bachelors

B. Masters

C. Specialist

D. Doctorate

5. How many years have you been teaching? _____
6. On what teaching level(s) have you acquired your experience? Please indicate all that apply.
- A. Public Elementary School (K-6) How long? _____
 - B. Private Elementary School (K-6) How long? _____
 - C. Public Middle School (7-8) How long? _____
 - D. Private Middle School (7-8) How long? _____
 - E. Public High School (9-12) How long? _____
 - F. Private High School (9-12) How long? _____
7. How long have you taught in this school? _____
8. How would you describe the location of any school(s) you attended when you were a student enrolled in grades K-12? Please indicate all that apply.
- A. Inner City (located in city; predominantly minority student enrollment)
How long attended? _____
 - B. Urban (located in city but not inner city)
How long attended? _____
 - C. Suburban (located in area adjacent to city)
How long attended? _____
 - D. Rural (located in farming area)
How long attended? _____
 - E. Other - Please Describe. _____
How long attended? _____
9. If applicable, how would you describe the location of any school(s) in which you have previously taught? Please indicate all that apply.
- A. Inner City (located in city; predominantly minority student enrollment)
How long taught? _____

- B. Urban (located in city but not inner city)
How long taught? _____
- C. Suburban (located in area adjacent to city)
How long taught? _____
- D. Rural (located in farming area)
How long taught? _____
- E. Other - Please Describe. _____
How long taught? _____

10. If applicable, how would you classify the predominant family backgrounds of students enrolled in any school(s) in which you have previously taught? Please indicate all that apply.
- A. Upper Class (from very affluent family)
 - B. Upper Middle Class (from well-to-do professional working family)
 - C. Middle Class (from average working family)
 - D. Lower Middle Class (from lower or under-paid working family)
 - E. Lower Class (unemployed family)
 - F. Other - Please Describe. _____

APPENDIX C

Summary of Demographic Information Related to Participants' Gender, Age, Race, Highest Degree Completed, Number of Years Teaching Experience, and Teaching Experience in Private Schools.

Code #	Gender	Age	Race	Highest Degree Completed	# Years Teaching Exp.	Private School Exp.
001	F	35	White	B.A.	12	No
002	F	39	White	M.A.	8	No
003	F	37	Af.- A.	B.A.	11	No
004	F	42	White	B.A.	19	No
005	F	30	White	B.A.	8	No
006	F	36	White	B.A.	14	No
007	F	30	White	B.A.	8	No
008	F	44	White	B.A.	3	Yes
009	F	33	White	B.A.	7	Yes
010	F	40	White	M.A.	6	No
011	F	44	White	B.A.	9	No
012	M	39	White	B.A.	13	No
013	F	40	Af.- A.	B.A.	16	No

Average Number of Years Teaching Experience = 10.3

APPENDIX D

Teaching Experience Related to School Settings.

Code #	Race	Total # Years Teaching Exp.	# Years at Current Inner-City School	# Years at Other Inner-City Schools
001	White	12	2	0
002	White	8	4	0
003	Af.- A.	11	11	0
004	White	19	6	0
005	White	8	8	0
006	White	14	14	0
007	White	8	8	0
008	White	3	1	0
009	White	7	1	0
010	White	6	6	0
011	White	9	4	0
012	White	13	6	7
013	Af.- A.	16	8	8

APPENDIX D (continued)

Code #	Race	# Years at Urban Schools	# Years at Suburban Schools	# Years at Rural Schools
001	White	0	0	10
002	White	2	0	2
003	Af.- A.	0	0	0
004	White	4	9	0
005	White	0	0	0
006	White	0	0	0
007	White	0	0	0
008	White	1	0	1
009	White	0	5	1
010	White	0	0	0
011	White	0	5	0
012	White	0	0	0
013	Af.- A.	0	0	0

Average # Years Teaching Experience at Current School = 6.1
 Average # Years Teaching Experience at Other Schools = 6.7

APPENDIX E

Participants' Responses Related to the Socioeconomic Family Backgrounds of Students Previously Taught in Other Schools.

Code #	Race	Socioeconomic Level				
		Upper Class	Upper Middle Class	Middle Class	Lower Middle Class	Lower Class
001	White	-	-	yes	yes	yes
002	White	-	-	yes	yes	yes
003	Af.- A.	-	-	-	-	-
004	White	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
005	White	-	-	-	-	-
006	White	-	-	-	-	-
007	White	-	-	-	-	-
008	White	-	-	yes	yes	yes
009	White	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
010	White	-	-	-	-	-
011	White	-	-	yes	-	-
012	White	-	-	-	yes	yes
013	Af.- A.	-	-	-	-	yes

APPENDIX F

Type of Schools Attended When Enrolled in Grades 1 - 12.

Code #	Race	# Years in Inner-City School	# Years in Urban School	# Years in Suburban School	# Years in Rural School
001	White	0	0	4	8
002	White	0	12	0	0
003	Af.- A.	7	5	0	0
004	White	0	0	8	4
005	White	0	0	12	0
006	White	0	0	8	4
007	White	0	12	0	0
008	White	0	0	12	0
009	White	0	0	12	0
010	White	0	12	0	0
011	White	0	0	12	0
012	White	0	0	12	0
013	Af.- A.	12	0	0	0

VITA

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Ms. Turner has taught in secondary inner-city schools in Georgia and in secondary schools and higher education institutions in Kentucky. As a graduate assistant for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at The University of Tennessee, she supervised field experience students, directed micro-teaching simulations, and conducted seminars for pre-service teachers. Currently serving as a placement coordinator for the Office of Field Studies at The University of Tennessee, Ms. Turner is responsible for facilitating the public school placements of student teachers and interns. Her duties in this position also include the supervision of student teachers and interns.