

FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

TEACHING CHILDREN SELF-CONTROL: A NEW RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHERS

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TEACHING CHILDREN SELF-CONTROL

Many citizens strongly believe our society has become too permissive and is out of control. Deviancy, not normalcy, seems to be respected. They cite the slogan "Do your own thing" as a national pursuit of young people, without including the necessary phrase "as long as it doesn't interfere with the personal and property rights of others."

Another major example of this lack of self-control or impulsive behavior is documented in the growing crime wave. The June 1975 issue of *Time* captured the attention of the entire nation. The cover showed the mashed face of a man who is pointing a "Saturday night special" at the reader. Across the cover in bold white prison print the word CRIME appeared. The cover story continued for 12 pages reinforcing the chronic fear among Americans that this country is not a safe place to live. The crime statistics reported were overwhelming to the law-abiding citizen. Since 1961 robberies were up 255%, aggravated assaults were up 153%, and rape increased by 143%. These figures do not include the growing number of unreported crimes or the shocking fact that in 1974 there were 10 million reported crimes in which 20 thousand American citizens were murdered. It was like a civil war but with only one side shooting. Almost half of all arrests were teenagers with a mean age of 15. Whatever the reason—the permanent class of unskilled labor who are no longer in demand; the enormous increase in the number of teenagers (44 million); the lax, overly strict, or erratic parent-rearing relationships; the constant flow of TV programs depicting violence and murder; the changing, inconsistent, and incompatible standards, values, and morals—the solution to crimes against people and property must involve more than better laws, elaborate police strategies, efficient court systems, and new comprehensive rehabilitation programs. There needs to be a national commitment to teaching pupils the positive skills that will enable them to cope with their intense feelings and the demands from the environment at home, in school, and in the

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community. We are convinced that the Self-Control Curriculum is a prototype of a psycho-educational model for democratic living by preventing emotional and learning problems in children. The curriculum blends the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning into personal skills leading to self-directed behavior with responsibility.

PREVENTION AS A MISSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Although we need to maintain and improve the present remedial services for handicapped children, future funding should give high priority to primary prevention programs. As special educators, we must change from a crisis "firefighting" educational service to a "fireproofing" service. Unfortunately, fireproofing is less glamorous than firefighting, but it is our only real solution to preventing another 10 million troubled children in our country from being overwhelmed by the future demands of our society. The first step in establishing primary prevention programs was accomplished in 1973 when the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) amended their policy statement to read, "The first level of service and concern of CEC will be the promotion of positive, cognitive, and affective psychomotor skills in all children that will prevent and/or reduce the frequency of handicapping behaviors."

Fulfillment of this preventive mission for special education hinges on two major factors—teacher training and curriculum development.

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Teacher Training

It is widely recognized that regular educators are under increasing pressure to reintegrate exceptional children into their classrooms and retain those experiencing difficulties (Christie, McKenzie & Burdett, 1972; Melcher, 1972). At the same time, the demand for leadership and help from special education is reaching a peak. As Martin (1974) has said, "There must be massive efforts to work with . . . regular teachers, not to just 'instruct them' in the pedagogy of special education but to share in the feelings, to understand their fears, to provide them with assistance and materials, and in short, to assure their success" (p. 3).

Special education service and training institutions are responding vigorously to the regular teacher's need for help through a variety of resource room, teacher consultation, laboratory-experiential, and inservice teaching programs (Cegelka & Tawney, 1975; Chaffin, 1974; Glass & Grosenick, 1972; Melcher, 1972; Yates, 1973). As skills, techniques, and experiences are shared with classroom teachers, positive attitudes and relationships will develop.

A critical element for improving the regular teacher's capacity to prevent disruptions of learning or behavior appears to revolve around system support and provision for training, communication, and mutual problem solving between regular and supplementary education personnel (McCauley & Deno, 1975). If special education is to fulfill its ultimate commitment to children, time and personnel must be devoted to the development of staff.

Curriculum Development

Educators engaged in helping exceptional children become acutely aware of (1) task or situational requirements which create stress for a given student, (2) skills or perceptions which need strengthening, and (3) techniques or methods for promoting success or bolstering deficiencies. An assessment-programming model, based on careful observation and a caring relationship, provides a common framework for reeducation whether the teacher's emphasis is on cognitive, behavioral, or emotional change (cf. Hewett, 1968; Moran, 1975; Redl, 1971).

Historically, special education has been held accountable for meeting the educational needs of the deviant child. In meeting this responsibility, a wide variety of curricula have been developed to overcome identified learning and behavior problems. It is evident, however, that the curriculum materials and methods developed for exceptional children have tremendous potential for individualizing

instruction with all students. As regular teachers gain access to curricula designed to remediate weaknesses in cognitive or affective development, the possibility of early intervention and prevention of serious problems is vastly improved.

Many examples already exist of curriculum methods and materials which are being utilized in regular school programs to assure success for all children, after having been developed from an understanding of the needs of exceptional children (Bush & Giles, 1969; Canfield, Wells & Hall, 1972; Dinkmeyer, 1973; Educational Research Council of America, 1972; Frostig & Horne, 1964; Kephart, 1971; Miele & Smith, 1975; Randolph & Howe, 1971; Ross & Ross, 1974; Valett, 1967).

These curriculum applications from special to regular education are noteworthy and must be expanded, particularly in areas of high priority. In our experience, one such area is that of teaching children self-control.

CURRICULUM APPROACH TO DEVELOPING SELF-CONTROL

The Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children documented the seriousness of disruptive behavior in the classroom. The behavior of these pupils often violated the rights of others or interfered with their own basic desires to succeed. Some children were disruptive by explosive, aggressive actions; some displayed withdrawal or extreme passivity; others retarded their own learning through rigid avoidance of tasks which arouse strong feelings of inadequacy.

We believe the common denominator for disruptive behavior is a lack of self-control. To effectively cope with the requirements and challenges of the classroom, a child must develop the capacity to control his own behavior, even when faced with frustration. In our terms, self-control is defined as one's *capacity to direct and regulate personal action (behavior) flexibly and realistically in a given situation*.

Any child or group of children with lags or weaknesses in self-control can be helped substantially by a curriculum tailored to develop skills and confidence in this area. Our position is that a specialized curriculum, presented within a context of positive relationship and sensitive teaching, offers the most direct and enduring means of overcoming disturbances associated with problems in self-control. We have recently developed such a curriculum (Fagen, Long & Stevens, 1975) for the following purposes:

1. To reduce disruptiveness, improve school adjustment, and prevent behavior and learning disorders
2. To strengthen the emotional and cognitive capacities which children need in order to cope with school requirements
3. To build control skills which allow for an effective and socially acceptable choice of action
4. To enhance value for the teacher-learner and educational process
5. To promote a more desirable educational balance between cognitive and affective development than that which currently exists.

Primary Prevention Program for School Age Children

A successful and well-designed prevention program should be developed to meet the following conditions:

1. It should be available to all children.
2. It should begin as early as possible in the child's development.
3. It should focus on the concept of health rather than illness or pathology.
4. It should be educationally focused.
5. It should emphasize normal adult-peer-self interactions.
6. It should be functional to the teacher.
7. It should be intrinsically pleasant and satisfying to children.
8. It should be inexpensive enough to be applied on a mass basis.
9. It should increase or strengthen skills for effectively coping with stresses of living.

The self-control curriculum appears to meet all of the above conditions of a successful and well-designed prevention program. While we do not claim to have created a comprehensive prevention program, we do believe our curriculum provides the average elementary school teacher with a direct and realistic means of enabling pupils to strengthen their coping skills.

Structure of Self-Control

Capacity for self-control depends upon the integration of eight skill clusters, which have been identified on the basis of observation and analysis of disruptive behavior in both special and regular school settings (Fagen & McDonald, 1969). Four of these skill clusters rely heavily on intellectual or cognitive development, while the other four are more related to emotional or affective development. These eight skill clusters are summarized as follows:

Selection – Ability to perceive incoming information accurately.

Storage – Ability to retain the information received.

Sequencing and Ordering – Ability to organize actions on the basis of a planned order.

Anticipating Consequences – Ability to relate actions to expected outcomes.

Appreciating Feelings – Ability to identify and constructively use affective experience.

Managing Frustration – Ability to cope with external obstacles that produce stress.

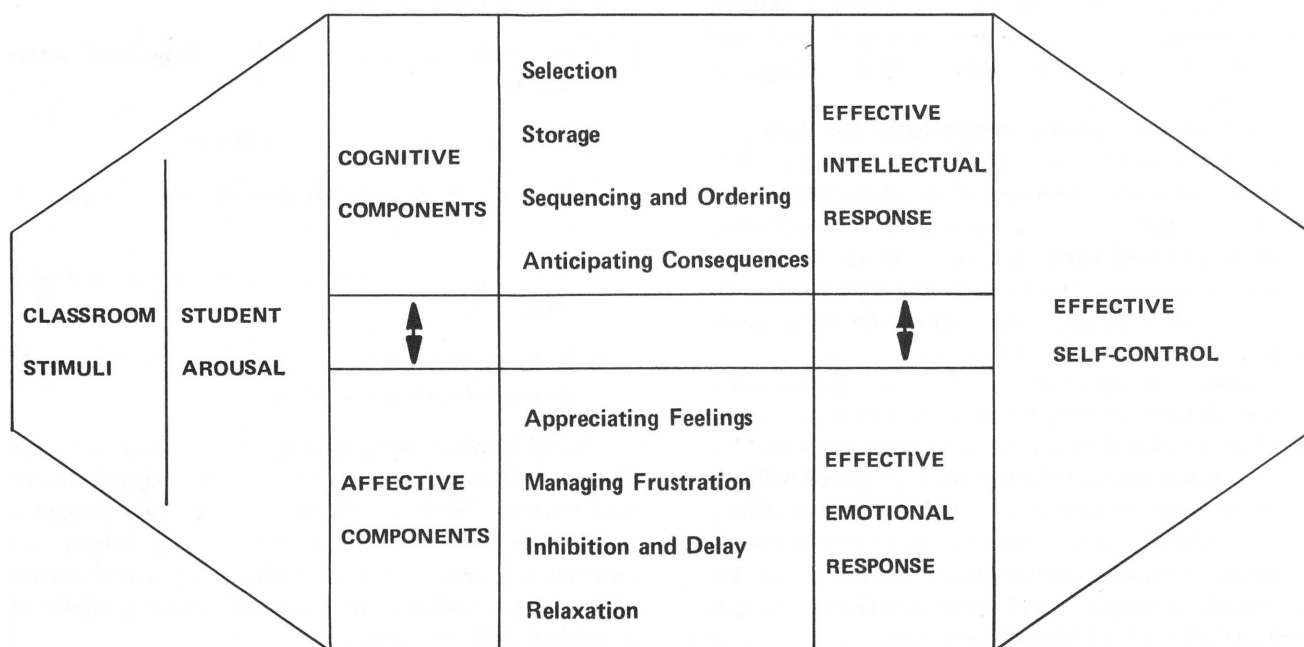
Inhibition and Delay – Ability to postpone or restrain action tendencies.

Relaxation – Ability to reduce internal tension.

Each of the above skill clusters represents a basic parameter of self-control, with each subsuming several interrelated functions. The first four are regarded as the more cognitive skills, and the latter four as the more affective skills. However, while it appears that parameters load differentially on intellectual or emotional processes, affect and intellect may interact across all areas. For example, *storage* pertains to memory processes, traditionally regarded as a cognitive ability, but memory may be disrupted by anxiety or emotional stress even to the point of amnesia. *Appreciating feelings*, on the other hand, clearly aims at affective experience but at the same time requires retention of verbal concepts (e.g., sadness, joy, resentment) if feeling states are to be correctly identified. Our contention is that cognitive performance is enhanced by the mastery of affective experience, which is likely to be enhanced by intellectual mastery.

Figure 1 depicts the capacity for self-control as an integration of the eight skill clusters.

Figure 1
CAPACITY FOR SELF-CONTROL AS AN INTEGRATION OF SKILL CLUSTERS



Overview of Self-Control Curriculum

A major conclusion of the 1970 White House Conference on Children ("Confronting Myths . . ." 1970, p. 125) stated the strong need for curriculum approaches to the prevention of learning and emotional problems:

We are further finding that curricula which help a child deal with his feelings and emotions, which teach principles of self control, and which help the child cope with the pressures and frustrations of an industrial society are desperately needed yet almost totally lacking.

The self-control curriculum provides one model for preparing children to cope with these real-life pressures.

The self-control curriculum consists of eight curriculum areas, corresponding to the eight skill clusters that promote one's capacity to flexibly and realistically direct and regulate personal action. Each curriculum area contains an introduction, including a statement of rationale, a description of units and goals, and suggested learning tasks. The introduction summarizes research that documents the importance of the skill area and states expectations that a teacher should establish for his pupils. The description of each unit specifies teaching goals for each unit within that curriculum area; the suggested learning tasks or activities provide the necessary instructions, materials, and procedures for teaching the skills in that unit.

Table 1 presents an overview of the eight curriculum areas and the specific units subsumed within each of these areas.

The curriculum may be flexibly implemented, with the following options available:

Option 1. The curriculum can be taught in one school year (eight months). Approximately one month should be spent in each curriculum area.

Option 2. The entire curriculum can be taught in one semester and then repeated (recycled) in the second semester. Approximately two weeks should be spent on each curriculum area. The entire curriculum can be taught in the first semester of the school year, with the teacher selecting special areas for the second semester. In the first semester, approximately two weeks should be spent on each curriculum area; time spent on any one area in the second semester will depend on the needs of the class and the discretion of the teacher.

Option 3. Any curriculum area can be taught any time of the year, depending on the needs or weaknesses of

the class. The amount of time spent on any curriculum area is left to the teacher's discretion.

In addition, the teacher may choose her own schedule for implementing the curriculum. Scheduling alternatives include regular, short daily lessons; frequent, responsive lessons which complement academic goals; periodic lessons to bolster interest or motivation; selected activities during free or open periods; and lessons in conjunction with programs for physical education and aesthetic appreciation.

To translate the self-control curriculum from theory to reality, two examples of pupils from the Mark Twain and Rose Schools are included. These vignettes will illustrate how the self-control curriculum can be used to remediate areas of personal weakness in pupils. Following these vignettes, sample units and lessons from one of the eight self-control skill areas, *managing frustration*, will be presented.

FRED: FROM COMFORT TO CONFLICT

Fred was feeling good when he came to school. He was excited because there was a baseball practice after school and he was one of the top players. When he came into his fourth-fifth grade classroom, Fred was calm and eager to do things.

The day was going well until Mrs. Roberts asked Fred to run an errand for her. Fred was willing. He was pleased that she asked him but a bit apprehensive also. Mrs. Roberts quickly instructed Fred to take a stack of parent permission slips to the secretary in the main office and, on the way back, to stop by the library and pick up the film scheduled for the class' next period.

Fred walked briskly to the office, stopping only briefly to glance at the rabbits in the nature center. He delivered the slips to Mrs. Watkins the secretary and was ready to head back. Mrs. Watkins thanked him and then said, "Oh, I'm glad you're here. Please tell Mrs. Roberts there's been a change of plans for this afternoon and the curriculum committee will meet at 3:30 after all."

Fred tried hard to comprehend the message but left the office feeling burdened. He kept thinking *crickim* committee, and the word made no sense at all. When he got back to the room he was too embarrassed to say anything to Mrs. Roberts about a *crickim* committee, and he had forgotten the time anyway. He rejoined the small group working on a picture of an Eskimo scene. Mrs. Roberts was

Table I
THE SELF-CONTROL CURRICULUM
OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM AREAS AND UNITS

Curriculum Area	Curriculum Unit	Number of Learning Tasks
SELECTION	1. Focusing & Concentration	9
	2. Figure-Ground Discrimination	4
	3. Mastering Distractions	3
	4. Processing Complex Patterns	3
		(19)
STORAGE	1. Visual Memory	11
	2. Auditory Memory	12
		(23)
SEQUENCING & ORDERING	1. Time Orientation	8
	2. Auditory-Visual Sequencing	7
	3. Sequential Planning	8
		(23)
ANTICIPATING CONSEQUENCES	1. Developing Alternatives	11
	2. Evaluating Consequences	7
		(18)
APPRECIATING FEELINGS	1. Identifying Feelings	4
	2. Developing Positive Feelings	8
	3. Managing Feelings	10
	4. Reinterpreting Feeling Events	4
		(26)
MANAGING FRUSTRATION	1. Accepting Feelings of Frustration	2
	2. Building Coping Resources	9
	3. Tolerating Frustration	22
		(33)
INHIBITION AND DELAY	1. Controlling Action	13
	2. Developing Part-Goals	5
		(18)
RELAXATION	1. Body Relaxation	5
	2. Thought Relaxation	5
	3. Movement Relaxation	3
		(13)

busy talking to some children at the other side of the room.

Time passed, and Fred was surprised to hear Mrs. Roberts call out his name. "Fred, did you bring the film from the library? We need it now." Fred was openly embarrassed—the film had completely slipped his mind. He shook his head, no. There was a rumble of laughter and giggles in the room, and Mrs. Roberts responded with obvious irritation, "I was counting on you for that. Now I'll have to run down myself." Fred wandered off to his desk and sat down, feeling mad at Mrs. Roberts for getting angry at him, at Mrs. Watkins for giving him an extra, hard job, and at himself for being so dumb and letting his teacher down.

Incidents like these were happening frequently with Fred. While a bright boy, he had a real weakness in storing or recalling verbal information and typically forgot bits of extended messages. Teachers and parents had trouble understanding Fred because he often seemed so willing to help, yet he could not be depended upon to do what he was asked. Several teachers came to distrust him, believing Fred to be basically sneaky and hostile. Others accused him of not paying enough attention or being disrespectful.

Fred, on the other hand, tried to cope with his memory weakness by avoiding situations where he was being talked to for any length of time. In these situations he became restless and fidgety, behaviors which looked disrespectful to the adult speaking to him. As adults came to distrust him and blame him, so Fred came to resent their unreasonableness and lack of caring for him. He was especially sensitive to being embarrassed by adults and often was made to feel stupid and mad when his errors or omissions were exposed in front of others. He hated the laughing, snickering, degrading side comments ("He did it again" or "Oh boy, what a retard").

Analysis of Fred's Problem Using the Self-Control Curriculum

Clearly Fred has skill needs in two areas: storage and appreciating feelings.

Storage—Teachers and adults need to know this to help him and to make tasks reasonable for him; Fred needs assistance in building ability.

Appreciating Feelings—Fred needs help in identifying his own feelings; putting them in words; seeing that many positives were real, despite weaknesses. Teachers

need to appreciate Fred's feelings and encourage his use of words to disclose when things were getting too burdensome. Many negative incidents could be averted if Fred learns to say things like "Mrs. Watkins, I'm afraid I'll forget all that—could you write a note?" or "Mrs. Roberts, I really tried to remember but couldn't. It made me mad when you yelled at me."

SAM: FROM ANGER TO RETRIBUTION

Sam was feeling angry when he came to school today. He couldn't find his tennis shoes so his mother made him wear his Sunday shoes. He was mad at his mother and his brother. He was convinced Bill, his kid brother, had hidden them so Sam would get in trouble. Well, Bill was right because Sam had a yelling match with his mother. He could still remember her saying, "If you put things where they belonged, you would have your shoes! It's your own stupid fault! Now get out of here before I give you what you really deserve!" As he left the house, he noticed Bill was smiling!

Today, school was a bore. Still thinking about what happened at home, Sam found it difficult to concentrate on his math assignment. He even had difficulty remembering his multiplication tables. After a few minutes he gave up and started poking at his paper until it was filled with pencil holes. Somehow this behavior encouraged him to poke even harder and to make even larger holes.

Suddenly Mrs. Parker said, "Sam, what are you doing?" "Nothing," he replied.

"How can you make all that *noise* by doing nothing?" she asked.

Before Sam could answer, Peter said, "He's been tearing up his arithmetic paper."

"I have not," Sam shouted. "Besides, it's none of your business!"

"All right, Sam," Mrs. Parker said with authority, "you better quiet down before you get yourself into serious trouble! Now, whatever you were doing, stop it, and get busy with your assignment!"

Sam could feel the anger surge through his body. He hated Peter and his teacher. He decided he would get Peter after school by provoking him into a fight or else by having Peter accept the verbal abuse that he's a baby and a sissy.

As Sam was enjoying these thoughts, Peter left his desk. Impulsively, Sam stuck out his foot tripping Peter who yelled, "You did that on purpose, Sam!"

"I did not!" Sam answered, "it was an accident!"

"It was not," Peter replied.

"Yes, it was!" Sam shouted.

Mrs. Parker entered the battle by shouting at both of them to stop. By this time, Sam could not hear, see, or respond rationally. The cycle of conflict was in full swing, and the outcome was predictable. Sam was sent to the office as a behavior problem. He was convinced everyone was against him—his mother, brother, classmate, teacher, and now the principal.

This is not an unusual incident. While the names and the circumstances may change, the displacement of anger from home to school is a commonplace problem for the pupil. Everyone in the classroom could profit from understanding what really was happening to Sam and the skills he needs to prevent this cycle of anger, displacement, rejection, and retribution.

Analysis of Sam's Problem Using the Self-Control Curriculum

Sam needs to develop self-control skills in the following areas:

- Inhibition and Delay Unit: Controlling Actions
- Anticipating Unit: Evaluating
 Consequences Consequences
- Appreciating Feelings Unit: Identifying Feelings
- Relaxation Unit: Thought Control

If the class had been exposed to the self-control skills in these lessons, the negative interaction between Sam, Peter, and Mrs. Parker may not have become a "power struggle." Hopefully, the feelings of anger could have been identified, accepted, and programmed into coping skills.

MANAGING FRUSTRATION

Frustration is a natural, frequent, and inevitable part of the human condition whenever a wish, desire, or goal is obstructed (Yates, 1962). The term implies a thwarting stimulus situation and an associated set of negative emotional responses. Although little can be done about the obstacles in the way of immediate goal satisfaction, children can be taught to manage their negative feelings resulting from the stresses of frustration.

The *Managing Frustration* curriculum area contains three units: (1) Accepting Feelings of Frustration, (2)

Building Coping Resources, and (3) Tolerating Frustration. Taken together the units represent a process for managing frustration—developing supportive perceptions, identifying and maintaining possibilities for success and self-esteem, and increasing capacity for experiencing frustration.

UNIT 1. ACCEPTING FEELINGS OF FRUSTRATION

Goals: To help children acknowledge and accept feelings of frustration as normal, inevitable events; to help children perceive that frustration is not caused by their own badness or inadequacy.

Teaching acceptance of frustration requires that students identify with or experience some unpleasant or uncomfortable feelings. Three main approaches are available for meeting this condition:

Vicarious Identification—Students identify with the feelings of frustration experienced by a character in a story, film, or play.

Simulation or Situation Review—Students either *play* roles of persons in a scene in which one or more members will feel frustrated after having a goal blocked, or discuss *actual* feelings experienced in a previous real situation.

Planned Induction—Students are intentionally exposed to mild or moderate frustration.

Regardless of which approach is employed, the teacher *must* keep the following guidelines in mind before teaching acceptance of frustration:

1. Degree of frustration should be modulated to assure that students are not markedly distressed. Lessons which involve ordinary, everyday thwarting should be used to build acceptance (for example, having to stop before ready, losing to someone else, getting teased, having less than someone else, making mistakes in work).
2. Students should be prepared to expect that the lesson may create discomfort or be "hard," but that it is important and they can do it.
3. Frustration induction should not be used unless a positive, trusting relationship exists between teacher and pupil.

4. The lesson should include clarification and closure procedures, i.e., the teacher is sure the children understand the meaning and purpose of the activity before moving on to other things.

Illustrative Task: “Sharing Personal Frustrations”

Ask the children to think of a time in school when there was something they wanted to do but could not, a time when their wish or their hope was blocked. Encourage them to think of things that happened in or near school (e.g., classroom, halls, playground, lunchroom, bus). Possible energizers include pairing children and having them exchange an experience with a partner, writing a short story, or drawing a picture with feeling words.

After each child has had a chance to recall and express a frustration experienced in school, announce that the class can now make a School Frustration (“Bug”) List. Using the chalkboard, draw five columns to record the class’ frustrations in terms of goal (“What I wanted”), blocking (“What happened”), source (“Who did it”), location (“Where it happened”), and feelings (“How I felt”).

Call on children around the room and, with simple words, summarize the situation under the appropriate columns on the board. The summary should reflect a wide range of school frustrations affecting many personal goals, induced by various sources, and arousing common feelings of upset.

Develop understanding and acceptance of frustration by asking focused questions: “What feelings do we have when we are blocked?” “Is it wrong to feel things like being mad. . .sad. . .upset?” “Can you get what you want all of the time?” “Can you feel bad without being a bad person?” “Are you dumb or wrong when you can’t do what you’re trying for?”

During this question and response period, *several important points can be made*: (1) The frustration experience was upsetting and uncomfortable; (2) Different feelings were aroused, e.g., anger, sadness, fear, distrust; (3) Upset could not be avoided by anyone; you can’t always get what you want; (4) Frustration was unrelated to fault or wrongdoing; you can feel badly without being bad; (5) Children share similar feelings of upset; (6) It is all right to be upset when you cannot reach a goal; it means you care about things you do.

In all likelihood, it will not be feasible to carry out a full discussion with primary grade youngsters. Be ready to close the activity with a quick summary. For example:

- “Today we talked about feelings of frustration—the way we feel when we don’t get what we want, or hope for, or thought we’d get.”
- “We could see that everyone gets these feelings.”
- “We can talk about these things, and we will do more another time.”
- “These feelings are OK to have; you and all other people (grownups too) will get them a lot. They are part of life and have to be. In school we can learn about them, just like we do other things.”

UNIT 2. BUILDING COPING RESOURCES

Goals: To strengthen the child’s resources for coping effectively with frustration experiences; to develop techniques and behaviors which maintain possibilities for success and positive regard for the self.

Tasks provided in this unit are designed to foster skill in using three basic strategies for coping with frustration: (1) modifying goal-setting, (2) identifying positives, and (3) accepting limitations.

Modifying Goal-Setting—Illustrative Task: “Finding Alternative Routes”

Role play or describe situations where children want a particular end result but are unsuccessful in achieving it (e.g., wanting father to play ball, wanting attention from the teacher, wanting to be liked by others). Show a specific way in which the child goes about trying to reach the goal (e.g., telling his father how other boys play with their fathers, shouting out in class, giving candy and money to peers). Then encourage the class to express ideas about other ways that these goals may be reached (e.g., asking father if he would play catch later, offering to do some job for the teacher, showing interest in other kids’ ideas and activities). The point to be made and practiced is that there are several ways to get a goal, and we cannot be sure which (if any) will work unless new ones are tried.

Identifying Positives—Illustrative Task: “I Did My Best and I Like It”

Role play situations in which a child tries to accomplish something (e.g., write a poem, draw a picture, build a

model), and someone else makes fun of it or makes disparaging remarks. Instruct the criticized child to respond with "I did my best and I like it" or some other self-valuing statement. Use a variety of work efforts to be faulted, and allow children to play not only the criticized child but the critical person as well.

Accepting Limitations—Illustrative Task: "Laughing at Myself"

Ask the children to think about a time when they goofed or made a mistake that was kind of funny—for example, falling in mud when trying to jump a creek, saying the wrong word but one that was humorous, trying to show someone else how to jump rope and missing, etc. Keep the activity relaxed and low key, encouraging spontaneous expression at the children's own pace.

Point out that while people try hard to do things well, we often fall short of what we hope to do. This is natural and not so serious. If we can laugh at some of our errors it may help us accept our imperfections, and yet keep on trying. Conversely, if we take shortcomings too seriously, we can become overly discouraged and give up or get too nervous about doing it just right.

SUMMARY

Much of the present educational and mental health effort has been directed toward managing, understanding, or treating maladaptive behavior of children with identifiable problems. It is time to pay at least an equal amount of attention to developing the positive skills that will prevent learning and behavioral problems. This article presented a brief overview of a specialized psycho-educational curriculum that can be taught by the regular classroom teacher in the same way reading or any other basic skill is taught.

The self-control curriculum is a positive approach to learning inner controls that are essential to the goals of our democratic society. Current social realities demand that public schools assume a greater responsibility in this area. By 1980, primary prevention programs in elementary schools will be integrated into the regular school curriculum. The self-control curriculum is a prototype of what can be developed in the future for the classroom teacher.

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MARK TWAIN SCHOOL

Mark Twain School² in Montgomery County, Maryland, is a specially designed and staffed public school which provides a short-term educational program for pre-adolescents and adolescents of normal intelligence who are having serious difficulties with academic tasks, human relationships, and self-organization. Students are referred by local school staff through area pupil services offices, when it is determined that needs cannot be met by the resources available in the local school.

To establish an educational environment with balanced groups of students in small units based on age, physical maturity, and social development, Mark Twain was designed as three schools within one. The Lower School is composed of two instructional teams, each with 50 students 9-12 years old, grades 5-7. The Middle School has 100 students, ages 12-14, grades 7-9. The Upper School has 50 students, ages 14-19, grades 9-12. Overlaps in grades across the three schools permit placement of students with one team throughout the maximum stay of two years at Mark Twain. The primary objective is to prepare the student for a successful return to a local school program.

Pupil programming, instruction, and evaluation are intended to promote positive change in academic, personal, and social behaviors. Thus, the instructional program emphasizes guidance and counseling and behavior management as well as subject matter. *Academic* instruction focuses on maintaining achievement and meeting state and Montgomery County requirements, remediation of skill deficiencies, and encouraging effective school behaviors such as attendance and participation. The focus for

personal change is on the development of self-acceptance, self-awareness, and appropriate coping behaviors. The focus for *social* behavior is on promoting understanding and ability to relate positively to peers and adults, and on the development of group interaction skills.

To promote these positive changes, the Mark Twain School provides an individualized and personalized task-oriented curriculum which includes (1) assignment to an instructional team on the basis of age and grade level, (2) assessment of academic, personal, and social functioning for the purpose of goal setting, (3) scheduling into classes and groups appropriate to the pupil's cognitive and affective needs, and continuous diagnostic-prescriptive teaching. Student progress is monitored by both formal and informal means. Evaluation information is used to measure attainment of academic and behavioral objectives and for decision-making.

In order to assure a basis for caring and consistency in teacher-student relations, each student is assigned to a teacher-advisor who becomes a sponsor and counselor. The teacher-advisor coordinates the student's instructional program, establishes goals and schedule with the student, conducts group and individual counseling, and serves as a resource to other teachers.

Teachers are organized into interdisciplinary teams representing the areas of language arts, math, reading, science, and social studies. Instruction in each subject area is founded on the Montgomery County Public Schools course of study. However, staff are careful to assess pupil ability level relative to course requirements and to design an individualized program which enables successful completion of objectives. Specific content and skill goals are set for each student and a remedial, grade level, or enriched program is planned. Although subject content is individualized, opportunities for group work are provided as preparation for the pupil's return to larger classes and regular school instruction.

The physical education program is organized to help students master skills at their own levels while learning to work cooperatively. All Mark Twain students participate in physical education at least four periods a week, unless excused for medical reasons. Activities are planned to foster (1) increased physical fitness, (2) development of various motor skills, (3) growth of interest in wholesome leisure time activities, and (4) development of lifetime sports interests.

Mark Twain students also participate in a wide variety of art and aesthetic experiences. Students are assigned to the Arts Barn three times per week where they may

2. The material describing Mark Twain School has been excerpted, with permission, from documents written by Mr. William Porter, Dr. Steve Checkon, Mrs. Elaine Lessenco.

develop skills and appreciation in the areas of art, drama, domestic survival (home economics), industrial arts, and music. The Arts Barn program is built on the premise that troubled youngsters need multiple creative experiences to help them realize that they have unique creative abilities which can be expressed in multimedia.

Supporting the total instructional program is an Instructional Resources Center which offers intensive curriculum help to both students and teachers. The center provides diagnostic-prescriptive consultation, business education, and instructional materials design, media, and equipment services. Instructional materials are developed as needed to present required content at the student's functional reading or other skill level and with high interest.

ROSE DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL

The Rose Demonstration School in Washington, D.C. is a unique psychoeducational facility for elementary age pupils with serious learning and behavior problems. The school is a service of the Department of Human Resources, Community Mental Health, Area A, and is affiliated with the D.C. Public Schools to serve emotionally handicapped pupils attending the 16 elementary schools in its catchment area. The Rose School also is affiliated with the American University Department of Special Education. Dr.

Long is assigned as administrative and training director of the school; and in conjunction with a BEH grant, his graduate students are assigned to the Rose School for the academic year on a full time basis. In addition, a video research project on behavior management is being directed by the Department of Special Education.

While the school is organized to reeducate 40 troubled pupils who attend Rose School four days per week and their regular classroom one day per week, the primary goal of the school is to influence the socialization and interpersonal techniques of teachers, parent groups, and significant community agencies. This goal is promoted by ongoing consultation, inservice training programs, and demonstration projects. At least 50% of the staff's professional time is committed to establishing primary and secondary preventive programs in the public schools and community. In this organizational model special education and mental health have joined resources and talents in a common cause. It is a comfortable relationship, but like all important relationships it needs attention and care. However, the benefits of this arrangement to the community, schools, and pupils are enormous. Alone, special education and mental health are limited and fragmented services. Together, there is a hope and a vitality that something worthwhile can be achieved, a quality program can be established, and destructive fighting over professional control and status can be eliminated.