

THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY AND  
ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GENERAL SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IN  
INSTITUTIONALIZED OPPOSITIONAL RETARDED CHILDREN

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## ABSTRACT

The present study tested the hypothesis that giving an institutionalized oppositional retarded child an increase in responsibility would bring about social change in the child in a positive direction. Institutionalized retarded children at Western Carolina Center who were rated as oppositional by their cottage parents, teachers and social workers were chosen as Ss. A questionnaire was used to assess to what degree the Ss were oppositional. Responsibility was assigned to the Ss in the form of captainship, or leadership, responsibility of a group of girls in the cottage with regard to specified chores.

Four separate means were used to judge social adjustment. First, observation of the Ss' classroom conduct was used to ascertain how well the Ss were adjusting to the social expectations of the classroom. Second, the Ss were asked to trace a triangle on an Etch-A-Sketch machine, and the number of times Ss did this was used as a measure of how well each S would obey an authority figure. The third measure, also derived from the Etch-A-Sketch, was the daily score for each S on the triangles traced. This was a measure of how well the Ss would respond to the demands of an authority figure. And, the fourth measure was taken from the Center's pre-established Token Economy Program. The measure used from this program was bonuses earned.

The results were positive for each measure of social adjustment.

The first three measures were subjected to a planned comparison statistic, and significance was found for all three measures. The fourth measure, bonuses earned, did not lend itself to this statistic, so an accumulative graph was employed. The results in this measure were also positive. The Ss showed the steepest incline during each S's captainship. Overall the study suggested that increasing responsibility in institutionalized oppositional retarded children did bring about improved social adjustment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
II. METHOD. . . . .	5
Subjects and Setting. . . . .	5
Apparatus . . . . .	5
Scoring of Questionnaire and Statistical Analysis . . . . .	6
Use and Scoring of the Interval Recording Sheet . . . . .	7
Use and Scoring of the Etch-A-Sketch. . . . .	7
Use and Scoring of the Cottage Cleanliness Checklist. . . . .	9
Administrative Procedures . . . . .	9
Training in Use of the Cleanliness Checklist. . . . .	11
Training in Supervisory Skills. . . . .	14
Time Schedule . . . . .	15
An Added Measure of Social Adjustment . . . . .	16
Observational Procedures. . . . .	16
Observer Training and Reliability . . . . .	18
III. RESULTS . . . . .	19
IV. DISCUSSION. . . . .	29
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	36
APPENDICES . . . . .	38
APPENDIX A. . . . .	39
APPENDIX B. . . . .	41
APPENDIX C. . . . .	42
APPENDIX D. . . . .	44
APPENDIX E. . . . .	45
VITA . . . . .	47

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1	Daily percentage of the amount of appropriate classroom behavior for $\underline{S}_1$ and $\underline{S}_2$ during ten days baseline <sub>1</sub> , ten days experiment <sub>1</sub> , ten days experiment <sub>2</sub> , and three days baseline <sub>2</sub> . . . . . 21
2	Daily number of attempts at tracing a triangle on the Etch-A-Sketch toy for $\underline{S}_1$ and $\underline{S}_2$ over a 33 day period of ten days of baseline <sub>1</sub> , ten days of experiment <sub>1</sub> , ten days of experiment <sub>2</sub> , and three days of baseline <sub>2</sub> . The greater the number of attempts made, the more responsive the $\underline{S}$ s were to the demands of an authority figure. . . . . 23
3	Daily scores for the Etch-A-Sketch triangle tracings for $\underline{S}_1$ and $\underline{S}_2$ for ten days baseline <sub>1</sub> , ten days experiment <sub>1</sub> , ten days experiment <sub>2</sub> , and three days baseline <sub>2</sub> . The lower scores represent fewer mistakes and are indicative of $\underline{S}$ 's desire to please an authority figure. . . . . 25
4	Accumulation of bonuses earned by $\underline{S}_1$ over a 33 day period of ten days baseline <sub>1</sub> , ten days experiment <sub>1</sub> , ten days experiment <sub>2</sub> , and three days baseline <sub>2</sub> . Bonuses were a reward for "good" behavior in the classroom and in the cottage. . . . . 26
5	Accumulation of bonuses earned by $\underline{S}_2$ over a 33 day period of ten days baseline <sub>1</sub> , ten days experiment <sub>1</sub> , ten days experiment <sub>2</sub> , and three days baseline <sub>2</sub> . Bonuses were a reward for "good" behavior in the classroom and in the cottage. . . . . 27

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

We are familiar with parents giving their child or children the responsibility of certain chores done around the home. For example, an older child may be assigned the task of watching the younger children, or a very young child may be given the task of keeping a play area clean. In school, teachers make a practice of placing certain students in positions of responsibility in the classroom. It has been assumed that giving a child more responsibility will improve his chances of following a normal pattern of psychological development.

A research of literature in this area indicated that no one has attempted a program of this nature with institutionalized oppositional retarded children (IORC). If the theory is correct that assigning a child a responsibility encourages a normal pattern of growth, this same type of rationale would apply to IORC. If the IORC are given an increase of responsibility this would help their social adjustment. A workable program of this nature would bring about social adjustment in IORC and assist in more prompt release from an institution.

Ora (1971) defined the "oppositional" preschooler as a child who, despite being physically capable of cooperating, actively resists what our culture views as reasonable requests. These



children are usually described as uncooperative and negative; they have serious temper outbursts, are hyperactive and frequently destructive. Though Ora offers a definition for oppositional children he does not advocate changing them by increasing their responsibilities.

Giving a person a job with enough responsibility to challenge his abilities has long been a practice in business management. There have been many studies in the area of leadership and the characteristics of leaders. Zerfoss (1968) expounded the theory that in order for professional workers to be motivated to do a good job they must be challenged. He presented a hierarchy of needs --- based on Maslow's writings --- which he believed must be fulfilled for a worker to perform at optimum level. Among these were the need to belong, and the need to know and understand. Zerfoss stated in his book that these needs can be, and usually are, met in professional workers. He stated that when these needs are met a person is motivated to accomplish, but when these needs are not met a person becomes frustrated and does not attempt to accomplish. He then presented a list of fifteen characteristics for the motivated person, and fifteen characteristics for the frustrated person. Children in institutions for the retarded may not have any of these needs met. They also exhibit the characteristics which Zerfoss listed for a person who is frustrated. These are: 1) rigid, and unreasonable; 2) emotionally defensive; 3) hostile and antagonistic;

4) resists change; 5) ritualistic; 6) disorganized, confused, and; 7) low in productivity. A child exhibiting any or all of these qualities is usually labeled as a behavioral problem. According to Zerfoss, if the needs listed above are met, these characteristics will disappear.

Studies in leadership indicated that leaders chosen by children themselves were superior in either mental, physical or social ability. Harrison & Rawles (1971) presented the fact that leaders were more disruptive in class. It has been assumed that anyone who possessed superior mental, physical, or social abilities would not possess the characteristics of the frustrated person if they were given the chance to express these abilities. In this study it was hypothesized that the captainship gave these children a chance to test their abilities and brought to the forefront any abilities that they possessed in the aforementioned areas. It was felt by the writer that in giving oppositional retarded children leadership roles, their mental, physical, or social attributes would become apparent because of such expectations by peers and cottage parents.

Even though there was a great wealth of literature on leadership, and characteristics of people who are chosen as leaders by their peers, no previous studies have been attempted to ascertain in what direction a person who was assigned leadership and increased responsibility would change in regard to their social adjustment and interaction.

Rosen (1974) stated: "...man has a biologically-rooted need to engage in complex activities..." The present study attempted to establish that giving the IORC responsibility would in fact bring about a change in the children's social adjustment. The specific hypothesis advanced in this study was that, if IORC were given positions of leadership over other children, and also given an increase in responsibility, that the children would also improve in their social adjustment by indulging more in behavior which society deemed appropriate (by cooperating with people of authority), and less in behavior that was considered unacceptable.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Subjects and Setting

The sample for this study consisted of two girls, fourteen and fifteen years of age. They were both residents of the Educational Program Unit at Western Carolina Center for Exceptional Children. Their average I.Q. was approximately 60. The two girls were admitted to the Western Carolina Center for truancy, uncontrollable behavior in the home and school, and for delinquency and pre-delinquency. The girls were chosen for this study via an oppositional child prescreening questionnaire answered by their cottage parents, teacher, and social worker.

The observation and training of the girls took place from eight in the morning until eleven in the morning at Western Carolina Center. The girls were observed both in the cottage and in the classroom settings. The study ran for six weeks, ten days baseline, ten days program, and 3 days of reversal for each subject.

#### Apparatus

An oppositional child questionnaire, a sheet showing the proper response indicative of oppositional behavior, and a scoring sheet, appendices A, B, and C, were used in the study. Interval recording sheets, appendix D, were also used. Other

equipment used: stop watches, two children's Etch-A-Sketch toys, and a cottage cleanliness checklist, appendix E.

The oppositional child prescreening questionnaire, appendix A, was given to cottage parents, teachers, and the cottage social worker. It was used to determine the degree to which these people, who interacted with the child every day, considered the child to be oppositional. Each child was judged on a continuum from "frequently (F) does this," "sometimes (ST) does this," to "rarely (R) does this." For example, does Billy Sue follow the instructions you give her? The response was either; "yes, frequently," "I would say yes, sometimes," or "no, she rarely does that."

#### Scoring of Questionnaire and Statistical Analysis

The oppositional child questionnaire was scored by recording only the responses that fell into the oppositional category. Neither "frequently" nor "rarely" was always indicative of an oppositional answer to these questions. Whether a response was oppositional or not was determined by a list that presented the oppositional answer to each question, appendix B. This list was derived by the writer when developing the questionnaire. As an aid to speed in scoring, an answer sheet with a hole punched where the oppositional answer should appear, appendix C, was placed over the test sheet and the test was then scored. The Ss with the highest combined scores were then considered most oppositional.

A Spearman Rank-Order Correlation ( $\rho$ ) was computed comparing

quantitative scores for each girl on the Oppositional Child Questionnaire, as judged by professional staff against the non-professional staff.

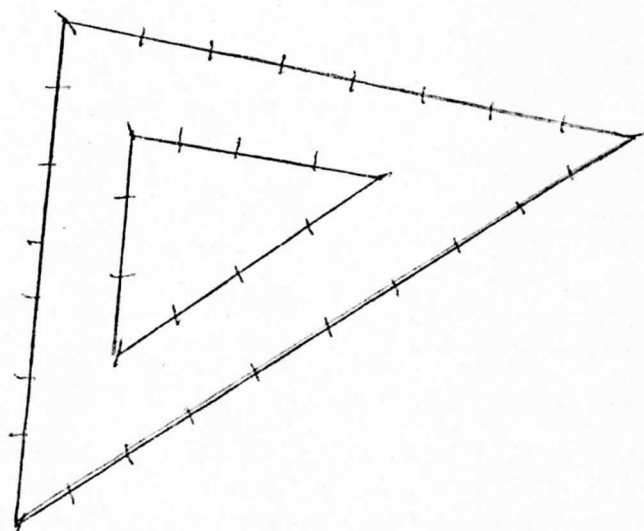
#### Use and Scoring of the Interval Recording Sheet

The interval recording sheet, appendix D, was used to measure the percent of time on task. This was computed by the formula:

$$\text{percent of time on task} = \frac{\text{time on task}}{\text{time on task} + \text{time off task}}$$

#### Use and Scoring of the Etch-A-Sketch

The Etch-A-Sketch was used in the study as a measure of social adjustment. This was accomplished by placing two permanent triangles on the face of the Etch-A-Sketch. One triangle was placed one half inch inside the perimeter of the other. The lines that formed the triangles were ruled off with marks placed one centimeter apart. The Ss saw a larger drawing of the figure below:



The two triangles were arranged so that there was an opening of one half inch between them. The Ss were then asked to trace a triangle between the two triangles. The Ss were told to stay in the one half inch area when tracing the triangles with the Etch-A-Sketch.

Each S was scored on the number of times she attempted to trace a triangle when asked to do so by E. The more times S attempted to trace a triangle, the better her social adjustment was considered because she had followed the requests of a person in a position of authority. The S was measured on how well she stayed within the area between the two triangles. This was accomplished by penalizing the S one mistake (or point) for each time a line passed outside the area between the triangles in either direction. If the line passed out of the designated area in either direction and did not come back within the area between the triangles for quite some distance the S was penalized five points for each complete centimeter she was outside of the area. She was also penalized one point for every 3 centimeters in distance away from the triangle outline. A score was then derived by totaling all of the points S had received for mistakes on the triangles attempted. That number was divided by the number of triangles completed. The formula used was:

$$\text{score} = \frac{\text{total mistakes}}{\text{number of attempts.}}$$

It was hypothesized by the writer that the harder the S tried to please, the lower the score would be. It was also felt that as the

S's social adjustment improved she would attempt more triangles before she indicated she wanted to terminate the session. There was some expected improvement over a two week period from practice, but this amounted to a change of around ten points in a positive direction as had been found by the writer in a pilot study.

#### Use and Scoring of the Cottage Cleanliness Checklist

A cottage cleanliness checklist, appendix E, was used in this experiment to assist in illustrating to the Ss how to determine when the girls in her group had done the type of job that was considered a "good job." This checklist was used only by the captain to determine how well the cottage was cleaned by the girls. The Center's cleaning crew came in and cleaned the areas immediately after the girls left for school and, for this reason, the cleanliness checklist could not be used by anyone else. It was felt by the writer that as the child's social adjustment improved that the group she captained would do a better job of cleaning their cottage. The checklist consisted of a list of the areas in the cottage which each group was assigned to keep clean, i.e. bedroom, shower, etc. The checklist included instructions on how to score each area but, due to the timing of the Center's cleaning crew, was not scored by the captain nor an authority figure.

#### Administrative Procedures

The teachers, cottage parents, and social worker were told that the study was to determine whether increasing an oppositional child's



responsibilities and status would cause an improvement in the child's social adjustment as measured by cooperation in class and on the Etch-A-Sketch. Procedures for observing the Ss in order to determine whether there was an actual improvement in social adjustment were explained.

Each of the Ss' teachers, cottage parents, and social worker were administered the oppositional child prescreening questionnaire. After the questionnaire was scored, the highest scoring Ss were chosen to be representative of the IORC. These Ss were then used as the targets of the study.

The Ss were then placed in the position of captain, one at a time. It was possible for both Ss to be captain of the same group at different times.

To distinguish the Ss from the other girls in the cottage and to develop "status" a number of techniques were employed. The Ss wore a red armband with a large blue "C" embroidered on the face of the band. To distinguish the Ss socially, two means were used: 1) The announcement of the Ss' position as captain to both staff and the other residents of South Ash Cottage; 2) The Ss attended daily staff meetings at which the writer and staff members who represented authority to the Ss (and to the other cottage residents) were present. In these staffings the Ss were delegated a position of equality with the staff members present. The Ss were recipients of certain responsibilities in these staffings. These responsibilities consisted of reporting the following to the staff:

- A) A review of the cottage cleanliness checklist
- B) Resident cooperation --- how well the girls in the group cooperated with the captain and other girls
- C) The manner in which she perceived her job --- i.e. whether she liked the position or disliked it

During these staffings the Ss were also introduced to staff members whom they otherwise rarely came in contact with, but whom they knew were a part of the higher echelons of the Center. These staff members were the Director of Habilitation Unit at Western Carolina Center, Assistant Director for Research and Training, and social workers. Cottage parents and other members of the staff were present at different times. The same people did not attend every meeting. The Ss were spotlighted by this opportunity to talk with these prestigious personnel. The S who was acting-captain at the time explained to the staff members her position as captain, and the responsibilities she incurred with the position. The S who was not the acting-captain at the time spent the meeting time with a research assistant to control for attention.

#### Training in Use of the Cleanliness Checklist

The Ss' practical training procedure consisted of instructions in how to complete certain designated chores. The following outlines were used in these training sessions.

Making a bed

- 1) Strip the bed of linens.
- 2) Spread one sheet the length of the bed.
- 3) Tuck the sheet in all the way around the bed.
- 4) Spread second sheet over bed with the end with double ridge sewn in at the head of the bed.
- 5) Go to the foot of the bed, lift mattress and tuck the sheet under at the foot of the bed only.
- 6) Place the blanket on the bed in the same manner as the top sheet --- steps 4 and 5.
- 7) Place the pillow at the head of the bed.
- 8) If a bedspread is used, spread evenly over the bed and do not tuck in.

Sweeping a floor

- 1) Place broom at arms length in front of S with the face of the broom pointing sideways to the S's body.
- 2) Place S's left hand at top of the broom handle.
- 3) S extends right hand about waist high and grasps the broom handle with it.
- 4) Pull the broom from right to left in front of the body all the way across (about the distance of an arms reach).
- 5) Lift up the broom, move to reach an unswept area, and repeat the motion. Continue to move in this manner until the complete floor has been swept, directing all of the dirt into one area.
- 6) Sweep the dirt into a pile.
- 7) Get the dust pan and, holding it in the left hand, place the edge of the dust pan near the pile of dirt.
- 8) Tuck the broom handle under the right arm and with right hand grasp the broom handle just above the broom proper. S will be in a stooped position.
- 9) Brush the pile of dirt into the dust pan.

Mopping a floor

- 1) Fill a mop bucket with water.
- 2) Add four squirts of cleaning liquid to the water.
- 3) Place the mop in the bucket.
- 4) Lift the mop straight up over the bucket. Then place the mop in the ringer attached to the bucket.
- 5) Pull the handle on the ringer toward the bucket to release mop.
- 6) Place the mop on the area to be cleaned.
- 7) Holding the mop in the same manner as a broom, pull the mop from right to left without picking up the mop. Then pull the mop from left to right, moving slightly to overlap the mopped and unmopped area.
- 8) After about five strokes back and forth replace the mop in bucket and repeat steps 4 through 8 until area to be mopped is covered.

Dusting the furniture

- 1) Spray the dust cloth with furniture polish.
- 2) Rub the cloth back and forth over the widest expanse of item, overlapping strokes so each part of the area is touched.
- 3) Dust the narrower areas such as legs on tables, slats in chair backs, etc., and be careful to see that all areas are touched.

Cleaning the bath and shower

- 1) Mop the bathroom floor in manner taught earlier.
- 2) Clean the lavatory by first wetting the surface. Apply cleaner to the surface and, using a sponge, proceed in same manner as taught in dusting. After scouring the sink in this manner it should then be rinsed to remove any remaining cleaner.
- 3) Clean the shower in the same manner as the lavatory substituting a brush for the sponge.
- 4) Clean the toilet by first flushing the toilet to wet the surface. Proceed by sprinkling cleaner into the toilet bowl and, using a long handled brush, scrub the bowl with the cleaner. Flush to rinse the cleaner from the surface. Wipe the outside of the toilet (similar to dusting) using first a cloth with cleaner and then a clean damp cloth to remove any surplus cleaner.

Giving out clothing

- 1) Take each item of clothing and look at the girl's name in the item.
- 2) Separate the clothing by the girls' names.
- 3) Take the item(s) and place on that girl's bed.
- 4) Return to the table and pick up another girl's clothing and take and place on her bed. Continue in this manner until all clothing is distributed.
- 5) It is not necessary to call out the girl's name. If you wish to communicate with one of the girls, do not yell across the room, but walk over and speak with her in a normal voice.

How well the S's group kept their area clean and how quietly they distributed clothing was judged by the cottage parents. Assignments were made to the group in six areas: the hall, the Parent

Management room, the bath and shower, the Day Room, the bedroom, and the distribution of clothing. The duties varied from area to area, but no particular area was considered easier nor harder work by the girls. To insure that any one group did not have a lighter work load, the areas were rotated from day to day.

### Training in Supervisory Skills

The Ss also received training in Supervisory Skills. The training procedure in this area was accomplished by going over the following outline with the Ss and then having them role play with each other the skills they had learned.

#### Making Reports at Meetings

- 1) Wait for a time when no one else is speaking to speak.
- 2) When speaking look at the others present at the meeting.
- 3) Volunteer the following information at every meeting. No one should have to ask for answers to these questions.
  - a) Tell the others how well the rest of the girls have cooperated with you since the last meeting.
  - b) Be sure and single out any girls that have been doing a good job at whatever they were assigned to do.
  - c) Also single out (for the staff at the meeting) any members of the group that have done what you asked of them.
  - d) Single out for the staff any girls who, conversely, have not cooperated well with you.
  - e) Tell the members of the staff that are at the meeting how you generally feel about being captain today (i.e. like it, dislike it), and why you feel the way you do about it.
  - f) Always try to remain calm at the meetings, and talk in a nice, even, normal voice. Do not talk in an overly soft or overly loud voice.

### Giving Directions to the Other Girls

- 1) Never yell or raise your voice to ask a girl to do something. Always try to ask in your normal speaking voice. If need be (because of noise) go over where the girl can hear you to ask her to do something.
- 2) Always be sure when asking girls to do chores to say "please" and "thank you."
- 3) If some girl does not comply with a reasonable request that you have made of them, repeat your request (still not raising your voice, or threatening, or in any other way causing a verbal or physical confrontation with the girl). If, after asking a girl three times, she still does not comply with your request then tell the cottage parent and she will help you with your problem.

### Delivering Feedback

- 1) Tell the girls in your group if they are doing something wrong. Don't yell at them, but tell them they are not doing the job in the most efficient way. i.e. mopping in one spot only. After telling them they are doing something wrong proceed to show them the correct way to accomplish the goal.
- 2) Be sure and let a girl who is doing a good job know that you know she is doing the job well, and praise her for it. i.e. If Lana is doing a good job sweeping, say, "Gee, Lana, you sure did a good job sweeping today. Keep up the good work." It is very important to tell the girl she is doing a good job in front of the other girls in the group. This way she will continue to do a good job. Always give praise more often than you criticize.

### Time Schedule

During the baseline and during the program the E set up the following time schedule for the Ss.

- 8:00 am to 8:30 am - The Ss were engaged working with their groups in the cottage.
- 8:30 am to 9:15 am - The Ss were observed in the classroom setting.
- 9:15 am to 9:30 am - The Ss were involved in training in both supervisory skills and cleaning skills.
- 9:30 am to 9:45 am - The Ss attended the staff meeting with the experimenters and other staff members.
- 9:45 am to 10:30 am - The Ss worked on the Etch-A-Sketch cooperation sample.

### An Added Measure of Social Adjustment

To add strength to the measures of social adjustment derived by the writer, one measure was taken from the Western Carolina Center's established Token Economy Program. This was "bonuses earned." For exhibiting "good" behavior the Ss received extra tokens (or privileges). If the Ss earned a full number of tokens each day they were then awarded bonus (or extra) tokens.

#### OBSERVATIONAL PROCEDURES

Observation of the Ss' classroom behavior was conducted to measure the Ss' social adjustment in the classroom. Observers were seated in a corner of the classroom. This was felt to cause as little disruption as possible. Es had a clear view of the S they were observing. The observation was carried out on a fifteen second interval assessment of behavior with the E recording a ✓ (appropriate behavior) or a — (inappropriate behavior) at the end of every 15-second interval. E observed behavior for one 15-second interval and then took a 15-second period to rest and just glance around the room. The S was observed for a total of 15 minutes each day in this manner. To insure that the S was not observed daily in the exact sequence nor at the exact time the observation time was varied. This was accomplished by beginning daily observations exactly at 8:30 on one day, at 8:45 or 9:00 on other days. No order was followed as to the time observation was started.

The Ss' behavior was recorded in the following categories as developed by Williams (1970):

I. Student Behaviors

A. Appropriate Behaviors

1. Task relevant - answering or asking questions (must be lesson oriented), writing when directed to do so, hand raising to get teacher's attention, looking at teacher while teacher is lecturing, looking at another student who is participating in lesson activity and any other behavior that is consistent with the ongoing lesson activity. Task relevant received a "✓" from the observer.
2. Appropriate social interaction includes talking, laughing, playing games, telling jokes, or just sitting at one's desk when students have not been instructed to engage in lesson activity and when these behaviors are not forbidden by the instructor, or are impolite in nature, e.g., taking an object away from someone, hitting someone. This behavior would occur during free time. Appropriate social interaction received a "✓" from the observer.

B. Inappropriate Behaviors

1. Time off task - just sitting at one's desk without appropriate materials or attempting to get appropriate materials, looking at nonlesson material, gazing out the window or looking around the room when lesson activity has been assigned. The student, however, is not distracting another student by his inattention. Time off task received a "-" from the observer.
2. Disruptive behavior included any behavior that disrupts the academic performance of another student.
  - a. Motor behaviors - getting out of seat, standing up, walking around, rocking in chair, moving chair, gesturing without talking, showing object without talking, squirming in chair, exchanging looks with another student, tapping a student on the shoulder to get his attention, throwing objects, or any disruptive movement without noise. Any of these motor behaviors received a "-" from the observer.



- b. Noise making - tapping feet, clapping hands, tearing papers, tapping pencil on desk, or any other non-verbal noise producing behavior that is not directly involved in task relevant behaviors or appropriate social interaction. Disruptive behavior received a "—" from the observer.
- c. Verbalization - crying, screaming, singing, whistling, laughing, coughing, or engaging in conversation (talking and listening) with other children when these behaviors are not consistent with task relevant behaviors or appropriate social interaction. Inappropriate social interaction or verbalization received a "—" from the observer.
- d. Aggressions - hitting, pushing, shoving, pinching, slapping, striking, poking with objects, grabbing objects from another child, or destroying objects. Any of these aggressions received a "—" from the observer.

#### OBSERVER TRAINING AND RELIABILITY

Two observers received approximately one hour of instruction prior to the beginning of classroom observation. The observers had reliabilities of .90 on the trial observations before the actual observation periods were conducted. Reliability checks were conducted at least three times a week. Observers were the experimenter and a cottage parent at Western Carolina Center, Morganton, North Carolina.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

A planned comparison test was used to determine the amount of change in  $\underline{S}$ 's social adjustment as reflected in three measures: 1) appropriate classroom behavior, 2) number of attempts at tracing a triangle on the Etch-A-Sketch toy, and 3) daily scores from the attempted triangle tracings. Comparisons were made on these measures for  $\underline{S}_1$  versus  $\underline{S}_2$  during baseline<sub>1</sub> ( $b_1$ ), experiment<sub>1</sub> ( $e_1$ ), and experiment<sub>2</sub> ( $e_2$ ). Comparisons were made for each  $\underline{S}$  for  $b_1$  versus  $e_1$  and for  $e_1$  versus  $e_2$ . Comparisons were made of the sum of the means of  $\underline{S}_1$  and  $\underline{S}_2$  during their periods of captainship ( $e_1, \underline{S}_1 + e_2, \underline{S}_2$ ) to the sum of the means of  $\underline{S}_1$  and  $\underline{S}_2$  during the experimental periods when they were not participating as captain ( $e_1, \underline{S}_2 + e_2, \underline{S}_1$ ). Comparisons were made of the sum of the means of  $\underline{S}_1$  and  $\underline{S}_2$  for the period immediately prior to each  $\underline{S}$  actively engaging in the captainship ( $b_1, \underline{S}_1 + e_1, \underline{S}_2$ ) to the sum of the means of  $\underline{S}_1$  and  $\underline{S}_2$  during the experimental period when each  $\underline{S}$  was actively engaged in the captainship ( $e_1, \underline{S}_1 + e_2, \underline{S}_2$ ).

Appropriate classroom behavior: A comparison of  $\underline{S}_1$  vs.  $\underline{S}_2$  during  $b_1$  was not significant ( $t=1.46$ ). However, a comparison of  $\underline{S}_1$  vs.  $\underline{S}_2$  during  $e_1$ , at which time  $\underline{S}_1$  was captain, did show significance ( $t=6.201, p < .002$ ). Similarly, a comparison of  $\underline{S}_1$  vs.  $\underline{S}_2$  during  $e_2$ , at which time  $\underline{S}_2$  was the captain and  $\underline{S}_1$  was removed from that position showed significance ( $t=2.476, p < .02$ ). The degree of freedom for the measure was 18.

A comparison of the periods  $b_1$  vs.  $e_1$  for  $\underline{S}_1$  showed a significant improvement in appropriate classroom behavior ( $t=5.82$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Comparison of  $\underline{S}_2$ 's appropriate classroom behavior during this same period,  $b_1$  vs.  $e_1$  for  $\underline{S}_2$ , was significant at the .05 level ( $t=1.079$ ). The period of  $e_1$  vs.  $e_2$  for  $\underline{S}_1$  was significant ( $t=3.302$ ,  $p < .002$ ), and the period of  $e_1$  vs.  $e_2$  for  $\underline{S}_2$  was significant ( $t=5.376$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Again, the degree of freedom for the measure was 18.

Comparison of the sum of the means of the  $\underline{S}$ s during the experimental periods when each  $\underline{S}$  was captain ( $e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_1 + e_2$ ,  $\underline{S}_2$ ) and the sum of the means of  $\underline{S}$ s during the experimental periods when each  $\underline{S}$  was not involved as captain ( $e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_2 + e_2$ ,  $\underline{S}_1$ ) was significant ( $t=6.136$ ,  $p < .002$ ). The last comparison statistic for appropriate classroom behavior was carried out for  $b_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_1 + e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_2$  (the periods immediately prior to the involvement of each  $\underline{S}$  in the captainship) and  $e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_1 + e_2$ ,  $\underline{S}_2$  (the periods when each  $\underline{S}$  was actively engaged in captainship). This mean comparison was significant ( $t=8.68$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Freedom of degree for this measure was 18.

Figure 1, page 21, represents the percentage of appropriate classroom behavior over the 33 day period in graphical form. The 33 day period includes 10 days of baseline<sub>1</sub> (no captain), 10 days of experiment<sub>1</sub> ( $\underline{S}_1$  was in the captainship); 10 days of experiment<sub>2</sub> ( $\underline{S}_2$  was in the captainship and  $\underline{S}_1$  was removed from the position); and 3 days of baseline<sub>2</sub> (when the captainship program had been discontinued). Due to shifts in the educational program of the  $\underline{S}$ s, baseline<sub>2</sub> ( $b_2$ ) was cut short and insufficient data points for  $b_2$  period made it difficult to use this period in comparisons.

PERCENTAGE OF APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

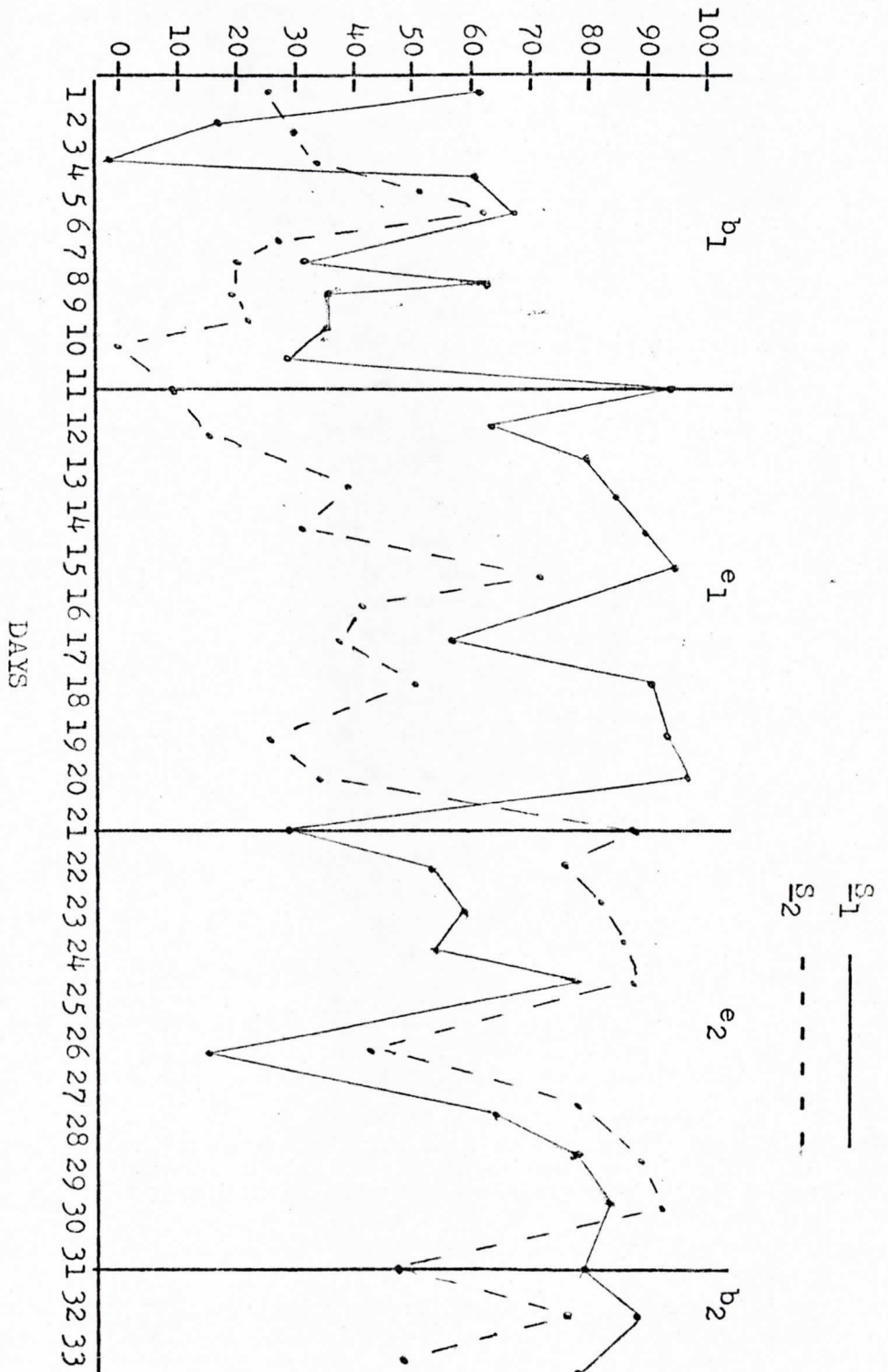


Figure 1: Daily percentage of the amount of appropriate classroom behavior for  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  during ten days baseline<sub>1</sub>, ten days experiment<sub>1</sub>, ten days experiment<sub>2</sub>, and three days baseline<sub>2</sub>.

The second measure subjected to the planned comparison statistic was the number of attempts at tracing a triangle on the Etch-A-Sketch toy. The same comparisons were made for this measure as were used for the first measure, and the results were similar. The freedom of degrees for all these computations were 18. Comparison of  $\underline{S}_1$  vs.  $\underline{S}_2$  for  $b_1$  was not significant ( $t=.304$ ). Comparison of  $\underline{S}_1$  vs.  $\underline{S}_2$  for  $e_1$  was significant at the .002 level ( $t=3.341$ ). Comparison of  $\underline{S}_1$  vs.  $\underline{S}_2$  during  $e_2$  was significant ( $t=2.005$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Comparison of  $b_1$  vs.  $e_1$  for  $\underline{S}_1$  was significant ( $t=3.949$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Comparison of  $e_1$  vs.  $e_2$  for  $\underline{S}_1$  was significant ( $t=3.706$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Comparison of  $e_1$  vs.  $e_2$  for  $\underline{S}_2$  was significant ( $t=9.052$ ,  $p < .002$ ).

Comparison of the sum of the means of  $e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_1 + e_2$ ,  $\underline{S}_2$  and the sum of the means of  $e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_2 + e_2$ ,  $\underline{S}_1$  was significant at the .002 level ( $t=3.780$ ). Comparison of the sum of the means of  $b_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_1 + e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_2$  to the sum of the means of  $e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_1 + e_2$ ,  $\underline{S}_2$  was significant ( $t=9.192$ ,  $p < .002$ ).

Figure 2 on page 23 shows the number of daily attempts at tracing a triangle (triangle shown on page 7) on the Etch-A-Sketch made by each  $\underline{S}$ .

The third measure was the  $\underline{S}$ 's' daily scores on the Etch-A-Sketch tracings. The formula used to obtain the Etch-A-Sketch score was:

$$\text{score} = \frac{\text{total mistakes}}{\text{number of attempts.}}$$

Comparison of  $\underline{S}_1$  vs.  $\underline{S}_2$  during  $b_1$  showed no significance ( $t=.390$ ). Comparison of  $\underline{S}_1$  vs.  $\underline{S}_2$  during  $e_1$  showed significance ( $t=4.02$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Comparison of  $\underline{S}_1$  vs.  $\underline{S}_2$  during  $e_2$  showed significance ( $t=4.508$ ,  $p < .002$ ).



Comparison of  $b_1$  vs.  $e_1$  for  $\underline{S}_1$  was significant  $t=3.747$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Comparison of  $b_1$  vs.  $e_1$  for  $\underline{S}_2$  was not significant ( $t=.117$ ). Comparison of  $e_1$  vs.  $e_2$  for  $\underline{S}_1$  was significant ( $t=2.342$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Comparison of  $e_1$  vs.  $e_2$  for  $\underline{S}_2$  was significant ( $t=6.644$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Comparison of the sum of the means of  $e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_1 + e_2$ ,  $\underline{S}_2$  to the sum of the means of  $e_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_2 + e_2$ ,  $\underline{S}_1$  was significant ( $t=6.030$ ,  $p < .002$ ). Comparison of the sum of the means of  $b_1$ ,  $\underline{S}_1 + e_2$ ,  $\underline{S}_2$  was significant ( $t=7.106$ ,  $p < .002$ ).

Figure 3, page 25 reflects the daily score of each  $\underline{S}$  in the triangle tracings. The lower the score the fewer the mistakes made by  $\underline{S}$  in tracing the Etch-A-Sketch triangle.

The fourth measure of social adjustment was taken from the previously established token economy program of Western Carolina Center. This measure was bonuses earned in the cottage and in the school. When the residents of the Center did a "good" job in either of the aforementioned physical situations, they earned a respectable number of regular tokens. Extra effort in performance in these areas was rewarded with bonus tokens. Selection of this measure was made because it dealt specifically with the amount of social adjustment achieved by the  $\underline{S}$ s. The number of bonuses earned by  $\underline{S}$ s during the six week period that the program was implemented were plotted on two accumulative graphs, figures 4 and 5, pages 27 and 28. There was a steeper climb in both  $\underline{S}$ s during the time the  $\underline{S}$  was serving as captain.  $\underline{S}_1$  showed a more dramatic climb during captainship than  $\underline{S}_2$ .

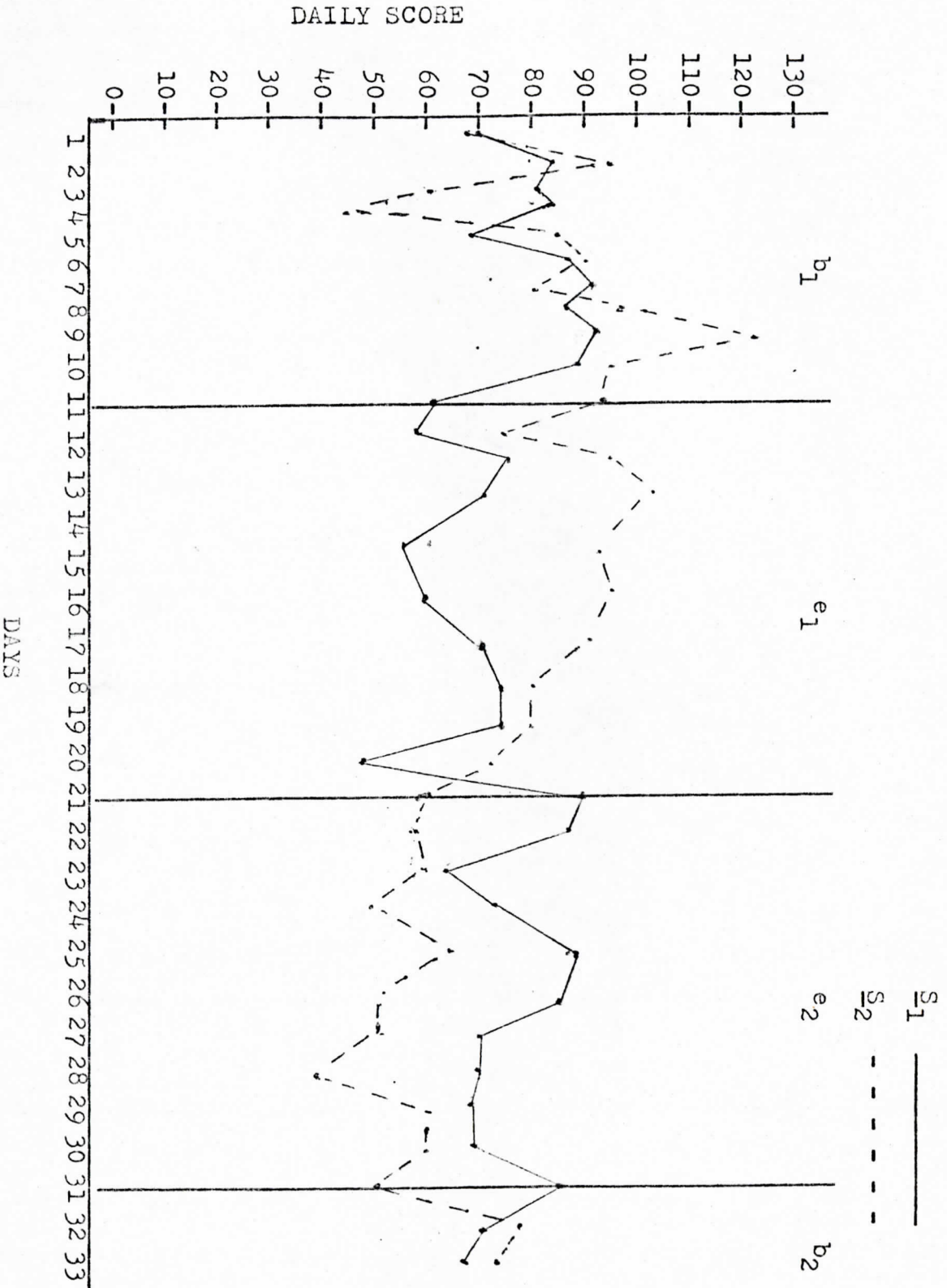


Figure 3: Daily scores for the Etch-A-Sketch triangle tracings for  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  for ten days baseline<sub>1</sub>, ten days experiment<sub>1</sub>, ten days baseline<sub>2</sub>, and three days baseline<sub>2</sub>. The lower scores represent fewer mistakes and are indicative of  $S$ 's desire to



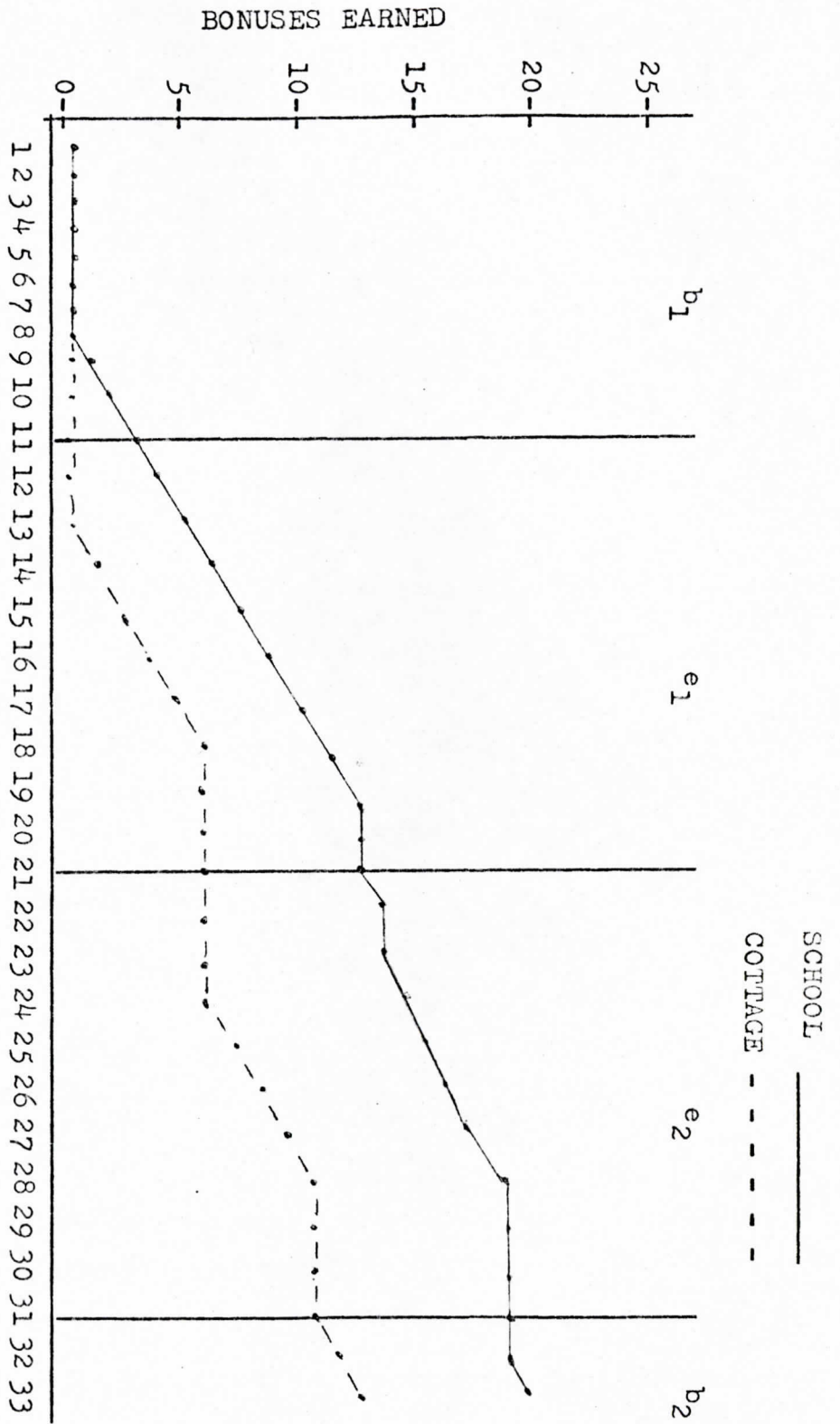


Figure 4: Accumulation of bonuses earned by  $S_1$  over

a 33 day period of ten days baseline<sub>1</sub>, ten days experiment<sub>1</sub>, and ten days experiment<sub>2</sub>, and three days baseline<sub>2</sub>. Bonuses were a reward for "good" behavior in the classroom and in the cottage.

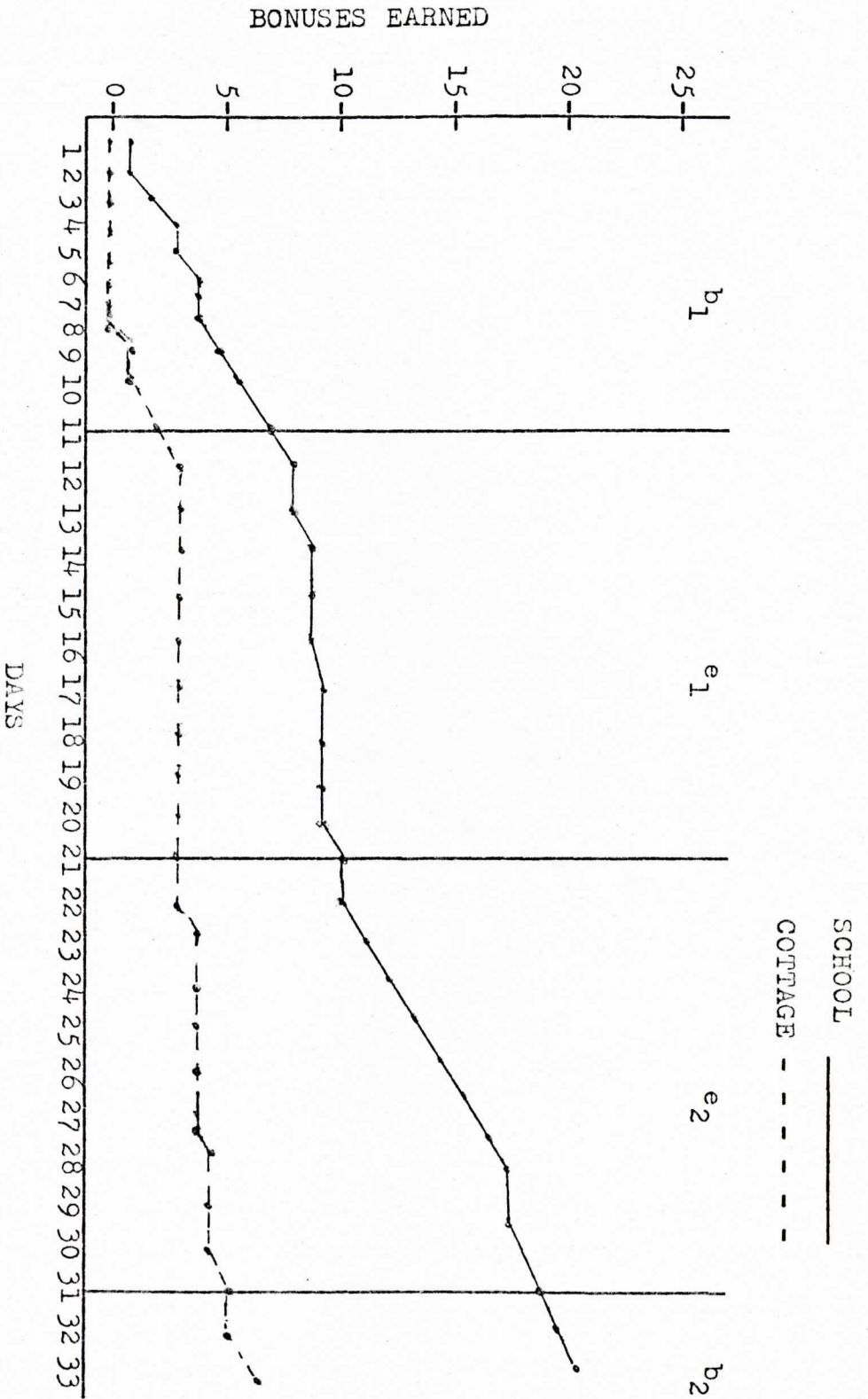


Figure 5: Accumulation of bonuses earned by  $\underline{S}_2$  over

a 33 day period of ten days baseline<sub>1</sub>, ten days experiment<sub>1</sub>, and ten days experiment<sub>2</sub>, and three days baseline<sub>2</sub>. Bonuses were a reward for "good" behavior in the classroom and in the cottage.

A Spearman Rank-Order Correlation ( $\rho$ ) was computed, comparing quantitative scores for each girl on the Oppositional Child Questionnaires as judged by professional staff against the non-professional staff. The  $\rho$  was positive .55 which was significant ( $t=2.69$ ,  $p < .02$ ), thus showing the questionnaire to be reliable across professional and non-professional staff.

Inter-rater reliability was computed on an average of 3 times a week for the per cent of appropriate classroom behavior. The overall reliability for both observers was 95.7. Daily reliability was computed by dividing the total number of observations into the number of agreements between observers and multiplying the result by 100. The formula was:

$$\left( \frac{\text{\# of observer agreements}}{\text{total \# of observations}} \right) \times 100.$$

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to assess whether increasing responsibility of oppositional institutionalized retarded children would increase their social adaptability; and, the results of the measures used to register change in social adjustment offered support for this hypothesis.

The Oppositional Child Questionnaire used to select Ss was shown to be reliable across professional and non-professional staff. Improved social adjustment was expected of the Ss both in the cottage and in the classroom.

A planned comparison was made for the amount of appropriate classroom behavior for the sum of the experimental periods when each S was actively involved in the captainship program, to the sum of the experimental periods when each S was not actively involved in the captainship. This comparison was significant and offered support for the hypothesis that increased responsibility challenged the Ss and brought about an improvement in social adjustment, and was in agreement with Zerfoss (1968) and his management theory.

The possibility was considered that, in singling out the Ss as captain, Ss would be brought to the attention of the people who control reinforcers in such a way that they, in turn, would recognize "good" behavior where previously the Ss were aversive to them and they tended to ignore the Ss. This could have resulted

in increasing  $\underline{S}$ s rewards over what they had been, thus shaping "good" behavior. A study is now in progress dealing with this variable (Page, 1974). A referral to the moderate results of the bonuses earned measure (figures 4 and 5, pages 26 and 27) indicate, especially in  $\underline{S}_2$ , that the people who controlled contingencies in the present program were not unduly influenced by the  $\underline{S}$ s' participation in the program.

It was noted during experiment<sub>1</sub>, when  $\underline{S}_1$  was in the position of increased responsibility, that  $\underline{S}_2$  improved in her appropriate classroom behavior. This change is reasoned to be due to the attention that  $\underline{S}_2$  received from a research assistant who was assigned to work with  $\underline{S}_2$  during the period when  $\underline{S}_1$ , as captain, attended the staff meeting. This attention was not received during baseline<sub>1</sub>.  $\underline{S}_1$  received attention from a research assistant during experiment<sub>2</sub>, after she was removed from the position of captain, during the time when  $\underline{S}_2$ , as captain, attended the staff meeting.  $\underline{S}_1$ 's negative change in appropriate social behavior during experiment<sub>2</sub> was attributed to removal from the captainship.

Significance was also found in the number of attempts at tracing the triangle between the sum of the treatment programs for each  $\underline{S}$  and the sum of the experimental programs when each  $\underline{S}$  was not captain. The reason for this significance has been hypothesized; the  $\underline{S}$ , having improved in social adaptability, was more responsive to the requests of an authority figure.

There was the possibility that, in the measure of the number of

triangle tracings attempted, each girl acted as a model for the other girl. E noticed a feeling of competitiveness developing between the two Ss over the baseline<sub>1</sub> and the experiment<sub>1</sub> periods. The competitiveness was noted to be at its highest point, as can be seen by figure 2 on page 23, on day 21. The Ss were separated on day 22 for the Etch-A-Sketch sessions, and while one S worked with the Etch-A-Sketch the other S spent the time with a research assistant. When the separation occurred the Ss reversed, with the S in captainship doing more tracings than the S not in captainship. It is felt by E that there was a significant increase in the number of attempts at tracing the triangles due to Ss' increased social adjustment. Although when the Ss were separated for the Etch-A-Sketch sessions the number of attempts at tracing a triangle dropped for both Ss, S<sub>2</sub> (who was in the captainship) was higher on day 29 than during the periods when Ss had their Etch-A-Sketch sessions together. With the exception of day 21, the S in the captainship (S<sub>1</sub> during e<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub> during e<sub>2</sub>) always did a greater number of tracings than the S who was not in the captainship.

The possibility of the Ss having picked up subtle hints from E as to who should be doing the most tracings of the triangle has been considered. As E was aware of this possibility, precautions were taken not to give hints in the form of talking or facial expressions. It was felt that these precautions were adequate to prevent this possibility from occurring, and the fact that, on day 21 the S who was not captain attempted more triangle tracings than did the S

who was captain refutes the possibility of influence by E. Any replication studies, however, should take better defined precautions in this area, i.e. separate Ss and E by a board in such a manner that Ss could not see E's face, and use of a recorded statement, "do another" to eliminate any special inflection in E's voice.

Significance was found in comparisons of the measure, daily scores on the Etch-A-Sketch. The two periods when each S was captain were compared with the sum of the two experimental periods when each S was not captain, and was very significant. This was accepted as further support of the fact that each S did improve in social adjustment and took more pains to please E.

A pilot study, previously run by E, showed that the Ss would improve (about 10 points) over 10 trials on the Etch-A-Sketch due to practice. After trial 10 their performance tended to ceiling out. The Ss were, therefore, given the Etch-A-Sketch approximately 20 times before they were started into the program to control for practice effects. The fact that each S scored lower during her captainship, and S<sub>1</sub>'s score rose when removed from the captainship, would support the statement: Ss did not improve due to practice.

The Etch-A-Sketch scores were obtained by dividing the number of mistakes made daily in tracing the triangles by the number of triangles attempted. The lower the score the better the S was at tracing the triangles. It should be pointed out that separating the Ss on day 22 did not affect the measure of daily scores. This can be seen in figure 3, page 24, when on day 21 the S who had just

become captain scored lower than the S just removed from the captainship, and lower still on her second day in the captainship (the first day of separate Etch-A-Sketch sessions). The variable of competitiveness did not appear to enter into this measure, as it did in the number of attempts at tracing the triangle. A possible reason was the Ss could not see the scores as they were written down, but they could estimate who had traced the last triangle and, therefore, guess who was tracing the greater number of triangles.

The measure of the number of bonuses earned by each S in the cottage and in the school did not show as definite results as the other measures, but did show definite improvement in amount of bonuses earned. The bonuses earned measure was not subjected to a planned comparison statistic, but the number of bonuses each S received during captainship could be favorably compared to the number of bonuses each S received during baseline<sub>1</sub> and during the experiment period when she was not captain. It was easily seen that each S accumulated more bonuses during the period when she was actively involved in the program, figures 4 and 5, pages 26 and 27. The lack of any spectacular accumulation of bonuses minimized the possibility of excessive reward for "good" behavior by the people who controlled the reinforcers.

As bonuses were given for generally "good" behavior, this measure supports the hypothesis that increasing the responsibility of institutionalized oppositional children did bring about increased social adjustment. Social adjustment was reflected more



promptly in the classroom than in the cottage.  $S_2$  had expressed some resentment towards cottage parents and it was felt that, although  $S_2$ 's bonuses earned in the cottage were minimal, that  $S_2$ 's gain in bonuses earned was significant.

Control for attention was established to minimize any change in social adjustment from this factor. The program was geared so each  $S$  participated in some manner at all periods, even during the period when she was not in the captainship. Activities were the same with the exception that the  $S$  in the captainship attended staff meetings, while (as a specific control for attention) the  $S$  who was not captain was involved in interaction with a research assistant at the Center.

The present study demonstrated strong support for the hypothesis that an increase in the responsibility of oppositional institutionalized retarded children to a level that challenges them did improve social adjustment, as defined by Ora (1971). There did, however, appear to be many variables that may interact to bring about this positive change. The possibility exists that when a person has all of his basic needs met, higher needs must be met before the person can lead a productive life. This lends direct support to Maslow's theory and the business management theory as set forth by Zerfoss (1968). It seemed possible that when a person is given increased responsibilities, there is a change in his contingencies. Page (1974) found that people controlling reinforcers may not be turned off by a child who is treated as being more capable and

reward the child more often, thus appropriate behavior may increase rapidly and may remain high.

There definitely should be further research in this area of increased responsibility in institutionalized people, and mental health cases in general. Any future research should control the method by which Ss are rewarded to eliminate any change in contingencies, and a more specific hypothesis should be derived as to exactly what brings about the increase in social adjustment. Attempts should be made for any future studies to increase the number of Ss and to increase the periods to have a clear return to baseline period. It was not felt that the present study was weakened by insufficient data points in baseline<sub>2</sub>, rather that any future study would be strengthened and enlarged (does improved social adjustment continue after discontinuation of responsibility?) in the planned comparison statistic. Baseline<sub>2</sub> was cut short in the present study due to a change in the education program of the Ss. However, there was a definite trend toward continuation of social adjustment during baseline<sub>2</sub>. This was indicative that the increase in social adjustment did remain at an increased level even after the Ss were removed from the program. (The writer was grateful to Western Carolina Center for delaying the change in the Ss' educational program to accommodate the more vital periods of the study.)

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SCREENING TEST FOR OPPOSITIONAL CHILDREN

Answer: F = Frequently

ST = Sometimes

R = Rarely

(Circle your answer.)

Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Taking Directions:

- |                                                                                                                                                             |   |    |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|---|
| 1) Does <u>S</u> listen carefully when you ask her to do something?                                                                                         | F | ST | R |
| 2) Does <u>S</u> do what you ask her to do (work, etc.)?                                                                                                    | F | ST | R |
| 3) Does <u>S</u> give back-talk when asked to work?                                                                                                         | F | ST | R |
| 4) Does <u>S</u> follow the instructions you give her?                                                                                                      | F | ST | R |
| 5) When unable to follow instructions (because she doesn't understand, or can't find something) does <u>S</u> ask for help in a friendly and polite manner? | F | ST | R |

Leadership:

- |                                                                                |   |    |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|---|
| 6) Does <u>S</u> appropriately direct activities of other residents?           | F | ST | R |
| 7) Does <u>S</u> try to direct activities of others along inappropriate lines? | F | ST | R |
| 8) To what extent does <u>S</u> follow rather than lead?                       | F | ST | R |
| 9) Does this <u>S</u> try to avoid doing anything you ask?                     | F | ST | R |
| 10) Does <u>S</u> want to please you with respect to all reasonable requests?  | F | ST | R |

## Response to Criticism and Reprimand:

- |     |                                                                                                             |   |    |   |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|---|
| 11) | Do you feel you must be careful what you say to <u>S</u> for fear she will lose her temper?                 | F | ST | R |
| 12) | When criticized or reprimanded how likely is <u>S</u> to accept it and to improve herself by the criticism? | F | ST | R |
| 13) | How often does <u>S</u> come to you and seek your praise?                                                   | F | ST | R |
| 14) | Does <u>S</u> cause a disruption among the other girls?                                                     | F | ST | R |

APPENDIX B

OPPOSITIONAL RESPONSES FOR  
THE OPPOSITIONAL CHILD PRESCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

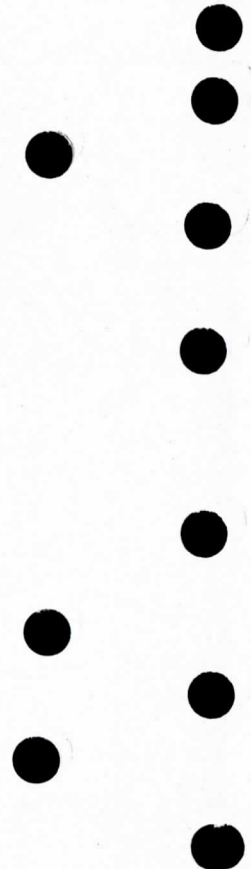
QUESTION	OPPOSITIONAL RESPONSE
1	Rarely
2	Rarely
3	Frequently
4	Rarely
5	Rarely
6	Rarely
7	Frequently
8	Rarely
9	Frequently
10	Rarely
11	Frequently
12	Rarely
13	Frequently
14	Frequently



APPENDIX C

ANSWER KEY

OPPOSITIONAL RESPONSES FOR  
THE OPPOSITIONAL CHILD PRESCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE





APPENDIX D

INTERVAL RECORDING SHEET

Instructions to Observer: Place a ✓ in any box (15-second interval) in which the subject is on task for the complete 15-second interval. Record a — in any box (15 second interval) in which the subject is off task for any part of the 15 second interval. ("On task" and "off task" are defined under "Student Behaviors" pages 15-16.)

SUBJECT \_\_\_\_\_

OBSERVER \_\_\_\_\_

TIME START \_\_\_\_\_

TIME STOP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

15-Second Intervals

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
S <sub>1</sub>										
S <sub>2</sub>										

SITUATION \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

15-Second Intervals

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
S <sub>1</sub>										
S <sub>2</sub>										

SITUATION \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

Percent of time on task \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX E

COTTAGE CLEANLINESS CHECKLIST

Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Bedroom #1

No foreign objects on floor larger than 1/8 inch square

Scored as follows:

0-1 item -- 15 points earned  
 2-5 -- 10 points earned  
 6-10 -- 5 points earned  
 11+ -- 0 points

Efficient mopping - white cloth test

Scored as follows:

<u>Test Grade</u>	<u>Pts. Earned</u>
#1 Clean; hand print not evident	15
#2 Adequate; hand print evident with light dust outline	10
#3 Dirty; hand print evident in dark dust outline	5
#4 Not mopped	0

Beds Made - judged by B-area standards

(+1 for each)

Windowsills (+1 for each clean on white cloth test)

Bedroom #2

Foreign objects

Efficient mopping (white cloth test)

Beds made

Windowsills

Bedroom #3

Foreign objects

Efficient mopping (white cloth test)

Beds made

Windowsills

Bedroom #4

Foreign objects

Efficient mopping (white cloth test)

Beds made

Windowsills

Dayroom

Foreign objects

Furniture

- +1 for each piece clean
- +1 for each piece in order
- +1 for each emptied trash can
- +1 for each trash can in order

Bathroom

Sinks

- +1 for each sink left clean

Commodes

- +1 for each clean commode (white cloth test)

Floor

Foreign objects

Mopping

Mirror

- +1 for each clean mirror

Walls

- +2 for each clean wall (tile only)

Shower Room

Bathtub

- +5 for clean tub

Shower stalls

- +3 for each clean stall

Floor

Foreign objects

Mopping (white cloth test)

Quiet Room

Foreign objects

Efficient mopping (white cloth test)

Walls

- +2 for each clean wall

Hallway

Floor

Foreign objects

Mopping (white cloth test)

Furniture

- +1 for each piece clean
- +1 for each piece in order (3")

Trash cans

- +1 for each emptied

Equipment

- 1 for each piece found out of place  
(carts in S. Ash should be in shower room)

## VITA

Charles Grayson Guyer, II was born in High Point, North Carolina on May 22, 1949. He was graduated from High Point Central High School, High Point, North Carolina in June, 1968. The following August he entered Mitchell College, Statesville, North Carolina. In September of 1970, he entered Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, and in June 1972, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology.

In September 1972, he entered the graduate program in Clinical Psychology at Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina. He has served as psychologist for the Region D Developmental and Evaluation Clinic, Boone, North Carolina. He is currently involved as a clinical intern at Surry County Mental Health Authority, Mount Airy, North Carolina, and is currently a candidate for Master's degree at Appalachian State University.

He is married to the former Beverley Perdue of High Point, North Carolina.