

UNDERSTANDING AND GUIDING
THE ELEMENTARY CHILD

by 680

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INTRODUCTION

Because the school children of America are faced with ever increasing complex changes in our society, there is a greater need for the teacher to understand the developmental needs of children. The teacher must be aware of the child's needs just as the child must be aware of his own needs.

There exists a conflict between what a person knows of himself and what a person thinks of himself. It is natural for one to appraise the cognitive facts about himself and to sort these facts into pigeon holes that are congruent with what one wants to appear to be in the eyes of the significant people around him. Most people confuse "self-knowledge" with knowledge of their conscious ego personalities. Carl G. Jung summed it adequately by saying:

People measure their self-knowledge by what the average person in their social environment knows of himself but not by the real psychic facts which are for the most part hidden from them. In this respect the psyche behaves like the body with its physiological and anatomical structure, of which the average person knows very little too. . . . What is commonly called "self-knowledge" is therefore very limited knowledge, most of it dependent on social factors, of what goes on in the human psyche.¹

Presumably, then, the need for self understanding becomes more acute with regard to elementary children. The elementary child is more ego oriented than the secondary school aged child. He is also more dependent

¹Carl G. Jung, The Undiscovered Self. (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1958), p. 7.

and less able to defend an ego attack.² Knowing this, one can realize that classroom teachers have a duty to endeavor to understand the child, then, to help the child understand himself.

After this bond of empathy solidifies, the teacher and student are able to work cooperatively in providing a rewarding experience. Concentrated efforts may then be given to striving for behavioral changes.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this report was to integrate the underlying principles of a phenomenological approach to self understanding, a kind of behavior modification, and a therapy, called Reality Therapy, based on a theory which is of a behavioristic orientation.

Since the intention of this investigation was to show how a child can change his behavior, some research relevant to change in behavior of the child was introduced and techniques for applying research findings to the classroom were suggested. The content of the report was directed to the elementary classroom teacher.

Limitations

The investigation was designed to be a survey and not an extensive summation of all theorists' ideas. The report centered upon (1) the research findings of Leonard Krasner and Leonard Ullman, (2) the techniques used by William Glasser, (3) the works of Carl Rogers, and

²Roger F. Aubrey, "The Legitimacy of Elementary School Counselors: Some Unresolved Issues and Conflicts," Personnel and Guidance Journal XLVI (December, 1967), p. 355.

(4) the ideas of Donald Snygg and Arthur Combs. The above mentioned were elaborated upon as these seemed most applicable for utilization in the classroom. Techniques mentioned were limited to elementary school children.

Method of Research

The study was limited to a review of the literature available in the Farrell Library, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

Definition of Terms

Behavior modification. Behavior modification is the result of the process whereby one changes the behavior and attitudes of a person. Behavior modification employs the behavior theory of learning which is based on a stimulus-response approach. In working with children, the adult responds to the child's desirable behavior with praise and passively disregards the undesirable behavior. Through this method the child learns to associate his behavior (the stimulus) with the reward (the response) from the teacher.

Phenomenal self. The phenomenal self is the physical self plus the experiences that comprise what the individual perceives of himself as the real person.

Phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach is the point of view that behavior is determined by direct experience rather than by external, objective, physically described reality. A person reacts to

an experience or phenomenon solely on the basis of how it affects him.³

Psychoanalytic theory. The theory of psychoanalysis that was developed by Freud attributed mental disorders to repressed factors in the unconscious. Patients were encouraged to alleviate frustrations through dream analysis and free association. Free association occurs as the patient verbalizes his thoughts randomly.⁴

Reality Therapy. Reality Therapy is the process by which the psychiatrist guides people who are unable to fulfill their basic needs in a realistic way to face reality in making decisions that are morally right and that make the person socially responsible for his behavior. Reality Therapy takes a contradictory stand to psychoanalytic theory.⁵

³Horace English and Ava English (ed.), A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958), p. 417.

⁴Ibid., p. 387.

⁵William Glasser, Reality Therapy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 20.

II. EMOTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN

To understand better how to help children, it is necessary for the teacher to understand the emotional and intellectual needs of children. Teachers would want to provide the best setting possible in which the child will learn. Young children usually are influenced by their teachers actions and reactions. The teacher with a guidance viewpoint will demonstrate that she acknowledges the child's emotional needs, and the integration of emotional and intellectual needs.

Understanding the Emotional Needs of a Child

Behavior is a product of past experience. Experience is the result of an attempt at fulfilling individual needs.

Though the basic needs of an infant are respected, concentration has been confined to the needs of elementary children and how these needs can be fulfilled. In simple terms, the needs of a child are the same as those of an adult. Excluding the physical needs of survival, the two most basic needs are probably (1) the need to love and to be loved (security) and (2) the need for self-actualization (esteem).¹ Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs indicated that by fulfilling these two needs a person will probably feel of great value to himself and the world.² This is what is so important to a child--to be worthwhile, to be somebody, to be missed when he is not present and to be recognized when he is.

¹William Glasser, Reality Therapy (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965), p. 7.

²Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," The Psychological Review, L (July, 1943), 371.

Physical needs are demanding on one's body. Likewise, emotional needs require constant maintenance. For the child who is struggling for identity, meeting these emotional needs is an overwhelming task; and for this reason, he seeks assistance from his teacher. Following is one of many lists of emotional needs of children. This list was chosen because elementary teachers are familiar with this division of needs if not with the author.

The emotional needs of children as listed by Rath and Burrell³ are

1. Need for belonging
2. Need for achievement
3. Need for economic security
4. Need for freedom from fear
5. Need for love and affection
6. Need for freedom from guilt feelings
7. Need for self-respect
8. Need for understanding

If everyone were able to fulfill those needs, then the necessity of mental hospitals and clinics would be reduced. Since everyone is not capable of fulfilling his emotional needs, it seems imperative, then, that teachers and counselors instigate immediate action to alleviate the situation. It would be presumptuous to think that educators can solve the abundance of problems existing in these areas. However, great

³Louis Rath and Anna Porter Burrell, Understanding the Problem Child (West Orange, New Jersey: The Economic Press, Inc., 1963), p. 64.

strides of progress can be made in the elementary school toward understanding and working with children.

Glasser underscored the fact that fulfilling basic needs is necessary for life saying that if a child is not able to fulfill these emotional needs in one way, he will find another.⁴ For example, consider the well-known theory that if an infant does not fulfill his need for oral stimulation by nursing, he will suck something else which is usually his thumb.

Children find ways of substituting one gratification for another. No amount of knowledge, literature, or experience can present to the adult the different devices used by children for satisfying their needs. What is frequently interpreted as misbehavior or "getting his way" is probably the child saying, "Look at me. Here I am. Recognize me." If that child does not gain attention by the more conventional methods, he will resort to behavior that is most likely irritating to adults.

A close examination of these emotional needs mentioned earlier reveals that children struggle daily with their needs which strongly compel them to act as they do. If one need is not met in a small way, this can compensate for other needs or fears because the needs are so intricately interwoven.

The need for belonging. The need for belonging is a complex, yet concrete, aspect of the child's existence. The child is dependent upon

⁴Glasser, op. cit., p. 64.

those people within his immediate surroundings to fulfill this need. Quite naturally, the family is the primary source for reinforcing the need for belonging. Secondary reinforcing sources are his peer group and his teacher. For this reason, it seems necessary that the teacher strive to foster an atmosphere of acceptance within the classroom. That is, the teacher must accept each child and attempt to help classmates accept one another. If a child knows that he is accepted by his peers, he will be motivated to higher goals and achievements; for by being accepted by others, he is meeting his need for belonging.⁵

Having a group with which to identify is most essential for children as well as adults in fulfilling the need for belonging. It is presumed by the writer that the strongest identification group is the family, probably followed in importance by small friendship groups, classmates at school, organizations, and church groups. Being a part of the group gives the child the friendship of those with a common goal; and at the same time, the group provides regulating principles by which to live.

The underlying principles of group membership are

1. Individuals tend to seek adequacy through identification with people seeking need satisfaction in ways similar to their own.
2. Persons banded together in groups for their mutual satisfaction of needs find the group purposes most effectively advanced by the development of group organization.

⁵Frank S. Miyamoto and Sanford M. Dornbusch, "A Test of Interactionist Hypothesis of Self-Conception," The American Journal of Sociology, LXI (August, 1956), 399-403.

3. People tend to withdraw from groups whose approval they are unable to win or which no longer satisfy their need.
4. Identification of an individual within a group leads him to adopt and defend the standards and behavior of that group.⁶

The need for achievement. Need for achievement can be interpreted as the child's desire to succeed in accomplishing some predetermined goals.

It is ideal for a child to want to be successful; but when this need is misproportioned, the child may suffer. For example, if a child feels that one of his other needs is not being met, he may strive with great compulsion to be successful at simple tasks so that he becomes a perfectionist. Having a need for achievement so strong that the child cannot tolerate simple failures is detrimental enough to cause the child to be dependent upon others for assuring his every success. This is noticeable in children who feel the urgency to know exactly at what time and where each experience of their day will happen.

Campbell indicated that a child who has an extremely high need for achievement will probably be a very dependent child.⁷ It seems that modern American schools are striving to develop internal control in children as contributing factors to effective democracy. If this is true,

⁶Donald Snygg and Arthur Combs, Individual Behavior (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959) pp. 327-332.

⁷Paul Burton Campbell, "Self-concept and Academic Achievement in Middle Grade Public School Children," Dissertation Abstract, 1966, 276-A, 1535-36.

then teachers and counselors must be able to recognize degrees of need for achievement while they endeavor simultaneously to meet individual needs.

The need for economic security. Discussions with children concerning money lead the writer to believe that elementary children are concerned with money and the value of money in our society. In children's opinions, adults should be guided in career advancements by motives other than money. Children also feel that adults should not allow debts to accumulate but should repay all debts immediately. Large sums of money seem to be impressive to children but are of secondary importance in character reputation of adults whom children admire.

Elementary children worry about the family's welfare when they hear parents discuss the family's financial status.

Children are willing to perform tasks for money ranging from small chores to paper routes because they feel the need for the security of having their own money. Some children have said that they tend to hoard money that they earn. The possession of money seems to give them personal economic security.⁸

The need for freedom from fear. Fears are not imaginary to children. Even when told that there is no logical basis for their fears, children cannot dispel such fears.

⁸The statements concerning economic security are conclusions of the writer after discussing money and financial status with elementary children. No sophisticated study was conducted.

The fears that children have could be divided into physical and non-physical threats. Physical threats cause a fear of bodily harm. Children are sometimes afraid of large animals, snakes and other reptiles, persons of authority with punitive power such as policemen, severe weather conditions, and electrical devices which they fear could electrically shock them.

Non-physical fears include one of the greatest fears of children, which is any external or internal force that may threaten the family as a unit. Children fear the loss of a parent through death. Death in itself is a threat to children because they do not understand it.

Because their fears are so intense, children frequently question adults concerning their safety with such questions as, "Will the lightning burn down the house?" or "What would happen to me if you were to die?" indicating that their minds are full of unanswered questions which are real fears to them. It is advisable for the teacher to provide a time for children to discuss their fears. In this way, children can see that what they fear their peers fear also.

The need for love and affection. "Love," says Gibran, "has no other desire but to fulfill itself."⁹ Probably the greatest need of mankind and the most difficult to describe is the need for love and affection. As is frequently said, "With love you can be anything, without it you are nothing."

⁹Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Pub., 1957), p. 14.

Primary children express the physical outward signs of love more easily than do intermediate children. This does not mean that they need more love or that they need more physical display of love; it means that they are not apprehensive about demonstrating love. If an intermediate child were to be more free in displaying affection, he may be subject to peer disapproval. This threatens his concept of being accepted by others, which is an integral part of the need for belonging.

Since there is a great overlapping in the affective areas of children's needs, it seems imperative that the teacher consciously attempt to help the child fulfill his emotional needs.

The need for freedom from guilt feelings. It is quite possible that the intense guilt feelings of children are a result of pressures exerted by adults.

During their years spent in the elementary school, children are struggling with their consciences which are forming. The teacher could help the children see that one's conscience is a result of past experiences, and that a "bad conscience" is appropriate only if one knows of several choices and deliberately chooses the wrong alternative. The teacher could also help the children understand that mortals are not perfect and that they should not feel obsessive guilt if they do not attain perfection.

Children may feel guilty if they do not attain the standards imposed upon them by adults. Many times adults pressure children into being "good" according to adult standards. Children find this extremely

difficult, especially if the adult expects children to behave in adult-like manners. It may be that adults attempt to compensate for personal shortcomings in creating a "perfect" or "model" child which is a product of their training and influence.

The need for self-respect. Having self-respect may very well mean the difference between success and failure. Low achievers tend to have a lesser amount of respect for their abilities and personal attributes. A child who meets failures daily and whose infrequent successes are not positively reinforced has little opportunity to build self-respect.

In many instances the child resorts to adult schemes of "fishing for a compliment." A child may say to his teacher, "I'm just not any good at schoolwork; I really would be happier if I weren't in school." He hopes and expects that the teacher will praise him for his accomplishments and encourage his being in the classroom. Most teachers do react with the child's anticipated responses realizing that the child's self-concept must be supported for him to regain or strengthen his self-respect.

The need for understanding. At all age levels, children say that they are not understood. There seems to be a lack of true communication when adults hear what children are saying but do not attend to the feelings accompanying the spoken word.

Children have yet to develop the skills needed to express themselves clearly, or to be perceptive to one another's feelings. However, children are not totally without awareness of people's moods and feelings.

They know when their best friends are upset or when their teacher is having a "bad day." Adults should realize, then, that children have the capacity for learning how to understand others; and because they want so desperately to be understood, they will try to understand others.

The teacher must be the key person in the school for fulfilling the children's emotional needs. Despite the fact that American schools are structured so that the teacher is basically concerned with the group, one cannot dismiss the premise that the group is composed of individuals. The teacher must regard each child as a dynamic and unique individual. The child must be aware of the fact that his teacher is genuinely concerned about him and that his teacher is always available when students need help. In dealing with the children, the teacher must attempt to understand their children by thinking of the child's feelings, and how the child perceives the situation. Fulfilling the emotional needs of a child is daily integrated with fulfilling the child's educational or academic needs.

Emotional and Intellectual Intercourse

In order for a child to develop intellectually, he must develop emotionally. As a child sees himself becoming an individual, it is necessary for him to recognize a fusion of intellect and emotion as he deals with his feelings. Although there is a difference in feeling and emotion, there is not an actual dichotomy between the two. Feeling is a more generic term for a state of mind encompassing emotion, sensitivity, affectation and other reactions. Emotion involves more of the total

mental and physical responses. Emotion affects the biological process of the body. In a sense emotion is an extrapolation of feeling. One who has a feeling about something has the capacity to respond emotionally but that emotion is precipitated by personal involvement.

Children are emotionally involved in the learning that results from the classroom instruction. They have identified with their classmates and perceived the teacher as a helping person. They have invested their feelings, and in a sense their life, into the relationship with other people. Because of the investment, they cannot afford the risk of being rejected academically. The support that children feel is needed in order to gain self-adequacy must be available to them several times during each school day. The child's needs which are to be met will vary each day and in different degrees. Knowing this, the teacher must be prepared to recognize when the child is not emotionally ready for classroom learning.

According to Henry Clay Lindgren, learning is a form of behavior. When people find ways of adjusting their behavior, they are learning something.¹⁰ The child must be emotionally ready to learn. He must accept this change in behavior. He must make this intercourse of emotion and intellect work for him.

In an article written for the Journal of Educational Theory, Samuel Tanenbaum reminded us that children come to school not as passive

¹⁰ Henry C. Lindgren, Educational Psychology in the Classroom (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960), p. 225.

inert persons but with objectives, aims, hopes, feelings, and needs.¹¹ Educators must be ready to assist each individual to fulfill his needs, understand his feelings, reinforce his hopes, realize his aims, and exemplify his objectives.

Readiness to learn is essentially emotional growth and emotional growth leads to educational growth. The child's progress from infantile feelings and thinking, his vocational objectives, his vision of his place in society and the world, his demands of self in terms of this broadening world take on increasing meaning and depth.¹²

In years past, school was considered as an institution whereby the teacher possessed the available and necessary information which she distributed to each receptor according to her own needs and objectives. Present conditions require that educators be aware of the child's needs in establishing curriculum.

Lindgren feels that elementary curriculum is related to the child's basic needs, but that much of it is too slow in actually fulfilling these needs. He claims that if educators used children's psychological needs as a guide for curriculum that the standard curriculum would be greatly changed.¹³

Conditions have improved since Lindgren made those statements;

¹¹Samuel S. Tanenbaum, "Implications of a Phenomenological Approach to Education," Journal of Educational Theory, 1967, XVII, 343-352.

¹²Lindgren, op. cit., p. 227.

¹³Lindgren, op. cit., p. 227.

however, it seems that educators teach what adults think that children need. Adopting the teacher centered approach indicates that the desired results are that children behave less like children and more like adults.

Sometimes students have difficulty perceiving the relationship between what is taught and what they already know. That the student should be given help in understanding why he is expected to gain a certain outcome was supported by Gordon Allport when he said:

When the individual goes through the motions that he does not find meaningful, when he does not really participate, then comes rebellion against authority, complaints, griping, gossip, rumor, scapegoating, and dissatisfaction of all sorts. The job satisfaction is low.¹⁴

Students desire to know how the information that they learn will benefit them. For those who do not understand the relevance of what they are doing in class and how it affects their lives, the teacher is obligated to make that relationship meaningful.

To be a more effective teacher one must be cognizant of the emotional needs of children, be knowledgeable of the successful means for satisfying those needs, and be aware of the necessity for the fusion of emotional and educational needs. The teacher will want to know the importance of students gaining self-insight and adapting their behavior to their own needs and to the needs of society. The following chapter introduces the teacher to one view of the phenomenological approach for developing self-concepts, one form of behavior modification, and one form of therapy which is readily adapted to the classroom.

¹⁴Gordon W. Allport, "The Psychology of Participation," The Psychological Review, LXII (May, 1945), 123-25.

III. SOME APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

There were three prominent approaches to understanding children's behavior discussed here. However, helping a child understand himself is not a simple three-step task. A child must be able to accept and respect himself. This can come through understanding one's self. The child also needs some assistance and support in developing himself. Guidelines are made available to the child through behavior which is or is not reinforced. Because each child is an individual, unique from all others, there can be no set pattern which is applicable to all children. One can learn a great deal from reviewing research conducted by the selected authors.

Understanding One's Self in His Surroundings

The scientific term used to indicate the study of individual behavior is the phenomenological approach to psychology. This approach recognizes that human behavior may be observed from at least two frames of reference: the point of view of the outsider and the point of view of the behavior himself. The common viewpoint of phenomenologists is, as Arthur Snygg and Donald Combs expressed it, "that behavior is a function, not of the external event but of the individual's perception of it."¹

Before one can apply the phenomenological approach to learning and dealing with children, it is necessary to understand in what the

¹ Donald Snygg and Arthur Combs, Individual Behavior (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 21.

phenomenal self consists. Basically, the phenomenal self is the physical self or the person's awareness of body conditions at a given moment and the experiences with which the individual identifies or perceives his own self.

No two people ever share the same phenomenal field. The teacher may see an act of overt behavior of a mischievous child as a tiring disruption to her teaching process, while the child sitting behind the offender sees the act and the boy together as an amusing incident but not worthy of special attention. What stirred anxiety in his teacher and amusement in his classmate might create self-enhancement to the performing child. One act affected and was perceived in multiple dimensions by each person witnessing it.

"The meaning of an object or event is the relation which it has to the self of the perceiver. It is his perception of its effect upon himself and his efforts at self-maintenance and self-enhancement," said Snygg and Combs.²

According to the above authors, the phenomenal self is the individual's basic frame of reference from which all else is observed. The maintenance and enhancement of this self is the prime objective of a person's existence, as Snygg and Combs stated:

As the central point of the perceptual field, the phenomenal self is the point of orientation of the individual's every behavior. It is the frame of reference in terms of which all

²Snygg and Combs, op. cit., p. 372.

other perceptions gain their meaning. It is involved in greater or lesser degree in all perceptions. It provides meaning to what would otherwise be meaningless.³

The degree of involvement is of utmost importance in the phenomenal self. The more closely related or involved a person is to an experience the greater impact it will have upon the phenomenal self. For example, if a fifth grade student hears that the sixth grades in his school will be taking achievement tests he may be passively concerned to the extent that he is glad that that experience does not involve him. But if this boy has a sister in the sixth grade, he is affected by her bemoaning the examination experience and may extend his condolences for her plight. If, however, the boy hears that his fifth grade class will be taking achievement tests, his reactions are quite different. Since this involves him directly, he is actively affected. He may wish that he were ill that day or that he would be exempt from the test for some reason. Regardless of his reactions, one is able to understand that the degree of involvement is directly related to the effect upon the physical self.

Not all psychologists agree that a contrast can be made between the external and the internal frame of reference. It is believed by some that the "phenomenal self approach" is merely a term used to represent the individual's development of common sense. Through his understanding of situations, as perceived through his frame of reference that relates all experiences to former experiences, the individual should be able to act logically in accordance with what he knows about himself.

³Ibid., p. 145.

According to Brewster Smith, it is not possible for one to relate what he does with all that he has done in the past. People, especially children, are constantly exposed to new and different experiences and, he feels, are not humanly capable of evaluating current behavior according to past experiences. If each individual were able to establish theoretical constructs to govern his life and could adhere to the common sense ideal, then there would be no need for psychologists or psychotherapists. He feels that this would be a backset to the clinical success now attained.⁴

The interdependency existing between the ego and the self in the phenomenological approach as interpreted by Snygg and Combs is not clear to Smith. In reference to the mechanisms of defense used by some, he questions whether the defense mechanisms are to protect the ego or to protect the self since the maintenance of a favorable self-image is important to the ego.⁵

It was not the intent to resolve conflicting issues in this paper. Presumably, each phenomenologist's view of the approach is a combination of personal emotion and bias.

A person's perceptual field constantly makes allowances for change. Gaining an insight into one's feelings and attitudes helps a person make decisions. When a child begins to understand that what he thinks of

⁴Brewster M. Smith, "The Phenomenological Approach in Personality Theory: Some Critical Remarks," The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLV (1950), 518.

⁵Ibid., p. 520.

himself is sometimes very different from what others think of him, he can then begin to solve his interpersonal relations. If the child realizes that what others think about him is very near to his own self-concept, then his self-image is improved because he realizes that he has a realistic self-image. Thus, understanding one's self in his surrounding leads quite naturally to a change in behavior.

The ultimate result of the phenomenological approach is a change in behavior. Change in a person's behavior is a result of many factors including the change of the individual's perceptual field. As a person changes his personal attitudes, his outlook on life, or some specific act in his daily routine, he has changed his perception or his ideas about himself. He is then ready for a change, a realistic change in his behavior.

When working with children or in treating patients in a clinical situation, the desired outcome is that the child or patient can make his own decisions based on insight gained through counseling. "The main purpose in treating persons with problems is not to solve the problem but to reduce the tension making it possible for the person to reorganize and to have different feelings about the problems," said Carl Rogers.⁶

Snygg and Combs underscored that idea with the statement:

The more closely related an experience is perceived to the phenomenal self, the greater will be its effect upon the behavior. It is only when events are perceived as having some relationship to self that behavior is changed as a result of perceiving.⁷

⁶Carl R. Rogers, "Some Observations on the Organization of Personality," The American Psychologist, II (1947), 362.

⁷Snygg and Combs, op. cit., p. 149.

The phenomenological approach, then, involves helping the individual understand himself by recognizing that what happens to him or what he does to make something happen is directly related to his feelings, his attitudes, and his opinions of himself.

Recognizing Conditions for Change

After a child is able to understand the components that make his self function, he can be ready to change through various learning processes. Although the learning processes were not discussed here, the utilization of the different types of learning processes were implied in the process of changing behavior.

Learning is a form of behavior. One would expect that through planned exposure and conscientious effort a fourth grader would have a concept of the process of long division in mathematics. As a result of this, the child should be able to perform the computation when necessary having experienced behavioral change, or what is known as the development of a particular learning process.

The term "behavior modification" is used when referring to the clinical practices which are used by psychiatrists and psychologists in treating clinical and hospital patients. The term "behavior modification" may be reserved for the medical professions and clinical research; but, the underlying theory should be applicable to classroom situations. Behavior modification is the desired ultimate condition following a treatment of maladaptive behavior in patients. The term "maladaptive behavior" suggests that the patient engaged in behavior which was not

congruent with social standards or accepted under certain conditions, such as in the classroom. The principle of maladaptive behavior is seen in the overt behavior of the child when he endeavors to bring response and recognition to himself by trying in some way to refuse to follow the standards for accepted behavior.

Examining the general concepts of the medical model of behavior modification, one can make analogies to classroom behavior. The general concepts were outlined by Krasner and Ullman: (1) there is an underlying cause and maladaptive behaviors cannot be treated as such because they are products of causes, (2) changed behavior is not really important unless the "real" trouble has been dealt with, and (3) the distinction between what the subject does, his behavior, and what the clinician expects or knows to be there is blurred and failure to find the expected cause merely confirms the severity of the problem.⁸

In treating patients, doctors endeavor to bring to awareness that of which the patient has not been conscious. This is the goal of the elementary teacher and counselor, to give the child an insight to his behavior, and to help him recognize the conditions for change. From this point, the child and teacher can work cooperatively for a change in behavior.

Thus, behavior modification in the classroom involves helping the child to see the consequences of his former behavior, looking at the

⁸Leonard Krasner and Leonard Ullman, Research in Behavior Modification (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 5.

changes in behavior that are possible, and taking an approach that requires the child to make his own decision about changing behavior.

The change of behavior--the actual modification--is brought about through learning new ways. In clinical experiments, psychologists were successful in changing group leaders to group followers, and group followers to group leaders in a twenty minute discussion of human relations. The subjects were told that a panel of human relation experts would judge their comments and signal with red and green lights whether what they had said was harmful or beneficial to the discussion. Each subject could see only his lights and was not influenced by the ratings the other subjects received. Of course, the "panel of experts" was a group of psychologists who manipulated persons into certain roles by reinforcing or not reinforcing responses.⁹

Although the classroom is not a clinical laboratory, the same procedures may be used in a less formal manner. For example, if a child is hesitant to give his views or answers in a recitation, the teacher may recognize that for some reason, probably lack of confidence, the child is not contributing to discussions. The teacher, with concentrated effort, can positively reinforce any spontaneous discussion by the child until he associates his responses with the teacher's desired praise. The next step of the teacher would be to help the child discover that some responses may be better suited to the topic than others. By firmly praising the most appropriate responses and giving secondary reinforcement, such as a

⁹Krasner and Ullman, op. cit., pp. 268-284.

smile or a nod, to the less appropriate or less meaningful responses, the teacher can reinforce positive classroom behavior.

In the same manner, the child who wants to talk at length indiscriminately, thus denying others the privilege of contributing to class discussion, may be observed by the teacher. By praising his worthwhile responses and "passing by" his seemingly selfish indulgences, the teacher can help the child to appraise his own thoughts before speaking. Behavior modification takes place in every classroom whether done consciously or without conscious effort. If a child desires to change his behavior, then the change can accrue. Until he does want to change or is ready for change, the teacher must continue to praise the child's positive behavior, to encourage continuing efforts in success of achievement, and to support the child's attempt in striving to reach his goals.

It is not advisable for the teacher in any way to attempt to treat behavioral changes in a clinical manner. Referrals should be made to the proper available personnel for treating children who are not capable of handling daily classroom situations. The content design of this paper was not concerned with extremely deviant behaviors, but was to help the teacher continue to know how a child can understand himself, realize a need for change, and be able to make realistic contributions for the future.

Actions for the Future

Reality Therapy, the term used by Dr. William Glasser, is his successful approach to psychiatry. The basis of Reality Therapy is

concerned with two basic psychological needs, the need to love and be loved, and the need to feel worthwhile to oneself and to others. The fulfilling of these needs is based on the premise that everyone has the same needs but varies in the ability to fulfill them. The ability to solve these needs must be learned. Reality Therapy purports to teach the person how to resolve his needs in an acceptable manner.¹⁰

Glasser and his associate G. L. Harrington declared that the psychiatrist or counselor or teacher, as it may be, must become emotionally involved with the person who is seeking help. The troubled student must know that the counselor or teacher is genuinely concerned for his welfare. The only way to give a feeling of genuine concern is to be positively concerned about the student.¹¹

These authorities recognize mental illness as a state of irresponsibility. Refraining from using mental illness and mental healthfulness, Glasser uses the terms "irresponsible" and "responsible" for describing the persons' characteristics. The true task, then, lies in teaching responsibility to the currently irresponsible person.¹²

Persons who choose to lead irresponsible lives have effective methods for eliciting help from others. The helping relationship, according to some people, grew out of such manipulation. The sick person

¹⁰William Glasser, Reality Therapy (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 7.

¹¹Ibid., p. 22.

¹²Ibid., p. 14.

felt that he was entitled to help just because he was sick, and the doctors felt morally unjust if they did not support him or give him treatment. The ultimate result would be an unwritten contract in which the doctor was obligated to help the sufferer. This contract allowed the "sick" person to deny any responsibility for his condition or behavior, thus escaping reality.¹³

When implementing Reality Therapy, patients are first taught to look at their actions realistically. If a youth is in a detention home for shoplifting, he must admit to himself and others that he is a thief. If a truant is confronted by authorities, he must admit to himself and to others that he has been deliberately "skipping school." Once a student has faced reality, he must devise a plan for accepting his responsibility for his behavior. Then he is able to make a moral decision about his plans for the future. Thus, a student must ultimately decide to pursue realistic, responsible, and morally right goals.

It is interesting to note the basic differences of Reality Therapy and the conventional psychoanalytic therapy.

1. Followers of Freud believe that mental illness exists which Reality Therapy will not accept.
2. Those who practice conventional psychiatry deem essential the probing into the patient's past life. Reality Therapists work for the plan of action for the future, saying that the past cannot be changed.

¹³Thomas Szasz, The Myth of Mental Illness (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1961), p. 187.

3. Conventional therapists maintain that a patient must transfer his attitudes to the therapist, while the Reality Therapists feel that they must be able to become emotionally involved with each patient.
4. Conventional psychoanalysts emphasize that the patient must know his unconscious mind. The Reality Therapist contends that a patient cannot become involved with the psychiatrist by excusing his behavior on the basis of unconscious motivations.
5. Conventional therapists avoid morality; Reality Therapists emphasize morality.
6. Followers of conventional psychiatry hold that the patient will learn better behavior after understanding his unconscious motives. Reality Therapy teaches patients better ways to fulfill their needs.¹⁴

Becoming involved is the crucial difficulty in Reality Therapy, which places exhaustive demands on the therapist, counselor, or teacher. For proper involvement, the therapist must be a very responsible person capable of showing that a person can act responsibly even if it takes great effort. The therapist must possess strength to maintain his own responsible life, and strength to resist manipulation by the patient who does not want to confront reality. To become emotionally involved, the therapist must unconditionally accept the patient. The therapist must

¹⁴Glaser, op. cit., pp. 42-44.

become emotionally involved with each patient. To some extent, the therapist must be affected by the patient and his problems, and even suffer with him.¹⁵

Involvement with a patient does not require the same emotional relationship as transference. By being honest with the patient about himself and the patient, the therapist can teach by example ways in which the patient can view the world realistically. Pain is recognized as pain. Guilt is recognized as guilt. And the two of them are recognized as necessary for a behavioral change. Therefore, it is not necessary for a patient to transfer all of his attitudes to the therapist. In fact, effort is made to avoid transference and thus to avoid countertransference by establishing this mutual honesty, then moving the patient to group therapy where he encounters people with similar behavioral traits.¹⁶

Followers of this approach to therapy agree that it is not necessary to search the patient's past history for causes of his behavior. These causes, as was mentioned, may then be used as crutches or excuses for anything the patient now does. Mowrer emphatically said, "Psychoanalysts too long have been engaged in privacy, withdrawal, denial, and duplicity."¹⁷

Confessing all sins and enumerating all guilts only shares a secret.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁶Hobart O. Mowrer, The New Group Therapy (New York: D. VanNostrand Company, Inc., 1960), pp. 164-65.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 92.

The fact that it is still a secret encourages the holder to focus upon the contributing factors to his present behavior rather than to look closely at his behavior now, and forecast promising specific behavioral changes.

Utilizing these theories that develop constructive actions for the present and future seems decidedly favorable in the classroom. Teachers have an advantage over therapists in that they see the child in a variety of situations and they have the opportunity to establish mutual honesty and emotional involvement in a shorter period of time.

IV. INCORPORATION AND APPLICATION OF IDEAS INTO THE CLASSROOM

The task of deciding the direction to follow in assisting children is immense because of the innumerable routes from which to choose. The wise and understanding teacher selects the appropriate route for helping each child. Even so, one must strive, continuously, to meet the child's needs in a day-by-day situation which arises in the classroom.

Utilizing Reality Therapy in Conjunction with the Phenomenal Self and Behavioral Changes

Although Glasser's Reality Therapy was initially intended for clinical use with wayward youth, it has numerous possibilities for functioning in the classroom. The same basic principles can be used with public school children. The basic principles are (1) confronting the student with his actual behavior, (2) discussing the moral requirements for functioning in society, and (3) inspiring a desire to fulfill responsibilities as a means of self satisfaction.

Through understanding himself, the child can face the situation realistically and attempt to change his pattern of behavior which he now sees as detrimental to himself and others.

Elementary school children need guidance and direction, but they do not need militant commands issued by adults. They do deserve the chance to know why there are privileges and responsibilities appropriate for each age level. Children also need to be aware of the fact that the adults in their lives have the prerogative of making some decisions for the children. The child needs someone to help him face reality in times

of distress and pleasure. When a child goes home ecstatic over a newly acquired position, such as being responsible for helping the teacher by passing papers to classmates, his parents help him understand that his temporary duty, although it bears prestige, does not give him any authority over others.

If a child should be involved in a scrap on the playground, his teachers and parents help him understand that the behavior was a result of his feelings interacting with the feelings of another person. In this way, the child is able to understand why he felt as he did. Hopefully, the child will understand the feelings of the other person involved and be able to confront the reality that he personally has violated a code that exemplifies moral rights and responsibilities.

The child and the adult should compromise on one another's feelings and try to examine the situation logically from the frame of reference of the child and the frame of reference of the adult. If a child is truly sincere in wanting to understand himself, then he is able to encounter confrontation, decision, and responsible behavior. If a child is not willing or emotionally unable to face reality, then he is probably in need of some professional psychological help.

The actual techniques of utilizing the three approaches discussed (the phenomenal self, Reality Therapy, and behavior modification) can be seen in a step by step process of a hypothetical incident. Teachers can identify with the individual problems of students and their relations with adults.

A common problem for elementary teachers is the student who does not hand in assignments, is not attentive in class, and does not follow directions. At first the teacher may attempt to "reach" the student through any one or more of the approaches such as making the child stay after school to do unfinished work, giving the child extra work to be done at home, and talking with the student about developing a sense of personal pride and accomplishment in a job well done. It is quite possible that none of these approaches will motivate the child to change.

If the teacher plans to incorporate the phenomenological approach and Reality Therapy in striving for a change in behavior, she must first help the child understand himself. There are several possibilities available to the teacher such as giving a trait rating scale or a personality inventory test.¹ The latter is available from kindergarten to grade twelve. By using these devices, a child can appraise his self-concept and his self-esteem. An insight to either of these is a beginning for self understanding.

The teacher could arrange a conference with the parents. Learning about the child from another person will help the teacher understand the child and his home environment which will ultimately help the child.

¹Herman J. Peters, Bruce Shertzer and William Van Hoose, Guidance in Elementary Schools. (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1965), p. 97-99. Trait-rating is an observation and a recording of characteristics of personal behavior rather than its process. Trait-ratings form a basis for normative and idiographic study of the child. The check list is usually constructed by the observer. Ibid., p. 119. There is a Pupil Adjustment Inventory developed by Educational Service Bureau, School of Education, University of Pennsylvania for grades K-12. This device assesses academic, social, emotional, and physical characteristics as well as home and school influences.

Once the child knows that a teacher is sincerely interested in him, he can accept more easily any assistance which is offered by the teacher or parents.

The teacher can arrange for a student-teacher conference. At this time the child is asked to face reality. It is here that the child and teacher can discuss the child's strengths and weaknesses. Care should be taken that this conference is a dialogue and not the teacher giving her feelings about the situation. The child must make some contribution. It may be advantageous for the child to list on paper specific things that he can and will do to change his behavior and attitude. One must use this technique with caution trying to avoid the feeling that this list is a required apology. It must not seem to the student that the authority figure (teacher or counselor) is demanding a certain performance.

After the student and teacher have made a plan of action for the future, the teacher must try to praise the student's general improvement in attitude and cooperation, and praise each small sign of a change in behavior. If the student is now handing in one paper a week, that is progress; and that accomplishment deserves encouragement and praise.

At this time, the teacher could ask the student for recitation responses more frequently, and do so with a tone in her voice that indicated her confidence that the child knew the answer and could express himself. Praising any noticeable improvement before his classmates can increase the child's self-confidence. Once the child has confidence in his ability to participate as a member of the class, the teacher and the class could review together the responsibility that each member has to

the class. It is quite possible that with continued praise the child would improve so that he might be asked to help another class member to do something which the troubled child does well.

Praise is the essential factor in changing the behavior. Once a child understands why he does something, or feels some way, and has foreseen concrete steps in altering his behavior pattern, he must be reinforced with praise when he tries a new behavior that is satisfying to himself and his associates.

There are some limitations to this approach, the first one being that it is a slow process and exhaustive to the teacher and the child. If it proves to be too difficult to the child, he may give up and regress to his former behavior. The other children in the room are likely to suffer as the teacher's energies will be directed to the one child's problem. The teacher must demonstrate to the class her desire and willingness to change as she will be receiving the child with more genuine acceptance and be more tolerant of his fears. There is a possibility that the parents may not understand this process just described and may not therefore support the teacher's endeavors. The child must have approval from his parents concerning the change in behavior if the child is to feel successful.

Techniques for Further Understanding

There are some ways that the classroom teacher can foster the relationship whereby the student desires to understand himself and change his behavior. There are opportunities for the teacher to help the child

devise a realistic plan for his new behavior. There are no magic answers to every problem, but the teacher with a guidance viewpoint can accomplish salient goals in understanding.

Promote atmosphere of acceptance. The teacher could strive to promote an atmosphere of acceptance in the classroom. An atmosphere of acceptance exists when the students feel free to express themselves, and know that their ideas will be heard and valued even if they are not adopted. The ideal way for a teacher to promote this atmosphere is to accept, and sincerely try to love every child. The teacher can demonstrate acceptance only by genuinely accepting the students. It is not possible to accept a child and reject his ideas and values.

Effort should be made to publicize each child's attributes. Research has shown that praising the child is the most constructive way to encourage continued success. Each child must feel that he has something of value to contribute to his peer community.

If an atmosphere of acceptance exists, the students will feel free to express themselves without fear of criticism or evaluation. This is known as acceptance without qualification. Students should feel that they are free to respectfully express their opinions about teachers and about school, or about their lives in general. If students are able to express their feelings, the teacher can expect to see a change in study habits and interest in school. Because the students feel that someone is truly interested in their welfare, they will work harder to please others knowing that such efforts will ultimately please themselves.

Help child understand himself. By getting to know each child as an individual, the teacher can begin to help the child understand himself. A good way for the teacher to become involved with children is to get to know them well. If a teacher knows the student's family, or at least knows of all the members of the family, she can easily converse with the child about his family. Being aware of each child's hobbies or interests provides an opportunity for the teacher to talk with the student. If a student is able to talk freely about himself, the teacher can help the child learn more about himself. The teacher can help the students understand why their bodies react to their feelings by discussing physical growth and development with them. Teachers may also discuss attitudes and opinions held by adults about children. Students have the capacity to give the teacher insight concerning many student problems through these discussions. Children who seem hesitant to discuss their ideas may be willing to express themselves in a written composition.

When a child begins to understand himself, the teacher can help him further by aiding him in establishing realistic goals. For example, a student who does not have the ability or the diligence to try will not meet much success. Through conscientious effort the teacher can help the child understand himself by evaluating what the child is currently doing. The teacher then praises his positive efforts so that the child soon learns what action elicits a satisfying response.

Once the child begins to see himself as a worthwhile individual, he is ready to establish new goals for his new behavior. The procedure will not change the child's mental ability, but will encourage a behavior^{al}

change. Realistic goals, in this case, would not involve the student's becoming an honor student, but, perhaps, would be that the child could hand in one paper a week and maintain a positive attitude toward his new goals. To be realistic the goals must be unique to each person.

The ultimate goal of self-understanding is an increase in self-respect. The child must have some self-esteem and pride in his ability. Carl Rogers calls this form of self-respect "positive self-regard."²

Set mood for desire to learn. The teacher is the key person to set the mood for a desire to learn. Children have great perception as to whether a teacher is truly interested in their learning, or just absorbing information. Assuredly, the teacher must be aware of characteristics of the age group with whom she works and enjoy being with these children.

It is essential for the teacher to have adequate knowledge of the subject matter taught. Students, sometimes unrealistically, expect the teacher to be an authority in the curriculum which he teaches. It is not necessary for the teacher to be an authority, but the teacher should have sufficient background and interest in the subject so that he can effectively create within the students an interest or an appreciation for the subject.

Teachers must have effective skills in presenting subject matter so that it appeals to the student. According to Snygg and Combs, good teachers are able to create in the student a desire to know. Efficient

²Carl R. Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1951), p. 191.

teachers have the capacity to relate meaningful information which is commensurate with the student's ability to perceive. By their own enthusiasm, interest, and understandings of both the subject matter and their pupils, effective teachers excite similar interest in students. Good teachers do not deplore the disinterest of their pupils, but they have the power to create interest.³

Be aware of characteristics of group behavior. The teacher should be aware of the characteristics of group behavior and be able to efficiently observe group behavior, as well as the individuals within the group. Anything that a child does provides opportunities for understanding his inner feelings and emotions. To effectively observe a student and his interaction with the group, the teacher could maintain a series of anecdotal records of the child's behavior in group situations, or a time sampling of his behavior.

The teacher should observe all behavior of the child in keeping an anecdotal record. Care should be taken to record the time, date, situation, what the observed individual actually did or did not do, and the teacher's interpretation of the situation, which may include her opinion of the group's reaction to the situation. If the teacher wants to observe the child every day, it would be advisable to record a time sampling of the child's behavior. Every day at a specific time the teacher should record everything that the child does during that time period. The

³Snygg and Combs, op. cit., p. 393.

teacher could add the group's reaction, if any, to the record keeping it separate from the child's behavior.

Because peer acceptance is such a strong need of children, the impact of the group can be very effective in exerting corrective techniques. The group is the reality in which the child operates. The group establishes and reinforces the child's behavior by accepting or rejecting his attitudes and behavior. The teacher who is aware of group behavior can use this influence of the group in disciplinary situations.⁴

Past experience of this writer reveals that group behavior in the classroom can be affected by (1) the physical arrangements in the room, (2) the mental abilities of the group, (3) the environmental conditions of the group leadership, and (4) the social climate of the group.

The physical arrangements of the room include the seating arrangement, the attractiveness of the room and the provisions made for physical comfort, such as proper ventilation, adequate lighting, and appropriately sized desks. Children respond favorably to seating arrangements which allow them to sit by one of their friends. Students also like to help plan the seating arrangement. Colorful and imaginative bulletin boards, pictures on the wall, and pets and flowers help to make an attractive room.

The wide range of mental abilities within a classroom can be detrimental to the group's ability to function as a cohesive group. If slow learners are overwhelmed by the expectations of the teacher, they

⁴Rudolph Freikurs, Psychology in the Classroom (New York: Harper and Row, Pub., 1968), p. 69.

may passively withdraw from the group. The teacher can help avoid withdrawal by assisting the troubled student in finding some area in which he is successful. The teacher should also attempt to help the average and above average students appreciate the others in the room. If the teacher sincerely believes in the contribution that each student makes to the class, then sincerity will be transmitted to the class members, and they too will see merit in every individual. Difficulties may arise if the competition between the better students becomes hostile rather than friendly. The teacher is the initial person to suppress competition so that excessive demands are not made on certain individuals to maintain their academic superiority, rather than enjoy the excitement of working with others who are interested in intellectual pursuits.

The environment of the classroom is a result of methods for group processes utilized by the teacher and the group. The essential difference between harmony and discord may lie in whether the process is democratic, autocratic, or anarchic. Lewin showed in his research done with groups of boys that students with a democratic leader could function well when the leader was out of the room. In the groups in which the leader was autocratic, the boys fought among themselves when the leader was gone. In the group in which anarchy existed, the group could not even function.⁵ The teacher should be familiar with how each type of leader functions with the group and how the group reacts to each type of leadership.

⁵Kurt Lewin, R. Lippitt and R. K. White, "Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created 'Social Climate,'" Journal of Social Psychology X (1939), 271-299.

If there exists within the room the idea that all individuals are worthy of acceptance and praise, the social climate in the room will be pleasant. The social maturity of the group depends upon the ability of each person to display intelligent behavior. "Intelligent behavior," defined by Snygg and Combs, "is behavior which effectively and efficiently satisfies the need of the individual and his society."⁶

The teacher should assist the group in attempting to dissolve racial or social class conflicts. An interracial group will probably not work cooperatively if one or more facets of the group harbors resentments or prejudices. Likewise, students who come from social class conscious families may have trouble accepting or working with someone from another social or economic level.

Experience in working with groups will benefit the teacher in knowing signs of group resistance, inter-group conflicts, group dependency, and other characteristics of group behavior. Once a teacher learns to know the individuals and the group as a whole, he can anticipate problems which may arise, and take necessary precautions to avoid them, or to prepare for those problems.

Remember discipline is preventive. The teacher with the guidance viewpoint does not see discipline as being synonymous with punishment. The dictionary definition of discipline that is most commensurate with the guidance viewpoint is "the training effect of experience."⁷ If the

⁶Snygg and Combs, op. cit., p. 213.

⁷The American College Dictionary (New York: Random House, 1966).

teacher views discipline as an ongoing process whereby children are taught to respect others and to respect rules of order which are necessary for a community to function properly, then discipline will be preventive.

If one expects the children in the classroom to respect the rules and regulations, then the children should have a part in making those rules. In this way, the children feel that they have helped to decide what can be expected of every member. They will be supportive to any necessary punishment if one member violates his responsibilities because they understand why punishment is necessary.

Punishment should take place in peaceful as well as troublesome moments. In fact, sometimes it is more beneficial to wait until the emotional level is low. Suppose that during recess two children began fighting, and the other class members joined one of the two forces until nearly everyone was involved. The teacher would probably be very angry at the class' loss of self-control. The children in each of the two groups would be angry and bitter, and the two original instigators of the incident would, undoubtedly, still be hostile. At that time, it would be inappropriate for the teacher to punish the students or the group. The two children would be too angry to listen to anything that the teacher or the classmates said. Some time later the teacher could let the children discuss settling differences between people, inter-group disputes on the playground, and how to react to someone who provokes bitter feelings in others. The class members will be able to think more rationally and objectively when the emotional level is low, not to mention the teacher's

calmness. Waiting could prevent the teacher from making irrational threats or admonishments which would be difficult to enforce.

Being well aware of the individuals within the classroom can help the teacher anticipate potential personality conflicts. Using foresight in this manner is a form of preventive discipline.

When it is necessary to correct a behavioral situation, the teacher should deal with the child's feelings as well as his actions. By asking herself what made the child commit the particular offense, she reviews what she knows about the child, reflects on incidents during the day leading to the present, and regards the other people involved as contributing factors to his behavior. All of these factors have something to do with why the child feels as he does, and consequently have influence upon why the child did what he did.

Carl Rogers has a technique which he calls "reflecting,"⁸ whereby, he states to his clinical patients how he thinks they feel. This works very well with children. For example, suppose that a second grade child is working on an arithmetic page and suddenly tears it up, stomps to the wastebasket, and throws the paper away. Rather than saying to the child, "Now, why did you do that? Take that paper out of the basket," the teacher in reflecting the child's feelings would say, "You seem to be upset with your performance." In this way, the child sees that someone really understands what he feels and cares about helping him. The first

⁸Carl R. Rogers, Client-Centered Therapy (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1951), p. 64.

response could give the child an opening for transferring his anger from his performance to the teacher, who has confronted him with his actions rather than his feelings.

Dealing with the student's feelings is another form of preventive discipline. Children soon realize that there is someone who cares about how they feel and who gives them a chance to express their feelings to the teacher; they will not feel the urge to express so much of their aggressive feelings in hostile behavior.

The definition which says that discipline is the "training effect of experience" does not imply that children are subjected to forced rules of conduct, nor that they are allowed complete freedom to do as they choose in the classroom. Complete permissiveness is equally as bad as complete conformance. Children need love and understanding, but this does not mean a blanket approval for everything that they do. Children should be able to have freedom to function according to accepted standards, yet within their own self-concept.

By being well informed about the students in the classroom and the characteristics of that age level, the teacher can fashion her own techniques for understanding children.

V. SUMMARY

Now, more than ever, there is a great need for people to understand themselves and one another. Children living in our fast moving society are forced to bear pressures that place their security in jeopardy. It is important for school children to understand the interaction between their physical growth and their mental growth. The entire school personnel work cooperatively for optimum conditions whereby the majority of the students can attain their potential. However, the crucial responsibility for a one-to-one basis for helping individuals befalls the counselor or the classroom teacher. One way that the teacher can help the students is to understand the integration of the underlying principles of (1) a phenomenological approach to self-understanding, (2) a kind of behavior modification effectively used in the classroom, and (3) a therapy which is based on a theory for helping people make realistic decisions.

Teachers must be well aware of the emotional, physical, social, and academic needs of children at the particular age level that they teach. The two greatest needs for children and adults are the need to love and be loved, and the need to feel worthwhile to one's self and to others.

In the public schools of most American communities, adults establish curriculum in accordance with what they interpret as the need of the students. Most school officials select appropriate subject matter for their students, and indicate a willingness to change the curriculum whenever needed. However, there are some areas where adults need to orient the selection of subject matter to the actual needs of students rather

than the needs assumed by adults. Children at all age levels need to see the relevance between what they are taught and how it affects their lives. If children feel that what they are doing is worthwhile or at least stimulating in some respect, they tend to work with diligence and enthusiasm. The job satisfaction is high.

The phenomenological approach emphasizes that there are two frames of reference or points of view, that of the observed, and that of the observer. The teacher can help the student to understand himself by genuinely loving him, and letting him know that he is accepted by others. When a child realizes that he is of value to someone else, his self-image is increased; and he is more capable of examining himself closely in order to understand himself. After a child has an insight into his feelings and actions, he is ready to work for behavior which is appropriate to society, but through which he can still retain his individuality.

Children learn quite easily which type of behavior elicits favorable responses from the teacher and which brings forth undesirable consequences. This stimulus-response approach can work advantageously for the teacher. The teacher can reinforce behavior which is beneficial to the child in his relations within the classroom. For example, if a shy child begins to show signs of desiring to enter classroom discussions, the teacher can slowly draw the child in by asking the child questions that are easy for him to answer, and by making the class aware of that particular child's contribution to the class. In much the same way, a teacher may effectively discourage some disruptive behavior by not responding in a way that would give the performing child the notorious

attention for which he was striving.

Children need to face reality and accept responsibility. It is not beneficial to allow a student to use his past experiences or conditions as an excuse for his present behavior. The understanding teacher realizes that past experiences have an influence upon children's learning, interests, and abilities. However, the real challenge to the teacher is to help the child make realistic, responsible, and morally right choices for his future behavior.

In trying to help a student adjust his behavior, the teacher follows three basic principles which are (1) confronting the student with his behavior, (2) discussing the moral requirements of society, and (3) inspiring a desire to fulfill responsibilities as a means of self-satisfaction. It may be advisable to arrange conferences with parents for an opportunity to know more about the child. Some ways that a classroom teacher can instill within the student a desire to understand himself and change his behavior are (1) to promote an atmosphere of acceptance for all within the classroom, (2) to help the students understand their physical and mental growth, (3) to motivate a desire in the students to learn for understanding, (4) to be informed about each individual and the class as a whole in order to anticipate some behavior, and (5) to assume the position that discipline is not punishment, and that discipline is an ongoing process.

The teacher who truly wants to help students understand themselves and their behavior will be continuously searching for techniques that will be effective for her and her students.

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UNDERSTANDING AND GUIDING
THE ELEMENTARY CHILD

by

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Children in our schools today are forced to bear pressures that place their security in jeopardy. It is imperative that students understand the interaction between their physical and mental growth, and how this growth affects their feelings and attitudes. Even though all school personnel work cooperatively for the benefit of the child, the crucial responsibility for helping individual students befalls the elementary counselor and teacher. The purpose of this paper was to investigate and implement the integration of the underlying principles of (1) a phenomenological approach to self-understanding, (2) a kind of behavior modification effectively used in the classroom, and (3) a therapy which is based on a theory for helping people make realistic decisions. This investigation was deliberately limited to a few well-known proponents of the ideas explored. The report was based upon (1) the research findings of Leonard Krasner and Leonard Ullman, (2) the techniques used by William Glasser, (3) the works of Carl Rogers, and (4) the ideas of Donald Snygg and Arthur Combs.

Teachers must be well aware of the emotional, physical, social, and academic needs of the students in their particular grade level. The two greatest needs for children and adults are the need to love and be loved, and the need to feel worthwhile to one's self and to others.

Most school officials select appropriate subject matter for their students and make adjustments in the curriculum when necessary. Unfortunately, curriculum planning is sometimes influenced by what adults feel that the students need rather than the actual needs of the students.

All children need to see the relevance between what they are taught and how it affects their lives. If children feel that what they are doing is worthwhile, they tend to work with diligence and enthusiasm.

The phenomenological approach emphasizes that there are two frames of reference or points of view, that of the observed, and that of the observer. The teacher can help the student to understand himself by genuinely loving him and letting him know that he is accepted by others. When a child realizes that he is of value to someone else, his self-image is increased and he is more capable of examining himself in order to understand himself. After a child has an insight into his feelings and actions, he is ready to work for behavior which is appropriate to society, yet, through which he can still retain his individuality.

Children learn quite easily which type of behavior brings forth undesirable consequences. This stimulus-response approach can work advantageously for the teacher. The teacher can reinforce behavior which is beneficial to the child in his relations within the classroom. A teacher may effectively discourage some disruptive behavior by not giving the performing child the notorious attention for which he was striving.

The understanding teacher realizes that a child's past experiences have an influence upon his behavior, but does not permit the past to become an excuse for present behavior. The real challenge to the teacher is to help the child make realistic, responsible, and morally right choices to direct his daily living.

In trying to help a student adjust his behavior, the teacher follows

three basic principles which are (1) confronting the student with his behavior, (2) discussing the moral requirements of society, and (3) inspiring a desire to fulfill responsibilities as a means of self satisfaction. Some ways that a teacher can instill within the student a desire to understand himself are (1) to promote an atmosphere of acceptance for all within the classroom, (2) to help the students understand their physical and mental growth, (3) to motivate a desire in the students to learn for understanding, (4) to be informed about each individual and the class as a whole, in order to anticipate some behavior, and (5) to assume the position that discipline is an ongoing process.

The teacher with the guidance viewpoint will be constantly alert to ways in which pupils can gain self-understanding, and can become increasingly aware of pupil characteristics and needs.