

A STUDY OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS  
ENCOUNTERED BY BEGINNING TEACHERS  
OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE  
IN OKLAHOMA

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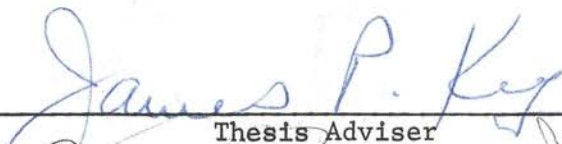
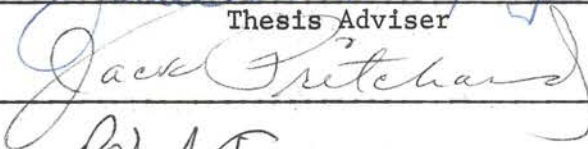
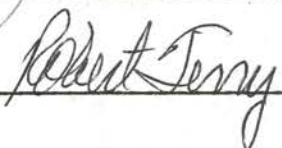
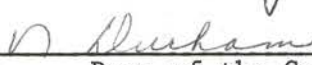
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## CHAPTER I

### PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

Outstanding teachers, public leaders, generals, athletic coaches--in short, all people in positions of responsibility--are by necessity strong disciples of discipline in their own individual ways. Since our public schools are one of the foremost proponents of discipline, it is best for us, as teachers, to work and study in order that we may become even better qualified to train boys and girls how to discipline themselves correctly and democratically.

The modern concept of high school discipline is, according to Pringle, a gradual transition from control to rule to control by reason. High school pupils must grow into freedom, but eternal vigilance is the price of this freedom; and it calls for much firmness on the part of those in authority. (1)

It is to aid the teacher in his vigilance of this freedom that this study has been undertaken.

#### Statement of the Problem

The maintaining of discipline conducive to effective learning is one of the most critical problems facing the beginning teacher. He must prove himself a disciplinarian before he can prove himself a teacher because very little learning will result unless there is discipline in

the classroom. How the beginning teacher meets this problem and how he handles his discipline problems will be the central theme of this study. The inability to maintain the proper discipline conducive to effective learning has caused many potentially good teachers to leave the profession.

An unpublished study was made in 1946, covering the ten-year period of 1936 to 1946, by the staff of the Oklahoma State Office of Vocational Agriculture, on the reasons why teachers were dismissed from their jobs. In the study it was found that the failure to maintain proper discipline was the most common reason causing teachers to be dismissed from their jobs.

#### Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are four-fold: (1) To determine the more common disciplinary problems encountered by beginning teachers of vocational agriculture; (2) to determine the frequency and causes of the various problems; (3) to determine the most satisfactory methods of prevention of disciplinary problems; and (4) to determine the most satisfactory methods of handling the various disciplinary problems.

#### Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study will be limited to the experiences of 50 teachers of vocational agriculture from all five supervisory districts of vocational agriculture in the state of Oklahoma. The teaching experience of the teachers will be limited to five years or less for this study.

This study will be concerned only with those disciplinary problems which the vocational agriculture teachers surveyed encountered with vocational agriculture students. This includes those problems arising in the classroom, shop, on field trips, and at fairs, shows, and contests.

#### Procedure

The first step in making this study was to make an extensive study of the literature available pertaining to high school discipline. Since only a limited number of studies made on this particular problem were found, the review of literature consists chiefly of a summary of books and other materials on discipline as it concerns public schools.

A questionnaire was formulated on the information gained from the survey of literature and from conferences with members of the Agricultural Education staff of Oklahoma State University.

A survey was made with 50 teachers from the five supervisory districts of vocational agriculture. The district supervisor of each district was asked to provide ten teachers with five years or less experience from his district. The questionnaires were mailed to the teachers, and they were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the sender. The questionnaires were filled out anonymously because the author felt that the teachers would be more thorough and frank.

After the questionnaires were returned, the data were tabulated in the various tables, which were then analyzed and discussed.



### Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the term listed below is used as indicated:

1. Beginning Teachers--Teachers who have taught for five years or less.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The author was able to find only a limited number of studies of this particular nature. A search was made of Summaries of Studies in Agricultural Education, Vocational Education Bulletin 180, and its various supplements. The ERIC system was also searched. However, only a limited number of studies on discipline were found. This review, therefore, will consist chiefly of a summary of books and other material on discipline as it concerns public schools.

#### Aims of Discipline

Before proceeding any further in this review, it is necessary that the word discipline be understood. The definition of discipline as given in the dictionary of education is "the degree and kind of orderliness in a given school or the means by which that order is obtained; the maintenance of the school's functions."

In every discussion of discipline we should ask ourselves these questions: Discipline for what? What are we trying to accomplish through discipline? What are the aims and goals for which we aspire? If we know not the goal of discipline, then we are groping in the dark. It is necessary for the good teacher to know the answer to these questions before trying to teach. In answering the question "Discipline for what?" Bagley (2) suggests the following objectives or goals:

(1) The creation and preservation of the conditions that are essential to the orderly progress of the work for which the school exists;

(2) The preparation of the pupils for effective participation in an organized society which, while granting many liberties, balances each with a corresponding responsibility, and which, while allowing each individual much freedom in gratifying his desires and realizing his ambitions, also demands that the individual inhibit those desires and repress those ambitions that are inconsistent with social welfare; and

(3) The gradual impression of the fundamental lessons of self-control, especially through acquainting the pupil with the importance of remote, as contrasted with immediate, ends, and through innumerable experiences which will lead him to see that persistence and sustained effort bring rewards that are infinitely more satisfying than can be attained by following the dictates of momentary desire.

Smith (3) states that the aim of classroom discipline should be of a two-fold nature. The first is to maintain enough system and order to provide a wholesome atmosphere in which pupils may live and work. The second is to maintain the kind of moral conduct that will best stimulate worthy motives, cultural appreciations, and useful habits.

In answering the question "What is the goal of discipline?"

Sheviakov and Redl (4) have this to add:

(1) We want discipline based on devotion to humanitarian principals and ideals such as freedom, justice, and equality for all; (2) we want discipline which recognizes the inherent dignity and rights of every human being, rather than discipline attained through humiliation of the undisciplined; (3) we want self-directed self-discipline, rather than discipline based upon obedience to a master; and (4) we want discipline based on understanding of the goal in view, rather than discipline based on "taking" someone's word for it.

It is very important that every teacher realize that instruction and discipline are inseparable. Instruction is directed primarily toward an increase in knowledge, while discipline is directed toward the refinement of character. Good or bad, both are present in every class that a teacher has conducted.

#### Causes of Disciplinary Problems

It was found in this review that all the authors were pretty much in agreement on the causes of disciplinary problems. The author of this study will summarize the causes of disciplinary problems in the school room as given by Pringle (1).

- (1) Lack of respect of superiors
- (2) Lack of regard for rules
- (3) Stubbornness
- (4) Motor type of pupil--live wire type caused by unusual vitality
- (5) Nervous irritability
- (6) Low mentality
- (7) Immaturity
- (8) Unreasonable desire for fun
- (9) Maliciousness
- (10) Natural excessive talkativeness
- (11) Desire for class attention
- (12) Undesirable home conditions
- (13) Too wide a variation in students' I.Q.'s
- (14) Bad physical environment of classroom:
  - A. Poor lighting
  - B. Inadequate heating

- C. Overcrowding
- D. Poor ventilation
- (15) Causes brought about by teacher
  - A. Insufficient preparation for class
  - B. Attempt to control pupils by mere entertainment
  - C. Lack of poise or want of self-control
  - D. Lack of self-assurance on problem to be taught
  - E. Lack of sense of humor
  - F. Dullness on part of teacher

Scott (5) found in his study that teachers who have trouble with student behavior have certain undesirable habits or characteristics. He found that they tend to:

- (1) Talk too much
- (2) Interrupt others who are talking
- (3) Permit themselves to become involved in personal arguments before or during class
- (4) Act as if they are on the defensive
- (5) "Blow their tops" for little reason
- (6) Laugh too much or grin more or less constantly
- (7) Fail to think ahead of the class
- (8) Miss logical steps in group thinking or fail in adjustment to the ability level of specific groups
- (9) Emphasize mistakes instead of recognizing improvement
- (10) Appear to be lost or not sure where they are going
- (11) Lack integrity
- (12) Play favorites
- (13) Procrastinate

- (14) Hold grudges
- (15) Have poor general health
- (16) Have poor vision or hearing
- (17) Have a poorly developed speaking voice

Of course, no teacher has all the bad qualities listed. However, there is a tendency for a poor teacher to have several of the bad qualities listed.

In Scott's study (5), it was also found that inadequate facilities were many times contributing factors to the causes of disciplinary problems. In order to prevent facility-caused or aggravated disciplinary problems, Scott suggested:

- (1) Keep rooms orderly and clean.
- (2) Provide adequate storage and filing space.
- (3) Brighten room with cheerful, harmonious colors.
- (4) Provide comfortable furniture in good state of repair.
- (5) Reduce number of class interruptions by phone calls, visits, etc.
- (6) Provide floor coverings which reduce noise.
- (7) Improve acoustics by ceiling treatment, etc.
- (8) Cover lower part of windows if they provide views which distract the attention of students.
- (9) Display appropriate pictures, charts, etc.
- (10) Improve heating and ventilation.

#### Prevention of Disciplinary Problems

It is the opinion of Sheviakov and Redl (4) that if our schools spent more time on orienting the students and on explaining the reasons

for rules, discipline would be less of a problem. Teachers should have enough respect for a student's intelligence to explain to them why they cannot do a certain thing.

There are certain prerequisites to effective discipline which every teacher must have. These, according to Smith (3), are:

- (1) Proper attitude toward educational work.
- (2) Proper attitude toward pupils--work with them, not just for them. Treat each as an individual.
- (3) Fairness, sympathy, and cheerfulness.
- (4) Definiteness of purpose--sufficient preliminary preparation to be assured mastery of subject.
- (5) Self-control over his or her emotions.
- (6) Prompt beginning and effective attack upon the day's lesson or work.
- (7) Skillful motivation of the subject matter to be taught each day.
- (8) An effective assignment.
- (9) Some method or methods of arresting attention.
- (10) Use of stimulating questions--keep the "wanting to know" attitude alive in students.
- (11) Judicious control of discussion.

Scott (5) in his study lists 18 characteristics or mannerisms that seem to be associated with prevention of disciplinary problems. He found that teachers who are successful in developing desirable student behavior tend to be:

- (1) Skillful in planning work
- (2) Enthusiastic and generally optimistic

- (3) Courteous in dealing with students
- (4) Tactful when possible
- (5) Firm while acting as a leader or teacher
- (6) Courageous and confident
- (7) Consistent from day to day
- (8) Honest and fair
- (9) Sincere
- (10) Methodical
- (11) Interested in students and people in general
- (12) Skilled in the art of questioning
- (13) Able to wait for group approval
- (14) Able to conduct effective conferences with individuals or small groups
- (15) Able to ignore insignificant behavior problems
- (16) Quick to praise and recognize abilities in others
- (17) Capable of working with adults in the community
- (18) Strong in maintaining good public relations

Certainly teachers lacking in many of the characteristics or mannerisms listed by Scott could expect to have disciplinary problems arise.

Good teaching procedures can do much to prevent disciplinary problems from arising. Krebbs (6) gives ten examples of such teaching procedures.

- 1. Teach in such a way that both the teacher and students always know what work is to be done, and the reasons for doing the work. Variety in teaching techniques is also very important.
- 2. Follow a definite routine for such daily matters as roll-



taking and daily announcements. Begin and end classes promptly.

3. Make it a practice to check on the light and temperature of the classroom at the beginning of each class, as well as the seating arrangement.
4. Provide for definite instruction, as part of the course of study, on such items as the kind of behavior acceptable in school, how to get along with other people, and how to get the most out of school. Too often teachers take it for granted that someone else has taught our students how to behave.
5. Establish early the rules needed for orderly conduct of the class. The making of the rules for the class can be shared with the students. Above all, be certain that the rules are reasonable.
6. Treat all students fairly, consistently, and impartially. Teachers can ill afford to "lose their tempers" when dealing with trying situations.
7. Learn as much as possible about each student from every available source of information. This should include a knowledge of the home situation.
8. Challenge constantly the best in each student by giving as much responsibility as he is ready for.
9. Use praise and reward to promote good conduct. This will also help develop good morale in the group.
10. Be alert to everything that goes on in the classroom. Nothing is more challenging to the mischievous student than a teacher

who appears to be unable to see more than one thing at a time.

Teachers should always be mindful of the fact that the most effective disciplinary approach is a positive one. A teacher should cultivate the habit of looking for and emphasizing the brighter side of things, and the pupils will be more cooperative. Never fail to give praise when merited. Never forget that good discipline is primarily a process of prevention rather than a cure of misbehavior.

### Handling of Disciplinary Problems

In handling disciplinary problems, it is Pringle's opinion (1) that one should not deal with an angry pupil, or when one is angry, if it can be postponed effectively. An angry person is not conducive to suggestion or to admitting he was in the wrong. Both teacher and pupil should have time to think it over and "cool off."

In the specific methods of handling disciplinary problems, several of the authors in this review were of the same general opinion; therefore, the author of this study will review the various methods as given by Pringle (1):

1. Admonishment or good natured warning--this is good.
2. Sharp reprimand--when occasion demands, it is fine; but be brief, dignified, and unemotional. Value is lost many times when these three things are lacking. Avoid cutting remarks.
3. Conference with pupil--serious, friendly talk, in private. Emphasize the good qualities of pupil first and then gradually go into the problem at hand. Let student talk. Do not be hasty, because time is required for a change to be effected. If this method does not work, no harm is done as is the case in many other methods.

4. Threats--are a sign of weakness and indicate a lack of control. Threats of punishment to be inflicted if a certain thing is done are too often a suggestion to do that very thing. Always be aware of the power of suggestion.
5. Extra work--this is a questionable method of punishment. Tasks assigned should never be something other than school work.
6. Themes--should be on work that student should have been doing when discipline problem arose.
7. Lowered grades--should never be used.
8. Withdrawal of privileges--special privileges should automatically be surrendered when pupil fails to maintain the standards of scholarship or behavior. Group privileges should never be withdrawn because of bad conduct on the part of certain members. It would be unjust and would probably create an atmosphere for other problems to arise.
9. Forced apology--rarely if ever accomplishes anything except to make student more resentful. A forced apology is not an apology at all, but is merely a hypocritical statement. Unless you can explain things in such a way as to get the pupil to want to apologize, then the trouble should be settled in another manner.
10. Conference with parents--this is best set up by a brief, courteous letter stating the problem and asking, not demanding, their help. The success of this method depends mostly upon the relationship between the pupil and his parents. If pupil has little respect for his parents, then it is doubtful if a

conference will help, and it may hinder the solving of the problem.

11. Expell from class--as a last resort only in most cases. If student has no interest in class and he could be in some other class that might be better for him, then this method might be used. This will require careful study of the pupil's background, capabilities, aptitudes, interests, etc. This would also require the assistance of the principal.
12. Expelling from school--this should be done only with the consent of the board of education. Do this only after all other means have failed, and it is evident that it would be disastrous to allow such a pupil to remain in school.
13. Corporal punishment or whippings--is a very questionable practice. Whippings during adolescence by a teacher are sure to bring resentment. If and when this method is used, be sure to have another teacher as a witness.

Several specific control measures found to be most useful in helping to correct poor discipline by Krebbs (6) in his study are:

1. Ignoring minor classroom misbehavior. This control measure is used to a greater or lesser extent by all good teachers. Many teachers, however, hold it in disrepute because of the difficulty of knowing just what misbehavior may be safely ignored and what misbehavior must not be ignored.
2. Using simple classroom control measures early through being alert to everything going on in the room, and by using a warning look, a shake of the head, or an immediate question to call attention to the teacher's disapproval. Many teachers

recommend this kind of control as the first step rather than ignoring misbehavior. It is, without a doubt, one of the best ways of keeping the classroom situation under control.

3. Loss of privilege--this is slightly more severe than the first two control measures, but well within the understanding of the students. It is one of the most common control measures used outside of the school.
4. Removal from the situation. The student may be removed from the classroom, or he may be moved to a new location within the classroom. In either case, he has lost a certain amount of control over his movements.
5. Sending to the principal. There should be a definite understanding between the teacher and principal regarding the kinds of misbehavior which should be referred to the principal. Such referrals should be as few as possible. Too many referrals weaken the control of both teacher and principal, and are definite sign of weakness on the part of the teacher.
6. Suspension and expulsion. These are severe forms of loss of privilege of attending class or school. Such action cannot be taken without consultation with the administrator.

McInvale (7) found in his study that certain methods of handling disciplinary problems were more frequently used than others by vocational agriculture teachers in Texas. His findings were:

1. Oral reprimand was the most commonly used method of handling disciplinary problems. This method was most effectively used by teachers over 36 years of age. Its least effective use was among teachers under 26 years of age.

2. Ignoring a situation was a popular method except with the teachers under 26 years of age. These teachers had not had enough experience to distinguish which problems could be safely ignored.
3. Corporal punishment was a popular method, especially with those teachers between the ages of 26 and 36. Those teachers over 36 years of age did not use this method very often.
4. Depriving students of privileges was a popular method with those teachers over 36 years of age. It was not very popular with the younger teachers.

In the summary of his study, McInvale (7) made the following statement: "There is little evidence that the teachers in this study use educational psychology."

Hobbs (8) in his study found that a good many of the discipline problems encountered by teachers were caused by the teachers' failures to familiarize themselves with the various causes of disciplinary problems, the methods found to be most successful in prevention of those disciplinary problems, and the methods found to be most successful in the handling of the disciplinary problems.

Hobbs also stated in his summary that "One cannot be a successful teacher unless he is first a successful disciplinarian in the educational sense."

#### Summary

The purpose for the review of literature, as it was conducted, was to furnish background information for the study. The review was divided into four areas related to the problem.

The first area dealt with the aims of discipline. The aims of discipline are varied, but the basic concepts are, first, to maintain the proper conditions for work and develop the kind of moral conduct needed in an organized society.

The second area of discipline reviewed was what the cause of disciplinary problems are. There are a number of causes of disciplinary problems, but the major causes are associated with the following areas: student related, teacher related, inadequate facilities.

The prevention of disciplinary problems was found to depend on several factors. The first of these are the characteristics or mannerisms of the teachers. The second factor associated with the prevention of discipline problems are the teaching procedures of the teachers.

In the handling of disciplinary problems it is important for the teacher to remember not to deal with an angry pupil or when the teacher is angry. In the specific methods of handling disciplinary problems, a polite warning is the recommended method for most problems.

### CHAPTER III

#### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter consists of the presentation and analysis of the data derived from the 35 questionnaires completed by the responding teachers. A total of 50 questionnaires were mailed out, and the return percentage was 70 percent.

In the presentation of the data relative to this study, the various disciplinary problems were placed into groups similar in nature. On the questionnaire, however, the problems were listed at random as it was felt that the teachers would be more apt to consider each problem separately this way than if they were listed in groups similar in nature.

The first group, which was the least severe in nature, consisted of excessive talking, lack of attention, and abuse of shop tools. It was found that excessive talking was the most common disciplinary problem encountered by the 35 teachers reporting in this study. As indicated by Table I, 37 percent of the teachers reported excessive talking as a frequent problem and 57 percent reported it as an occasional problem, with only 6 percent reporting it as being a problem only rarely. It was interesting that no teacher reported that excessive talking was never a problem.

Reporting teachers indicated that lack of attention has been an occasional problem for 64 percent of them. Seventeen percent of the teachers reported that it was a problem only rarely. It is interesting



to note that only one teacher reported lack of attention as never a problem.

Abuse of shop tools has been encountered frequently by 23 percent of the teachers reporting, occasionally by 40 percent, rarely by 28 percent, and never by only 9 percent. The data in Table I indicates that the abuse of shop tools is the third most common problem that the teachers encountered.

Horseplay was reported as an occasional problem by 43 percent of the teachers. It was rarely a problem for 43 percent of the teachers and never a problem for only 8 percent of the reporting teachers.

Table I also indicates that 37 percent of the teachers encountered the problem of unnecessary movement occasionally, while 48 percent of them encountered it rarely.

Table I shows that non-cooperation is another problem that has been encountered occasionally by 34 percent of the reporting teachers. The greatest number--43 percent--of the reporting teachers encountered non-cooperation only rarely. It is interesting to note that only three teachers reported non-cooperation as a frequent problem.

The greatest number of teachers--57 percent--reported that scuffling was rarely a problem, while 34 percent report it as an occasional problem.

The misuse of shop tools so as to cause a safety hazzard has not been much of a problem, as only 17 percent of the teachers reported it as an occasional problem, while 65 percent reported it as rarely being a problem. Six percent reported it as never being a problem.

The next problem to be found in Table I is the problem of eating candy or gum. This problem was encountered by 40 percent of the

reporting teachers as an occasional problem. It was rarely a problem for 37 percent of the teachers and never a problem for 17 percent of the reporting teachers.

The next problem listed in Table I is the use of tobacco. This was an occasional problem for 17 percent of the reporting teacher, rarely a problem for 37 percent of the teachers, and never a problem for 17 percent of the reporting teachers.

Table I indicates that throwing things is rarely a problem for 38 percent of the reporting teachers, while it is an occasional problem for 25 percent and never a problem for 32 percent of the reporting teachers.

Direct disobedience was a problem that was encountered rarely by 57 percent of the responding teachers. Twenty-three percent of the teachers indicated that they never had a problem of direct disobedience.

The problem of disrespect to others was an occasional problem for 23 percent of the teachers, rarely a problem for 48 percent, and never a problem for 25 percent.

The problem of vulgar talk was reported by 17 percent of the teachers as an occasional problem, rarely a problem by 51 percent of the teachers, and never a problem by 25 percent of the teachers.

Failure to dress appropriately caused 25 percent of the reporting teachers occasional problems, 43 percent rarely a problem, and 29 percent never a problem.

Rowdiness at fairs and shows has been a problem encountered occasionally by 20 percent of the teachers and rarely by 60 percent of the teachers. It has never been a problem for 20 percent of the reporting teachers.

TABLE I  
DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER RESPONSES REGARDING THE FREQUENCY  
WITH WHICH SELECTED DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS WERE ENCOUNTERED

Area of Problem	Frequently		Occasionally		Rarely		Never		Average Value	Rank
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Excessive talking	13	37	20	57	2	6			2.31	1
Lack of attention	4	11	24	64	6	17	1	3	1.88	2
Abuse of shop tools	8	23	14	40	10	28	3	9	1.77	3
Horseplay, unappropriate	2	6	15	43	15	43	3	8	1.45	4
Unnecessary movement	2	6	13	37	17	48	3	8	1.40	5
Non-cooperation	3	8	12	34	15	43	6	17	1.37	6
Scuffling	1	3	12	34	20	57	2	6	1.34	7
Misuse of shop tools so as to cause a safety hazzard	4	12	6	17	23	65	2	6	1.34	7
Eating candy or gum	2	6	14	40	13	37	6	17	1.34	7
Use of tobacco	4	12	6	17	14	40	11	31	1.08	10
Throwing things	2	6	9	25	13	38	11	32	1.05	11
Direct disobedience	2	6	5	14	20	57	8	23	1.02	12
Disrespect to others	1	3	8	23	17	48	9	25	1.02	12
Vulgar or profane talk	2	6	6	17	18	51	9	25	1.02	12
Failure to dress approriately	1	3	9	25	15	43	10	29	1.02	12
Rowdiness at fairs			7	20	21	60	7	20	1.00	13
Disrespect to teachers	1	3	7	21	18	51	9	25	1.00	13
Disrespect to host on field trips	1	3	1	3	19	54	14	40	.68	14
Brawling or fighting	1	3	1	3	14	40	19	54	.54	15
Drinking intoxicants					4	11	31	89	.11	16
Use of drugs					4	11	31	89	.11	16

Disrespect to the teacher was an occasional problem for 21 percent of the teachers, while it was rarely a problem for 51 percent of the teachers and never a problem for 25 percent of the teachers, as indicated in Table I.

Disrespect to the host on field trips was rarely a problem for 54 percent of the teachers and never a problem for 40 percent of the reporting teachers. The problem of fighting rarely was a problem for 40 percent of the teachers and never a problem for 54 percent of the reporting teachers.

The problem of drinking intoxicants was not listed by any teachers as a frequent or an occasional problem. It was reported as rarely a problem for 11 percent of the teachers and as never a problem by 89 percent of the teachers.

The problem of use of drugs was not reported by any teachers as being a frequent or an occasional problem. It was reported as rarely a problem for 11 percent and as never a problem for 89 percent of the reporting teachers.

Several questions were asked concerning discipline in order to determine if any relationship existed between individual questions and the frequency with which disciplinary problems were encountered by the individual teachers.

In response to the question of whether or not the teacher handled his own disciplinary problems, except in extreme cases, 100 percent of the teachers reported that they always handled their own problems.

The responding teachers were asked if they received the support of the local administration in their decisions in discipline problems. Sixty-three percent replied that they always were supported; 28 percent

reported that the administration supported their decisions most of the time, 5 percent of the reporting teachers received local support some of the time, and only 2 percent reported that they seldom had the support of the local administration. The frequency with which the teachers not receiving the backing of the administration encountered disciplinary problems was not greater than was the case when teachers received the full backing of the administration. This supports the author's opinion that each individual teacher must solve his own discipline problems without outside assistance.

The study was limited to teachers with five years of teaching experience or less, but even with this small number of years of experience a definite relationship was established between the frequency of problems and the years of experience. There were eight teachers, or 23 percent, who had taught one year. These teachers encountered disciplinary problems more frequently than did the teachers with more experience. Eleven percent of the teachers had taught five years, and the frequency of problems for this group was much lower than the first-year group.

In response to the question, "Does your local administration allow corporal punishment?" only one teacher, or 2 percent, reported that corporal punishment was not allowed.

The data derived from this study did not indicate any major difference between the number of different schools a teacher had taught in and the frequency with which he encountered disciplinary problems.

In response to the question, "Does your school have a clearly defined code of conduct?" 37 percent reported that their school did not have a code of conduct for students, while 63 percent of the reporting

teachers' schools had a code for the student. There was a definite relationship between the frequency of discipline problems and whether or not the school had a code of conduct. The occurrence of problems was significantly higher for those teachers whose schools did not have a code of conduct.

There was no evidence of any major difference between the giving of a grade for citizenship and not giving a grade in citizenship insofar as frequency of encountering disciplinary problems was concerned.

#### Most Common Causes of Disciplinary Problems

This study would not be complete and meaningful unless it tried to determine the causes of discipline problems. In this study, the responding teachers were asked for their opinions about what were the major causes of disciplinary problems. The questionnaire did not list any of these causes but asked the teachers to write their own opinions of what were the major causes of disciplinary problems. The reasons were varied, but fell into the general areas listed herein: (1) Failure to keep the student busy was listed by 28 percent of the teachers. (2) Lack of home discipline was listed by 25 percent of responding teachers. (3) Administration and other teachers being too easy on students was listed by 25 percent of reporting teachers. (4) Attitude of the student and failure to enforce rules were listed by 11 percent of the reporting teachers. (5) Lack of respect for the teacher was listed by 8 percent of the teachers.

The Benefit of Sources of Information  
for Controlling Disciplinary  
Problems

The teachers were asked to rank in order of benefit the sources of information that have been available to help them in solving discipline problems.

Table II indicates that 63 percent of the responding teachers were of the opinion that the supervising teacher while student teaching was very important as a source of information. Thirty-one percent of the teachers reported it as of some importance, and only 2 percent reported it as of no importance.

Fifty-four percent of the reporting teachers were of the opinion that the superintendent or principal was very important as a source of material, while 34 percent were of the opinion that it was of some importance. Five percent of the teachers were of the opinion that the superintendent or principal was of no importance as a source of material for preventing discipline problems.

The data presented in Table II indicates that 45 percent of the reporting teachers considered other teachers as a very important source of information, while 45 percent considered it of some importance. Five percent of the reporting teachers were of the opinion that it was of little importance, and 2 percent considered it of no importance.

The responses of the reporting teachers on personal reading materials, as shown in Table II, as a source of information shows that 28 percent rated it as of some importance, while 45 percent were of the opinion that it was of little importance. Twenty-three percent of the responding teachers felt it was of no importance.

TABLE II

THE DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER RESPONSES IN THE RELATIVE BENEFITS OF THE USE OF  
SELECTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED IN THE PREVENTION AND HANDLING OF  
DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

Source of Information on Discipline	Very Important		Of Some Importance		Little Importance		No Importance		Average Value	Rank
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Supervising teacher while student teaching	22	63	11	31	1	2	1	2	2.54	1
Superintendent or principal	19	54	12	34	2	5	2	5	2.37	2
Other teachers	16	45	16	45	2	5	1	2	2.34	3
Personal reading materials	1	2	10	28	16	45	8	23	1.11	4
Undergraduate courses at college			16	45	12	34	7	20	1.25	4
Graduate courses at college	2	5	10	28	12	34	11	31	1.08	5
P. I. meeting	1	2	9	25	10	28	14	40	.88	6



An analysis of Table II indicates 45 percent of the reporting teachers found undergraduate courses at college to be of some importance as a source of information in handling disciplinary problems, while 34 percent found it of little importance. Twenty percent reported it as of no importance.

Twenty-eight percent of the teachers reported in Table II that graduate courses in college were of some importance, while 34 percent reported it as of little importance. Thirty-one percent of the reporting teachers rated graduate courses at college as of no importance as a source of information for handling discipline problems.

Forty percent of the reporting teachers were of the opinion that professional improvement meetings were of no importance as a source of information for discipline problems, while 28 percent were of the opinion that it was of little importance.

#### Treatment of Problems

The two most common treatments used by the teachers to control discipline problems were polite warning and whippings. The polite warning was used by all the teachers surveyed and was used for all discipline problems except drinking, fighting, and the use of drugs. The overall acceptance of this method by the teachers indicates that it does have the desired results of controlling the problem.

The second most commonly used control measure by the responding teachers was whippings. This method was used by all the teachers except one, whose system did not allow corporal punishment. This method was used for control of all types of discipline problems. Its rank as number two indicates that the responding teachers depended heavily upon

this method of control to maintain discipline in their classroom.

In the methods of treatment of the problem of excessive talking, Method Number One, polite warning, was found to be the method most commonly used, as indicated in Table III, by 68 percent of the teachers reporting. Method Number Two, sharp reprimand, was used by 25 percent, to make it the second most commonly used method. Method Number Four, whipping, was used by 23 percent of the teachers reporting. The wide difference in percentage of use by Methods One, Two, and Four indicates that excessive talking can usually be treated by the use of a polite, firm warning.

Table III indicates that Method Number Four, whipping, used by 54 percent of the teachers, was the most commonly used method in the treatment of scuffling. In second place was Method Number One, polite warning, used by 14 percent of the reporting teachers.

In the treatment of the problem of throwing things, Table III indicates that whipping was used by 57 percent of the cooperating teachers. In second place was Method Number One, polite warning, used by 37 percent of the teachers. Method Number Six, themes or reports, was used by 11 percent of the reporting teachers.

The analysis of Table III indicates that in the treatment of the problem of direct disobedience, Method Number Four, whipping, used by 60 percent of the teachers, was the most commonly used method in the treatment of this problem. Method One, polite warning, Eight, send to principal, and Fourteen, conference with both student and parents, were the second most commonly used treatments, with each method having 14 percent of the reporting teachers using them.

TABLE III  
THE RESPONSES OF TEACHERS CONCERNING THE MOST  
COMMON METHODS OF TREATMENT OF  
SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Area of Problem	Percentage of Use									
	Warning, polite but firm	Sharp reprimand	Threats	Whippings	Extra work	Themes or reports	Withdrawal of privileges	Sending to principal	Required apology	Dismiss from day's class
										Expell from class
										Conference with student
										Conference with parents
										Conference with both student and parents present
										Rectify, make student redo
										Have the class participate in a discussion of the lesson
										Reparation, clean-up, repair or pay for damage done
										Ignore problem
										Shame student before class
										Biting sarcasm
										Lowered grades because of attitude or behavior
										Use of rules of behavior and punishment made up by students
										Look of disapproval
										Give a thought-stirring assignment to class
										Call on student to answer a question
										Change the subject matter being taught to the class to regain interest
										Speed up the lesson to regain interest
										Any other method used
Excessive talking	68	25	23							
Scuffling	34	14	54							
Throwing things	37		57	11						
Direct Disobedience	14		60			14			14	
Unauthorized use of tobacco	28		34		20				20	
Lack of Attention	31	20								25
Unnecessary Movement	57	17	14							
Vulgar or profane talk	17	23	60							
Rowdiness at fairs	25	20	34							
Non-cooperation	25							17	20	
Disrespect to teacher	20	20	40							
Eating candy, gum	51		20	11						
Abuse of tools	31	25	28							
Misuse of tools	28		34		25					
Disrespect to host	23	28	45							
Disrespect to others	28	28	28							
Horseplay, inappropriate	31		48	17						
Brawling or fighting			60			14			17	
Drinking intoxicants			31						43	31
Failure to dress appropriately	45	8							17	
Use of drugs						20			48	45

NOTE: Percentages add up to more than 100 because some teachers used more than one method.

An analysis of Table III indicates that Method Number Four, whipping, used by 34 percent of the teachers, was the most commonly used treatment for unauthorized use of tobacco. In second place was Method Number One, polite warning, used by 28 percent of the reporting teachers. Twenty percent of the reporting teachers used Method Seven, withdrawal of privileges, and Method Eleven, dismiss from day's class, in the treatment of this problem.

Table III indicates that in the treatment of the problem of lack of attention, Method Number One, polite warning, was used by 31 percent of the teachers reporting. In second place, used by 25 percent of the teachers reporting, was Method Number 25, call on student to answer a question. Method Number Two, sharp reprimand, was in third place, with 20 percent of the teachers using it.

An analysis of Table III indicates that in the treatment of the problem of unnecessary movement, Method Number One, polite warning, was used by 57 percent of the teachers. The second most commonly used method was Number Two, sharp reprimand, used by 17 percent of the reporting teachers. Method Number Four, whipping, was used by 14 percent of the reporting teachers.

Table III indicates that in the treatment of the problem of vulgar or profane talk, Method Four, whipping, used by 60 percent of the reporting teachers, was the most common treatment for this problem. Method Two, sharp reprimand, used by 23 percent of the reporting teachers, was the second most common treatment for this problem. Seventeen percent of the reporting teachers used Method One, polite warning, as a treatment for this problem. The wide range between the first and second treatments of this problem indicates that the teachers consider it a

serious problem and take harsh action to control it.

In the treatment of the problem of rowdiness at fairs and shows, Table III indicates that the method most commonly used is Number Four, whipping, used by 34 percent of the teachers. In second place, with 25 percent of the teachers using it, is Method One, polite warning. In third place is Method Two, sharp reprimand, with 20 percent of the reporting teachers using this method.

An analysis of Table III shows that the methods used in the treatment for non-cooperation are somewhat different than for most disciplinary problems. Method Number One, polite warning, was used by 25 percent of the teachers. In second place was Method Number 14, conference with both student and parents present, used by 20 percent of the reporting teachers. Method Number 12, conference with student, was third, with 17 percent of the teachers using that method. The closeness of these percentages indicates that there is no one best treatment for this problem.

In the treatment of the problem of disrespect to the teacher, 40 percent of the teachers used Method Four, whipping, as shown in Table III. In second place was Method One, polite warning, and Method Two, sharp reprimand, used by 20 percent of the teachers. Also used by 20 percent of the reporting teachers was Method Number 12, conference with the student.

As analysis of Table III indicates, 51 percent of the teachers used Method Number One, polite warning, in the treatment of the problem of eating candy in class. In second place, used by 20 percent of the teachers, was Method Number Four, whipping. Eleven percent of the teachers used Method Number Six, themes or reports, as a treatment for this problem.

Table III shows that Method Number One, polite warning, was the method most commonly used for the problem of abuse of shop tools. Method Number One was used by 31 percent of the reporting teachers, while Method Four, whipping, was used by 28 percent of the teachers. Method Number Two, sharp reprimand, was in third place, being used by 25 percent of the teachers reporting.

The closeness of the percentages of the methods used to treat the problem of misuse of shop tools so as to be unsafe, indicates that the most commonly used method is not always successful. As shown by Table III, the most common treatment is Method Number Four, whipping, used by 34 percent of the reporting teachers. The second most commonly used method, Method Number One, polite warning, was used by 28 percent. Method Number Seven, withdrawal of privileges, was in third place, being used by 25 percent of the reporting teachers.

An analysis of Table III shows that Method Number Four, whipping, being used by 45 percent of the teachers, to be the method most commonly used to control the problem of disrespect to the host on field trips. Next is Method Number Two, sharp reprimand, with a percentage of 28. The third most commonly used practice is Number One, polite warning, used by 23 percent of the reporting teachers.

Table III indicates that the treatment of the problem of disrespect to others, is most often punished by Method Number One, polite warning, which was used by 28 percent of the teachers. This was followed by Method Number Two, sharp reprimand, which was also used by 28 percent of the teachers. Method Number Four, whipping, was used by 28 percent of the teachers reporting, also.

In the treatment of the problem of horseplay at inappropriate times and places, Table III shows Method Number Four, whipping, was used by 48 percent of the reporting teachers. In second place, with 31 percent of the teachers using it, is Method Number One, polite warning. In third place is Method Number Five, extra work, used by 17 percent of the reporting teachers.

An analysis of Table III indicates that Method Number Four, whipping, was the overwhelming choice by the majority of teachers to control the problem of brawling or fighting, with 60 percent of the reporting teachers using this method. Method Number Eleven, expell from class, was in second place, being used by 17 percent of the reporting teachers. In third place was Method Number Eight, send to principal, used by 14 percent of the reporting teachers.

In the treatment of the problem of drinking intoxicants, Method Number Eleven, expell from class, was the most commonly used method by the teachers. Table III indicates that 43 percent of the reporting teachers used this method. In second placed was Method Number 14, conference with both student and parents present, which was used by 31 percent of the reporting teachers. Also being used by 31 percent of the reporting teachers was Method Number Four, whipping.

An analysis of Table III indicates that the most commonly used treatment for the problem of failure to dress appropriately was Method Number One, polite warning, which was used by 45 percent of the teachers. In second place was Method Number 12, conference with student, which was used by 17 percent of the reporting teachers. In third place was Method Two, sharp reprimand, which was used by 8 percent of the cooperating teachers.

In the treatment of the problem of the use of drugs, Table III shows that Method Number Eleven, expell from class, is the method most commonly used, being reported by 48 percent of the teachers. In second place, with 45 percent of the teachers using it, was Method Number 14, conference with both student and parents present. In third place was Method Number Eight, send to principal, which was used by 20 percent of the reporting teachers. The use of the strongest possible means of control by a majority of the reporting teachers indicates that they consider this a serious problem.

The author asked the responding teachers to rank the classes they taught in order of disciplinary problem caused by each class. An analysis of the data in Table IV indicates that no one class presented more disciplinary problems than any other class. Twenty-five percent of the teachers reported that they encountered the most problems with the freshman class, while 23 percent reported the senior class as giving the most disciplinary problems. Thirty-one percent of the teachers reported the sophomore class as being in second place as to the frequency of disciplinary problems encountered, while 28 percent reported the junior class as being second. The percentages for the remainder of the classes are so close that it is difficult to try to rank them in order. Table IV shows that there is no definite relationship between the class a student is in and the frequency with which the teacher is likely to encounter disciplinary problems from the student.



TABLE IV  
THE RESPONSES OF 35 TEACHERS CONCERNING THE  
CLASSES REPORTING THE MOST DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

Rank According to Problems	Seniors		Juniors		Sophomores		Freshmen		Ag Mech	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	8	23	6	17	3	8	9	25	1	2
2	1	2	10	28	11	31	3	8	3	8
3	8	23	7	20	3	8	7	20	1	2
4	3	8	5	14	3	8	7	20	3	8
5	4	11	3	8			2	5		

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

The teachers responding in this study reported that the most common discipline problem encountered was excessive talking. This problem was reported as happening to all of the teachers who reported in this study.

The second most common problem was lack of attention. This problem was reported by the majority of the teachers as occurring occasionally. Only one teacher reported the problem of lack of attention as never occurring to him.

The problems of abuse of shop tools, horseplay, and unnecessary movement were the next most common problems. Abuse of shop tools ranked third and was a problem to some extent for over 90 percent of the teachers reporting. Over one third of the teachers reported this as an occasional problem, while another one fourth found this to rarely be a problem.

Horseplay was the fourth ranked problem, and a majority of the reporting teachers found it as an occasional or rare problem, while only three teachers reported it as never a problem.

The fifth ranked problem was unnecessary movement. This problem was reported by the teachers as occurring to a majority of the teachers occasionally or rarely.

The problem of non-cooperation was ranked sixth and reported by the teachers as an occasional or rare problem to a majority of the reporting teachers.

Three problems tied for the seventh position. These problems were scuffling, misuse of shop tools, and eating candy or gum. A majority of the teachers reported that scuffling was rarely a problem for them. The misuse of shop tools so as to be a safety hazard was rarely a problem for the reporting teachers. Eating candy or gum was an occasional or rare problem for a majority of the reporting teachers.

The use of tobacco was the tenth ranked problem and encountered as an occasional or rare problem by over one half of the reporting teachers.

The problem of throwing things was the eleventh ranked problem and was rarely or never a problem for a majority of the teachers reporting.

The problems of direct disobedience, disrespect to others, vulgar or profane talk, and failure to dress appropriately tied for twelfth ranked position. The majority of the reporting teachers reported that these problems rarely occurred to them.

Rowdiness at fairs and disrespect to the teacher were the 13th most common problems encountered by the reporting teachers. These problems were rarely encountered by a majority of the reporting teachers.

Disrespect to the host on field trips was the 14th ranked problem and was rarely a problem for over one half of the teachers. This was never a problem for over one third of the responding teachers.

The 15th ranking problem was brawling or fighting. This problem was reported as never being a problem for a majority of the teachers.

The last ranking problems were those of drinking intoxicants and the use of drugs. These problems were never a problem for over three fourths of the reporting teachers.

### Frequency of Problems

Several pertinent questions were included in order to determine if any relationship existed between those questions and the frequency with which disciplinary problems were encountered. The findings were as follows:

1. There was a definite relationship between the years of experience and the frequency of discipline problems. This study was limited to teachers with five years or less experience, but the first-year teachers had a higher rate of problems than did the teachers with five years experience.

2. There was a definite relationship between the school systems that did not have a school code of conduct and those that did. The frequency of discipline problems was higher in the school systems without the student code of conduct. This points out how important it is for the students to have a definite set of rules to follow as to good classroom discipline.

3. There was no major difference in the frequency of encountering disciplinary problems between those who handled their own disciplinary problems and those who did not handle their own disciplinary problems because all the responding teachers in this study handled their own discipline problems. It was found that 100 percent of the reporting teachers handled their own discipline problems except in extreme cases.

4. There was no major difference in the frequency of encountering disciplinary problems between the teachers who received the backing of their administration and those who reported they did not receive the backing of their administration.

5. No relationship was found between the number of schools the teachers had taught in and the frequency of disciplinary problems encountered by the teachers.

6. The use of corporal punishment was allowed in all the school systems surveyed except one, and there was no definite relationship between the systems allowing corporal punishment and the frequency of discipline problems.

7. The giving of a grade in citizenship by the teacher did not prove to have any relationship with the frequency of disciplinary problems encountered by the teachers included in this study.

#### Causes of Problems

The most common causes of disciplinary problems reported by the reporting teachers were (1) failure to keep the students busy, (2) lack of home discipline, (3) administration and other teachers being too easy on students, (4) attitude of the students and failure to enforce rules, and (5) the lack of respect for teachers by the students.

The responding teachers were of the opinion that the following sources of information were of some importance in handling discipline problems.

#### Sources of Information

The cooperating teachers of their student teaching experiences were rated as the most important sources of information for handling discipline problems. The next most important source to the teacher was the superintendent or principal of the school in which they were teaching. Other teachers in the school system were the third most important

source of information for the teachers.

The reporting teachers did not consider personal reading materials, graduate courses at college, or professional improvement meetings to be of much importance as a source of information for solving discipline problems.

### Treatment

The responses of the responding teachers concerning methods of treatment for specific disciplinary problems revealed several methods were used much more frequently and on a broader range of problems than the other methods. The study revealed that a polite, firm warning was the method most commonly used. This method was used on all problems except drinking, fighting, and use of drugs. The next most commonly used method was whippings. The third most commonly used method was sharp reprimand.

### Conclusions

There are several conclusions which can readily be drawn from the information derived from this study.

The first conclusion indicates that beginning teachers will have problems of minor importance when teaching a class. This is evidenced by the fact that all of the reporting teachers in the study indicated that they had a problem in controlling excessive talking. The teacher must realize that these problems will be present and learn to cope with them.

Another conclusion for beginning teachers to remember is that it is not necessary for them to have 100 percent support from their super-

intendent or principal. Their classroom discipline will be determined largely by their own actions.

Another conclusion derived from the study is the importance of the cooperating teacher in helping the future teacher to form his background for handling classroom problems. The superintendent and principal also play an important role in developing the new teacher's classroom discipline methods.

Another conclusion derived from the study is that beginning teachers tend to rely on whipping as a corrective measure too much. The two most common methods of control, which were polite warning and sharp reprimand, were well used by the teachers; but the use of whipping, which is a "very questionable practice" (1), was used as a punishment by a majority of the teachers for problems ranging from talking to drinking.

### Implications

A new teacher must first understand just what is the meaning of the term school discipline and all of its connotations. He must be able to distinguish between what is and what is not a discipline problem.

New teachers need to familiarize themselves with the various causes of disciplinary problems and the methods that have been found to work best in controlling these problems. Much can be learned about the problem of school discipline by consulting with other teachers in the school system, other vocational agriculture teachers within the professional improvement group, and good references for individual reading.

The teacher who is interested and enthusiastic about his work, whose interest about each day's work is contagious to students, who is skilled in the art of motivation, who is firm and fair in his dealings

with his students, and who is understanding of the students' problems and their human failings is not likely to have many disciplinary problems.

One cannot be a successful teacher unless he is first a successful disciplinarian in the educational sense. Becoming a successful disciplinarian is the first task a beginning teacher must face and overcome to be a successful teacher. It is the opinion of the author, based on the information derived from this study, that there are certain basic qualities which a teacher must possess to a considerable degree if he is to be a successful teacher and disciplinarian.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended, based on the information in this study, that more emphasis be placed on how to solve disciplinary problems while the future teacher is in college. The author would suggest that a section of the educational courses now taught be devoted to the study of the different types of problems found in this study and to the various methods that are used by successful teachers to control these problems. The author would suggest that various case studies be discussed by the students to increase their ability to cope with these problems.

The author would suggest that before the student teachers leave for their student teaching centers that they be given an intensive session on disciplinary problems they may encounter. While discipline is not always a problem at the teaching centers, this intensive session will better prepare the students for the day they have their own classes and have to cope with problems on their own.

The above recommendations are only a few that might be useful in



preparing future teachers for their jobs. These suggestions will not solve all the problems the teachers will encounter, but they will give them a background from which they can work to solve any disciplinary problems they encounter.

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