*EFFECTS OF CHILD BEHAVIOR CHANGE ON TEACHER VERBAL
BEHAVIOR AND RATING OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR¹*

FREDERIC C. CRAIGIE, JR. AND EUGENE E. GARCIA²

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

The relationship between student behavior change and its effect on teacher behavior was investigated. A total of six boys and their two male teachers from two fourth-grade classrooms served as subjects. In two multiple-baseline experiments, students were exposed successively to baseline, placebo-therapy (a control for teacher expectation of student change), active-therapy (contingencies for student behavior improvement), and a return to placebo-therapy phases. As student behavior (the independent variable) improved, daily teacher ratings of children improved moderately, and the percentage of teacher vocalizations in response to appropriate (as compared with inappropriate) child behavior increased markedly. The latter shift in the distribution of teacher vocalizations was found to be largely attributable to the increased availability of appropriate behavior to which teachers could respond. This study raises questions about similar findings in an earlier experiment by Sherman and Cormier (*Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 1974, 7, 11-21). First, the main measure of teacher verbal behavior in both this and the earlier study was considered to be insufficient as a measure of teacher change. It did not control for the expected effects of changes in the base rate of student appropriate behavior. Second, student behavior improvement did not appear to reinforce teacher behavior. This was attributed to the noncontingency of student improvement on any class of teacher behaviors. The possible reinforcing value of student behavior improvement for teachers was not challenged. Implications of rating changes were also discussed.

DESCRIPTORS: teacher attention, child behavior, feedback, students

Received 11 July 1975.

(Final Acceptance 23 August 1977.)

¹See NAPS document no. 03200 for 30 pages of supplementary material. Order from ASIS/NAPS c/o Microfiche Publications, P.O. Box 3513, Grand Central Station, New York, New York 10017. Remit in advance for each NAPS accession number. Institutions and organizations may use purchase orders when ordering; however, there is a billing charge for this service. Make checks payable to Microfiche Publications. Photocopies are \$7.50. Microfiche are \$3.00 each. Outside the United States and Canada, postage is \$3.00 for a photocopy or \$1.00 for a fiche. This study is based on a thesis submitted by the senior author to the Department of Psychology, University of Utah, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science. Appreciation is extended to Donald Hartmann, Stewart Proctor, and David Shaw for their contributions to the design and execution of the thesis. The authors also wish to thank the staff and students of the Liberty School in Murray, Utah, for their kind cooperation.

²Now at the University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106.