



Lots of People Think They See Flying Saucers

Author(s): Ralph P. Romano

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RALPH P. ROMANO

LOTS OF PEOPLE THINK THEY SEE FLYING SAUCERS

I've been in guidance (and I'm *not* apologizing) in an inner-city school for the past 15 years. The heart of our traditional approach to discipline is an intricate demerit system. Technically, demerits are supposed to be given for M.D.O.'s (Major Disciplinary Offenses). At one time nine unconscionable areas of aberrant behavior were all carefully spelled out, in the manner of the Seven Deadly Sins. But most of our teachers now rely on their own versions of what constitute "crimes" against school and society.

Long before the Rise of Student Power, I saw the day coming when demerits would be no more. Painstakingly, like a squirrel hoarding nuts (now there's a simile fraught with possibilities), I collected and preserved for posterity a raft of revealing anecdotal writeups. They speak for themselves:

"Changed 4 F's on his report card to 4 B's. Then had the unmitigated gall to add this comment over his father's forged signature: 'Mrs. H. and I couldn't be happier about this. Michael is a delight.'"

"Please remove him from my class — posthaste: The crassness of his cranium renders him impervious to even a token assimilation of ideas."

"He threw my unabridged dictionary out of a second-story window."

"Listening to earphone radio in class. For about the first half-hour, I thought

he was listening rapturously to me!"

"Flashing dirty words to the girl behind him by writing on the bottom of his shoe."

"Out of his seat at beginning of biology class, handling skeleton without permission, while singing loudly, 'Knee-bone connected to the calf-bone.'"

"Warned about eating lunch on the sly during class. After I issued a demerit, he declared that he intended to make it a test case. He's sure to be upheld by the Supreme Court. I have a hunch that all of those justices were once disgruntled last-lunch kids!"

"Raiding the home economics refrigerator. Caught red-handed, he said, 'Crime certainly doesn't pay, Miss B. These sandwiches were terrible.'"

"When I asked her name, she refused to give it; claims that her *hearing* is impaired. I'm sure her mind is also."

"Firecracker."

"Threw a lighted cigarette directly at Tommy S., who claims not to have asked for it."

Dated April 16: "Chewing, chewing, chewing. I think she's had the same piece of gum since September the 9th . . . of last school year."

"She came to school in a skirt so short I had to look twice to see if she had any skirt on at all. . . . How do you expect a Latin teacher to compete with something like this?"

"Called me a *mean S.O.B.* P.S. I never thought of myself as *mean*."

"Swearing while making a recording in the language lab."

"Talk, talk, talk, talk, talk."

"Striving to make a general ass of

himself — and not stopping until the job was completed."

"He threw a small bottle of acid in class, yelling, 'Don't mess with the Mafia!'"

"Deliberately angled sun's rays into my eyes most of the period. I can just see well enough to write this."

"Misconduct during study. Was found holding desk above his head, aiming it in the direction of another student. When I reminded him that body-building classes were held *after* school, he sassed back, 'How would *you* know?'"

"Sat in front of me all period — *scratching*."

"Threatened to jump out of the window. I would have called his bluff if my room were on the third floor — instead of the first."

"While teaching *Ethan Frome*, I happened to mention that I was once stepped on by a horse. This imbecile wisecracked, 'My, Miss F., you *have* lived a *full* and *interesting* life, haven't you?'"

"His limitations are — limitless."

"Plagiarism. Handed in lines from 'Barbara Fritchie' as his own original verse."

"*Asinine Behavior* — nine times!"

"This rogue lacks any sense of decency, honesty, or self-control. He should do very well in politics."

"Open insubordination. He made this remark in class: 'Are you *that much* of a louse that you'd give a person a zero?' From here on in, he'll *know* that I am."

Three demerits to the same offender: Sept. 26 — "Breaking paper bag in cafeteria." Oct. 17 — "Breaking paper

MR. ROMANO (655, University of Connecticut Chapter) is guidance chairman, Bulkeley High School, Hartford, Conn.

bag in cafeteria." Nov. 1 — "Trying to pull railing out of the wall. I advised him to go back to breaking paper bags."

"Clipping a girl lightly on the derriere and declaring that she was his sister."

"Asked for a corridor pass to see the nurse. I checked. He didn't show. I caught him out of bounds. He kept insisting that he mistook the boys' room for the nurse's office."

"Vincent emptied contents of two wastebaskets into another pupil's desk. When pupil opened desk, Vincent roared, 'Some kids live like pigs!'"

"Rolling marbles from the back of the auditorium during assembly. I suspect he doesn't have all of his."

"Reprimanded about being a nuisance in class, he wiseacred, 'I'd behave better if you made me feel wanted.' I assured him that he would soon be among the 10 most wanted men in the country."

"I'm sending her out of my class to forestall an emotional disturbance — mine."

"I told the class to get to work. He accused me of using a dirty four-letter word."

"Repeatedly skips my fourth-period class. Claims to suffer from attacks of amnesia."

"I told you last year that he didn't belong in my academic division. Don't you counselors have a test for sanity? If so, take it!"

"Passing a note to the girl seated beside him in study hall. The note read, 'If you are pregnant, smile.'"

"Using the library photocopier to reproduce photographs of nudes."

"I looked up and saw a purplish-colored object being thrown by him. It sailed high in the air and landed several rows back. Of course he denied everything. 'Lots of people think they see flying saucers,' he said." □

► A monograph titled *Individually Prescribed Instruction — A Critique* is available from Technical Educational Service, University of Missouri-Columbia, 417 S. Fifth St., Columbia, Mo. 65201 for 50 cents per copy.

Written for the busy public school administrator, it presents the case for IPI with colorful graphics and provides guidelines for the administrator hoping to persuade his staff to accept the IPI concept.

Carl C. Fehrle, Bureau of Continuing Professional Education at Missouri, writes that the monograph has received considerable recognition in his state. The demand for copies has forced a second printing.

RESEARCH NOTES

Interaction Analysis: A Tardy Comment

By BARAK ROSENSHINE

The verdict is not in, and is not likely to be in for some time, on the relationship between a teacher's behavior as measured by the Flanders Interaction Analysis (IA) system¹ and pupil achievement. This holds true despite the glowing review of 12 studies presented by Campbell and Barnes² in the June, 1969, issue of the *KAPPAN*.

In that review the results of each study were labeled statistically significant, and the overall conclusion was that "the micro-elements involved in the indirect/direct ratios do affect achievement and attitude development at almost every grade level from K-9."³

However, if one goes beyond the summaries which Campbell and Barnes read and checks the original reports, then one sees flaws in all of the "results" they cited. These flaws include: 1) inappropriate statistical analyses by the investigators, 2) limits in the external validity or generalizability of the study, 3) data omitted from the summary reports, and 4) misinterpretations in reading. A more careful examination shows that not one of these 12 studies provides clear data which can be applied with confidence to a teacher training program. In short, the Campbell and Barnes review, which is based on secondary information, yields conclusions inconsistent with the original data.

Review of studies. The order in which studies will be cited here is identical to that used in the original review by Campbell and Barnes. The first "study" is actually four studies reported by Flanders⁴ — two using pupil attitude as the dependent variable, two using pupil achievement. In all these studies, student scores were used as the unit of analysis. But the degrees of freedom should have been the number of teachers rather than the number of students, because the teachers were the sampling unit,⁵ and because we wish to generalize the results to the training of teachers. In a subsequent analysis of the same seventh- and eighth-grade classes, Flanders⁶ corrected this error and reported linear correlations of .47 and .41

MR. ROSENSHINE (2426, Stanford University Chapter) is assistant professor of educational psychology, Temple University.

between the *i/d* ratio of the teachers and the *class mean* achievement scores (adjusted by regression for aptitude or prior knowledge) for the 15 seventh-grade classes and the 16 eighth-grade classes respectively. Although these correlations are respectable, they miss being statistically significant at the .05 level.

The second study in the review, by Amidon and Flanders,⁷ is an acceptable experiment, but it cannot be generalized to teacher training for two reasons. First, only one teacher was involved. Second, during indirect teaching the teacher "accepted student ideas" twice as often as the indirect teachers in the original studies by Flanders,⁸ and during direct teaching the teacher used criticism three times as often as the direct teachers in Flanders' original studies.

The study by LaShier⁹ is also of questionable generality, because 1) the teachers were student teachers, and 2) they were teaching the BSCS curriculum to eighth-grade pupils. The BSCS curriculum was written for high school biology students; many teachers believe that the materials are too difficult even for pupils at the high school level.

The study by Brown¹⁰ is inconclusive on two counts. First, Brown used the Wit-hall system¹¹ for observing teacher behavior, not IA. Second, as Medley and Mitzel have noted, the procedure for calculating the correlation was in error, and "it is impossible to tell from the published data what the correct values of *r* would be."¹²

The authors were accurate in their report of the short article they read by Nelson:¹³ The teacher's *i/d* ratio was significantly higher when she prepared her class for a pupil-determined writing topic than it was when she prepared her class for a teacher-determined writing topic. But in this study teacher style and writing assignment are confounded, so that we cannot determine whether the significant differences were due to the method of determining the topic or the teacher's *i/d* ratio. The use of a single teacher further limits the generalizability of any results. In the complete report, Nelson noted that there were no significant differences in the quality of the essays produced under the two conditions.¹⁴

The study by Beller, Weber, and Amidon¹⁵ involved a total of four teachers; because of this no statistical tests were run. The report on the study by Soar¹⁶ is an accurate summary. But the short piece by Soar is a *post hoc* analysis of a larger investigation.¹⁷ In this larger study, involving 55 teachers and their classrooms, the factor containing the loadings for indirect teaching was not significantly correlated with any of the four class-mean residual gain scores in vocabulary, reading, or arithmetic. Moreover, in the report that was cited by Campbell and Barnes, the use of pupils rather than classes as the unit of measure is questionable.

The description of the study by Furst and Amidon⁸ is inaccurate. Their report is purely descriptive of teacher-pupil