



Role Play Situation #2

Identifying the Problem

Jane Smith, principal of ABCD School, scheduled several observations of Mr. Bill's third grade classroom. Comments overheard in the faculty room and from several of Mr. Bill's parents confirmed the fact that this was a difficult year for the teacher. On two of her last three observations, Ms. Smith was shocked by observing students talking back to their teacher and on one occasion by a pupil demonstrating a fairly realistic mime of his behavior. Sensing the stress under which Mr. Bill was working, Jane Smith came to the decision that one of his more troublemakers would have to be transferred to the other third grade class.

Although, the next week seemed to go more smoothly for the class, Ms. Smith experienced a moment's doubt when a note left on her desk by Mr. Bill urgently requested another "observation." Though a few details were noted, the name Harold was underlined as someone to be watched during her next visit.

Sitting in the classroom the next day, her worst fears were confirmed; the class had again deteriorated to its prior level of disturbance. In place of Timmy, who was removed the previous week, Harold occupied center stage. Although her first reaction was to consider another transfer, Ms. Smith stopped to notice what was happening in the interaction between Harold and Mr. Bill. First she noted that his eyes seldom left Harold even though his head was orientated toward other children. Other clues began to fit into place which together formed the picture of Mr. Bill giving nearly continuous attention to those pupils who were out of their seats or looking about the room. Working pupils received little or no attention whatsoever. It was time for a chat with Mr. Bill. Jane Smith left a note on Mr. Bill's desk suggesting a time after school when they could talk.