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THE USE OF SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING AND ITS IMPACT ON THE BEHAVIORS

OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS WITH MULTIPLE HANDICAPS

By
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A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
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at
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Approved by

Professor

Date Approved ___4/29/99___

ABSTRACT

Stephanie L Winkler
The use of social skills training and its impact on the behaviors of elementary students
with multiple handicaps.
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Dr. S. Jay Kuder
Master of Arts in Special Education

This study examined the use of social skills training and its impact on the behaviors of elementary students with multiple handicaps. The two main areas of focus were to improve social conformity and ego strength. Deficits were discovered in these two areas after a pre-test was given to the eleven subjects using the Burk's Behavior Rating Scale and after reviewing the student's Individual Education Plans (IEP's). The students then underwent a ten lesson unit that attempted to increase their social and peer interactions and therefore their self-esteem. The students were taught through modeling, prompting, discussion, direct instruction, role-playing, and discovery. The main focus was through physical education lessons and subsequent discussions. The games were chosen because they lend themselves to goal setting, making friends, being helpful, learning to communicate, and thus with the goal of improving self-esteem. The results indicated that the students showed marked improvement in the area of ego strength and a satisfactory level of improvement in the area of social conformity.

MINI ABSTRACT

This study examined the use of social skills training and its impact on the behaviors of elementary students with multiple handicaps in the areas of social conformity and ego strength. The results indicated that the students showed marked improvement in the area of ego strength and a satisfactory level of improvement in the area of social conformity. This supports research that social skills training is beneficial to the student's behavior.

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Chapter 1: Research Problem

Introduction: Elementary age special education students often have difficulty relating to other students and teachers. These children may be unable to start conversations, and therefore, unable to start friendships. Other problems may stem from lack of self-concept. Children suffering from low self-esteem may not feel they can accomplish what the other students can do. This could cause the child to act out in several different ways including withdrawing, aggressiveness, clowning around, or defensiveness. Students with disabilities can come from unstable environments and may not know how to vent their frustrations. This could lead to uncontrolled anger and inappropriate behaviors. The child with a poor attention span may have difficulty with relationships due to their inability to control their behaviors. These issues are reasons why social skill training is being studied as a possible solution to the above problems.

In speaking to the teachers that instruct these children they felt that their largest weakness was in social skill development. Lack of social skills seems to be a common problem among students with disabilities. Teachers report a lack of social competence, that students with disabilities interact less frequently, and that they have specific behavior problems. Peers often show greater rejection toward these students. Self-reports from special education students find that they have problems with academics, interpreting facial expressions, and social problem solving.

Problem Statement: Will social skills training that is focused on specific skills, as measured by a rating scale, enhance the social skills of elementary multiple handicapped students? This research will determine if social skills training has a positive

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impact on the behaviors, identified through the Burk's Behavior Rating Scale, of elementary multiple handicapped students. These eight male and three female students are in a self-contained classroom. Their grade levels range from first to fifth grade. Their disabilities vary greatly. The most severe is educable mentally retarded with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Most of the students in the class are perceptually impaired and suffer from ADHD. The students' Individual Education Plans (IEP's) contained anecdotal notes that vary from one child to the next, however there is a common theme. Comments include: "needs constant approval", "effort and cooperation is inconsistent", "socialization skills need to be developed", "needs to improve self-confidence", and "poor peer interaction" to name a few.

Hypothesis: It is hypothesized that given a minimum of ten social skills' lessons geared toward the students' weaknesses, that the above students will increase positive behaviors and decrease negative and inappropriate behaviors.

Terms: The research that will be conducted will consist of a minimum of 10 social skills' lessons being taught to the class. The two main "trouble areas" for the students will be defined through a behavior rating scale. These two social skills' deficits will be taught once a week concentrating on one area at a time. The Burk's Behavior Rating Scale will be utilized to determine significant to very significant categories as well as improvement or lack of improvement in the specified areas.

There are many areas that encompass social skills. One main area is how one interacts with peers. Does the person interpret cues from others appropriately? Do they act appropriately (within societal norms)? Specifically social skills include, but is not limited to: being able to interact with two or more people, making eye contact and facial

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expressions, what words should be said in certain situations, showing empathy, discriminating social cues, possessing problem solving skills, and assertiveness skills.

Purpose: Social skills are often learned from a significant adult in a child's life. The child mimics the actions of an adult. Unfortunately, some role models are not positive influences. This could be for several reasons. The child may not have a stable adult in their life. The child may have been bounced from foster home to foster home. The poor role model could be an older sibling, another relative, or friend of the family.

For whatever reason social skills were not learned, the child needs to be taught. Elementary school is the best level to implement a social skills program. The older the child becomes, the more ingrained the inappropriate behaviors become. Early intervention is the key. Enabling the child to learn socially appropriate skills now will help them develop self-management skills, a positive self-image, as well as valuable friendships.

The purpose of this research is to determine whether the above social skills can be taught using the techniques listed. It is my hope that teaching the students this way will help them to be happier with themselves and with the people around them.

Overview: In the upcoming chapter I hope to review literature that will help to clarify research that has already been done in this field. The role of physical education will be looked at in depth. Other areas will include violence prevention, cooperative education, moral education, and teaching values in school. Teaching techniques, self-management skills, as well as factors to motivate students will be covered.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Defining social skills: Social skills are a vital part of a well-rounded person. Having the ability to relate and communicate with others can define what a person is. Someone with the intelligence to accomplish anything they want, but possessing few social skills may not have the goal setting abilities or the communication skills to achieve their objectives. This problem is confounded when dealing with a child. Lack of social skills can mold a child's personality. If they are afraid to express themselves, the child may give in to people who make unreasonable requests upon them. Not being able to stick up for yourself can cause many problems for children and adults alike. This is only a few of several areas of social skill development which took form only in this century.

The study of social skills began in the psychiatric field in the late 1950's (Polloway and Patton, 1997). However it isn't until the last two decades that it's importance took hold in education.

The reason that social skills training became necessary is because students who were not taught how to develop goals, to problem solve, and to establish relationships are often unsuccessful in school (Polloway and Patton, 1997). Peer acceptance is a very large aspect in social skills. Polloway and Patton (1997) reviewed five social skill curricula for several different items. One of those items was skill content. The following are skills that were taught in the reviewed programs: problem solving, how to get along with others, how to hold a conversation, how to make friends, assertiveness, following directions, accepting criticism, giving criticism, giving positive feedback, stress coping

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skills, how to plan, dealing with anger, outlets for anger, and feelings. Social skills, however, is not limited to these areas.

According to Sorensen and Commodore (1997) there are several categories in social skill development. The first area is self-expressive skills that include expressing feelings and opinions, accepting compliments, and being able to say positive things about oneself. The second is stating positive things about others, it could be in the form of praise and it must be genuine. The next important social skill is assertiveness. The student should be able to make simple requests, be able to disagree with others, and deny unreasonable requests. Another area focuses on communication skills such as being able to have a conversation and utilize interpersonal problem solving (Sorensen and Commodore, 1997). These skills are important for any person, however, they are vital for students with special needs.

Social skill problems in students with disabilities: A literature review performed by Frank M. Gresham and Donald L. MacMillan (1997) overwhelmingly found that students with mild disabilities (specific learning disabilities, mild mental retardation, behavior disorders, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) are not included and often excluded by their peers. They also are more likely to have poor social skills and more difficult behaviors than children their own age. This is why there is a great need to help students to integrate with their peers. When a regular education teacher is faced with including a special education student into his/her classroom there are many things the instructor can do to help make the child feel welcome. In doing this it is hoped that the child will feel they are a part of the class thus reducing possible problems with the child being accepted by their peers.

It is helpful to realize the child's limitations. If the student has extreme difficulty with a task like tying shoes, another student can assist the disabled student so he/she does not miss valuable instruction time (Hamre-Nietupski, McDonald, & Nietupski, 1992). This is a very important point. The child needs to be a part of the classes' academic time whenever possible. There will be times when a special lesson should be taught that is geared toward the disabled childs' goals. Providing a positive atmosphere will help the child to feel more included.

Teaching techniques: Cooperative learning is one way to promote this nurturing environment. There are many activities that can be done to promote the child's social associations. Pairing children or placing them into groups can be effective if carried out in a well-planned manner. All children need to be a contributing member of the group. This can be accomplished by assigning each child a task or role and group the students heterogeneously. To alleviate one child from dominating the conversation/project, each child could also be given a set amount of 'chips' and each time they talk in the group they turn in a chip, when they have used up their chips they become a listener. There are many conditions to creating successful cooperative learning groups. There are four aspects that need to be present for the students to feel they are part of the group. Foremost is that the child must feel included. Their influence must not be one of complete dominance but one contributory in nature. When the first two are present in the classroom environment a level of openness can begin. The child will feel that he/she can share personal feelings because a relationship has been built on trust. The final result will be a sense of community. Through successful cooperative learning all children in the class will feel like a valued and contributing member (Zitkus-Lillie, 1998).

The special needs child can learn social skills from their regular education peers. This type of integration is most successful at an early age. As with cooperative learning the teacher must be well prepared for this to seem as if it is occurring naturally.

Social interaction must be encouraged. Barbara Lowenthal (1996) offers the following suggestions to help the disabled child develop social skills. How the class is arranged is vital. If during free time the students are placed far away from one another the students will not be encouraged to interact. Another way to promote social skills is to allow the child to mimic the actions of a student modeling the correct behaviors. The teacher needs to be a guide for the child with disabilities. The child may not know what to do in a social situation and the teacher must physically show them what to do. This method will be most successful if it is used as a temporary technique that is eventually faded. The teacher should play games with the class that encourage students to show love toward one another.

These activities should bolster student's positive interactions. Positive reinforcement and social skill training could be used and geared toward the individuals' needs. The students without disabilities can be used as teachers. Students are assigned to one another. The teacher-student prompts the special needs child until he/she responds. The peer needs to be trained in order to use this method of teaching.

Social skills programs should teach the above skills using specific techniques. Interventions could include several different methods of teaching. One of these approaches is modeling. This is demonstrating to a student by example. An example could be praising a student who is performing an appropriate social skill. Another technique to teach social skills is direct instruction, telling the child outright if you are in

situation "X", you should do "Y". A follow-up of the reason the child should behave in a certain way will reinforce it in their mind. Another form of direct instruction would be to actually teach what the specific social skill is and what behaviors are expected. One social skill could be focused upon each week. Students can also be taught that when they see a positive behavior they should reinforce that behavior, this is called using peer contingencies. Another technique used is coaching. Coaching is helping the child to make the right choices during the decision making process. The last technique is role-playing. Give the children a situation and they act out what they would do. This is useful because if they are placed in that situation in real life, they will already know what to do (Polloway and Patton, 1997).

There are many forms of instructing social skills. One model has children look at literature and put themselves in roles of the characters and setting (Kreidler, 1995). This helps the child to learn empathy by 'walking in someone else's footsteps.' Another way to teach empathy is to have students present other peoples' points of view (Kreidler, 1995). Perhaps the teacher would take a common childhood problem and turn it into a point of learning. Have the students in the class play a role that does not suit their personality to allow them to see the other perspective.

This technique of allowing children to take on a different role can be very effective. Richard Weissbourd (1996) reports that it is important to have children experience solutions to problems. It is not good enough to tell students that violence is harmful. A student who is aggressive could be asked to present a report on the effects of violence. They may also take part in a mock talk show in which the topic is gun control

(Weissbourd, 1996). Students don't need to be told what to do but they need to experience how to do it.

There are several projects the students can undertake as a class. Literature can be integrated with the social studies curriculum to act more globally. Students can write letters to politicians or businesses expressing their concerns about important issues in their community and country. A school ground clean up or beautification project can be conducted. Older students may also expand this to their community park or streets.

With careful planning a teacher can teach students social skills through the literature the students read. This can be implemented at any grade level. It could be done to teach minor classroom problems, such as manners when forming a line, or it could be used to inform students of important social issues. McCall and Ford (1998) cited several pieces of literature that aid in teaching about issues of racism, the holocaust, homelessness, violence, and the impact of war on a culture.

There are several methods in which books can be best utilized in the classroom. It is the hope of the authors that the teacher creates a lesson not just on characters, plot, and summary but to actually create a classroom environment in which social activism is explored. Allow the students opportunities to investigate what can be done to solve the problem in the book. Create an atmosphere where children feel free to ask questions like, "What can I do to help?" and "What am I doing now that adds to the problem?" When students begin to ask these types of questions it empowers them to make a change for the better. According to McCall and Ford (1998) there are several guidelines that educators should follow when utilizing literacy to promote social change. The teacher does not want to start with a large project. Limit the first few to small easy-to-overcome

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problems. Issues should be integrated in to other disciplines for the students to understand it's impact, however, it should not dominate the curriculum all of the time. Choose topics that will have the support of the school staff and the students' parents. Send information to the parents and invite them to discuss the problem at home also. Topics should be interesting, meaningful, and not hurt the students' feelings.

Students can also learn social skills in several other ways, including their family. Parents can create an atmosphere that allows their children to learn from one another. Younger children sometimes mimic their older siblings, through this mimicry they learn future behaviors. Parents from 50 Mexican-descent families in California were questioned about family occurrences and how their children interacted. Families with more than one child were interviewed about the interactions between the two in regard to socialization.

There are several different ways that children can learn from one another. These are similar to the roles of the student and teacher. The student can learn from the teacher's example, mimicking their actions, togetherness, direct instruction, the student's learning style, and how motivated they are (Perez-Granados & Callanan, 1997).

Twenty-five percent of the parents reported that younger children learned social skills from the older child (Perez-Granados & Callanan, 1997). One child told his younger brother that he should not fight/hit his friends. Through examples such as this one the authors conclude that families learn a lot from each other. Not only do the younger siblings learn things such as academics from their older siblings, but also older children learn how to deal with people in more positive ways from their younger sibling. Perez-Granados & Callahan (1997) believe that school and home need to compliment one

another to best suit the learner. This can be done in covert ways as explained above or in directly through the curriculum. These planned lessons to teach social skills can be taught in several forms. Examples are through direct instruction on teaching values, violence prevention, a particular skill, or social skills in general.

Intervention programs for all students regardless of disability: The physical education curriculum can be a very positive social skill building experience. However, the program needs to be developed and taught with this in mind. Activities need to encourage collaboration. All students need to be challenged. Activities should be multi-level and not just developed for the athletically inclined.

Physical education should be where the students learn that having the most points at the end of the class is not the most important factor in a game. The teacher should introduce the class to other "winning" definitions. These definitions can encompass improvement, being a good leader, cooperating with teammates as well as opponents, goal setting, how to solve a problem, and resolving conflicts.

Going "beyond the physical" is a program whose aim is to develop self-confidence, teamwork, responsibility, and good sportsmanship. This is accomplished through the physical education curriculum in two ways. The first is an "MVP" award and the second is a "Sunshine Gram." These are given to a student for positive qualities that make them stand out as well as attributes that allow them to "fit in" (McHugh, 1995).

The MVP is announced in the beginning of the class, given a badge and is automatically given star status. Classmates interview the MVP to find out more about their family, their likes, their hobbies, etc.. The class will continue giving the MVP

special attention through complimenting them. This helps the student to feel good about themselves and to demonstrate leadership skills (McHugh, 1995).

The Sunshine Gram is a note given to the students' parents for something positive the child did. This message lets the parent know that their child is doing well. This improves the child's self-esteem as well as improves relations between home and school. The author believes that this program has cut down on discipline problems in her class and according to the students she has polled that have gone on to middle and high school these rewards have been a positive influence in their lives.

Gloria Soloman (1997) implemented a thirteen-week program with second grade students during their physical education classes. The curriculum focused on moral education to improve social skills. The basic premise is to give the students a purpose to their learning. There were several moral goals in this program. It hoped to have the children want to develop responsibility for their actions, improve cooperative skills, sharing, and interpersonal verbal skills.

The curriculum utilizes game invention. The students are asked what they would do to make a particular game better. This gives the students a sense of power. What they are doing has a purpose. If it didn't they wouldn't feel as they have accomplished something worthwhile.

Student dialogue is another important aspect. Every child has input and their opinion counts. This allows the student to feel they are an important member of the class. They also help to develop the class rules. Children are more likely to follow rules and carry out important values if they feel they helped to create them (Soloman, 1997). It gives them a better understanding of the "Why?" behind what they do.

The program encourages students to show that they care about and need one another. It is not until the child feels valued, competent, and given a chance to be self-directed, that social skills can be taught (Soloman, 1997).

The four themes utilized in this program (trust, helping, problem-solving, and body awareness) have been shown to have a positive effect on those students involved with the program. The control group made little gains, while the group taught social skills improved greatly. Students in the program were evaluated on an adapted version of the Distributive Justice Scale (Soloman, 1997) and through classroom teacher observation.

The above program is similar to Teaching Games for Understanding (TGFU) program that also uses game invention. This program has three main objectives. It's aim is to teach fourth through sixth grade students to develop problem-solving skills, social skills, and to develop the two preceding skills while learning rules and strategies of games that will be played on the secondary level. The sports played on the secondary level are far too complex for these grade levels, therefore, a lead-up game will be played. This game is a modification that does not touch upon the actual game in great detail.

The TGFU method consists of three steps. First is to select the game. It will be an invasion game, a net/wall game, a fielding/run scoring game, or a target game (Curtner-Smith, 1996). The second step involves the actual playing of the game. The games learned in the beginning are simplified and toward the end of a unit they are more complex. This is the area that students learn strategies and tactics. The teacher guides learning by asking questions, not by telling the students exactly what to do. For example; instead of saying to the defensive team in football that they should cover a person from

the offense, ask the students, "What could you do to help prevent the offensive team from scoring a touchdown?" The final step to this method is game invention.

There are several reasons why this is such a valuable part of the program. The students have a better understanding of how the games are played. The students feel they are doing something valuable that improves self-confidence. They are demonstrating their understanding of the rules and strategies of the game. The skills that can be acquired using this program are creativity, problem solving, responding to others' ideas, how to disagree politely, and leadership. When the student is able to invent their own games, the author believes it proves that they comprehend the rules and that they can work well with their peers.

"Fair Play for Kids" was developed to determine if physical education could effectively teach moral education. This curriculum was implemented to 452 fourth through sixth grade students in two Canadian provinces for seven months. Students were divided into three groups. The first was taught moral development in just their physical education class. The second group was taught the skills across the curriculum. The last group was the control group.

Activities were designed to promote the importance of rules, accepting the official's ruling, a fair attitude toward the opponent, allowing all students to contribute, and staying in control of one's self. One of the main strategies used in this program is the running shoe solution. This activity is designed for those students who need a time out for losing their composure. The student is sent to the running shoe alone or with a peer that contains four sections. The students answer the following questions: "What is the problem?", "What are possible alternatives?", "What are the consequences?", "What is a

good solution?". Time is taken out at the end of some game situations to discuss what happened during the game that promoted fair play.

Pretests and posttests given to the students determined that when they were taught "fair play" in physical education classes and throughout the curriculum their moral development improved while the control group saw little improvement (Silverman, 1998). In this case moral development is defined as being respectful to all on the playing field while engaged in open communication and problem solving skills while engaged in moral dilemmas.

The use of this program had its most positive effect on the student's time on task. The average student decreased off task behavior from 33% off task to 25% off task. Other improvements were noticed in the student's ability to recognize and define the various levels and inappropriate behaviors. This could have implications on long term effects when the program is continued. Perhaps now that they thoroughly understand appropriate behaviors, they can begin to make a more permanent adjustment.

The above paragraphs state many examples of physical education programs to help students deal with and overcome their social skill inadequacies. Some are very easily implemented, like the MVP and Sunshine Gram, while others require the support of the entire school and modification of the curriculum.

The following section shows social skill programs geared toward all students that are not part of the physical education curriculum. Below, social skills are taught directly through a separate social skills program.

These deficits are not just a problem in America, but they reach across the globe. Sixteen high school students in Hong Kong were taught social skills during eight

sessions. The focus of the program was to teach students of average ability oral skills, nonverbal skills, communication, relaxation, and self-reliance (Hon & Watkins, 1995). The greatest amount of improvement was seen through the Self-Description Questionnaire. This part of the assessment was used to determine how the student felt about their relationships with their parents and with their friends (Hon & Watkins, 1995).

Schools that implement this next type of program usually come from a community that realizes that there is a need and support it. The Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum for grades 1-3 was taught to 790 2nd and 3rd grade students in Washington. The objective is to teach anger management, impulse control, and empathy during 30 social skill lessons (Grossman, Neckerman, Koepsell, Liu, Asher, Frey, & Rivara, 1997). A baseline for behavior was determined through observations.

The curriculum was taught in three separate units. During empathy training students were taught about seeing other peoples' perspectives, how the student felt, how other students felt, and how to demonstrate concern. Part two was how to control their impulses and solving problems. The last area dealt with coping skills of anger management (Grossman, Neckerman, Koepsell, Liu, Asher, Frey, & Rivara, 1997). Two weeks before the program was over found a significant decrease in physical aggression from the students and an increase in positive behaviors. At the six-month follow-up observation, the students were found to be performing at about the same level. The data was drawn from observations on the playground, cafeteria, and classroom. However, the parent reports did not indicate notable changes.

Similar to the above teachings, a group of 28 sixth graders experienced a 12-week assertiveness program. The curriculum was taught bi-weekly. Every lesson was concluded with a quiz and feedback.

The results show that the students greatly improved in their knowledge of assertiveness. This data was similar at the follow-up report. Results were not as positive when the students carried out their assertiveness training skills. Children basically knew what they were supposed to do but they did not follow-through with their actions (Thompson, Bundy, & Broncheau, 1995). This is a problem with some social skills programs. This is another reason why Weissbourd (1996) states that students need to experience the skills and not just talk about them. This is especially true in teaching special education students.

Programs specifically geared toward students with disabilities: Social skills' programs are especially important for the special education population. These students often lack the necessary skills to make productive friendships, to communicate with others, and/or manage their anger.

The following literature review looks at a curriculum developed for a special needs population focusing on and integrating into the physical education program. It is geared toward alternative education, but it has been successful for regular education students.

Adventure education parallels some school's main goals of educating a person physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. These are accomplished through having the students take risks, meeting challenges, trusting others, cooperating, and solving problems (Dyson and O'Sullivan, 1998).

The implementation of this project may be difficult for most schools. Many things must be present for this program (as well as most new programs begun in a school situation) to succeed. The entire school must support it. It is not only essential for the school staff to be behind it but parents need to show an interest also. There needs to be effective leadership, teachers who feel they are contributing members whose input is important, and time must be set aside for mutual planning periods and for adjustments developed during discussions.

Adventure education hopes to challenge each student, regardless of their ability. It is not a program that tells the student what to think, but instead teaches them how to think. This was done in two alternative elementary schools in the mid-west with culturally diverse populations. Both schools began to transform very positively. Students would focus less on competition and more on cooperation. One school had their Parent-Teacher Association membership rise from one member to 240 in the past six years. Parent-teacher conferences are up to an 87% turn out. The community is also interested and involved. Local businesses come into the school to devote their time and resources, as well as money.

Project adventure's success seems to stem from commitment. All parties were interested and able to spread that interest throughout the community. The students transformed into caring individuals who were challenged on a daily basis. Perhaps when the students saw how dedicated the staff was they began to feel they were important members of the school and the community. This helps the child to develop a sense of belonging and therefore strive to do better.

When students feel that they are doing something positive and that they are a part of something bigger than themselves, many come out with a feeling of accomplishment. These feelings of empowerment increase a student's self-esteem and make other tasks seem attainable (Dyson and O'Sullivan, 1998). Social issues can also be learned through a non-school setting. The arts can help students to use their creativity to create change.

The Community Arts Apprenticeship Program (CAAP) was developed in California for youth as a means of developing their social skills and cultural awareness. The six week summer program teaches students to work together to reach a common goal. The students create projects with a purpose or message to convey to other community members. The students were divided into five culturally diverse teams for the morning program. After lunch the students were regrouped into teams based on their interest in a particular artistic area. One day per week was devoted to group learning activities such as workshops on social change (Schwarzman, 1997). The students turned their learning into something positive. The students reached the community through radio, billboards, a Web site, as well as other forms of media.

When completing this program the students felt they were more in touch with what was going on around their community. They also learned how to better their community, how to work together toward a common goal and look at other people's perspectives. CAAP is an ongoing program that has a high number of graduates that continue their efforts for social change.

Inclusive classrooms also have students from different backgrounds working together. These students are not only culturally diverse (according to cultural make up of the community) but they are varied in their academic level also. Project Innovation is a

study of the parents' attitudes toward their child's inclusive classroom. Its objective is to see if they think the special need's child can learn social skills from their regular education peers and vice versa. The class consists of 42 students (12 that are special education), one regular education and one special education teacher.

Questionnaires were returned from 67 percent of the parents whose children were in the above class. Responses from a majority of the parents stated that their child's social skills improved since they have been involved in this class. Regular education parents believe their children have learned to adapt and deal with students of varying abilities. While the parents of the exceptional children felt that their child's social skills improved from being around regular education students. From these results the authors concludes that social skills and self-esteem have improved (Tichenor, Heins, & Piechura-Couture, 1998) since the children have not been involved in a non-inclusive classroom.

Students in the above classroom learned from each other without being taught directly how to do so. The teachers created a classroom environment that facilitated appropriate social skills.

The same will hold true for the social skill of expressing one's self nonverbally. Building friendships can be a very difficult undertaking for some children. The socially inept child may simply be lacking the ability to show and interpret facial expressions and body language appropriately (Nowicki, 1996). To help the student with this type of problem Nowicki (1996) suggests several tips.

These techniques could be taught to the whole class or directly to the student having difficulty. These should help the student realize their weakness and ways to overcome it. (1) For the child that speaks slowly, they can practice speaking at different

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speeds or watch another student while they talk. (2) For the child that does not maintain an appropriate amount of distance away from other students, they can observe other students while in line or engaging in conversation. (3) For problems with gestures, posture, facial expressions, and tone of voice, the children can play charades with emotions or other aspects on a card and the students act out how they should look. Simply pointing out suitable behaviors can help a student learn what to do.

Two lessons that the instructor can teach to further facilitate friendships are to have students pair up to trace each other's body on large pieces of paper. Once completed this aspect the students could write the qualities that they think that a friend should possess (Kreidler, 1997). A discussion about those aspects could complete the lesson. Another valuable enrichment would be to have the students create a song about nice and unkind behaviors (Kreidler, 1997). These are all valuable when problems arise in a classroom or school situation.

The teacher needs to be aware of potential problems before they arise. Of course, the teacher wants each child to reach his or her full potential. But are they? There is usually one child in every class that is not accepted by his or her peers, sometimes this is a special needs child. The child usually responds in one of three ways to peers. The first is to accept the fact that they are not well liked and assume the role of outcast. The second is to constantly seek reassurance or help from the teacher. The last typical response is to become confrontational (Silverman, 1997).

This is the basis of a study performed by Stephen Silverman (1997). The research was conducted in the Pacific Northwest with 35 seventh grade students and their two

physical education teachers. The focus was on the five students having difficulty due to their lack of social and/or physical skills.

Students that do not want an unpopular child to choose them as a partner make their feelings known through subtle or direct means. The student may not make eye contact with that person or they may outright tell the person not to pick them. Behaviors may also escalate to violence.

The isolated student needs strategies to help them overcome this problem. However, the teacher is the person who needs to take control of the situation to alleviate an obstacle before it occurs. This can be done through not allowing students to choose their own groups as often. The teacher also needs to be educated about the strategies a child uses when they are put in an uncomfortable situation that may lead to exclusion. This will cause the teacher to be aware of the classes chemistry and to know when he/she needs to intervene (Silverman, 1997).

Another program with similar goals as the Teaching Games for Understanding model presented in the previous section is the Hellison's Personal and Social Responsibility Model (PSRM). This model is taught during physical education classes to at-risk youth. The overall goal is to develop self-responsibility utilizing seven techniques (Compagnone, 1995). These techniques are used to aid students to move from a level of irresponsibility to a level of caring. The levels are the heart of the program. Students are made aware of what each level means. A chart is kept on each student that states his or her level for the day. Level 0 is irresponsibility, Level I is self-control, Level II is involvement, Level III is self-responsibility, and Level IV is caring (Compagnone, 1995). Compagnone (1995) suggests the following strategies to implement the program. It is

easier to implement this program, as well as any other requiring specific new rules, at the beginning of the school year. Make sure that the students thoroughly understand what is expected of them and how to define each level. Some type of interactive feedback will be vital. The students need to do a self-report and the teacher needs to provide feedback and how it relates to the developmental levels. Don't skip levels. If all of your students were at a Level I it would not be appropriate to teach a Level IV type activity. When students lose focus bring them together to regroup. Peers should encourage each other as well as provide constructive criticism to refocus class members. Lastly, Do not expect changes to occur very quickly. The teacher needs to be perseverant.

Intervention programs go beyond the elementary and middle school level. Continuation Options Re-Entry Education (CORE) reaches from an alternative high school situation to the University of Regina in Canada. These two institutions worked together to improve the wellness of thirty-five 15 through 21 year old students. These students were in the high at-risk category. Many have had criminal troubles and some were victims of abuse or were substance abusers themselves. All had either left high school or were contemplating dropping out of school.

The CORE program was developed on the basis that people who engage in physical activity could improve their self-worth and self-assuredness (Bluechart, 1995). Its goals were to benefit both University students as well as the at-risk high school students. The program helps the high school students by providing them with two 1½ hour wellness sessions per week. The activities ranged from recreational games and noncompetitive sports to guest speakers on healthy lifestyles and visits to places of cultural interest.

At the end of the eleven-week program, it was discovered that the students had increased awareness of their own wellness and that they partook in physical activities more often. Information gathered from the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents found improvement in the following areas: classmates working well together, awareness of positive cultural/community activities to engage in, accepting personal and peer qualities whether positive or negative, increased level of participation in physical activities.

Conclusion: When students feel that they are doing something positive and that they are a part of something bigger than themselves, many come out with a feeling of accomplishment. These feelings of empowerment increase a student's self-esteem and make other tasks seem attainable. The teacher needs to take responsibility for this happening in the classroom.

Social skills training can be implemented into a curriculum in several different forms. Some of those forms are through literature, the arts, violence prevention programs, inclusive classrooms, and physical education.

The overall objective of all of these programs is to help children 'fit in'. For one reason or another many students are not acquiring social skills that they need to achieve in society. The skills that they are lacking could be something less obvious like not making appropriate facial expressions to a more complex behavior problem like blowing up when they are criticized. Taking the time during class to promote positive interactions between students will help the students to develop an optimistic attitude that will filter from social situations to their academic life.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Subjects: The study is being performed on the only special education classroom in a kindergarten through fifth grade school of approximately 300 students. The students come from different towns in a regional school district that is set in a rural area. Eight of these eleven students are from an African American background and the others are of Caucasian descent, which is not representational of the elementary school population. The ethnic breakdown for the school is as follows: 0.2% Asian, 10.3% Hispanic, 22.6% African American, and 67% Caucasian.

New Jersey's special education program has been reorganized to include new classifications. Most of these students have not undergone their annual review by the child study team this year and still have the older state classifications in their individualized education program (IEP). Four students are classified as perceptually impaired (PI).

> Perceptually impaired means a specific learning disability manifested by a severe discrepancy between the pupil's current achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas: (1) basic reading skills; (2) reading comprehension; (3) oral expression; (4) listening comprehension; (5) mathematic computation; (6) mathematic reasoning; and (7) written expression. (New Jersey State Board of Education, 1994, p.31)

One student is classified as multiply handicapped (MH) and the specific handicapping conditions were not noted. However, multiply handicapped refers to

having two or more handicapping conditions. Another student is considered educable mentally retarded (EMR). According to New Jersey's code EMR is a "level of cognitive development and adaptive behavior in home, school, and community settings that are moderately below age expectation" (New Jersey State Board of Education, 1994, p.30). Two students are classified as neurologically impaired (NI). This is considered "a specific impairment or dysfunction of the nervous system or traumatic brain injury which adversely affects the education of the pupil" (New Jersey State Board of Education, 1994, p.30). The final student is new to the district and received the classification of learning disabled. This student has auditory processing problems. Six of these students have also been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Instrument Description: There was three separate instruments used during this research. The first is a gathering of information from each student's IEP and the second is a pre- and post-test of the Burks' Behavior Rating Scale. This rating scale was implemented through observing each student's behavior. In addition to the two above instruments, comments from the social skills instructor and the classroom and special area teacher's will be noted when the program is complete to see if they notice an improvement in these particular areas.

Notes contained in the IEP were viewed for strengths and weaknesses. The five areas of concentration dealt with behavior and areas of personal and social development. Anecdotal notes from the classroom teacher summarized each child's behavior. The next four areas were in checklist form. They were: areas of concern, the students needs, modification that the classroom and special area teachers should follow when the student

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is mainstreamed, and personal/social objectives for the students. This provides a guide of the classroom teachers' views and the child study teams' findings.

From the IEP personal and social objectives, nine of the eleven children needed to take part in activities that improve their self-esteem. Another common goal was for students to engage in more peer/social interactions (8 out of 11 students needed help in this skill).

The second instrument will be more formal. This rating scale was developed by Harold Burks, Ph.D. and published by Western Psychological Services. This scale contains 110 questions which the evaluator rates the observed child on a scale from 1 to 5. A number 1 is placed next to the statement if the observer has not noticed this behavior at all. A number 2 is used if the behavior is noticed slightly; number 3 to a considerable degree; number 4 to a large degree; and number 5 to a very large degree. The scores are then tallied for the nineteen separate categories. Behaviors are divided into areas such as internalizing behaviors, externalizing behaviors, physical self, and cognitive self. Once the evaluator has answered questions and tallied them, they are charted on the profile sheet. The profile sheet will determine if the child has a very significant (significant or not significant) problem in a particular area.

After administering this test most students scored in the significant to very significant area for poor ego strength and poor social conformity. Another area that some students were weak in was poor anger control. Three of these students also had IEP objectives to express emotions appropriately.

The conclusion was drawn from these two instruments that the students needed a program in which they could find success. Improving the children's self esteem and

increasing their positive peer interactions will be the crux of the program. The students will be instructed in the areas of cooperation, trust, communication, and teamwork.

Procedures: The students will undergo a 10 week curriculum that will attempt to increase their social and peer interactions and therefore increase their self-esteem. They will be taught through modeling, prompting, discussion, direct instruction, role-playing, and discovery. The main focus will be through physical education lessons and subsequent discussions. The games were chosen because they lend themselves to goal setting, making friends, being helpful, learning to communicate, and therefore improving self-esteem.

Lesson 1: Goal- to develop class rules and to identify body language signals.

The students will develop the class rules with the help of the teacher. Pictures will be shown to the students and they are to identify how they think that the person in the picture feels. A discussion will take place about body language. The components to be discussed are: tone of voice, facing the person, eye contact, facial expressions, posture, proximity, and volume of voice. Students will then create their own expressions for the class to guess. Next a list will be created of appropriate and inappropriate body language components.

Lesson 2: Goal- to analyze social situations and become aware of appropriate responses.

The list that was created last week will be reviewed. The students will be asked to anonymously write down something that happened to them that bothers them. It could be something from class, when they are mainstreamed, on the playground, in the cafeteria, on the bus, or at home. The papers will be collected and mixed up so that no

one knows who wrote the scenario. The children will role-play what the teacher reads to them and the children will be asked what could have been done. Then the students will repeat the correct way to solve the problem.

Lesson 3: Goal- to determine solutions to everyday problems.

The class will be opened with the students telling what outcomes were determined from the previous lesson. The students are divided into groups of two. They are each given a picture (some of these pictures will be created from the problems the students reported in the first lesson). Among themselves they are to determine what they think is happening in their scenario. They are also to discuss how they would act in that same situation. One student will have the job of discussing what they think is happening in their picture. The second student will present the pair's solution.

Lesson 4: Goal- to use cooperative skills to guide a partner and achieve a common goal.

Co-op Golf- students create a golf course on a large piece of paper. One student is then blindfolded while the partner guides the golfer around the hazards to the hole (Orlick, 1982). Cooperative Musical Desks- played similar to musical chairs only with desks. The object of the game is to see how few desks students need for the whole class to be off the floor for 10 seconds (Orlick, 1982).

Lesson 5: Goal- to use teamwork to avoid consequences.

Beach ball Boogie Train- move with a beach ball between 2 (3, 4, 5…all) students (Orlick, 1982). Love Handles- person #1 is being held by the waist by their partner. Person #1 maneuvers around obstacles trying to make sure person #2 is not tug by the person who is "it" (Orlick, 1982). Runaway Train- groups of 4-5 students form a train.

The object is to grab onto the caboose of the other team while avoiding being linked onto by another train (Orlick, 1982).

Lesson 6: Goal- to communicate with a partner to achieve goal and to trust one another with their own safety.

The students record on paper the answer to the question, "Do you trust all of your classmates." This is done at the beginning of the class and after the lesson is taught. Tortoise and Hare- The class guides a blindfolded person through the "forest" avoiding any "snares" (Kasser, 1995). Happy Landings- a blindfolded person pushes a scooter while the person sitting on the scooter acts as a guide (Kasser, 1995).

Lesson 7: Goal- using teamwork to reach a common goal, the students are trusting one another with their own safety.

Partner Pull-ups- partners pull each other up from sitting to standing position (Orlick, 1982). Partner Stand-up- partners stand up while facing the same direction (Orlick, 1982). Group Pull-up- the whole group pulls themselves up to a standing position (Orlick, 1982). Tug of Peace- group holds onto a thick rope to pull each other up at the same time (Orlick, 1982). Circle of Friends- the class forms a circle while one person in the center falls backward to be caught by classmates (Orlick, 1982).

Lesson 8: Goal- to break taboo barriers of not touching or complimenting one another.

Frozen Beanbag- each person walks around area with a beanbag on his or her head. If the bag falls off their head they are frozen until a friend replaces the beanbag to unfreeze them. Reversing the Gauntlet- two lines facing each other, one person runs in

between the two lines and stops anywhere and faces someone who must compliment the runner (Orlick, 1982).

Lesson 9: <u>Goal-</u> to move and work together and to use verbal communication and thinking skills to place teammates in designated order.

The Great Divide- students move in a line together without allowing their feet to break away from their partner's foot (Kasser, 1995). Alphabet Balance Beam- students line up in alphabetical order on a balance beam without touching the floor (Glover & Midura, 1992).

Lesson 10: <u>Goal-</u> to use verbal communication and thinking skills to place teammates in a particular order and to develop trust.

Stepping Stones- students grouped in a row with each on a carpet square with one extra square. The students will attempt to finish in reverse order than when they begun without stepping off any square (Glover & Midura, 1992). Scooter Basketball- students are arranged as car and drivers on a basketball court with waste paper baskets as goals. Basic rules of basketball apply.

Statistical Analysis Overview: This research will be analyzed by comparing the data scores of the Burk's Behavior Rating Scale before the social skills were taught and after the program is concluded. The special education and special area teachers will be asked whether they believe the student's have met or are closer to meeting the objectives (regarding social development) stated in their IEP.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Data

Results: In this study I looked at the effects of social skills training on eleven elementary students with multiple handicaps. The social skills training program consisted of ten social skill lessons focusing on self-concept and peer and social interaction. Participants were administered the Burk's Behavior Rating Scale (BBRS) before and after intervention.

The results of the BBRS fall into one of three categories. They are either very significant, significant, or not significant. An improvement is noted when the raw score in each category is lowered because the poor behavior is now seen to a lesser degree. Base scores may vary because there are not the same amount of questions for each area.

Most students improved or had no change in their raw score. Table 1 was calculated by finding the average of all the students' raw scores for each category. The first mean was calculated from the students pre-test of the BBRS. The second mean was determined after the study was completed and after the second administration of the BBRS. The difference in the final column represents the degree the class improved on average. The most notable area of improvement is poor ego strength with seven students moving from very significant deficits to significant or not significant.

Gains were noted in the mean score of both focus areas of the project (poor ego strength and poor social conformity). The mean score before the implementation of the project in the poor ego strength category was 21.2. This raw score dropped 4.3 points to 16.9 after the project was completed. This was by far the largest gain from pre-test to post-test. A gain of 2.5 points was seen in the area of poor social conformity. Significant improvements in the two-point range were also noticed in five other categories. Increases were seen in poor intellectuality (2.4 points), excessive resistance (2.4 points), excessive

Table 1: Comparison of the pre-test and post-test means for BBRS

CATEGORY	PRE-TEST MEAN	POST-TEST MEAN	DIFFERENCE
Excessive Self Blame	10.6	9.6	-1.0
Excessive Anxiety	10.6	9.3	-1.3
Excessive Withdrawal	11.8	10.1	-1.7
Excessive Dependency	11.1	9.6	-1.5
Poor Ego Strength	21.2	16.9	-4.3
Poor Physical Strength	7.4	6.5	-0.9
Poor Coordination	6.4	6.0	-0.4
Poor Intellectuality	14.7	12.3	-2.4
Poor Attention	12.4	10.6	-1.8
Poor Impulse Control	13.4	11.3	-2.1
Poor Reality Contact	10.0	9.1	-0.9
Poor Sense of Identity	8.3	7.1	-1.2
Excessive Suffering	14.7	13.5	-1.2
Poor Anger Control	12.6	11.5	-1.1
Excessive Sense of Persecution	11.6	9.6	-2.0
Excessive Aggressiveness	15.7	13.5	-2.2
Excessive Resistance	13.1	10.7	-2.4
Poor Social Conformity	15.7	13.2	-2.5

aggressiveness (2.2 points), poor impulse control (2.1 points), and excessive sense of persecution (2.0 points). Furthermore, it should be noted that every category showed an improvement.

The focus of the study was determined through the pre-test of the BBRS which found that students had weaknesses in ego strength and social conformity. All students fell into the very significant or significant behavior rating in the poor ego strength category while six students fell into the significant area for poor social conformity. A detailed breakdown of these categories shows that all students improved their ego strength and ten out of eleven improved their social conformity as shown in Table 2. The eleventh student remained the same, which is in the not significant area. Table two demonstrates this, as well as, a very significant (V), significant (S), and not significant (N) deficit in the category continuum.

The average student had a decrease in poor ego strength of 4.3 points. Two students went from the category of very significant to significant, one student improved from very significant to not significant, and four students went from significant to not significant. The other students that showed improvement in ego strength did not exhibit a strong enough improvement to change categories even though they did improve within the significant category. All students now fall into the significant or not significant area and very significant is no longer represented among the students.

Table 2: Raw scores for pre- and post-tests for main areas of focus in research

Student	Poor Ego Strength: pre-test	Poor Ego Strength: post-test	Points Improved	Poor Social Conformity: pre-test	Poor Social Conformity: post-test	Points Improved
A	26-V	22-S	4	18-S	14-N	4
B	21-S	17-S	4	17-S	15-N	2
C	18-S	11-N	7	8-N	8-N	0
D	16-S	13-N	3	14-N	13-N	1
E	21-S	17-S	4	15-N	11-N	4
F	24-S	21-S	3	18-S	17-S	1
G	25-V	21-S	4	15-N	12-N	3
H	28-V	23-N	5	20-S	17-S	3
I	17-S	12-N	5	12-N	10-N	2
J	20-S	17-S	3	17-S	14-N	3
K	17-S	12-N	5	19-S	14-N	5
MEAN	21.2	16.9	4.3	15.7	13.2	2.5

The average student showed a decrease in poor social conformity of 2.5 points. Only one student did not show any improvement, however, this student remained in the not significant category. Before the study was implemented there were six students in the significant category and upon completion of the study only two remained in that area. Of the two students one dropped one point and the other three points to show improvement.

A second instrument was used to assess comments from three teachers and their classroom assistant that come into contact with these students at least on a weekly basis. The purpose of this assessment was to see if the teachers observed improvement in the student's behavior. The teachers were asked to comment on three areas when the project was complete. They compared the student's ego strength, social conformity, and ability to express emotions before and after the study. The classroom teacher and assistant had knowledge of the goal of the project while the other teachers (guidance teacher and media specialist) were unaware.

The media specialist felt none of the children showed an improvement in their ego strength. Both the classroom assistant and the classroom teacher felt subject 'C' has shown more confidence and is participating and risking more. Subject 'G' has low self-esteem (feels ugly) and although the problem is still present, it has lessened since the study began. The classroom teacher feels she is helping others more. This teacher also sees improvement in subjects 'A' and 'J'. They went from constantly seeking reassurance and support to starting to do work at their seat with less teacher intervention.

In the area of social conformity, the media specialist had prior difficulties with subjects 'K', 'B', 'I', 'A', and 'F' working together. Lately subject 'K' has been "perfect" and the others are being cooperative with the exception of subject 'B'. Subject 'K' has not improved for the classroom assistant (he can be arrogant and ignore teachers' instructions). The classroom teacher feels this same student still makes noises and rude comments to others, just on a lesser scale. The teacher of guidance felt that the one student 'F' who needed more direction than the others is now conforming to the teacher's expectations. The classroom assistant feels 'B' has opened up very little and he seems content to be on his own. She also wrote that 'J' used to laugh at anyone and anything and is now more of a participant. The classroom teacher comments that overall many students in the class have begun to say things like, "Dang, she told you." to a student who has just been corrected.

All of the teachers believed that generally the students are expressing themselves better emotionally now than earlier in the year. Comments include: one girl out of the three 'C' has opened up more; the boys have improved; 'F' used to break out in temper

tantrums and then became withdrawn, although he still won't give the whole story about

what is bothering him, he now looks for teacher support.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion: This study looked at the use of social skill training and its impact on behaviors of eleven elementary students with multiple handicaps. It was hypothesized that given ten social skills' lessons geared toward the students' weaknesses, that the self-contained students would increase positive behaviors and decrease negative and inappropriate behaviors.

The students were evaluated using the Burk's Behavior Rating Scale before and after the program's implementation. Four teachers who came into contact with the students on a weekly basis were interviewed after the research project was completed. The two main areas of focus were found from deficits in the students pre-test scores. The two categories were poor ego strength and poor social conformity.

Most of the students either reported the same score in a particular category or they improved. Very few students had a raw score decline. This shows that the program was not detrimental. In fact my research would support that this program was indeed beneficial to this type of population. A comparison of the means of table one and two shows that all areas improved. Poor ego strength was decreased by an average of 4.3 points with seven of the eleven students moving from very significant deficits to either significant or not significant. There were also improvements in the other focus area of poor social conformity. This was the second largest gain with a 2.5 point decrease.

These improvements could have been made because many of the lessons they were taught needed for the students to work together to achieve a common goal. When the whole group was not successful some students showed leadership qualities to help

their classmates out. Rarely did students chastise one another for causing the group to not reach their goal.

Overall, the comments were positive from the teachers interviewed after the project was completed. The majority of the students were working well together for the media specialist. The classroom teacher and classroom assistant felt that five students in particular were improving.

Teachers did also have some valid concerns about the children. Although gains have been made, they still have quite a distance to go. One teacher felt the student's ego strength had not improved. Other teachers noted improvements in a student, but often comment that their problem is still present. Also, some students are not consistent in their positive behaviors from teacher to teacher. This could demonstrate that positive behaviors were not truly learned.

The most significant area of concern to the observer is the recent trend to chastise other students when they see them being corrected. This is inconsistent with the findings that the students are showing improved social conformity.

To improve consistency among teachers, all of them could have been made aware of the research goals. They could have then been made active participants so the students' positive behaviors would be reinforced. The teachers could have been given a stack of cards with a particular social skill on it. If the teacher notices the student doing one of these skills appropriately, a card would be given to that person. The student would give this card to the social skill's teacher at the beginning of the next class. The child could use that time to discuss why he/she received the card. The child would then be given praise in front of the class.

There are several other improvements that could be made when implementing this project. Since there were so many areas that needed to be addressed, one area could have been dealt with until the results that were desired were achieved, then the next area could be taught. Implementing the project in this manner would require more time. Instead of teaching social skills on a weekly basis, a more intense two to three day per week curriculum could be used. This would also help with the problem of inconsistency.

There were several variables that may have also contributed to the student's success. One possibility is the interventions that the classroom teacher was performing. There are also other contributing factors in each individual that could contribute to their more appropriate behaviors. Student C was new to the district when the project was begun and this could have caused her to behave in a shy manner. She now may feel more comfortable with her surrounding and therefore opens up more.

The most troubled student in the class, F, may have been making outbursts solely because he missed his mother around Christmas time when the pre-testing occurred. His improvements may be due to the holiday season being over and he now sees his mother on a weekly basis.

If this project were to be extended or continued, the students may benefit from a more diverse program. They could profit from learning manners, such as, saying "sorry", "excuse me" stepping out of someone's way, etc. They could also be taught how to interact with peers on a more positive level. This would especially help them to relate to their peers when they are mainstreamed. The goal would be that they build and maintain friendships out of their self-contained classroom.

The findings in this project are similar to "The Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum" study done by Grossman, Neckerman, Koepsell, Liu, Asher, Beland, Frey, and Rivara (1997). This program may also lead to an increase in social behavior among elementary students. Although the lessons did not include physical education curricula, other aspects were similar. Photographs with a social problem were shown to the students and they used role-playing and behavior strategies to solve the problem. Another similarity was the discussion of feeling and how others may interpret their body language.

A program developed in Canada that resembled my study even more than the previous program was called "Fair Play For Kids" (Silverman, 1998). This 4th and 5th grade curriculum hoped to advance moral development through sportsmanship and physical education. It was concluded that appropriate behaviors were improved through sport skills that were designed to teach respect for rules, officials, opponents, and teammates while maintaining self-control. The emphasis of this program parallels my research in that students were taught the appropriate behaviors along with the designated game.

Conclusion: This study examined the use of social skills training and its impact on the behaviors of elementary students with multiple handicaps in the areas of social conformity and ego strength. The results indicated that the students showed marked improvement in the area of ego strength and a satisfactory level of improvement in the area of social conformity. This supports research that social skills training is beneficial to the student's behavior.

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