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Abstract

The effects of direct instruction in the area of social skill development were investigated. Students in three classes (a total of 50 students) were rated on a checklist of appropriate kindergarten social skills by their teacher. Two classes (29 students) were then instructed in social skill development while one class was given no specific instruction. When social skills were compared at the end of the eight week instructional time, both the experimental and control groups had improved, with boys improving at a greater rate than girls overall.

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Action Research Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Education

The Effects of Social Skills Training
on Kindergarten Students

by

Cindy Van Den Top

B.A. Dordt College, 1986

Action Research Report
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Education

Department of Education
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa
July 1997

The Effects of Social Skills Training
on Kindergarten Students

by

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Abstract

The effects of direct instruction in the area of social skill development were investigated. Students in three classes (a total of 50 students) were rated on a checklist of appropriate kindergarten social skills by their teacher. Two classes (29 students) were then instructed in social skill development while one class was given no specific instruction. When social skills were compared at the end of the eight week instructional time, both the experimental and control groups had improved, with boys improving at a greater rate than girls overall.

The Effects of Social Skills Training on Kindergarten Students

Success for students in school involves more than simply bringing home good grades, just as success after graduation from school is more than simply holding a job. In order for students to be happy, well-adjusted people, they must succeed socially as well as academically. Students are judged on their social competency just as are adults. They must have appropriate coping skills, proper work habits, and good peer relationships (Fad, 1990).

There are also long term applications for social skill development. If students are to go into the world to be change agents for the Lord and make a difference for him, then there is a need to provide the skills to be able to do that. Students need to be able to greet others and relate with others in socially acceptable ways. They must know how to approach others in a way that opens doors for sharing about our Lord. Social skills are very much a part of dealing with others successfully and are necessary in having an impact on others. There is also a responsibility to fellow Christians to deal with each other in ways that are respectful. Social skills allow us to do that.

Appropriate social skills are necessary because they make it possible to

achieve three important goals. They allow an individual to initiate and develop positive social relationships with others. They foster the individual's ability to cope effectively with the behavioral demands and expectations of certain settings. They provide the means by which one can function in a range of academic, personal, and community contexts. Social skills are necessary in performing daily tasks and provide a basis for successful communication (Walker, Schwarz, Nippold, Irvin, & Noell, 1994).

In a study by Ladd (1981), 36 children from six elementary schools were selected based on their poor social relationships with their classmates. The selected students were then individually trained in social skills during eight 45-50 minute sessions. The students were coached in asking questions, offering useful suggestions and supportive-statement behaviors. The training group experienced an increase in social acceptance with their peers which grew over time. This finding seems to support the assumption that skill training has a beneficial and lasting effect on peer acceptance.

In a study done by Margalit (1991), 87 students from two special schools were randomly divided into two groups. The experimental group consisted of 46 students and the control group consisted of 41 students. Ages of the students ranged from 10.6 to 17.11 years. Teachers were trained in using computer

software to teach social skills to the students in the experimental group. At the end of the study students in the experimental group received higher scores in their assertion and cooperation post-test results. Teachers rated the trained students as demonstrating better task-oriented behavior and fewer behavior problems.

Children who have weak social skills and show difficulty with peer relationships in their early school years are at risk for low self-esteem, under-achievement, school drop-out, juvenile delinquency, and adjustment problems following secondary school (Strain, Guralnick, & Walker, 1986).

While most programs for social skill training have been directed toward those students with disabilities, children in regular classrooms can also benefit from such training. In their classrooms they are expected to work independently, cooperate with others, follow teacher instruction, and respond appropriately when called upon. In free-play they must interact appropriately with peers, communicate efficiently, and cope with conflict among peers. Social skill training has the potential to improve the atmosphere in school for both the students and the teacher (Walker et al, 1994).

Care must be taken to address the possible cause of inappropriate behavior by the student. If the student is acting in an inappropriate way due to something other than ignorance of acceptable social practice, then further evaluation and

another means of intervention must be used.

Because behavioral issues are best addressed through instruction, the overwhelming number of interactions between students and teachers make school a logical place to teach social behavior (Neel & Cessna, 1993).

Since social skills are learned behaviors, they can be taught using structured teaching methods. Social skills training must be valid across time, affect subjects not involved in the training, and influence naturalized settings and tasks in order for the training to be considered generalized (Ogilvy, 1994).

While several studies have examined the social skills training of disabled students or of children with low social status among their peers, very few studies address the effects of teaching social skills to an entire classroom of students, as a subject area in the curriculum. This investigation seeks to test the impact of teaching social skills to lower elementary school children. If teaching social skills improves the relationships students with special needs have with their peers, the same should be true for all students. Research shows that when students of all abilities are grouped together to accomplish a task, students who were trained to display proper social skills were accepted among their peers, regardless of their abilities (Ciechalski & Schmidt, 1995). In fact, all of the students involved in the cooperative learning groups improved their social skills and attitudes toward

students of differing abilities and race.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of structured social skills training on the behavior of kindergarten students. The intention is also to find whether birth order or gender plays a role in social skill development.

Method

Participants

Two kindergarten classes from small, private schools in the Midwest were used. One of the schools was Rock Valley Christian School in Rock Valley, Iowa, and the other was Hull Christian School in Hull, Iowa. Each class met three days a week. The Rock Valley Christian group contained 29 students (8 girls and 21 boys) while the Hull Christian School contained 21 students (9 girls and 12 boys). The students involved were from white, middle class homes.

Materials

An abbreviated version of the Teacher Skill Checklist (TSC) from Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984) was used to measure the social skills gained by the students (Appendix A).

A social skills curriculum, Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child

(McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984) and Enhancing Social Competence in Young Students (Hundert, 1995) was used by the experimental group teachers in the training of social skills (for outline and lessons see Appendix B). The teachers instructed the students in the following areas: classroom survival skills, friendship-making skills, dealing with feelings, and dealing with stress. The teachers also used several methods to teach these skills including role playing, class discussion, and the use of books that deal with specific social skills.

Procedure

This study employed a two-group, quasi-experimental design. Kindergarten students enrolled in the Rock Valley school were the experimental group and those in the Hull kindergarten made up the control group. Prior to the onset of the study, students in both the treatment and control groups were evaluated using the TSC. The control group, under the direction of their teacher, received no specific instruction in social skills following the designed curriculum. All teachers agreed that the skills measured by the TSC are appropriate for the age and maturity of their students. Social skills were then taught to the experimental group (by the researcher and a fellow teacher) for 30 minutes, three days each week. Several methods were used to teach the skills including role playing,

creative dramatics, storytelling and the use of home work. The parents of the students involved reacted in a very positive way to what was being taught. Their comments reflected their appreciation of their children's enthusiasm over learning new ways to handle social situations.

After six weeks of training all three teachers (two teachers from the experimental group and one from the control group) re-administered the TSC measure of social skills. While the test could have been scored more objectively by an outsider, that person could not have known the children well enough to rate them without spending a lengthy period of time with each class.

Results

At the onset of the study each teacher rated her students on nineteen separate items on the Teachers Skill Checklist (TSC). The ratings for each item were on a scale of one to five, one being the score for skills the students were "almost never good at using" and five being the score for skills students were "almost always good at using." Total scores were reached by adding all the ratings for each item in each group and reaching a mean score. The types of questions on the test were also categorized in four specific skill areas. The categories were Classroom Survival Skills (CSS) (questions 1-6), Friendship

Making Skills (FMS) (questions 7-12), Skills for Dealing With Feelings (DWF) (questions 13-14), and Skills for Dealing With Stress (DWS) (questions 15-19). Each teacher kept a record of their group's birth order, gender, and also their pre-test and post-test scores on the TSC. Separate analysis for gender and birth order were performed.

Table 1 displays the class averages on the checklist overall and on the subgroups for both the pre- and post-tests. Classes 1 and 2 made up the experimental group which received specific instruction in social skill development. Class 3 was the control group.

TABLE 1

Pre-Test Scores by Class and Group

	Class 1		+	Class 2		=	Exp Group		Class 3 (Control)	
	M	SD		M	SD		M	SD	M	SD
CSS	2.61	.61		3.53	.59		3.09	.75	3.73	.41
FMS	2.29	.61		3.56	.54		2.95	.86	3.87	.35
DWF	2.57	.61		3.36	.63		2.98	.73	3.69	.33
DWS	2.67	.65		3.52	.77		3.11	.82	3.95	.40
Ave.	2.52	.57		3.52	.55		3.04	.74	3.83	.31

To test for the equivalence of students at the onset of the study a *t*-test was done to compare the experimental ($M=3.83$, $SD=.32$). A significant difference in the groups was found ($t(48) = -4.54$, $p=.000$) with the control group scoring significantly higher at the onset of the study. To determine whether the control group was rated higher on each subcategory, independent group *t*-tests were performed. The control group was found to be significantly higher than the experimental group ($p=.000$) on each dimension.

Because the control group (class 3) was so much higher at the onset of the study, the groups were separated by class and a one-way ANOVA was performed to test for teacher differences in rating. The test found a significant difference among the three classes, $F(2,47)=33.00$, $p=.000$.

To locate where the significant differences in the pre-averages were found, post hoc analyses were performed. Class 2 (3.5) and class 3 (3.8) were significantly higher than class 1 (2.5). Separate one-way ANOVA's were performed on each subcategory finding class 1 significantly lower $F(2,47)= 19.61$, $p=.000$ than class 2 and 3 for each dimension.

A possible explanation for this difference in score is due to the fact that, because of an overwhelming number of boys registered for kindergarten in the Rock Valley Christian School, class 1 is an all-male class. Gender may play a role in the social skill level of students at this age (see Table 2). Whatever the explanation, class 1 was not at the same social skill level as class 2 and 3 at the onset of the study.

TABLE 2

Questionnaire Scores by Gender

	Boys				Girls			
	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CSS	3.23	.76	4.25	.40	3.60	.52	4.27	.52
FMS	3.11	.85	4.22	.41	3.77	.56	4.23	.39
DWF	3.16	.72	4.01	.34	3.50	.58	4.11	.62
DWS	3.27	.80	4.32	.45	3.83	.63	4.51	.53
Ave	3.20	.75	4.23	.32	3.70	.50	4.30	.44

In order to find whether differences between boys and girls were prevalent, a *t*-test on the pre-averages of boys and girls was performed. A significant difference was found in that girls rated significantly higher ($t(48) = -2.49, p = .016$) than boys at the onset of the study. In order to find precisely where the differences between boys and girls were found, *t*-tests on each subcategory were performed. The results demonstrated no significant difference on pretest scores of CSS ($p = .07$), or on skills for DWF ($p = .10$). However, in the areas of FMS

($t(48) = -2.85, p = .006$) and skills for DWS ($t(48) = -2.5, p = .016$), girls were rated significantly higher than boys at the onset of the study.

To compare the experimental group to the control group on the post-test, a t -test was performed. It found a significant difference ($t(48) = -3.08, p = .003$) between the experimental and control groups on post-average scores with the control group significantly higher (see Table 3). In order to determine in which subcategories the control group was rated higher than the experimental group, a t -test was performed. The results found no significant difference on CSS ($p = .5$) but significant differences on FMS ($t(48) = -4.03, p = .000$), DWF ($t(48) = -2.26, p = .028$), and DWS ($t(48) = -3.01, p = .004$). The difference between groups in classroom survival skills has disappeared at this point.

A one-way ANOVA was performed to look at teacher differences in rating. There was a significant difference $F(2,47) = 5.76, p = .005$ among teachers. Results of the pre-test had shown that the teacher of class 1 had rated her students significantly lower than the teachers of class 2 and 3, but class 1 had now moved to the middle and was not significantly different than class 2 or class 3.

TABLE 3**Post-Test Scores by Class and Group**

	Class 1		Class 2		Exp Group		Class 3	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CSS	4.34	.33	4.11	.56	4.22	.47	4.30	.40
FMS	4.15	.32	3.94	.46	4.04	.41	4.48	.22
DWF	4.03	.23	3.83	.69	3.93	.53	4.21	.25
DWS	4.24	.42	4.21	.61	4.22	.52	4.61	.33
Ave	4.22	.26	4.05	.47	4.13	.39	4.43	.24

Another one-way ANOVA was performed on the subcategories showing no significant difference between classes on CSS ($p=.295$); however, class 3 was significantly higher than the other classes on DWF ($F(2,47)= 3.38, p=.042$), FMS ($F(2,47)= 11.58, p=.000$), and DWS ($F(2,47)= 4.45, p=.016$). This finding shows the possibility of differences in teacher rating affecting scores.

There is also some evidence that the intervention was successful in class 1

but not in class 2, possibly due to the fact that classroom 1 was all male while classroom 2 with only half male. Because boys seemed to score much lower than girls in all areas (regardless of group or class) on the pre test, gender has been shown to be a factor. In looking at gender differences on the post-test (Table 2), a *t*-test was administered in looking for differences between boys and girls. No significant difference was found in their general averages ($p=.52$) or in any of the subcategories (CSS, $p=.870$; FMS, $p=.948$; DWF, $p=.456$; DWS, $p=.196$). The boys had caught up with the girls.

Next, gender was studied independent of class or group. A paired *t*-test was done to compare the pre-test and post-test ratings of boys and girls. Girls improved significantly overall ($t(16)=13.17$, $p=.000$) and in each subcategory (CSS, $t(16)=-8.66$; FMS, $t(16)=-5.06$, $p=.000$; DWF $t(16)=-4.44$, $p=.000$; DWS $t(16)=-11.01$, $p=.000$). Boys also showed significant individual improvement overall ($t(32)=8.07$, $p=.000$) and in each subcategory (CSS, $t(32)=-7.61$, $p=.000$; FMS, $t(32)=-7.67$, $p=.000$; DWF, $t(32)=-6.29$, $p=.000$; DWS, $t(32)=-7.45$, $p=.000$). Overall, girls improved about a half of a rank and boys improved a full rank regardless of group or class.

A one-way ANOVA was done to see if birth order had any effect on the ratings or improvement in ratings. No significant difference was found on the

pre-average score ($F=.08, p=.94$) or on the post-average score ($F=.08, p=.91$).

TABLE 4

Improvement in Rating by Gender

	Boys				Girls			
	Pre-Test		Post-Test		Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CSS	3.23	.76	4.25	.40	3.60	.52	4.27	.52
FMS	3.11	.85	4.22	.41	3.77	.56	4.23	.39
DWF	3.16	.72	4.01	.34	3.50	.58	4.11	.62
DWS	3.27	.80	4.32	.45	3.83	.63	4.51	.53
Ave	3.20	.75	4.23	.32	3.70	.50	4.30	.44

Discussion

The results of this study did not demonstrate that teaching social skills in the classroom is effective for all children. It did show that the male participants

benefitted greatly from the structured social skill training. The scores of the experimental group on the post-test did show that they have retained the skills taught and that they are using those skills in a naturalized setting. However, the control group also showed an improvement in their social skill development.

The unexpected finding in this study is how important the social skill instruction was to the boys involved. At the onset of the study their scores on the TSC were much lower than the girls' scores. However, by the end of the study the boys had improved their scores so that there were no longer any significant differences between ratings of the boys and the girls. The all male class who had improved their scores dramatically (they were not significantly different from Class 1 and 2 by the end of the study) seem to support this point. The implications of this finding are that boys may need more structured instruction in social skill training (than girls do) in order to develop the social skills appropriate for their grade level.

As other research has indicated, the students who needed social skills training were the ones who benefitted the most from it. The girls started with higher scores than the boys but did not improve as dramatically as the boys. This result shows that perhaps the girls already possessed the skills necessary and for that reason did not benefit as greatly from the training.

One of the classes in the study was scored significantly lower than the other two at the onset of the study. Two of the teachers involved in the study (those who rated their classes higher) were first-year teachers; the third teacher had nine years of teaching experience in kindergarten and was possibly more familiar with the expectations of students in kindergarten. The veteran teacher also had an all-male class the year this study was completed, and males scored lower generally. The combination of these two factors help explain the lower initial scores of the first class.

A limitation of the study was the fact that the control group was not in the same school nor did the students in that class have the same teacher as the experimental group. Their experiences with their teacher could have an effect on their social behavior.

Another limitation of this study is that eight weeks is a relatively short time to look for significant behavioral-attitudinal change. Social skills training needs to be addressed in the curriculum for the entire school year. Social skills can be taught formally, as a separate subject or integrated with the other curriculum. However it is addressed, the teacher must have set plans including goals and objectives for what is being taught.

A variable not considered in this study that has an effect on social behavior

is each child's academic standing in the classroom. Academic proficiency affects how each student views himself and, therefore, how he relates to others (Coie & Krehbiel, 1984).

In retrospect, someone other than the teachers involved in the study should evaluate the children's social skills before and after the study to eliminate some of the rater bias involved. The scoring difference between the two inexperienced teachers and the experienced is a complex issue. The teacher's expectations of their students may have been different. The class that was rated lowest was also all male which may have also affected the ratings since boys rated lower generally. The lower rated class (class 1) improved enough so that their post test scores were not significantly different from the other two classes. This finding shows support for the theory that class 1's low initial scores, may have been due to it being an all male class and were raised by the instruction they received. Whatever the reason for the low initial scores, they impact the validity of the study. Since we cannot be sure of the reason for class 1's lower initial score we also cannot be sure of the reason for their improvement. We can only assume it was because of the social skill training.

The students' parents should also have been polled to discover any effects the training may have had on the home life of the child.

Further research may examine the implications of academic standing in relation to social skill development and peer acceptance. It is possible that higher academic standing may affect whether children are accepted by their peers. Family income and social status may also play a role in the development of social skills prior to direct instruction.

This study has impacted my teaching in that I am more aware of students who do not possess the skills necessary to gain social acceptance, and I now address these skills in a manner similar to the way I address other skills I teach. There are times when a child's inappropriate behavior is simply due to ignorance of socially acceptable practice. These children are in need of the knowledge of appropriate ways to deal with others. At other times students who behave inappropriately are doing so for reasons other than the lack of social skills. They must be identified and appropriate intervention must be sought.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Teacher Skill Checklist

Student: _____ Class: _____

Date: _____ Teacher: _____

Directions: Listed below you will find a number of skills that children are more or less proficient in using. This checklist will help you record how well each child uses the various skills. For each child, rate his/her use of each skill, based on your observations of his/her behavior in various situations. Please base your ratings on your observation over the past week.

Circle 1 if the child is almost never good at using the skill. Circle 2 if the child is seldom good at using the skill.

Circle 3 if the child is sometimes good at using the skill. Circle 4 if the child is often good at using the skill.

Circle 5 if the child is almost always good at using the skill.

Classroom Survival Skills

Does the student:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. appear to listen when someone is speaking and make an effort to understand what is said? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. understand instructions and follow them? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. decide when he/she needs assistance and ask for help in a pleasant manner? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. tell others he/she appreciates help given? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. participate in class discussions in accordance with the classroom rules? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. find something to do when he/she has free time? | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Friendship-Making Skills

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 7. introduce himself/herself to people he/she doesn't know in an appropriate way? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
|---|-----------|

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 8. tell others that he/she likes something about them or something they have done? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. tell others he/she is sorry for doing something in a sincere manner? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. know and practice acceptable ways of joining an ongoing activity or group? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. play games with classmates fairly? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. agreeable to sharing things with others? | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Skills for Dealing with Feelings

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 13. express his/her feelings in acceptable ways? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. try to figure out how others are feeling in acceptable ways? | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Skills for Dealing with Stress

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 15. willing to give and take in order to reach a compromise? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. accept losing at a game or activity without becoming upset or angry? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. know how to say he/she disagrees in acceptable ways? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. accept the consequences for his/her behavior without becoming defensive or upset? | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. accept being told no without becoming unduly upset or angry? | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Appendix B

Outline of Social Skills to be Taught

- I. Classroom Survival Skills
 - A. Listening
 - B. Asking for Help
 - C. Saying Thank you
 - D. Following Instructions
 - E. Contributing to Discussions
 - F. Deciding on Something to Do

- II. Friendship-Making Skills
 - A. Introducing Yourself
 - B. Joining In
 - C. Playing a Game
 - D. Giving a Compliment
 - E. Sharing
 - F. Apologizing

- III. Skills for Dealing with Feelings
 - A. Expressing your Feelings
 - B. Recognizing Another's Feelings

- IV. Skills for Dealing with Stress
 - A. Accepting Consequences
 - B. Negotiating
 - C. Reacting to Failure
 - D. Accepting Denial of a Request

Appendix B (continued)

Lesson 1 Listening

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. show that he/she is listening to the speaker.
2. listen to the speaker without becoming distracted.

Instruction: It is important to pay full attention to someone who is speaking to you whether you are talking with friends or listening to your teacher. There are several things you can do to help focus your attention on the speaker.

1. Look at the person who is talking.
2. Remember to sit/stand quietly--do not fidget.
3. Think about what is being said.
4. Say yes or nod your head.
5. Ask a question about the topic to find out more.

Demonstrate following these steps by asking a student to tell you the names and ages of his/her family members.

Activity:

Get in groups of two and take turns telling each other what you did last weekend (or last night). When the speaker is finished talking, the listener must ask at least one question about what was said.

Ask:

When you were the speaker, how did you feel when the listener paid close attention to what you were saying?

Did you listen better when you remembered to follow the steps?

Homework:

When you get home, ask Mom or Dad about his/her day. Then remember to follow the steps to good listening.

Lesson 2 Asking for Help

Objectives:

The students will be able to:

1. decide when help is needed.
2. Ask for help in a friendly, appropriate way.

Instruction: It is important to know when to ask for help whether you are in the classroom or outside of the classroom. In order to determine whether you need help and what you should do to get help you'll need to follow these steps.

1. Ask yourself "can I do this alone?" - you should try to do it by yourself
2. If not, raise your hand - discuss what you should do outside of class.
3. Wait. Say to yourself "I know I can wait without talking (or interrupting in a home situation)."
4. Ask for help in a friendly way - discuss what constitutes a friendly manner (tone of voice, facial expression, content).

Review the steps with your students and let them practice each step.

Activity:

Pose these situations to the students:

- a. You have been given an assignment but you don't understand what you are supposed to do.
- b. You can't find your skates and need help from Mom to find them.
- c. You want your friend to show you how to play soccer.

Practice using the steps in each situation.

Ask:

How can you show someone (besides telling them) that you appreciate their help?

How can you show someone that you are willing to help them?

Homework:

When you get home tonight ask your Mom or Dad to help you with a chore. Remember to use the steps when you ask.

Lesson 3 Saying "Thank you"

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. recognize when it is necessary to thank someone.
2. thank someone in a way that communicates your appreciation for that person.

Instruction:

There are times when someone does or says something nice to you and you need to thank them for their kindness. We thank others to show them that we appreciate what they did for us. Here is how to thank someone for their thoughtfulness.

1. Decide if you want to thank someone. Discuss the purpose of saying "thank you," emphasize that it must be sincere. You thank someone when you want to or feel it is deserved.
2. Choose a good time and place - when the person is not busy with something else.
3. Thank the person in a friendly way. You may let them know why you are thanking them.

Activity:

Pretend your friend gave you a pencil when you couldn't find yours. Practice these steps to thank him.

Make a thank you card for someone who has done or said something nice to you.

Ask:

1. When are times when we thank someone?
2. How do you feel when you thank someone?
3. How does it feel when they thank you?

Homework:

Give the thank you card to the person you made it for. Tell them why you made them the card. Say "thank you" in a friendly way.

Lesson 4 Following Instructions

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. follow verbal directions.
2. ask appropriate questions concerning directions given.

Instruction:

When you hear someone give directions it is important that you listen to them and understand them. These are things to help you do that.

1. Listen carefully to the instructions. Think about what is said.
2. Ask questions about anything you don't understand.
3. Repeat the instructions to the person (or yourself).
4. Follow the instructions.

Activity:

Draw a scarecrow following the directions given by the teacher.
Get a partner and practice giving each other directions.

Ask:

Why is it important to follow directions?

What might happen if you do not listen to or understand the directions?

Lesson 5 Contributing to Discussions

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. contribute to classroom discussions appropriately.
2. contribute to personal discussions appropriately.

Instruction:

It is important to listen to others during discussions in your room or with your family and friends. It is also important to add to the discussion. These are things to do:

1. Decide if you have something you want to say.
2. Ask yourself "Is this related to the discussion?"
3. Decide exactly what you want to say.
4. Raise your hand (only at school).
5. When you are called on, say what you want to say. At home, eliminate steps 4 & 5.

Activity:

Roleplay a discussion and think of appropriate comments to make.

Homework:

Say something during the evening meal that relates to the discussion.

Lesson 6 Deciding on Something to Do

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. recognize times when finding something to do on their own is appropriate.
2. find something to do that does not disturb others.

Instruction:

When you finish with your work at school or at home and you have some time to find something to do here are some things to remember.

1. Check to be sure you have finished all of your work.
2. Think of the activities you would like to do (within the rules).
3. Choose one.
4. Start the activity.

Activity:

List as many activities as you can think of that you could do when you have a few minutes after finishing your work at home or at school. Some of the activities should be for a quiet time (when others are still working) or for less quiet times (indoor recess or free time).

Lesson 7 Introducing Yourself

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. know when to introduce him/herself.
2. introduce him/herself in a socially acceptable manner.

Instruction:

1. Decide if you want (or need) to meet the person.
2. Decide if it is a good time (is the person busy with something or someone else?).
3. Walk up to the person.
4. Introduce yourself. Discuss ways to introduce yourself.
5. Wait for the other person to tell you his/her name. If they don't tell you, ask them.

Activity:

Get a friend and practice introducing yourselves to each other.

List times when you should introduce yourself to someone new.

- For example:
- A new student joins your class.
 - A friend of your parents is visiting.
 - A new child moves in next door.

Ask:

What should you do when someone introduces themselves to you?

Lesson 8 Joining In

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. appropriately join in play with a group of their peers.

Instruction:

When it is time to play and you have decided what you want to do, there may be other students who are already doing what you want to do. There are some things you should do in order to join in:

1. Decide if you want to join in. Are you sure this is what you want to play?
2. Decide what to say. "Can I play with you?"
3. Choose a good time. Before the game has begun, during a break in play.
4. Say it in a friendly way.

Ask:

How do you ask to join the group in a friendly way?

When you are the one being asked, how do you respond?

Activity:

Read "Ruby the Copycat"

Make a puppet from a paper bag. Using your puppet, practice asking to join in with others at your table.

Homework:

Ask to join a group at recess.

Lesson 9 Playing a Game

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. engage in a game with others in a socially acceptable manner.
2. engage in sportsman-like conduct during the game.

Instruction:

When you are playing a game with others it is fun for everyone if you play fairly.

1. Be sure to know the rules. If you don't know them, ask someone who does.
2. Decide who starts the game. Discuss methods of deciding (roll the dice, spin the spinner for a color, etc.).
3. Remember to wait your turn. Say to yourself, "I can wait until my turn."
4. When the game is over, say something nice to the other person. Discuss ways to handle winning and losing.

Ask:

How does it feel when you win?

How does it feel when you lose?

How should the winner and the loser act?

Activity:

Play Mouse Trap with your class. Remember to play fairly!

Lesson 10 Giving a Compliment

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. Give a sincere compliment at an appropriate time.

Instruction:

When someone has something that is nice or does something well it is polite to compliment them or tell them something nice about it.

1. Decide what you want to tell the other person. What are you complimenting them on? It could be appearance, behavior, an achievement, etc.
2. Decide how you want to say it. Give examples.
3. Choose a good time and place.
4. Give the compliment in a friendly way. Give the compliment in a sincere manner.

Activity:

Give these situations and let students tell you how they would respond. Emphasize sincerity.

1. A classmate has done very well on an art project.
2. Your mom or dad makes a good dinner.
3. You like a new toy someone else got for their birthday.
4. You like a shirt someone else is wearing.

Homework:

Compliment someone in school today and someone at home tonight.

Lesson 11 Sharing

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. share toys without becoming upset with the other child.

Instructions:

When you have something that someone else wants to play with or needs, the best thing for you to do is to share it with them.

1. Decide to share something. How do you know when someone wants to share? They may ask or they may say they need something (I'm out of glue").
2. Decide who you need to share with. How many people want to play, who needs glue, etc.
3. Offer to share in a friendly and sincere way.

Activity:

Discuss how you might know someone wants to share something you have.
Talk about how to react to someone when they ask you to share something.

Ask:

How do we share with those in our world who need things?
Do we give our best or things we don't want anyway?
What are our responsibilities?

Homework:

Bring a can of food for the school's food drive.
Share a toy you like with a friend or brother/sister.

Lesson 12 Apologizing

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. recognize when he/she has done something that he/she needs to apologize for.
2. apologize in a socially acceptable and sincere manner.

Instruction:

When we do something to hurt or inconvenience someone else then we must tell that person that we are sorry.

1. Decide if you need to apologize for something you did. What are things that we apologize for?
2. Think about your choices:
 - a. Tell the person you're sorry.
 - b. Write the person a note.
3. Choose a good time and place.
4. Carry out your best choice in a sincere way.

Activity:

Discuss these situations:

1. You accidentally break something of someone else's.
2. You said something hurtful to someone else.
3. You broke a promise to your mom or dad.

Draw a picture showing how friends should treat each other.

Lesson 13 Expressing Your Feelings

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. recognize his/her own feelings.
2. know how to express his/her feelings in an acceptable manner.

Instruction:

Discuss different feelings that people have. Make a list of them on the board. These are ways to understand the way you feel.

1. Stop and think of how you feel.
2. Decide what it is you are feeling. Identify what may have made you feel that way.
3. Think about your choices:
 - a. Say to the person "I feel ____." Consider if it is an appropriate time to express your feelings.
 - b. Walk away for now. You may need to calm down if you are angry or upset.
 - c. Get involved with an activity.
4. Act out your best choice. If one choice doesn't work the student should try another.

Discuss: What would you do if:

1. You want to answer in class, but you're afraid your answer will be wrong.
2. Your parents won't allow you to watch a movie on T.V. that many of your friends are going to watch.
3. Someone calls you a name or doesn't want to play with you.

Activity:

Listen to the examples and hold up the happy or sad face.

Lesson 14 Recognizing Another's Feelings

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. Recognize another's feelings.
2. React to other's feelings in an appropriate way.

Instruction:

We should be concerned with how others are feeling. Here are some ways to understand how others are feeling:

1. Watch the person. What a person says or how they say it may tell you how they feel.
2. Name what you think the person is feeling.
3. Decide what to do. In a serious situation an adult should be called, if the student is angry it may be wise to let them calm down first.

Discuss: What would you do if:

1. Someone is crying on the playground.
2. A friend hasn't been chosen for a game, or a classmate just watches a game instead of asking to join in.
3. Someone is being teased or called names.

Activity:

Make a picture of you and your friend doing something that makes both of you happy.

Lesson 15 Accepting Consequences

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. acknowledge that there are consequences for their actions.
2. recognize that they need to accept the consequences of their actions.

Instruction:

When we do things that are not right, then many times there are other things that happen as a result of what we did. Those are called consequences. When you do something wrong you should:

1. Decide if you were wrong. We all make mistakes, you will be wrong sometimes. It is important to recognize when you are.
2. If you were wrong, say to yourself "I have to accept the consequences." Discuss the possible consequences of particular actions.
3. Say to the person, "Yes I did _____" (describe what you did). Discuss how to describe the behavior without making excuses.
4. Say something else:
 - a. How you will avoid this behavior next time.
 - b. Apologize.

Discuss these situations:

What would you say if:

1. You forgot to bring your boots to school on a snowy day.
2. Your parents tell you that you can't watch a movie because you didn't pick up your toys.
3. You broke something at your house.
4. You lost something you borrowed from your friend.

Lesson 16 Negotiating

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. calmly solve a disagreement with another person in a way that is fair to both people.

Instruction:

When you and another person cannot agree on something, how should you solve it?

1. Tell the other person how you feel about the problem.
2. Ask them how they feel about the problem.
3. Listen to what they say.
4. Decide on something you both want to do or find someone else to play with.

Discuss these situations:

1. Your friend wants to play one game, but you want to play another.
2. Your brother will not let you have a turn to play with a certain toy.

Homework:

At home practice your negotiating skills at least once.

Lesson 17 Reacting to Failure

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. accept losing at a game without becoming upset.
2. use the loss to motivate them to try harder.

Instruction:

1. Say to yourself "Somebody has to lose. It's okay that I didn't win."
2. Think about your choices:
 - a. Play again.
 - b. Do another activity you like to do (non-competitive).
3. Act on your best choice.

Situations to discuss:

1. You lose at a game with your brother or sister.
2. Your team loses the game in PE.

Activity:

Play musical chairs. Practice being good losers.

Lesson 18 Accepting Denial of a Request

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. accept "no" as an answer to a request.

Instruction:

When you ask for permission to do something, your parents or teacher may say no.

1. Decide why you were told no. What could be the reason?
2. Do something else. Do not pout or ask again.
3. If you feel sad, sit quietly until you feel better.

Situations to discuss:

1. Your teacher says that there isn't time to complete a favorite activity today.
2. Your parents won't let you go over to your friend's house.
3. A friend won't split a candy bar with you.

Appendix C

**Rock Valley Christian School
1405 17th Street
Rock Valley, Iowa 51247
(712) 476-2615**

January 10, 1996

Dear Mr. and Mrs.

I am working toward my master's degree at Dordt College and, as part of that program, I will be conducting an action research project under the direction of the Graduate Education Program Committee.

My project consists of teaching certain social skills to kindergarten students. I will be testing the effectiveness of teaching social skills in our room using several approaches. This information will help us determine the most effective way of teaching social skills to lower elementary school children.

Before I begin this project I need your informed consent. Please be assured that your child's name will not appear in the study and you are free to withdraw your child at any time.

If you would like additional information regarding this study please contact me at school.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cindy Van Den Top

_____ Signature of Parent or Guardian

Department of Education
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa

VITA

Name: Cindy Van Den Top Date of Birth: Nov. 6, 1963

Local Address: 909 12th Street, Rock Valley, Iowa, 51247

Home Address: same as above

Dordt College, 1982-1986, Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education