

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

5-14-2002

The effects of social problem-solving training in an inclusive kindergarten classroom

Kimberly R. Fontana
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you - share your thoughts on our feedback form.

Recommended Citation

Fontana, Kimberly R., "The effects of social problem-solving training in an inclusive kindergarten classroom" (2002). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1434.
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/1434>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact LibraryTheses@rowan.edu.

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL PROBLEM-SOLVING TRAINING IN AN INCLUSIVE
KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

Kimberly R. Fontana

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 14, 2002

Approved by _____ Professor

Date Approved 5-14/2002

ABSTRACT

Kimberly R. Fontana

The Effects of Social Problem-Solving Training in an Inclusive Kindergarten Classroom
2002

Dr. Joy Xin

Master of Arts in Special Education

The purpose of this study was for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting to improve socially from social problem solving training. An eight-week social problem-solving training program (SPS) was administered to twenty-three children. Three participants took part in this study. One child was classified as being emotionally disturbed and two other children were classified with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The behaviors observed were: positive social interaction, the ability to make friends, and attending behavior during big group, small group, and playtime. The teacher and teacher assistant observed the three participants using a baseline analysis. Results did exhibit a slight increase in positive behavior in all three areas observed resulting from the social problem solving training program. However, future studies should be conducted over a longer period of time involving more participants to see the program's true effectiveness.

MINI ABSTRACT

Kimberly R. Fontana

**The Effects of Social Problem-Solving Training in an Inclusive Kindergarten Classroom
2002**

Dr. Joy Xin

Master of Arts in Special Education

The purpose of this study was for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting to improve socially from social problem solving training. Results did exhibit a minimal positive increase in attending behavior, the ability to make friends, and positive social interaction as a result of the eight-week social problem solving training.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background.....	1-3
Statement of problem.....	3-5
Significance and Purpose of Study.....	5-6
Research Questions.....	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review	8
Social Skills and Social Skills Training.....	8-12
Social Skill Training to Promote Positive Social Interaction.....	12-16
Social Skills Training to Promote Friendships.....	16-17
Social Skills Training to Improve Problem Solving Skills.....	18-20
Summary.....	21-22
Chapter 3: Method	23
Samples.....	23
Table 1.....	23
Research Design.....	24
Instructional Materials.....	24-25
Instructional Procedures.....	25
Prompts.....	25-26
Lesson Activities.....	26-28
Table 2.....	28
Dependent Measures.....	29

Reliability.....	29-30
Chapter 4: Analyses of the Data.....	31
Observation.....	31
Table 1.....	32
Table 2.....	33
Table 3.....	34
Chapter 5: General Discussion.....	35-36
References.....	37-41
Appendix.....	42-50

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Many educators regarded basic academic skills instruction as their sole responsibility and social skills instruction as the parents' primary responsibility (Elksin & Elksnin, 1998). Teachers have always expected children to come to school "socially skilled", therefore, social skills were not included into any curriculum.

Do children need social skills instruction? In recent years administrators and educators have reconsidered and re-evaluated the importance of social skill instruction. Research has revealed outcomes of children associated with social skill deficiency. Strain and Odom (1996) claim that social skill deficiency in early childhood is the single best indicator of significant problems in adulthood. A child's Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is more important in predicting success in life than one's Intellectual Intelligence (IQ) (Goleman, 1995). Emotional Intelligence includes skills such as understanding the feelings of others, putting others at ease, and regulating one's own emotions. Children who are socially deficient have more school problems (Gresham, 1981). When children elicit poorly developed social skills they are at a greater risk for dropping out of school, subsequently causing a higher juvenile delinquency rate (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Furthermore, the lack of social skills could potentially make a child unemployed or create less opportunity for future employment. A child with adequate social skills and high

levels of emotional intelligence can promote occupational advancement in adulthood (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998).

Over the past several years, violence in our schools and communities has escalated dramatically; thereby prompting educators to reconsider the importance of social skill instruction which behooves children with social and emotional problems (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Within the classroom environment, social adjustment is viewed as equally pertinent as academic skill development (Schloss, 1992). From teaching experience, one may concur that social adjustment needs to be dealt with before any academic skills can be implemented with great success.

Social skills instruction is important for all students, and is critical for students with learning and behavior problems. These students tend to exhibit social skills deficits more frequently than their normally developing peers (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). One way to view social skills is to consider pro-social behavior as the antithesis of anti-social behavior. Anti-social behavior has been described as an absence of social skills (Walker, Colvin & Ramsey, 1995).

One of the greatest challenges administrators and educators may face is to teach students self-control through a social problem solving program (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Social problem-solving programs are teacher-led, group-based classroom lessons that focus on a variety of interpersonal skills. Such programs are developmentally tailored to span the years from pre-school through high school (Elias, 1997). Social problem-solving programs are designed to focus on promoting pro-social interaction, respect for diversity and positive social development for students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998).

Inclusion as a movement to place children with and without disabilities in general education classrooms has established common ground between all students and has created an environment in which all students feel that they belong (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998). In order for inclusion to be successful, classes containing students with disabilities must focus on the following issues: (1) self-worth, (2) acceptance, (3) respect for others, and (4) friendship (Stainback, Stainback, East & Sapon-Shevin, 1994). Programs that provide the development and the use of social skills are especially encouraged in an inclusive setting. Therefore, the need for social skill/social problem solving strategies is increasing (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998).

Statement of Problem

Mild disability is an umbrella term that refers broadly to children having a variety of social, behavioral, emotional problems, mild mental retardation, and a variety of learning disabilities (Wang, Reynolds & Walberg, 1988). The commonality shared by mildly disabled children is the difficulties these children have with social relationships (Elias, Blum, Gager, Hunter & Kress, 1998). Such children tend to not be accepted by their peers and tend to have difficulties interacting with adults (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998). Children with mild disabilities may benefit by being included into regular education classes so they can acquire more acceptable social skills (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998).

Having friends and maintaining friendships is an integral part of a child's developmental process (Cooper, Filer, & Griffith, 1999). According to Hurley-Geffner (1995), much research exists on the benefits of friendships with respect to the facilitating

social development. For example, children diagnosed with pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) tend to be unsuccessful in making friends (Cooper, et. al., 1999). In diagnosing children with pervasive development disorder (PDD) a primary characteristic would be social interaction impairments (Cooper, et. al., 1999). This impairment includes the inability to form developmentally appropriate peer relationships as well as the lack of seeking out interactions with others (Simpson & Myles, 1998). Another example pertains to children with attention deficit disorder (ADD). These children may have difficulty with attending behavior, task focus, as well as appropriate social interactions with peers and adults (Simpson & Myles, 1998).

Research consistently suggests that applied learning skills, such as listening, attending, following directions, and social skills are essential for school success (Cooper, Filer & Griffith, 1999). Children with disabilities often display deficits in social skills among their normal developing peers (Cooper, et. al., 1999). They may have difficulty in making friends or interacting with their peers in a positive way, such as initiating conversation, presenting appropriate manners, or taking turns.

According to MacMillan, Gresham, and Forness (1996), including students with disabilities into regular classrooms will not help them to learn appropriate social behavior simply from interacting with non-disabled peers. In fact, students with disabilities demonstrate low levels of social interaction when they are included in regular education classrooms (Macmillan, et. al., 1996). As children with disabilities are included into regular classrooms, teachers may find that they lack the necessary skills to handle daily problems. Preparing classified students for inclusion into regular education classrooms through Social Problem Solving (SPS) is addressing half the issue. The other part of this

problem is to prepare their non-disabled peers. In order for inclusion to be successful, both students, with and without disabilities, must learn and understand one's self worth, acceptance, respect for others, tolerance, and ability to make friends (Stainback, Stainback, East & Sapon-Shevin, 1994).

Social problem solving (SPS) strategies contain structured activities led by the teacher. They focus on numerous interpersonal skills, self-control strategies, group participation, role-play and social awareness concepts. By learning social problem solving skills, children can thereby learn a decision-making strategy used to respond to their many obstacles and choices that they may face (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998). This is critical for children in inclusive settings to learn how to make friends, to share, to take turns, and to develop positive peer interactions.

Significance and Purpose of the Study

Regular education teachers are confronted daily with teaching students with disabilities in their inclusive classrooms. Children with disabilities are not only low academic performers but they also demonstrate a lack of social skills, specifically the ability to develop and maintain social relationships (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998). They tend to not be accepted by their non-disabled peers (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998). To help these children succeed in and out of school, it is important to find innovative methods to teach them. According to the authors of *Group Interventions for Children and Families*, one way to accomplish such an objective is to improve children's social skill/problem solving strategies (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998).

The present study focused on social problem solving strategies and the implementation of lessons on self-worth, self-control, acceptance, respect for others, attending behavior, and making friends in an inclusive kindergarten classroom. The lessons instructed both children, with and without disabilities, on social skills such as accepting each other and developing friendships. As research shows, keeping children with mild disabilities in self-contained classrooms without social interaction from their non-disabled peers may cause parents, teachers, and students to lower their expectations and thus lose confidence in the disabled students' abilities (Waldron, 1997). Inclusive classrooms may provide a different environment to encourage children both with and without disabilities, to interact socially. Thus, it is important to examine the effects of social skills training in an inclusive setting.

Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) advocate three primary goals: (1) to improve social skills for all students through curriculum based lessons in social skills and social cognitive problem solving, (2) to bring classified and non-classified peers together in a structured group setting consequently increasing interpersonal awareness and empathy between these two groups, and (3) to provide a context to develop friendships that was implemented in the following study. The instruction was provided on a biweekly basis and the skills taught were reinforced during free play and throughout the daily routine. Children with disabilities who were included in the regular kindergarten classroom were encouraged to initiate attending behavior, make friends and develop positive social interactions with their non-disabled peers. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of instruction on social problem solving was evaluated through the observations of the children's behavior change during baseline, intervention (training), and follow-up sessions.

Research Questions

1. Do children with mild disabilities demonstrate attending behavior when in an inclusive setting as a result of training in social problem solving strategies?
2. Do children with mild disabilities have positive social interaction in an inclusive setting when social problem strategies are being taught?
3. Do children with mild disabilities make more friends in an inclusive setting as a result of training in social problem solving strategies?

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews related literature on the social skills of children, with and without disabilities, in inclusive classrooms. The social skills discussed are attending behavior, making friends, and developing positive social interactions. Researchers have studied and implemented different strategies in numerous classrooms by various teachers to improve the social skills of children with disabilities. The techniques that one teacher may find to be successful may not be successful for another. Various studies are reviewed and different strategies to teach such social skills are summarized and critiqued below.

Social Skills and Social Skills Training

According to Ladd and Mize (1983), social skills are defined as a child's ability to organize cognitions and behaviors into an integrated course of action directed toward a culturally acceptable social or interpersonal goal. In short, they involve overt, observable behaviors, as well as covert problem-solving skills (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Learning to share, coping with bullying, and handling teasing are just a few problems that children will face as early as their toddler years (Sinagub & Vaughn, 1998). Social skills' training is crucial because it provides instruction on specific skills children need to learn.

Elksnin and Elksnin (1998) use attending behavior as an example of utilizing a skill specific approach to teaching social skills. A skill specific approach involves breaking a skill, such as attending behavior, into constituent parts and having students perform each skill step by step (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Examples of attending behavior are: facing the person, maintaining eye contact, using an appropriate tone of voice, using an appropriate facial expression, and one's body posture (Elksnin, & Elksnin, 1998). An instructional model is presented to enable students to acquire social skills in a well-organized and effective manner (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). The skill is first defined, which enables the students to understand it clearly, and then a description of the skill is given (i.e., verbal expression, eye-contact, tone of voice, appropriate facial expression and body posture). According to Elksnin and Elksnin (1998) a rationale is provided to the students as to why they are learning the skill. The students rationalize the skill with both positive and negative statements such as, "If I learn to control my temper, I won't get into trouble at home and school", and "If I don't learn to control my temper, I could get into another fight and get suspended" (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). The following steps provide a scenario for role-play (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Children are more motivated to learn skills when they generate their own role-play situations (Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw, & Klein, 1980). The final step is to enable students to identify social rules. Using this method to teach social skills to children with disabilities has been successful, however it proves to be unsuccessful in teaching the children when and where to use each specific skill (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998).

It is suggested that social skills instruction be integrated into the school curriculum, for example, teaching social skills on an "as-needed basis" throughout the day. For example, applying social skills in a real problem solving situation, teaching social skills in a natural setting when ever possible was also emphasized (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Teaching social skills is valuable in the

natural setting and pertinent when integrating social skills into an existing curriculum (Linda & Elksnin, 1998). Teachers need to carefully examine their classrooms to make certain that they foster positive social interaction, specifically by incorporating cooperative learning and peer tutoring (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998).

Similar studies found the use of group discussion and role-play as the key factors for teaching social skills to children with and without disabilities (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998). Group discussions aid in the formulation of attitudes and values that are influential to children in and out of the classroom (Dreikurs, Grunwalk, & Pepper, 1998). Children can learn constructive ways to handle frustrations and to work through upsetting problems by listening to their peers and by helping others work through solutions (Miller & Nunn, 2001). The implementation of social skills training has guidelines for both the teacher and students to follow in order to create a smooth group meeting and role-play situation (Miller & Nunn, 2001). Sweeney (1998) suggests holding the group discussions in a circle to encourage everyone's participation. During the group discussion the group implements a discussion that will lead to the solution of the problem, without using punishment or "fault finding" as part of the discussion or solution, and by taking turns during the discussion. The teacher should be nonjudgmental to validate the importance of each student's contribution to the group (Sweeney, 1998). According to Sweeney (1998) teachers who have limited time and resources may use group discussion and role-play in their classrooms to produce an environment of belongingness and acceptance, which consequently fosters responsible behavior, both in and out of the classroom. It seems that group discussions may exhibit a positive effect on students by improving peer relationships, attitudes, behaviors and choices made by the participating pupils (Miller & Nunn, 2001).

When providing social skills intervention, it is important to be direct toward a child's particular problem (Sinagub & Vaughn, 1998). A longitudinal study (Vaughn & Hogan, 1994; Vaughn, Zaragoza, Hogan, & Walker, 1993) investigated three primary groups of children: (1) high/average achievement, (2) low achievement and (3) those with disabilities. Children from kindergarten through third grade were included in this study. Prior to their classification, each child was observed in order to identify the characteristic social and academic patterns in comparison to their non-classified peers. It was reported that within the first ten weeks of kindergarten, children who were later identified as being learning disabled were found to be significantly lower than their non-classified peers, in measures of peer acceptance and attention problems (Vaughn et al. 1993). Including students with disabilities with their non-classified peers physically failed to improve peer acceptance (Vaughn & Hogan 1994). Vaughn and colleagues (1993) indicated the need for social strategy training programs and inclusive settings implementation (Vaughn & Lancelotta, 1990). Once the social strategy-training program was implemented into these classrooms a higher level of peer acceptance was present (Sinagub & Vaughn, 1998).

Integrating social skills into academic learning may be successful for children with disabilities (Vaughn & Lancelotta, 1990). The curriculum Ready To Learn (RTL) focuses on teaching social and learning skills through the use of stories and five teaching strategies (Brigman, Lane, Switzer, Lane, & Lawrence, 1999). Brigman, Lane, Switzer, Lane and Lawrence (1999) claim the uniqueness of three components of RTL: (1) a systematic approach to teaching critical skills in the classroom; (2) teaching both social and learning skills and (3) using an outline which can be easily implemented into the ongoing curriculum. Teachers and teacher assistants involved in this research attended several workshops before and during the study. Site supervisors observed teachers and the implementation of the RTL program on a weekly basis. Both academic tests, such as Metropolitan Readiness Test, which

includes an auditory memory, language and listening subtest and the social skills competence test, namely the Comprehensive Teacher's Rating Scale which covers attention, social skills, hyperactivity, and oppositional behavior and the attending behavior rating scale were used for pre, post, and follow up tests (Brigman et .al 1999). Findings indicated positive results from the students who were in the classrooms that incorporated RTL into their program, thus teaching attending and social skills. The RTL approach or similar approaches would improve both academic and social skill learning for school success and decrease school failure (Brigman et .al 1999).

Social Skills Training to Promote Positive Social Interaction

Social competence as well as social skills training is particularly prominent for students who are classified into one of the high incidence disability groups, namely specific learning disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). Teaching positive social development to students with high-incidence disabilities has been translated into various approaches to eliminate deficits in social competence functioning.

The Early Childhood Social Skills Program uses procedures and principles of peer social initiations to implement the development of positive interaction skills for preschoolers, both those with and without social delays (Stroiber & Kratochwill, 1998). Successful facilitation to the peer initiations involves four components. According to Stroiber and Kratochwill (1998), the first component includes sharing, affection and assistance, which will thereby result in a positive response from the students. The second component is to make the environment friendly to facilitate positive interaction among the children (Vaughn & Sinagub, 1998). The third component is choosing specific children to initiate the interactions (known as the confederate) with their peers (or target students). The final component is

daily intervention sessions, which are step-by-step processes that enable interactions to take place between the target student and the confederate student (Vaughn & Sinagub, 1998). Throughout the process the teacher prompts and encourages positive peer interactions between the confederate student and the target student. Vaughn and Sinagub (1998) reported that this method was highly successful in pre-school for children, both with and without disabilities, to learn positive social interactions, social responses, and lengthening social exchanges. The success of the program is dependent on the willing participation of the confederate student(s). This in turn could be a negative or positive aspect to the program. If the confederate student has a difficult time implementing the skill to the target student, the result could be negative. However, if the confederate student is strong in his/her implementation of the skill to the target student, the results could be positive to both students as they succeed in mastering the skill (Vaughn & Sinagub, 1998).

Another approach in implementing positive social interaction, according to Gresham, Sugai, and Horner (2001), are social skills training (SST). A study involving students with high-incidence disabilities has been conducted over the last sixteen years (Gresham, Sugai & Horner, 2001). This study consisted of 22,000 students ranging from the ages three to eighteen. Teacher rating scales were used as well as parent and self-report ratings. Caldarella and Merrell (1997) included five social skills in a taxonomy covering: self-management skills, peer relations, academic skills, and compliance and self-management skills. According to Caldarella and Merrell (1997) this taxonomy provides a classification system, which refers to typical social skill patterns. It identifies a student's strengths and weaknesses and designs interventional techniques to teach a specific social skill. The outcome of the particular skill learned facilitates the developmental theory concerning the reason, diagnosis, and responsiveness of students to the social skill interventions (Caldarella & Merrell, 1997). Students with high-incidence disabilities, including students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

were participants in this study. The conclusion indicated that the most effective social skills training strategies utilize a combination of coaching, modeling and reinforcement procedures that were applied (Gresham, Sugai & Horner, 2001). However, across various settings and over time researchers were unable to demonstrate consistent and durable gains in social skills (Gresham, Sugai & Horner, 2001). The assessments used in this particular social skills training reflect little correlation between the behaviors that are assessed and those behaviors that are taught (Gresham, Sugai & Horner, 2001).

Social skills' training is important for children with disabilities. This importance is not only a priority for children with disabilities who are included in regular classrooms but equally important for their non-disabled peers. Buysse and Bailey (1993) suggest that if classified students are to be successful and accepted in inclusive settings, then their peers without disabilities need to learn to be more accepting of their differences. Diamond (2001) examined how non-disabled children viewed and interacted with their disabled peers. Forty-five children, both those with and without disabilities, were placed in an inclusive pre-kindergarten classroom. They were grouped into two teams, one of eighteen and another of twenty, including three or four children with disabilities. A second group of children consisted of eighteen to twenty typical developing children. Both groups of children were involved in small and large group activities, however there were no specific interventions provided to target children on awareness, strategies for helping others, or social interactions in the children with disabilities group (Diamond, 2001). Informal observations and interviews elicited non-disabled children's reaction towards helping, understanding emotions, and gaining acceptance of their peers with disabilities. The results of this study showed that the group of children who had learning-disabled peers included in their classrooms were more sensitive and accepting to the needs of their classmates with disabilities than those only with their normally developing peers in class (Diamond, 2001).

A comprehensive school intervention model is discussed to prepare students for the inclusion of schoolmates with and without disabilities. Simpson and Myles (1998) add that the preparation of students without disabilities is an often over looked area when preparing students for inclusion. Children without disabilities need encouragement in their sensitivity to others' difficulties and differences (Gresham, 1981 & Honig & McCarron, 1990). The participants of this study were two boys, one with Autism and the other with Asperser's syndrome. In both cases the parents felt that the socialization needs of their children were not being met in their self-contained classrooms, therefore they wanted their children included into a regular education classroom. The boys were included into regular education classes with their normally developing peers. Prior to their new inclusive classrooms a school intervention strategy was designed to increase social opportunities between the boys and their classmates (Cooper, Griffith, & Filer, 1999). A four week, forty-five minute group meeting was held for the students, parents, teachers, teacher assistants, and the principal. During these meetings, four topics were presented including caring, belonging, puncturing negative peer pressure, and the demonstration of good and bad deeds (Cooper, Griffith, & Filer 1999). As a result, this program helped non-disabled children, parents, and teachers understand children with disabilities, and provided a positive classroom environment for the students with disabilities making them an integral part of their school (Cooper, Griffith, & Filer, 1999). Cooper, Griffith, and Filer (1999) state that the inclusion of special needs children will continue to be a controversial issue, especially for those who view inclusion only as the product rather than the means. In an inclusive setting teachers can use non-disabled children as positive role models to help disabled children to learn appropriate social behaviors (Attwood, 1995). In return, children without disabilities would then acknowledge that children with disabilities might contribute to their array of appropriate social behaviors (Cooper, Griffith, & Filer, 1999).

Social Skills Training to Promote Friendships

An imperative aspect of social skills training is to learn how to make friends. Children's relationships with their peers have long been considered as an important part of a child's development (Vaughn & Elbaum, 1998). Berndt and Perry (1986) conducted a study with 106 classified and non-classified fourth and fifth grade participants. A "Friendship Interview" established by Berndt and Perry (1986) was used to observe the friendships between these children. Although the findings revealed no significant differences between classified and non-classified peers in the negative aspects of friendship, they did suggest a significant difference in four out of five positive aspects which include: (1) loyalty, (2) self-esteem, (3) intimacy, and (4) contact (Vaughn & Elbaum, 1998). It is suggested that students with disabilities do not turn to their peers for social support as often as their non-disabled peers (Vaughn & Elbaum, 1998).

Vaugh and Elbaum (1998) conducted a study in regards to friendships between learning disabled (LD) students and non-learning disabled (NLD) students. During this study children were asked to complete a "Friends List", in which they listed up to six individuals with whom they considered to be "best friends". They were also required to write the gender next to the persons name and if they knew their friend in or out of school. The children were also administered the Friendship Survey and self-concept measure. The findings showed that the disabled students listed fewer best friends and exhibited lower self-esteem than that of the non-disabled students (Vaugh & Elbaum, 1998). Although the study on friendships resulted in a small difference between the NLD and LD student, one may conclude that children's friendships are reciprocally valued (Vandell & Hembree, 1994).

A study on positive social interaction compared 86 disabled children and matched them with 86 non-disabled children in three domains: including social problem-solving skills, teacher-rated school behavior and competence, and family background. The children were given the Open Middle Interview (OMI) (Toro, Weissberg, Guare, & Liebenstein, 1990). The OMI consisted of four age appropriate social problem situations. The children were required to generate as many solutions to the problems as possible. An example of one problem situation was a child wanted to take home the class hamster that another child also wanted. As the child was responding to the situation given, a trained interviewer recorded the child's responses. The Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) (Toro et. al., 1990) assessed the school behavior domain. The teacher completed the family background domain according to each child's history. Children with disabilities differed from their non-disabled peers in all domains. The disabled students exhibited fewer social problem- solving strategies when given a problem (Toro et. al., 1990). Children with disabilities showed less tolerance and less adaptive assertiveness than their non-disabled peers. Overall children with disabilities had more classroom behavior problems and had significantly more family background difficulties (Weissberg, Gesten, Carnrike, Toro, Rapkin, Davidson & Cowen, 1981). From reviewing this study, one might suggest a longitudinal study be completed through the comparison of students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Thus, further research on children's relationships is imperative.

Social Skills Training to Improve Problem Solving Skills

Programs that emphasize the development and the application of social skills tend to be successful in an inclusive classroom because these programs address issues that are relevant to both disabled and non-disabled children (Stroiber & Kratochwill, 1998). One social problem-solving program developed by Shure (1992) is the Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving (ICPS) program. This program gears itself towards the promotion of mental health in kindergarten through sixth grade. Children in this program are classified as high-risk. The two-phase program includes a pre-problem solving phase, as well as a problem-solving phase. Both phases use games, stories, puppets and role-playing to introduce the specific skill being taught.

Another method in the implementation of social skills is Skill Streaming. This method emphasizes interpersonal and problem-solving skills (Stroiber & Kratochwill, 1998). The skill-streaming curriculum targets behaviors such as making friends, dealing with feelings and stress, and learning alternatives to aggression (Miller, Midgett & Wicks, 1992). This method relies heavily on modeling, role-playing, and peer feedback (Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw & Klein, 1980).

Even though these programs have shown some success, it has become evident that results tend to be stronger and more stable in on-going and long-term programs (Elias, Weissberg & associates, 1994). According to Stroiber and Kratochwill, (1998), a “second generation” of social problem solving programs (SPS) have emerged dually emphasizing the integration of the program into the classroom; thereby it continues to reinforce the skills. Weissberg’s Social Problem Solving (SPS) program has implemented the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of problem solving (Stroiber & Kratochwill, 1998). In this program the children are taught the steps to follow when confronted with a social problem. The first steps are to “Keep Calm”, and to think before you act. Step two is to

say the problem and to express how you feel. The third step is to set a positive goal, while step four allows the child to think about a solution. The fifth step in this program requires students to reflect on the consequence of the action and step six concludes by having the student executing the best plan (Weissberg, Jackson, & Shriver, 1993). A longitudinal study was completed on students who received SPS programs on a regular basis and those who did not. Results indicated significant gains in cooperative solutions to those children who were in the SPS program as compared to those who did not participate in the program (Elias & Weissberg, 1990).

The Social Decision Making/Problem Solving Strategies Program (SPS) is another model. This program uses a research-validated framework to provide administrators and teachers the skills needed to facilitate this program successfully in regular, special education and inclusive classrooms (Elias & Weissberg, 1990). The main focus in teaching social decision-making and problem solving is to obtain responses from the students by asking thought-provoking, open-ended questions in a supportive manner. SPS consists of a formal lesson administered once or twice a week. During this time a specific skill is introduced to all of the students in the circle. The activities are organized in terms of topics, rather than lessons, to emphasize the importance of mastery with a particular topic (Elias & Tobias, 1996). This program begins at the kindergarten level and follows through to eighth grade. Lessons at the elementary level begin with the "Sharing Circle". In the beginning, the "sharing circle" consists of the "name game". During this game children are able to acclimate themselves with the "sharing circle" and the procedures of the SPS program. As the group gradually becomes more comfortable and trusting of one another the questions gradually become more personal. Some examples may be in the form of an open-ended question, such as, "What is your favorite food, or what do you like to do on the weekends" (Elias & Tobias, 1996). After the "Sharing Circle", specific skills are introduced (Elias & Tobias, 1996). It is very crucial that children with disabilities understand the

skill and are provided with opportunities for review and practice (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998). Three skills that are pertinent to SPS are calming down when upset, approaching and interacting with others in an acceptable way and using one's social decision making strategy. In short these two steps are: (1) Keep Calm and (2) Be Your BEST (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998). When a student uses Keep Calm, they "Stop" and say "Calm Down", then they take a deep breath and continue doing this until they feel their body calm down. Be your BEST stands for B = body posture, E = eye contact, S = saying the right words, and T = tone of voice (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998). The "sharing circle" has specific guidelines that the group agrees to before the lesson begins. Some rules are developed. For example, the person holding the ball (speaker power) is the only person who is allowed to talk and no one is allowed to laugh or to ridicule a person because of his/her answer. It is the facilitator's job to make sure that no insults are given to the speaker because an answer may not be what another person believes (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998).

Various evaluations have been given to the social problem-solving curricula over a period of time. Key findings concluded that in the instructional phase, children receiving lessons showed a meaningful gain in the knowledge of problem-solving concepts, a sensitivity toward others', a willingness to take initiative, and the capacity to understand and to consider the consequences of their own actions (Elias & Clabby, 1997). A study on third graders concluded that after SPS training, 100% of the experimental groups were able to give specific, acceptable strategies for paying attention as compared to 60% of the control group. Furthermore, 63% percent of the experimental groups were able to identify two or three ways to recognize when they were upset as compared to the controlled group who had 27% of occurrence. Fifty-six percent of the children in the experimental group were able to use a specific strategy to become less upset, such as keeping calm, asking for help, or thinking about the problem, conversely, only 44% of the children in the control group had no strategy to use.

Summary

A review of the literature summarized the approaches and the outcomes taken by various researchers in developing and implementing programs that would benefit children in social skills. Although most of the studies mentioned in this chapter had one primary goal, which is teaching children social skills successfully, a few studies deemed unsuccessful in demonstrating the importance of social skills training to children with disabilities in inclusive settings. Despite the failure of some studies, Elksnin and Elksnin (1998) presented an instructional model on social skills training that was implemented successfully in an inclusive classroom.

Little has been found concerning the need for preparing the non-disabled children for their disabled peers and vice versa. One study mentioned was to have non-disabled peers prompt classified peers to a specific social response. The non-disabled peers were trained through role-playing before working on a skill with a disabled peer (Vaughn & Sinagub, 1998).

Much of the research in this chapter expressed the need for longitudinal studies to see how social skills training aided children as they moved up in grades. One longitudinal study was conducted using children from kindergarten to third grade. As a result, the longer period of time that the children were in inclusive classrooms the higher the level of peer acceptance was shown (Vaughn & Sinagub, 1998).

There are countless social skills training programs. As a teacher, it is easy to become overwhelmed with the thought of placing social skills in a chronological order of importance in addition to teaching them. Brigman, Lane, Switzer, Lane and Lawrence (1999) emphasized specific social skills, such as Ready to Learn (RTL), which would be taught and implemented into a classroom.

Although each study reviewed could enable a teacher the opportunity to select parts of one program and group it with another, the Social Problem Solving (SPS) program approach has integrated each positive piece of various social skills programs and compiled it into one complete program. The SPS program targets children from kindergarten to eighth grade with a specific curriculum for each age level. The levels build upon the previous ones, detailing the specific skills to be taught. SPS may be used in regular education, special education and inclusive classroom education. The Social Problem Solving program targets all children without identifying any particular “problem children”, and reciprocally, students collectively can brainstorm the ways to handle a given situation (Stoiber & Kratochwill, 1998).

The present study has used the Social Problem Solving program (SPS) in an inclusive kindergarten classroom to teach the children social skills on attending behavior, positive social interactions and making friends. The effects of the social skills training were examined through the observation of the disabled students at three periods of the day: big group, small group, and playtime. Each disabled child’s reactions were recorded based on the results from the following performance: (1) attending behavior, (2) making friends, and (3) making positive, social interactions.

Chapter 3

METHOD

Samples

Students. Twenty-three kindergarten children attending an elementary school in a rural school district located in the eastern region of the United States participated in the study. Included in the twenty-three children are eleven boys and twelve girls, with an age range of five to six years of age (See Table 1). The kindergarten class consists of disabled and non-disabled students. Two students are classified as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and one child is classified emotionally disturbed/oppositional defiance (ED/ODS). The other nineteen children are non-disabled. All twenty-three children received social problem solving strategic training over an eight-week period.

Table 1

Grade and Gender Distribution of the Sample Students

	Grade	Gender	
	Kindergarten	Female	Male
Classified	3	1	2
Non-classified	20	11	9

Teachers. One teacher and a teacher assistant participated in the study. A regular education teacher and a teacher assistant in an inclusive kindergarten classroom instructed the class.

Research Design

A multiple baseline design across activities (big group, small group, playtime) was used in this study. Both the disabled and the non-disabled students were grouped together in the same class. The teacher and the teacher assistant observed the children's behaviors three times during the day, in big group activities and playtime. During these times all of the twenty-three children were present. The participating children were also observed during small group activities, which included four to five children in a group. After the eight-week social problem-solving program (SPS) was given, the children were observed again during the same three above mentioned time periods. All observations were conducted in the inclusive kindergarten classroom.

Instructional Materials

The program chosen for the study was the Social Problem Solving (SPS) program. The curriculum in the program addressed readiness skills to promote success in the school and developing an "I can" attitude of: self-control, group and social awareness. Included in the SPS program was a curriculum guide with two main units: self-control skills, and group and social awareness skills. Each unit was broken down into eight, thirty-minute lessons to support the topic. Grade level, maturity, class size, teacher and student familiarity with social decision making was an determining factor as to the length and frequency of the lessons required to teach the material on a particular topic. The class began each lesson in the "sharing circle". Prior to the actual social problem-solving program the class participated in a series of "sharing circle" activities to help familiarize themselves with the "sharing circle" and the rules of the program. Some simple introductory lessons that the teacher used to familiarize the students were the name

game and the favorite food game. In these games each child rolled the ball around the circle stating their name or telling their favorite food and then passed the ball to the next child. The object of the game was for the children to become comfortable with their classmates and to understand the importance of Speaker Power. The person with speaker power is the person holding the ball or designated item. This person who has speaker power is the only person allowed to speak.

Materials needed for each topic are given at the beginning of each lesson and handouts for each lesson are located at the end of each topic in the curriculum book. There are sixteen topics in the program.

Instructional Procedures

The Social Problem Solving program (SPS) took place twice a week. Each lesson was held on the carpet in the “sharing circle” and had a time span of approximately twenty-five minutes.

Prompts

The Social Problem Solving program (SPS) used prompts as reminders. They may be verbal requests or directives to use a certain set of skills. The set of skills consists of components that have been taught during group meetings. Most of the readiness topics contained labels that could be used as prompts. Some examples of prompts are as follows:

- a.) Self-control prompts: Speaker Power-a sign not to talk out of turn. Paying Attention- an indication to the child to self-monitor and attend. Listening

Position- a cue to sit and orient one's attention appropriately. Examples of when to use self control prompts:

- 1.) Two children are arguing over a pencil, you see the situation escalating. Prompt: “I would like to see you both use Keep Calm... Now, let’s see what happens if you try to use VENT.”
 - 2.) One child is squirming in his or her seat while you are reading something to the class. Prompt: “I will continue when everyone is in Listening Position.”
- b.) Social awareness programs: Giving Praise- a cue not to insult others. Role Playing- a set of behaviors to enact a problem-solving situation and to take other's point of view. Being Friends- a prompt to think about how one relates to others and how to maintain a positive relationship or to change an unsatisfying one.

Examples of social awareness prompts:

- 1.) A child is working on a problem and is growing more and more frustrated; you sense that he or she may potentially lose control. Prompt: " It looks like you might need to Keep Calm, and then think about Getting Help. How could you do it? Who might you ask?

Lesson Activities

The Social Problem Solving Program included the following activities in each lesson.

- A. The “Sharing Circle”. Children look forward to the stability of beginning an activity with a standard format, such as the “sharing circle” (Elias and Chabby, 1997). This activity is utilized as a way of introducing Instructional Phase topics. (See Appendix 1)

According to Elias and Chabby (1997), when facilitators are teaching lower elementary school students, two main points should be kept in mind: (1) instructors should always begin formal meetings with the “sharing circle”, as it promotes a sense of stability and security, and (2) groups should move gradually from impersonal matters to personal matters and likewise from hypothetical problems to actual problems. Playing the “name game” or “favorite food” game will help promote step two in order to make a smoother transition for the children and the teacher.

B. Instructional Activities.

1. The children will meet in their “sharing circle”. The teacher will begin the lesson by telling the children that good friends are not easy to make or to keep. The teacher will proceed to ask the children what they find to be more important; being a good talker or being a good listener. The teacher may need to remind the children how they feel when someone is not listening to them.
2. The following activity is set up to show the children how hard it is to be a good listener. The teacher will read the words from list 1 (Table 2) at a rate of one word per second. The children are to clap only when they hear the word “cow”. The teacher should note both performance errors in (clap on another word) and nonperformance errors (no clap on “cow”).
3. The children will share their difficulties in this activity and then they may share some things that helped them to be a good listener. During this time the teacher will introduce
 - A. Listening Position- sits or stands straight.
 - B. Concentrate- do not interrupt or let anyone distract you.
 - C. When the speaker is finished ask questions.

4. Repeat the activity (see Table 2) this time making sure all students are in listening position.
5. As the children become more familiar with the game, one may use one or two variations. An example of this would be to clap on everything except “cow”, or to only clap on all animals.
6. Reinforce this activity throughout various parts of the day reminding students of “Listening Position”.
7. Role-play situations that demonstrate children listening and children who are not using listening position.

Table 2

List 1	List 2
Cart	shop
Sheep	ship
Cow	oar
Cup	shape
Pig	sail
Crow	shoe
Cow	shape
Sheep	shop
Cart	oar
Cup	ship
Crow	sail
Cup	ship
Pig	boat
Cow	sail
Crow	oar
Cart	shoe
Sheep	ship
Pig	shoe
Cart	shape
Crow	shop
Cup	ship
Cow	shape
Pig	shop

Dependent Measures

Three measures on social problem solving were recorded. The first measure was positive social outcomes demonstrated by disabled children. For example, in a social situation, children with disabilities are able to use their own words when they are frustrated or anxious. This would enable them to keep control while seeking help or reassurance from the teacher. The second measure was his/her ability to make friends. Once taught the social skill on how to make friends, (this was done through role playing various situations) one may ask whether or not children with disabilities are able to positively interact with their peer's verses parallel play? The last dependent measure was how children with disabilities show attending behavior. Are they "safe" and have their eyes looking, mouths quiet, hands and feet in a listening position? The twenty-three students were observed in each activity during the three periods daily and data was recorded for the baseline, training, and follow-up sessions.

The teacher and the teacher assistant observed the twenty-three participants four times a day throughout the week. The observations took place during small group and large group instruction, and at playtime. Both the teacher and the teacher assistant used a checklist to daily record the participating children's behaviors during the three periods.

Reliability

Two observers, the teacher and the teacher assistant recorded behavior occurrences using the observation check-list each time.

The interrater reliability was calculated using the formula = $\frac{\text{Agreement}}{\text{Total observation interval}} \times 100$

to reach at least 60% of agreement.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Observation

The data collected was organized into three graphs which depicts the following: Table 1, making friends, Table 2, positive social interaction, and Table 3, attending behavior. The tables compared the observations of the three participants throughout the three periods, specifically during small group and big group activities, and playtime. The baseline, intervention, and follow-up phases are reflected for each of the three participants. The two observers recorded the participants' behaviors for five days during baseline, intervention, and the follow-up. The rating score was used to calculate the observation data. These are 0=expected behavior *never* demonstrated by the participant, 3=expected behavior *sometimes* demonstrated by the participant and 5=expected behavior *always* demonstrated by the participant. The mean of the three participants' daily scores were obtained and graphed in the baseline, intervention, and follow-up. (See Tables 1, 2, and 3)

Making Friends

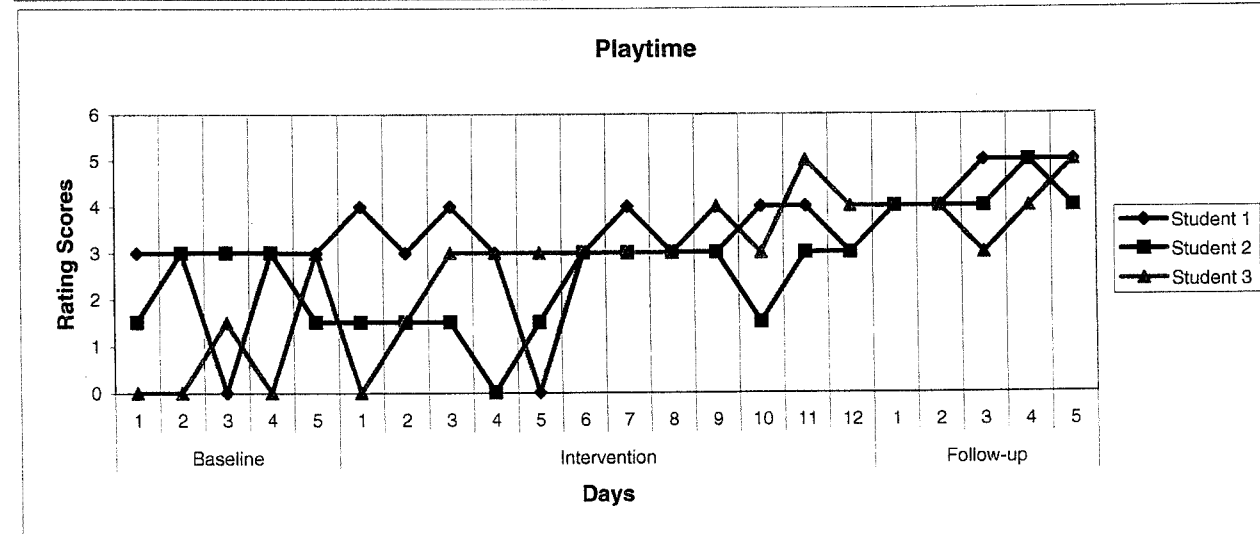
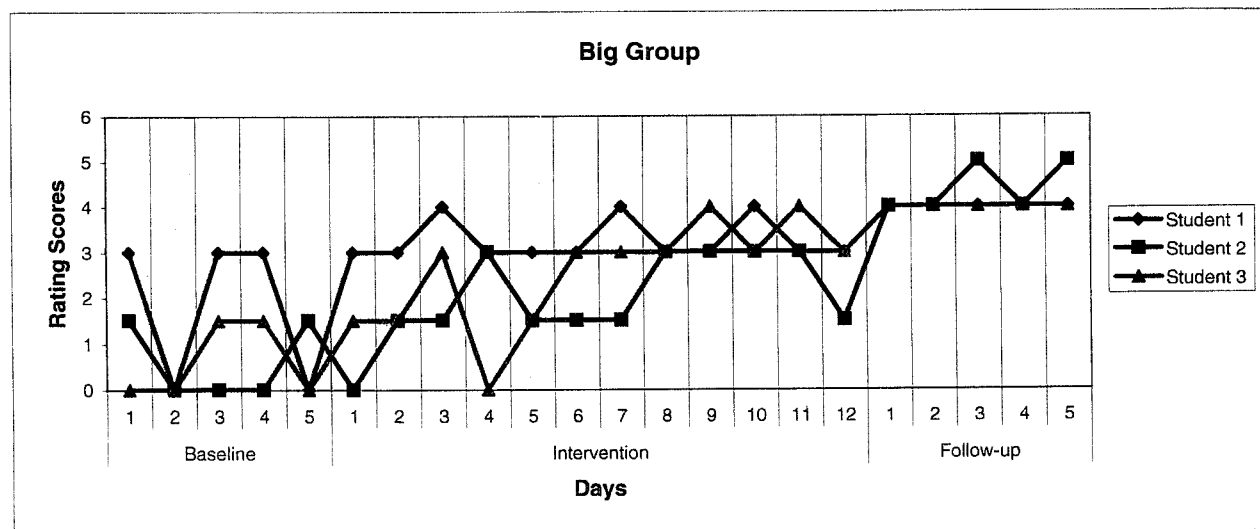
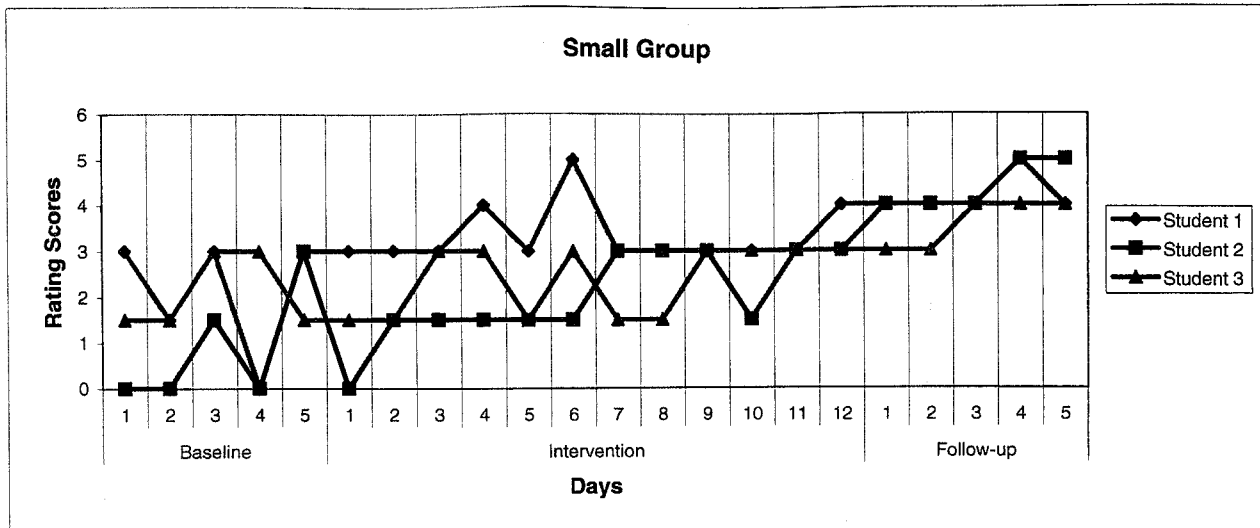


Table 1

Positive Social Interaction

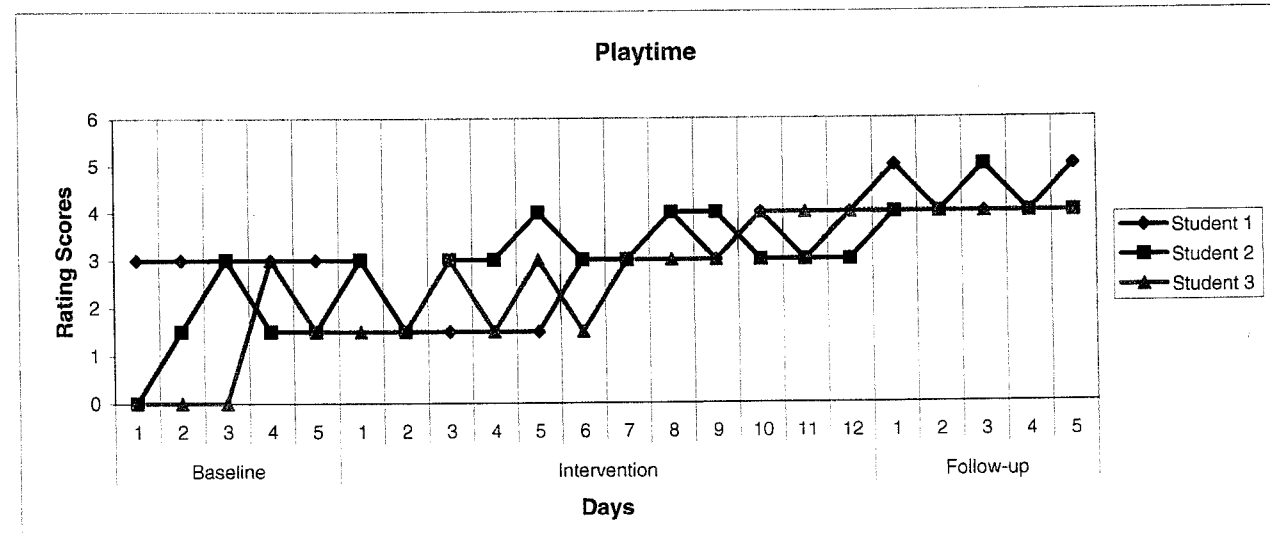
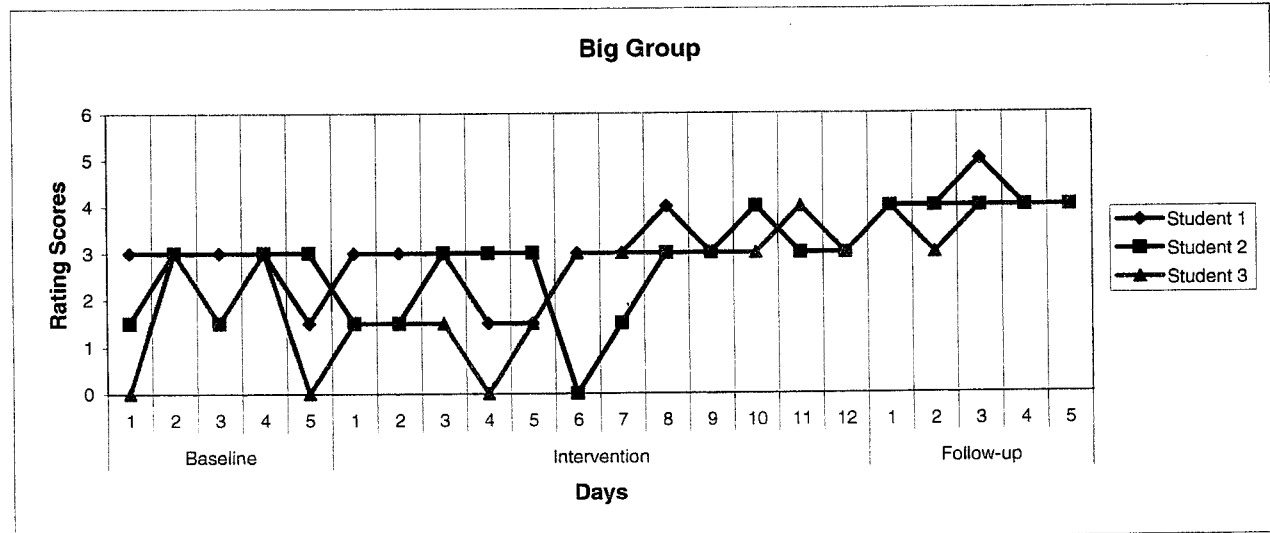
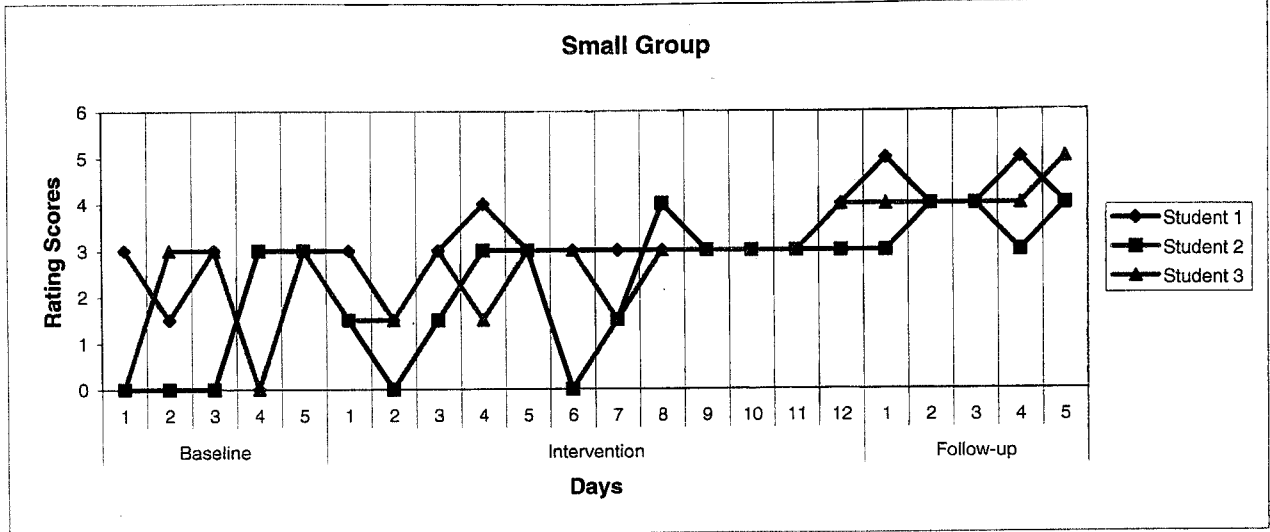


Table 2

Attending Behavior

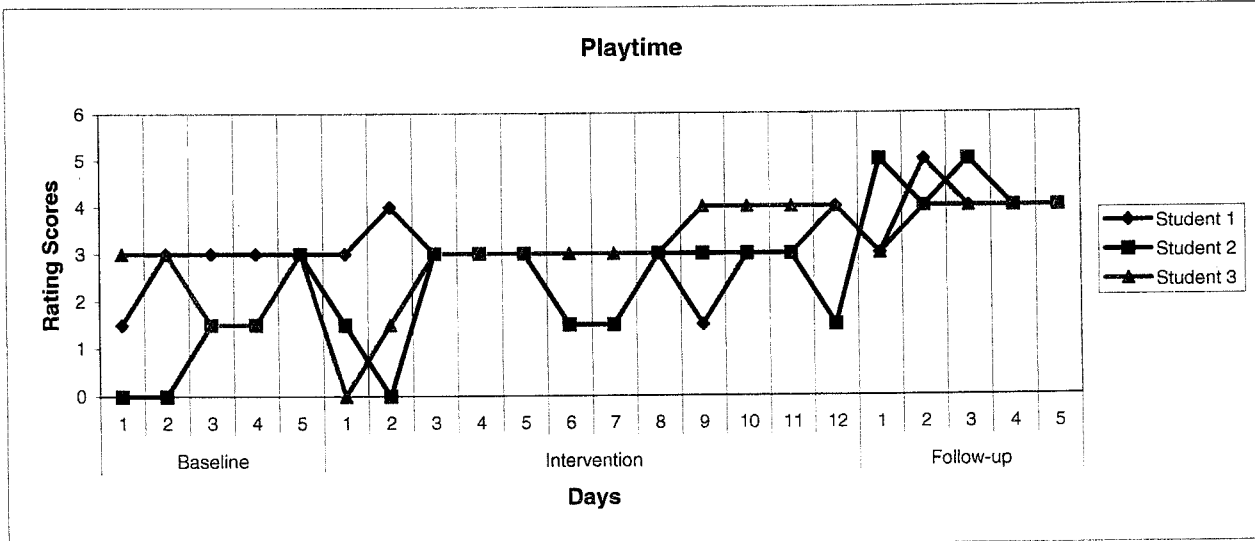
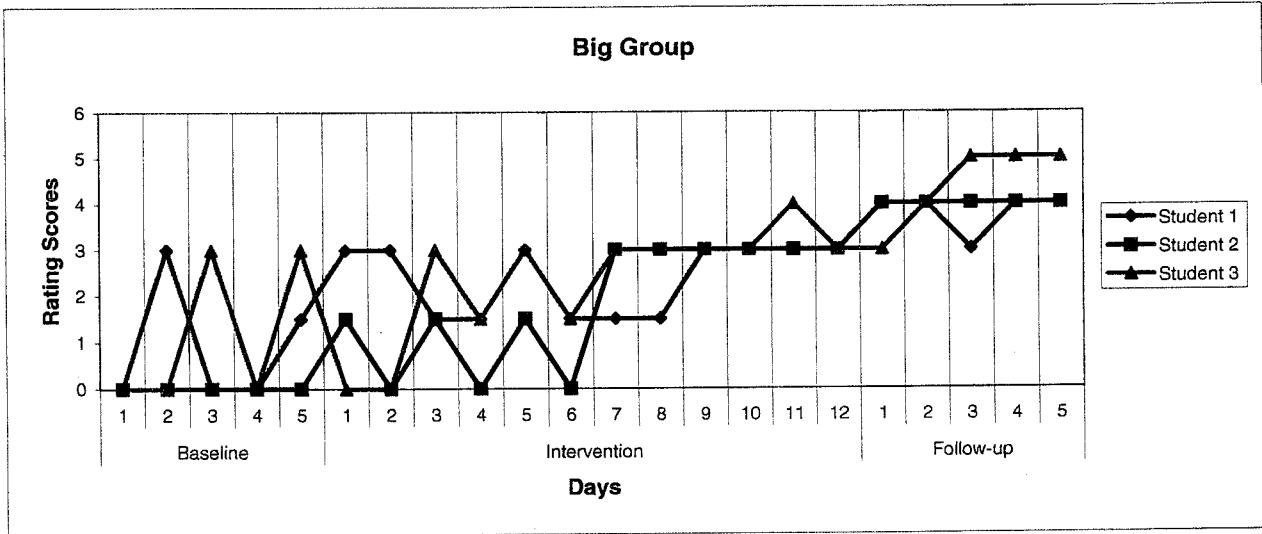
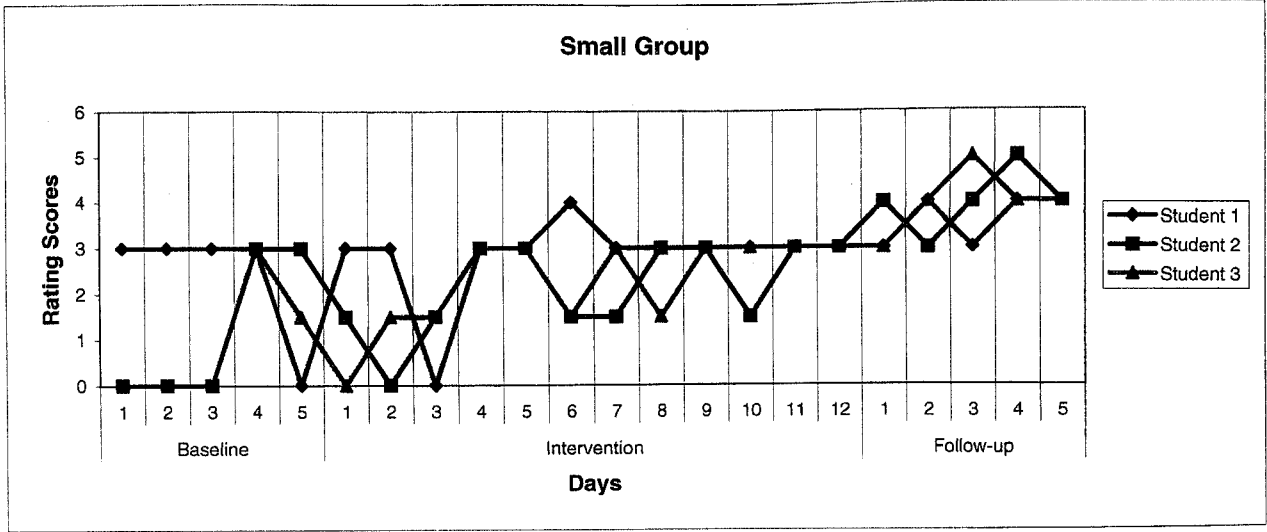


Table 3

Chapter 5

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Within the past ten years, numerous studies have identified attending skills, social skills and listening skills as being the most prognostic of children's long-term school success (Brigman, Lane, Switzer, Lane, & Lawrence, 1999). Such studies allowed children to learn various strategies to enable them to become successful individuals in school and in their lives. In this study, a social problem-solving program was implemented into an inclusive kindergarten setting to examine the effectiveness on children with mild disabilities.

Results of the study demonstrated that children with disabilities did exhibit a positive increase in their attending skills, positive social interaction, and the ability to make friends after receiving the Social Problem-Solving (SPS) training. The three participants showed an accelerated increase during the intervention and follow-up phases. The greatest increase of their attending behavior was observed during the big group activities. Although the students showed an increase in the three behaviors during the eight-week training program intervention, the three participants showed a slightly higher increase in the skill of making friends. Moreover, making friends was associated with a slightly higher increase during playtime than during big and small group activities. This finding was interesting because the skill of making friends is directly proportional to the student's success at playtime. Overall, the students showed an increase in all behaviors

during each activity. A longer training and post observational period may be recommended to determine if students can proportionally increase their behaviors as it relates to making friends during playtime.

Research revealed that out of the three social skills taught during the SPS training, positive social interaction was the least likely to show a significant change between the baseline and follow-up observations. There is not an increase of positive social interaction observed during the three activities.

There are some limitations of this study. First, only three students with mild disabilities participated in this study. Therefore, it is recommended that a larger sample of students be observed. Second, the duration of the study was only a total of ten weeks, including baseline, intervention and follow-up. Although there was an increase in positive behavior for the students in all three activities, a further study, which includes more inclusive classrooms, should be conducted over a longer duration. Lastly, future research may be suggested to expand the observational times in different activities, such as recess and individual working.

REFERENCES

- Attwood, T. (1995). *Asperger's Syndrome: A guide for parents and professionals*. Philadelphia: Kingsley.
- Berndt, T., & Perry, T.B. (1986). Children's perceptions of friendships as supportive relationships. *Developmental Psychology*, 22, 640-648.
- Brigman, G., Lane, D., Lane, D.E., & Switzer, D. (1999). Teaching children school success skills. *Journal of Educational Research*, 92, 323-327.
- Buysse, V., & Bailey, D.B. (1993). Behavioral and developmental outcomes in young children with disabilities in integrated and segregated settings: A review of comparative studies. *The Journal of Special Education*, 26, 434-461.
- Caldarella, P., & Merrell, K. (1997). Common dimensions of social skills of children and adolescents: A taxonomy of positive behaviors. *School Psychology Review*, 26, 264-278.
- Cooper, M.J., Filer, J., & Griffith, K.G. (1999). School intervention for inclusion of students with and without disabilities. *Focus on Autism and other Developmental Disabilities*, 14, 110-116.
- Diamond, K.E. (2001). Relationships among young children's ideas, emotional understanding, and social contact with classmates with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 21, 104-114.
- Dreikurs, R., Grunwalk, B.G., & Pepper, F.C. (1998). *Maintaining sanity in the classroom: Classroom management techniques* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: Taylor & Francis.
- Elias, M., & Clabby, J. (1997). *Building social problem solving skills: Guidelines from*

- a school-based program. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Elias, M.J., & Tobias, S.E. (1996). *Social problem solving: Interventions in the schools*. New York: Guilford.
- Elias, M.J., & Weissberg, R.P. (1990). *School-based social competence promotion as a primary prevention strategy: A tale of two projects. Strategies for optimizing human development*. New York: Haworth.
- Elias, M.J., Weissberg, R.P., & Associates. (1994). *The school based promotion of social competence theory, research, and practice. Processes, mechanisms, and interventions*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Elksnin, L.K., & Elksnin, N. (1998). Teaching social skills to students with learning and behavior problems. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 33, 131-141.
- Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L.S. (1994). Inclusive schools movement and the radicalization of special education reform. *Exceptional Children*, 60, 294-309.
- Goldstein, A.P., Sparfkin, R.P., Gershaw, N.J., & Klein, P. (1980). *Skills streaming the adolescent*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.
- Goleman, D.L. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam.
- Gresham, E.M. (1981). Assessment of children's social skills. *Journal of School Psychology*, 19, 120-133.
- Gresham, E.M., Sugai, G., & Horner, R.H. (2001). Interpreting outcomes of social skills training for students with high-incidence disabilities. *Journal of Exceptional Children*, 67, 331-344.
- Honig, A., & McCarron, C. (1990). Prosocial behaviors of handicapped and typical peers in an integrated preschool. *Optimizing early childhood care and education*. London:

- Gordon & Breach.
- Hurley-Geffner, C. (1995). Friendships between children with and without developmental disabilities. *Teaching children with autism*. Baltimore: Brooks.
- Ladd, G.W., & Mize, J. (1983). A cognitive social learning model of social skill training. *Psychological Review*, 90, 127-157.
- MacMillan, D.L., Gresham, F.M., & Forness, S.R. (1996). Full Inclusion: An empirical perspective. *Behavioral Disorders*, 21, 145-159.
- Miller, M.G., Midgett, J., & Wicks, M.L. (1992). Student and teacher perceptions related to behavior change after skills-streaming training. *Behavioral Disorders*, 17, 291-295.
- Miller, M., & Nunn, G.D. (2001). Using group discussions to improve social problem-solving and learning. *Education*, 121, 470-6.
- Schloss, P.J. (1992). Mainstreaming revisited. *The Elementary School Journal*, 92, 233-244.
- Shure, M. (1992). *I can problem solve (ICPS): An interpersonal cognitive problem-solving program for children*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.
- Simpson, R., & Myles, B. (1998). Understanding and responding to the needs of students with autism. *Educating children and youth with autism: Strategies for effective practice*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.
- Sinagub, J. & Vaughn, S. (1998). *Learning about learning disabilities*. (2nd ed.). Academic Press.
- Stainback, S., Stainback, W., East, K. & Sapon-Shevin, M. (1994). A commentary on inclusion and the development of a positive self-identity by people with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 60, 486-490.

- Strain, P.S., & Odom, S.L. (1986). Peer social initiations: Effective intervention for social skills development of exceptional children. *Exceptional Children*, 52, 543-551.
- Stroiber, K.C., & Kratochwill, T.R. (1998). *Handbook of group intervention for children and families*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sweeney, T.J. (1998). *Alderian counseling: A practitioner's approach* (4th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis.
- Vandell, D., & Hembree, S. (1994). Peer social status and friendship: Independent contributors to children's social and academic adjustment. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 40, 461-477.
- Vaughn, S., & Elbaum, B. (1998). Social outcomes for students with and without learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 31, 428-436.
- Vaughn, S., & Haager, D. (1994). Social competence as a multifaceted construct: How do students with learning disabilities fare? *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 17, 253-267.
- Vaughn, S. & Lancelotta, G.X. (1990). Teaching interpersonal social skills to low accepted students: Peer-pairing verses no peer pairing. *Journal of School Psychology*, 28, 181-188.
- Vaughn, S., Zaragoza, N., Hogan, A., & Walker, J. (1993). A four year longitudinal investigation of the social skills and behavior problems of students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 26, 404-412.
- Waldron, N.L. (1997). Inclusion. In G.G. Bear, K.M. Minke, & A. Thomas (eds.), *Children's needs II: Development, problems, and alternatives*. Bethesda, MD:

- National Association of School Psychologists.
- Walker, H.M., Colvin, G., & Ramsey, E. (1995). *Antisocial behavior in school: Strategies and best practices*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks & Cole.
- Wang, M.C., Reynolds, M.C. & Walberg, H.J. (1988). Integrating the children of the second system. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 70, 248-251.
- Weissberg, R.P., Gesten, E.L., Carnrike, C.C., Toro, P.A., Rapkin, B.D., Davidson, E., & Cowen, E.L. (1981). Social problem-solving skills training: A competence building intervention with second-to-fourth grade children. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 9, 411-423.
- Weissberg, R., Jackson, A., Shriver, T. (1993). Promoting positive social development and health practices in young urban adolescents. *Social decision-making and life skills development: Guideline for middle school educators*. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen.

APPENDIX

Lesson Plan 1

Topic: Introduction to Social Problem Solving (SPS) Meetings

Objective: To introduce and orient children with SPS meetings.
To establish ground rules of SPS meetings
To participate in sharing circle

Materials: White board, markers

Procedure:

1. The teacher will begin by telling the children that a very important part of growing up healthy is learning how to get along with others. Some of them are already good at doing this, and others are not as good. The whole class will be having lessons and activities to help the class work together as a problem-solving team. The teacher will further explain that, we are doing this because sometimes we all get stuck about what to do with problems we have. Our problem-solving lessons will help us to be more sensitive to each other's feelings, think through our problems, and learn different things we can do to solve our problems.
2. Tell the children where and when the lessons will take place. (Forecast during time together.)
3. Explain to the children that most of the lessons involve large group discussions and activities (all or half of the class). The children will sit in sharing circle during SPS. Determine the location and arrangement of sharing circle and have the children move right into it.
4. Together the teacher and children brainstorm on rules to have during sharing circle. Rules should be brief and few. They should be written for future reference. Some basic rules might be:
 1. Hands must be raised to be called on
 2. One person speaks at a time; everyone else must be in ready position
 3. There are no right or wrong answers
 4. "Out of bounds" or "unsafe" behavior and its consequences will be reviewed
5. Explain the ground rules for the sharing circles. Each person (child, teacher, visitor in the room) in turn says at least his or her name. They may share with the group anything that might come to mind. The teacher might wish to model the sharing of something happy or sad that happened recently to them. * Class size and maturity are important factors in determining how the sharing circle will best operate.
6. Go around the room and give everyone the opportunity to at least share their name. Teacher may wish to demonstrate.

Lesson Plan 2

Topic: Learning to Listen Carefully and Accurately

Objective: To teach the components of good listening.
To provide practice for learning good listening skills

Materials: Lists 1, 2

Procedure:

1. With the students' help, review the main themes of Lesson One. Include the reasons for having the lessons and the meaning of SPEAKER POWER. It may also be necessary to review the established sharing circle rules.
2. Obtain children's interest by asking when it is important to be a good listener? Some examples are: when learning the rules of a game for the first time, when trying to understand your teacher's directions, or when trying to learn the words of your favorite song.
3. Explain, we are going to explore what listening is and how to go about doing it better. To be a good listener it is necessary to pay attention. Ask, what is paying attention? Can someone show how a person looks who is paying attention? How does someone look when they are not paying attention?
4. Tell the class that listening is an important part of paying attention. Right now we are going to show how hard it is to be a good listener. Ask the children to close their eyes then read the words for List #1...about one word per second. Ask the children to clap only when they hear the word "cat".
5. Have the children share their difficulties. Ask what are some things you can do to listen more carefully and accurately? Be sure to mention the following:
 - a. Listening Position: sit or stand straight, face the speaker, look at the speaker
 - b. Concentrate: do not interrupt or let anything distract you.
6. Model each of the above for the children, then have children model each of them.
7. Repeat step 4 having the children sit in Listening Position. Repeat directions. There are several variations that can be used with this list.
 - a. Clap on everything except "cat"
 - b. Clap on all animals only
 - c. Clap on all animals except "cat"

List 1

Cuts	coat	horse	cat	cut	dog
Cow	cat	horse	cuts	cut	cow
Cut	dog	cat	cow	coat	cute
Horse	dog	cute	cow	dog	coat
Cow	cut	cat	cat	dog	horse
Cut	cute				

List 2

Cat	shoes	pants	coat	cute	dress
Cut	cute	cut	pants	shoes	dress
Cat	shoes	coat	dress	pants	cut
Dress	shoes	cut	coat	pants	cute
Cat	coat	cut	shoes	cute	coat
Cat	pants	cat	cute	dress	

Lesson Plan 3

Topic: Teaching Children how to Role Play

Objectives: To teach students how to role play
To understand reasons and needs for role playing
To understand responsibilities of the audience

Materials: Prepared classroom situations

Procedure:

1. Review good listening and following direction skills from topics two and three.
2. Forecast what children will be doing today: role-playing
3. Explain that role-playing is acting out situations, and we will do this often in SPS lessons.
4. Begin with pantomimes as one way of easing children into role-playing. An example of some pantomimes:
 - a. A person driving a car
 - b. A person shopping
 - c. A person reading a book
 - d. Someone who is waking up from a nap
 - e. Someone who is brushing their teeth
 - f. Someone eating dinner

Others try to guess what is being pantomimed.

5. Once children become familiar with this routine teacher may use real life situations to role-play:
 - a. Someone took your lunch
 - b. A friend pushed you off the swings
 - c. A group of girls/boys won't let you play

Use age appropriate situations that children can relate to.

Lesson Plan 4

Topic: Keep Calm

Objective: To point out problematic situations where students can use self-control
calm down before reacting
To teach students, through a deep-breathing exercise, how to calm down and
keep their self-control in a problematic situation
To practice a deep-breathing exercise to Keep Calm

Materials: Whiteboard, markers, poster with steps

Procedure:

1. Talk about physical signs of getting angry or upset. (Some examples may be face turns red, may become hot, grit teeth.)
2. Talk with students about things that may make a person upset. Some examples may be: someone taking a toy away, cutting in front of you in line, or pushing you on the playground. (Teacher may write these down on the wipe-board.)
3. Explain to the children that everyone at one time or another has a problem that needs to be solved. These problems can be with our parents, friends, brothers, sisters, or teachers. Sometimes we jump right into trying to solve the problem before we are ready. If this happens, nothing gets accomplished because we are too upset and out of control to think about what we might be able to do.
4. Explain to the children that you are going to teach them steps that they may use when confronted with a problem. Present "Keep Calm" steps:

Keep Calm

1. Tell yourself to STOP.
2. Tell yourself on the inside (or whisper) to "keep calm".
3. Slow down your breathing with two long deep breaths.
4. Praise yourself for a job well done.
5. Demonstrate the steps to the class by presenting a situation in which you could be irritated or nervous. Describe the situation and then go through the steps of Keep Calm.
6. Have everyone try this procedure.
7. Talk about and role-play a few scenarios in which you could use Keep Calm.

Lesson Plan 5

Topic: Be Your B-E-S-T

Objectives: To teach children to distinguish between passive, aggressive, and confident/assertive styles of behavior (mouse, monster, and me).

Material: Wipe-board, markers, Monster and Mouse Representation (if available)

Procedure:

1. Review steps to Keep Calm.
2. Obtain children's interest by explaining, now that you all know how to keep calm in situations when you can get upset, it is important to learn some other ways to keep control and be our BEST.
3. Explain the difference between the Monster, Mouse, and Me. The **Mouse** is someone who is very quiet and always lets other people have their way. The **Monster** is very pushy, bossy and loud about what they want and how they think and feel. The only problem is, the monster does not care about what other people feel or want. The monster is a bully. **Me** is the best of both of these creatures. A **Me** is someone who very clearly says what they think and feel, but says it in a way that respects the rights of other people who are listening.
4. Explain that when you are a Me you are being you B-E-S-T.
 - B Body posture
 - E Eye contact
 - S Speech
 - T Tone of voice
5. Role-play a few situations with the children in order to practice B-E-S-T.

Lesson Plan 6

Topic: Practice using Keep Calm and Being your BEST

Objective: To provide students with practice in dealing with conflicts and criticism by keeping control by using B-E-S-T.

Procedure:

1. Review Topic 5.
2. Give children a situation where the children may use be you BEST in school. Have two children role play it.
3. After the children role-play the situation, discuss it with the class. Continue this with other situations and have the children come up with some “trigger” situations on their own.

Lesson Plan 7

Topic: Sharing ways to cope with Hassles

Objectives: To introduce use of the Hassle Log/Problem Journal
To practice using the Hassle Log/Problem Journal

Materials: Hassle Logs

Procedure:

1. Review the last lesson by asking, how can you tell when you are upset and may lose control? How can you remind yourself to use Keep Calm and Be Your Best?
2. Obtain children's interest by saying; today we will learn another way to handle problems. Another way of handling problems is through the use of the Hassle Journal. The Hassle Journal can be used in situations where children are out of control (i.e., playground, personal conflicts). Writing down a problem begins the thinking process and puts things in perspective.
3. Show children where the Hassle Journal will be kept and remind children (because we are in kindergarten) that they do not need to know how to write, they may draw a picture if they choose.

Lesson Plan 8

Topic 8: Sharing Ways to Cope with Hassles

Objectives: To review Keep Calm, be you BEST, and the Hassle Journal with children.

Materials: Journal

Procedure:

1. Review steps to Keep Calm by using poster on wall. Teacher may wish to have children role play different situations.
2. Review steps to be your BEST. Remind children of the mouse, monster, and me.
3. Remind children of where journal will be kept in the classroom and guidelines on using it.
4. Remember to use “lingo” in the classroom throughout the day and when the situation arises call for a sharing circle. (It is a good idea to have SPS at least once a week to review skills learned and discuss any future questions and/or problem.)