

The Effect of Social Skills Training
On Grade 3 Students' Self-Esteem, Moral Development, and Perceptions of
Classroom Environment

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ABSTRACT

Two Grade 3 classes were used to study the effects of a formal social skills training program. Specifically, comparisons were made on self-esteem, classroom environment, and moral development to see whether changes occurred as a direct result of social skills training. One group participated in the social skills program, while the other group did not.

It was hypothesized that formal social skills training would improve students' self-esteem, moral development, and the classroom environment. At the end of the program, however, data from class observations, teacher interviews, journal of the social skills training group teacher, and measures of self-esteem, classroom environment and moral development did not support this hypothesis. Although the social skills training group scored significantly higher in class cohesiveness, they did not show marked improvement in the other measures. In fact, in some measures (e.g., friction and competitiveness), they demonstrated greater scores at both pretest and posttests. The social skills training group was, however, able to vocalize and utilize the strategies of several skills which had been a focus of the program, suggesting that formal social skills training is a useful tool for presenting and reinforcing some specific behaviours.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
List of Tables	vii
CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM	
Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	3
Importance of the Study	4
Definition of Terms	5
Outline of the Remainder of the Document	7
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
Introduction	9
Historical Background	11
Students' Perception of Values	13
The Development of Self-Esteem	14
Methods for Promoting Positive Self-Esteem	17
Classroom Environment	20
Methods for Promoting a Positive Classroom Environment	22
Moral Development	23
Methods for Promoting Moral Development	26
Teaching Social Skills in the Classroom	28
Community or School Board Programs	33

Summary of Literature Reviewed.....	35
Present Study	35

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction	37
Purpose	37
Subjects	37
Materials	38
Assessment Tools.....	38
Social Skills Program.....	41
Procedure	43
Data Analysis.....	46
Limitations of the Study	46

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction.....	48
Student Self-Perception Profile.....	48
My Class Inventory	50
Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form Questionnaire	55
Behavioural Checklist.....	55
Journal of the Social Skills Training Group Teacher	56
Teacher Interviews	57
Differences in Students' Behaviour from September to January	57
Behavioural Changes in Students Since the Onset of the Program ..	58
Increases and Decreases in the Occurrence of Specific Behaviours, Including Aggression, Fighting, and Name Calling.....	60

Changes in Classroom Environment	61
Usefulness of the Social Skills Training Program.....	62
Summary of Major Research Findings.....	62
 CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Introduction	64
Conclusions	65
Self-Esteem	65
Classroom Environment.....	65
Moral Development.....	68
Recommendations for Further Research.....	69
Implications for Education.....	71
 References.....	 75
 Appendix A: Letter of Explanation.....	 81
Appendix B: Consent Form	82
Appendix C: Behavioural Checklist.....	83
Appendix D: Teacher Interviews	84
Appendix E: Practical Social Skills for Students in Schools.....	92

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Self-Perception Profile as a Function of Experimental Conditions	50
Table 2: My Class Inventory: Student Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Experimental Conditions	54
Table 3: My Class Inventory: Teacher Scores as a Function of Experimental Conditions.....	55

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

It has been a long-standing educational objective to promote socially responsible behaviour, good moral character, and conformity to social rules and norms. Schools have also attempted to teach children cooperation and positive styles of social interaction. Following social rules and conforming to social role expectations are crucial for positive social development within the family and peer group systems (Wentzel, 1991).

There seems to be greater demands for schools to teach children behaviours, values, and attitudes that used to be considered the domain of the home and church. With changes in social and family structure, increasing numbers of children are demonstrating the inability to cope with, or solve problems dealing with, socially acceptable values and behaviours. Many teachers are finding that the dynamics of their classrooms are changing rapidly. Students do not always behave in socially expected ways, such as completing assigned work and treating each other with respect. Rather, teachers increasingly believe that students lack respect and concern towards others. More children seem to be solving problems through physical violence. Aggressive incidents on the playground and in the classroom seem to be increasing. Behaviours such as yelling out, pushing, and name calling, occur frequently and, as a result, teachers spend a great deal of class time coping with disruptions and disciplining children and teaching them social skills (Lickona, 1988).

There are several hypotheses why children have social skills deficits. The "primary cause hypothesis" views social skills deficits as the result of neurological

dysfunctions, similar to those responsible for academic problems (Gresham & Elliott, 1989). There is, however, no data supporting this hypothesis. The "secondary cause hypothesis" views social skills problems as being the result of, or a side effect of, academic problems. Although there is little evidence that academic problems cause social skills deficits, there is a positive correlation between the two (e.g., Bursuck & Asher, 1986; Gresham, 1983; cited in Gresham & Elliott, 1989). In addition, there is a relation between academic success, social skills prowess, and peer acceptance. Presumably, poor social skills and academic problems can result in low peer acceptance.

A study carried out by Coie and Krehbiel (1984; cited in Gresham & Elliott, 1989) supports the secondary cause hypothesis. Low achieving 4th graders who were receiving academic tutoring were observed for changes in social acceptance, academic skills, and the occurrence of disruptive behaviours. The authors found that decreases in off-task and disruptive behaviours result in more positive teacher attention. However, the data suggest that unless social skills are specifically taught, no increases in positive social interactions or decreases in negative social interactions will occur. It seems unlikely that improvement in academic abilities will incidentally result in improvement in social skills.

Gresham and Elliott (1989) describe how social learning theory may be applied to social skills deficits. According to these authors, children with social skills deficits somehow fail to acquire or perform social behaviours. They list several possible reasons for this failure. First, these children may have lacked the opportunity to learn these skills. Their home and social environment may have never required that they perform these skills. It may also be because appropriate social behaviours have not been modeled for them. Significant role models perhaps did not possess these skills or felt they were not important. Finally, children may have previously

behaved in a socially skilled way but did not receive enough reinforcement to acknowledge and maintain their positive behaviour. Having not received praise for behaving in a desirable manner, the children may have decided that such behaviours were not necessary.

Presumably, formal instruction in social skills would help students learn more appropriate social behaviours by providing them with effective techniques for dealing with problem solving and strategies for more positive interpersonal relationships. The development of these skills would then help to reduce the amount of nonsocial behaviour (e.g., aggressiveness, yelling) in the classroom. Less classroom disruptions would provide a better learning environment and provide teachers more time to teach curriculum material. In addition, providing students with prosocial problem-solving skills may help them develop a positive self-esteem since behaving in socially acceptable ways would help others see them in a positive manner.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a formal social skills program, Practical Social Skills for Students in Schools (Kulik, 1991), positively affects elementary school students' self-esteem, moral development, and perceptions of classroom environment. This particular program teaches a variety of skills enabling students to cope in different social situations (e.g., listening, following instructions, using self-control, problem solving, trying harder, and dealing with feelings). The program incorporates brainstorming activities, class discussion and role-play techniques to help students develop effective social skills strategies. The program is available to teachers upon their request.

Kulik's program was chosen for this study for several reasons. First, this program is used by the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board, with the school participating in the study being a part of that board. Second, the program incorporates methods demonstrated by Denton (1991) and Schuncke and Krogh (1985) to be highly successful in the teaching of social skills and the development of higher levels of moral thinking (e.g., drama, teacher-guided discussion, and student self-evaluation).

Importance of the Study

Research demonstrates that if social deficits are not treated in early childhood, there is greater risk of poor academic performance, social adjustment problems, and serious psychopathology in adolescence and adulthood (Elliott, Sheridan, & Gresham, 1989). Children who consistently exhibit social skill deficits experience both short-term and long-term negative consequences. In their adult years, antisocial children are often over represented in groups characterized by alcoholism, unemployment, divorce, and dependence on public assistance (Wentzel, 1991).

It is expected that formal social skills instruction will increase students' self-esteem and moral development and will improve classroom environment. Formal instruction may help children improve their self-esteem by providing them with strategies for problem solving. Presumably, children will feel more competent in social areas when they are able to resolve their difficulties without the assistance of an adult. Peers may also look more favourably on fellow classmates whose behaviours is not obnoxious or domineering. It is likely that social skills training would provide students with an opportunity to learn more appropriate behaviours

which would help make students with social skills deficits more likable. Finally, peer approval might reinforce children's self-perceptions, making them feel better about themselves.

A social skills training program might also help students attain a higher level of moral reasoning. Specifically, role-play and perspective-taking would be aimed at higher stages of moral development, thereby encouraging students to think of their world in a different way. In having students think about values and morals, they would need to think about and sympathize with other people's feelings. They would see that there are several ways to respond to any social situation and that each response carries with it a different consequence.

Finally, classroom environment would probably also benefit from formal social skills instruction. With fewer interruptions and less animosity between students, the classroom would become a friendlier place more conducive to social growth and academic learning. Teachers would be happier when they would not have to continuously deal with inappropriate behaviour. Students would be happier when they would be able to stop a problem before it escalated. It is hoped that the findings of this study will assist teachers in making informed decisions about the utility of social skills training programs and provide strategies for dealing with children who have social skills deficits.

Definition of Terms

Classroom Environment is the physical and social surroundings in a school classroom. How teachers establish and maintain their expectations and classroom atmosphere environment influences children's learning as well as how their self-esteem will develop.

Moral Development is the stages of thought individuals attain that influence how the world is perceived. Kohlberg's theory of moral development describes three major levels, each with two stages. Not all individuals attain the higher levels of moral development.

My Class Inventory is a measure of classroom environment by Fraser and Fisher (1983). It provides data on five subscales: cohesiveness, friction, difficulty, satisfaction, and competitiveness.

Practical Social Skills for Students in Schools is the social skills training program used in the present study (Kulik, 1991). It employs class discussion and both teacher and student role-play to develop strategies for such skills as listening, trying harder, and dealing with feelings.

Prosocial Behaviour is action intended to benefit another person, without the anticipation of external reward. In this study, the term "prosocial behaviour" is interchangeable with "socially acceptable behaviour" (e.g., helpful, non-aggressive behaviour that implies respect and concern towards others).

Self-concept is the perceptions, feelings, and attitudes individuals have about themselves. These self-perceptions are influenced by gender, ethnic identity, and physical and psychological characteristics,

Self-esteem reflects people's evaluations about themselves and how they judge themselves. Self-esteem is also influenced by other people's perceptions of an individual's competency and worth.

Self Perception Profile For Children is a measure of self-esteem by Harter (1985). The "What I Am Like" survey provides data on six subscales: scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavioural conduct, and global self-worth.

Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form Questionnaire is a measure of moral development based on Kohlberg's moral development theories (Gibbs, 1991). The questionnaire consists of two moral dilemmas similar to those used by Kohlberg. Students must consider possible responses and compare those responses to their own way of reasoning.

Social skills are behaviours exhibited in specific situations that help in assuring a child's attainment of important social outcomes (Gresham & Elliott, 1987; cited in Elliott, Sheridan & Gresham, 1989). Important social outcomes include peer acceptance, positive judgments of significant others, academic competence, adequate self-concept or self-esteem, and adequate psychological adjustment.

Outline of the Remainder of the Document

Chapter Two includes a review of the literature about social skill development and its relation to self-esteem, moral development, and classroom environment. Historical background of social skills education compares formal and informal social skills training. Possible reasons why some children do not behave in prosocial manners as well as methods for promoting positive self-esteem, moral development and classroom environment are discussed. Strategies for teaching social skills are analyzed, with some community and school board programs analyzed.

The third chapter discusses the research designs that were used and the rationale for choosing each. Subject selection, procedures, and data collection are outlined, as well. Finally, the method used in the data analysis is discussed. The limitations of this study are also included here.

Chapter Four presents the results from this study. Specifically, data from "My Class Inventory," "Self-Perception Profile," and "Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form Questionnaire" are presented.

Chapter Five includes a synthesis of the perceptions of major findings of the study with respect to students' self-esteem, classroom environment, and moral development. This chapter also discusses recommendations for possible changes. Finally, conclusions are drawn with suggestions for further research in the area of social skill development and its effect on self-esteem, moral development, and classroom environment.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Social skills development is an important part of the educational mandate (e.g., Pietig, 1983). From the beginning of formal education, society has expected the education system to convey social values and morals so that students would look beyond their own needs and become concerned with the rights of others. Recently, increased responsibility has been placed on schools to provide students with social skills education (McMillan & Gentile, 1988).

This shift in responsibility can be attributed to several factors. Specifically, more and more children are growing up in single parent families, and there seems to be a greater number of underprivileged students in the school system (Kuhmerker, 1989). To assist these "latch-key" children, who many consider to be socially deprived, schools have adopted the additional roles of health care providers, counselors, and remedial instructors. Some even supply breakfasts and lunches (Kuhmerker, 1989).

There is evidence that children who are socially competent are less inclined to experience mental or emotional disorders in later life while children who have poorer social skills are at greater risk for these disorders (Rose, 1983). This type of evidence has led to greater demands on educators to teach behaviours and attitudes that used to be considered the domain of the church and home. Increasing numbers of children are unable to cope with, or solve problems dealing with, socially acceptable values and behaviours. Of these children, many demonstrate severely disruptive behaviour (Rempel, 1991). These children fight, are disobedient, throw temper tantrums, disrupt lessons, and abuse others as well

as themselves. Regardless of whether these behavioural problems are the result of family breakup, personal problems, or lack of self-esteem, the classroom disruptions they cause are severe.

There are several possible reasons why children do not behave in a prosocial manner. Children who are isolated or rejected by their peers often demonstrate specific skill deficits. Ladd and Mize (1983) discuss the cognitive-social learning theory that children may lack mastery or coordination in three specific areas: social knowledge of appropriate behaviours for specific situations, skill proficiency, and self-evaluation. Children who lack knowledge of appropriate behaviours for specific situations risk rejection or isolation by acting in ways that do not conform with peer expectations and norms. For example, children who believe that games are "played to be won" can discourage the friendship of those children who want to "play for fun" and encourage inappropriate aggressive behaviour. While some children do possess this necessary social knowledge, they may lack the experience or confidence to skillfully perform the desired behaviours. That is, children may be able to verbalize appropriate strategies for specific situations and conflicts but be unable to associate those strategies with behaviours. For example, students may be able to verbalize strategies for solving disagreements between peers but be unable to utilize the appropriate behaviours in those situations. Finally, children need to be able to evaluate their behaviour and skills and the effects of their actions on others. The ability to self-evaluate depends on the ability to take the perspective of others and monitor how others react. Children who are unable to evaluate the success of their behavioural strategies will not know how to alter their behaviour to gain peer acceptance. For instance, children who continue to act aggressively in a "play for fun" situation will continue to be isolated from their peers

if they do not re-evaluate their behaviour and alter their actions to conform to their peers' expectations.

Children may also lack the motivation to exhibit the desired behaviour, or may be motivated to behave inappropriately. For example, students desiring any form of adult attention may find the most expedient way of obtaining it is through misbehaviour. Breaking class rules often guarantees teacher response. For those students who crave being noticed, negative attention may be better than no attention. That is, frequent misbehaviour may ensure more attention than continuous desired behaviour. These students are thereby reinforced to behave inappropriately. On the other hand, misbehaviour may simply be a matter of letting emotions get in the way of objective thinking (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984). Children may behave in a negative manner when they feel discouraged and unwanted. They may use misbehaviour as an alternative approach to belonging. They may believe that the only way that they can belong, or be seen as important, is by hurting others or defying adult authority.

Historical Background

There are many documents supporting the need for social skills and values education, including ones issued by the Ontario Ministry of Education. For instance, Personal and Societal Values (1983) states that values education is one of the major goals of formal education. It lists the components of a personal and social value system as including respect for self, others, and the environment. It suggests that every school should encourage such values as cooperation, courtesy, self-discipline, and tolerance. The document stresses the importance of

the school and the classroom environment in acting as a model for students with respect to adopting prosocial and personal value systems.

Lickona (1988) also supports many of the values presented by the Ministry. He suggests that in the late 1900s, society began to move away from the concept of common values and toward the concept of personal preference or choice. This type of response filtered into the schools, moving them away from the traditional role of moral educator. At the same time, family unit breakdown increased, as did the role of the media. Many of the values that media promotes are negative (e.g., violence and selfishness). Lickona states that public opinion about values education is swaying back to the traditional school model, and suggests that respect and responsibility need to be incorporated as the fourth and fifth R's (i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic).

One manner of imparting social skills, values, and morals is direct instruction where the teacher uses a systematic approach to instill moral responsibility. In the past, students were taught slogans, promises, codes, and oaths. They would be asked to write stories or make illustrations for specific values. One classic program was "Hutchins's Code" (1916; cited in Pietig, 1983). Class discussions were dedicated to the different "laws" so that the students could apply them to their own lives. Group projects consisted of completing "good deeds" and "clubs" were formed to further encourage positive morals. Since "Hutchins's Code," social skills programs have evolved to focus on behaviour rather than codes and pledges. More recently, Asher and Taylor (1983) have found that direct social skill training is generally successful in helping children who have been rejected or isolated in their peer group change their sociometric status.

Teachers who use explicit teaching methods for social skills education believe that this subject warrants separate instructional time relative to traditional

curriculum. Others prefer less direct methods and incorporate social skills education into the entire school experience. These teachers believe that formal social skills programs might not focus on the specific skills teachers want their students to develop. Also, there is a fear that teachers would choose to follow explicit programs step-by-step, having the entire class learn skills that some students might already know. Formal programs also encourage set periods for instruction. The aim of an integrated approach is to demonstrate how all aspects of school affect the students' character. In contrast, collateral teaching enables teachers to instruct the social skills desired throughout the day as needed, in normal context (Lovitt, 1987).

Pietig (1983) agrees that social skills instruction should permeate all areas of the curriculum, and that it should also be incorporated into all other aspects of school life including extracurricular activities, discipline, and the general organization of the school. Social skills education should also be broadly defined. Merely classifying behaviours as either "right" or "wrong" is not effective, especially when dealing with multicultural groups (i.e., different behaviours may be encouraged by different groups).

Students' Perceptions of Values

The ministry document, Issues and Directions (1980; cited in Personal and Societal Values, 1983) states that teachers are to help students "develop a feeling of self-worth and responsibility, respect for other societal groups and the environment, and values related to personal, ethical, and religious beliefs and the common welfare of society" (p.3). Teachers need to influence students' personal

values as it is these values that most directly affect individuals' beliefs and behaviours.

The specific values that are deemed important tend to vary as a function of students' age. Schuncke and Krogh (1982) reported seven values considered to be important by young children: friendship, rules, property, obeying authority, truth, promises, and sharing. However, the order of priority varied as a function of grade. In Grade 1, the most important values ranged from rules, truth property, authority, sharing, friends to promises. In Grade 5, the order of priority ranged from truth, rules, friends, authority, promises, property to sharing. Knowing the values children consider to be of greatest importance is crucial for developing a successful social skills training program.

Other factors besides students' perceptions of value importance also need to be considered when developing a social skills program. For example, students with a positive self-esteem should be able to reflect on the needs of others and consider other people's perspectives more readily than will than students with low self-esteem. The classroom environment is also important. Behaving in a prosocial manner can create an environment that is conducive to learning and cognitive development because it promotes positive interactions between teachers and students (Wentzel, 1991). Finally, the stage of the students' moral development affects how they view their environment and the people around them.

The Development of Self-Esteem

People tend to behave in a manner that is consistent with their inner perceptions of themselves (Marshall, 1989). How they approach new situations depends on their beliefs about what they can or cannot do, with their success in

these situations influencing future self-perceptions. In other words, it is a circular process. People with low self-concept, or what is often referred to as self-esteem, also tend to have poor mental health, poor academic achievement, and behave in a delinquent manner (Harter 1983; as cited in Marshall 1989).

Maccoby (1980; as cited in Santrock & Yussen, 1978) states that the self-concept of children is initially shaped by such external factors as personal appearance, where they live, and what they do. After the age of six or seven years, the identifying factors become more internal (i.e., their feelings and relationships). Group membership becomes increasingly important and children are strongly affected by their beliefs about how they are viewed by others. Marshall (1989) defines self-concept as the perceptions, feelings, and attitudes individuals have about themselves. Self-concept is shaped by physical and psychological characteristics, gender, and ethnic identity.

Self-esteem, however, reflects people's evaluations about themselves and the manner in which they judge themselves. Self-esteem develops, in part, from perceiving one's self as competent. Equally important, self-esteem also develops from other people's perceptions of the individual's competency and worth. Perceived competence of oneself is also related to personal control. Marshall (1989) states that the degree of personal control individuals believe they have over their own environment is positively related to self-esteem.

Selman (1976; as cited in Santrock & Yussen 1978) believes that there is a developmental sequence to the formation of self-esteem and the ability to see events from other people's perspectives. Between three to six years of age, children are at an egocentric stage where they view themselves as separate from others and are unaware of the feelings of others. After six years, children gradually develop the ability to understand alternative viewpoints. Being able to take another

person's perspective influences how children view themselves and other people. According to Selman (1976; as cited in Schuncke & Krogh, 1985), children as young as seven years begin to reflect on their own thoughts and actions and realize that others can do so as well. Other children may not attain this stage of development until the age of nine. Selman's research has shown that perspective-taking can be facilitated through educational interventions. Selman's interventions focused on classroom discussions of real-life dilemmas. Because the discussions allowed interaction, children were often exposed to "perspective-taking" thought that was at a higher level than their own.

Marshall (1989) suggests that as children advance in the primary grades they become better able to think logically and take the perspectives of others. They slowly move away from the egocentricity of early childhood. The ability to see other people's viewpoints allows children to imagine the way others, especially significant adults and peers, view them. In a school setting, teachers' expectations can influence children's self-esteem in a number of ways. For example, if teachers perceive that certain children can do more than others, they may provide greater learning opportunities to those children thereby directly affecting the children's perceived competence. Another example is informal evaluation. Pointing out the children's best work conveys teacher expectations and can influence students' self-esteem as they are able to compare teacher evaluation with their own self-evaluation. The different learning opportunities teachers provide as well as subtle cues found in the "hidden curriculum" indicate to children what teachers think of them (Marshall, 1989).

Acceptance by teachers and peers has been consistently related to academic achievement. Children who behave in an aggressive manner or children who have been rejected by their peers are usually at high risk for academic failure (Wentzel,

1991). Acceptance by teachers and peers is based largely on the students' prosocial and responsible behaviour. Rejection by teachers or peers is related to students' lack of social skills and behaviour.

The classroom environment also influences the development of self-concept. For instance, Stipek and Daniels (1988) found that in schools where evaluation was based on normative criteria (i.e., grades), students had lower perceptions of their competence than in those schools where grade evaluation was not emphasized. Marshall (1989) states that in classrooms where a wide range of student abilities is stressed, and student autonomy is supported and encouraged, students tend to have a greater sense of their self-worth and cognitive abilities. Self-esteem and competence also seem to be related to peer interaction. Kirchner and Vondraek (1975; as cited in Marshall, 1989) found that older children, who possessed positive self-concept, had a higher social status with their peers than did children with a negative self-concept. Therefore, helping children learn how to interact with peers may positively affect their social self-concept.

Methods for Promoting Positive Self-Esteem

There are several strategies that teachers can use to encourage the development of positive self-concept. For instance, children can be shown they are valued by being asked for their suggestions and opinions. Teachers can reinforce positive and prosocial behaviour so that children can associate these behaviours with themselves. Children can be made to feel competent by being provided with experiences where they can succeed, where they are praised for trying, and where they are explicitly taught strategies to successfully complete tasks. Teachers need to provide opportunities for choice, initiative, and autonomy.

Avoiding comparison and competition ensures that all students will be "winners" (Marshall, 1989).

Peer counseling is another method of building positive self-esteem (Mastroianni & Dinkmeyer, 1980). In peer counseling, students who are interested in working with others are trained techniques to facilitate peer interaction. These students can be used as helpers and tutors. Working with peers in this capacity provides students opportunities to gain a greater confidence in themselves and to feel significant and capable in socially useful ways. Those receiving the extra attention of a helper or tutor are also given the chance to feel wanted and worthwhile.

Self-esteem is largely determined by the opinions and perceptions of others. Rejection by peers can have a devastating effect on the way children view themselves. Teaching children how to work together is another method of encouraging cooperation and respect. Campbell (1990) lists several ways teachers can use group-work successfully, including having teacher-chosen groups where academically weak students are matched with stronger ones, and quiet personalities are paired with louder ones. Presumably, if children are encouraged to rely on each other as opposed to the teacher, they will learn compromise. When a group completes the assigned task, each student should play a role in sharing the group's results. This expectation will encourage all students to try harder to participate and, hopefully, their contributions will make them feel valued and useful.

Often, children are rejected because they lack certain skills or because they "set themselves up" and invite peer rejection by exhibiting unpopular behaviours (Campbell, 1990). In situations such as these, teachers need to spend a little time helping children attain these skills so that they may begin to look at themselves in more positive ways. Often, children do not realize what it is about themselves that

bothers others. These students need to be gently guided through self-examination where they can begin to recognize undesirable behaviours. Most importantly, they need to be provided information about positive behaviours that can replace undesirable ones.

For example, in the elementary grades, children are prone to tattletaling as a method of problem solving. Using a formula of "when...I feel ...and I want..." (Love & Baer, 1991), students are provided with a vehicle to voice their feelings in a positive manner where they can communicate the behaviour that is bothering them without condemning the aggressor (e.g., "When you hit me, I feel upset, and I want it to stop right now"). Love and Baer (1991) also suggest teaching students how assertiveness can be communicated through body language (i.e., standing straight, holding eye contact, calling the person by name, and speaking clearly). Love and Baer found that many of their students began using this formula spontaneously to solve their own problems. Parental feedback also suggested that the students were successfully incorporating the formula strategy in their personal lives. By helping students develop assertiveness, teachers are providing children an opportunity to feel competent and confident in themselves and their ability to problem solve in social situations.

The formula, "when...I feel...and I want..." is also a useful tool for teachers (e.g., "when I hear the class talk, I feel upset because I can't teach well, and I need you to be quiet while I'm talking"). Besides providing a method of communication, it provides the opportunity to model assertive behaviour in the classroom. To better ensure the success of such a program, Love and Baer (1991) encourage communication with parents to explain the goals and objectives of the formula and to encourage its use at home.

Classroom Environment

The manner in which teachers create a classroom environment and establish their expectations influences how children's self-esteem will develop (Lickona, 1988). Children in elementary school want to be viewed as competent and their self-esteem primarily develops from their impressions of what they can do. These impressions are based on the recognition they receive from their parents, teachers, and peers. Their beliefs about themselves and their abilities influence how they view new situations, with their successes in new situations influencing their self-perceptions. The potential impact of a teacher on these perceptions is great, especially for children with unhappy backgrounds (Wassermann n, 1987). In a classroom environment where teachers treat children with respect, those children feel respected. When children receive recognition for what they do and for choices they make, they feel valued. If children believe their teacher respects them and the decisions they make, they begin to respect themselves, which in turn, empowers them (Wassermann n, 1987).

During the elementary school years, children become better able to think about possible alternatives and consequences when problem solving, yet they continue to be frequently unaware of the ways they hurt others (Lickona, 1988). Therefore, teachers should encourage a classroom environment where there are cooperative relationships and mutual respect as opposed to egocentric behaviours.

Development of positive self-esteem is contingent on a positive sense of community, where an atmosphere of mutual respect helps children feel valued by their peers (Lickona, 1988). In this kind of setting it is easier for children to feel good about themselves, thereby making it more likely for them to want, and know how, to be "good." Presumably, children develop self-respect in an environment

where they have positive perceptions of both their competence and their positive behaviours towards others. An environment promoting a sense of community also helps children become better able to take the perspective of others as well as develop moral reasoning skills, prosocial skills, and other moral values including kindness, courtesy, trustworthiness, and responsibility (Lickona, 1988).

An environment that facilitates the development of prosocial skills gives children the opportunity to discuss why people, themselves included, sometimes act in negative ways (e.g., cheating, treating others badly, stealing). Students need to be challenged to defend and explain their moral reasoning so that they may reflect upon the validity of their beliefs. Students also need to be provided opportunities to participate in making rules and decisions for the classroom. Such occasions would help children apply their moral reasoning skills to their own behaviours as well as the behaviours of their peers (Lickona, 1988).

It is important to remember that children need to actively participate in the development of their personal values. The classroom needs to reflect an interactive environment that encourages students to think about values. Classroom rules should illustrate and encourage respect of self and others. For example, the rule, "listen while someone is speaking," implies that what every person has to say is important and that everyone is special. Similarly, the rule, "share class supplies," encourages equality, cooperation, and selflessness.

Classroom rules help to establish an environment conducive to learning. Rules for teacher-student and peer relationships should focus on consideration, cooperation, sharing, and problem solving in a prosocial manner. Wentzel (1991) cites Le Compte's (1978a, 1978b) findings that the majority of students understand the importance of following instructions and behaving responsibly. Indeed, students associate prosocial behaviour with academic competence.

Holmes (1991) discusses the importance of developing a democratic classroom. Such an environment teaches children the knowledge, values, and behaviours that a democratic society expects from its citizens. Included in these are the concepts of individual rights, responsibilities, and respect for self and others. In a democratic classroom, children learn that to be responsible involves thinking about the good of the group as well as themselves. Responsibility helps develop an internal locus of control, which in turn fosters the development of positive self-esteem. Holmes suggests that, in a democratic classroom, children develop a sense of belonging because they possess a concern for the greater group as opposed to just themselves. In addition, they participate in group activities and work on solving problems relevant to their daily lives.

Holmes's ideas support the work Maslow (1970; cited in Wortman & Loftus, 1981). Maslow stated that there is a hierarchy of needs such that basic needs must be satisfied before higher ones can be obtained. Once a person satisfies the fundamental physical needs of food, shelter, security and safety, psychological needs may be fulfilled. Psychological needs are those involving the development of a sense of belonging, competence, and a positive self-esteem. The final step in Maslow's hierarchy is self-actualization, where individuals work to fulfill their unique potential.

Methods for Promoting a Positive Classroom Environment

To establish an environment where individuals strive towards self actualization, teachers need to demonstrate concern and compassion (Holmes, 1991). They need to demonstrate that they value their students' viewpoints and emotions. In addition, teachers need to incorporate classroom discussions, democratic decision

making, modeling, and the opportunity to consider why certain behaviours are desirable in society.

In group discussions, students can look at their rights and responsibilities as well as the importance of showing respect for self and others. Democratic decision making involves solving class problems and planning activities as a group as opposed to the teacher establishing all the rules (Holmes, 1991). Teachers, themselves, need to model desired behaviours and encourage those actions in their students. Finally, if students understand why a behaviour is important in society, they will be more likely to incorporate that behaviour into their personal system of values and morals.

Cooperative learning is a method of teaching whereby small groups of students work cooperatively in teams toward academic goals. In measuring attitudes towards social relations and schoolwork, cooperative learning techniques, even if used for only a short period of time, generally resulted in more favourable classroom environments than did traditional instruction (e.g., Zahn, Kagan, & Widaman, 1986). Using a classroom attitude scale, Zahn et al. compared cooperative classrooms with traditional classrooms and found that cooperative classrooms scored higher on social relations (e.g., "Many students in my class like me") and schoolwork (e.g., "I usually like school"). Female students, in particular, tended to score higher on social relations.

Moral Development

Kohlberg states that moral development takes the form of stages. Kohlberg's stages are fixed and invariable, although not all individuals attain the higher levels of moral development. Individuals' biological composition and environmental

experiences interact to produce a state/stage of thought. This state of thought influences how a person interprets the world, with each stage representing a more complex organization of thought. Individuals progress from one stage to another when they recognize inconsistencies and faults in the way they view the world. This state of unbalance helps a person develop new skills and cognitive abilities with which a deeper moral understanding can occur (Santrock & Yussen, 1978).

There are three major levels in Kohlberg's theory of moral development, each with two stages. The first level is the preconventional level. In Stages 1 and 2, individuals have no internalization of moral values. Moral thinking is based on external rewards and punishments. Children at this stage would say that people should not steal because if they get caught, they would be sent to jail. The second level is the conventional level. In Stages 3 and 4, moral standards are dictated by the approval/disapproval of others. Individuals abide by these standards without the extrinsic factors of reward. Children at this stage would argue that stealing is bad because it would hurt family and result in their disapproval. The final level is the postconventional level. In Stages 5 and 6, morality has become completely internalized and is not based on the standards of others. Individuals at this stage would argue against stealing by saying that it would result in the loss of self-respect and the violation of personal principles (Kohlberg, 1969; cited in Wortman & Loftus, 1981).

Kohlberg's theory has been criticized on several aspects. Because the theory focuses on Western culture and values, it is culturally biased (Simpson, 1974; cited in Hall, Perlmutter, & Lamb, 1982). There is no conclusive evidence that exposure to higher levels of moral thought will help children to reach that level more quickly. Responses are difficult to score and stages within a level are difficult to distinguish. Also, it appears that all people do not pass through the developmental stages in

their prescribed order, with some people regressing to earlier stages under stressful circumstances.

For example, although Krebs, Vermeulen, Carpendale, and Denton (1991) agree that moral judgment tends to follow Kohlberg's stages, previous stages are not displaced once a new stage has been attained, as Kohlberg suggests. Moral judgment appears to be the result of the interaction between the structure of stages and the structure of dilemmas. Individuals retain the structures from previous stages and use them in certain situations. For example, in the Impaired Driving dilemma, a man realizes that he has had too much to drink and is over the legal alcohol limit to drive home. In response to the question, "what should the man do?", Krebs et al. found that subjects who had demonstrated Stage 4 competence on Kohlberg's test made Stage 2 judgments on the Impaired Driving Dilemma. Krebs et al. concluded that people do not always perform at their optimal level of moral competence. Rather, the individuals' attained stages interact together and with such factors as their personality, self-interest, and the type of moral situations encountered. In terms of the Impaired Driving dilemma, the social messages against drinking and driving are based on low-level moral structures that are consequence-based justifications (e.g., "you might kill yourself or someone else, or lose your driver's license, or go to jail").

Another criticism focuses on gender-related biases (Gilligan, 1977; cited in Hall, et al., 1982). Females do not show the expected pattern of movement through the stages and are therefore at an immediate disadvantage when being placed in Kohlberg's levels of moral reasoning. The values of compassion, responsibility, and obligation are more likely to be stressed in the socialization of females than in males, but Kohlberg has assigned these values to the conventional level. Women

who base their reasoning on these values are therefore automatically placed in a low level of moral development.

Methods for Promoting Moral Development

Kohlberg developed a moral education training program. Using a step-by-step method, he attempted to help children achieve a higher level of moral reasoning by encouraging them to use more complex thinking skills. The main feature of Kohlberg's program is the discussion of controversial moral issues. The teacher focuses students' attention using hypothetical moral dilemmas. Discussion is then encouraged between students of different stages of moral development. Finally, the teacher helps students consider the reasoning they used to solve the moral conflicts. During the program, it is important for the teacher to communicate with students at a level of moral reasoning that is one level above their own. Kohlberg believes that this type of discussion will force children to experience a cognitive imbalance, thereby encouraging them to seek higher levels of moral reasoning (Pietig, 1980).

Research suggests that children's moral thought can be increased via exposure to models or discussion more advanced than their own. Denton (1991) compared four moral educational programs (teacher/experimenter guided moral discussion, class discussion, role-playing with experimenters, and role playing with peers) based on Kohlberg's theory. All of these programs attempt to create cognitive disequilibrium, provide experience with people possessing higher stages of moral reasoning, and involve discussion of moral dilemmas.

In the teacher/experimenter guided moral discussion, small groups of individuals who are at approximately the same level of moral development are led by the

teacher in a discussion of moral dilemmas. The teacher presents the dilemmas and then facilitates discussion by suggesting questions and judgments that reflect a higher level of reasoning.

Class discussion incorporates the variance in moral reasoning that one would naturally expect to find in a classroom to create an imbalance in children's viewpoints about a critical moral dilemma. Presumably, class discussion would expose each child to a higher level of reasoning. In this method, it is important that the teacher does not offer any moral judgments. Denton (1991) states that peer influence is the key to success and not the power figure that the teacher represents.

Role-playing encourages children to role-take with two adult leaders. The children are told to ask for advice in a hypothetical dilemma. The adults provide advice at a stage higher than that of the children's. Role-playing with peers pairs students with others who are at higher levels of moral development. In this program, the first student is required to ask advice in hypothetical dilemmas while the second student replaces the adult as the one offering advice.

In her review, Denton (1991) found that the teacher/experimenter guided moral discussion approach was the most successful in promoting moral values. Class discussion was the second most successful. Denton suggests that these two methods guaranteed that students were exposed to higher levels of moral reasoning, whereas the two role-playing methods leave this exposure to chance. Also, having the teacher question children about their moral judgments, forced the children to consider the consistencies and inconsistencies of their logic. This self-examination is important for moral development.

It is important to have students think about morals and values. Such thoughts can be encouraged by having students role-play, discuss moral dilemmas, and

share their personal experiences. By having students reflect about values and morals, they begin to ask questions, think about feelings, and sympathize with others (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1983). With exposure and practice to different social situations, students are better able to choose an appropriate social response to a specific situation and to evaluate the consequences of that choice. This may be a novel experience for many students who often believe that there is only one way to react to a situation and that they are not responsible for the outcome.

Smith and Brett (1980) examined Kohlberg's theory of moral development in order to deduce characteristics of an educational environment that are conducive to the acquisition of socially desired values. Smith and Brett concluded that the ideal educational setting is one in which students play active roles in planning, discipline, and classroom decision-making. For this to occur, the teacher must adopt the role of facilitator and guide, and not the role of authoritarian.

Sharp (1984) also recommends that students should be involved in the process of inquiry and dialogue. This way, students can discover for themselves the importance of social values by using an inquiry process. The teacher's responsibility is to provide the class with experiences and situations about which they can dialogue. Students should also be actively involved in dramatizing different situations from which values can be discovered.

Teaching Social Skills in the Classroom

Many social skills education programs require students to be active participants. Schuncke and Krogh (1985) and Kulik (1991) recommend using a structured program in which students can develop strategies that promote prosocial

behaviours. First, students should brainstorm about how to deal with specific dilemmas that occur in their lives. Once strategies have been developed, the class reviews their choices and makes decisions about effective techniques. After this discussion, the teacher leads a role-play that is relevant to the students' daily interactions. Discussion then revolves around the results of the role play. The skill and strategies are then reinforced by having students participate in the role-playing.

Schuncke and Krogh (1985) cite research that indicates structured discussion and role-play positively affect children's perspective-taking abilities and their judgment concerning moral issues. Krogh's study (cited in Schuncke and Krogh, 1985) looked at first, second, and third grade students. Students from each of the three grade levels were put into three heterogeneous groups. Of the three groups, one received structured discussion intervention, one received role-play intervention, and the third received no intervention. This third group was the class with regular instruction. Pretest and posttest data indicated that both role-play and structured discussion produced significant gains in students' perspective-taking and justice reasoning abilities compared to students assigned to the class with regular instruction.

Through this explicit method of teaching social skills, teachers discuss such skills as listening, following instructions, using self-control, problem solving, trying harder, and dealing with feelings (Kulik, 1991). Social skills programs do not just assist those students with behavioural problems. Indeed, it is the cooperative students, who must deal with the disruptive behaviour, who are helped. These students increasingly try to use the techniques discussed in solving the problems when interacting with disruptive children.

Children's literature is also an effective vehicle for demonstrating the effects of different values and behaviours as it is able to transcend and accommodate most boundaries imposed by age and different stages of cognitive development (McMillan & Gentile, 1988). Children's stories are filled with themes of honesty, courage, respect, kindness, sharing, forgiveness, and public service and they can provide students with moral dilemmas, emotions, and social concerns. Literature also provides children as well as adults, with vicarious experiences in handling different situations that could be relevant to their own lives. Children may also find characters or storylines that deal with similar problems or feelings that they themselves are experiencing. In the sharing of stories, students should be encouraged to discuss courses of action, and predict potential outcomes, thereby promoting the development of critical and ethical thinking (McMillan & Gentile, 1988).

Another strategy to make a social skills program more effective is to have activities and materials that would provide students with opportunities to practice the skills being discussed, either through drama or writing. These activities should also encourage the students to think about the good of others and society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1983).

Oden and Asher (1977) used a "coaching" strategy, where children worked in pairs in a game-playing situation to learn social skills. Specifically, children were taught several social skills (e.g., cooperation, participation, and communication) and were then given the opportunity to practice these skills in game-playing sessions. After each session, review and discussion were used to analyze the children's use of the target skills. The overall results of this research indicated that coaching was effective in increasing peer acceptance for isolated children.

Lovitt (1987) lists coaching as well as modeling, reinforcement, and cognitive behaviour modification as possible strategies for teaching social skills. For example, teachers can coach children in the steps of listening to someone (i.e., looking interested, maintaining eye contact, and asking questions). After children are given the opportunity to practice this skill, they receive feedback about how they performed. Modeling enables students to watch the teacher demonstrate desired behaviours and then discuss the importance of them. Teachers then provide praise or points to reinforce the display of desired behaviours (e.g., cooperating, taking turns, helping one another, or apologizing). Cognitive behaviour modification focuses on students managing their own social instruction. By setting their own objectives and monitoring their own behaviours, students become independent and learn to take responsibility for their behaviours. When students "self-manage," there is greater chance that they will generalize the learned skills from one situation to another (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; cited in Lovitt, 1987).

Another cognitive behaviour modification technique is self-talk (Meichenbaum & Goodman, 1971; cited in Meichenbaum & Burland, 1979). Children are taught to talk to themselves as a means of developing self-control using the following steps: 1) adult models first perform a task while talking to themselves; 2) children perform the same task under adult supervision; 3) children perform the same task while instructing themselves out loud; 4) children whisper instructions to themselves; and finally, 5) children perform the task with private speech or nonverbal self-direction. In the Meichenbaum and Goodman (1971) study, the group receiving self-instructional training showed significant improvements at posttest measures, relative to the control and placebo groups. That group also used spontaneous self-talk strategies in the posttest and follow-up sessions.

There are many social skills programs available to teachers. No single treatment, however, is effective for everyone. Effectiveness of social skills training procedures varies considerably among students as a function of their age, gender, and degree of social skill deficiency (Elliott et al., 1989). Generally, the most effective techniques tend to be reinforcement, modeling, coaching, and social-cognitive methods, in that order (Elliott et al., 1989).

Bulkeley and Cramer (1990) investigated social skills training with young adolescents. The treatment group consisted of nine students (six boys, three girls) in the 12-13 year age range who had an identified social skills difficulty (i.e., "unable to make friends"). The class with regular instruction (similar subject makeup as the treatment group) had no identified social skills difficulty. Treatment involved role-play, observation, participation, and discussion. Each treatment session lasted 75 minutes, and there were 10 sessions in total. Subjects were given positive reinforcement, both verbal and non-verbal, whenever possible. At the end of the treatment, significant differences were between pretest and posttest scores on a social skills questionnaire completed by the students' homeroom teachers and a student self-report. These results showed that both students and teachers believed the treatment group was more socially skilled as a result of the treatment. There was no change in the scores of the class with regular instruction.

In response to the need for assistance in helping children develop social skills, community services and school boards have developed different programs. Several programs are presently discussed. All of these programs contain a high degree of student participation

Community and School Board Programs

Peacemakers (Fine, Lacey, Baer & Rother, 1991/1992) originated in a downtown alternative school in Toronto. It is a program that attempts to help children develop the language and social skills necessary to problem solve and cooperate. Fine et al. found that children had limited resources to resolve problems with peers. The peacemakers are students who enter a conflict and ask specific questions in an effort to solve the issue (e.g., "Do you want to try to solve this problem? No interruptions? No running away? No name calling? No plugging your ears? Tell the truth."). If the children involved in the conflict agree to follow the rules, the peacemakers lead them through a structured exercise. Although not all problems can be solved with this method, Fine et al. noticed that the school community became more caring as the Peacemaker program continued and students began to internalize the problem-solving strategies. They also found that the language and experiences of the peacemaking process extended to a wide range of problem-solving tasks.

Friends in the Neighbourhood is a primary level social skills program for kindergarten developed by the Niagara Child Development Centre. It is a six-week systematic program designed to teach some basic skills needed for successful peer relationships (e.g., listening, sharing, helping, asking others to play, and problem solving). The skills are taught using puppets, modeling, role playing, practice, and reinforcement. Specifically, the instructor presents the skill through puppet role play. The children are then asked to discuss the behaviour of the puppets and what strategies the puppets used. Following class feedback, a child and adult repeat the puppet play, after which the class discusses an inappropriate skill (i.e., yelling out instead of going to a person and asking them to play). The next step

involves a child/child role play demonstrating the correct skill. The lesson is concluded with generalization and reinforcement. The children are asked to practice the new skill during a free time session.

Skill-Streaming (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984; as cited in McGinnis, Sauerbry, & Nichols, 1984/85) uses structured learning techniques to teach social skills. Two adult models demonstrate specific steps in a social skill, which students then learn to a mastery level. Students then practice the steps through role-playing situations in which they may use the skill. Feedback is given as students discuss how the skills were performed. Practice in real-life situations through structured homework assignments allows children to further assimilate the skills, after which approval is given to reinforce the use of the skill.

Practical Social Skills for Students in Schools (Kulik, 1991) also incorporates role play and class discussion and is similar to McGinnis and Goldstein's program (1984). It is a teacher-guided program that discusses listening, following instructions, using self-control, problem solving, trying harder, and dealing with feelings. Students brainstorm possible strategies for dealing with a particular situation using a specific skill. The instructor and the classroom teacher role play a scenario depicting the use of the skill. The class then discusses the success of the strategy used. The skill is reinforced through student role-play, followed by class discussion about the strategies used and their effectiveness. Kulik's program is suitable for any grade level.

No empirical evidence was found in the review of the literature about the success of these particular programs. These social skill programs do use reinforcement, modeling, and coaching, techniques found to be effective in offsetting social skills deficiencies (Elliott et al., 1989). Presumably, the use of these techniques would make these programs successful.

Summary of Literature Reviewed

In summary, there is literature on social skills development supporting both explicit instruction (e.g., Asher & Taylor, 1983; Denton, 1991; Schuncke & Krogh, 1985) and integrated instruction (e.g., Pietig, 1983; Lovitt, 1987). Regardless of which method is preferred, students' self-esteem, levels of moral development, and the classroom environment interact to dictate the specific need for social skills programs and how they should be implemented.

Children develop a positive self-esteem when they view themselves as competent and when they perceive that others believe that they are competent as well. It may be said that individuals must think well of themselves before they can think positively of others. When children are able to take the perspective of others, they are able to develop higher levels of moral development. Presumably, children at higher stages of moral development have more competence in social skills and therefore have more positive interpersonal relationships than children at lower stages of moral development. Positive relationships would create a classroom environment more conducive to learning, one which would also promote moral growth and social skill development. In return, a classroom environment that promotes positive experiences would encourage success and therefore help students develop a positive self-esteem.

Present Study

The present study investigated the effects of a formal social skills training program on a Grade 3 class. Specifically, the study looked at whether positive changes in self-esteem, moral development, and classroom environment occur

when formal training in social skills is administered over an extended period of time. In order to have a valid comparison, a second Grade 3 class was used as a class with regular instruction, where no formal social skills program was used. Pretests and posttests were administered to both groups in order to obtain empirical data on self-esteem, moral development, and classroom environment. A 30-day posttest was administered one month after treatment to ascertain whether the social skills training program had any long-term effects. A mixed model ANOVA was carried out to determine if there are any significant changes within and between the control and social skills training groups that may be attributed to one group receiving the social skills training program.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The following chapter presents the purpose of the present study, makeup of subjects in the control and social skills training groups, assessment tools, procedure used for carrying out the study, discussion about data analysis procedures, and a discussion of the study's limitations.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether formal social skills instruction positively affects Grade 3 students' self-esteem, moral development, and perceptions of classroom environment relative to informal social skills instruction.

Subjects

The subjects were from two Grade 3 classes in the same school, with one class serving as the class with regular instruction and the other class serving as the social skills training group. The social skills training group contained 18 students (ten boys, eight girls) at pretest, 16 students (eight boys, eight girls) at the immediate posttest, and 17 students at the 30-day posttest (nine boys, eight girls). The age mean was 7.94 and the standard deviation was 0.443. The class with regular instruction contained 14 students (seven boys, seven girls) at pretest, nine students at the immediate posttest (five boys, four girls), and 10 students at the 30-

day posttest (six boys, four girls). The differences in the number of classes with regular instruction students between the different test times are due to absences and two of the students having moved. The mean for the students' ages was 8.0, the standard deviation was 0.0.

The assignment of classes was not truly random as class participation in the study was dependent on teacher agreement. It was understood that the classes would not be completely homogeneous since there were two different teachers involved, each of them having their own unique style, preferences, and expectations. The teacher in the social skills training group was a first-year teacher in her mid twenties. The teacher in the class with regular instruction was a 23-year veteran who has taught as a primary teacher in the same school for her entire career. Generally, however, the two classes were approximately equal with respect to important student characteristics, including behavioural problems, gender, and academic ability, as these factors are considered when class lists are created.

Materials

Assessment Tools

Students were also asked to complete the Self-Perception Profile for Children, "What I Am Like" survey (Harter, 1985) as a measure of self-esteem. In this questionnaire, students were given two statements from which they were instructed to choose the one that was most like them (e.g., "Some kids would rather play outdoors in their spare time" or "Other kids would rather watch TV"). For each statement, the children then checked if the statement was "sort of true for me" or

"really true for me." Data from the thirty-six questions fall into six subscales: scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavioural conduct, and global self-worth. Items in the questionnaire are scored with 4, 3, 2, or 1, where 4 represents the most adequate self-judgment and 1 represents the least adequate self-judgment. Internal Consistency Reliability measures for this instrument are acceptable, ranging between 0.71 to 0.86 for the six subscales.

The My Class Inventory (Fraser & Fisher, 1983) is a measure of classroom environment. This questionnaire required students to answer "yes" or "no" to 38 statements about their classroom (e.g., "Children in our class like each other as friends"). The students' homeroom teachers also completed this survey. Questionnaire responses fall into five subscales: cohesiveness (e.g., "Some people in my class are not my friends"), friction (e.g., "Some children don't like other children"), difficulty (e.g., "In our class the work is hard to do"), satisfaction (e.g., "Most children say the class is fun"), and competitiveness (e.g., "Some children don't care who finishes first"). The items in the questionnaire are scored 3 for "yes" and 1 for "no." Invalid or omitted answers are scored 2. The scores for items of the same subscale are added together to give a total score for that scale. Reliability measures for the individual students and classes range between 0.62 and 0.78, and 0.73 and 0.88, respectively. These numbers fall into a satisfactory range for reliability.

Students also completed the Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form questionnaire (Gibbs, 1991) to ascertain the students' level of moral development. The questionnaire required students to consider two moral dilemmas (similar to those used by Kohlberg) and to complete twelve question arrays about them. Each question array included four response options representative of moral

Stages 1 through 4. Students indicated whether each response was "close," "not close," or "not sure" to their reasoning about the question. Students then indicated which of the four options was "closest" to their own thinking. For example, students were asked to consider whether a person should do everything possible, even break the law, to save the life of a stranger. One of the response options was "because you should always be nice." Students had to rate the statement as "close," "not close," or "not sure" to their own reasoning. Items in each protocol were added together and averaged.

Basinger and Gibbs (1987) found that the Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form was a reliable and valid measure of reflective moral reasoning for 11th-graders but it was not a reliable or valid measure for sixth-grade children. Knowing this, the researcher read the questionnaire verbally to the Grade 3 students in this study, and allowed them to ask questions in order to help students understand what was being asked of them.

A 16-item behavioural checklist was used to assess classroom conduct of children in both groups (listed in Appendix C). The checklist was developed by the researcher to help determine what kinds of prosocial behaviours were, or were not, present in the classroom (e.g., conflict resolution, problem-solving strategies, and following instructions). The items chosen for the checklist were frequent classroom behaviours noticed in the researcher's personal experiences as a classroom teacher.

The teacher of the social skills training group was asked to complete a journal during the course of the social skills training program. The journal was analyzed to see whether any change in noticeable change in behaviour occurred as a function of the program. Interviews with the classroom teachers were held midway through the program and at the conclusion of the program. Like the journal, the interviews

were compared to see whether any behavioural changes had occurred as a function of formal social skills training.

Social Skills Program

Children assigned to the experimental classroom participated in the Practical Social Skills for Students in Schools training program (Kulik, 1991; listed in Appendix D). This program discussed a variety of prosocial behaviours and strategies (e.g., listening, following instructions, using self-control, problem solving, trying harder, and dealing with feelings), and addresses many dilemmas that occur in students' lives.

The social skills instructor followed the following format for each lesson: 1) brainstorm why the skill is important; 2) list the steps involved in the skill; 3) teacher modeling of the skill; 4) class discussion evaluating the strategies used; 5) student role-play; 6) class discussion of the strategies used. For example, in the lesson on listening skills, the social skills instructor led students in a brainstorming session on the importance of listening in class. Together, the instructor and students listed the steps involved in listening (e.g., "look at the person speaking, be quiet and pay attention to what is being said, think about what the person is saying, and finally, ask questions if there is anything you do not understand"). The instructor and classroom teacher then demonstrated the steps of listening in a role-play. The class discussed the success of the strategies used in the role-play and listed other possible alternatives. Several groups of students then role-played different scenarios using the same strategies. After each role-play, the class discussed the success of the strategies and reviews the steps involved in listening. The next lesson started with a review of listening skills. Depending on class needs, the

social skills instructor would either continue discussion and practice of listening skills and strategies or move on to another social skill.

Kulik's program was selected because it is teacher-guided, incorporates drama, class discussion, and requires students to actively participate in the lessons. Denton (1991) found that teacher-guided instruction and class discussion were the two most effective techniques for enhancing moral reasoning. Presumably, incorporating drama will also encourage students to consider value issues within the realm of their personal experiences.

The teacher of the experimental class completed a journal describing how the social skills program was progressing and whether the students were internalizing the skills and strategies outlined in the program. Both the experimental and class with regular instruction classroom teachers were also interviewed twice about their perceptions of change in the classroom environment. One interview was held at approximately halfway through the program and the other was held at the end of the program. Both teachers were asked the following questions:

1. Do you notice any difference in behaviour from September to now?
2. Do you notice any difference from the onset of the program?
3. Is there an increase or decrease in the degree of occurrence of such behaviours as aggression, fighting, name calling?
4. Is the classroom environment better/worse/same since September? In what way?
5. Was the program helpful or would the program be helpful? In what way?

The interviews were carried out to determine whether there were any changes in the classroom environment and students' social skills as a function of participating in the social skills program.

Procedure

The researcher used the behavioural checklist to observe and assess students' classroom behaviours in both the experimental and class with regular instructions. Specifically, the checklist was used in eight, 30-minute observation sessions (four sessions per group) prior to the start of the program. Data from this checklist demonstrated the frequency of selected social and problem-solving skills. A second observer was present for two of the sessions for each group to control for observer biases. The behavioural checklist was also used at the end of the program. Again, a second observer was present for two sessions per group. Data from this checklist were used to help determine whether there was a greater occurrence of the prosocial skills (or at least fewer anti-social behaviours) in the experimental classroom as a function of participating in the social skills program.

The two questionnaires, Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985) and My Class Inventory (Fraser & Fisher, 1983), were administered on three occasions: at pretest, at immediate posttest and at posttest 2. The Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form (Gibbs, 1991) was only administered at the pretest and immediate posttest. The students experienced a high degree of difficulty answering the questionnaire, even with it being read verbally and, consequently, there were a great number of invalid responses on the first two measures. As a result, the questionnaire was not administered at the 30-day posttest.

The Self-Perception Profile for Children and My Class Inventory each took approximately 30 minutes to complete and were administered verbally by the researcher to guarantee that all students processed information at least once regardless of reading level. The Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form was also administered verbally and took approximately 90 minutes to

complete. The questionnaires were handed out to each student and were also displayed on overhead transparencies so that students had a visual guide. Students were assured that the questionnaires were not tests.

For the My Class Inventory, students were asked to consider each question as it pertained to their classroom, with the terms "most," "some" and "often" being emphasized (e.g., "*Most* children can do their schoolwork without help"). After considering the statements, the students were asked to respond "yes" or "no." In the survey, Self-Perception Profile for Children, students were instructed to read conflicting statements, select the one most like them and fill in one of the two response boxes. For example, given the statement, "Some kids find it *hard* to make friends BUT other kids find it pretty *easy* to make friends," the children were asked to pick which statement was most like them. They were then asked to mark "really true for me" or "sort of true for me" for the statement they chose. In the Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form, students were read the questions and then asked to circle one response option. For example, given the question "How important is it to do everything you can, even break the law, to save the life of a friend?", students were asked to circle one of the following responses, "very important" / "important" / and "not important." Students were given the opportunity to ask questions to clarify any part of the surveys they did not understand. Having students in the class with regular instruction complete these instruments was important in that the classroom atmosphere tends to improve spontaneously as the school year progresses and children settle into routines.

The two classroom teachers also completed the My Class Inventory questionnaire. The survey was not read to the teachers, rather they completed them on their own time. They were asked to simply answer the questions "yes" or "no," as pertaining to their classroom. The questionnaire was given at pretest and

the immediate posttest in order to determine whether they perceived change in the classroom atmosphere as a function of the social skills program. The questionnaire was not given at the 30-day posttest because the teacher of the social skills training group had left the school.

The treatment was administered to the experiment group by both the classroom teacher and Ann Kulik, author of the social skills program. The program lasted for approximately 12 weeks. Each lesson in the social skills program followed the same format. Students brainstormed possible strategies for dealing with a specific situation (e.g., listening, following instructions, trying harder). The instructor and the classroom teacher role-played a scenario depicting the use of a specific skill, after which the class discussed the success of the strategy used. Students then role-played several other situations using other possible strategies. Following the student role-play, the class again discussed the success of the strategies and reviewed the steps of the skill taught. The instructor either taught a new skill each week or reviewed a previous skill. The classroom teacher provided follow-up activities during the week to reinforce the new skill and its strategies. For example, she would have the students record the steps and role-play specific situations which had occurred on the playground. The class was also able to earn a reward by earning a specified number of points for exhibiting the new skills. In one instance, the classroom teacher gave an unspecified number of points when students exhibited a specific social skill (e.g., listening) either individually or as a group, and marked the points on a thermometer. When the points reached the top of the thermometer, the class earned a popcorn party.

During the course of the social skills training program, the class with regular instruction continued with the regular curriculum. Social skills were dealt with as difficulties arose or specific misbehaviours needed to be corrected.

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using a 2(treatment) by 3(time) split plot ANOVA as well as posthoc q -tests. Specifically, the Tukey-Kramer Modified HSD test was used because of the unequal n 's in the control and social skills training groups. The analysis would determine whether there has been any significant change in the dependent variables (i.e., self-esteem, moral development, and classroom environment) between and within each classroom. It was expected that the group receiving formal social skills instruction would undergo greater positive change in the dependent variables than the group not receiving formal instruction.

The data from the behavioural checklist, teacher interviews and the journal of the social skills training group teacher were analyzed to see how the classroom teachers perceived changes in their classroom as a function of the social skills training program. The data were used to descriptively support and confirm the major research findings.

Limitations in the Study

There are several limitations in this study. The small subject sample and unequal number of statistics in each condition could affect the ability of the statistics to define any clear relationships or generalizations among the variables.

The difficulty level of the Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form questionnaire (Gibbs, 1991) made it impossible to gather valid data on the development in moral reasoning. Even with the researcher reading the questionnaire verbally, the students generally could not answer the questions in a

consistent manner necessary for scoring. As a result, changes in this dependent measure could not be analyzed.

Class makeup determines success of any program. The relationships among the students and their different personalities will affect how the social skills program will be received and internalized. Some students will internalize the target skills more quickly than others and be more successful in generalizing those behaviours to different situations. Also, a class containing a greater number of students with social skills deficits would need a more intense training program before seeing some success than a class where the students are at the same level of social skills development and exhibit more desirable behaviours.

Another limitation may be students' previous experiences. Some of the students have been exposed to Kulik's social skills program in the past (i.e., in Grade 2), and the potential differences between their pretest and posttest measures may be influenced as a result. Specifically, these students may have already internalized some of the target skills from the previous grade and, as a result, scored higher on their pretest than students who had not received previous exposure to the training program.

Finally, experience, expectations and tolerance of behaviour vary between the two teachers involved in the study. It is probable that the teachers' different experiences and personal preferences will influence their opinions of the level of change within their classrooms. For instance, the teacher of the social skills training group may view certain behaviours as more problematic than the teacher of the class with regular instruction. Especially as a first-year teacher, she may have a more limited view of how children should behave in a Grade 3 classroom. The teacher of the class with regular instruction, having had more years of experience, may see a greater number of behaviours as being acceptable.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

The results from this study are presented in six sections. First, the findings from the Self-Perception Profile questionnaire are presented. Next, the findings from the My Class Inventory questionnaire and the Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form questionnaire are presented. Finally, a summation of the behavioural checklist will precede the journal of the social skills training group teacher and the teacher interviews.

Student Self-Perception Profile

The Student Self-Perception Profile provides for six subscales: scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavioural conduct, and global self-worth. Table 1 lists the means and standard deviations for each subscale as a function of experimental condition and test time.

There were no significant main effects for either condition or time on the Scholastic Competence subscale, $F(1, 27)=1.71$, $p>.05$ and $F(2, 54)=1.35$, $p>.05$, respectively. Nor was there a significant interaction between condition and time, $F(2, 54)=.96$, $p>.05$.

For the Social Acceptance subscale, there were no significant main effects for condition, time, or interaction between condition and time, $F(1, 27)=.08$, $p>.05$, $F(2, 54)=1.97$, $p>.05$, and $F(2, 54)=1.83$, $p>.05$, respectively.

There were no significant condition or time main effects for the Athletic Competence subscale, $F(1, 27)=.76$, $p>.05$, $F(2, 54)=.26$, $p>.05$,

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Self-Perception Profile as a Function of Experimental Conditions

Condition		Pretest	Immediate Posttest	30-Day Posttest
Scholastic Competence				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	2.747	2.688	2.788
	<u>SD</u>	.678	1.002	.658
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	2.775	2.050	2.442
	<u>SD</u>	.992	1.461	1.099
Social Acceptance				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	2.435	2.406	2.635
	<u>SD</u>	.613	.909	.626
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	2.883	2.000	2.408
	<u>SD</u>	1.032	1.369	1.077
Athletic Competence				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	2.718	2.824	2.700
	<u>SD</u>	.502	1.034	.685
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	2.725	2.283	2.558
	<u>SD</u>	1.029	1.444	1.194
Physical Appearance				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	3.059	2.824	2.959
	<u>SD</u>	.699	1.194	.767
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	2.917	2.333	2.567
	<u>SD</u>	1.142	1.621	1.184
Behavioural Conduct				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	2.859	2.353	2.912
	<u>SD</u>	.654	.943	.765
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	2.933	1.975	2.658
	<u>SD</u>	1.072	1.452	1.133
Global Self-Worth				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	3.035	2.924	3.200
	<u>SD</u>	.642	1.078	.557
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	3.050	3.200	2.825
	<u>SD</u>	1.176	.557	1.132

M = mean score; SD = standard deviation

respectively. There was also no significant interaction between condition and time, $F(2,54)=.74$, $p>.05$.

For the Physical Appearance subscale, there were no significant main effects or interaction effect. The F values for condition, time, and interaction were: $F(1, 27)=1.21$, $p>.05$, $F(2, 54)=1.46$, $p>.05$, $F(2, 54)=.28$, $p>.05$.

There was no significant effect for condition on the Behavioural Conduct scale, $F(1, 27)=.76$, $p>.05$. There was, however, a significant main effect for time, $F(2, 54)=4.33$, $MSe=9.75$, $p<.01$. There was a significant difference for both groups between pretest and the immediate posttest, $g=3.77$, $p<.05$. Both groups saw their behaviour as worsening. There was also a significant difference for both groups between the immediate posttest and the 30-day posttest, $g=3.327$, $p<.05$. Both groups believed their behaviour had improved since the immediate posttest. There was no significant interaction between condition and time $F(2,54)=.38$, $p>.05$.

For the Global Self-Worth subscale, there were no significant main effects for either condition or time, $F(1, 27)=1.09$, $p>.05$, and $F(2, 54)=.96$, $p>.05$, respectively. Also, there was no significant interaction between condition and time, $F(2, 54)=.41$, $p>.05$.

My Class Inventory

As described earlier, Fraser and Fisher's questionnaire measures perceptions of classroom satisfaction, friction, competitiveness, difficulty, and cohesiveness. Means and standard deviations for each of these subscales are listed in Table 2 as a function of experimental conditions and time.

There were no significant main effects for either the condition or time on the Satisfaction subscale, $F(1, 27)=.93, p>.05$ and $F(2, 54)=.59, p>.05$, respectively. There was a significant interaction between condition and time, $F(2, 54)=3.19, MSe=59.44, p<.05$. At pretest, there was no significant difference between the social skills training class and class with regular instructions, $q=1.73, p>.05$. At immediate posttest, however, students in the social skills training group expressed significantly greater satisfaction than did the students who did not receive training, $q=2.83, p<.05$. At 30-day posttest, the experimental and class with regular instructions did not significantly differ, $q=1.43, p>.05$.

There was a significant main effect for condition on the Friction subscale, $F(1, 27)=5.88, MSe=46.34, p<.03$. The social skills training group had a significantly higher Friction score than did the class with regular instruction, $q=3.148, p<.05$. The main effect for time was not significant, $F(2, 54)=2.91, p>.05$, nor was the interaction between condition and time, $F(2, 54)=.53, p>.05$.

On the Competitiveness subscale, there was a significant condition main effect, $F(1, 27)=5.19, MSe=35.10, p<.02$. The social skills training group had a significantly higher score than did the class with regular instruction, $q=3.263, p<.05$. The main effect of time and the interaction between time and conditions was not significant, $F(2, 54)=.34, p>.05$, and, $F(2, 54)=.14, p>.05$, respectively.

There were no significant main effects for either the condition or time on the Cohesive subscale, $F(1, 27)=.11, p>.05$, and $F(2, 54)=1.57, p>.05$, respectively. There was a significant interaction between condition and time, $F(2, 54)=4.92, MSe=24.88, p<.01$. There were no significant differences between the two groups at pretest, critical $q=2.83, q=2.426, p>.05$, or at the immediate and 30-

Table 2

My Class Inventory: Student Means and Standard Deviations as a Function of Experimental Conditions

Condition		Pretest	Immediate Posttest	30-Day Posttest
Satisfaction				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	19.412	22.647	20.529
	<u>SD</u>	7.698	6.873	4.611
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	22.583	16.833	17.583
	<u>SD</u>	7.786	10.564	7.891
Friction				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	17.941	18.824	20.588
	<u>SD</u>	7.232	5.876	3.063
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	14.167	13.083	18.167
	<u>SD</u>	6.645	9.356	6.952
Competitiveness				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	15.706	15.824	16.235
	<u>SD</u>	6.507	4.940	3.345
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	12.333	11.417	13.250
	<u>SD</u>	5.466	7.704	6.326
Difficulty				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	10.824	9.765	12.882
	<u>SD</u>	5.102	3.930	3.935
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	10.500	8.333	9.833
	<u>SD</u>	4.275	6.140	4.041
Cohesiveness				
Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	10.941	12.647	11.412
	<u>SD</u>	5.297	4.676	3.447
No Social Skills Training	<u>M</u>	14.167	9.167	10.333
	<u>SD</u>	5.006	6.408	4.334

M = mean score; SD = standard deviation

Table 3

My Class Inventory: Teacher Scores as a Function of Experimental Conditions

Condition	Pretest	Immediate Posttest
Satisfaction		
Teacher of Social Skills Training Group	19	27
Teacher of Class with No Social Skills Training	19	27
Friction		
Teacher of Social Skills Training Group	24	16
Teacher of Class with No Social Skills Training	18	18
Competitiveness		
Teacher of Social Skills Training Group	11	19
Teacher of Class with No Social Skills Training	9	19
Difficulty		
Teacher of Social Skills Training Group	17	10
Teacher of Class with No Social Skills Training	8	8
Cohesiveness		
Teacher of Social Skills Training Group	12	14
Teacher of Class with No Social Skills Training	16	12

day posttests, $g=2.617$, $p>.05$, and $g=0.811$, $p>.05$, respectively. Descriptively, the class with regular instruction scored higher at pretest than did the social skills training group. In both posttests, however, the social skills training group scored higher.

There were no significant differences between the class with regular instruction and the social skills training group for the Difficulty subscale. The main effect for condition was not significant, $F(1, 27)=1.78$, $p>.05$, nor was the main effect of time $F(2, 54)=2.4$, $p>.05$. The interaction between time and condition was $F(2, 54)=.80$, $p>.05$.

The teachers' responses to the My Class Inventory questionnaire were compared. Table 3 shows the subscale scores at pretest and posttest for both teachers. The teacher of the class with regular instruction group's scores in the subscales Friction, Competitiveness, and Difficulty did not change from pretest to posttest. At posttest, her score in Satisfaction had increased and her score in Cohesiveness had decreased. The teacher of the social skills training group's scores in the Satisfaction and Cohesiveness subscales increased at posttest, whereas her scores in Friction, Competitiveness, and Difficulty had decreased.

Comparatively, both teachers perceived the same degrees of Satisfaction at both pretest and posttest. The teacher of the social skills training group had a higher Friction score at pretest than did the teacher of the class that did not receive social skills training, but a lower score at posttest. In the Competitiveness subscale, the teacher of the social skills training class had lower scores at both pretest and posttest. She had higher scores in pretest and posttest.

Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form Questionnaire

Only one Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form score in the social skills training group and ten scores in the class with regular instruction were valid at pretest. Despite the researcher reading the questionnaire out loud, the students were unable to answer the questions in a consistent manner. While some students did not understand the questions, others did not follow instructions carefully, thereby invalidating their responses. Because of the high number of questionnaires that could not be included as part of data analysis, students' pretest responses were not statistically analyzed, with the test discontinued at posttests 1 and 2.

Behavioural Checklist

The behavioural checklist was used by the researcher at the onset and conclusion of the social skills training program. Specific behaviours were targeted to get a general view of the classroom environment. The researcher and the second observer agreed on the number of occurrences and the types of behaviours occurring in both classrooms. Differences in the number of behaviour occurrences never differed by more than two. Each observation was tallied and the sum of the sessions totaled.

Over the first four 30-minute observation sessions in the social skills training group, the observers noted 33 instances of yelling out , 55 instances of wandering/excessive talking/not working, and 30 instances of the teacher speaking to a student about undesirable behaviour. At the immediate posttest, there were

only four occurrences for yelling out, 41 instances of wandering, and 15 incidents of the teacher speaking to individual students about their behaviour. In the classroom that did not receive training, the observers noted 11 instances of yelling out, 78 examples of wandering/excessive talking/not working, and 44 occurrences of students being spoken to for misbehaving. At the immediate posttest, there was only one example of yelling out, 73 instances of off-task behaviours, and 27 occurrences of the teacher speaking to students about their behaviour.

Journal of the Social Skills Training Group Teacher

The teacher of the social skills training group completed a journal for the duration of the study. She made weekly entries describing the social skills lessons and any classroom activities carried out to reinforce these skills. She also documented her perceptions of students' behavioural changes throughout the duration of the social skills program.

The students generally received social skills training once a week for about forty minutes. This varied depending on timetable interruptions (e.g., assemblies, cancellations). Students appeared to be attentive and enjoyed the instruction. The children especially enjoyed role-playing. Although the students became aware of the various skills and strategies, the teacher believed that the students did not internalize the skills or implement them in their daily lives unless explicitly reminded to do so. The teacher reinforced various social skills by having the students write down the steps and do additional role-playing. These role-plays focused on real situations which occurred on the playground.

After four weeks, the teacher noted that some of the target social skills (i.e., listening and following instructions) were becoming internalized by a few students.

About three weeks later, the teacher noted that some students were vocalizing the steps involved in problem solving and were attempting to solve problems on their own, especially in school yard related incidents. Specifically, she noticed students vocalizing their feelings instead of reacting in a physical manner. For example, on several occasions, some students verbalized their feelings to peers who were bothering them (e.g., "Please don't bother me. I'm doing my work, now. Maybe you could do your work, too") as opposed to using physical aggression, like hitting or pushing.

Overall, the social skills training group teacher believed that the social skills program had some positive effect on the class. She believed that some children's listening skills and abilities to follow instructions improved, although many students continued to have difficulty dealing with their feelings. She concluded that the program is valuable and effective if constantly reinforced by the classroom teacher.

Teacher Interviews

Interviews were held with the teachers of the experimental and class with regular instruction, midway through the program and at the end.

Differences in Students' Behaviours from September to January

At the time of the first interview, midway through the social skills training program, the teacher of the social skills training group did not believe that students had internalized social skills, stating that there had been no significant change in students' behaviour. She believed that the program had not been administered consistently because of extenuating circumstances (e.g., teacher absence,

preparations for Christmas celebrations, teacher meetings). When the social skills program administrator was not present ("There have been weeks where she hasn't been able to come in"), the teacher attempted to refer to the skills as much as possible ("I have them up around the room").

The teacher of the class with regular instruction believed that the behaviour in her classroom had improved since September because of two factors. First, she believed that the children had learned her routines more, and second, she had a behavioural contract in place with one child who had been causing severe disruptions. The contract, she believed, was working well.

At the end of the social skills training program, the teacher of the social skills training group found that the more difficult students had settled down since September ("I think that some of the kids who were more unsettled, you know, in September and October, have settled down more, and are easier to get along with"). She also believed that these students were developing new friendships. The teacher of the class with regular instruction believed that the classroom behaviours at the end of the study were moderately better but that, in general, the children had to be reminded of the rules and routines more often than in previous years. "It seems like every day, or almost every day, you have to remind them, 'these are the rules, and this is what we should be doing, and this is how we should be doing things'. They can't seem to remember things like that for a long time."

Behavioural Changes in Students Since the Onset of the Program

The teacher of the social skills training group believed that the students' behaviours were better while the program administrator was in the classroom. Generally, however, she believed that the students failed to internalize most

program skills. She believed that students' listening skills improved. She attributed this improvement to her reference to the different strategies the students had been taught in the training program. For the "trying harder" and "following instructions" skills, the teacher said "I don't think they really think about them unless I point them out."

The teacher of the class with regular instruction believed that during the time that the program had been initiated in the other class, her students were demonstrating strategies they had developed while coping with fellow students exhibiting behavioural problems. Initially, she had had to discontinue an enjoyable activity because of disturbances. "I had to stop it, sometimes completely, and say that the class was not behaving and we'd have to finish another time. Later, the class had a discussion about techniques they could use during difficult situations, without specifically referring to the children causing those problems. The teacher encouraged the use of those strategies and, as a result, others were better able to handle this student.

At the final interview, the teacher of the social skills training group believed that the social skills training had become more consistent towards the end and, as a result, the students were able to verbalize the steps of the skills taught, "So I guess that means they were thinking about that a little bit more." The teacher of the class with regular instruction believed that there has been an improvement in classroom behaviour since the beginning of the study. She believed that although the children were more aware of the rules, they still did not always exhibit appropriate behaviour. She believed it was still necessary to continuously remind them what is expected of them, "Whereas, if I don't remind them, they don't internalize it."

Increases and Decreases in the Occurrence of Specific Behaviours, Including Aggression, Fighting, and Name Calling

The teacher of the social skills training group believed that those students who had created difficulties in September were still doing so midway through the social skills training program. She could not discern any change in the occurrence of disruptive behaviours. She did believe that the other children developed coping methods "They have a sense of 'well, I don't like it.'" She noticed that some of the strategies they were using were ones that either she had suggested, or were part of the social skills training program.

The teacher of the class with regular instruction believed that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour was about the same as at the beginning of the school year. There were occasional fights and instances of children being mean to each other, but, overall, the teacher believed that the occurrences of misbehaviours were few, "but there was never that much to begin with."

At the end of the study, the teacher of the social skills training group believed that there was a decrease in inappropriate behaviour. She attributed the change to two factors. First, some of the students had matured and therefore did not argue as much. Second, she believed that some of the students were trying to use some of the social skills strategies that had been taught in the training program (e.g., walking away from a problem if you can't deal with it).

The teacher of the class with regular instruction also observed that there had been a decrease in the occurrence of disruptive behaviour by the end of the study. Particularly, there did not seem to be as much fighting. "Now, I'm not saying never, but it doesn't seem to occur as frequently".

Changes in the Classroom Environment

Midway through the study, the teacher of the social skills training group believed that the classroom atmosphere had improved but not necessarily as a factor of the social skills training program. Classroom routines were more defined, and students felt more comfortable and competent. She did believe that skills in listening and following instructions were being reinforced, and that there was a definite improvement in these skills. Overall, students were treating one another more positively. From this perspective, she believed that the classroom environment had positively changed. "In the way they treat one another, yes, I've seen an improvement."

The teacher of the class with regular instruction believed that the classroom environment was better at the time of the first interview because the routines were in place. The child with the behavioural problem was not as much of a problem anymore. "I wouldn't say (the classroom environment) is 100% better, but I'd say 75%."

At the end of the program, the teacher of the social skills training group believed that the classroom environment was more positive, although she was reluctant to attribute this change solely to the social skill training.

The teacher of the class with regular instruction also believed that the classroom atmosphere was a bit better. Specifically, the students were used to their disruptive peer. "They choose to ignore (his behaviour) now, rather than come to me all the time." In turn, the teacher believed that this particular student has calmed down.

Usefulness of the Social Skills Training Program

The teacher of the social skills training group believed that the program was useful for establishing and then reinforcing desirable behaviours. The teacher of the class with regular instruction expressed the same beliefs, specifically, that a social skills program would encourage desirable behaviours.

At the end of the program, the teacher of the social skills training group believed that a social skills training program would be most successful if it were a high priority focus of both the classroom teacher and the social skills instructor. Social skills was not a focus of hers at the onset. "In the fall, it was kind of like, the instructor is going to come in and do this, period, and I was kind of separate from it. Later, she was saying that I could (participate more), and I did."

The teacher of the class with regular instruction believed that a social skills program would definitely be useful. She believed that some students internalize the skills better when they have to role-play, "where they go through the actions of proper behaviour rather than say, 'This is the way you should behave'. If they act it out and things like the program does, they tend to remember it a little bit more."

Summary of Major Research Findings

The scores for the Behavioural Conduct scale in the Student Self-Perception Profile questionnaire suggest that while both classes significantly decreased their scores at the immediate posttest, and increased their scores at the 30-day posttest, the group that received social skills training had greater gains than did the group that did not receive training. In the My Class Inventory questionnaire, the social skills training group expressed greater satisfaction at the immediate posttest than did

the students who did not receive training. The same group also scored higher in Friction and Competitiveness. In the Cohesive subscale, the class with regular instruction scored descriptively higher at pretest. At both posttests, however, the group that received training scored higher.

The interviews with the teacher of the social skills training group and her journal reflect the teacher's beliefs that some students were incorporating the target skills into their daily behaviour and that the students could verbalize the steps of the social skills taught. The interviews with both teachers also reflect their beliefs that a social skills training program would be useful for introducing and reinforcing certain desirable behaviours.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The acquisition of social skills is important for the prevention of poor academic performance, social adjustment problems, and serious psychological difficulties in adolescence and adulthood (Elliott, Sheridan, & Gresham, 1989). Lack of social skills is often associated with poor self-esteem, since children who behave in an aggressive manner are more likely to be rejected by peers and adults. As well, these children are more likely to experience academic failure (Wentzel, 1991). Presumably, classrooms containing children who do not exhibit appropriate social behaviours are environments with many disruptions and, therefore, are not conducive to learning. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a formal social skills training program would positively affect students' self-esteem, moral development, as well classroom environment. It was hypothesized that the teaching and reinforcing of social skills pertinent to children's daily experiences would provide them with the opportunity to improve and internalize target skills. Presumably, whole-class practice in such skills would help the children form a more cohesive group where they would be more attuned to each other's feelings. This kind of sensitivity and perspective-taking was expected to enhance children's feelings of being valued and competent.

Conclusions

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem was measured using the Student Self-Perception Profile. There were no significant changes in Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, or the Global Self-Worth subscales as a function of participating in the social skills training program.

On the Behavioural Conduct scale, however, there was a significant difference for both groups from pretest to the immediate posttest as well as from the immediate posttest to the 30-day posttest. Specifically, at the immediate posttest, both groups believed that their behavioural conduct had deteriorated from the beginning of the year. However, at the 30-day posttest, both groups believed that their behavioural conduct had improved. It is likely that, as the year progressed, students became more familiar with each other and the classroom rules. As a result, their behavioural conduct improved. Overall, however, it does not appear that the social skills training group's collective self-esteem had been significantly affected by the social skills training program.

Classroom Environment

The My Class Inventory was used to measure classroom environment. On the Satisfaction subscale, the social skills training group's immediate posttest scores suggested that they were significantly more satisfied in their classroom than was the class with regular instruction. Despite this satisfaction, however, the social skills training group had significantly higher scores on the Friction subscale throughout the

study. The social skills training group also tended to be more competitive (as measured by the Competitiveness subscale) than the class with regular instruction.

On the Cohesive subscale, the class with regular instruction scored higher at pretest than did the social skills training group. At both posttests, however, the social skills training group's scores were descriptively higher. The social skills program may have promoted feelings of unity among class members through the classroom discussions and role-play used to practise the target skills. There were no differences between the groups on the Difficulty scale.

The regular instruction teacher's Satisfaction and Cohesiveness scores suggest that she believed that those two areas had improved from pretest to posttest. Her Difficulty, Competitiveness, and Friction scores remained the same. The teacher of the social skills training group also had higher Satisfaction and Cohesiveness scores at posttest. Her Friction, Competitiveness, and Difficulty scores were lower at posttest than at pretest. This suggests that the social skills training program was successful in lowering some negative aspects of the classroom, at least from the teacher's perspective.

Behavioural checklist. The behavioural checklist suggested that as the year progressed, disruptive behaviours in both classes decreased. The misbehaviours in the social skills training group decreased more than those in the class that did not receive training. In part, children may have become familiar with classroom routines and rules. Also, they could have become more accustomed with the behaviours of disruptive classmates, developing strategies to handle these children.

Journal of the social skills training group teacher. The journal kept by the social skills teacher suggests that the social skills training program had some success in

promoting children to internalize some of the target skills (e.g., listening and following instructions). As the training program went on, children began to verbalize some of the suggested strategies during problem solving with peers. Specifically, children vocalized their feelings as opposed to reacting in aggressive manners. However, many students still had difficulty dealing with their feelings. Overall, she believed the social skills program could positively change students' behaviours if properly implemented and reinforced (i.e., having structured lessons once or twice a week as opposed to once every two or three weeks).

Teacher interviews. Both teachers believed that their classroom environments had improved over time, but that the students needed to be frequently reminded of classroom rules and routines. The teacher of the social skills training group believed that the students generally failed to internalize target skills, as they did not exhibit them spontaneously. However, if the students were reminded, they could verbalize the steps of the particular social skill in question. Children in both classes, who initially exhibited extreme social skills deficits, had settled down over the course of the study and had developed some new friendships. The teachers believed that students were starting to employ strategies which had been discussed formally in the social skills training group, or incidentally in the class that did not receive training. Specifically, students were beginning to use those strategies suggesting how to deal with disruptive children or interpersonal problems. Aggressive behaviour decreased in both classes. While the teacher of the social skills training group attributed this lessening to the usage of program skills, the class with regular instruction teacher attributed the change to children becoming more accustomed to classroom routines and expectations.

Both teachers believed that the social skills training program was useful for introducing and reinforcing desirable behaviours. The teacher of the class with

regular instruction believed that students internalized the skills better when they had to role-play, brainstorm and discuss together. Direct student involvement, she said, was much better than simply speaking to them. The teacher of the social skills training group believed that if social skills were a high priority, and if the program were well implemented and reinforced, the program would be very successful.

The results from My Class Inventory, the social skills training teacher's journal, and the teacher interviews suggest that the social skills program may have had some positive effects on the classroom environment. Children in the social skills training group were seen as employing some of the strategies discussed in the program and experiencing some success with them. Although students in the social skills training group tended to see their class as having more friction and competitiveness, they also seemed to be more cohesive. The social skills training group's higher Cohesive scores seems somewhat contradictory to their high Friction scores, but, perhaps despite their differences, they felt a togetherness not felt in the class with regular instruction and, as such, a feeling of satisfaction. Perhaps working together in the social skills training program and discussing their feelings made them a more unified group.

Moral Development

The Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form failed to provide valid data. There are several possibilities why this measure was ineffective. First, the test vocabulary was greater than a Grade 3 level. Knowing this, the researcher presented the material verbally and rephrased the questions in a manner appropriate for the students' level. Unfortunately, at pretest, the students did not fully understand the questions, nor did they understand the correct manner of filling

in the response sheet, a fact not apparent until the tests were analyzed. The test could have probably been better administered by the researcher. For example, visual cues, such as pictures, may have helped students understand the scenario of the question arrays. The measure would need to reflect the vocabulary of younger children. Specifically, the Sociomoral Reflection Objective Measure-Short Form is worded in such a way that the responses reflecting higher levels of moral thinking contain the most difficult vocabulary. It is possible that younger children might concur with the higher level responses but do not understand the particular words used.

In conclusion, formal social skills training did not appear to have a greater impact on the students' self-esteem, moral development or the classroom atmosphere than did informal teaching. However, the fact that the children were vocalizing the steps of specific skills and utilizing them on occasion suggests that the program was not irrelevant. The journal and interviews with the teacher of the social skills training group suggest that the program was worthwhile if only from the perspective of introducing and practicing several specific skills and encouraging children to apply them in similar situations.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research might compare individual scores as well as combined class scores. Special attention might be made to those students who were seen to have poorer social skills and self-esteem at the onset of the program to see if the program helped them overcome some of their difficulties. Presumably, the acquisition of skills not previously learned would improve the scores of students who did not exhibit the

target skills at the beginning of the program. Their gains may be significantly higher than those of students who did not have social skills deficits.

Perhaps this type of training program is more suitable for older children, such as Grade 5 students, who are less egocentric and more critical of their own behaviour. Students who are better able to take the perspective of others and analyze their behaviours and responses to others at a deeper level, may be more successful in recognizing the need for a change in their conduct and more motivated in maintaining their efforts towards that change.

Ideally, the study should have two teachers of similar experiences and expectations. The teacher of the social skills training group was a first-year teacher, whereas the teacher of the traditional class was a 25-year veteran. Her expectations were perhaps more demanding and her perceptions more critical and less tolerant than those of a veteran. As well, her priorities were probably focused on coping with a new position rather than implementing and reinforcing an additional program. As such, her responses in the questionnaires, interviews, and her journal may not reflect the same degree of change or growth that a more experienced teacher would see.

A longitudinal study would help discern whether social skills taught in a training program one year were being used by the students as they got older. Perhaps those children who did not seem to have internalized the skills during the study had learned the skills, but did not find it necessary, or useful, to use them until a later date.

A qualitative approach may be a better way to discern the impact of a social skills training program. Interviews with students and teachers, as well as observation over a long period of time, would enable the researcher to see how specific students react to social skills training. Specifically, observation during a social skills lesson would

show how the children participated in the program and which parts of the lesson were most worthwhile. Observation at different times during the day would help determine whether or not the students were internalizing the skills and using them in the classroom as well as on the playground. Also, a qualitative approach would enable the researcher to ask the children what they felt their needs were and what skills they felt were important. Instead of using quantitative methods, interviews with students would indicate whether they felt better about themselves, whether they believed they were using some of the social skills taught, and if they felt the classroom environment had changed. A qualitative study would also enable the teachers to give more of a voice in the success/failures of a social skills training program.

The literature could be expanded upon by including research on cooperative learning techniques and their success in the area of social skills training. For example, would a classroom that incorporates cooperative learning strategies promote feelings of competence and control for students? Would such a classroom encourage students to attain higher levels of moral development by giving them opportunities for perspective-taking? What elements of cooperative learning seem to be the most successful in promoting a positive classroom environment?

Implications for Education

A social skills training program may be more effective if consistently implemented once or twice a week. Greater lengths of time between formal lessons would not be as successful in reinforcing target behaviours. Also, the need to develop and improve social skills needs to be a high priority with the homeroom teacher, so that

target behaviours and strategies and continuously reinforced and praised outside of formal instruction time.

Social skills training might have a greater impact if a "two-pronged" approach were adopted. Students who have social skill deficits might benefit more in small group environments. After going through the skills in a small homogeneous group, they would participate in the same type of training with the whole class. The whole class would therefore be exposed to the same skills, thereby providing the small group with reinforcement and support from their peers.

A social skills training program may have faster success with older students. Older children are better able to take the perspective of others, and are more aware of the moral implications of their actions. Because they would be able to discuss social situations at a deeper level than younger children and apply the skills to different dilemmas, older children might better be able to internalize the skills.

The failure of the social skills training program to provide significant findings may be because the skills taught were not relevant to self-esteem and, as such, self-esteem did not change over the course of the program. Perhaps the target skills were not skills that children of this age group consider important to peer acceptance. For example, children might feel that a skill like the ability to tell jokes is more important than the ability to listen. Perhaps before implementing the training, students in the classroom should be asked which behaviours they feel are important for feeling good about themselves and having others like them. It may be that self-esteem does not change incidentally as a function of a social skills training program, and that a program aimed at promoting a more positive self-esteem would have to be more structured and directly related to self-esteem as opposed to classroom environment. Such a program might include activities that would reaffirm the

children's worth. For example, students would find out which of their qualities their peers like.

Role-playing might have more of an impact if children were given more chances to dramatize a wider range of situations. Also, perhaps role-playing would be more effective if done in the environment in which the real-life situation occurs. For example, dramatizing a disagreement that occurred on the playground might be more powerful if done outside where the real disagreement occurred. In this manner, children would perhaps be better able to make direct links between the abstract social skill strategy and the concrete problem.

Teacher in-service would enable teachers to implement a social skills training program without the assistance of a separate instructor. The proper training would show teachers how to adapt a program to their own needs, using techniques they know would be most effective with their students. Teachers need to be shown how to integrate a social skills training program within all parts of the curriculum, like language arts and religious study, so that children would be exposed to target skills and strategies more frequently and holistically. Most importantly, teachers need to learn how to identify, and make the most of, those "teachable moments" and explicitly tie them into the students' reality. For example, while reading a story, direct links could be made between the character's behaviours and real-life situations the students' deal with. Teachers cannot assume that the children will make these connections on their own. By integrating the teaching of social skills in all subject areas, students would learn that social skills are for all parts of their lives, and not just for one half hour every week.

And perhaps the most important factor in the success of a social skills training program is teacher ownership and commitment. Like any part of the curriculum, the priority place upon social skills by the teacher will determine how well the students

will react to it. If the teacher does not continually reinforce target skills, there will be less chance of the children internalizing them.

In closing, the social skills training program is still considered to be a valuable tool with which to present and reinforce desirable behaviours. Whether the children use the skills immediately, or recall them at a later date, the opportunity to discuss and practise them is still worthwhile.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF EXPLANATION

Dear Parent(s),

Beginning the week of November 2nd, 1992, I will be conducting a study in the Grade 3 classes of St. Thomas More School. This study will investigate whether a formal program in teaching social skills will help create a positive classroom environment.

Each child will be asked to complete several (2-3) short questionnaires. One questionnaire investigates how children feel about their classroom environment. The second questionnaire investigates how children feel about themselves. I would like to see if acquiring social skills changes the way children view themselves (i.e., do they feel better about themselves if they are able to solve a problem more successfully).

Some children will receive formal social skills instruction. Other children will discuss social skills informally. Let me stress that all children are exposed to social skills instruction as part of their regular classroom activities.

Children generally enjoy participating in these types of sessions. However, if for any reason your child does not wish to complete the questionnaires before, during, or after the questionnaires are administered, your child may refrain from doing so. The children's names will not be mentioned. All data from this study will be stored anonymously in order to protect the privacy of students.

Please return the attached consent form to your child's teacher as soon as possible indicating whether you give your permission or not. Please note that it is important that you return the form in either case. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for sending the permission form back to the school. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to send a note to your child's teacher and I will contact you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Irene Kolenko

Dr. V. E. Woloshyn
Supervising Professor

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

I have read the letter of explanation describing the study regarding the use of a formal social skills program and the effect it may have on self-esteem and classroom environment. I have been informed that with my permission, my child will be asked to complete the classroom environment questionnaire, the self-esteem questionnaire, and the sociomoral reflection questionnaire.

I have been informed that my child's completion of the questionnaires is entirely voluntary. All information is to be kept confidential so that any report(s) of the results will not be associated with my name or my child's name.

I AGREE to have my child participate in the study.

Parent's signature _____ Date _____

Student's signature _____

I DO NOT AGREE to have my child participate in the study.

Parent's signature _____ Date _____

Student's signature _____

I wish to receive a summary of the completed study.

Name: _____

Address: _____

APPENDIX C: BEHAVIOURAL CHECKLIST

Date _____ Class _____

Behavioural Checklist

Tally how many times the following behaviours occur during the observational period:

yelling out		hand raising	
tattling		students ignore peers' inappropriate behaviour	
name calling		complimenting	
taking someone's things		students offer peer a positive behaviour alternative	
wandering / talking excessively / not working		participating in activity as requested by teacher	
inappropriate display of anger / pushing / fighting		articulating feelings in a constructive manner	
students are not cooperating during an activity		students cooperate / help each other	
teacher speaks to student about behaviour / sends student to a time-out area		teacher praises student praised for positive behaviour	

APPENDIX D: TEACHER INTERVIEWS

First interview with the teacher of the social skills training group

1. Do you notice any difference in behaviour from September to now?

Teacher of social skills training group: I don't think it's sunk in yet. I can't really say that I've seen a significant change. It (the program) hasn't been consistent. There have been weeks where she hasn't been able to come in. I've tried to refer to them as much as possible and I have them up around the room...but it's not always on my mind, to tell you the truth.

2. Do you notice any difference from the onset of the program?

Teacher of social skills training group: When she's in the classroom, yes, but it has to be constant. They really haven't internalized it. Maybe a little bit on the listening because I'm constantly referring to that one. Listening, following instructions, and trying harder are really the only one's she's been working on. So those are the only ones that I refer to or even have up. But I guess, the listening I've seen some improvement but as for the other two, I don't think they really think about them unless I point them out.

3. Is there an increase or decrease in the degree of occurrence of such behaviours as aggression, fighting, name calling?

Teacher of social skills training group: I'd say the ones instigating the problems in Sept. are still doing it. So I can't really say that I've seen an improvement. As for the other kids coping with those few, it's almost like they're growing up a bit. They have a sense of "well, I don't like it". They're trying to use ways I've been suggesting.

4. Is the classroom environment better/ worse/ same since September? In what way?

Teacher of social skills training group: Oh, yeah, sure. But I don't necessarily think that's because of the program...the routines are more defined, they feel more comfortable and know what they're doing. I do refer to the listening and following instructions a lot so I am reinforcing it. The listening is definitely coming but the other two need to be worked on. The classroom environment is better. In the way they treat one another, yeah, I've seen improvement.

5. Was the program helpful or would the program be helpful? In what way?

Teacher of social skills training group: Yes, it was helpful. It helps to reinforce things.

First interview with the teacher of the class with regular instruction

1. Do you notice any difference in behaviour from September to now?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: Yes. Two things. 1) Kids have learned routines more and 2) my problem kid is on contract and that's been working more or less.

2. Do you notice any difference from the onset of the program?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: Well, the kids are reacting better to my problem kid -they've learned how to cope with him better so it's less of a disruption. For example, when there was a disturbance when they were doing something, and it bothered me, sometimes during a fun thing that they were enjoying, and he was disrupting, I had to stop it, sometimes completely and say that the class was not behaving and we'd have to finish another time.

Have you been able to talk to the class about strategies for dealing with this student?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: No, because he's never been away. Well, once, without mentioning any names, and the class came back with some answers which I've been using.

3. Is there an increase or decrease in the degree of occurrence of such behaviours as aggression, fighting, name calling?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: About the same. There are still odd fights breaking out and kids being mean to each other, but there was never that much to begin with.

4. Is the classroom environment better/worse/same since September? In what way?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: Better. Because they've got routines going and my problem student is on contract and he's not creating as much of a problem anymore. I wouldn't say it's 100% better, but I'd say 75%.

5. Would the program be helpful? In what way?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: For awhile, it might be. It would help to reinforce the kinds of behaviour that teachers expect from their students.

(later in a staffroom discussion)-- You know what I think? Parents are afraid of their kids. Kids probably listen to teachers more than parents. Kids look at teachers differently than parents; they would obey teachers more. With the way they behave in school, it's scary to think how they are at home.

Final interview with the teacher of the social skills training group

1. Do you notice any difference in behaviour from September to now?

Teacher of the social skills training group: Yeah, I think that some of the kids who were more unsettled, you know, in September and October, have settled down more, and, easier to get along with, and developing some friendships. One of my difficult students is now more under control since September. And another student, I think, is coming along, making some progress.

2. Do you notice any difference from the onset of the program?

Teacher of the social skills training group: I think at the end, it was much more consistent. The social skills instructor was coming in every week and so she was reviewing the skills more frequently. The students were able to verbalize the steps. If you were to say, "What do you do to follow instructions?", they could repeat that. So I guess that means they were thinking about that a little bit more.

3. Is there an increase or decrease in the degree of occurrence of such behaviours as aggression, fighting, name calling?

Teacher of the social skills training group: I think there might there might be a little bit less. Not a humongous difference, or anything. But I think that a few have just matured a little bit more, so they aren't arguing about every little thing, and they can walk away more, and are trying to use some of those social skills that they are talking about as to walk away from a problem if you can't deal with it.

4. Is the classroom environment better/ worse/ same since September? In what way?

Teacher of the social skills training group: I think it's better, but I don't know if it's strictly because of the program. Generally, though, I kind of feel that things are more positive than they had been.

5. Was the program helpful or would the program be helpful? In what way?

Teacher of the social skills training group: Well, I guess I would say that it was somewhat helpful, that it didn't hurt, but perhaps it could have been implemented better, by the instructor and probably by me, if I had concentrated on it more. But in the fall, it was kind of like, the instructor is going to come in and do this, period, and I was kind of separate from it. And then later, she was saying that, you know, I could do it, and I did. I did write out the skills and put them up, and stuff. But I can't really say that it was a focus of mine in the fall. But I think that if it was your focus and you went in in September and said, "this is my focus, social skills," I think that then it could be helpful, and I think it could work.

So do you think that the students internalized the skills, at least when you reminded them?

Teacher of the social skills training group: Oh, yeah. I think that's true..

So, it was worth it?

Teacher of the social skills training group: Yeah. I mean, it wasn't a waste of time, no.

Final interview with the teacher of the class with regular instruction.

1. Do you notice any difference in behaviour from September to now?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: A bit. I can't name names. What I've noticed is that the children have to be reminded of the rules and routines more often than I've, than in other years. It seems like every day, or almost every day you have to remind them, "these are the rules, and this is what we should be doing, and this is how we should be doing things". They can't seem to remember things like that for a long time.

2. Do you notice any difference from the onset of the program?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: Yes, there has been an improvement since the fall. The children are more aware.. if I say to them, you know, "do we remember, what are the rules", if I remind them, they seem to remember some of the things that they're supposed to be doing. Whereas, if I don't remind them, they don't, you know-

They haven't internalized it?

Yes, that's right.

3. Is there an increase or decrease in the degree of occurrence of such behaviours as aggression, fighting, name calling?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: There was a decrease, yes, there was a decrease.

So, the children who were a concern earlier in the year, you found that their behaviour has improved somewhat?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: Yes, yes. Somewhat. And there's not as much in-fighting between the children. Now I'm not saying never, but it doesn't seem to occur as frequently.

4. Is the classroom environment better/ worse/ same since September? In what way?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: Well, it's a little bit better. I think because the children have become used to my problem child's behaviour. They choose to ignore it now, rather than come to me all the time. The problem child has learned to, not necessarily hand in much more work, but at least he isn't disturbing the class as much.

He's calmed down a bit?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: Yes, he's calmed down a bit.

5. Was the program helpful or would the program be helpful? In what way?

Teacher of the class with regular instruction: Definitely, definitely. Because I think that with the role-playing with some of the children and that, I think that some of them internalize it a little bit more, then just talking to them about it, where they go through the actions of proper behaviour rather than say, "This is the way you should behave." If they act it out and things like the program does, they tend to remember it a little bit more.

APPENDIX E: PRACTICAL SOCIAL SKILLS FOR STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS

**PRACTICAL SOCIAL SKILLS
FOR STUDENTS
IN
SCHOOLS**

By: M. Ann Kulik

Social Skill: TRYING HARDER

Steps of the social skill:

1. Stop and Think
2. Think about Your CHOICES:
 - Ask someone for help -a friend, an adult
 - Self Talk -it's hard but I'll try
 - I want to stay out of trouble so ..
 - Try one more time
3. How did I do?
4. Reward Yourself if you did a good job

Social Skill:

Dealing With Embarrassment

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Decide - What is the problem?
2. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Calm yourself, if you need to
 - b) Ignore those persons who have embarrassed you
 - c) Tell those who embarrassed you how you feel, if you feel this will help
 - d) Share your feelings of embarrassment with someone with whom you are comfortable
 - e) Decide what you can do, in a similar situation the next time, so you will be less embarrassed
 - f) Do something that is fun for you
 - g) Do a relaxation exercise
 - h) Other
3. Choose the ones that are best for you.
4. Do it.
5. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
6. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Dealing With an Accusation or Someone Setting You Up

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Decide - What is the problem?
2. Decide, if the person is right, did I do that?
3. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Calm yourself, if you need to
 - b) Do a relaxation exercise
 - c) Tell the person, in a positive way, you did not do what you were accused of doing
 - d) Apologize, if you did it, or were involved
 - e) Offer to make up for what happened, if you have some responsibility for what happened
 - f) Talk to someone you are comfortable with, share how you feel
 - g) Think, is there something you can do to prevent such things happening again
 - h) Other
4. Choose the ones that are best for you.
5. Do it.
6. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
7. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Dealing With Being Left Out

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Decide - What is the problem?
2. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Calm yourself, if you need to
 - b) Do a relaxation exercise
 - c) Ask to join the group in a friendly way
 - d) Do something else with someone else or on your own
 - e) Talk to someone (adult, friend, someone older), let them know how you feel
 - f) Talk to the people who were not including you; let them know how you feel
 - g) Try to resolve the problem with the people involved
 - h) Other
3. Choose the ones that are best for you.
4. Do it.
5. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
6. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Dealing With Losing or Failure

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Calm yourself, if you need to
 - b) Try harder the next time
 - c) Ask someone to help you so you can do better the next time
 - d) Practice when you understand; this will help you do better the next time
 - e) Ask someone, who does well, to help you do better
 - f) Learn more about _____, go to the library, talk to someone who has knowledge, etc.
 - g) Share your feelings around failing and/or losing with someone with whom you are comfortable
 - h) Other
2. Choose the ones that are best for you.
3. Do it.
4. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
5. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Dealing With Fear

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Decide what you are afraid of.
2. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Calm yourself, if you need to
 - b) Do a relaxation exercise
 - c) Talk to someone about what you are afraid of
 - d) Try what you are afraid of doing, with help
 - e) Try what you are afraid of doing, by yourself
 - f) Other
3. Choose the ones that are best for you.
4. Do it.
5. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
6. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Dealing with Peer Pressure

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Listen to what the person wants you to do.
2. Think about the consequences (results) of what may happen.
3. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Think of a reason to do something else
 - b) Tell the person why you don't want to do
 - c) Talk with your peers about the consequences which could result
 - d) Suggest something to do that will not get you in trouble and no one will get hurt
 - e) Talk with your friends at other times about staying out of trouble and having safe fun
 - f) Other
4. Choose the ones that are best for you.
5. Do it.
6. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
7. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Avoiding Trouble/Staying Out of Fights

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Calm yourself - stop, take a deep breath, count 1-10, while looking at an object.
2. Decide if you want to stay out of trouble or what is the problem?
3. Think about your Choices.
 - a) Ignore the person and walk away for now
 - b) Play the "So What Game"
 - c) Tell the person why you don't want to get into trouble and what the consequences* could be
 - d) Share how you feel about getting into trouble/fights
 - e) Ask the person to do something that is fun and won't get you in trouble
 - f) Ask an adult, someone older, or a friend to help you stay out of trouble or fights
 - g) Other
4. Choose the ones that are best for you.
5. Do it.
6. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
7. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

* consequences - is what the results or what will happen if you do whatever

Social Skill:

Responding to Teasing

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Calm yourself - stop, take a deep breath, count 1-10, while looking at an object.
2. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Ignore the teasing for now, walk away
 - b) Play the "So What Game"
 - c) Ask the person to stop in a nice way
 - d) Let the person know how you feel in a friendly way
 - e) Do something else
 - f) Ask the person to do something with you in a friendly way
 - g) Talk to someone else and share what happened and how you feel
 - h) Ask an adult for help
 - i) Do something active to get the feelings out in a good way
(go for a run, walk, bike ride, play soccer, baseball, etc.)
 - j) Other
3. Choose the ones that are best for you.
4. Do it.
5. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
6. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Negotiating

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Calm yourself, if you need to.
2. Decide what is the problem.
3. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Share with the person what you want to negotiate
 - b) Share how you feel about what you are negotiating
 - c) Ask the person how they feel about what is being negotiated
 - d) Make a deal with the person (work out a compromise*)
 - e) Think of another solution
 - f) Ask an adult, friend, or someone older, for suggestions to help you solve the problem
 - g) Other
4. Choose the ones that are best for you.
5. Do it.
6. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
7. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

* compromise - is something you can both agree to

Social Skill:

Ignoring Distractions

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Stop, take a deep breath, count 1-10, while looking at an object:
(Calm yourself)
2. Think of Choices:
 - a) Ignore the person
 - b) Ask the person to stop
 - c) Go away from the distraction
 - d) Ask an adult for help
 - e) Go back to what you were doing
 - f) Other
3. Choose the ones that are best for you.
4. Do it.
5. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
6. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Expressing Your Feelings

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Decide how you feel.
2. Decide what to call the feeling.
3. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Ignore the feeling now, walk away
 - b) Calm yourself if you need to
 - c) Talk to someone you feel comfortable with about how you feel
 - d) Share with the person how you feel about what happened
 - e) Make a deal with the person if you feel comfortable
 - f) Draw or write about how you feel
 - g) Do something active to get some of your feelings out in an okay way (play soccer, football, skip, run, walk, punch a pillow/punching bag, etc.)
 - h) Other
4. Choose the ones that are best for you.
5. Do it.
6. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
7. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Dealing With Anger

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Calm yourself - stop, take a deep breath, count 1-10, while looking at an object.
2. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Ignore the person you are becoming angry with, walk away for now
 - b) Talk to someone about what happened, tell them how you feel
 - c) Tell the person why you are angry, and how you feel
 - d) Try to make a deal with the person
 - e) Get your anger out in okay ways: punch a pillow/punching bag, draw or write about how you feel, cry, scream into a pillow, do something active - soccer, baseball, wall ball, run, bike, walk, etc.)
 - f) Ask an adult for help in dealing with the situation
 - g) Other
3. Choose the ones that are best for you.
4. Do it.
5. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
6. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Using Self Control

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Calm yourself - stop, take a deep breath, count 1-10, while looking at an object.
2. Think - how does your body feel. (Do you feel tense, are you getting angry?)
3. Think about your Choices:
 - a) Ignore the person, walk away for now
 - b) Ask the person to please stop
 - c) Play the "So What Game"
 - d) Do something that is fun for you
 - e) Do a relaxation exercise
 - f) Talk to someone, tell them how you feel - an adult, friend, someone older
 - g) Talk to the person involved, make a deal with them and share how you feel about what is happening
 - h) Write or draw about how you feel
 - i) Punch a pillow, punching bag to get rid of the angry feelings
 - j) Do something active - play soccer, go for a run, bike ride, etc.
 - k) Other
4. Choose the ones that are best for you.
5. Do it.
6. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
7. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Problem Solving

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Decide - What is the problem? _____
2. Think about your Choices: How can I solve this problem?
I don't want to make another problem?
 - a) Ignore the problem for now
 - b) Talk to the person about the problem (What happened?)
 - c) Use some steps from the Using Self Control Skill
 - calm yourself if you need to
 - ask the person to stop
 - play the "So What Game"
 - do something that is fun for you
 - do something active to get rid of some feelings
 - write or draw about how you feel
 - d) Tell someone you feel comfortable with how you feel
 - e) Make a deal with the person
 - f) Ask an adult or someone older for help
 - g) Share your feelings with the person if this will solve the problem in a good way
 - h) Other
3. Choose the ones that are best for you.
4. Do it.
5. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
6. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

Social Skill:

Listening

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Look - at the person who is speaking.
2. Be Quiet - sit still, pay attention and concentrate on what is being said.
3. Think - about what the person is saying.
4. Ask Questions - if there is anything you do not understand.
- or to get more information.

Social Skill:

Following Instructions

Steps of the Social Skill:

1. Listen - carefully to the instructions.
2. Think - about the instructions.
3. Ask Questions - about anything you don't understand.
4. Repeat - instructions to yourself (or the person).
5. Follow the instructions.
6. Ask yourself - "How did I do?"
7. Reward yourself - if you did a good job.

This booklet on Practical Social Skills for students in schools has been adapted from work done by Arnold Goldstein and Ellen McGinnis, Skills-Streaming the Elementary School Child, a guide for teaching practical social skills. Anyone using this guide to practical social skills should familiarize themselves with this book.

The writer has developed, experimented with and refined these practical social skills. They have been used extensively between 1985 and 1990 with classroom teachers and their classes as well as with smaller groups of students (9-12 group size).

The general format used in teaching these practical social skills is:

1. Developing the social skill - with the students
2. Modelling the social skill steps - for the students
3. Feedback of the social skill with the students on conclusion of the modelling by adults
4. Role Playing of the social skill steps - using situations that are "alive" for the students
5. Feedback of the social skill steps - on the conclusion of the role play for the students
6. Reinforcement - immediate and long term reinforcers
7. Transference of Learning - the key to the programs effectiveness, is teachers and other significant adults, reinforcing the social skills taught continuously, throughout the students total day and preferably in as many "real" life situations as possible.

Hopefully these practical social skills will be useful to many professionals in their work with students and others. Should questions arise around the use of this booklet or the program, the writer may be contacted (Ann Kulik) at Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board, 40 Matheson Blvd., West, Mississauga, Ontario L5R 1C5, (416) 890-1221.