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A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING ON THE DISPLAY OF
PHYSICAL AND VERBAL AGGRESSION IN STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIOR
DISORDERS

By
Antonio Singletary

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 17, 2004

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved 5/17/04

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A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING ON THE DISPLAY OF
PHYSICAL AND VERBAL AGGRESSION IN STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIOR
DISORDERS

2003/04

Dr. Steven Crites
Master of Arts in Special Education

The purpose of this single subject design was to examine the effect of social skills training as displayed by students with behavior disorders. Social skills training was conducted with 12 to 14 year old multi-cultural students with behavior disabilities in a self contained learning environment. The results showed that social skills training did decrease or eliminate physical and verbal aggression for most students with behavior disorders, while a few students will need more training. The results are discussed with recommendations for future relevant research. The study lasted nine weeks.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to my good wife Vickie who has been right by my side from the very beginning of this research project to the present, “Proverb 18:22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord”; to my father and mother who gave their encouragement and support, “Ephesian 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise”, to my deceased grandmothers Georgia and Ruth for always telling me that they and Jesus love me every time we met; to my Dear Aunt Sarah who inspired me to be motivated to do something else with my life; to the Broad Street Child Study Team for resources; to Faye Robinson and Phyllis Meredith at Rowan University’s Campbell Library for aiding in literature review research; to Joan Cioffi for assisting me at the Rowan University Bursar’s office; to Mrs. Santana, Mrs. Bond, and my son Brent for their word processing skills; to my Pastor Albert Morgan’s sermon “The Main Thing is Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing”; to Minister Robert Bryant’s sermon “Handle Your Business”; to all my co-workers in the Bridgeton School District; and to all my family and friends. Amen.

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A Study of the Effect of Social Skills Training on the Display of Physical and
Verbal Aggression in Students with Behavior Disorders

Chapter 1- Introduction

Attention and behavior problems cause various difficulties for elementary school children. These problems often diminish their academic and social learning (McKinney & Speece, 1986). As a consequence, many such children experience social rejection by teachers and peers, which may lead to further aggression, disruption, and inattention in classrooms (Cantrell & Prinz, 1985). Furthermore, attention and behavior problems of children have been shown to predict various serious disorders in adulthood (Sater & French, 1989); Etscheidt, 1991, page 107).

Aggressive behavior, verbal or physical, has been considered as the most frequent cause of problems among young students who have been classified as Behaviorally Disordered. Physical aggression (PA) is the touching, hitting, pushing, bumping, or feeling of another person or persons causing an individual or group to become uncomfortable in a learning environment, community, or a place in society. Verbal aggression (VA) is statements to or at a person or group causing one to feel insulted or degraded in a learning environment, public or private. Other research has suggested that aggressive behavior is increasing (Epoinchin & Paul, 1987; Kennedy, 1982). Frequent classroom disruptions have caused uncomfortable learning environments. Public school teachers are more concerned about anger and their response toward behavior. Programs have been designed to create a safe school environment and a positive student relationship in the classroom.

Students with disabilities who exhibit physical and verbal aggression may quit high school or be placed in an alternative setting to earn a GED instead of receiving their high school diplomas. They often are identified as juvenile delinquents and often spend time in a detention facility. As young adults, they sometimes are hired in dead end jobs that do not provide insurance to them or their children. They are often caught and arrested for petty crimes and are lodged in county jails for short periods of time. Verbally and physically aggressive students with disabilities are often in courts for fines, such as street dice games, drug possession, driving without insurance and shoplifting. Others become members of neighborhood gangs, choose to become involved themselves in the illegal drug business or abuse alcohol while they remain underage (Etscheidt, 1991).

When disruptive classroom behaviors are displayed, special education teachers look for help from the classroom environment. This usually happens when the special education teachers' strategies and interventions have failed. Students with behavior disorders who are removed from the classroom environment are placed in disciplinary environments such as time out rooms; given teacher's detention, central detentions, in-school suspension or, depending on severity of inappropriate behavior, out-of-school suspension; or placed in a new restrictive learning environment such as an out-of-district placement.

In any event, special education teachers who implement interventions for inappropriate behavior find that it is very time-consuming and difficult to get the rest of the classroom students back on task because many of these students have an additional disorder such as Attention Deficit Disorder. Those students with physically and verbally

aggressive behaviors are usually removed from the classroom environment and miss out on special learning time (Taylor 2001).

In the communities across America, administrators, special education teachers, parents and other students know that young students with problems with aggression can be a threat to their schools and their neighborhood and to themselves. These students are often rude and very disrespectful (Duckworth, Smith & O'Kay, 2001). The reauthorization of IDEA (Public Law 105-17) makes it more difficult to suspend or expel potentially violent students with disabilities from special education learning environments.

A student with a disability who has been removed from his current placement because of an inappropriate behavior for more than ten days must have a manifestation determination. A Child Study Team must determine whether this current disability is the cause of his inappropriate behaviors. When or if the Child Study Team determines that the behavior is not related to the disability, the student may be suspended or expelled. The Child Study team may place a student in an alternative setting if the behavior is related to his disability. Removing students from school should be the last resort. Moreover, the individuals who provide the manifestation determination review will be the IEP Team and several other professional faculty members such as a special education teacher and a regular education teacher (N.J.A.C. Appendix A, pg. 90).

Students with behavioral disabilities who have shown physically and verbally aggressive behaviors often have a record of difficulties with classroom assignments and/or finishing their class work during the time given or usual amount of time. When analyzing IEP's, more behaviorally disabled students are farther behind at learning levels

than their school age peers. Sometimes those students who are increasingly disruptive in a self-contained learning environment disrupt the other students' rights to receive an education and the special educator's right to teach (Duckworth, Smith & O'Kay, 2001).

There is a current shortage of teachers for special education students with emotional or behavior disorders. More than fifty–seven percent of teachers who are working with emotionally/behaviorally disabled students are not certified. It has been determined that this low number of qualified special education teachers is a reason for the ineffective teaching and poor classroom management of special education students in America. This is not a local, city or state problem; it is spread all across America's school systems (Gunter, Coutinbo, & Cade, 2002).

The task of providing students with emotional/behavioral disabilities has been more complex because of the current decrease of qualified special educators (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). More special education departments are requiring those who make policies to address the needs of educating special education teachers (Gunter, 2002).

Most students with behavioral disabilities are educated in different classrooms from their regular education peers (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Often, these students are not provided the same services such as academic and social experience that are offered in regular education classrooms. Fortunately, the percentage of students with behavioral disabilities who are taught in regular classes has increased slightly in the last few years (Kauffman, Lloyd, Baker & Reidel, 1995).

Of all students who have been identified with disabilities, students with behavioral disabilities have earned lower grade point averages, fail the most classes, are

absent more often and kept back over one or two grades (U.S. Department of Education, 1998; Wagner, Blakorky & Hebbeler, 1993). Three to five years after leaving high school, more than half of the students with emotional/behavioral disabilities are not employed at long-term meaningful jobs (Heflin & Bullock as cited in Gunter, 2002).

To address the inappropriate behaviors of students with behavioral disabilities, several interventions are effective. They include precision request, mystery motivates, classroom rules, teacher movement, token economy and response-cost programs. When considered together these interventions may produce an even more powerful effect than using individually (Musser, Bray & Kehle, 2001).

This research is very important because inappropriate behavior, such as verbal or physical aggression, prevents the special education teacher from maintaining a successful, productive and progressive learning environment for their at-risk students. Behaviorally disordered students are often off task and display physical and verbal aggression in a self-contained special education learning environment. This study will provide information about an effective intervention designed to decrease or eliminate physical and verbal aggression in students with behavior disorders.

The purpose of this research project is to study the effect of a classroom intervention designed to decrease and eventually eliminate physical and verbal aggression in a self-contained special education learning environment. This study will be guided by the following research question:

Research Question:

1. Will social skills training combined with reinforcement be effective in reducing or eliminating the number of physical and verbal aggressions in students with behavior disorders?

The review of the literature that follows will examine some of the problems caused by the display of physical and verbal aggression by students with behavioral disabilities and explore behavioral modification techniques to address these problems.

Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

“Thomas Jefferson and other advocates of free public school believed fervently that an educated populace is the lifeblood of democracy. In their view, the school clearly had a political purpose: to socialize children to become good citizens.” Jefferson wrote, “I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with the wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion (Comer, 1998, p. 42).

“It is a long fall from this lofty ideal to the grim reality facing youths at the margins of today’s society. Poor minority children are undereducated in disproportionate numbers across the country. Academically such children may lag behind the national average by up to two years. In large cities as many as 50 percent of minority children drop out of school. The failure to educate these children makes even harder the task of rectifying economic and social inequities. Job opportunities increasingly reside in service and technology industries, but poor minority youths are the least likely to have the social and academic skills these jobs demand. Unless schools can find a way to educate them and bring them into the mainstream, all the problems associated with unemployment and alienation will escalate.” Consider this excerpt from “Educating Poor Minority Children.”

“In 1939 I entered an elementary school in East Chicago, Ind., with three other black youngsters from a low-income community. The school was considered

one of the best in the district; it was racially integrated and served the highest socioeconomic group in town. All four of us were from two parent families, and our fathers made a living wage in the local steel mill. We were not burdened by any of the disadvantages—school segregation, inadequate schools, single families, unemployment—commonly cited as causes of education underachievement in poor black children. Yet in spite of the fact that we had similar intellectual potential, my three friends have had difficult lives: one died prematurely from alcoholism, a second spent a large part of his life in jail and a third has been in and out of mental institutions.

“Why did my life turn out better? I think it was largely because my parents, unlike those of my friends, gave me the social skills and confidence that enabled me to take advantage of educational opportunities. For example, my parents took me to the library so that I could read books. My three friends, however, never read books, which frustrated and angered my teachers. What the teachers did not realize was that their parents were afraid to go to the library: indeed they were uncomfortable around white people and in general avoided them” (Comer, 1998, p. 42).

All teachers try to manage classroom environments so all students can become involved in an educational learning process. In almost all classrooms, students with behavioral disabilities bring challenging behaviors every day, which can make a special education classroom a difficult and uncomfortable learning environment. Student-teacher relationships can easily turn into power struggles when students with behavioral disabilities attempt to disrespect the teacher’s authority and try to take control of the

classroom environment. The outcome of constant disruptions is usually a disciplinary action that takes them temporarily out of the learning process. There is nothing positive for students who find themselves looking at their free public education vanish. When students with behavioral disabilities get suspended or expelled from schools, no learning is going on.

Black students are more often placed into lower ability classes, labeled as behaviorally disordered (U.S. Department of Education, 1999), and overlooked (Oakes, 1990). Also, they are rarely given a chance to be accepted in a talent and gifted programs and classrooms. Young African American males are focused on sports teams and usually not chess or debate teams. Black students with behavioral disabilities are expelled and suspended more often and for longer periods of time (Cartledge, Pillman & Talbert-Johnson, 2001), and are disciplined more harshly than other students (Office for Civil Rights, 1992). These students are also very likely taught by a novice or low-skilled special educator (Cartledge, 2000).

Aggressive behaviors take many different forms within our educational systems. They range from a mild verbal abuse to severe physical abuse or death. There are some students who could be quiet and hard working yet have the ability to display hostile outbursts. Other students could have antisocial behavior and prefer to keep to themselves. Still other students could be in control of their emotional expressions but not their verbal expressions and may respond to students and teachers with rude verbal aggression. Another situation is that a person with no history of violent behavior could have an aggressive outburst that is related to illegal use of alcohol or street drugs (Del'Homme, 1996).

It has been suggested that physical and verbal aggression could not be predicted. However, research has focused on point of intent that could identify potential behaviorally disordered students who could display inappropriate behavior. Such students may have a history of juvenile violence; a difficult time in school; excessive suspensions; or may frequently mention guns, knives and neighborhood conflicts. These students may also be members of well-known families for violence and disruption in their communities. Many could also have a history of being abusive to cats or dogs. Another predictor could be when students are verbally rude to their parents in front of the teacher or Child Study Team. Another strong indicator of students who could be physically and verbally aggressive is that when they have been caught displaying inappropriate behavior and are informed of their punishment, they often state that they do not care (Del'Homme, 1996).

The students with behavior disorders who are physically and verbally abusive become homeless more often because they are removed from their parents' homes when the parents can no longer tolerate being abused by their own children. These students may come to the parents' homes late in the night on drugs, drunk, hungry, with no money and disturb those who are sleeping. Often they raid the refrigerator for food or drink, turning on appliances, such as the TV, the stereo or the microwave. Others bring friends with them who are often in similar circumstances (Del'Homme, 1996).

Being poor, black and having a disability can have a tremendous effect on a student's achievement. Poor students have been identified to have more apparent or visible signs of problem behaviors because of their oppressed living conditions (Park, Turnbull & Turnbull as cited in Cartledge *et al*, 2000).

There are data that show many students with inappropriate behaviors have a past of slow achievement and failure (Kauffman, 1997; Kerr Nelson, 1988). These students are often two or more years behind when compared to the school age peers and are in need of more intervention to help aid and assist them to catch up before they drop out (Adams, 1998; Juel, 1988).

Many students in regular and special education classrooms display inappropriate behaviors at times and some educators have not learned how to deal with these types of student behaviors (Furlong, Morrison & Dear, 1994; Kauffman as cited in Scott , 2000). Implementing behavioral interventions is often very difficult and can cause a high amount of stress on the special education teacher and peers. Managing behavior takes up instructional time and limits the time spent on implementing lesson plans (Sugai & Horner, 1994).

Attention and behavior problems often decrease the chance for these students to reach high levels of school achievement and common socialization (McKinney & Speece, 1986; Spivock, Marcus & Swift, 1986). As a result, a number of problem students become isolated by peers, teachers and administrators, which could lead to more physical and verbal aggressions in the classroom (Cantell & Prinz as cited in Hovland 1996).

As early as middle school age, antisocial children usually are attracted to other children who display unacceptable behaviors (Cairns & Cairns, 1991). There is research supporting the notion that students are drawn to those who behave like they do, especially those who display physical and verbal aggression toward other students in school (Kandel, 1978). Students with behavior disorders usually like to team up against the less aggressive student (Dishion, 1995).

Relationships between antisocial students develop because of peer rejections (Dishion, Patterson, Stoofmiller & Skinner, 1991), their abilities in school (Kellam, 1990), or because they live in same or immediate neighborhoods, often visiting the same corner store or each other's homes. Those rejected students often play with younger children and still others arrange friendships with children outside the school environment (Ladd, 1983).

Raush (1995) found "hyperaggressive" males get involved in frequent numbers of negative circumstances when they are in situations with students who have identified with the same behavior. Austin and Draper (1984) interviewed good friends of rejected students and found the students with physically and verbally aggressive behaviors are bossy with their close friends and their siblings. Most of these students display bully-like behavior on those they could beat up in a fair fight.

In contrast, Pamella and Henggeler (1986) studied the relationships between conduct disordered, uneasy and fairly adapted males with their best friends and realized no dissimilarities in the number of inappropriate behaviors.

Family

There is evidence of how divorce in the United States has affected the lives of many students. In 1970, nearly ten percent of all students were in single-parent homes with their mothers and by 1983 that percentage had doubled (Knoff, 1987). By the 1990's nearly forty-five percent of all students spent more of their childhood and school years in single-parent homes (DeMarco, 2001).

The effects of the separation of parents on the children include a rise in feeling of uneasiness, sadness and blame (Knoff, 1987). Also, Krantz (1988) suggests that

separation of parents can affect the student's state of health and happiness as well as his socialization process. The emotional impact of the separation of parents usually affects the student's performance when it comes to achievement and socialization in the school (DeMarco, 2001).

One-parent families have been identified as a factor for at-risk children (Bianchi 1984; Coleman 1989). Also the high number of brothers and sisters may contribute to at-risk status. Bianchi (1984) suggests that a student who lives with his single mother who has not received a high school diploma, is often retained one or two grade levels compared to the school age peers. As the number of siblings increases, so does the number of retentions. In comparison, Joseph Hawkins (1988) found that more than fifty percent of high school students who had been removed from the classroom environment an excessive number of times came from a one-parent home (as cited in Vacha, Edward & McLaughlin, 1992).

Families of children who have reached higher levels of education do help the children with school projects and regular homework and usually communicate with teachers (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Lareau, 1987). Other studies have suggested that those parents provide comfortable places to study in their homes. They also have books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, computers, internet access, and materials related to student success in their homes (Coleman, 1989; Teachman, 1987).

Previous research has shown that students in special education are more likely to quit school than their school age peers in regular education (Wagner, 1991). The Office of Special Education Programs has stated that behaviorally disabled students quit school at twice the rate of those in regular education (Capital Publication, 1997). Several

authors have implied that a special education student who feels that the school, teacher or administrator can no longer help him can lead to his quitting school (Freeman and Hartcinson, 1994).

IDEA (1997) focuses on the guarantee that public schools provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). FAPE refers to a free and appropriate public education which requires each student to have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is designed to fit the current needs. A group of qualified people is required to develop an IEP for each student with a qualifying disability (Bakken, 1999).

There were other demands by the Department of Education (1999) under the mandate of IDEA. Students are required to be educated in the least restrictive environment to the highest degree necessary (Office of Special Education, 1998). The overall objective is to provide the student with a disability an education as similar to his peers without disabilities as possible.

Assessing problem behaviors

When students with disabilities display verbal and physically aggressive behavior in the classroom, special education teachers often refer them for discipline or remove them from the classroom or school environment (Walker, Colvin & Ramsey, 1996, Center & McKittrick, 1987). Studies have shown that these interventions are useless (Strauss, 1994). They may even cause more harm when dealing with undesirable behavior (Sulzer-Anzaroff & Mayer, 1991). Regular and special educators can develop effective methods for intervening with students with aggressive behaviors through assessment of the problem behaviors (Brady, 1984; Gunter, Fox, Brady, Shores &

Cavanaugh, 1988). Functional behavior assessment (FBA) involves identifying the reasons for the student behavior.

The method of the functional assessment has been clearly identified (O'Neill, 1997) and used particularly with students who have been identified with low-incident disabilities (Scott, 2000). However, there are a number of published studies describing the use of FBA with students with mild disabilities and students without disabilities (Carr & Durand, 1985; Foster-Johnson & Dunlop, 1993; Repp, Felce & Barton as cited in Scott 2000).

FBA is a process of assessing observable, measurable target behaviors, which cause problems in the classroom. Data is collected from various sources (e.g., direct observation, interviews, rating scales) and used to determine the function of the problem behavior (Muellar, Moore & Sterling-Turner, as cited in Sterling, 2001). The information obtained from the assessment can be used to design an effective individualized intervention (Nelson, Robert & Smith as cited in Sterling, 2001).

When a functional assessment shows the function of the problem behavior (e.g., attention), an appropriate behavior will be taught which serves the same function as the problem behavior. The new behavior is reinforced; and the problem behavior ignored. In small urban school environments issues and conditions continue to require special education teachers to provide behavior programs that surround “universal interventions” (e.g., classroom management programs, social skill training and peer tutoring) that are helpful to all students. Universal interventions are not limited to those who display physical and verbal aggression but to all students (Kamps, 1999).

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) has been labeled as a new way to change the behavior by using an intervention that is aimed at the child with disabilities who has displayed physical and verbal aggression and those family members who provide care for that child (Carr, *et al*, 1997; Horner, 1997). There seems to be proof because, according to Carr, (1999) and Horner & Carr (1997), when applying PBS in several learning environments like the child's home and in school where there are a number of interventions, has produced more positive and longer lasting outcomes. The most significant part of a PBS is that there must be family members willing to develop a firm partnership with educators in order for the PBS to function properly (Fox, 2002).

Classrooms are located inside a school building; therefore, a school-wide approach is a necessary concept to deal with the problems of physical and verbal aggressive behaviors displayed by students with disabilities. First, special educators must accept the school-wide approach. In a classroom environment school-wide rules need to be explained in detail and should be accepted by everybody in the school building. The school wide approach intervention focuses on all the students in the school building learning environment unlike interventions that are designed for specific groups and individual students (Walker et al, 1996).

All special educators are certainly responsible to some degree for being involved with student behavior. Therefore, everyone must agree to be connected with the school-wide learning concept in the same method. Individual regular and special educators need to inform their learning disabled students what is expected of the school-wide concept and give school-wide reinforcement when students display appropriate behaviors. As all teachers must be at a constant when inappropriate behaviors are displayed, students are

given the necessary consequences when they are needed. Teachers could become a part of the school-wide team, responsible for developing new methods, guidelines and programs of the school-wide approach. “As with parenting, providing a united front that is positive and consistent is the best way to create a school environment in which students know they can count on certain things in the environment; they can feel secure and trust the adults around them” (Smith, 2001 n.p.).

School officials in Vermont started a program that was designed to meet the needs of the most physically and verbally aggressive students with learning disabilities. The Success School Program (SSP) accepted students because of their disruptive behavior those who were not learning in the regular education classroom environment. Those students were relocated in a different school although they took some classes during the day at their former school.

SSP is a former elementary school in Vermont, a state with almost double the United States average of learning disabled students in regular education classes. This state is well known as a front-runner in inclusive education. Its overall focus is to return as many as possible back to the regular education learning environment. The SSP has shown that it is very effective for at-risk students. SSP accepts special needs students from some of the nearest school districts. Also, SSP program gets parents involved as a priority. The faculty visits all the students’ homes several times during the year (Stock, 1997).

Similarly, wraparound services are designed for young elementary students who display physically and verbally aggressive behavior and those who have been identified with severe and complex emotional behavior disorders (EBD). Wraparound services refer

to a group of services that are developed by a behavior support team, which includes the family of the student, the school and the community resources (Duckworth, 2000).

Wraparound services focus on the family as the core of the wraparound system. Most of the services given are the result of the parents and educators as a team. The child's parents must participate on a team in order to develop service needs and to increase the chances of success and positive outcome.

The Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) has been used for all students and staff members in all types of school settings and learning environments for verbally and physically aggressive students (Sugai, Sprague, Horner & Walker as cited in Eber, 2002). The PBIS provides an all-purpose approach for providing prosocial skills and positive behavior. PBIS has three components. The first of the three is called a primary prevention, which is designed for students who do not display constant behavior. The second part is called secondary prevention, which is designed for students who are at risk for problem behaviors. The third part, for students with intense behavior treatments, is called tertiary prevention (Eber, 2002).

Social Skills Training

According to Cartledge and Milburn (1986) social skills are seen as “socially acceptable learned behaviors that help the students to behave in ways that call for positive responses and help in avoiding negative and rude responses from them” (p. 7). Social skills are “socially acceptable learned behaviors that help the student with behavior problems learn new behaviors that help the students to behave in ways that call for good, positive responses and help avoid and decrease negative rude disrespectful behavior” (Cartledge and Milburn as cited in Muscott, 1994, n.p.). Walker, Colvin and Ramsey

(1995) have defined social skills as a group of qualities needed for students to display and to keep positive social relationships with their peers and teachers.

Social skills help provide good peer relations and school adaptation while moving from one grade level to the next and moving from one classroom to the next. Walker et al. (1995) pointed out that antisocial students generally function one or two standard deviations below their peers on measures of social skills. These deficits are often related to some level of cognitive impairment ranging from mild to moderate, which means there is a significant level of mental retardation for most of those students with behavior problems. This inappropriate behavior suggests that the student with behavior problems needs to be taught the skills that are needed to use in a given situation or social environment (Quinn, 1995).

Patterson and partners have suggested that by the time the student with behavior problems begins to start school he/she has learned many inappropriate behaviors but does not have the necessary prosocial skills to keep a good mature peer and/or teacher relationship. Those students with behavior problems display inappropriate behaviors because that is the only way they know how to deal with peers and teachers. These students begin to think that their teacher and peers do not like them and that they are the outcast in their own classroom and school building. When conflicts arise students with behavior problems often state that they hate all the teachers or that they do not like the school as a whole. This verbal behavior often leads to academic failure and low self esteem (Quinn, 1995).

When the process of failure and low self esteem is allowed to go unchecked, the student who does not develop a sense of belonging or a part of the class within the

classroom will begin to look for students who say there are socially unaccepted and rejected by peers and teachers. These students often form poor peer groups in school and out of school and become disrespectful and rude to peers and teachers. When these students reach 7th or 8th grade, they have become well known members of poor peer groups. Membership in these groups increases the risk for drug use, high rates of absences and juvenile delinquency (Walker, Shinn, O'Neill, & Ramsey as cited in Quinn, 1995).

Violence and its victims in school districts all across the United States are steadily increasing (Guetzloe as cited in Muscott et al 1994). Public school has increasingly become a potential place of danger instead of a place where one should be able to earn an education. "According to the National Crime Survey, close to three million attempted or complete crimes for assault, rape, robbery, or theft took place inside schools or on school property" (Juvenile Justice Bulletin, 1989, NP).

The teaching of prosocial skills in public elementary, middle and high schools as well as alternative settings has become a great need. School has traditionally been a place where students could meet new members of their neighborhood and become friends and life long partners. The other place students usually meet friends and partners is a community church. These two institutions were the dominant places for people to make some level of progress. According to this article families and churches have not kept pace with the school's given role to shape the child's social skills. Studies have suggested that negative social skills are related to school learning problems such as low grades, repeating of grade levels, and the quitting of school which will result in most cases in poor jobs or employment (McCandless, 1967, Knold as cited in Muscott, 1985).

Students who lack good positive social skills are more likely to become young adults with poor social skills (Neel as cited in Muscott, 1994).

Trower (1980) breaks social skills down in two equally important groups, such as skill elements, that can be used in social situations and skill processes, which involve the ability to generate a variety of skilled behaviors according to social rules and feedback (Muscott et al, 1994). A study of social gathering of students with behavior problems suggests that such students do not automatically have the social skills needed for appropriate social gathering in a given environment (Gresham as cited in Vaughn et al, 2003). Students' getting along with other students is necessary because developing good relationships could help in the life long process of reaching and maintaining success.

A vast amount of literature has been aimed at increasing the social functioning of students with behavior problems and disabilities throughout life (Parker & Asher as cited in Vaughn, 2003). In relation to the large amounts of information aimed at the positive development of appropriate social skills for students with behavior problems, several reviews have been conducted to gather the outcome of social skill interventions for these types of students. These reviews primarily are aimed to help school age students who display inappropriate behaviors in school learning environments.

Social skill needs change for students with disabilities at different ages and grade levels, so social skills for school age students may be useless for preschoolers (Guralnick & Neville as cited in Vaughn, 2003). Many literature reviews have shown that there are large numbers of helpful social skills intervention for students with disabilities, although they may not be given or provided with the one that would help them display appropriate social skills needed during a certain situation (Vaughn et al, 2003).

Direct instruction of social skills is a systematic method of teaching young students with behavior disabilities (Rivera & Smith, 1997). It usually includes the learning of one skill at a time until that skill is at mastery. Direct instruction has often been used to teach students with behavior disabilities social skills, such as sharing, and those who have one or more problems in the psychology process (Hundert & Houghton as cited in Vaughn, 2003).

Prompting and rehearsal of target behaviors include someone showing a display of an anticipated target behavior for a particular situation (Tirpoli & Melloy, 1997). The focus of prompting is for students with behavior disabilities who display inappropriate behaviors to practice appropriate behaviors. After the target behavior has been taught and learned, practice is needed to keep that appropriate behavior functioning (Hundert & Houghton as cited in Vaughn, 2003)

Cognitive Scripts and Negative Attributions

Research on cognitive scripts about aggression (Huessmann & Miller, 1994) and negative attributions (Weiner, Grahman, & Chandler, 1982) has aimed at the thought patterns of students with behavior problems before aggressive responses occur. The idea of thinking skills scripts is based on the fact that some of student behavior and social problem solving is controlled by internal responses for behavior that developed early in life. However, over time these scripts are controlled by the individual and become more self directed and resistant to change. Research suggests that the observation of physical and verbal aggression in the learning environment gives students with behavior problems the opportunity to practice aggressive cognitive scripts. These scripts seem to set the

stage for students to respond in positive ways after several periods of practice (Huessman & Miller as cited in Meyer, 1998).

Cognitive behavior interpersonal problem solving is a method designed to increase observable behavioral change by teaching students with behavior disorders to develop new thought processes as well as teaching the specific prosocial skills necessary for positive socialization skills (Duclak, Fuhman, & Lampman, 1991). These programs combine a strategy approach that is designed to teach students who display physical and verbal aggression the process of how to think through a problem situation and come up with an appropriate behavioral response. The use of cognitive problem solving skills has yielded positive results. Students can develop problem solving skills by practice, modeling, role-play, connective feedback, and social or token reinforcement (Meyer & Farrell, 1998).

Cooperative learning is working together to accomplish shared goals. Cooperative learning is the instructional linking of small groups of three or more students working together to increase their individual learning as the learning of others. Students in cooperative learning groups are given two important responsibilities. They are to learn the given material and to make sure other group members learn the provided material also. Everyone in the class should participate in the applying of the material instead of just a few listening to the teacher. Cooperative learning seems to be a good way to provide prosocial student group development, which should become more beneficial personally and to others (Quinn & Jannasch-Pennell, 1995).

Modeling is the demonstration of specific desired behaviors to one or more observers (Rivera & Smith, 1997). Some literature suggests that students with behavior

disorders can learn appropriate behaviors by watching other students and practice by modeling (Bandura as cited in Vaughn et al., 2003). Modeling appropriate social skills by students who display physical and verbal inappropriate behaviors has been useful in helping the students' social functioning in certain situations (Alom & McEvoy as cited in Vaughn et al., 2003). Modeling seems to be a good and positive way of increasing social functioning in students who have displayed very poor social skills (Jenkins et al as cited in Vaughn 2003).

Skill streaming is now over 20 years old. Starting with its introduction in 1973 as one of the very first social skills training approaches, it has been widely used in the United States and beyond, and is now in place in hundreds of school agencies and institutions serving youth. What lessons have we learned? What do we now know that will maximize the program's skill training effectiveness?

We begin our examination of skill streaming today by placing it in both past and present contexts. Although the procedure is appropriate for diverse types of interpersonally skill deficient youths, in actual practice its primary target has been chronically aggressive adolescents as well as those seemingly on their way to becoming so.

Successful use of skill streaming requires more than skilled management of actual training sessions by teachers or other practitioners. Program implementation begins with awareness of and responsiveness to district and school needs. It depends on competent and motivated trainers as well as on appropriately selected and grouped trainees. And successful programs are those that deal effectively with the mundane but oh-so-consequential details of where, when, how long, and so forth.

Chapter 3 - Method

This study was conducted to investigate whether or not physical and verbal aggression displayed by students with behavior disorders could be decreased or eliminated by teaching the students skills that are alternatives to aggression. The study lasted nine weeks.

Research Design

This study utilized a single-subject research design across subjects. There was a baseline (A) phase and an intervention (B) phase.

Participants and Setting

The research was conducted at an elementary school in Southern New Jersey during the 2003-04 school year. Ten participants (9 males and 1 female) returned consent forms and were included in the study, but due to excessive absences and/or suspensions (i.e., more than 5 days), 4 participants were excluded from the results. All of these students were identified as having a behavioral disorder and specific learning disability. Their families were of low socio-economic status. One of the ten students lived with both parents. The nine remaining students lived with single female guardians, including one grandmother and one aunt. Eight males comprised the eighth grade, one female and two males comprised the seventh grade, and one male comprised the sixth grade. All students were at least two years below average in general cognitive functioning. Data are included for 5 males and 1 female.

Each student was given a consent form to take to his/her parent or guardian. With the signature on the returned consent form, parents or guardians gave permission to their

children to participate in the study. Six of the student's homes were visited to inform parents in person and to increase student participation in modeling and practicing social skills as alternatives to aggression.

Procedure

The study was conducted for nine weeks. There were three weeks of baseline and six weeks of training.

Baseline Phase. A baseline was developed to record information on behavior that was observed by the researcher. The researcher used frequency recording to note incidents of physical and verbal aggression displayed by the students in the self-contained learning environment for three consecutive weeks.

Training Phase. The interventions consisted of social skills training and rewards for appropriate behavior. Students participated in a six-week social skills training program broken into two segments. During the first segment nine alternative skills to aggression were taught to the students, and they then practiced and rehearsed the skills for 20-30 minutes three times per week, usually every other day. During the second session the students were given the same script that the researcher used for the first six weeks and asked to review the material and role-play situations increasing independent practice. The topic of these alternatives to aggression skills were 1) asking permission, 2) sharing, 3) helping others, 4) negotiating, 5) using self control, 6) standing up for your rights, 7) responding to teasing, 8) avoiding trouble with others, and 9) keeping out of fights.

Every other day starting with the first day of the week the researcher would write the social skills on the chalk board then inform the students of which skill would be

taught by the researcher and practiced by the students. Some students were reluctant to participate, so to increase student role-playing, rewards were given to those who participated immediately after the lesson was complete. Rewards were in the form of potato chips, corn chips, cheese twists, or miniature candy bars, which the students consumed immediately.

Data Analysis

Anecdotal data were compiled and analyzed. Frequency data of verbal and physical aggression for each participant were graphed. Visual comparisons were made between the baseline phase and the intervention phase.

During this research, the child study team made three changes of placement with the self-contained classroom. They removed one student and put him in a grade 6/7 self-contained classroom and added two from an inner district school after the baseline was completed.

During the study, regular and special educators wrote 12 referral notices on participants for inappropriate behaviors of physical and verbal aggression including profanity on buses, insubordination, dangerous horse play, disrupting class, failure to follow bus rules, spitting on the floor, fighting in the classroom, attempting to fight while bus is in motion, creating a dangerous situation, being rude and disrespectful to staff, hitting others, disrupting class during GEPA testing, removal from in-school, cutting class, walking out of class without permission, and threatening to bring guns to school. For these offenses, some students were given one or two days in-school suspension or one to five days of out of school suspension, which requires a parent to come back to

school for a conference. When a parent/teacher conference is scheduled, the mother is usually the parent that attends.

Also during this research the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) was scheduled for four consecutive days, which caused some social skills to be taught and practiced at the end of the day rather than in the morning. To increase the teaching of social skills and to meet the researcher's given deadline some social skills were taught twice a day.

A question arose as to how many behavior disordered students were absent, suspended, or had earned in-school suspension. The question was posed for the intervention of social skills training. The information came from the conduct report for each student on the researcher's attendance rolls.

Attendance of students in class fluctuated often, however, the recording of the intervention was continuous throughout the six-week intervention. There was documentation from the daily school bulletin in reference to any student absences from class due to absence from school, in-school suspension, or out of school suspension. One day the bulletin showed that five of the twelve students were given suspension and three were serving in school suspension for one or more of the aforementioned referral notices, which left my class with a total of four students for that day.

A main cause of absence from school is a student's removal from bus transportation. When a student of low socio-economic status is removed from bus transportation, he/she usually will miss that given amount of days from school because it's too far for students to walk, the parents do not have their own transportation, and cab fare is too expensive.

According to the conduct reports, two of the twelve BD students were not enrolled during the baseline phase. Six of the ten BD students were absent a full day for a combined total of seven school days and the remaining four had no absences during baseline. During six weeks of intervention where social skills training was taught, the same six BD students were absent a full day for a combined total of eighteen scheduled school days. For the remaining four only one was absent one full day.

During baseline there was a combined total of seventeen out of school suspensions for six BD students (these were different students from the aforementioned absent students). Still another four students had no suspensions. Of those four students, two had no absences or suspensions but were tardy three times.

The conduct reports showed that during the intervention there were eleven suspensions for seven BD students. One student had been suspended seven times during the baseline and only once during the intervention but did not have any absences during baseline or intervention. Another student had five suspensions during baseline but only one during the social skills training. Two students had no suspensions during the baseline and three suspensions each during the intervention of social skills training. Two students had two suspensions during baseline and one each during social skills training. One student had one suspension during baseline and one suspension during intervention. Three BD students had no suspensions, however, the conduct reports showed that one was absent three full days during baseline and was not in school twelve full days during social skills training. One BD student was not suspended but was absent once during baseline and twice during social skills training and tardy four times. Only one student was not suspended, absent, or tardy during the entire research study.

The conduct reports showed that two BD students had earned three in-school suspensions during baseline. However the conduct report showed that there were twenty-four incidents in which referrals were written by both special and regular educators, and the administration assigned in-school suspension for the students' physical and verbal aggressions. During the baseline one of the two students had received an in-school suspension for disrespect for authority. When social skills training was being taught that student received two in-school suspensions: one for disrespect for authority and one for dangerous horseplay. The second BD student had earned two in-school suspensions: one for failure to follow rules and the other for dress code violations during baseline. However, during the social skills intervention, they received three in-school suspensions: two for disorderly conduct and one for dangerous horseplay. Three BD students had received one in-school suspension for dangerous play only. One student received four in-school suspensions for dangerous horseplay, one disorderly conduct, and insubordination. Another earned two in-school suspensions for throwing objects and disorderly conduct.

The conduct reports showed that two BD students were not on the researcher's attendance during baseline, however, they did in fact receive the social skills training and their parents did sign consent forms. Both served in-school suspension for dangerous horseplay. One BD student was absent two full days and had one out of school suspension. The other BD student had not been absent or received any out of school suspensions. Moreover, neither BD student had been tardy. These two students were not included in the collected data during the intervention because they were not on the researcher's attendance rolls during baseline. However, they were included in the school's conduct report.

Chapter 4 – Results

These are the results of the intervention to reduce physical and verbal aggression in junior high school students with behavior disorders. Six students were included in the results. The other four were eliminated due to more than 5 absences. Zero indicator on graphs suggested students were absent, suspended out of school, suspended in school, or did not have an incident during baseline or intervention.

Student #2's baseline of incidents of verbal aggression was 44. The average was 4.8 per observation. During intervention incidents of verbal aggression was 26. The average was 1.4 per observation. Student #2's baseline for physical aggression was 4 incidents. The average was 0.2 per intervention. The number of incidents during intervention for physical aggression was zero. The school bulletin showed that student #2 was absent 1 full day during baseline and 2 full days during the intervention (see figure 1).

Student #3's baseline of incidents of verbal aggression was 40. The average was 4.4 per observation. The rate for intervention for verbal aggression was 30 incidences, with an average of 1.6 per observation. Student #3's baseline for physical aggression was 4 incidents. The average was 0.2. Intervention data indicated zero incidences of physical aggression. The school bulletin showed that student #3 was present throughout baseline and intervention (see figure 2).

Student #4's baseline of incidence of verbal aggression was 52. The average was 5.7. During intervention there were 29 incidents of verbal aggression. The average was 1.6 per observation. Student #4's baseline for physical aggression was zero incidences. Intervention was also zero. The school bulletin showed that student #4 was suspended 1

full day during baseline. Student #4 was also absent 1 full day during intervention (see figure 3).

Student #5's baseline of incidents of verbal aggression was 8. The average was 0.8 per observation. During the intervention incidents of verbal aggression was 14. The average was 1.5. Student #5's baseline for physical aggression incidences was 1. The average was 0.5 per intervention. Intervention data for physical aggression indicated zero incidences. The daily school bulletin showed that student #5 was suspended 2 full days during baseline and 1 full day during intervention (see figure 4).

Student #9's baseline of incidents of verbal aggression was 26. The average was 2.8 per observation. During the intervention incidents of verbal aggression was 32. The average was 1.7 per intervention. Student #9's baseline of incidents of physical aggression was 0. The average was 0.7 per observation. Intervention data for physical aggression was 8. The average was 0.4. Student #9 was absent 2 full days during baseline; the student was absent 1 full day and suspended 1 full day during intervention (see figure 5).

Student #10's baseline of incidents of verbal aggression was 13. The average was 1.4 per observation. During the intervention incidents of verbal aggression was 9. The average was 0.5 per intervention. Student #10's baseline of incidents of physical aggression was 9. The average was 1 per observation. During the intervention incidents of physical aggression was 8. The average was 0.8 per intervention. Student #10 was present during all of baseline and absent 2 days during intervention (see figure 6).

Figure 1. Results for Student Two

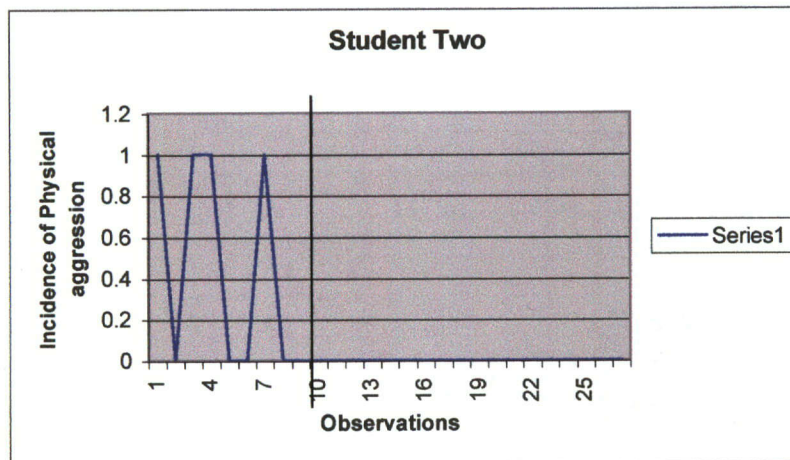
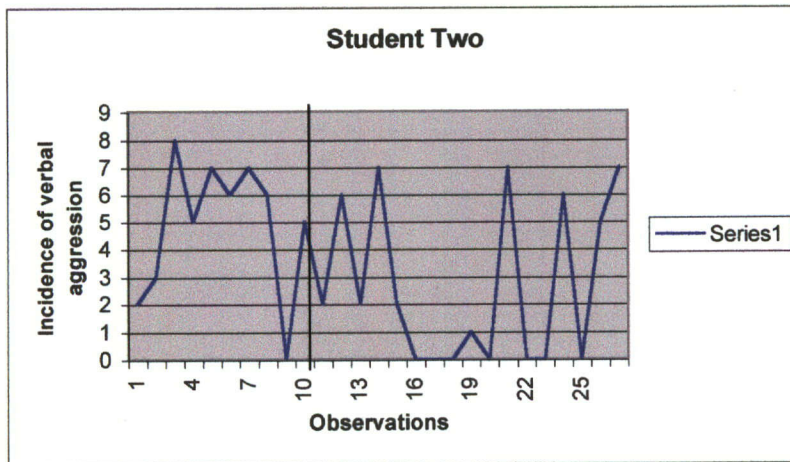


Figure 2. Results for Student Three

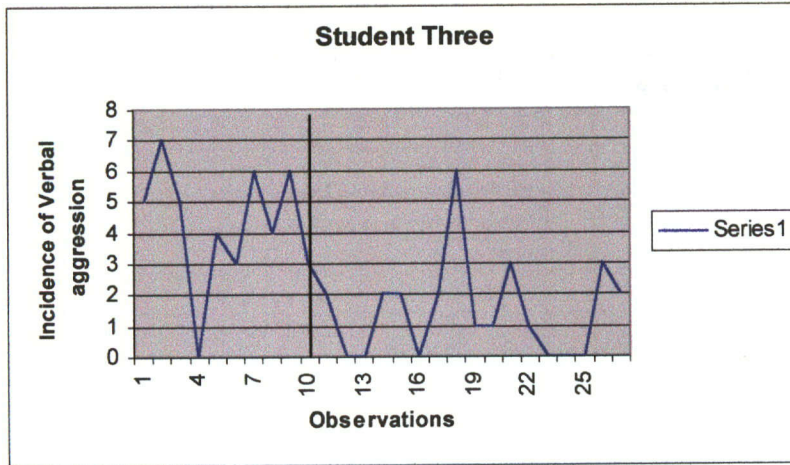
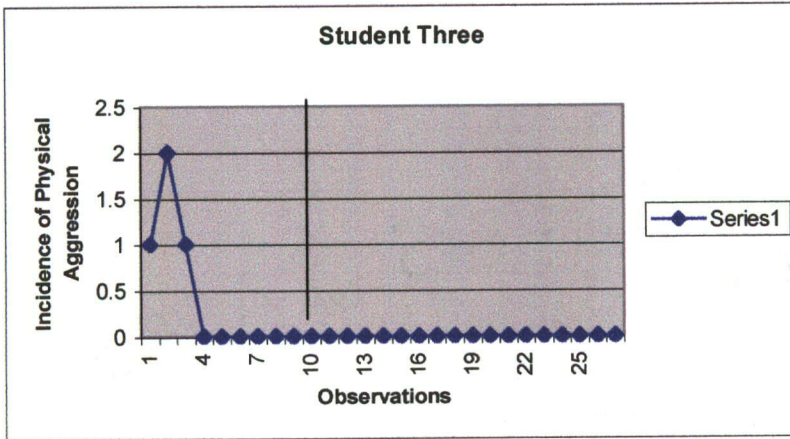


Figure 3. Results for Student Four

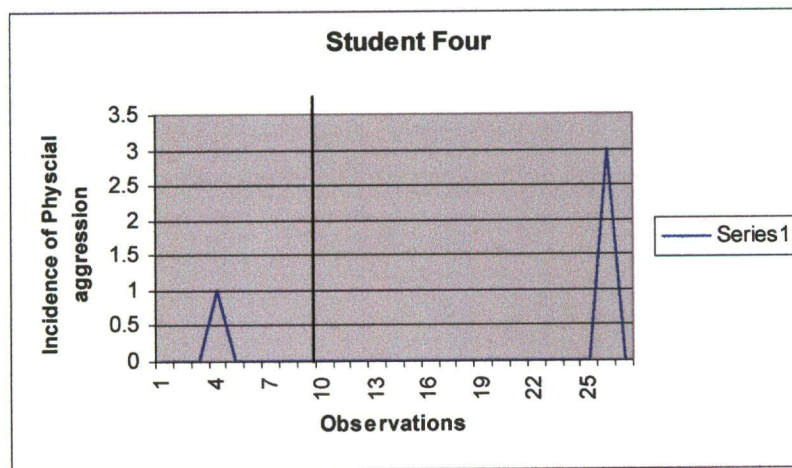
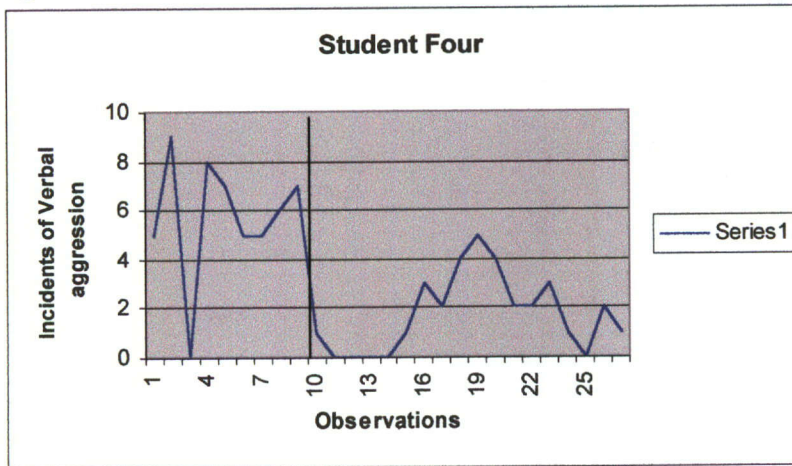


Figure 4. Results for Student Five

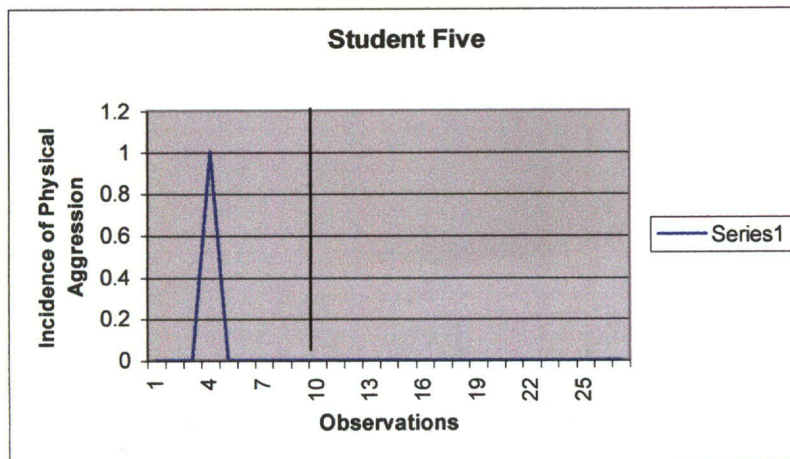
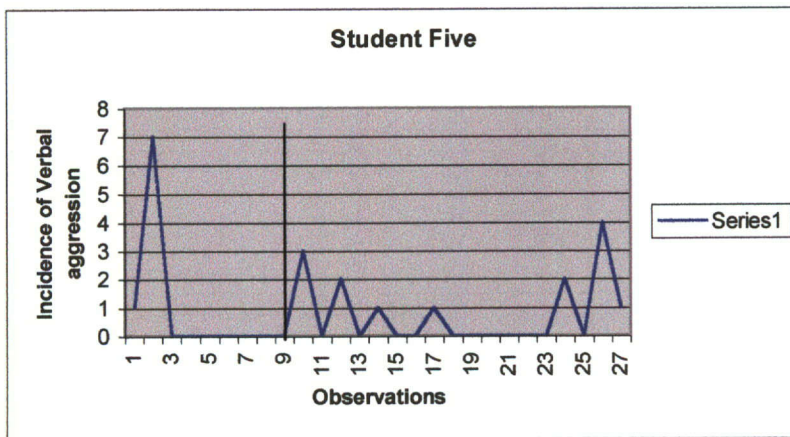


Figure 5. Results for Student Nine

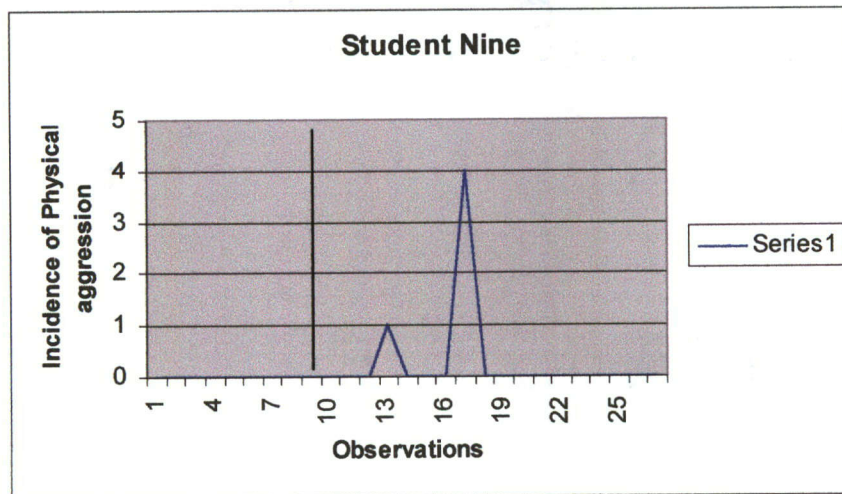
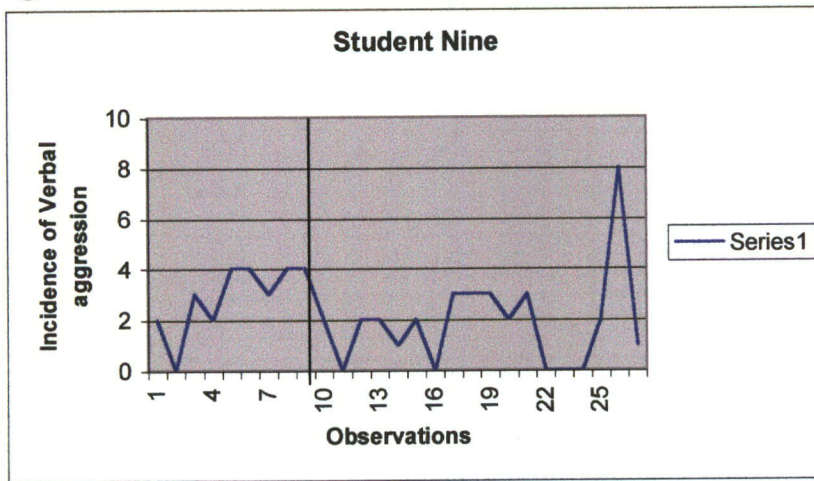
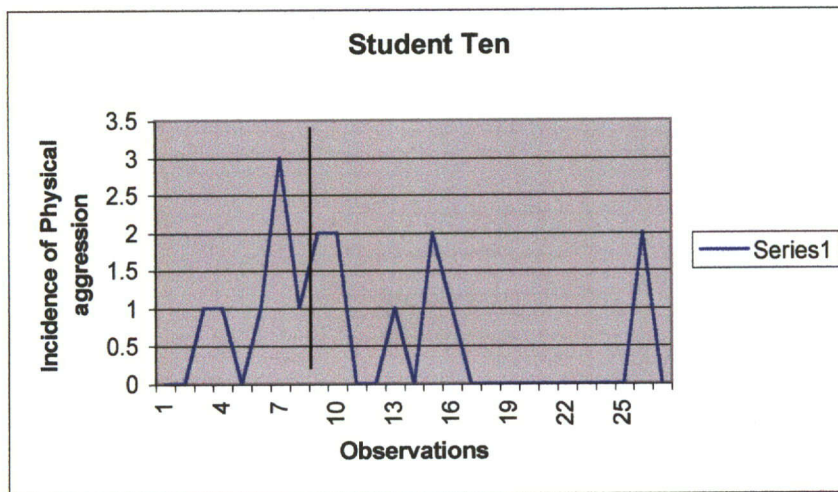
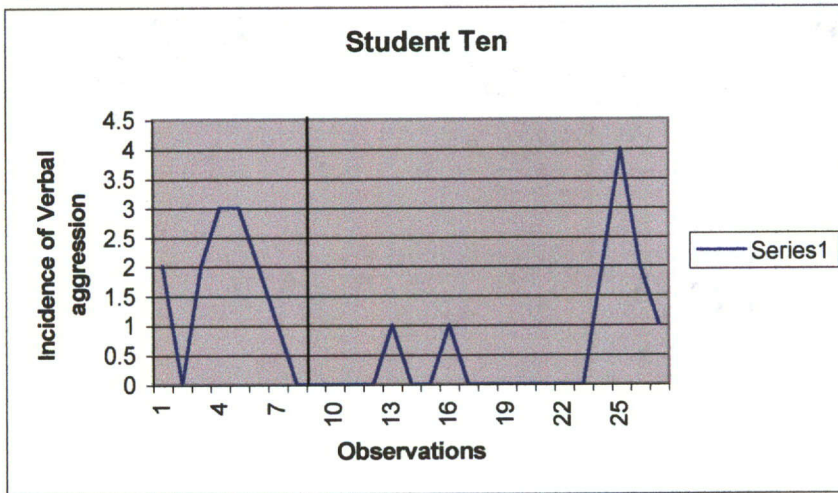


Figure 6



Chapter 5 - Discussion

Of the six remaining participants, results indicate students #2, #3, and # 4 had a significant decrease in incidents of both verbal and physical aggression after social skills training was taught and modeled. Student # 4's verbal aggression decreased by more than half and physical aggression fell to zero or was eliminated. Student #3 had 10 fewer incidents of verbal aggression, while physical aggression went to zero or was eliminated.

In small urban school environments, issues and conditions require special education teachers to provide behavior programs that surround “ universal interventions” (e.g., classroom management programs, social skills and peer tutoring) that are helpful to all students (Kamps, 1999). The decrease in physical and verbal aggression in this study appears to be the result of social skills training.

Social Skills are “socially acceptable learn behaviors that help the student with behavior problems learn new behavior that help the student to behave in ways that call for good, positive responses and help avoid and decrease negative rude disrespectful behavior” (Cartledge and Milburn as cited in Muscott, 1994, NP). Student # 2's verbal aggression decreased tremendously to less than half and physical aggression was eliminated. Increasing social skills helped provide good peer relations and school adaptation. Students with behavior problems need to be taught and learn social skills that are needed to be used in a given situation or social environment (Quinn 1995).

Student # 9's data results showed that there was an increase in one of the areas of physical or verbal aggression but not both. Patterson as cited in Quinn (1995) has suggested that by the time the student with behavior problems begins to start school

he/she has learned many inappropriate behaviors but does not have the necessary prosocial skills to keep a good peer and/or teacher relationship. When conflicts arise students with behavior problems often state that they hate all the teachers or that they do not like the school as a whole. This verbal behavior often leads to academic failure and low esteem (Quinn 1995). When these students reach 7th or 8th grade they have become well-known members of poor peer groups. Memberships in these groups increase the risk for drug use, high rates of absences and juvenile delinquency (Walker, Shinn, O'Neill, & Ramsey as cited in Quinn 1995).

Student #9's verbal aggression data showed a marked decrease in incidents after social skill training. However, physical aggression doubled during the intervention. Student #9 may need more social skills training to decrease incidents of physical aggression.

Violence and its victims in school district all across the United States are steadily increasing (Guetzloe as cited in Muscott et al, 1994). Public school has increasingly become a potential place of danger instead of a place where one should be able to earn an education. According to the National Crime Survey, "close to three million attempted or complete crimes for assault, rape, robbery, or theft took place inside school or on schools property" (Juvenile Justice Bulletin, 1989). A vast amount of literature has been aimed at increasing the social functioning of students with behavior problems and disabilities throughout life (Parker & Asher as cited in Vaughn et al.). These reviews primarily are aimed to help school age students who display inappropriate behaviors in school learning environments. Many literature reviews have shown that there are large numbers of social skills interventions for students with disabilities, although they may not be given or

provided with one that would help them display appropriate social skills needed during a certain situation (Vaughn et al.).

Student #10 showed moderate increase in both areas of physical and verbal aggression after social skill training. This student may also need more training.

Violence in America has increased among young adults. Within a nine year period the number of students under the ages of 18 who have been arrested for manslaughter and murder has risen. Over that period of time, the arrest of students with disabilities for crime of physical aggression (i.e., aggravated assault and rape) has increased. A large percentage of these increases in violent behaviors has happened within the public school system while school are in session. “The national Crime Victimization Survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice indicated that of the 10,000 students surveyed 9% reported that they were victims of crime in and around their school” (Bastian & Taylor, 1991 as cited in Meyer et al, 1998 NP). “According to an excellent review of adolescent violence by Tolan and Guerra (1994), the prevalence and aggression within our nations’ school is a reflection of a larger culture that both tolerates and legitimizes violence” (Meyer, 1998, NP). The real truth about physical and verbal aggression is that its very origin is complex and is not thoroughly understood because most people believe that it comes from people who are poor, those who have not had good parents or bad schools (Kazdin as cited in Bullis, 2001).

The overall effect of social skills training was positive for four of the six students with disabilities because data showed that there were fewer incidents of physical and verbal aggression in one or both categories after the training was complete. In some instances, physical and/or verbal aggression was eliminated or fell to zero incidents. For

the remaining two students, data showed that one had an increase in one category while the other had an increase in both. Social skills training was indeed effective for BD students.

Limitations of the Study

There could have been additional data, however, because four of the ten BD students were eliminated due to high numbers of absences during the intervention. Therefore the behavior of only six participants was studied. The baseline and intervention lasted a modest 9 weeks combined due to deadlines and other obligations.

This study was done in one classroom in a school in Southern New Jersey. The researcher's instructional aide was mobile with participants during physical education, cafeteria, music, art, and world language where incidents were not recorded. Also data were not collected as the students were coming to school or going home from school, however referrals were written for displays of verbal and physical aggression on the bus during this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Continued research is needed on the effects of social skills training on incidents of verbal and physical aggression for students with behavior disorders. This study was started in the latter part of the school year whereas social skills training could be implemented much earlier in the school year, especially for BD students who may need more social skills training than other students without disabilities. More time is needed for some students to learn social skills by modeling, demonstrating, practicing, and reading the scripts. Problem solving should also be taught and practiced.

Future researchers should be familiar with African American male students, both with and without behavior disorders, who may use verbal aggression in the form of “crackin” or “momma jokes” as part of a cultural method of creating a feeling of superiority by insulting a peer or a group of peers. These verbal aggressions are accepted among young African American males as a rite of passage in their neighborhoods and schools; however these aggressions often cause disruption in the classroom. Physical aggression has reached a level of extremes, in which a shove, a push, or a hit could escalate to a situation involving death, usually by the use of a handgun, as opposed to an old-fashioned fistfight. In addition some young Black males practice physical aggression during birthday celebrations by hitting or punching the birthday person the same amount of times as the person’s age. This practice is socially acceptable among peers in school and within the community. This behavior is fast becoming an intolerable nuisance in schools and communities across the country and could be a factor in the increase of physical aggressions as the children grow older

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Appendix A
Institutional Review Board Approval

2004-56

RECEIVED FEB 04 2004

Appendix C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
DISPOSITION FORM

Antonio Singletary
Principal Investigator

Co-Principal Investigator (if applicable)

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Address of Principal Investigator

Address of Co-Principal Investigator

Bridgeton, New Jersey 08302
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Telephone # Fax # e-mail address

Telephone # Fax # e-mail address

TITLE OF
RESEARCH A study on a Classroom Intervention for Behavioral Disorders: Students Who Display Physical and
Verbal Aggression in a Multicultural Learning Environment

ADMINISTRATIVE DISPOSITION - DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Your claim for exemption for the research study identified above has been reviewed. The action taken is indicated below:

_____ APPROVED FOR EXEMPTION AS CLAIMED: CATEGORY # _____

Note: Anything that materially changes the exempt status of this study must be presented to the IRB for approval before the changes are implemented. Such modifications should be sent to the IRB Office at the address above.

_____ APPROVED FOR EXEMPTION - BUT NOT AS CLAIMED. Your claim for exemption does not fit the criteria for exemption designated in your proposal. However, the study does meet the criteria for exemption under CATEGORY # _____ .

_____ A determination regarding the exempt status of this study cannot be made at this time. Additional information is required.

_____ Your proposal does not meet the criteria for exemption, and a full review will be provided by the IRB.

EXPEDITED REVIEW: _____ Approved _____ Denied

FULL REVIEW : _____ Approved _____ Approved with modifications _____ Denied

DENIED: _____

See attached Committee Action Letter for additional comments.

J. Gurak
Chair, IRB

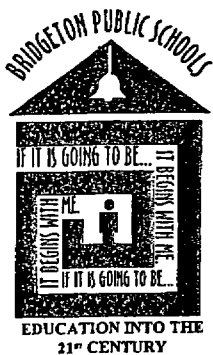
Co-Chair, IRB

Date 3/21/04

Date _____

Appendix B

Consent Letter from School System



Bridgeton Public Schools

*Bank Street Administration Building
Bridgeton, New Jersey 08302-2001*

Telephone: (856) 455-8030, Ext. 1100

Fax: (856) 451-0815

(856) 455-0176

H. Victor Gilson, Ed.D.

Superintendent

TO: J. Michael Coyne, Principal, Broad Street School

FROM: Dr. H. Victor Gilson, Superintendent

RE: Board Approval

DATE: February 11, 2004

The Bridgeton Board of Education, at its meeting held Tuesday, February 10, 2004, approved the request for Mr. Antonio Singletary to conduct a research project using Broad Street School students for his Masters' Thesis course at Rowan University. The course requires him to develop an original project for classroom intervention. His project is entitled "A Study on a Classroom Intervention for Behavior Disorder: Students Who Display Physical and Verbal Aggression in a Multicultural Learning Environment." There will be no names of students or references to the Bridgeton School District.

HVG/kb

c: A. Singletary

Appendix C
Informed Consent Form

February 13, 2004

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a graduate student in the Special Education Department at Rowan University. I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. Steven Crites as part of my master's thesis concerning classroom intervention for students with behavioral difficulties who display physical and verbal aggression in a multicultural learning environment. I am requesting permission for your child to participate in this research. The goal of the study is to determine whether interventions can reduce and/or eliminate physical and verbal aggression.

The interventions consist of social skills training and rewards for appropriate behavior (i.e., not being verbally and physically aggressive). Students will participate in a social skills training program nine times a month for two consecutive months for six weeks. Topics of the lessons include asking permission, sharing, helping others, negotiating, using self-control, standing up for your rights, responding to teasing, avoiding trouble with others and keeping out of fights. Frequency data will be collected on the number of aggressive incidents (verbal and physical) which will occur before, during and after the training.

Each child will be observed. Information will be obtained by observation only. There will be no videotaping or questionnaires for parents or students. Only numbers or initials will be used to identify individuals. All data will be reported in terms of group and individual results.

Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will have absolutely no effect on your child's standing in his/her class. At the conclusion of the study, a summary of the group and individual results will be made to all interested parents. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 856-455-8030, ext. 3486, or you may contact Dr. Steven Crites at 609-256-4500 ext. 3684. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Tony Singletary

Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your child participate in this study by checking the appropriate statement below and returning this letter to your child's teacher by February 17, 2004.

I grant permission for my child, _____, to participate in this study.

I do not grant permission for my child, _____, to participate in this study.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

