The Effect of Skillstreaming Intervention on

First Grade Students from Low-Income Families

By Jennifer Barnes

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Abstract

The purpose of this pre-experimental one group pre-test, post-test design study was to determine the impact of using four selected lessons from the Skillstreaming curriculum once a week in a first grade classroom of 16 students from a low income area. The researcher awarded points to students on the internet based classroom wide point system, Class Dojo, for respectful behaviors and took away points for aggressive behaviors. The mean number of unkind behaviors per student during the intervention (Mean = 4.86, SD = 5.54) was significantly lower than the mean number of unkind behaviors per student during the weighted baseline (Mean = 12.27, SD=13.03) [t (12) = 2.57, p = .03].The mean number of respectful behaviors per student (Mean = 5.65, SD = 2.94) during the intervention period was significantly higher than the mean number of respectful behaviors per student during the weighted baseline period (Mean = 2.82, SD = 2.84) [t (12) = 5.30, p < .001]. Results suggest that this is a valuable social skills intervention for children living in low income areas. Further research should be conducted incorporating the Skillstreaming curriculum for a longer time-period and on a more school-wide basis.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Verbal and physical aggression can take the form of hitting, pushing, yelling, arguing, or teasing. These unkind aggressive acts among students can create loss in instructional time due to necessary adult intervention. Students with aggressive behaviors have difficulty forming positive relationships with their peers.

The students in this study often viewed, experienced, or participated in acts of verbal or physical aggression multiple times throughout the school day. These students frequently would request or require adult intervention to end the behaviors. The students were defensive about accusations that others would make. Typically, the behaviors were minor disagreements that could have been resolved between the students. However, the students were not equipped with strategies to use. The hope of this research was to provide students with resources and common language that could be used to limit aggressive interactions and increase respectful interactions.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of incorporating weekly, classroom-wide lessons from the Skillstreaming Curriculum for first grade students living in a low-income area in helping them reduce their aggressive behaviors and increase their respectful behaviors.

Hypothesis

The first null hypothesis is that there will be no statistically significant difference between the mean number of unkind interactions per student during the weighted baseline period and during the Skillstreaming intervention period. The second null hypothesis is that there will be no

statistically significant difference between the mean number of respectful interactions per student during the weighted baseline period and during the Skillstreaming intervention period.

Operational Definitions

Unkind interactions are verbal and/or physically aggressive behaviors by students that are directed towards peers or adults. These unkind interactions include hitting, pushing, yelling, arguing, or putting others down by exclusion, teasing, or embarrassment. Respectful interactions and behaviors include resolving conflicts without adult support, standing up for others, and acts of kindness (helping others, compliments, etc.). Normal and expected interactions among students include sharing, taking turns, and completing tasks in groups or with partners without negative interactions. A low-income area is defined as an area in which the school qualifies for Title I services.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review seeks to explore the impact of social skill instruction on behaviors for students in poverty. Section one provides an overview of risk factors associated with poverty. Section two explores the implications of poverty on behavior in the classroom. Section three explores strategies to increase socially appropriate behaviors, and in section four, a summary is provided.

Risk Factors Associated with Poverty

Poverty can impact many areas of a student's life. Several risk factors associated with poverty include premature birth, poor nutrition, single parent households, inadequate child care, and more authoritarian parenting styles, which can create an unstable and neglectful environment and lead to developmental problems in children (Holtz, Fox & Meurer, 2015). Limited financial resources due to poverty can lead to higher levels of stress and impair the mental health of parents and guardians (Henninger & Luze, 2014). Stress may be manifested in inappropriate ways, including parents' failure to demonstrate emotional regulation for the children in the home (Mathis & Bierman, 2015). A child's social and emotional development can be greatly impacted by the effects of poverty. Children living in poverty are at an increased risk of social-emotional and behavioral deficits, and children may be more likely to be exposed to domestic violence or trauma (Bush & Eisenhower, 2014).

Implications of Poverty on Behavior in the Classroom

Due to stressors associated with poverty, children may not always be exposed to appropriate modeling of behaviors or learn healthy coping strategies. Trauma associated with poverty may lead to fear and a lack of security, which may impair a child's ability to interact or

develop trusting relationships with others (Bush & Eisenhower, 2014). Henninger and Luze (2014) indicate that early exposure to poverty may cause children to demonstrate "externalizing" behaviors, such as; physical aggression, disobeying rules, cheating, stealing, or destruction of property. Poverty has been associated with behaviors such as noncompliance and aggression (Bush & Eisenhower, 2014). Behavior disorders among early childhood students who live in poverty may be as much as 15% more common compared to their economically advantaged peers (Dufrene, Parker, Menousek, Zhou, Harpole & Olmi, 2012). Instruction can be impacted by frequent disruptions and acts of disrespect or aggression in the classroom (Parker, Nelson & Burns, 2010). In addition to negatively impacting learning, aggressive, noncompliant, and disruptive behaviors can also interfere with a child's ability to form relationships in a classroom.

Strategies to Increase Socially Acceptable Behaviors

Early Intervention

In order to reduce problematic behaviors related to poverty, interventions should be implemented as early as possible to support academic and behavioral success. If not addressed early, problematic behaviors may continue or worsen past early childhood (Holtz, et al., 2015). According to Thomas, Bierman, Thompson & Powers (2008), it is most beneficial to identify those children at high-risk for problematic behaviors and intervene prior to their entering school, in order to promote their social development and school readiness. Utilizing preventive strategies helps to prepare children to be effective students in a classroom.

If a child is already of school age, teachers can still use preventive strategies prior to the school year beginning. Establishing classroom environments using preventive strategies is more effective for supporting appropriate behavior than using consequences (Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver & Wehby, 2010).

Structure

Having organized class rules and routines helps establish clear expectations and promotes self-regulation skills, and models of desired behavior help support the development of social skills (Lee & Bierman, 2015). Increasing student engagement through opportunities for all students to respond can decrease off-task behaviors and promote appropriate academic and social behaviors (Partin, etal., 2010). Building classrooms that are emotionally supportive, with close student-teacher relationships, may reduce stress and promote security, which will enable the development of skills to regulate emotions and attention (Lee & Bierman, 2015). Providing higher levels of positive attention and having close relationships with students are associated with reduced aggression and social withdrawal. Teachers can promote appropriate behaviors in the classroom by taking a proactive approach, and creating safe and trusting learning environments.

Behavior Modification

Teaching replacement, or desired, behaviors can also help students to be successful in the classroom. Behavior intervention may be necessary and can have a positive impact on the reduction of problematic behaviors (Benner, Nelson, Sanders & Ralston, 2012). Early classroom-based social skills interventions are more effective than interventions with older students (January, Casey & Paulson, 2011).

Social Skills Training/Character Education

Social skills are necessary for establishing friendships and relationships, developing peer acceptance, and adapting to the demands of school (Robinson-Ervin, Cartledge, Musti-Rao, Gibson & Keyes, 2016). Social skills can be taught through character education programs. These programs have a positive influence on students in schools with a high rate of poverty (Parker et

al., 2010). Motivation and immediate feedback can help replace negative behaviors with more socially appropriate conduct (Robinson-Ervin et al., 2016). Social behaviors need to be modeled and directly taught to students, in order for problematic behaviors to be reduced.

Skillstreaming

Skillstreaming is a social skills curriculum that can be used by teachers in small group or whole-class settings. There are lessons for a variety of social skills which are intended to provide students with necessary life skills, such as problem solving, dealing with stress, and increasing positive relationships with peers and adults (McGinnis, 2012). Each lesson incorporates teacher modeling, role-playing, performance feedback and generalization training for different social situations. A study on using Aggression Replacement Training for children and youth with traumatic life experiences found that they were able to learn to take responsibility for their behaviors, manage their emotions, and build respectful relationships through weekly training in Skillstreaming, Anger Control, and Moral Reasoning (Amendola & Oliver, 2013).

Positive Reinforcement

Recognizing and praising students' positive behavior may also increase appropriate behavior. Positive reinforcement, such as teacher praise, can be used to increase a student's appropriate behavior and decrease a student's inappropriate behaviors (Partin et al., 2010). Verbal praise can be a simple and effective strategy to increase a student's positive behaviors, and simultaneously decrease negative behaviors. Specifically, teachers' use of praise has been shown to increase a student's ability to follow directions, remain engaged in instruction, demonstrate on-task behavior, respond correctly to academic tasks, and complete their work accurately. Disruptive classroom behavior can also be reduced with increased use of praise (Dufrene et al., 2012). Additionally, when teacher praise reduces a student's negative behaviors,

it may, in turn, cause the teacher to use praise more often, resulting in a more positive classroom climate. In order to be effective, teachers should provide specific praise and feedback about the appropriateness of a student's behaviors in order to increase desired behaviors (Partin et al., 2010).

Summary

Poverty can have a variety of negative impacts on students' and consequently, their peers', social behaviors and ability to learn. Additional stress that poverty causes in the home may interfere with a child's ability to self-regulate his or her emotions, which may lead to social deficits. These behaviors may manifest as aggression, disruption, or noncompliance. Students who overreact or become withdrawn as a result of these stressors will not flourish in a classroom environment.

While they are not able to control families' economic situations, research indicates that teachers are able to utilize several strategies and approaches which may increase appropriate behaviors in the classroom. Many of these relate to developmental theory about the conditions necessary to learn, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the area of security and belonging and Erikson's Theory of Trust, Industry, and Initiative. Students need to feel accepted and have a sense of belonging, but they may need support in developing the skills necessary to function in a classroom. Establishing clear rules and expectations will help to create a secure learning environment. Developing close teacher-student relationships will help to promote trust. Keeping students engaged in instruction through total participation techniques will help to reduce inappropriate behaviors, such as being of-task, calling out, or distracting others, and increase what is able to be learned during lessons. Teacher use of specific feedback and praise can also

help to increase appropriate behaviors. Social skill instruction, such as Skillstreaming, can be used to promote appropriate behaviors and is most effective as an early intervention.

All of these strategies can help students to develop necessary skills to be successful in a classroom environment both academically and socially. Future research should examine which strategies work best to help students who live in poverty succeed in school and their communities. This support and consequent success may have implications for breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty and improving the success and health of students as they grow.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Design

The design that was used for this study was a one-group pretest-posttest, a variant of the pre-experimental design. The sample group was a convenience sample consisting of an entire first grade classroom. The dependent variables in this study were the frequency of unkind and the frequency of respectful interactions. The independent variable was whether or not the children had yet participated in the Skillstreaming intervention.

Participants

The participants in this study were the researcher's entire first grade class. This class consisted of 16 students between the ages of six and seven. The classroom was based in a public, Title I elementary school in a city in the mid-Atlantic region. According to the Maryland State Department of Education (2017), "Title I, Part A is a federal program that provides financial assistance to local school systems and schools with high percentages of poor children to support the academic achievement of disadvantaged students" (p.1). Six of the sixteen students were African American. One was Asian. One was Hispanic. Three were bi-racial. There were seven boys and nine girls in the class. The students in the classroom have a range of abilities. Two students are English Language Learners. One student receives special education services. Three students are above grade level in all academic areas. The remaining students fall in the low to average ability range. Not all students in the class displayed unkind behavior. However, there were several in the class who expressed verbally or physically aggressive behaviors so frequently that the researcher decided it was best for the whole class to receive the intervention to develop consistent strategies for dealing with unkindness.

Instrument

Data was recorded using the classroom-wide point system, Class Dojo. The data was recorded using an internet based application for Class Dojo on a smart phone and on the classroom computer. Students earned points on Class Dojo for respectful behaviors and lost points for aggressive behaviors. The researcher developed two categories on Class Dojo for data collection purposes; respectful and unkind. Each time an act of verbal or physical aggression toward another person was observed or reported, the researcher deducted a point from the unkind category for all students involved. Each time a student was observed showing respect toward another person, a point from the respectful category was awarded. If the researcher observed two or more students working out a problem without adult intervention, points for respect were awarded to all the individuals involved. The points were displayed on the classroom projector screen throughout the day. Each student was able to see if they had earned points or lost points. When the screen was not projecting the student names and their points, a sound would alert the students if a point was deducted or earned. The alert sound was different for each category of behavior. As the categories on Class Dojo were developed by the researcher, there is no reliability or validity in the data for the data collection tool. There was no other observer recording incidents of respect or aggressive behaviors in order to obtain a measure of inter-rater reliability.

Procedure

Before the intervention began, the researcher observed and recorded unkind acts and respectful acts for ten days using a classroom-wide point system, Class Dojo. This system had already been in place before the baseline data was collected. Each morning the students began the day with four points. Students could earn a point for being ready, respectful, responsible, or

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safe. These are the four school rules that the students reviewed daily since the beginning of the school year. The class had identified what each of these behaviors looks like; ready is following directions quickly and quietly, respectful is using kind words and helping hands, responsible is working hard the whole time in his or her spot, and safe is walking at all times and sitting on his or her bottom. Students could lose points for not being ready (not following directions), respectful (unkind), responsible (of task), or safe (unsafe). Before the baseline data was collected, the students were reminded that they would be earning points for being respectful and losing points for being unkind. The criteria for respectful and unkind behaviors were described to the children through verbal discussion and routine classroom and school rules during the morning routine. These criteria were reviewed every morning and throughout the day. Although the Dojo feedback to the children had the respectful and unkind behaviors in the same category with respectful behaviors earning points and unkind behaviors losing points, for data collection the Dojo kept track of respectful and unkind behaviors separately. To calculate the number of respectful interactions, the initial "free" daily point on the Dojo for respectful interactions was not included. The students were also given tickets at the end of each day for each point they maintained and for additional points earned. These tickets were placed in a classroom container. At the end of each day, a ticket with one student's name was pulled from the container for a prize, such as a pencil, stickers, or small toy. These reward systems remained in place for the entirety of the experiment.

After the baseline data was collected, twenty days of intervention began. A lesson from the Skillstreaming curriculum was taught over the course of the four weeks, one lesson each week. The skill lessons selected were: Using Nice Talk, Ignoring, Dealing with Teasing, and Solving a Problem. The lessons were taught in this order, based on student need and the sequence

McGinnis' (2012) *Skillstreaming in Early Childhood: Guide for Teaching Prosocial Skills*.
Skillstreaming lessons were taught during a thirty-minute instructional block in the afternoon, at the beginning of the week. This instructional block followed lunch and recess and was before special areas. This time is usually designated for writing, science, and/or social studies. Each lesson began with describing the skill steps to the class and creating an anchor chart. The lesson provided suggested modeling situations for the students to participate in in order to demonstrate the steps for the skill. These situations were given to small groups of students to act out for the whole class. After the situations were modeled, students were asked to think of other situations in which the skill could be used. The skills were reviewed throughout the week during homeroom, and anchor charts were displayed at the front of the classroom for each skill. Related skill-supporting activities and homework assignments were also available in the lessons, but they were not implemented due to time constraints.

The baseline values were weighted to compensate for the shorter duration of the baseline by multiplying the baseline values by two. The data was prorated to adjust for absences. The weighted mean number of respectful interactions per student in the two weeks prior to the intervention was compared to the mean number of unkind and respectful interactions per student in the four weeks during the intervention. The data was compared by a non-independent samples t-test.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of incorporating weekly, classroom-wide lessons from the Skillstreaming Curriculum in helping students reduce their aggressive behaviors and increase their respectful behaviors. The study focused on first grade students living in a low-income area.

The mean number of unkind behaviors per student during the intervention (Mean = 4.86, SD = 5.54) was significantly lower than the mean number of unkind behaviors per student during the weighted baseline (Mean = 12.27, SD=13.03) [t (12) = 2.57, p = .03], as seen in Table 1. Consequently, the first null hypothesis, that there will be no statistically significant difference between the mean number of unkind interactions per student during the weighted baseline period and during the Skillstreaming intervention period, was rejected.

The mean number of respectful behaviors per student (Mean = 5.65, SD = 2.94) during the intervention period was significantly higher than the mean number of respectful behaviors per student during the weighted baseline period (Mean = 2.82, SD = 2.84) [t (12) = 5.30, p < .001], as seen in Table 1. Consequently, the second null hypothesis, that there will be no statistically significant difference between the mean number of respectful interactions per student during the weighted baseline period and during the Skillstreaming intervention period, was rejected.

The students had significantly less unkind behaviors during Skillstreaming intervention. The students also had significantly more respectful behaviors during Skillstreaming intervention.

Table 1.

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-test Results for Unkind and Respectful Behaviors per Student

Before and After Skillstreaming

Condition	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-statistic
Baseline Unkind	12.27	13.03	2.57*
Skillstreaming Unkind	4.86	5.54	
Baseline Respect	2.82	2.84	5.30**
Skillstreaming Respect	5.65	2.94	

N = 16

  *Significant at p < .05

  **Significant at p < .001

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study looked at the impact of using selected lessons from the Skillstreaming curriculum once a week in a first grade classroom of students from a low income area. The frequency of students' respectful and unkind behaviors prior to the intervention were compared with the frequency of respectful and unkind behaviors during the intervention in order to determine the impact of the Skillstreaming lessons on student behavior. The null hypotheses stated that there would be no significant difference in the number of respectful and unkind behaviors prior to the intervention and during the intervention. When the data was compared, the null hypotheses were rejected. There was a decrease in the frequency of unkind behaviors and an increase in the frequency of respectful behaviors.

Implications of Results

The results of this study provide many reasons for using the Skillstreaming curriculum as a means to help students learn social skills and conflict resolution strategies. By incorporating Skillstreaming lessons once a week, students were able to learn steps for thinking about and addressing social issues such as dealing with teasing. The impact of the intervention is likely even greater than what is indicated by the study results because the data collected provided evidence only of the number of times that students were observed using respectful or unkind behaviors inside of the observer's classroom. The data did not document the number of times that students used what they learned from the Skillstreaming curriculum outside of the classroom.

Throughout the intervention period, the researcher frequently observed students using the steps they had learned in Skillstreaming lessons in order to solve problems with other

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students. The observer also recorded more instances of respect toward others. Students were doing more kind things for others and helping each other to solve problems. The students would report how they solved disagreements to the observer. The intervention helped to create a positive classroom culture where the students were able to discuss and practice the social skills together with real life examples. The Skillstreaming lessons that were taught provided students with common language for solving problems with others.

The Skillstreaming intervention was extremely practical for use in the classroom setting. Each lesson required only about thirty minutes to complete, and daily implementation is not necessary. The lessons can be implemented based on the needs of the students, which makes it a valuable and time saving experience for the classroom. The lessons used a simple format that was consistent for each lesson, and there were no additional materials needed. The only necessary resource was the Skillstreaming curriculum guide, which was inexpensive. Once the materials are purchased, there is little additional expense. Skillstreaming was also easy to integrate in with the positive behavioral intervention already taking place schoolwide. Skillstreaming can be a good intervention for children living in poverty. The classroom in which the Skillstreaming intervention was implemented was in a school with a significant population of students from low-income families. Since additional funding is often available for Title I schools, it could be a way to use additional funding.

Theoretical Consequences

The results of this study provided compelling evidence in support of the theory that social skills training programs such as Skillstreaming improve students' respectful behaviors and reduce unkind behaviors. Skillstreaming involves providing the students with specific steps to take during certain social situations. The teacher models the steps in a given scenario, and then

the students are given practice scenarios. Putting the steps into context allows the students to understand how to respond in a variety of situations.

The results of this study also provide evidence that supports the theory that early intervention is more effective at reducing problematic behaviors and increasing positive behaviors and that it is important to promote social skills among individuals living in poverty. The students that received the Skillstreaming intervention were between the ages of six and seven years old and were from a low-income area.

<center>**Threats to Validity**</center>

The limitations in how the study was conducted threatened the internal validity of the study. First, the sample size of the study was extremely small, with only sixteen students in the classroom. This limited the statistical power, which made the study less sensitive to the potential effects of the intervention. An additional concern is that there was no control group. Consequently, there were no comparison group controls for internal validity risk factors such as history and maturation.

Another threat to internal validity was the short time frame of the intervention and data collection which may have limited the ability of the study to capture the effectiveness of the intervention. The study was conducted over a short period of time, with the pre-intervention data being collected over a period of 10 days and the number of unkind and respectful incidents doubled for statistical calculations. The data collected during the intervention occurred for 20 days. The intervention itself was only conducted over a period of four weeks, with only four Skillstreaming lessons being taught. A longer time period for pre-intervention data would provide a more accurate representation of student behavior for a baseline. The weeks of data collection during the intervention were often interrupted by school closings, which made it

difficult to collect the data consistently and consecutively. These disruptions to routine may have also affected students' behavior. It is difficult to compare how the various disruptions to normal classroom routine may have affected student behavior and the data.

The internal validity of the data may have been impacted by student attendance. Although prorating was used to adjust for absences in totaling the number of unkind and respectful behaviors, school absences can impact the social dynamics between students. For example, a child may be frustrated because he or she missed out on an academic or social event. Often times, students respond to an unkind behavior in an unkind way. A particular student that was absent several times during the intervention had more frequent unkind behaviors compared to other students. It is possible that the fact that the child was frequently absent may have impacted the way the child responded to other students. In addition, if children were missing school, they were also likely missing Skillstreaming lessons.

Another factor that could have impacted the internal validity of the study was the reinforcement of behaviors through a reward and consequence system. Students were awarded points when they were observed using respectful behaviors and lost points when they used unkind behaviors. Points were accumulated for rewards. Students may have been motivated to use respectful behaviors when they knew they would be rewarded for using them. Although the reinforcement system was also in place during the baseline period, it is possible that the reinforcement had a greater impact when the children were receiving the Skillstreaming intervention because they had more skills available to earn points and avoid losing points.

A threat to the external validity was that the study was conducted in just one first grade classroom in a low-income area. Consequently, the results do not generalize to children of a wide variety of demographic backgrounds or to children of different age ranges. The results also

cannot be generalized to all types of classroom behavioral climates. In the current study, the teacher had concerns about excessive unkind behaviors and also desired increased respectful behaviors. In a classroom in which there was already a low frequency of unkind behaviors and a high frequency of respectful behaviors, the intervention may have had a different impact.

The external validity may have been impacted by the limited number of lessons from the Skillstreaming intervention that were implemented. Only four lessons were taught out of the entire guide, which contained over thirty lessons. The four lessons were selected by the researcher based on the needs of the students. The results cannot be generalized to a Skillstreaming intervention using the entire curriculum since not all of the lessons were completed. Although it is likely the more lessons that are taught, the better the results, it is also possible that for some students the novelty of the intervention may wear off and they may return to previous, less desirable, behaviors.

Another factor impacting the external validity of the study was that data could be collected only when the observer viewed the students using unkind or respectful behaviors The students were regrouped to other classrooms for various instructional times throughout the day. The observer was unable to record data for the students during lunch, recess, special areas, and reading instruction. Not all behaviors were able to been seen by this researcher during all times during the day. Consequently, the results cannot be generalized to the entire school day or to settings in which the Skillstreaming instructor is not present.

Connections to Previous Studies

Prior to this study, other studies have shown that early social skills intervention will decrease unacceptable social behaviors. According to Thomas, et al.(2008), it is most beneficial to identify those children at high-risk for problematic behaviors and intervene prior to their

entering school, in order to promote their social development and school readiness. A study by

January, et al.(2011) showed early classroom-based social skills interventions are more effective

than interventions with older students. Another study showed problematic behaviors may

continue or worsen past early childhood, if not addressed early (Holtz et al., 2015). Results of

this current study are consistent in indicating that classroom social skills interventions with

young children are effective.

Other studies have shown that social skills intervention will decrease unacceptable social

behaviors among students living in poverty. According to a study, character education programs

have a positive influence on students in schools with a high rate of poverty (Parker et al., 2010).

Results of this current study are consistent in indicating that classroom social skills interventions

with children from low-income households are effective.

Implications for Future Research

This study provides many implications for future research. It would be beneficial to

conduct a study over a longer period of time in order to establish a more valid measure of

students' respectful and unkind behaviors before, during, and after the intervention period. It

would be important to see whether or not the children would continue to show fewer unkind

behaviors and more respectful behaviors relative to the baseline period after the children were no

longer receiving Skillstreaming lessons. It would also be interesting to gather more specific data

that measured different aspects of students' behaviors. Rather than focusing broadly on unkind

behaviors, the frequency of physically aggressive behaviors and verbally aggressive behaviors

could be analyzed. Data could also be collected on how many times students solve conflicts

independently prior to and after the intervention.

It would also be beneficial to conduct the study with a larger number of participants, such as an entire school, in order to determine whether or not the intervention would become more effective if it was able to be conducted across multiple reinforcing settings. If the whole school used aspects of the Skillstreaming curriculum, the language and skills of the curriculum would become part of the school culture, not just the classroom culture.

It may also be beneficial to compare the effectiveness of the intervention among groups of people with differing socioeconomic status. A study could even look at particular subgroups of children in poverty such as children with an incarcerated parent or children with divorced parents. Children have different needs based on their experiences and family backgrounds.

Another study could look at the differential effectiveness of providing the intervention at different developmental times, such as preschool, early elementary school, late elementary school, middle school, and high school to see whether early intervention is more effective. Social skill development starts at a young age and can be easily influenced by a child's experiences.

Summary and Conclusion

The results of this study show that there was a statistically significant difference in the amount of students' unkind and respectful behaviors during the Skillstreaming intervention for students living in poverty in early elementary school. The children had less frequent unkind behaviors and more frequent respectful behaviors during the intervention. The classroom based social skills training provided the students with consistent language and steps to solve problems with other students. The students became more aware of how to solve problems among themselves. Based on the data and the literature supporting the use of social skills training, it is evident that further research should be conducted incorporating the Skillstreaming curriculum for a longer time-period and on a more school-wide basis. By increasing the length and scope of the

intervention, students would potentially be able to become more independent at solving problems with their peers. When students are able to have the social skills needed to work with others, they will be able to participate in more valuable learning opportunities.

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