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ABSTRACT

To increase the social skills of second graders, a 32-week peace education curriculum was taught. All 135 students were from the same ethnically diverse suburban school located in a mostly upper-middle class neighborhood. Pre-curriculum observations, interviews, and teacher questionnaires demonstrated that students did not show proper respect for teachers, adult personnel, peers, and themselves; the main problems cited were fighting, unresolved disputes, and unacceptable language. The curriculum was used to teach children to solve problems peacefully through the use of activities such as role playing; modeling; reading, writing and publishing stories with conflict and peace themes; brainstorming; doing art projects with peace themes; and group discussion. Examples of lessons taught include: the value of trust, recognition of each individual's uniqueness, personality traits, and classroom rules. Evaluation results suggest that, after the curriculum was used, 80% of students learned to express respect for teachers, adults, and peers; 80% improved in the use of acceptable language; 70% learned to exhibit proper behavior in the cafeteria, and 70% were able to resolve conflicts independently. Results indicate that a peace education curriculum which focuses on acquiring conflict resolution skills can increase students' ability to resolve conflicts peacefully. (Eleven appendices include teacher opinion questionnaires, teacher surveys of student conflict resolution skills, and the peace and conflict resolution assessment test. Contains 40 references.) (JW)

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IMPROVING SOCIAL SKILLS IN SECOND GRADERS  
THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A  
PEACE EDUCATION/CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS CURRICULUM

by

Yvonne R. Tillman

Cluster 49

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Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

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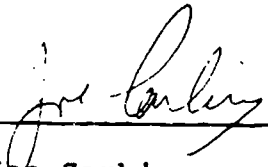
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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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Dr. Joe Carbia

Principal

Title

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May 21, 1995

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This practicum report was submitted by Yvonne R. Tillman under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Final Approval of Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D., Adviser  
Report

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## ABSTRACT

Improving Social Skills in Second Graders Through the Implementation of a Peace Education/Conflict Resolution Skills Curriculum. Tillman, Yvonne, R., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Social Skills/Conflict Resolution Peace Education/Curriculum Development/Elementary Education/Self-Concept.

This practicum was designed to address the problem 135 second graders were having demonstrating acceptable social skills. The goal of the program was to increase the ability of second graders to act in acceptable ways.

To achieve this goal, a social skills/peace education curriculum was developed and implemented over a 32 week period. Three questionnaires, one survey, and a peace education/conflict resolution assessment test were used to measure practicum success. The writer developed and taught 32 peace education/conflict resolution lessons that were designed to teach students how to solve problems peacefully. The curriculum included modeling, role playing, brainstorming, reading stories with conflict themes, and whole group discussions.

Results showed that 80% of the students exhibited acceptable behavior in showing respect for teachers, adults, and peers; 80% of the students also improved in the use of acceptable language; 70% of the students exhibited acceptable behavior in the cafeteria; and 70% of the second grade students were able to resolve conflicts independently.

Results indicated that a peace education/conflict resolution skills curriculum that focuses on the acquisition of conflict resolution skills increased the students' ability to resolve conflicts peacefully.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Description of Community

The writer is employed at an elementary school in a suburban neighborhood. The community consists of upper-middle class families who regularly participate in programs and activities at the school.

The school's student capacity is approximately 800 and originally consisted of 20 classrooms, a kindergarten building, a counselor's office, library, and cafeteria. As student enrollment increased, two additional buildings were added to the school site. The buildings now house kindergarten, second, and fifth grade classrooms.

The school's student population includes 56% white, 21% black, 19% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. A faculty consisting of a principal, assistant principal, and 45 classroom and exceptional education teachers implement the school district's elementary school curriculum.

Over the last 20 years, the school has joined with community civic and business leaders to pilot a number of educational programs. The school has received district recognition for the implementation of innovative programs and activities.

### Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is an elementary school teacher who currently works as a second grade teacher in a public school district. The writer collaborates with five other second grade teachers to implement the second grade curriculum.

The writer uses a whole language approach to teach reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. The writer guides students in the completion of learning activities in the classroom. The writer also maintains accurate records of lesson plans, grades, and attendance. The writer conducts whole group as well as individualized lessons for all students. In addition, the writer holds regular parent, student, and teacher conferences to discuss each student's educational progress. The writer has a bachelor of arts in elementary education and a master of science in elementary education.

## CHAPTER II

### STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

#### Problem Description

The problem was that second graders were unable to act in socially acceptable ways. Students do not demonstrate appropriate respect for teachers, adult personnel, peers, and themselves. For example, during a recent assembly program, the students talked loudly, engaged in arguments with peers, yelled out joking remarks, and booed students who were performing on stage. The inability of second graders to display appropriate social behaviors had become a disruptive force in the classroom. Unfortunately, students who were disruptive in class got very little independent work completed and often interfered with the learning of others as well. The writer believed that students who consistently performed poorly in class will have little chance of success if efforts were not made to help them.

#### Problem Documentation

The writer distributed a Teacher Opinion Questionnaire to all second grade teachers (Appendix A). As shown in Table 1, good manners, self-respect, respect for others, responsibility, and self-discipline were areas of concern for the teachers. Results presented in Table 1 suggested that second grade students were not learning social skills.

Table 1

Opinions of 7 Second Grade Teachers


---

Do you believe that at least half            Yes            No            Unknown  
of the students in your classroom need  
to improve in the categories below:

---

Good Manners	5	2	0
Self-Respect	4	3	0
Respect for Others	6	1	0
Responsibility	7	0	0
Self-Discipline	5	2	0
Sound Thinking	6	1	0
Good Judgement	7	0	0

---

An interview with the school's guidance counselor provided further evidence of the problem (see Appendix B). The guidance counselor stated that there had been a significant increase in the number of referrals dealing with students being disrespectful to teachers, other adults, and peers. The counselor also expressed concern for the use of unacceptable language (see Table 2).

Table 2

Interview with Guidance Counselor


---

Do you believe that a significant number of the students in the school have a problem in the areas below?

---

	Yes	No
Getting Along with Others	x	
Conflict Resolution Skills	x	
Unacceptable Language	x	
Responsibility	x	

---

The interview with the school's guidance counselor supported the writer's statements about what is wrong in the writer's work setting. Fighting, unresolved disputes, and unacceptable language all were identified as problems.

The writer interviewed the cafeteria manager and cafeteria monitors to gather additional information about the problem (see Appendix C). The cafeteria manager and monitors responded very firmly to the questions asked. As shown in table 3, getting up out of seats, arguing, throwing food, screaming and yelling all were identified as problems.

Everyone surveyed, questioned, and interviewed felt that the main ideas about what is wrong in the writer's work setting are accurate and that the problem (children do not act in socially acceptable ways) was an important one.

Table 3

Interview with Cafeteria Manager

	Yes	No	Unknown
Do students show respect while in the cafeteria?		x	
Do students conduct themselves in an acceptable manner while eating?		x	
Do students demonstrate acceptable social skills?		x	
Do students leave tables and floors clean?		x	

A Teacher Survey of Student Conflict Resolution Skills revealed very illuminating information (Appendix D). As indicated in Table 4, when asked about the ability of students to resolve conflicts, make peace, and demonstrate social skills, all of the teachers indicated that none of the students had mastered conflict resolution skills nor peacemaking skills.

Table 4

Teacher Survey of Student Conflict Resolution Skills


---

Do you believe that 75% of students in your class have mastered the following:	Yes	No	Unknown
--	-----	----	---------

---

Conflict Resolution Skills	0	7	
Peacemaking Skills	0	7	
Social Skills	3	4	

---

Causative Analysis

There were many probable causes of the problem. A review of the local school district's second grade curriculum competencies revealed that there was not one social studies objective that addressed nonviolence or conflict resolution in the school setting. Further, the discipline program employed in the writer's work setting relied heavily on adult monitoring. Students depended on authority figures rather than being taught how to mediate disputes and negotiate solutions independently. Additionally, many educators have not mastered conflict resolution skills and consequently are unable to teach conflict resolution skills to students. As a result, second graders have not acquired the competencies necessary to utilize conflict resolution skills in school and at home.

### Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature revealed a wealth of published work on the problem. Smith (1990) stated that conflict exists when people have opposing ideas, or interests. Alexander & McConnell (1990) maintained that conflict is a normal part of life and exists in many forms. Johnson (1990) believed that conflict can result in change and can be either productive or unproductive. According to Johnson (1990) conflict that is productive can serve as the stimulus for the accepting of new ways of viewing life. Yet, in Smith's opinion (1990), conflict in its unproductive form can also annihilate relationships, people, societies, and the earth.

Felder (1991) went a step further by linking peace with conflict. Felder (1991) stated that peace is concerned with the resolving of conflicts in a nonviolent way. He further suggested that to achieve peace, individuals should invent new and more peaceful ways to resolve conflicts.

Schantz (1987) asserted that conflict is the main theme of many well-known theories of human development and is often identified with aggression. However, Schantz (1987) believed that although behaving in an aggressive manner is associated with conflict, aggression is only one of the many types of responses that may occur in a conflictual situation.

Lorenz (1966) contended that aggression can best be explained in biological terms. Many common ideas about aggression revolve around



the presence at birth of aggression. Moreover, aggression can also be explained by the Freudian idea that aggression is dominant over all other human action. Yet, although Lorenz (1966) believed that aggression is present at birth, lots of research exists to dispute the idea. For example, Weiner (1980) cited the importance of goals in determining behavior. Similarly, Lewin (1935) believed that goals provide a focus, provide incentives, and determine the choices one makes. Furthermore, the way that goals impact behavior is determined by whether one is in a negative or positive state. The two states can be compared to Maslow's (1968) explanation of behavior in terms of shortage and need and Atkinson & Raynor's (1974) explanation of behavior in terms of the dreading of failure and the desire for success.

McCarthy (1992) suggested that in order to achieve lasting peace in the world, individuals must make peace within themselves. According to McCarthy (1992), most people address conflict either passively or violently. Therefore, nonviolence should be taught in the primary grades and extend through high school. Ideally, teaching nonviolence should be directed toward giving everyone a chance to lead a life of peace.

Research work conducted by Hicks (1986) suggested that throughout history people have been studying peace in order to discover nonviolent solutions to problems. It should be noted that this historical interest in peace has its origins in the world's fears about nuclear war.

Hicks (1986) maintained that early research on peace centered on peace problems rather than solutions. Consequently, researchers also tended to emphasize wars and civil disturbances. Hicks (1986) stated that this emphasis resulted in peace being defined as the nonexistence of war or conflict.

Hicks (1986) stated that by the 1970s, researchers began to study violence that occurs as a result of the various institutions within a society. This new focus led to a definition of peace that addressed nonviolence and cooperation. According to Hicks (1986) researchers called this "positive peace."

Wagner (1988) made it clear that defining peace in terms of positive goals rather than negative goals. This idea is critical to the unveiling of ways that societies can move toward the establishment of a peaceful world. Wagner (1988) stated that negative goals are identified with the avoidance of war and tend to not last over a sustained period of time. Contrarily, positive goals focus on bringing about conditions that create a permanent peace in the world.

Cooney & Michalowski (1986) suggested that in order to understand nonviolence, educators may need to amend history so that it includes peace heroes and stories that emphasize harmony and compromise. The authors also stated that there may also need to be a reconstitution of the curriculum so that it includes cooperative learning.

According to Wehr (1977), another important curriculum component should be conflict resolution training.

Hicks (1986) maintained that how students are socialized plays an important part in perceptions of the world. Galtung (1980) strongly believed that peace must be discussed in terms of violence and war, injustice, and the environment. issues.

Several studies reviewed by Schantz (1987) helped to shed additional light on the problem. The studies dealt with children and conflict. The experimental method was used. Children were observed in natural settings. For the purpose of the studies, Schantz & Schantz (1985) defined conflict as mutual opposition between two or more individuals. In other words, a conflict occurred when one child tried to exert an influence over another child who did not want to be influenced.

As a result of the studies, Schantz (1987) discovered several important reasons for the initiation of conflicts in children. During the preschool years, conflicts revolved around ownership of objects. As children grew older, conflicts involved one child's frustration over another child trying to dominate him or her, interrupting of play activities, or the breaking of social rules. Interestingly enough, Schantz & Schantz (1985) observed that as children get older, conflict ceases to center around objects and instead shifts more towards the attempt to control the way another person thinks or feels.

Other research conducted by Schantz & Schantz (1985) examined the relationships between a child's knowledge of social rules and a child's knowledge of conflict resolution skills. Schantz & Schantz (1985) concluded that a child's knowledge of conflict resolution skills has a direct bearing on a child's behavior when in conflict with another child. Children who viewed other children as separate and independent people were better able to get along with peers. Moreover, children who had a better understanding of the established social rules were more successful in interactions with peers. Schantz & Schantz (1985) concluded that a child's social-cognitive level determines the degree to which that child will engage in conflict with other children. In addition, Alexander & McConnell (1990) believed that a child's ideas about conflict and ways of settling disputes highly influence a child's ability to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner.

Other research revealed that children use a number of strategies when engaged in conflict. Hay & Ross (1982) observed that preschoolers settle conflicts by crying, submitting, withdrawing, and asking the other child to stop. Oftentimes, some conflicts are resolved when one or both forgive the wrong action and decide to become friends again.

Sackin & Thelen (1984) researched conciliatory behaviors. The research was conducted to determine if conciliatory behaviors resulted in peaceful interactions in kindergartners. According to Sackin & Thelen

(1984), results showed that physical or verbal encounters ended in a win-lose situation. Contrarily, the majority of conciliatory encounters resulted in a peaceful resolution of the conflicts. Schantz (1987) argued that the evidence suggested that, beginning at an early age, it required a joint effort to successfully resolve a conflict. Alexander & McConnell (1990) reported that results of the experimental studies had a number of implications. One implication is that educators should focus on the cognitive and affective aspects of a child's development rather than focusing solely on observable behaviors. Alexander & McConnell (1990) believed that by doing this, educators will be able to help children develop more effective bargaining strategies. Furthermore, cooperation may be encouraged by redefining the concept of "win-lose" to the concept of "win-win". The authors also stressed the importance of including a parent-child component which is important in the development of conflict resolution skills.

Levy & Furth (1986) found that there is a high correlation between resolving conflicts through compromise and moral reasoning. Moreover, conflict resolution is one of the most effective ways for a child to reach moral maturity. Youniss (1981) maintained that one way of settling conflicts is to approach the conflicts as communication problems. Youniss (1981) also reported that there is a definite interaction between a child's social, cognitive, and moral development.

The literature cited many probable causes of the problem. According to Stephens (1980), the rise in single-parent homes and high incidences of divorce have caused a fracturing of parental influence in the home. Furthermore, the Children's Defense Fund (1991), reported that a large proportion of children who live in poverty also experience violence on a daily basis. To exacerbate the problem further, Singer & Singer (1990) reported that the American child spends more time watching television than attending school. Moreover, Stephens (1980) asserted that children are exposed to all kinds of explicit acts and language while watching televised programs. In addition, Tuchscherer (1988) maintained that by the time a child reaches the age of 15, he or she has watched over 13,000 killings on television. This statistic alone makes it very difficult for educators to teach students how to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Pepitone (1972) cited another cause as being the aggressive competitiveness that is prevalent in American society. A child brings to school attitudes of competitiveness that are supported by traditional methods of grading and the existing system of rewards and consequences. Larsson (1988) maintained that competition exists even in classrooms that discourage it. This makes it very difficult to change a student's attitude to one of cooperation.

Katz & Taylor (1988) asserted that another cause of the problem is racial intolerance. Violence that occurs in the classroom or on the playground is frequently a result of hostile feelings among children from different backgrounds.

Ediger (1989) cited low teaching standards in social studies as another probable cause of the problem. Ediger (1989) maintained that colleges and universities are not providing the extensive training teachers need to teach peace education objectives.

McCarthy (1992) believed another probable cause of the problem is the fact that although America teaches peace, it still has a \$900 billion dollar budget for global arms.

McCarthy (1992) pointed out the irony of, on the one hand, encouraging young people to get along with others and coexist peacefully, while at the same time (by leaving peace objectives out of curriculums) implying that teaching peace is unimportant.

CHAPTER III  
ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The writer's goal was for second graders to act in socially acceptable ways.

Expected Outcomes

Outcome 1

After practicum implementation, results of a Teacher Opinion Questionnaire will indicate that 80% of the students in the classroom did improve in the ability to exhibit acceptable social skills (see Appendix E).

Outcome 2

After practicum implementation, results of a Case Management Referral Questionnaire will indicate that 80% of the students in second grade will be able to exhibit respect and use acceptable language in school (see Appendix F).

Outcome 3

After practicum implementation, the writer will distribute a Cafeteria Behavior Questionnaire to the cafeteria manager and the cafeteria monitors. Results will indicate that 70% of the students will be able to exhibit positive behavior in the cafeteria (see Appendix G).

Outcome 4

After practicum implementation, results of a Teacher Survey of



Student Conflict Resolution Skills will indicate that 70% of the second grade students were able to resolve conflicts independently (see Appendix H).

A Peace Education/Conflict Resolution Assessment Test will serve as the paper and pencil test. The test will consist of 30 items dealing with the meanings of peace and conflict, peace heroes, conflict resolution skills, and environmental awareness. Administration time will take approximately 30 minutes. Students will be tested in a whole group setting (see Appendix I).

#### Measurement of Outcomes

The writer will use a Teacher Opinion Questionnaire, a Case Management Referral Questionnaire, a Cafeteria Behavior Questionnaire, and a Teacher Survey of Student Conflict Resolution Skills to measure practicum success.

After practicum implementation, the Teacher Opinion Questionnaire would be distributed to each second grade teacher participating in the program. The questionnaire consisted of seven items. The items were: good manners, self-respect, respect for others, responsibility, self-discipline, sound thinking, and good judgement. Teachers would check the "yes" column if they believed students had shown improvement for each item.

The guidance counselor was given a Case Management Referral Questionnaire. The questionnaire was to be used to determine if second graders had improved in the ability to show respect and use acceptable language in school. The questionnaire consisted of an item dealing with respect and one dealing with use of acceptable language.

A Cafeteria Behavior Questionnaire was to be distributed to the cafeteria manager and cafeteria monitors. The questionnaire consisted of three items. The items dealt with respect, good manners, and interacting with others.

The Teacher Survey of Student Conflict Resolution Skills was also distributed at the end of practicum implementation. The survey consisted of three items: conflict resolution, peacemaking, and social skills.

The Peace Education/Conflict Resolution Skills Assessment Test would serve as the paper and pencil test. The test was to be administered to all five second grade classes at the end of practicum implementation. The test consisted of 30 items that dealt with peace and conflict, peace heroes, conflict resolution skills, and environmental awareness. Administration time was approximately 30 minutes. Students were tested in a whole group setting (see Appendix I).

## CHAPTER IV

### SOLUTION STRATEGY

#### Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem was that second graders were unable to act in socially acceptable ways. Molnar (1992) stated that if we are to construct a more peaceful world, we must begin by changing the attitudes of children in schools. Molnar (1992) suggested that we begin by changing existing curriculums to reflect societal values that are decent and fair.

Bernat (1993) presented a possible solution that was tailor-made for primary children when she suggested that in order to teach peace, educators must first help children develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others. Ideally, peace should be taught through lessons dealing with respect, cooperation, and the development of rules. Bernat (1993) believed that our attitudes affect how we act and has a profound impact on how peaceful we are. Bernat (1993) suggested that to teach peace, educators should create a safe environment in the classroom, identify rules for children to follow, encourage respect, and teach children how to solve conflicts peacefully.

Another solution found in the literature was one suggested by Larsson (1988). Larsson believed that the involvement of parents as well as teachers is vital to the development of peace skills in children. An

elementary curriculum might include games, conflict resolution skills instruction, and peace heroes. Larsson (1988) further believed that the following values should be taught: self-respect, respect for others, environmental awareness, and responsibility.

Harris (1993) suggested a number of ideas developed by a school district in Milwaukee, Wisconsin designed to address violence in schools. The solution was a peace education curriculum that included peer mediation, how to deal with anger, instruction in non-violence, and environmental awareness.

The solution suggested by Packard (1987) was to use Montessori-influenced education for peace. Packard (1987) believed that the means we use to teach children peacemaking skills is just as important as the end that we seek. Packard (1987) cited numerous examples of peace activities such as making a thousand paper cranes, comparing and contrasting peace and war, and teaching negotiation and mediation skills. Similarly, Masheder (1986) believed that the parent has an important role to play in the development of the child. Therefore, children should initially learn about fairness, justice, cooperation, and self-concept in the home.

Sutton (1990) suggested a variety of peace education components that included cultural diversity, conflict resolution skills, finding inner peace, prevention of war, and the causes of war. In addition, Hudson (1991) designed a curriculum composed of lessons in self-esteem,

conflict resolution, social skills, and parent involvement. Tabachnick's (1990) vision was that of a global approach and he recommended the inclusion of international relations when teaching peace. Tabachnick (1990) believed that peace education could lead to prosocial behavior.

According to Scherer (1992), an essential ingredient in finding lasting solutions to the problem is the training of teachers. Ediger (1989) asserted that teachers of peace education should have a background in the liberal arts, a variety of courses in educational psychology, and student teaching experience. Teachers should have extensive knowledge of the social sciences as well as plenty of opportunities to acquire the skills needed to teach peace education content (Eiger, 1989).

A diverse collection of peace education bibliographies was found in the literature. Bjerstedt (1990) cited a document that listed recent peace publications. The document included books of major influence in peace education as well as journal articles and doctoral dissertations.

Another bibliography cited by Barich (1987) was available from the Manitoba Education Library. The bibliography included books, kits, and films covering such topics as peace education, nuclear war, violence, and the origins of war. All of the information would be of great value to the writer since, as a primary teacher, the majority of lessons taught are presented orally. The writer believes the more knowledgeable one is about a specific topic, the better able he or she is to teach subject content.

### Description of Solution Selected

The writer took several steps to solve the problem. The writer developed a second grade curriculum that was designed to teach students how to act in socially acceptable ways. The writer taught 32 lessons that covered peace education and conflict resolution skills. The skills were taught through the development of teacher-made lessons utilizing a whole language/thematic approach. The writer directly taught conflict resolution and social skills. The lessons were based on the major themes of self-concept, cooperation, social skills, conflict resolution, nonviolence, and peacemaking. During the 32 week implementation period, students engaged in the following activities: 1) reading of stories dealing with conflict and peacemaking, 2) role playing win-win situations, 3) participating in seminars about peacemakers, 4) writing and publishing peace stories, and 5) completing art projects related to the major themes studied.

The program was implemented in five weekly 30 minute sessions. The writer taught a weekly lesson to each of the five second grade classes participating in the program. During the weekly visits, the writer taught peace education and conflict resolution skills. At the end of the 32 weeks, posttests were administered and data was gathered to measure the success of the program.

This solution was justified because it dealt with a major problem of mankind but on a smaller level. Furthermore, the solution addressed concepts that most of the second graders had not been exposed to in previous years. It was the first time that many primary students had received direct instruction in social skills and conflict resolution skills.

The solution was easy to implement since it fit well with the methods already being utilized in the writer's work setting. The writer believed that the program would be extremely beneficial for second graders. The resources required were readily available at the school site.

#### Report of Action Taken

Over the 32 week implementation period, the writer taught 32 lessons. Each lesson was designed to teach 135 second grade students how to act in socially acceptable ways. The lessons were also designed to teach students how to resolve conflicts peacefully.

During the first month of implementation, the writer met with the principal to request permission to implement the program in the five second grade classrooms. The principal was very supportive and gave the writer permission to implement. The writer then developed a schedule for each second grade class to receive eight months of peace education/conflict resolution instruction.

Each second grade teacher was introduced to the program during the first second grade planning meeting of the school year. At the

meeting, the writer discussed the goals and objectives of the program, curriculum content, rationale for the program, and scheduling. Each teacher was given a copy of available times for instruction and asked to choose a time for the writer to come into the classroom to teach the lessons. As a result, a master schedule was developed and plans for implementation were finalized. The writer then gave copies of the schedule to the principal and assistant principal.

The writer began the program by teaching a lesson on trust. The writer's purpose was to establish an environment in which students could feel safe and secure. The writer began the lesson by asking students to brainstorm names of people who students could trust. The writer listed the names on a chart on the board. Afterwards the writer asked students who they trusted the most and why. The writer ended the lesson by telling students that they can trust each other in the classroom.

In a continuation of the trust theme, another lesson was taught that focused on the idea of a circle of supporters students could rely on. The students were given a word wheel to list people closest to them. The purpose of the lesson was to point out that we also give and receive support in the classroom.

Another lesson taught dealt with the idea that each student is special. The writer asked students to write a response to the statement, "A person I can trust is \_\_\_\_\_." Most of the students named mother,



father, sister, brother, teacher, principal, and guidance counselor. The writer closed the lesson by asking volunteers to share ideas about trust.

Feedback from teachers the first month was very encouraging. All of the teachers said they were very pleased with the program. Teachers stated that the teaching of the skills was vital. Teachers reviewed the concepts taught after each lesson.

The next lesson dealt with one's personality. The writer introduced the lesson by defining personality. The writer told students that personality is everything about a person. Then the writer asked each person to tell the class about themselves. Then students were asked to create a poem entitled "I Am Special." The students were directed to draw a picture of themselves and volunteers read poems to the class. The idea behind the activity was to demonstrate to students that we are all unique and special. Yet, we also have some things in common such as being in the same grade and attending the same school. The writer went on to tell students that we all feel good about ourselves so that we can feel good about others. Another point conveyed was that all children are important and bring to the classroom special qualities from which we all can benefit. In other words, we are all important and should be treated with respect.

Next came a lesson on class rules. Though each second grade teacher had already established class rules during the first week of

school, the writer thought it was important to conduct another discussion about what our rules are in school. The writer began by asking the students what kind of environment did they want in the classroom. Then, using student ideas, the writer constructed a web on the chalkboard of the ideal classroom environment. Finally, with guidance from the writer, the students agreed on one class rule that would be followed during our lessons. This rule was that we would not do anything to hurt anyone else. This rule covered every possible word or deed that could occur in the classroom. Anything students did that hurt someone in words or actions was considered breaking the rule.

During the second month, the writer taught a culminating social skills lesson. Five sentence prompts were written on the chalkboard. Students were asked to write a sentence to complete the following: 1) I like it when, 2) One thing I'd like to do in school, 3) When I do a good job, 4) I like to wear, and 5) I feel at peace when. There were a variety of responses. Students like physical education and sharing time. One thing that many students wanted to do in school was go on field trips, work in mathematics, and learn to read. It was clear to the writer that the students had diverse interests, and goals. It was also clear that social skills were important for them to learn to ensure a win-win situation for students.

During the second month of implementation, the writer also introduced the concepts of peace and conflict resolution. During the first

lesson, the writer asked students to brainstorm ideas about the meaning of peace. Student ideas about the meaning of peace included such comments as: 1) not talking when someone else is talking, 2) not killing people with guns, 3) cooperation, 4) being quiet, 5) no more violence and guns, 6) not fighting at the table, 7) calm, 8) freedom, and 9) cooperating to make the world a peaceful place.

During the second month of implementation, the writer began reading aloud the book Peace Begins with You. As the book was being read, the writer pointed out several meanings of peace. One was having things you need in order to live. Another was being able to acquire things you want. A final meaning of peace was appreciating people who are different. The writer, who had worn a sign to each class that said, "Mrs. Peacemaker," told students that a peacemaker was a person who worked to ensure that others had a good life. The writer ended the lesson by telling students the best way to protect peace was to make sure that all people are treated fairly.

During the next several weeks, the writer provided direct instruction in conflict resolution skills. The writer began the introductory lesson by telling students that we all have conflicts as we go through life. We all get angry. However, we should handle anger without hurting other people. The writer told the students that it is important for us to know how to resolve conflicts without fighting.

Next, the writer taught each class the steps to use to solve problems peacefully. The writer displayed a chart on the board listing conflict resolution steps the writer specifically choose for second graders. The writer took into account the reading level of primary students. The steps were: 1) tell what the problem is, 2) say again what the problem is, 3) tell how the problem makes you feel, 4) tell how you think the problem can be solved, 5) agree to a solution, and 6) say problem is solved. Finally, the writer asked for volunteers to role play different problem situations. This was done so that students would have the opportunity to immediately practice the conflict resolution steps. Before engaging students in the role playing activities, however, the writer told students that participants were only pretending to be characters. Furthermore, students were instructed to always use the name of the character during the role plays. Whenever a student called a character by his or her real name, the writer reminded students of this so that the class could concentrate on the problem and not the person acting out the situation.

The writer continued to provide instruction in conflict resolution skills for the next four weeks. The writer read stories from The Big Book of Peace. After reading each story, the writer led discussions about the different problems and possible solutions.

During the third month of implementation, the writer continued to read from the book Peace Begins With You. After the reading the section

on arguments, the writer reviewed the conflict resolution steps. The students role played situations written by the writer. As the months passed, all of the second grade students began to look forward to the writer's lessons. The students were enthusiastic about the program and very eager to role play various problems.

During the next weeks, the writer continued to engage students in role playing situations. The writer told the students that conflict resolution skills were needed in order to help people and nations make peaceful choices that lead away from fighting. The writer explained that, if we are to have peace at home, in school, and in the world, everyone needs to practice using conflict resolution skills to solve problems.

During the fourth month of implementation, the writer continued to read from The Big Book of Peace. Several stories in the book were used to teach lessons on fairness and getting along with others. In order to teach the concept of fairness, for example, the writer read the story The Bus for Deadhorse. The writer was particularly impressed by the ability of second graders to articulate equitable ways of dividing up the father's possessions. The students quickly identified the importance of sharing in the story and what happens when someone is unwilling to share.

One story that students particularly liked was The Tree House. The story, about two girls who had very different tree houses, was one with which students could easily identify. The story was filled with social

themes such as getting along, working together, and sharing. When the writer asked students what the problem was in the story, students were quick to raise hands to respond. One answer was that one house was more lavishly decorated than the other. Another answer was that the girls would not play together. When asked how the problem could be solved, student responses included: 1) each girl sharing belongings with each other, and 2) building a bridge so that the girls could go from one tree house to the other.

During the fifth month of implementation, the writer taught lessons that revolved around peace in nature. The writer began instruction by reading the story The Law of the Great Peace. The purpose for reading the story was to relate to students the importance of conserving nature to have a lasting peace. After reading the story, the writer conducted a whole group discussion about the tree. When asked why the tree was used as a symbol, several students said that the Indian tribes didn't want to fight anymore so they buried all the guns under the tree. When students were asked to give examples of man and nature living in harmony, responses included not polluting, not littering, not destroying trees, and preserving the rainforest. During the remainder of the month, the writer continued to provide practice in conflict resolution and reinforce social skills.

During the sixth month of implementation, the writer introduced the

concept of cultural diversity. The purpose of the lessons was to encourage an understanding and respect for other cultures. The writer modeled the objective of the lessons by telling students about her heritage. As a homework assignment, students were asked to write a paragraph telling about family customs and traditions. Upon completion of the assignment, volunteers read paragraphs to the class.

The writer began each lesson with a discussion about an ethnic group in Dade County. The writer discussed customs, foods, traditions, language, and clothes. The writer always ended the discussions by pointing out that though we all come from different backgrounds we are all a party of the human race.

During the seventh month of implementation, the writer taught lessons about the Nobel Peace Prize. The writer began the unit by telling students that the Nobel Peace Prize is given to individuals who work to promote world peace. The writer then provided background information about the person who created the award. The writer also told why the award is important in the world today. Each week the writer told students about individuals who have been instrumental in preserving the peace. The writer told students to be peacemakers at home and at school as well. At the end of the lessons students made peace medals and mobiles.

The writer continued to provide opportunities for students to practice conflict resolution skills. Volunteers told the writer about

incidents and the writer decided whether or not the incidents could be role played in class. During the rest of the month, the writer invited students to role play problems such as using crayons without asking, skipping in line, not following playground rules, and using another person's belongings when he or she is absent from school. The writer walked students through each role play, helping the class to understand the process as we went along. It was quite evident that the message was getting through when one of the second grade teachers shared a journal entry with me written by a second grader participating in the conflict resolution program. The student wrote about two students who were treating each other in an unkind way on the playground. After writing about the problem, the second grade wrote that both children should not fight but shake hands and apologize. The student's teacher felt that the journal entry was a direct result of the conflict resolution lessons.

During the eighth month of implementation, the writer began to review conflict resolution and social skills. The writer began administering posttests to everyone participating in the program. During the last week of implementation, students participated in conflict resolution plays, peace stories were read, and songs were sung. The writer distributed keepsake pencils and stickers. The writer was extremely pleased with the success of the program.



## CHAPTER V

### RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Results

The problem in the writer's work setting dealt with the inability of second graders to act in socially acceptable ways. The writer's role as a second grade teacher provided the writer with the opportunity to address the problem. The research conducted by the writer indicated that a solution was needed. Consequently, the writer designed and implemented a 32 week program with the expectation that the situation would be improved.

The goal of the program was to improve each student's ability to act in socially acceptable ways. Learning peace education and conflict resolution skills would help students behave in a more positive manner.

The writer used 32 teacher-developed lessons and activities to solve the problem. The strategies used included providing direct instruction in peace education and conflict resolution skills, reading stories with conflict themes, writing about conflicts in our lives, lots of role playing, and whole group discussions.

The writer used the books The Big Book of Peace and Peace Begins with You to teach peace and conflict resolution skills. The writer introduced and taught the lessons then used a variety of techniques such as role playing, modeling, and whole group discussions to reinforce the

ideas presented. The writer used a Teacher Opinion Questionnaire, a Cafeteria Behavior Questionnaire, a Case Management Referral Questionnaire, and a Teacher Survey of Student Conflict Resolution Skills to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. The realization of the goals and objectives of the program improved the social and conflict resolution skills of all of the students participating in the program. After practicum implementation, the following results were obtained:

#### Outcome 1

This outcome dealt with second graders being given instruction in social skills. The skills were introduced and taught to five second grade classes. The writer found that students needed lots of practice with class rules and getting along with others. A comparison of pre- and posttest Teacher Opinion Questionnaires disclosed the following information: 1) pretest results indicated that 5 of 7 second grade teachers believed that students needed to improve in the areas of good manners and self-discipline; 2) 6 of 7 teachers felt that students needed to improve in the areas of respect for others and sound thinking; 3) 7 of 7 teachers believed that students needed to improve in the areas of responsibility and good judgement. Pretest results indicated that a majority of the second grade teachers believed that there was a need for second graders to improve in the ability to exhibit acceptable social skills. After practicum implementation, 2 of 5 teachers indicated that 80% of the

second graders had not demonstrated an overall improvement in social skills. The categories of responsibility, self-discipline, sound thinking, and good judgement continued to be areas of concern. Table 5 reflects posttest results of the Teacher Opinion Questionnaire.

Table 5

Posttest Opinions of 5 Second Grade Teachers

Do you believe that at least 80% of students in your class have improved in

the categories below:

Yes No

---

Good Manners	5	0
Self-Respect	5	0
Respect for Others	5	0
Responsibility	3	2
Self-Discipline	3	2
Sound Thinking	3	2
Good Judgement	3	2

---

Outcome 2

After practicum implementation, results of a Case Management Referral Questionnaire completed by the guidance counselor indicated

that 80% of the students exhibited acceptable behavior in showing respect for teachers, adults, and peers. The questionnaire also indicated that students had improved in the ability to use acceptable language. A comparison of pre- and posttest data revealed the following information: pretest results indicated that students were having problems in the areas of getting along with others, use of unacceptable language, resolving conflicts, and being responsible. As shown in Table 6, after practicum implementation, 80% of the students did improve in the ability to exhibit acceptable behavior.

Table 6

Posttest Results of Case Management Referral Questionnaire

Do you believe that 80% of the students in second grade exhibit acceptable behavior in the following areas:

	Yes	No
Respect for teachers, adults and peers	x	
Use of acceptable language	x	

Outcome 3

After practicum implementation, a Cafeteria Behavior Questionnaire indicated that 70% of the second grade students had improved in the

ability to exhibit positive behavior in the cafeteria. The monitors indicated that there had been a decrease in fighting, throwing of food, and pushing in line. Table 7 contains data gathered from the questionnaire distributed to the cafeteria manager and monitors.

Table 7

Posttest Results of Cafeteria Behavior Questionnaire

Do you believe that 70% of the second graders exhibit acceptable behavior in the following

areas: Yes    No

---

Respect	x	
Interacting with Others	x	
Courtesy and Manners	x	

---

Outcome 4

After practicum implementation, a Teacher Survey of Student Conflict Resolution Skills indicated that 70% of the second graders were able to resolve conflicts independently. Table 8 reflects results of the teacher survey.

Table 8

Posttest Results of Teacher Survey of Student Conflict Resolution Skills

Do you believe that 70% of the students in  
your class have mastered the following:

	Yes	No
Conflict Resolution Skills	5	0
Peacemaking Skills	5	0
Social Skills	3	2

Discussion

Four outcomes were addressed in this practicum. The first outcome was not met because expectations were too high. Although teachers indicated that more than half of the students in the class demonstrated improved social skills, the number of students showing improvement did not reach 80%.

Outcomes one, three, and four were met. In the writer's opinion, the students produced successful results because of the various lessons and activities implemented. The students were particularly enthused about role playing. Furthermore, students wanted to discuss problems they were having with peers. The writer believed the program was successful because students received repeated instruction in conflict resolution skills over an extended period of time. Students were able to

absorb and practice the skills on a continuous basis. Direct teaching of the skills was very effective as well. In addition, the lessons were developed to be of interest to primary children.

The role playing sessions were the most enjoyable for everyone who participated in the program. Through the use of hypothetical as well as real situations, students were able to learn firsthand how to deal with problems effectively, positively, and peacefully.

The writer truly believes that the peace education/conflict resolution program had a positive impact on the students. The writer also believes that students bought into the idea of resolving conflicts without fighting because, finally, they were given another alternative to finding solutions to the conflicts experienced on a daily basis. Another factor contributing to the success of the program was the win-win situations students experienced during the lessons. Finally, the conflict resolution process taught students how to compromise with classmates. The process also revealed to students that their feelings and opinions were highly valued.

#### Recommendations

1. The writer recommends that conflict resolution and social skills be written into the second grade curriculum.
2. The writer recommends that all students in grades K-5 receive training in conflict resolution skills.

3. The writer recommends that an inservice for teachers and administrators be held in the Fall.
4. The writer recommends that an inservice for parents be conducted in the Fall.

#### Dissemination

The writer plans to apply for a grant so that students can be continually taught conflict resolution skills. The writer will provide copies of the practicum for teachers to use.

The writer plans to use the peace education/conflict resolution curriculum next school year. Due to the interest generated for the program, the writer has had numerous opportunities to disseminate information. The writer's practice was publicized in the following ways:

1. The writer introduced the program and its goals at a meeting of the faculty and staff at the beginning of the school year.
2. The writer held monthly meetings with the second grade teachers to talk about the program.
3. The writer distributed copies of the report to the principal and assistant principal.
4. The writer gave copies of the curriculum to all the second grade teachers.
5. The writer plans to write a story about the peace education conflict resolution program and submit it to an educational publisher.



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APPENDIX A  
TEACHER OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

## Appendix A

Teacher Opinion Questionnaire

---

	Yes	No	Unknown
Do you believe that at least half of the students in your classroom need to improve in the categories below:			

---

Good Manners

Self-Respect

Respect for Others

Responsibility

Self-Discipline

Sound Thinking

Good Judgement

---

APPENDIX B  
INTERVIEW WITH GUIDANCE COUNSELOR



## Appendix B

Interview with Guidance Counselor1. Getting Along with Others

Has there been an increase in the number of students referred to the guidance counselor for fighting?

2. Conflict Resolution Skills

Do you think students are able to settle conflicts peacefully?

3. Unacceptable Language

Has there been an increase in the number of students using unacceptable language in school?

4. Responsibility

Has there been an increase in the number of students who are not demonstrating responsibility in completing homework, classwork, and other tasks?

APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW WITH CAFETERIA MANAGER

## Appendix C

Interview with Cafeteria Manager1. Respect

Do students show respect for adults and each other while in the cafeteria? Explain.

2. Group Interaction

How do students conduct themselves while eating? Explain.

3. Courtesy and Manners

Do students demonstrate acceptable social skills such as saying "Please" and "Thank you"? Explain.

4. Responsibility

Do students leave tables and floors clean when lunchtime is over? Explain.

APPENDIX D

TEACHER SURVEY OF STUDENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

## Appendix D

Teacher Survey of Student Conflict Resolution Skills

---

	Yes	No	Undecided
Do you believe that 75% of the students in your class have mastered the following?			

---

Conflict Resolution Skills

Peacemaking Skills

Social Skills

---

APPENDIX E  
TEACHER OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

## Appendix E

Teacher Opinion Questionnaire

---

Do you believe that at least 80%                      Yes    No    Unknown  
of the students in your classroom  
have improved in the categories below?

---

Good Manners

Self-Respect

Respect for Others

Responsibility

Self-Discipline

Sound Thinking

Good Judgement

---

APPENDIX F  
CASE MANAGEMENT REFERRAL QUESTIONNAIRE



## Appendix F

Case Management Referral Questionnaire

Do you believe that 80% of the students      Yes    No    Unknown  
in second grade exhibit acceptable  
behavior in the following areas?

---

Respect for teachers, adults, and  
peers

Use of acceptable language

---

APPENDIX G  
CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR QUESTIONNAIRE

## Appendix G

Cafeteria Behavior Questionnaire

Do you believe that 70% of the students                      Yes                      No  
in second grade exhibit acceptable  
behavior in the following areas:

---

Respect

Interacting with others

Courtesy and Manners

---

APPENDIX H  
TEACHER SURVEY OF STUDENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

## Appendix H

Teacher Survey of Student Conflict Resolution Skills

---

	Yes	No
Do you believe that 70% of the students in your class have mastered the following?		

---

Conflict Resolution Skills

Peacemaking Skills

Social Skills

---

APPENDIX I

PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION ASSESSMENT TEST

## Appendix I

Peace and Conflict Resolution Assessment Items

Directions: Read each question. Choose the best answer.

1. What is the meaning of "peace"?
  - A. Having what you need
  - B. Having what you want
  - C. Being allowed to be different
  - D. All of the above
  
2. What is a peacemaker?
  - A. A person who does not listen to others
  - B. A person who has his or her own way
  - C. A person who works for a living
  - D. A person who works to make life better for others
  
3. Which is the best way to protect peace?
  - A. Ensure that everyone is treated fairly
  - B. Ignore people who are different
  - C. Settle conflicts by fighting
  - D. Treat people in different ways
  
4. Which is a symbol of peace?
  - A. Dove
  - B. Bald Eagle

- C. Robin
  - D. Mockingbird
5. What can cause a conflict?
- A. When two people want to have the same thing at the same time.
  - B. When there is enough of something to go around
  - C. When people are allowed to be different
  - D. When you let others be different
6. Which is a "peaceful" feeling?
- A. Anger
  - B. Danger
  - C. Fear
  - D. Happiness
7. What is the name of the award given every year for someone who has made a major contribution to world peace?
- A. The Emmy Award
  - B. The Nobel Peace Prize
  - C. The Oscar Award
  - D. The Pulitzer Award
8. Who is a famous peacemaker?
- A. Babe Ruth
  - B. Big Bird



C. Martin Luther King

D. Mr. Rogers

Match the Nobel Prize winners in Column A with their contribution listed in column B.

Column A

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Jane Addams
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Mahatma Gandhi
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Nelson Mandela
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Teddy Roosevelt
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Chief Seattle

Column B

- A. Past president of the United States who worked to help end the Russo-Japanese war.
- B. He was a respected and peaceful leader and delivered a speech about caring for the land.
- C. Was sent to India in 1928 to work with the poor and needy.
- D. This leader was put into prison in 1962 for protesting how black people were being treated in South Africa
- E. Led the Indian nationalist movement and used peace to help free Britain.
- F. Founded Chicago's Hull House where the first kindergarten and public playground were set up.
- G. Built a large hospital in Africa.

Directions: Write "Yes" or "No" on the line beside each sentence.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Peace is having the things you need.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Peace is not having the things you want.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Peace is being allowed to be different.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Peace is a "time-out" from fighting.

Directions: You and your classmate have a problem to be solved. Number the conflict resolution rules that both of you would follow in the order that would best help you find a win-win solution.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Both children say "problem resolved".
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listen while your classmate tells his or her side of what happened.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The teacher asks both children to find a solution that they agree on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Repeat what your classmate said.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The teacher asks how each child feels about the problem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The teacher asks both children to think about ways to solve the problem.

Directions: Read the following questions about imaginary incidents at school.

Write an answer for each question.

1. What would you do if someone took food off your tray during lunch?

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2. What would you do if a classmate called you an inappropriate name?

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3. What would you do if someone cut in front of you in line on the way to lunch?

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4. What would you do if someone took your pencil case?

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Directions: Read the following statements and questions. Write an answer for each question.

1. In the story Law of the Great Peace, Deganawida planted a tree of peace. Why do you think the tree was used as a symbol of peace by Deganawida?

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2. Native Americans live in harmony with nature. How can you also live in harmony with nature?

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APPENDIX J  
WEEKLY LOG

Appendix J

Weekly Log

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Feedback: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Administrative  
Feedback: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX K  
AGENDA FOR SECOND GRADE TEACHERS



## Appendix K

Agenda for Second Grade Teachers

- I. Opening of Meeting
  - A. Outline of activities for eight month program
  - B. Schedule teachers for half hour lessons
  - C. Distribute copies of curriculum
  - D. Questions and answer session
  
- II. Conflict Resolution/Peacemaking Inservice
  - A. Educational approach
    - 1. Rationale for program
    - 2. Definition of terms "peace" and "conflict resolution"
    - 3. Goals and objectives of program
    - 4. Curriculum content in detail
    - 5. Ways to implement a model program
      - a. Scheduling
      - b. Feedback
    - 6. Question and answer session
    - 7. Evaluation of inservice