ED 454 464                                                    CG 031 008

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TITLE           Learning's Destiny: A Better Way of Thinking and Feeling.
PUB DATE        2001-05-00
NOTE            50p.; Master of Arts Action Research Project, Saint Xavier
                University and Skylight Field-Based Masters Program.
PUB TYPE        Dissertations/Theses (040)
EDRS PRICE      MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS     Curriculum Enrichment; Elementary Education; *Emotional
                Development; Grade 3; Grade 6; *Intervention; Kindergarten
                Children; Program Implementation; Role Playing; *Self
                Concept; *Social Development; Teacher Effectiveness; *Well
                Being
IDENTIFIERS     Illinois (Chicago Metropolitan Area)

ABSTRACT
            This document discusses a project designed to meet the need
for increased self awareness and emotional well being of children in a school
setting. The targeted population included kindergarten, third grade, and
sixth grade students from a suburban middle class community in the Chicago
area. Through a review of the literature and observations made in the
classroom, the need for increased self awareness and improved emotional
well-being among the students was noted. Specific risk factors that helped
create these problems were the breakdown of the family unit; the lack of
programs in schools that address social and emotional needs; students' poor
problem solving skills; and a decline in societal morality. In seeking
possible solutions for these risk factors, interventions were developed to
help the students. The interventions included group discussion, role playing
to develop better problem solving skills, and self awareness activities.
Teacher-to-teacher dialogue was also used to increase staff awareness of
these issues and to promote social and emotional program implementation. Post
intervention data indicated an increase in self awareness and emotional
well-being of the targeted sample. Interventions integrated with caring
teachers as role models and a positive classroom climate enhanced students'
emotional skills. (Contains 29 references and 7 appendixes.) (JDM)

Learning's Destiny:

A Better Way of Thinking and Feeling

Phil Esposito

Leila J. Trepanier

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & SkyLight

Field-Based Masters Program

Chicago, Illinois

May 2001

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Learning's Destiny:  A Better Way of Thinking and Feeling

Phillip Esposito and Leila Trepanier

May 2001

## ABSTRACT

This project discusses the need for increased self-awareness and emotional well-being of children in a school setting.  The targeted population included kindergarten, third grade, and sixth grade students from a middle class community in a Chicago metropolitan area suburb. Current research shows the need and importance of emotional intelligence in education and throughout life.

Through research and observations, the need for increased self-awareness and improved emotional well-being of children was noted.  Specific issues that led to this research were the breakdown of the family unit, lack of social and emotional programs in school settings, poor problem solving skills, and a decline of morality. These issues may lead to children becoming at-risk members of the community.

In seeking possible solutions for the above noted issues, interventions were developed to help the students.  These interventions included group discussions, role playing to develop better problem solving skills, and feelings/self-awareness activities.  In addition to student interventions, teacher-to-teacher dialogue was used to increase staff awareness of this issue and promote social and emotional program implementation.

Post-intervention data indicated an increase in the self-awareness and emotional well-being of the targeted sample.  Interventions integrated with caring teachers as role models and a positive classroom climate enhanced students' emotional skills.  Recommendations include additional activities for students and teacher collaboration with peers to foster future emotional learning.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted kindergarten, third, and sixth grade classes lacked self-awareness and emotional well-being which interfered with the learning process. Evidence for the existence of the problem included student behavior referrals, report card comments and checklists, and informal student to student and teacher to student interactions in the school environment.

Immediate Problem Context

The district student body population of 1,798 pupils consisted of 74% Caucasian, 13.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6.4% African American, 5.7% Hispanic, and .2% Native American. In addition to having a diverse ethnic composition, 6% of the students were from low income families. Student attendance for the district was 92.7% with a mobility rate of 11.7% (Illinois School Report Card, 1999).

There were a total of 105 teachers in the district; 99% of whom were Caucasian and 1% of whom were Asian/Pacific Islander. The district had one child psychologist, a guidance counselor at the junior high school, and one social worker at each elementary school to provide services to students. The average teaching experience in the district was 13 years with 36.4% possessing master's degrees and above. The average teacher's salary for the district was $41,759 while the state average was $45,337. The average administrator's salary was $79,577 while the state average was $76,917. The instructional expenditure per pupil was $3,361. The pupil to teacher ratio was 20.8:1 (Illinois School Report Card, 1999).

The schools in this district were experiencing overcrowding which resulted in tutoring in the hallways, less than optimal space for special education, and few spare facilities. Due to space limitations, the district was in the process of moving the sixth graders to the junior high school in order to create a middle school team approach. In addition, the entire kindergarten program was to be housed in the only elementary school building that had extra space.

The district offered standard educational programs along with many opportunities for extracurricular involvement. Some of the additional nonacademic activities included band, a variety of sports, student council, and chorus. The district was committed to increasing awareness and use of technology for teachers and students.

## The Surrounding Community

The targeted school district was located in the southwest suburb of a major Midwestern metropolitan area. Within the district there were three elementary schools and one junior high school. The community's population had increased from 14,956 in 1980 to 21,229 in 1998, but the student enrollment for the district had decreased from 2,448 in the 1980-81 school year to 1,798 in 1998-99. The community was comprised of 87.8% Caucasian, 1.8% Hispanic, 1.2% African American, and 9.2% other racial background (Chicago Tribune Homes, 1999).

The surrounding community of the district involved had a 1998 median income of $73,136 with 5.6% of the population showing an income below $15,000. Housing in the district included 80% single-family units with a median value of $193,250, and 20% multifamily units. The educational attainment for community members aged 18 and older was balanced between high school graduates, those with some college background, and those with bachelor's degrees (Chicago Tribune Homes, 1999).

The targeted K-6 elementary school had a total enrollment of 481 students (Illinois School Report Card, 1999). It was established in the 1960's and located on a busy street. There were commercial strip malls dispersed within the residential areas. Very little industry was present in this community. In recent years a new library and sports facility were built to enhance and accommodate local needs.

A positive relationship between community and school was apparent for many reasons. One positive indicator was the use of school facilities by a variety of community members and organizations after school hours. The passing of a 1995 referendum also reinforced the support of the community for the local school district. There was also a strong PTA membership and school board presence. Local support for schools was primarily funded through the community.

## National Context of the Problem

The lack of self-awareness and emotional well-being of students is seen in the newspapers and on television with reports of Internet scandal, school shootings, gang activity, higher crime rates,

and an increase of emotionally troubled children. Numerous stories about the difficulties families are facing have also been in the news. Changes in families can be observed with the increase of parents who work, numerous single-parent families, and children who are often left unattended or given more freedom than they can handle. The children are susceptible to the negative influences of television and other technology.

Schools have traditionally sought to meet academic needs but have not taken on the role of building emotional skills such as self-awareness and emotional well-being (Goleman, 1995). With the increase of brain research and scientific studies on the subject of emotions, educators should be looking at not only IQ, but emotional intelligence, as well. The thinking brain and the emotional brain interact, and emotional intelligence can be learned in school (Goleman, 1995).

People want schools to improve education and promote success for students, but programs differ greatly in their focus and their effectiveness. Often there is little research to support these programs. There is increasing evidence that building social and emotional skills provides the groundwork for successful cognitive and behavioral development (Elias et al., 1997).

The focus of this research will be on self-awareness and emotional well-being as aspects of emotional intelligence. Students come to school with many issues that cannot be dealt with in the traditional academic curriculum. Goleman (1995) states that a disturbing survey "shows a worldwide trend for the present generation of children to be more troubled than the last: more lonely and depressed, more angry and unruly, more nervous and prone to worry, more impulsive and aggressive" (p. xiii). This suggests that educators must do something to break the trend by building emotional skills in the classroom.

Members of the Collaborative for the Advancement of Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) have worked to promote and implement comprehensive social and emotional education programs that foster knowledgeable, responsible, and caring students (Elias et al., 1997). Elias et al. (1997) reported that "successful teachers and schools must go beyond the basics to help their students become contributing, productive citizens" (p. 125).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document and assess the emotional well-being of the targeted kindergarten, third, and sixth grade students, three assessment instruments were used and administered to teachers and students. Group A consisted of 17 classroom teachers from kindergarten through sixth grade. Group B consisted of 2 half day kindergartens with a total of 27 students. Group C consisted of a third grade class with 17 students. Group D consisted of a sixth grade class with 22 students.

These assessments were given over a one month period to groups A through D. A teacher survey was developed by the researchers (Appendix A) to aid in the documentation of deficiencies in the emotional well-being of students. A student survey and interview were developed by the researchers (Appendix B) to collect information related to the problem. The information was compiled by grade level and evaluated to assess possible deficiencies in students' emotional well-being.

The teacher survey was administered to compile classroom and family background information. The results are shown in Figures 1 and 2. The student survey was administered orally to targeted groups B, C, and D. The researcher circled answers for Group B while the students in Groups C and D circled their own answers after being read the questions. The results of these surveys are displayed in Tables 1 through 3. The student interview was given orally to targeted groups B, C, and D and answers were recorded on audio tape. The answers were then transcribed, documented, and discussed.

Teachers in Group A were given a general informational survey to compile classroom student totals and family background information. This survey consisted of seven questions ranging in type and specifics. The first question found a total of 375 students in the 17 classrooms surveyed. The results of questions 2 through 7 were calculated by the researchers and are subsequently noted.
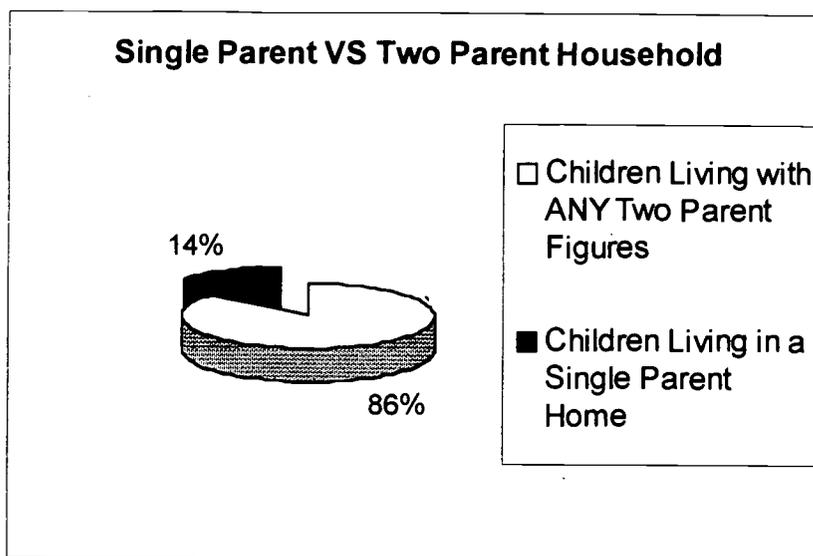
Figure 1. Children living with ANY two parent figures OR coming from a single parent home

Figure 1 shows the percentage of students living in single or two parent figure homes. Results show that there are a large percentage of students living in two parent figure households in the group surveyed.
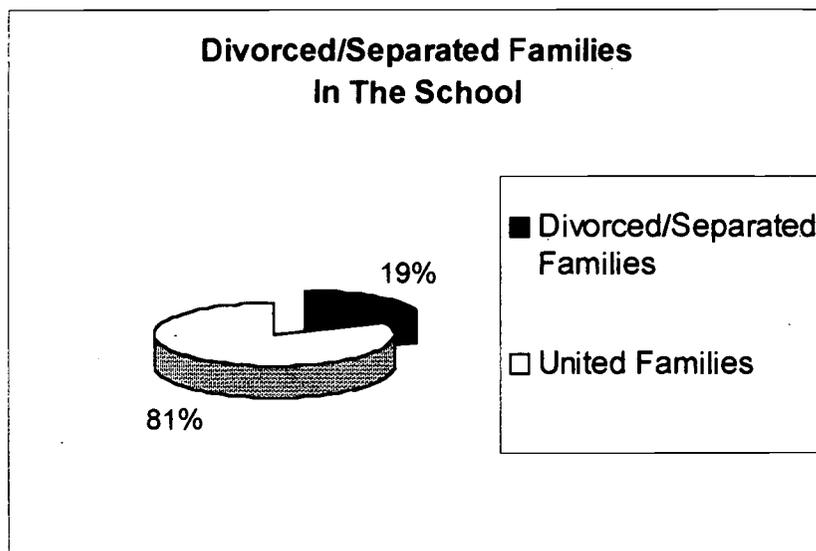


Figure 2. Divorced or separated families in the school

Figure 2 shows the percentage of divorced or separated families in the school. The results show 19%, or nearly one-fifth, of the students have experienced divorce in or separation of their families.

**Divorce Rate
In The United States**



40% ■ Divorced/Separated
Families
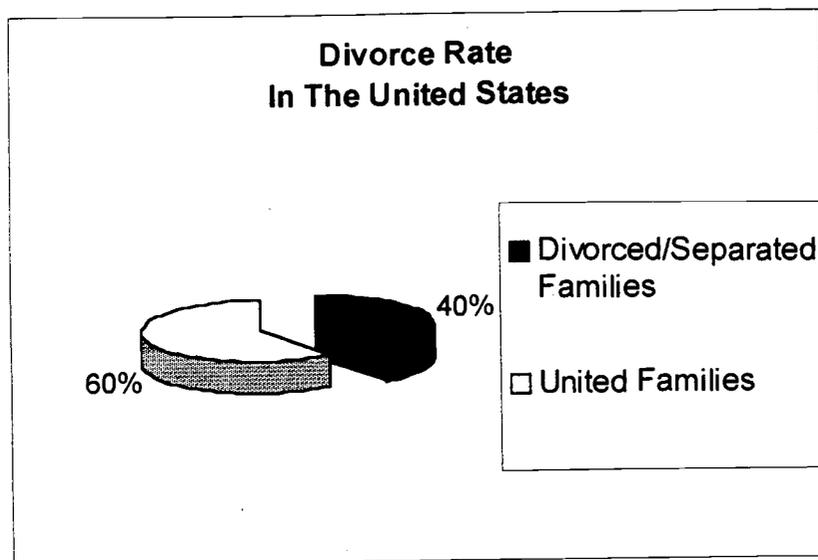
60% □ United Families

Figure 3. Divorce rate in the United States

Figure 3 shows that there is a 40% divorce rate in the United States (Stanley, 1999). Results show that students have experienced a lower percentage of divorce or separation in their families than the percentage of divorce in the United States, but it is still an important concern for this action research project.

In addition to the above statistics, the teacher-researchers found that teachers report 15% of their students attend day care full or part time at least one day a week. This statistic does not include children being supervised, other than daycare, by non-parent figures after school hours. A majority of the teachers, 71%, found an increase in both single parent families and two parent working families over the past several years. This teacher survey also included a comment section which was answered in detail by some and ignored by others. Most comments were related to the increase in single parent families and two parent working families. Teachers commented that children have greater difficulties because their needs are not being met in the family setting as completely as in the past.

Part of the data collection process included a student survey given to the targeted Groups B, C, and D. Groups B, C, and D included 64 students who answered 10 questions on the survey entitled "All About You." The following Tables 1 through 3 show results of this survey.

Table 1

Group B - Kindergarten Student Responses to All About You Survey

| All About You Survey | Most of the Time | Sometimes | Hardly Ever |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you like being with others? | 48% | 32% | 20% |
| 2. Do you like being by yourself? | 20% | 24% | 56% |
| 3. Do you show your feelings? | 24% | 32% | 44% |
| 4. Do you ask for help when needed? | 44% | 40% | 16% |
| 5. Do you feel happy? | 36% | 40% | 24% |
| 6. Do you feel mad? | 16% | 40% | 44% |
| 7. Do you worry? | 12% | 48% | 40% |
| 8. Do you like being with your family? | 76% | 24% | 0% |
| 9. Do you like school? | 56% | 32% | 12% |
| 10. Do you try your best in school? | 48% | 44% | 8% |

Table 1 illustrates questions and responses concerning interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, along with general feelings about self and school. The results indicate an inconsistency in how kindergarten students view themselves emotionally and socially. Student responses show a possible lack of self-awareness with various feelings. However, students at the kindergarten level understandably rely upon family contact and interaction as their responses show.

Table 2

Group C - Third Grade Student Responses to All About You Survey

| All About You Survey | Most of the Time | Sometimes | Hardly Ever |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you like being with others? | 71% | 29% | 0% |
| 2. Do you like being by yourself? | 6% | 71% | 23% |
| 3. Do you show your feelings? | 47% | 47% | 6% |
| 4. Do you ask for help when needed? | 41% | 47% | 12% |
| 5. Do you feel happy? | 71% | 29% | 0% |
| 6. Do you feel mad? | 6% | 71% | 23% |
| 7. Do you worry? | 29% | 53% | 18% |
| 8. Do you like being with your family? | 82% | 18% | 0% |
| 9. Do you like school? | 29% | 53% | 18% |
| 10. Do you try your best in school? | 88% | 12% | 0% |

Table 2 illustrates questions and responses concerning interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, along with general feelings about self and school. The results indicate a greater consistency in how third grade students view themselves emotionally and socially. Student responses show growth in self-awareness of various feelings as compared with Group B. However, students at the third grade level still could benefit from activities reinforcing self-awareness and building emotional well-being.

Table 3

Group D - Sixth Grade Student Responses to All About You Survey

| All About You Survey | Most of the Time | Sometimes | Hardly Ever |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you like being with others? | 68% | 27% | 5% |
| 2. Do you like being by yourself? | 14% | 68% | 18% |
| 3. Do you show your feelings? | 14% | 68% | 18% |
| 4. Do you ask for help when needed? | 36% | 59% | 5% |
| 5. Do you feel happy? | 73% | 23% | 4% |
| 6. Do you feel mad? | 0% | 68% | 32% |
| 7. Do you worry? | 23% | 59% | 18% |
| 8. Do you like being with your family? | 41% | 45% | 14% |
| 9. Do you like school? | 27% | 64% | 9% |
| 10. Do you try your best in school? | 68% | 32% | 0% |

Table 3 illustrates questions and responses concerning interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, along with general feelings about self and school. The results indicate even more maturity and consistency in how sixth grade students view themselves emotionally and socially. Student responses show growth in self-awareness of various feelings as compared with Groups B and C. However, students at the sixth grade level still could benefit from activities reinforcing self-awareness and building emotional well-being.

Students were interviewed by the researchers as part of the data collection process. Five answers for each of the five questions were audio taped with Groups B, C, and D. The questions and answers were transcribed and are listed below.

1. What would you do if another student hurt you?

Group B - kindergarten responses

"I would tell the teacher."

"Tell the teacher."

"I would hit them back."

"I would say stop."

"I would tell my mom."

Group C - third grade responses

"I would tell the teacher or work out the problem."

"If I was hurt, I would ask a friend to help me get up and tell the teacher what happened."

"I would ask him nicely not to push me, but if he pushes me more I would tell the teacher."

"I would tell the teacher, but if I was bleeding, I would go to the nurse."

"I would tell the teacher."

Group D - sixth grade responses

"I would tell my parents."

"I would tell the teacher or just ignore it."

"I would usually tell them to go away. If they did it again, I would tell."

"I would hurt him back."

"I would tell the teacher or my mom."

2. What would you do if you were picked last for an activity?

Group B - kindergarten responses

"I would ask the teacher."

"I would wait."

"I say stop."

"I would forget about it."

"I would cry."

Group C - third grade responses

"If I was picked last, I would ask why I was picked last."

"I would go and tell the teacher I don't want to be last next time."

"I will just say ok, because I don't care what team I'm on."

"I would not play with them."

"I would not do anything like getting mad."

Group D - sixth grade responses

"I wouldn't care very much."

"I would feel bad but ignore it."

"I would shake off the pain, and play the best, and show them what they missed."

"I wouldn't really mind."

"I would try my best not to be last again."

3.  What would you do if someone said he or she did not want to play with you?

Group B - kindergarten responses

"I would ask."

"I will ask and I will say please."

"I would tell the teacher."

"I would play alone."

"I will be sad."

Group C - third grade responses

"I would just say ok and find another person to play with."

"I would go away,  and ignore, and play with another person."

"I would ask him why, and if he had a good reason, then I would play by myself."

"I wouldn't care because they might want to play with someone else."

"I would feel sad because that hurts my feelings, and I would be lonely."

Group D - sixth grade responses

"I would try to find someone who wanted to play with me."

"I would be upset, but I would just play with someone else."

"I wouldn't care at all."

"Play with another friend."

"I would walk away."

4. What would you do if someone else's feelings were hurt?

Group B - kindergarten responses

"I would get the teacher."

"I will make them happy."

"I got to go home."

"I will tell the teacher."

"I would ask if they want to play."

Group C - third grade responses

"I would try to help them, whatever the problem is."

"I would say 'What is the matter?' to him. Then I would tell the teacher."

"I would cheer them up or ask what's wrong."

"I would play with them."

"I would ask them what is the matter and make them laugh."

Group D - sixth grade responses

"I would ask him what's wrong and try to make him feel better."

"I would go and cheer them up, and the person who hurt his feelings - I would have
  a talk with them."

"I would either help or leave them alone."

"I don't care. It will go away."

"Ask them what's wrong and maybe help them out."

5. When you have a problem at home, what do you do to solve it?

Group B - kindergarten responses

"I would tell my dad."

"I would stop."

"I would look."

"I would not feel good."

"I'd tell my mom my brothers are trying to mess up my room."

Group C - third grade responses

"I would tell my mom that I have a problem, and we would discuss it."

"I always go ask my mom for help."

"I work it out or go tell my mom or dad or any adult."

"I would ask my mom for advice."

"I would find a solution."

Group D - sixth grade responses

"Talk to a person in my family."

"Try to forget about it."

"I leave to compose myself or I talk to my parents."

"I would apologize or I would try to solve the problem."

"I go outside to play."

The answers to the interview questions give insight to the researchers about students' awareness of feelings and problem solving abilities. It appeared that student responses overall were more complete as they got older. They understood the questions more thoroughly and thought about their answers. There was a range in awareness of feelings and the ability to solve problems involving emotions at each grade level. This confirmed the researchers' findings that teaching self-awareness to and building emotional well-being in elementary students would be worthwhile.

Probable Causes

Review of the literature indicates that there are several causes for a lack of self-awareness and emotional well-being in students today. Changes in community and family structures have

contributed to the difficulty students have with emotions. Goleman (1995) states that the likelihood for divorce is rising. How this affects the children is a concern for educators and society. According to Growald (1994), "Children today are sent to school not only for knowledge but for the nurturance and values that families and communities used to supply" (p. 1). Families are working harder and longer than ever and have less time to spend with their children (Goleman as cited in O'Neil, 1996). Educators have been asked to accommodate diverse societal needs without being given extra time within the everyday curriculum because parents do not have time to provide for these needs. Schools need to implement programs that will help build students' emotional well-being.

Another cause of emotional deficits in students is the increase of violence in our society. Goleman (as cited in O'Neil, 1996) reports that "in the last 20 years or so the rate of teen homicide has quadrupled and teen suicide tripled, and forcible rape among teens has doubled" (p. 10). Obviously students need to find healthier responses in their lives. Students often act out or withdraw when faced with the overwhelming problems in today's society (Cohen, 1999). Teachers are finding more situations in schools where students act out and need to address these problems in the classroom.

Schools are very interested in improving academic success, but often fail students in terms of emotional learning. It has been found that "IQ predicts maybe 20% of life's success, and the rest is left eventually to luck, how much money your parents make, or to one's emotional well-being" (Goleman, 1996). Testing and assessment have become a huge part of providing accountability to the state and community. Teachers spend hours evaluating test scores and adjusting curriculum to increase academic achievement. Why is it that many people are far beyond what is thought of as cognitively competent but still do not succeed? Elias et al. (1997) discuss the need for more than academic programs in the schools. Schools must also teach social and emotional skills to students. An understanding of these skills will provide the students a greater opportunity for future success. There is a serious message for educators communicated by Elias et al. (1997) which states that:

> We should do more to prepare youngsters for the challenges of life in our complex and
> fast-paced world. In particular, these facts must be a wake-up call for educators in every
> classroom, at every grade level, and in every school district in the United States: These are

our children, and we must teach them in ways that will give them a realistic chance of successfully managing the challenges of learning, growing, and developing. (p. 10)

There is strong evidence that suggests television and computers may hurt children emotionally and socially (Bellanca, 1992). Newspapers are filled with articles that discuss illegal Internet scandals, children who learn violence from television, and kids who do not read because the TV and computer provide more motivating experiences. Goleman (as cited in O'Neil, 1996) voices his concern with the emphasis on television and computers and suggests that "more time with computers and TV means less time with other people" (p. 11). Schools are a community that builds emotional skills students do not receive via television or computers.

Values in today's society often consist of materialism and self-centeredness. "Young people are easily seduced by a material culture that promotes instant gratification" (Berreth and Berman, 1997, p. 25). It is not enough to ask children to develop moral values without proper role models. "We must hold ourselves and our social, educational, and political leaders accountable for living the values of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, justice, fairness, integrity, and caring" (Berreth and Berman, 1997, p. 25). Classroom teachers often feel that they can not change or have an effect on students' values. They do not realize that they are important role models for students each day by the way they act and the things they say.

A study was conducted in the 1970s and 1980s, showing "that American kids on the average had a growing deficit of emotional skills"(Burke, 2000, p. 49). Goleman (1995) discusses problems with withdrawal, social skills, anxiety, depression, attention, thinking, delinquency, and aggressiveness as emotional deficiencies. He also states that "these problems are universal, occurring in all ethnic, racial, and income groups" (Goleman, 1995, p. 233). Schools must accommodate the needs of students through programs that foster emotional well-being and help students resolve conflicts positively. Otherwise, what will the future bring? Lantieri and Patti (1996) reflect on the need for teaching emotional skills in the following statement:

Clearly, schools today must be committed more deeply than ever before to intentionally creating community and to paying attention to young people's social and emotional lives. We need a new vision for schools - one that includes educating the heart along with the mind. (p. 29)

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

All schools recognize the need for preparing students to become knowledgeable, responsible, and caring adults. They have always performed a vital socializing function in society. According to Elias et al. (1997), "Experience and research show that promoting social and emotional development in children is 'the missing piece' in efforts to reach the array of goals associated with improving schooling in the United States" (p. 1). Educating the heart along with the mind is a way to move toward peace and harmony in our schools and in our world (Lantieri and Patti, 1996). Many programs that address specific issues such as drug abuse, violence prevention, academic failure, gangs, and truancy neglect to teach students social and emotional skills and are often ineffective. Elias et al. (1997) state that "the ability of children to learn, access, and apply their learning is interwoven with their emotional skills" (p. 27).

The term "emotional intelligence" was proposed by Mayer and Salovey in 1990 as "a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Mayer and Salovey, 1993, p. 433). The concept was also thoroughly discussed by Goleman (1995). Goleman (1995) discusses self-awareness, managing emotions, self-control, empathy, and handling relationships as the five domains of emotional intelligence that can be developed and improved upon in our schools. Educators need to concentrate on these domains in order to promote success for students in all areas of development.

Self-awareness is defined by Goleman (1995) as "recognizing a feeling as it happens" (p. 43), and many researchers have developed techniques for implementing this skill in the classroom. Elias et al. (1997) talk about helping students with self-awareness and self-regulation through discussion of feelings, cuing students to regulate their own behavior, thinking aloud as a model for self-monitoring, and reducing supervision in order to build independence of students. Visual tools

such as the "Anger Thermometer" (Elias, et. al, 1997, p. 53) or the "Stoplight Poster" (Goleman, 1995, p. 276) can and should be used to integrate self-awareness activities into the regular curriculum for an enduring effect on students.

Lewkowicz (1999) also discusses self-awareness and gives specific ideas for teaching this skill to students. She states that with the development of self-awareness "students encounter the most important and basic concept of emotional intelligence: They choose how to think, feel, and behave" (p. 13). Lessons that Lewkowicz (1999) developed to promote self-awareness include understanding choice making, developing individual and group choice making, identifying feelings, and understanding assumptions of self and others. The methods used in the activities are skill development, multiple intelligences, and drama with the purpose of helping students learn more about themselves and choose to feel positive. Goleman (1995) indicated in his research that guidance in the area of emotional development would help individuals make more conscious and effective choices in all aspects of their lives.

Each student comes to school with a variety of needs and emotional competencies that can be addressed in the classroom. Cummings and Haggerty (1997) developed a project called Raising Healthy Children to teach social and emotional skills to children in order to reduce the risk of future behavioral, social, and emotional problems. Selection of social/emotional skills, development of units, and staff development were major strategies used in the project. Staff development included proactive classroom management, motivating at-risk learners, teaching social skills, teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, and reading instruction that integrated social/emotional learning with literature. Cummings and Haggerty (1997) found that "teachers who are using this approach report long-term improvements in their students' behavior" (p. 30). Staff development and increasing students' social and emotional skills proved to be important aspects of the project's success for students.

A program called Building Esteem in Students Today was developed by the Institute for Human Resources Development (1992) for the purposes of enhancing school climate, building on students' character strengths, increasing students' feelings of value and worthiness systematically, and encouraging participation of all school personnel. The program includes nine unit themes with specific classroom activities, newsletters, projects, and positive messages for each. One of the unit themes, Feelings, helps students become more aware of their feelings and the feelings of others.

Cobb and Mayer (2000) discuss a concern that educators do not realize that there are two models of emotional intelligence. They have described the two models as follows:

> The first, the ability model, defines emotional intelligence as a set of abilities and makes claims about the importance of emotional information and the potential uses of reasoning well with that information. The second, which we will refer to as the mixed model, is more popularly oriented. It mixes emotional intelligence as an ability with social competencies, traits, and behaviors, and makes wondrous claims about the success this intelligence leads to. (p. 15)

Both of these models often overlap and diverge in school curriculums. It is important for educators to rely on solid research and note the two models of emotional intelligence when planning ways to implement such programs in schools.

When emotional intelligence is treated as knowledge-based, it is more aligned with the ability model (Cobb and Mayer, 2000). "Emotional intelligence is probably related to general intelligence in being an ability; but it may well also have its differences in terms of mechanisms and manifestations. Different types of people will be more or less emotionally intelligent" (Mayer and Salovey, 1993, p. 440). Mayer and Geher (1996) did a study to identify and measure emotions on the Emotional Accuracy Research Scale (EARS). They found that it may be possible to educate individuals in the area of emotional intelligence in order to help them better recognize the feelings of others. This research indicates that schools should be developing curriculum that will build emotional knowledge.

How, then, should this curriculum be set up in the classroom? According to Elder (1997), "We must recognize that feelings are products of thinking, and that it is only through thinking that feelings become altered" (p. 41). Cobb and Mayer (2000) argue that this curriculum should be ability-based and should emphasize emotional knowledge and reasoning. Teachers could help students perceive emotions by teaching awareness of feelings and helping students recognize their own feelings and the feelings of others. Students should learn to use emotions when creating new ideas and work to understand emotions of others through literature and history. "The model of emotional intelligence that makes its way into schools should be empirically defensible, measurable, and clear enough to serve as a basis for curriculum development" (Cobb and Mayer, 2000, p. 18).

In addition to increased research on the topic of emotional intelligence, there are growing

resources for the educator. EQ Today is a journal·published by Six Seconds, an organization that provides schools, families, communities, and corporations with training and materials to support emotional intelligence (Six Seconds, 1998). The Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has goals to promote social and emotional learning, use research to increase knowledge about effective school practices, share information on sound educational strategies, train educators, and collaborate with others to increase social and emotional learning efforts (CASEL, 2000). It is important for educators interested in building social and emotional learning programs to read the research, learn about available programs, and develop a sound program for use in their own schools.

There are common strands running through many programs discussed in the literature that foster growth in the areas of social and emotional learning. When deciding to implement a program that promotes social and emotional learning, the common features of teacher training, classroom climate, teachers as role models, and teachers as caring individuals are important. These features provide solutions that will help increase self-awareness and emotional well-being of students.

Teacher training and support helps sustain reform according to James Comer, director of the School Development Program in New Haven, Connecticut. He believes that through training teachers to include a social/emotional component to the curriculum along with the academic component, schools can support the development and success of children (as cited in O'Neil, 1997). Teachers need staff development in current research and methods that promote learning for all students. Green (1999) states that "allotting time for teachers to plan complex lessons, share ideas, and reflect on curriculum and student learning is crucial in effectively creating a community of learners" (p. 5). The discussion of preparing and sustaining a teacher in effective social and emotional learning instruction involves four guidelines as developed by Elias et al., (1997). These are listed as follows:

> Staff development opportunities provide teachers with theoretical knowledge essential to teaching social and emotional skills. Staff development provides modeling and practice in experiential learning. Staff development activities are visibly and regularly supported by feedback from colleagues, administrators, and others. SEL programs are most effective when teachers and administrators adopt a long-range perspective. (pp. 68-72)

When these guidelines are adhered to in schools, then benefits of the social and emotional learning

program occur for students, teachers, administrators, and communities.

The classroom climate, particularly stimulation, respect, and care derived from the school setting, is extremely important in students' emotional development (Walberg and Greenberg, 1997). Classes that motivate students, foster cooperation, and promote a love of learning help sustain lifelong learning for those students. Zachlod (1996) finds that a climate which promotes responsibility as students actively make decisions and solve problems in their classrooms increases a sense of ownership and self-confidence. Respect is also an important part of the classroom climate for the teacher and students that involves understanding and accepting others' feelings. Zachlod (1996) goes on to say, "I envision my classroom as a haven - a place where children can test their ideas, develop moral autonomy, find answers to their questions, and learn about what interests them" (p. 53). Finally, a climate that promotes positive feelings of competence, belonging, usefulness, potency, and optimism in students will help them build resiliency in life. Strategies should be developed in order to infuse this type of environment into the regular curriculum for a profound impact on students' self-images and emotional well-being (Sagor, 1996).

Teachers must engage their students in learning through enthusiasm and modeling. When teachers respect and accept students while providing exciting and meaningful lessons, this brings value to education for all students (Green, 1999). Students need to be challenged by teachers who are there "to listen, advise, counsel, and provide guidance to them when necessary" (Elias et al., 1997, p. 77). Role models can also be adults from the community. Dundon (1999/2000) discusses the importance of introducing students to positive adult role models when promoting service learning. She believes that these role models help students "develop empathy, find out more about real world problems, and feel safer knowing that competent people are working hard to right the world's wrongs" (p. 36). Teachers must be models for emotional literacy, going beyond the traditional role of education toward becoming comfortable talking about and modeling their own feelings. When teachers model, they do a great deal to build awareness and management of these emotional skills for their students (Goleman, 1995).

Schools have always known that teachers should be caring individuals in the classroom. Taking time to get to know each student and really caring about each one's success would certainly have a positive effect on learning. Novick (1998) describes a Primary Intervention Program in Camas, Washington where children with multiple risk factors received one-on-one attention and

caring from an educator who interacted with them and shared about herself. These relationships were lasting and played an important part in the success of the students. Freiberg (1996) also discusses caring in person-centered classrooms where cooperation, participation, and support are essential elements. He believes that "authentic caring requires listening, reflecting, trusting, and respecting the learner" (p. 33). Another project, the Child Development Project, in Louisville, Kentucky, fosters caring through the building of warm, supportive, stable environments. According to Lewis, Schaps, and Watson (1996), "Like a family, the caring classroom provides a sense of belonging that allows lively, critical discussions and risk-taking" (p. 21). Because a caring classroom can promote success for all students, it is well worth the time and effort spent to build these relationships with students.

Based on the review of the literature, the action researchers used intervention strategies such as building a vocabulary of feelings, reading about feelings, role playing, and sharing student strengths. These activities were implemented in a positive, caring classroom climate with enthusiasm and modeling for the purpose of promoting self-awareness of feelings and emotional well-being.

## Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of implementing emotional intelligence activities, during the period of October 2000 to February 2001, the targeted kindergarten, third, and sixth grade classes would increase their self-awareness and emotional well-being, as measured by teacher constructed surveys and observation checklists.

In order to accomplish the final objective, the following processes were necessary:

1. Collect and analyze data from students and teachers.

2. Have discussions and read stories to help build awareness of feelings in self and others.

3. Engage in various role playing activities that foster problem solving and conflict resolution strategies.

4. Participate in group activities that promote positive feelings about self and emotional well-being.

Project Action Plan

The following action plan describes implementation of interventions for this research

project. This plan took place between October 2000 and February 2001 and involved kindergarten,

third grade, and sixth grade students.

| STRATEGY | WHO | WHEN | HOW | WHERE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Questionnaire | Teachers | Week # 1 10/2 – 10/6 (returned by 10/9) | Independently filled out by teachers | Distributed in teacher mailboxes (for Chapter 2) |
| Pre-Survey | Research group Grades K/3/6 | Week # 1 10/2 – 10/6 | Orally read K-teacher circles Grades 3 & 5 Self-circled | K-classroom; Grades 3 & 6 P.E. Class |
| Analyze; Organize | Researchers | Week # 2 10/9 – 10/13 | Table; Chart; Graph | N/A |
| Interview | Research group Grades K/3/6 | Week # 3 10/16 – 10/20 | Whole groups – orally read; Taped answers (pass the mic); no teacher response | K-classroom; Grades 3 & 6 P.E. Class |
| Analyze Interview (transcribe) | Researchers | Weeks # 4 – 6 10/23 – 11/10 | Compile data Graphic organizers | N/A |
| Activities # 1 | Research group Grades K/3/6 | Weeks # 7 – 12 11/13 – 1/19 | Discuss feelings and Build awareness | K-classroom Grades 3 & 6 P.E. Class |
| Activities # 2 | Research group Grades K/3/6 | Weeks # 9 & 10 11/27 – 12/8 | Role playing; Conflict/problem solving situations | K-classroom; Grades 3 & 6 P.E. Class |
| Activities # 3 | Research group Grades K/3/6 | Weeks 11 & 12 1/ 2 – 1/19 | Self-esteem; Positive feelings Positive comment activity | K-classroom; Grades 3 & 6 P.E. Class |
| Checklist | Researchers | Weeks # 7 – 12 11/13 – 1/19 | Observation checklist | K-classroom; Grades 3 & 6 P.E. Class |
| Post-Survey | Research group Grades K/3/6 | Week # 13 1/22 – 1/26 | Orally read K-teacher circles Grades 3 & 5 Self-circled | K-classroom; Grades 3 & 6 P.E. Class |
| Analyze Checklist and Post survey | Researchers | Week # 14 1/29 – 2/2 | Table; Chart; Graph | N/A |

Methods of Assessment

To gain information and assess the effectiveness of this action research, a teacher survey, a student pre-survey and post-survey, a student interview, and a self-awareness/emotional well-being observation checklist were used throughout the project. The teacher survey was used to gain information about the cause of the problem. The student pre-survey was used to determine students' awareness of their feelings before intervention activities were implemented. The student survey was titled "All About You" with responses falling into the categories of "most of the time," "sometimes," or "hardly ever." This same survey was used at the end of the project to determine if student responses had changed after intervention activities had been implemented. The student interview was used to determine the initial level of awareness about feelings and the ability to solve problems involving those feelings. Finally, an observation checklist was used to record instances when a student showed awareness of feelings and positive attitudes about himself/herself or others.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase the targeted kindergarten, third, and sixth grade students' self-awareness and emotional well-being in the school setting. As a result, students could become more successful in school and in life. Indications of the problem came from behavior referrals, report card comments and checklists, and teacher observation of students' interactions with others.

Students were given a pre-survey and interview (Appendix B) to help determine the necessity of the interventions. The implementation of emotional intelligence activities with an emphasis on self-awareness and positive feelings about self were selected to effect the desired changes during the period of November 2000 to February 2001. An observation checklist (Appendix C) was used to record behaviors observed during the entire intervention period. A student post-survey (Appendix D) was given at the end of the six week intervention period to evaluate growth based on the intervention activities.

Emotional intelligence activities included discussions with and stories for students that promoted awareness of feelings in self and others, role playing activities that fostered problem solving and conflict resolution, and activities that promoted positive feelings toward one's self and others. These activities varied due to the range of grade levels in the targeted group.

Formal discussions about feelings and stories or activities related to feelings were used twice a week throughout the six week intervention period with some writing activities included in kindergarten (Appendix E). During the ninth week, more time was spent discussing feelings due to extra time in the schedule. In addition, related informal discussions about feelings took place at other times during the school day when applicable to the topic. A "feelings" vocabulary was developed with students during the six weeks as well. The feelings list used by the researchers can be found in Appendix F.

During the third and fourth weeks of the intervention period, role playing activities were also used with kindergarten students once a week to increase awareness and management of emotions. Kindergartners showed feelings with their faces and bodies, given a feeling word. Kindergarten, third, and sixth grade students completed a "How would you feel if...?" activity (Appendix G) by role playing, given various social and emotional situations. Students were encouraged to use strategies learned in situations they encountered beyond this particular lesson. In addition, role plays were used when appropriate during the six week intervention period to help kindergarten students deal with conflicts or other emotional situations which arose during the course of their daily lives.

Role playing activities were integrated into the third and sixth grade physical education classes throughout the six week intervention period. Some role plays involved teacher-developed scenarios while other activities occurred naturally during physical education class. All students were asked to participate in the role play actively or through observation, along with adding input to the final discussion. Role playing activities encouraged students to incorporate previous experiences to help resolve conflict and problem solving situations that arose. Third and sixth grade students used prior knowledge and experience to enhance these activities.

During the fifth and sixth weeks of the intervention period, researchers focused on activities that promoted positive feelings toward self and others while continuing activities, stories, or discussions related to feelings. The first activity to promote positive feelings involved a discussion with students about what they did well and what they thought others did well. They orally shared these ideas with others and were encouraged to verbalize additional strengths as they saw them in themselves or in others. The second activity involved the targeted third grade students reading to and discussing a story with the targeted kindergartners as partners or groups of three for half an hour. The researcher monitored this activity and gave suggestions for discussion. Some students drew a picture together after they read their story. The kindergartners then wrote letters of thanks to the third graders with help from the researcher.

### Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effectiveness of emotional intelligence activities on students' self-awareness and emotional well-being, anecdotal records were kept along with an observation checklist that was completed daily and tallied weekly by the researchers to show the frequency of

five desired student behaviors throughout the six week intervention period. The results of the data from the observation checklist are presented in Table 4.

The intervention activities appear to have had a positive effect on the five targeted behaviors at the kindergarten, third, and sixth grade levels. Most behaviors increased in frequency each week of the six weeks observed. Every two weeks during the intervention period, new activities were added, which may account for some of the increases in observed behaviors at the kindergarten level. Of particular note is the number of times kindergarten students named what they were feeling during week five. This number was especially high because each student wrote about a feeling and explained a time when he or she had that feeling during a group discussion. These discussions were recorded on the observation checklist. Perhaps the researchers were more observant of the five behaviors as the intervention period progressed, but the increases seem to show an overall improvement of self-awareness and emotional well-being.

In third grade, the variance of occurrences on the observation checklist could be due to shortened periods, days off, or the particular physical education activity engaged in for a given observation period. During weeks three and four, students were participating in an activity involving physical contact and possible injury, causing them to respond to another's feelings frequently. These students were also observed showing a positive attitude about self twice as frequently as showing a positive attitude toward another student. This may be due to an increased awareness of physical idiosyncrasies and confidence in locomotor activities.

The sixth grade observation checklist had fewer overall occurrences than kindergarten and third grade in four of the five behaviors observed. These students showed a positive attitude about self most frequently. Sixth grade students had a greater awareness of self and environment. They verbalized their own feelings less and responded more through physical activity.

Anecdotal notes of student behaviors taken by the researchers showed an increase in the verbalization of both positive and negative feelings throughout the school day. Students also began showing the five behaviors listed on the observation checklist more often when these behaviors were modeled by the researchers, especially at the kindergarten level. It was noted by the researchers that the classroom climate improved during the intervention period due to an increased focus on the feelings and attitudes of each individual student. Students felt that they were listened to and that their feelings were natural. The students worked through problem situations involving emotions

Table 4

Kindergarten, Third Grade, and Sixth Grade Behavioral Observation Checklist Results

1. Student discusses feelings with someone.

|  | week 1 | | | week 2 | | | week 3 | | | week 4 | | | week 5 | | | week 6 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| grade | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 |
| # of times | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 17 | 14 | 9 |

2. Student names what he or she is feeling.

|  | week 1 | | | week 2 | | | week 3 | | | week 4 | | | week 5 | | | week 6 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| grade | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 |
| # of times | 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 28 | 10 | 5 | 18 | 8 | 7 |

3. Student responds to another's feelings.

|  | week 1 | | | week 2 | | | week 3 | | | week 4 | | | week 5 | | | week 6 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| grade | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 |
| # of times | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 12 | 19 | 14 | 19 | 7 | 9 |

4. Student shows positive attitude about self.

|  | week 1 | | | week 2 | | | week 3 | | | week 4 | | | week 5 | | | week 6 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| grade | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 |
| # of times | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 14 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 16 | 15 | 15 |

5. Student shows positive attitude toward another student.

|  | week 1 | | | week 2 | | | week 3 | | | week 4 | | | week 5 | | | week 6 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| grade | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 | K | 3 | 6 |
| # of times | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 9 | 10 | 27 | 10 | 8 |

with better strategies for solving them due to an understanding of their own and others' feelings.

In addition to anecdotal records and an observation checklist, an identical student survey was given before and after the interventions in order to evaluate their effectiveness. The results of both student surveys are presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7. Group B refers to kindergarten students in Table 5. Group C refers to third grade students in Table 6. Group D refers to sixth grade students in Table 7.

The post-survey in Table 5 indicates that many student responses changed after interventions had taken place. Group B student responses on the post-survey showed that all of the students liked being with others (item 1), felt happy (item 5), liked school (item 9), and tried their best in school (item 10) sometimes or most of the time. An increase in the number of students asking for help when they needed it (item 4) was also seen in the post-survey results. In each of these areas on the post-survey, there was an increase of students responding with "most of the time" as well.

Another notable change was in showing feelings (item 3). Only 7% of the students said that they hardly ever showed their feelings on the post-survey as compared with 44% on the pre-survey. This also means that 93% of the students in Group B responded on the post-survey that they showed their feelings at least some of the time, a dramatic increase from 56% on the pre-survey.

There were also changes in responses to the questions of feeling mad (item 6) and feeling worried (item 7). More students in Group B said on the post-survey that they hardly ever felt mad while fewer students responded that they hardly ever worried. Perhaps they understood their own feelings better when completing the post-survey.

Two items on the post-survey given to Group B showed little change when compared to the pre-survey. These were questions about being by yourself (item 2) and being with your family (item 8). It is interesting to note that both the pre-survey and post-survey showed 56% of the kindergarten students in Group B hardly ever liking to be by themselves and all of these students liking to be with their families most or some of the time.

The post-survey in Table 6 indicates that most student responses changed after interventions had taken place. Group C student responses showed that all of the students, as in the pre-survey, liked being with others (item 1), felt happy (item 5), liked being with their families (item 8), and

Table 5

Group B - Kindergarten Student Responses to All About You Pre-Survey and Post-Survey

| All About You Survey | Most of the Time | | Sometimes | | Hardly Ever | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| 1. Do you like being with others? | 48% | 59% | 32% | 41% | 20% | 0% |
| 2. Do you like being by yourself? | 20% | 18% | 24% | 26% | 56% | 56% |
| 3. Do you show your feelings? | 24% | 41% | 32% | 52% | 44% | 7% |
| 4. Do you ask for help when needed? | 44% | 59% | 40% | 37% | 16% | 4% |
| 5. Do you feel happy? | 36% | 63% | 40% | 37% | 24% | 0% |
| 6. Do you feel mad? | 16% | 7% | 40% | 41% | 44% | 52% |
| 7. Do you worry? | 12% | 22% | 48% | 56% | 40% | 22% |
| 8. Do you like being with your family? | 76% | 78% | 24% | 22% | 0% | 0% |
| 9. Do you like school? | 56% | 74% | 32% | 26% | 12% | 0% |
| 10. Do you try your best in school? | 48% | 74% | 44% | 26% | 8% | 0% |

Table 6

Group C - Third Grade Student Responses to All About You Pre-Survey and Post-Survey

| All About You Survey | Most of the Time | | Sometimes | | Hardly Ever | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| 1. Do you like being with others? | 71% | 78% | 29% | 22% | 0% | 0% |
| 2. Do you like being by yourself? | 6% | 8% | 71% | 47% | 23% | 45% |
| 3. Do you show your feelings? | 47% | 42% | 47% | 45% | 6% | 13% |
| 4. Do you ask for help when needed? | 41% | 54% | 47% | 41% | 12% | 5% |
| 5. Do you feel happy? | 71% | 78% | 29% | 22% | 0% | 0% |
| 6. Do you feel mad? | 6% | 5% | 71% | 75% | 23% | 20% |
| 7. Do you worry? | 29% | 34% | 53% | 54% | 18% | 12% |
| 8. Do you like being with your family? | 82% | 82% | 18% | 18% | 0% | 0% |
| 9. Do you like school? | 29% | 40% | 53% | 48% | 18% | 12% |
| 10. Do you try your best in school? | 88% | 91% | 12% | 9% | 0% | 0% |

Table 7

Group D - Sixth Grade Student Responses to All About You Pre-Survey and Post-Survey

| All About You Survey | Most of the Time | | Sometimes | | Hardly Ever | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| 1. Do you like being with others? | 68% | 72% | 27% | 14% | 5% | 14% |
| 2. Do you like being by yourself? | 14% | 10% | 68% | 71% | 18% | 19% |
| 3. Do you show your feelings? | 14% | 11% | 68% | 66% | 18% | 23% |
| 4. Do you ask for help when needed? | 36% | 31% | 59% | 67% | 5% | 2% |
| 5. Do you feel happy? | 73% | 62% | 23% | 30% | 4% | 8% |
| 6. Do you feel mad? | 0% | 0% | 68% | 57% | 32% | 43% |
| 7. Do you worry? | 23% | 18% | 59% | 63% | 18% | 19% |
| 8. Do you like being with your family? | 41% | 35% | 45% | 51% | 14% | 14% |
| 9. Do you like school? | 27% | 25% | 64% | 71% | 9% | 4% |
| 10. Do you try your best in school? | 68% | 77% | 32% | 23% | 0% | 0% |

tried their best in school (item 10) sometimes or most of the time. Students more frequently asked for help when needed (item 4), felt less mad (item 6), worried less (item 7), and liked school (item 9) sometimes or most of the time.

The most important change for Group C was the students liking to be by themselves (item 2). This item showed almost a 100% increase of students who hardly ever liked being by themselves. In addition, students showed their feelings (item 3) less frequently than on the pre-survey. Perhaps this is due to a greater awareness and control of their expression of feelings. One item that remained constant in the pre-survey and post-survey was the percentage of students who liked being with their families (item 8).

The post-survey in Table 7 displays the responses of the most mature students, Group D. These students showed the least fluctuation in their responses. Unlike Groups B and C, these students responded only to not feeling mad (item 6) and trying their best in school (item 10) with 100% replies. However, more than 90% of these students acknowledged asking for help when needed (item 4), feeling happy (item 5), and liking school (item 9) most of the time or sometimes. A greater majority of students declared showing their feelings less (item 3) and being less worried (item 7) than in the pre-survey. Close to the same percentage of students continued to like being by themselves (item 2) and with their families (item 8) most of the time or sometimes.

The most notable change for Group D was in their responses to being with others (item 1). The percentage of students who hardly ever liked being with others increased from 5% on the pre-survey to 14% on the post-survey. It is possible that these students have not yet found their desired assembly of friends.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data from the observation checklist and the "All About You" pre-survey and post-survey, the students showed notable improvement in the areas of self-awareness and emotional well-being. They seemed better able to express and explain their feelings in the classroom. The data showed that all of the students in Group B felt happy some or most of the time. This appears to portray a sense of emotional well-being in these students.

When comparing the targeted groups of students, it is apparent that age and maturity play a large part in how children perceive themselves and others in their surrounding environment.

Obviously, children have many stimuli and events, both in and out of school, that help to mold self-awareness and emotional well-being. In the current society, it is clear that many components, beginning with family, influence and encourage or discourage individuals to deal with themselves and their surroundings.

It is evident from the research that society is changing and that teachers need to play a bigger role in the development of students' self awareness and emotional well-being. Given the simple intervention activities presented in this paper, it is encouraging to see that educators can have a positive effect on students' awareness of themselves, their awareness of others, and their emotional well-being, even in the midst of many other responsibilities. The caring teacher, the classroom climate, the teacher as a role model, and emotional intelligence activities can indeed effect a change. By providing a caring classroom environment, teachers can create a climate that encourages and develops important social and emotional feelings and behaviors.

As students mature, they should develop a greater understanding of people and stronger emotional bonds with others as they begin to choose a path for their lives. Students in the intermediate age group often get caught at a crossroads in which they encounter hormones that affect themselves and their actions. This can have a great effect on how others perceive them and how they view themselves. It is important for educators to realize the importance of developing skills beyond academics. Educators must maintain awareness of a student's emotional well-being in order to help prepare them for everyday life.

Students who participated in the interventions responded positively to activities where feelings were discussed and explored. They loved being involved in role play where they could act out feelings and find out that it was okay to have those feelings. In physical education teachers often have to encourage students not to be celebratory after scoring a goal or point. Role playing this situation, in particular, helped students show their expression of happiness with actions much less demeaning than a "touchdown dance." The discussion of feelings after acting out scenarios helped students empathize with others while enlightening their own self-awareness.

Students learned strategies for solving problems involving their own or others' emotions. Their vocabulary of words describing feelings increased which improved communication and social skills. Emotional learning activities became intertwined with reading, social studies, physical education, music, art, and writing. Students felt that they were listened to by others and in turn

became better listeners themselves. Students were seen making positive comments to other students on their own. Through modeling, incorporating various activities, and building emotional vocabulary, the researchers helped students increase their self-awareness and learn to manage emotions. A true community of learners evolved as both teachers and students accepted and appreciated their emotions.

In order to continue increasing the self-awareness and emotional well-being of students, the researchers recommend communication with colleagues to promote the teaching of emotional skills and to generate ideas for implementation in the classroom. It is also important that activities which develop self-awareness and emotional well-being are taught throughout the year and at every grade level. New activities can be incorporated into the current curriculum. Researchers plan to explore additional ways to teach emotional skills in the classroom through reading about successful programs and expanding their teaching skills in the areas of managing emotions, self-control, showing empathy, and handling relationships.

Teaching self-awareness and emotional well-being to students is a continuous, expanding process with the goal of helping students be successful in school and in life. The information gathered in this action research project showed a need for teaching emotional skills in schools, the subject's importance to educators, and positive results from the intervention activities used. Educators need to rise to the challenge of making a difference in the emotional growth of their students.

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Appendix A
Teacher Survey

Dear Colleague,
    In an effort to gain family background for research on emotional intelligence, please help us by completing the following questions. Please return this to one of our mailboxes by Monday, Oct. 9, 2000.

Thanks,
Phil Esposito & Leila Trepanier

Grade Level Taught:_____


1.) How many children are in your class?                    _____


2.) How many children live with two parent figures?         _____
        (**ANY** two parent figures)


3.) How many children in your class come from divorced/
    separated families?                                     _____


4.) How many children in your class live in a single
    parent home?                                            _____
        (**JUST** mom, dad, aunt, grandpa, etc.)


5.) How many children attend daycare full or part time?     _____

        How many days per week? _____


6.) Have you seen an increase in single parent families
    over the past several years?

                Yes              No              Don't Know


7.) Have you seen an increase in two parent working families
    over the past several years?

                Yes              No              Don't Know

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____


Thank you for your time!  Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

# SURVEY - ALL ABOUT YOU
## Name:_____

1. Do you like being with others?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

2. Do you like being by yourself?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

3. Do you show your feelings?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

4. Do you ask for help when needed?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

5. Do you feel happy?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

6. Do you feel mad?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

7. Do you worry?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

8. Do you like being with your family?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

9. Do you like school?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

10. Do you try your best in school?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

# INTERVIEW

### Questions for students to answer on tape.

1.) What would you do if another student hurt you?

2.) What would you do if you were picked last for an activity?

3.) What would you do if someone said he or she did not want to play with you?

4.) What would you do if someone else's feelings were hurt?

5.) When you have a problem at home, what do you do to solve it?

# Observation Checklist

The researcher will record a check mark every time one of the behaviors listed below is observed during the six week intervention period.

1. Student discusses feelings with someone.

week 1          week 2          week 3          week 4          week 5          week 6

_____

2. Student names what he or she is feeling.

week 1          week 2          week 3          week 4          week 5          week 6

_____

3. Student responds to another's feelings.

week 1          week 2          week 3          week 4          week 5          week 6

_____

4. Student shows positive attitude about self.

week 1          week 2          week 3          week 4          week 5          week 6

_____

5. Student shows positive attitude toward another
   student.

week 1          week 2          week 3          week 4          week 5          week 6

_____

Appendix D
Student Post-Survey

# SURVEY - ALL ABOUT YOU
## Name:_____

1. Do you like being with others?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

2. Do you like being by yourself?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

3. Do you show your feelings?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

4. Do you ask for help when needed?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

5. Do you feel happy?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

6. Do you feel mad?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

7. Do you worry?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

8. Do you like being with your family?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

9. Do you like school?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

10. Do you try your best in school?

most of the time          sometimes          hardly ever

Appendix E
Student Writing Activity

# Name_____

Love is...

_____

_____

Appendix E
Student Writing Activity

Sometimes I feel

_____.

Appendix F
Feelings List

## **Feeling Words**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Abandoned | Cheerful | Doubtful | Guilty |
| Abused | Close | Divided | Gullible |
| Adamant | Cold | Drained | |
| Adequate | Combative | Dread | Happy |
| Affectionate | Comfortable | Dubious | Hateful |
| Afraid | Comforted | Dull | Heavenly |
| Aghast | Compatible | Dumb | Helpful |
| Agonized | Competitive | | Helpless |
| Almighty | Complete | Eager | Homesick |
| Alone | Composed | Ecstatic | Honored |
| Ambivalent | Condemned | Eerie | Horrible |
| Angry | Condescending | Elated | Humble |
| Annoyed | Confident | Embarrassed | Hurt |
| Anticipation | Confused | Emotional | Hysterical |
| Anxious | Consoled | Empty | |
| Apathetic | Conspicuous | Enhanced | Icky |
| Appreciative | Contented | Energetic | Ignored |
| Artificial | Contrite | Enraged | Immature |
| Ashamed | Courageous | Enthusiastic | Immortal |
| Attached | Cowardly | Envious | Imposed upon |
| Aware | Cozy | Excited | Impressed |
| Awed | Crazy | Evil | Incompatible |
| | Cruel | Exasperated | Incompetent |
| Bad | Crushed | Exhilarated | Incomplete |
| Bashful | Cut off | Exhausted | Infatuated |
| Beautiful | | | Infuriated |
| Betrayed | Daring | Failing | Injured |
| Bewildered | Deceitful | Fanatical | Inspired |
| Bitter | Defeated | Fascinated | Insensitive |
| Blah | Defensive | Fearful | Insufficient |
| Blissful | Degraded | Flustered | Intimidated |
| Bold | Delighted | Foolish | Irritable |
| Bored | Desolate | Forgotten | Isolated |
| Bubbly | Despair | Frantic | |
| Bugged | Destructive | Frustrated | Jealous |
| Bumbling | Detached | Frightened | Jostled |
| Burdened | Determined | Free | Joyful |
| | Different | Fulfilled | Joyous |
| Calm | Dignified | Full | Jumpy |
| Capable | Diminished | Furious | |
| Captivated | Disappointed | | Kind |
| Carefree | Discontented | Gallant | Keen |
| Cared for | Disloyal | Glad | Kooky |
| Challenged | Dissatisfied | Good | |
| Changed | Distracted | Gratified | Lacking |
| Charmed | Distraught | Greedy | Lazy |
| Charming | Disturbed | Groovy | Leery |
| Cheated | Dominated | Grumpy | Left out |

Appendix F
Feelings List

# Feeling Words

Lifted up
Lighthearted
Loathing
Lonely
Lonesome
Longing
Lost
Lousy
Loved
Loving
Low
Loyal

Mad
Magnanimous
Mean
Melancholy
Miserable
Mischievous
Misunderstood
Moody
Moping
Morbid
Mournful

Natural
Nauseated
Naughty
Negative
Nervous
Nice
Nutty

Obligated
Obnoxious
Obsessed
Odd
Opposed
Out of sorts
Out on a limb
Outraged
Overwhelmed

Pacified
Pained
Panic
Panicked
Peaceful

Persecuted
Petrified
Phony
Pitiful
Pleasant
Pleased
Poor
Positive
Precarious
Pressured
Pretty
Protected
Protective
Punished
Prim
Proud

Quarrelsome
Queasy
Queer
Questionable

Rage
Reassured
Refreshed
Rejected
Relaxed
Relieved
Religious
Remorseful
Repulsed
Responsive
Restless
Restricted
Reverent
Rewarded
Righteous

Sad
Satisfied
Scared
Secure
Self-Centered
Self-Pitied
Self-Sufficient
Serene
Selfish
Settled

Shocked
Shrinking
Shy
Sickened
Silly
Skeptical
Smart
Sneaky
Solemn
Strong
Strange
Stupid
Stunned
Submissive
Suffering
Supercharged
Sure
Surprised
Sympathetic

Talkative
Tearful
Tempted
Tenacious
Tender
Tense
Tentative
Terrible
Threatened
Tired
Thankful
Thwarted
Touched
Tranquil
Trapped
Troubled
Trusted
Trusting

Ugly
Uneasy
Unfinished
Undignified
Unique
Unreal
Unsettled
Unsound
Upset

Used
Useful
Useless
Unwholesome
Uptight

Violent
Vehement
Vital
Vulnerable

Warm
Weak
Weepy
Whole
Wholesome
Wicked
Wistful
Wonderful
Worried
Worthwhile
Wounded

Yearning
Young
Youthful
Yucky

Zany
Zealous
Zestful
Zippy

This activity was adapted from the "How would you feel if..." activity in <u>Teaching Emotional Intelligence: Making Informed Choices</u> by Adina Bloom Lewkowicz (1999).

1. Explain to students that people always have feelings, but they do not always recognize what they are feeling. It is good to know what you are feeling and to decide how to best deal with those feelings. People show feelings by how they look, how they speak, and how they act.

2. Give students statements and have them think about how they would feel after hearing the statement.

Examples of statements:
   -Great job!
   -You don't do anything right.
   -It's dark in here.
   -Your grandma is sick.
   -It's not your turn.
   -I don't want to play with you.
   -Why did you do that?
   -I'm going to the zoo.
   -Your picture is beautiful.

3. Discuss the feelings students had when they heard each of the statements. Have students act out feelings by showing expression, responding to the statement, or acting in response to the statement. Role plays can be used to act out statements. Encourage students to notice their facial and body expressions and to listen to how their voices sound.

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