IMPROVING SOCIAL SKILLS
THROUGH THE USE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this action research project is to improve student social skills through the use of cooperative learning, in order to develop a positive classroom environment that is conducive to learning. The action research project will involve approximately 95 students, 95 parents, and 200 teachers. It is the intent of the teacher researchers to improve students' social skills through the following strategies: role-playing, jig sawing, think-pair-share, and graphic organizers. This study will be conducted for twelve consecutive weeks (from October 2, 2006 to December 18, 2006) in the 2006 fall semester. The teacher researchers hope that improved social skills will create a positive learning environment that will benefit all students.

It has been a common complaint among teachers, parents, and administrators that far too much valuable time in the classroom is consumed by disciplinary measures. The teacher researchers agree with research that has shown the need for disciplinary measures is the result of acquisition deficits (student does not know the skill), performance deficits (student knows how to perform the skill, but fails to do so), fluency deficits (student knows how to perform skill, but demonstrates inadequate performance), and internal/external factors (negative motivation or depression) (NASP, retrieved 2006).

Each week the instruction will involve a mini-lesson. The skill is taught on Mondays. Tuesday through Thursday during at least two lessons students will work in cooperative groups where they will have the opportunity to practice the skill taught on Monday. On Fridays students will reflect on the week's activities. The first two weeks will focus on active listening. The third and fourth weeks will focus on students staying on-task. The fifth and sixth weeks will focus on problem solving. Possible strategies that

will be used throughout the six-week documentation period will include think-pair-share (discussions among pairs of students), jig-sawing (used to gather a lot of information in a short amount of time by dividing tasks among group members), role playing (acting out the social skills), and graphic organizers (t-charts, concept maps, KWL, and the fishbone). Researchers have advocated the implementation and use of cooperative learning in order to increase student achievement and social skills development (Siegel, 2005). With the implementation of cooperative learning strategies, these teacher researchers hope to improve the social skills of their students.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Without social skills, the classroom environment as we believe it should be would be in peril. Most teachers, from pre-school to college campuses, hope their students actively listen, stay on-task and are problem solvers. In an ideal world, these social skills would be universal; however, within these teacher researchers' classrooms students showed weak skills in these areas of actively listening, staying on task, and problem solving.

The students in the targeted learning environments had difficulty interacting appropriately when placed in cooperative groups. Evidence of this problem was found in teacher observations, rate of completion of classroom activities, and through peer reviews; therefore, the purpose of this study was to improve social skills through the use of cooperative learning strategies.

Five researchers, within two different districts, and four different schools, conducted this action research project. The action research involved approximately 50 students, 50 sets of parent responses, and 200 teachers. This study was conducted during the 2006 fall semester.

Immediate Problem Context

One teacher in a rural setting and four teachers in urban settings, in the mid-west participated in this action research project. Three were high school educators, one was a middle school educator, and one was an elementary school educator. Another factor that

had an effect on this research plan was the composition of students within each of those classrooms. Two of the five instructors were regular division high school teachers and three researchers were special education teachers. Of the three special education teachers, one taught at the high school level, one taught at the middle school level, and one taught at the elementary level. The research involved five classrooms within four sites. Hereafter this paper refers to the four sites as Site A, Site B, Site C, and Site D and the classrooms as Classroom A, Classroom B, Classroom C, Classroom D, and Classroom E.

Student Demographics

Site A had a total enrollment of 773 students in 2006, with an average class size of 19.4 students. Of the 773 students, 31% were considered low-income (School Report Card, 2006). The school also reported that the student population consisted of 95.7% Caucasian, 0.8% African-American, 0.9% Hispanic, 1.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.4% Native American, and 1.0% were considered Multi-Racial/Ethnic. In addition, the attendance rate at Site A was 94.1%, the mobility rate was 9.5%, the chronic truancy rate was 2.5%, and the high school dropout rate was 3.5% (School Report Card, 2006).

Site B had a total enrollment of 383 students in 2006, with an average class size of approximately 19.0 students. Of the 383 students, 29.8% were considered low-income (School Report Card, 2006). The school also reported that the student population consisted of 69.7% Caucasian, 19.1% African-American, 2.1% Hispanic, 7.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0% Native American, and 1.8% Multi-racial/Ethnic. In addition, the attendance rate at Site B was 95.0%, the mobility rate was 10.4%, and the chronic truancy rate was 1.8% (School Report Card, 2006).

Site C had a total enrollment of 1,065 students of 2006, with an average class size of 11.9 students. Of the 1,065 students, 74.7% were considered low-income (School Report Card, 2006). The school also reported that the student population consisted of 22.8% Caucasian, 74.1% African-American, 1.9% Hispanic, 1.0% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.1% Native American, and 0.1% Multi-racial/Ethnic. In addition, the attendance rate at Site C was 84.2%, the mobility rate was 33.5%, the chronic truancy rate was 21.5%, and the high school dropout rate was 6.4% (School Report Card, 2006).

Site D had a total enrollment of 475 students in 2006, with the average class size of 19.4 students. Of the 475 students, 60.2% were considered low-income (School Report Card, 2006). The school also reported that the student population consisted of 52.6% Caucasian, 40.0% African-American, 4.8% Hispanic, 1.1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0% Native American, and 1.5% Multi-racial/Ethnic. In addition, the attendance rate at Site D was 94.8% and the mobility rate was 18.7% (School Report Card, 2006).

Faculty Demographics

The high school faculty at Site A consisted of 52 total teachers, 20 of whom were male and 32 of whom were female. Exactly 100% of the faculty members at Site A were Caucasian (School Report Card, 2006). When organized into departments, the music department had two instructors; the department of consumer sciences had two instructors; the business department had four instructors; the foreign language department was comprised of four instructors; there were five instructors in the physical education and health department; the science department had six instructors; the English department had six instructors; the math department consisted of seven instructors; the technology department had seven instructors; and a total of eight instructors comprised the

department of special education. In addition, at Site A, there were three administrators, two guidance counselors, four administrative assistants, and nine teaching assistants in the building. According to the School Report Card (2006), the average teaching salary of the teachers, at Site A was $48,681. The administrator to student ratio was 1:228.5 and the staff to student ratio was 1:13.8 (School Report Card, 2006).

The middle school faculty at Site B consisted of 30 total teachers, six of whom were male and 24 of whom were female. When organized into grade levels, the fifth grade regular division had three instructors; the sixth grade regular division had four instructors; the seventh grade regular division had three instructors; the eighth grade regular division was comprised of two instructors; there were eight instructors that comprised the special education department; and a total of two instructors for the physical education department. In addition at Site B, there was one administrator, one and a part-time administrative assistant, and eight teaching assistants in the building. According to the School Report Card (2006), the average teaching salary of the teachers, at Site A was $54,505. The administrator to student ratio was 1:187.3 and the staff to student ratio was 1:12.4 (School Report Card, 2006).

The high school faculty at Site C consisted of 70 total teachers, 30 were male and 40 were female. When organized into departments, the math department consists of seven instructors; seven instructors in the science department; nine instructors in the social science department; eight language arts instructors; three foreign language instructors; four business instructors; five instructors for the Business Academy; ten instructors for the special education department; one instructor for the art department, one dance instructor; one industrial arts instructor; one band instructor; one chorus instructor; one

orchestra instructor; four physical education instructors; one drivers education instructor; and six fine arts instructors. In addition, Site C had five administrators, four guidance counselors, six administrative assistants, and fifteen teaching assistants in the building. According to the School Report Card (2006), the average teaching salary of the teachers at Site C was $54,505. The administrator to student ratio was 1:187.3 and the staff to student ratio was 1:12.4 (School Report Card, 2006).

In 2006, the elementary faculty at Site D consisted of 40 teachers, 38 were female and two were male. Site D had four regular division classrooms and one cross-categorical self-contained special education classroom at each grade level. In addition to a full-time certified teacher in each regular education and special education classroom, this school also had a part-time music teacher, two part-time physical education teachers, and a full time art teacher. In addition, Site D also had three part-time teachers who divided their time teaching social studies, science, or language arts. The school housed one full time speech pathologist, a part-time speech pathologist, and a speech therapy assistant. The school had one principal, one assistant principal, two full time secretaries, a part-time ESL teacher, and food service staff. According to the School Report Card (2006), the average teaching salary of the teachers at Site D was $54,505. The administrator to student ratio was 1:187.3 and the staff to student ratio was 1:12.4 (School Report Card, 2006).

Building Facts

The high school building at Site A is a two-story, brick building, constructed during the 1952-1953 school year. The original structure was approximately 170,000 square feet, however, it has had one major addition since then.

In 2006, the high school building at Site A included two administrative offices, the main office and the office of the school athletic director and his administrative assistant. The main office included a workplace with three administrative assistant desks, a conference room, a mailroom, storage closet, a vault, a copy room, three guidance offices, the assistant principal's office, and the principal's office. The school had 51 classrooms, an in-school suspension room, a sewing lab, and a foods lab. Along with those work areas, the building included an auditorium with a balcony, a cafeteria with a kitchen, three gymnasiums, three locker rooms, and a weight room. Site A also had a media center with a computer lab, five additional computer labs, one distance learning lab, four science labs, a band room, and a chorus room.

The middle school building at Site B is a one-story building that was built in 1957. Since the construction of the building, it has undergone two new additions and undergone a name change.

In 2006, the middle school building housed one main office with office space for the administrator and the administrative assistant. This main office also included a conference room, a mailroom, a restroom, storage closet, and a copy room. The school had 16 classrooms, including an in-school suspension room and a science lab. In addition, the school had a gymnasium and a cafeteria with a kitchen. The school also had a library with a computer lab and a music room.

In 2006, the high school at Site C was a 248,500 square foot structure that was built in 1856. In addition to this massive structure, there have been three renovations made to this structure, which make it the oldest functioning school in the state.

The high school at Site C included a main office, housing two administrative assistants, an office for the treasurer, and the principal. In addition, there were numerous offices located throughout the building that housed administrative and support staff. The four-story building at Site C contained 76 classrooms. Furthermore, the building underwent renovations in the auditorium, CAD Lab, and four network computer labs. Site C also had a separate 26,900 square foot facility where the swimming pool, locker rooms, offices, and exercise area were located (Community Website Sites A, B, C, and D, 2005).

The elementary building at Site D had two floors, originally built in 1940 and a single-story addition built in the 1960's. Entrance to this building was off a major road in the middle of this urban area; however the school itself was set back from the road in the midst of a modest neighborhood. The elementary building at Site D included a main office, which housed the principal, assistant principal, and two secretaries. In addition, the two-story building at Site D contained 31 classrooms, a gymnasium, a parent's room, and a stage area (Community Website, Sites A, B, C, and D, 2005).

Classroom Description

Classroom A was located on the first floor of the building. There were 24 desks, all facing the chalkboard that ran the length of the classroom. There were two bookshelves and a file cabinet lining one wall, a study carrel, a laminating machine, a poster printer, two computers, and a file cabinet located along the back wall of the classroom. The instructor's desk was located on the wall nearest the classroom windows. Along with the TV and VCR that are provided for Channel One, students had access to ELMO and projector, a separate TV, DVD, VCR, and a telephone for emergency

purposes. Classroom A had a variety of instructional and visual aids adorning the walls to aid in the instruction in the classroom.

Classroom B was located in the south end of the building. There were twelve desks; all facing the dry erase board that ran the length of the classroom. There were three bookshelves, two filing cabinets, and two teachers' desks that faced the dry erase board, as well. There were two computers with Internet access provided for students' use. There was a television, VCR, and instructional prompts located throughout the classroom.

Classroom C was located on the third floor in the west-end of the building, facing the south. There were eight round tables, each with four chairs and a teacher's desk, which was located near the windows. There was one computer for teacher access only, a television, VCR, two filing cabinets, and two bookshelves. Visual aids were located on the walls of the classroom to provide visual appeal and educational assistance.

Classroom D was located on the third floor between the west and east wings of the building. Each student had access to a computer, which was aligned along three walls of the classroom and one row of computers going down the center of the classroom. Classroom D faced towards the east. On the east wall, there was a dry erase board, with a storage cabinet on the left side. To the right side, there was a bookshelf and a filing cabinet. All four walls contained visual aids to assist students in business-related topics.

Classroom E was located on the lower level of the building, in a small hallway with two other first grade classrooms. These three classes shared two multi-use bathrooms. The targeted classroom had two carpeted areas and ample table space. There were also four large sinks, and plenty of storage areas, allowing for minimal clutter and

visual distractions. The room was designed with many hands-on activity centers for reading, math, art, team building, problem solving, and writing. The classroom had three computers for student use.

Programs Offered

According to the high school website at Site A (Site A Web Page, 2005), the mission statement was:

> It is the mission of … High School, serving as an advocate for respect, responsibility, and positive attitude, to graduate students capable of making educated decisions, enabling them to be confident, self-sufficient, and productive citizens in an ever changing global society.

In order for Site A to carry out its mission, it created three goals for school improvement: accountability, curriculum, and technology (Site A Web Page, 2005). With these goals in place, the faculty and staff at Site A were able to offer many educational classes.

The regular education curriculum, as described in the school's Course Description Handbook, 2005, included classes in Agriculture, Art, Business, English, Foreign Language, Family and Consumer Sciences, Health and P.E., Industrial Tech, Math, Music, Science, Social Studies, and Special Education. The high school at Site A offered advanced classes in Art, English, Math, and Science. Along with advanced classes, Site A also offered two college preparatory courses, English and Calculus (Course Description Handbook, 2005). The local community college in cooperation with Site A provided off-campus courses, Auto-Tech 1, Child and Daycare Occupations, Cosmetology, Computer Networks, Electronics, Introduction to Health Occupations, and Welding I and II (Course

Description Handbook, 2005). Site A also offered a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. These activities included athletics, music, drama, social clubs, and various other educational and social activities (Faculty Handbook, 2005).

According to the middle school website at Site B (Site B Web Page, 2005), the mission statement was:

> The mission of the … Public Schools, the cornerstone of academic excellence and the unifying force of our diverse community, is to ensure that each student reaches his or her full academic personal potential and is a well-balanced citizen through an educational approach characterized by: continuous redefining teaching and learning; optimizing technology to transform the system; providing safe and nurturing environment; engaging and enabling families; affecting community partnerships; embracing and honoring all aspects of diversity; guaranteeing professional staff who are committed to students.

Along with strong support from faculty, home and community, Site B was able to provide many academic and extra-curricular opportunities. The school provided general education, gifted education, and special services to students with learning disabilities, mental impairments, or who are physically challenged. In addition, Site B also provided support for the International Baccalaureate program to a feeder high school, which housed this program (School Improvement Plan, 2005). Extended Day and after school programs were also offered by Site B in order to help its students maintain tangible achievements. Extra-curricular activities included Scholars Cup, Scholastic Bowl, Student Council, Math Counts, band, choir, orchestra, and athletic programs (School Improvement Plan, 2005).

According to the high school website at Site C (Site C Web Page, 2005), the mission statement was:

> The mission of the … Public Schools, the cornerstone of academic excellence and the unifying force of our diverse community, is to ensure that each student reaches his or her full academic personal potential and is a well-balanced citizen through an educational approach characterized by: continuous redefining teaching and learning; optimizing technology to transform the system; providing safe and nurturing environment; engaging and enabling families; affecting community partnerships; embracing and honoring all aspects of diversity; guaranteeing professional staff who are committed to students.

The regular education curriculum at Site C, as described in the school's Course Description Handbook (2005), included classes in Business, English/Speech, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Physical Education and Health, and Science. In addition, Site C also offered additional courses in the Business Academy and the Preparatory School for the Arts. Site C also offered education for students receiving special education services. The high school at Site C offered advanced classes in English, Mathematics, Foreign Language, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education (Course Description Handbook, 2005). Along with advanced classes, Site C also offered classes that counted toward college credit, Cosmetology, English, and Math (Course Description Handbook, 2005) In addition, Site C also offered a mentoring program, which was designed to embrace challenged students. A freshmen learning community was also in place to assist freshmen with the transition from middle school to high school.

According to the elementary website at Site D (Site D Web Page, 2005) the mission statement is:

> The mission of … School, a diverse learning community committed to excellence, is to ensure each child grows in character, academics, and relationships with others by creating a safe, positive and nurturing environment in which a caring, professional staff uses effective educational practices and partners with families and other community members.

The regular education curriculum at Site D, received a 30-minute lunch period each day and a 45-minute special class each day (music, physical education, social studies, science, or art). Students also received a 45-minute period in the library, which was used to check out books and spend time using educational software in the computer lab. This school provided supportive services for its students, beyond the district required curriculum. This was accomplished through the Character Education Program, which provided monthly rewards. An after-school reading program was available for students in grades three and four who showed below average scores on their weekly reading assessments. This school had a very active Adopt-a-School Partner with a local church. This program provided numerous adult volunteers who worked weekly with children that struggled academically.

Community Demographics

The high school at Site A was located in a rural, Midwestern town. It was located approximately 30 miles southwest of the nearest city and also near a large river. Site A had two state routes that passed through the community (Community Website, Site A,

2005). According to the community website, Site A had a mayor, a treasurer, a city clerk, and eight aldermen, who ran the government in 2005. Although Site A was located 30 miles from the nearest city, it provided its community with a hospital that offered a 24-hour ambulance service, 24-hour trauma center, and a physical and occupational therapist center (Community Website, Site A, 2005). The established employers in the community of Site A; were a local correctional center, a hospital, a school district, and a local community college.

The elementary school, the middle school, and the high school at Sites B, C, and D were located in an urban, Midwestern city, also along a major river (Community Website, Sites B, C, and D, 2005). There were two major interstates and several U.S. routes linking it to the surrounding communities. Local city government was comprised of a mayor and city council members, who represented various districts within the city. This community also provided three major hospitals, one of which housed a major trauma center and a nationally acknowledged Neo-Natal center. Other major employers included a global corporation and the third-largest school district in the state (Community Website, Sites B, C, and D, 2005). Also among the major employers, of Sites B, C, and D were several community colleges and trade schools, a private university, and a state-affiliated medical school.

Socio-Economic Indicators

According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, the community of Site A was comprised of 87.9% Caucasian, 10.8% African-Americans, 0.1% Native Americans, 0.4% Asians, 2.3% Hispanic/Latin-Americans, and 0.5% others. The median household

income in the community of Site A was $22,491, the median housing value was $36,449, and the average home sold for approximately $63,000.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, the community of Sites B, C, and D were comprised of 69.29% Caucasian, 24.79% African American, 0.2% Native Americans, 2.33% Asians, and 2.51% Hispanic/Latin-Americans. The median household income in the community of Sites B, C, and D were $39,978, the median housing value was $85,400, and the average home sold for approximately $109,135.

District Demographics

In 2006, the district of Site A was comprised of eight buildings; one administration building, one gymnasium separate from the high school, one high school, one middle school (5th through 8th grade), three elementary schools (early childhood through 4th grade), and one building designated as a safe school. According to the School Report Card (2006), the instructional expenditure per pupil was $4,208 and operational expenditure was $6,759 per pupil.

After further review of the School Report Card (2006), it was concluded that expenditures went towards the following areas: 54.3% for instruction, 4.3% for general administration, 29.7% for supporting services, and 11.6% for other.

Two thousand six hundred eighty-five students attended school in the district at Site A. Of these students, 96.0% were Caucasian, 1.7% African-American, 0.7% Hispanic, 0.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.4% Native American, and 0.6% Multi-racial/Ethnic. The district at Site A also had a 44.1% low income rate, 3.5% high school dropout rate, 1.0% chronic truancy rate, 12.4% mobility rate, and 95.1% attendance rate (School Report Card, 2006).

In addition, the school district of Site A had a total of 174 faculty members. The faculty was comprised of 22.4% males and 77.6% females, all of which were Caucasian (School Report Card, 2006). Site A reported that the average teaching experience was 14.9 years and that 85.0% of the teachers had their bachelor's degree and 15.0% had their master's degree.

The district of Sites B, C, and D were comprised of 43 total buildings. One administration building, fifteen primary schools (K-4th), twelve middle schools (5th-8th), five high schools, and eight specialized schools. The district at Sites B, C, and D was operating at a deficit of $10,212,305. Also within the district, there were two warehouses, and one technology/media center. According to the School Report Card (2006), the instructional expenditure per pupil was $5,884 and operational expenditure was $10,234 per pupil. After further review of the School Report Card (2006), it was concluded that expenditures went towards the following areas: 517% for instruction, 1.2% for general administration, 35.3% for supporting services, and 11.8% for other.

Fourteen thousand, four hundred sixty-nine students attended schools within this district. Of these students, 32.6% were Caucasian, 59.7% African-American, 4.5% Hispanic, 2.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.1% Native American, and 0.3% Multi-racial/Ethnic. The district at Sites B, C, and D also had a 66.8% low-income rate, 5.9% high school dropout rate, 8.3% chronic truancy rate, 28.9% mobility rate, and 90.9% attendance rate (School Report Card, 2006).

In addition, the school district of Sites B, C, and D had a total of 1,047 faculty members. The faculty was comprised of 18.7% males and 81.3% females. The district of Sites B , C, and D consisted of faculty members who were 90.6% Caucasian, 7.4%

African American, 1.6% Hispanic, 0.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.1% Native American (School Report Card, 2006). Sites B, C, and D reported that the average teaching experience was 13.6 years and that 55.9% of the teachers had their bachelor's degree and 44.0% had their master's degree.

National Context of Problem

It has been a common complaint among teachers, parents, and administrators that far too much valuable time in the classroom is consumed by disciplinary measures. Most teachers expect students to listen, follow directions, turn in assignments, and display self-control. If students do not possess these skills, they are not likely to meet their teacher or classmate's expectations. Therefore, it is necessary that teacher's social and behavioral expectations are clear. These skills should be clearly and concisely taught and consistently enforced. Once these skills are mastered, students will benefit not only socially, but also academically while increasing available instructional time. According to an article from Kid Source Online:

> If we expect students to learn appropriate social skills we must structure the learning environment so that these skills can be addressed and practiced. We need to increase the opportunity for students to interact within the school environment so that pro-social skills can be learned. If all a student does is perform as a passive participant in the classroom, then little growth in social skill acquisition can be expected (Retrieved 2005).

Cooperative learning is a vehicle that involves groups of students working to complete a common task. This strategy for education can be implemented through the use of mind mapping, jig sawing, think-pair-share, and various other strategies.

Researchers have advocated the implementation and use of cooperative learning in order to increase student achievement and social skills development (Siegel, 2005). They believe that teachers' successful implementation of cooperative learning strategies is paramount for a successful classroom. They have also found that teachers should not modify any cooperative learning strategies unless they expect limited success in their real-life classrooms (Siegel, 2005).

Teachers of kindergarten through twelfth grade all view cooperation and self-control skills as extremely important to school success. "When social skills are absent, educators cannot fully engage students in a variety of learning experiences, especially those that are cooperative" (Bremer and Smith, 2004, p. 1). Researchers have also found that general education teachers, as well as special education teachers, also valued the cooperative learning skills with equal importance (Lane, et al. 2003). Schools today are under great pressure to create safe, orderly, learning environments that encourage social as well as academic skills that allow students to succeed in school and in their future endeavors. It is with the implementation of cooperative learning strategies that these researchers hope to improve social skills within their classrooms

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

The purpose of this study was to improve social skills of primary, middle, and high school regular and special education students within the teacher researchers' classrooms during the 2006 fall semester; particularly in the areas of active listening, staying on task, and problem solving, through cooperative learning strategies. "When social skills are absent, educators cannot fully engage students in a variety of learning experiences, especially those that are cooperative" (Bremer and Smith, 2004, p.1). The teacher researchers in this action research project observed and documented four different time intervals throughout a class period where students lacked the appropriate social skills. These time intervals included transition times, direct instruction, group work, and closure of the class period.

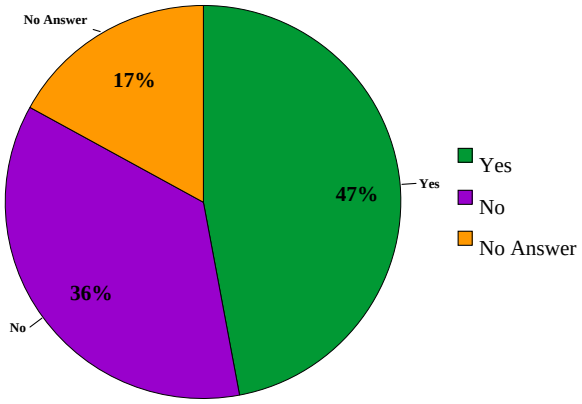
The time frame for the data collection existed over a twelve-week period. Weeks one and two consisted of pre-documentation, using five tools created and provided by the researchers. These tools included a school-wide faculty survey, parent survey, teacher survey, teacher observation checklist, and student survey. Week three consisted of an introductory activity that focused on the importance of appropriate social skills. Weeks four and five consisted of activities focused on active listening. Weeks six and seven consisted of various activities focusing on helping students to stay on-task. Weeks eight and nine focused on problem solving activities. Week 10 consisted of closing activities to wrap-up the importance of the appropriate social skills. Finally, weeks 11 and 12

involved post-documentation using the tools created and provided by the researchers. These tools included a parent survey, teacher survey, teacher observation checklist, and student survey.

School-Wide Faculty Survey

The school-wide faculty survey (See Appendix C) was distributed to faculty members within each building site. The purpose of the school-wide faculty survey was to gather information on various behavioral concerns within other faculty members' classrooms. There was a 47% return rate of the school-wide faculty survey distributed at each of the four sites. This survey was issued only during the pre-documentation period as a method to obtain feedback from fellow colleagues on social skill issues within their own classroom environments. Surveys were distributed either during faculty meetings or personal mailboxes and were accepted the following week. There were 17 open-ended questions within this survey. This survey allowed the faculty members to answer the questions, in regards to inappropriate social skills exhibited within their own classrooms.

Figure 1. Demonstration of Appropriate Social Skills



Source: School-wide Faculty Survey from Sites A, B, C and D

The combined results of the completed school-wide surveys from each site are shown in Figure 1. Forty-seven percent of the survey respondents indicated that their students did display appropriate social skills in the classroom environment. Thirty-six percent of the survey respondents indicated that their students did not display appropriate classroom behaviors. Seventeen percent of the respondents did not respond to that question or their response was unclear.

Figure 2. Behaviors Teachers Find Distracting to Instruction

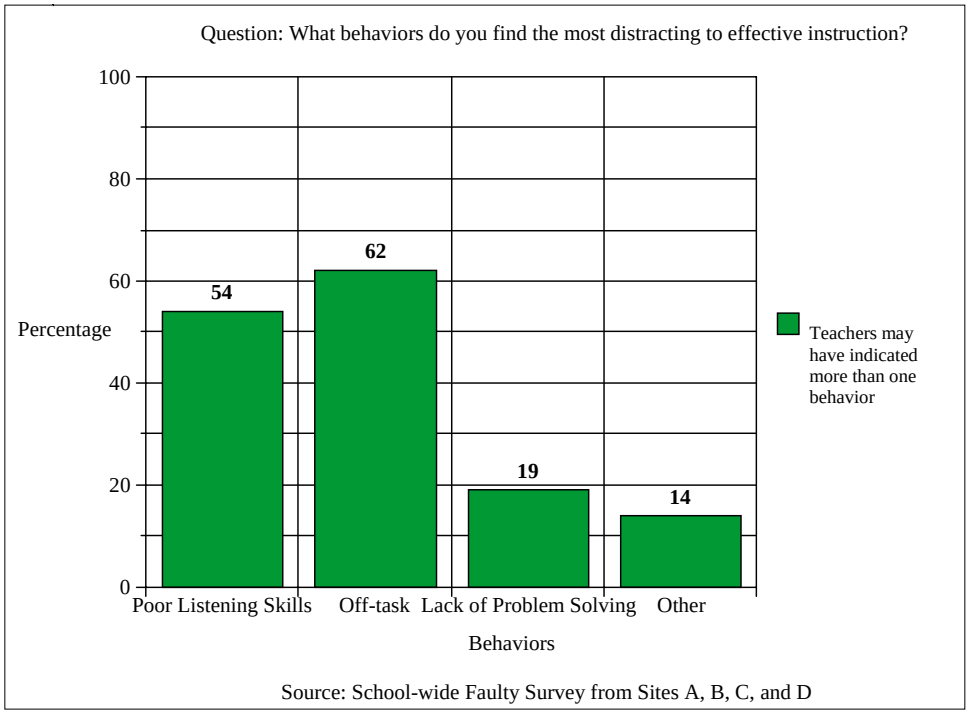
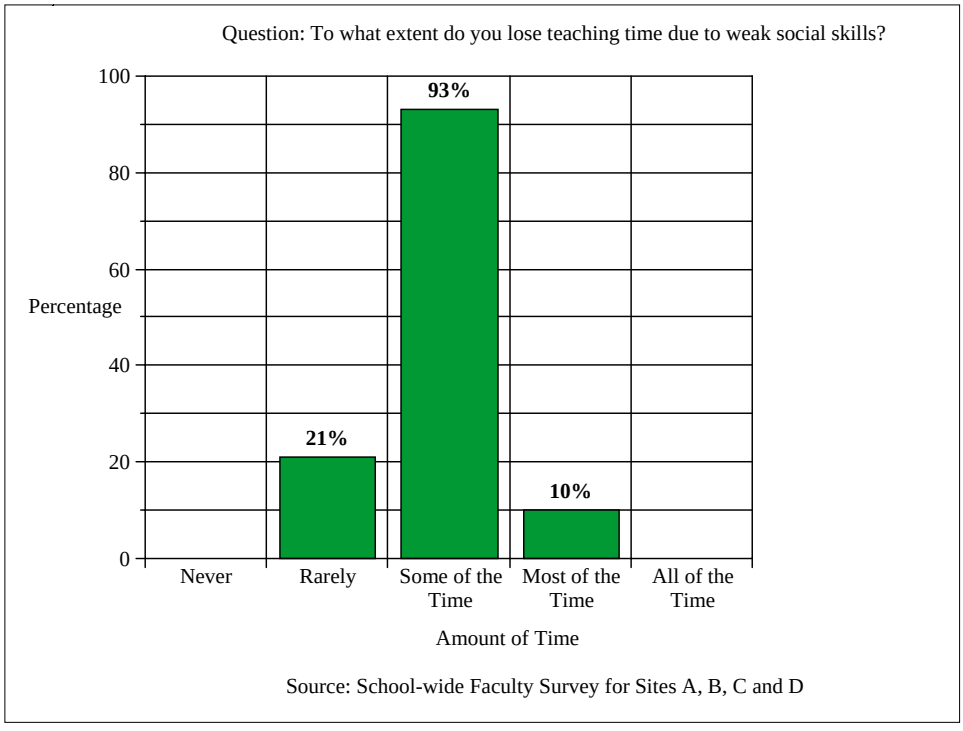


Figure 2 shows results of those behaviors which teachers find most distracting to instruction based on the school-wide faculty survey. Teachers were asked to select which skills were the most distracting or intrusive to the delivery of effective instruction in their own classrooms. Teachers were able to select more than one behavior if necessary. Percentages were based on the total number of completed surveys. Therefore, the percentages totaled more than 100% because teachers could select multiple behaviors.

Sixty-two percent of the teacher responses indicated that “off-task behavior” was the most intrusive to effective instruction. “Poor listening skills” also obtained a high number of responses with 54% of the teachers indicating it as distracting to instruction on the school-wide faculty survey. Nineteen percent of the surveys showed that a “lack of problem solving” distracted the delivery of effective instruction. Fourteen percent of the surveys had “other” circled as a distraction to effective instruction. This portion of the survey allowed teachers to write in a behavior they found distracting to instruction. The behaviors written in on the surveys included verbal disruption, lack of effort, and insubordinate behavior.

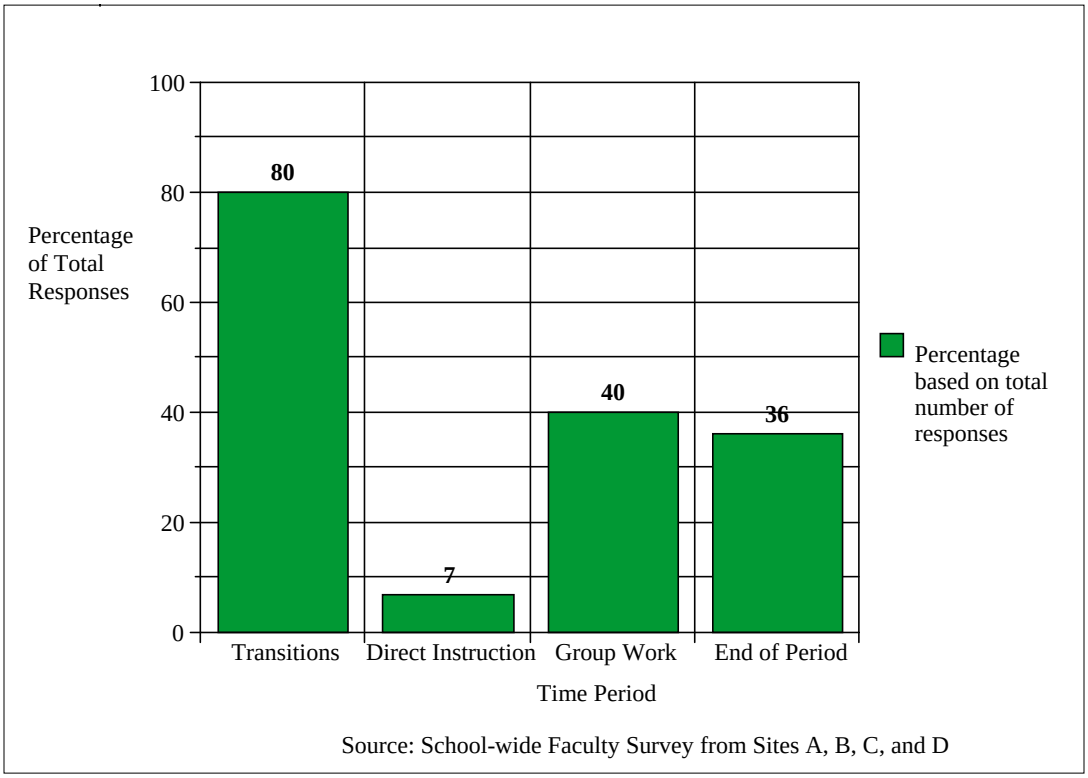
Figure 3. The Extent to Which Teachers Lose Teaching Time Due to Weak Social Skills



The survey asked teachers to specify to what extent they lost teaching time due to poor social skills. Some teachers selected more than one reply for this question. Therefore, the percentages in Figure 3 were based on the total number of completed

surveys which allowed for more than 100%. As Figure 3 shows, 93% of the surveys indicated that poor social skills in the classroom caused a loss of instruction “some of the time.” Ten percent of the surveys indicated teaching time was lost “most of the time” due to poor social skills. Twenty-one percent of the teachers surveyed responded that they “rarely” lose teaching time due to poor social skills.

Figure 4. Percentage of Teachers’ Perceptions of When Off-Task Behaviors Occurred



The graph in Figure 4 displays the perceptions of the teachers surveyed with the school-wide faculty survey. The teachers were asked when they felt most off-task behavior, due to inappropriate social skills, occurred in the classroom. Some of the surveys had more than one time period indicated, resulting in more than 100%. The percentages were calculated by the total number of completed surveys. As the graph

indicates, 80% of the surveys indicated that most off-task behavior occurs during "transition periods." Transitions are times of the day that students are changing classes, subjects, or switching to a different activity within the same classroom. "Group work" was indicated on 40% of the surveys as the period of the day in which the off-task behavior occurred. Thirty-six percent of the surveys indicated that most off-task behavior occurred at the "end of the class period." Only seven percent of the surveys indicated "direct instruction" as the time period in which most off-task behavior occurred.

Summary

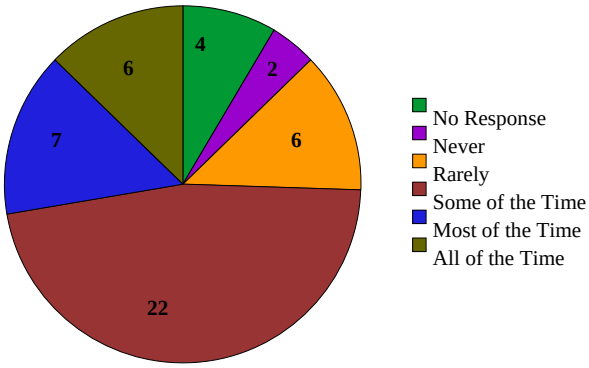
The pie graph in Figure 1 shows that approximately one-third of the teachers surveyed felt that their students did not have social skills appropriate for the classroom environment. The information presented in Figure 2 showed that "poor listening skills" and "off-task" behavior were disruptive to the delivery of effective instruction. More than half the teachers surveyed indicated that these two behaviors disrupted instruction. "Problem solving" was not highly indicated by teachers. While the "lack of problem solving" was not indicated to be a disruption to the delivery of instruction, it has the potential to keep children from effectively completing assignments and working successfully in a cooperative group. Figure 3 showed teachers' perceptions of the extent to which teaching time was lost due to inappropriate social skills. An overwhelming percentage of the surveys indicated that they did indeed lose teaching time, "some of the time," due to the social skills of the children in their classes. The loss of instruction time could lead to lowered student achievement. A decrease in student achievement could occur throughout the class even though a smaller percentage of the students were displaying inappropriate social skills because the loss of instruction time occurs to all

pupils in the class period. The perception of the faculty surveyed using the school-wide faculty survey (See Appendix C) indicated that most off-task behavior occurred during transition periods, between classes, or between activities. The results of this survey also showed that group work and end of the period time slots were periods in the day when a lot of off-task behavior occurred, as well.

Parent Survey

The parent survey (See Appendix E) was given to the parents of the participants at the beginning and at the end of the study. The purpose of the parent survey was to gain the insights of the parents relating to the social skills that they observed pre-intervention and post-intervention. There was a 96% return rate of the parent surveys. Copies of the parent surveys were mailed home to the parents of the participants and asked to be returned within one week. There were 14 questions included within the parent survey in the form of a Likert Scale. The numbers ranged from one to five, with one being “never” and five being “all of the time.”

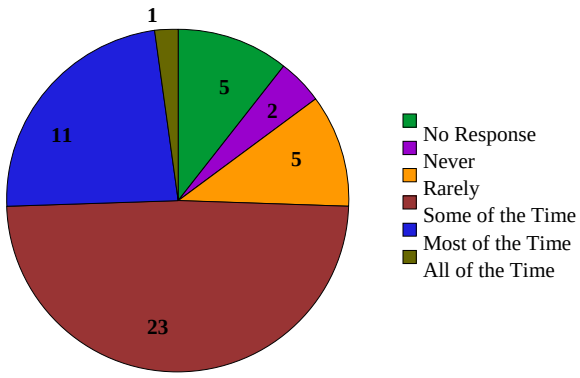
Figure 5. The Number of Parent Responses for the Behavior of Arguing



Source: Parent Survey from Sites A, B, C, and D

Figure 5 shows the degree to which students argue, according to the parent survey. Parents' perceptions were rated using a Likert Scale on different aspects of their children's behavior outside of the school environment. Due to the length of the questionnaire, the teacher researchers selected four survey questions that directly related to the social skills being studied. In terms of arguing, the largest proportion of the responses showed that students exhibited this behavior "some of the time."

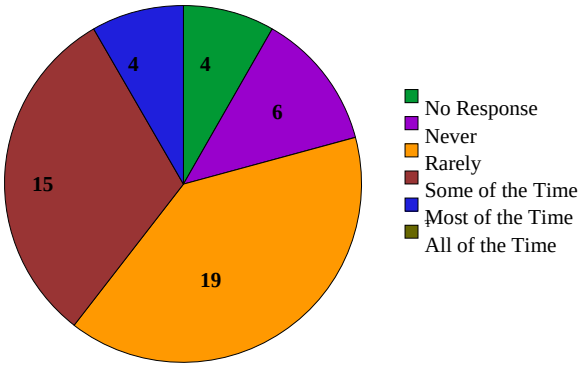
Figure 6. The Number of Parent Responses for the Behavior of Interrupting



Source: Parent Survey from Sites A, B, C, and D

The pie graph in Figure 6 reports the parent survey responses in regards to interruption. This behavior also showed the highest number of responses for "some of the time."

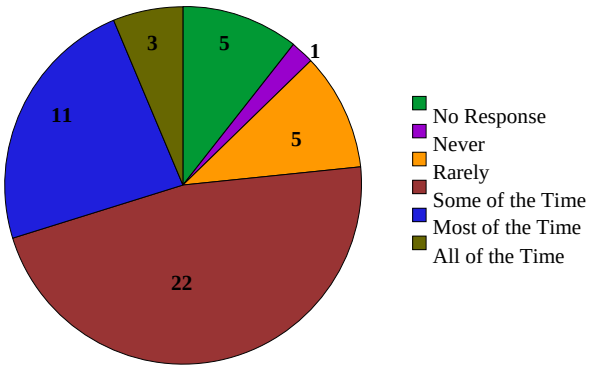
Figure 7. The Number of Parent Responses for the Behavior of Being Out-of-Seat



Source: Parent Survey from Sites A, B, C, and D

As Figure 7 indicates, the out-of-seat responses on the parent survey greatly varied from the first two survey questions indicated on the pie graphs in Figures 5 and 6. The two largest portions of the pie graph show that most of the parents' perceptions of their children's out-of-seat behavior were "some of the time" and "rarely."

Figure 8. The Number of Parent Responses for the Behavior of Problem Solving



Source: Parent Survey from Sites A, B, C, and D

Figure 8 shows the responses on the question relating to problem solving behavior. The graph reveals that approximately half of the parents perceived their children to problem solve “some of the time.”

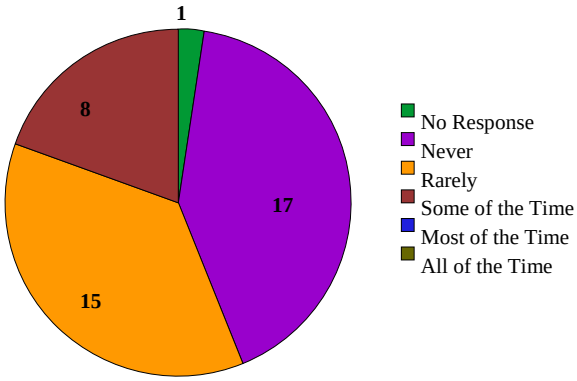
Upon interpretation of the pie graphs of each of the four selected behaviors from the parent survey, the teacher researchers decided to eliminate the results from the following sections: “no response,” “all of the time,” and “never.” The “no response” indicator has no impact in regards to analysis. The absence of a response indicates that the responder did not understand the item or could not appropriately determine a response. The teacher researchers decided to eliminate the “all of the time” and “never” responses as they determined that it was highly unlikely that a given behavior would occur 100% or 0% of the time. Eliminating those three responses left the teacher researchers analyzing the three remaining responses: “rarely,” “some of the time,” and “most of the time.” The pie graphs indicating the degree to which students “argue,” “interrupt,” and “problem solve,” indicate that approximately half of the responses were some of the time. The out-of-seat pie graph shows almost equal distribution between

"some of the time" and "rarely." The results of the parent survey clearly indicate that the parents perceive the presence of these behaviors in the home environment.

Teacher Survey

The purpose of the teacher survey (See Appendix B) was to gather input and opinions of various misbehaviors within other teachers' classrooms, relating to the three social skills being studied. Additional teachers, who were involved with the participants, were given a survey to complete. There was a 90% return rate on the teacher surveys given out to additional teachers. The teacher surveys were completed as a pre- and post-documentation tool. This survey was given to selected teachers who had contact with the participants outside of the teacher researchers' classrooms. The teacher survey was in the form of a Likert Scale (See Appendix B). Twelve misbehaviors related to the three social skills were listed in the left column; for each of the misbehaviors, the observer was required to circle the number that best corresponded to the student's behavior in his/her classroom. The numbers ranged from one to five, with one being "never" and five being "all of the time." The following graph represented a compilation of each of the teacher researchers' data collected at each of the sites.

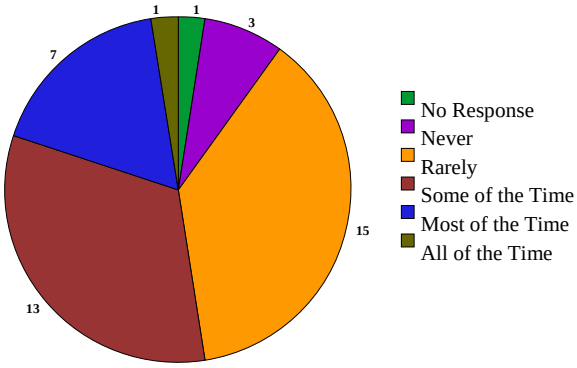
Figure 9. The Number of Teacher Responses for the Behavior of Arguing



Source: Teacher Survey of Observed Behaviors

Figure 9 indicates the results for the question on the teacher survey of observed behaviors regarding the degree to which students argue in the classroom environment. The responses “most of the time” and “all of the time” were not used on this particular question on the teacher survey of observed behaviors.

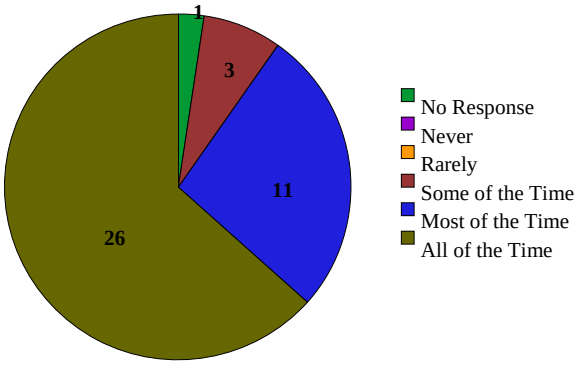
Figure 10. The Number of Teacher Responses for the Behavior of Talking



Source: Teacher Survey of Observed Behaviors

Figure 10 represents the teachers’ perceptions of the degree to which students talk in class, at an inappropriate time. This graph denotes that approximately two-thirds of the responses were “some of the time” and “rarely.”

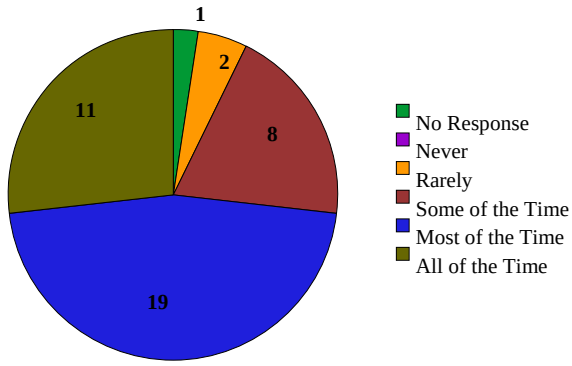
Figure 11. The Number of Teacher Responses for the Behavior of Staying in the Area



Source: Teacher Survey of Observed Behaviors

Figure 11 shows the responses from the teacher survey of observed behaviors on the teachers' perceptions of the degree to which students remain in their assigned areas. The options of "rarely" and "never" were not selected as responses by the respondents on this particular survey item. The graph shows an overwhelming selection of the response "all of the time."

Figure 12. The Number of Teacher Responses for the Behavior of Work Completion



Source: Teacher Survey of Observed Behaviors

Figure 12 represents the teacher respondents' perceptions of the degree to which student's complete assigned work in the classroom environment. The "never" response was not chosen for this particular question on the teacher survey. Approximately 75% of

the responses indicated that students complete work “most of the time’ or “all of the time.”

Upon interpretation of the teacher survey of observed behaviors, the teacher researchers concluded that approximately 43% of the students “never” argue and 38% “rarely” argue. Arguing does not seem to be a problem within the teacher researchers’ classrooms. Approximately 38% “rarely” talk and 33% talk “some of the time.” The talking that does occur within the classrooms could be due to transition times and the variations of the curriculum within the three levels (primary, middle, and secondary). Approximately 65% of the students remain in their assigned areas “all of the time.” Roughly 48% of the student’s complete work “most of the time” and 28% complete work “all of the time” within the researchers’ classrooms. What the teacher researchers noticed after reviewing the parent survey and the teacher survey was that parents typically responded using an intermediate reaction, such as “some of the time,” “most of the time,” or “rarely.” Parents rarely responded using “never” and “all of the time.” After looking at the teacher surveys, the teachers who participated in the survey typically chose the extreme responses. The teacher surveys were completed within the first few months of the school year, which may or may not have been a sufficient amount of time for teachers to document misbehaviors properly. Student misbehaviors tend to escalate as the year progresses.

Student Survey

The student survey (See Appendix D) was given out to all participants within each teacher researcher’s classroom. The purpose of the student survey is to determine the student’s perception of their own social skills within the classroom environment. One

hundred percent of the student surveys that were distributed were collected. During the pre- and post-documentation periods, student surveys were distributed in class. Each participant was given the first 10 minutes of class to complete the survey. The responses include “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.”

Figure 13. Student Perceptions of Behavior from Site A

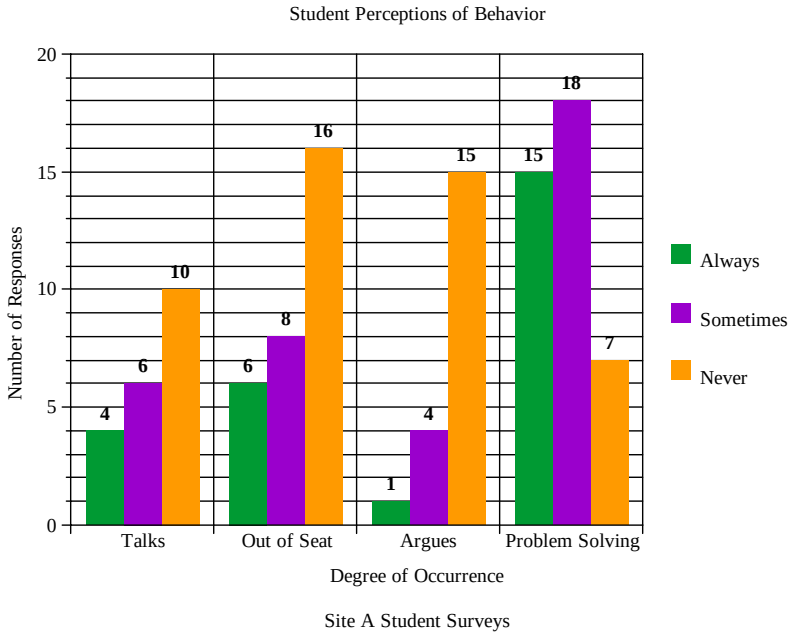


Figure 13 shows the results of the student surveys given at Site A. The students in this setting were high school special education students in a rural setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to behavior of “talking” in the classroom setting. The “out-of- seat” section on this figure relates to two questions on the student survey. Two questions on the student survey were compiled to obtain the results for “argue.” The “problem solving” portion relates to four questions on the student survey. All of the other questions on the student survey were eliminated for the purposes of this graph as they did not relate to the social skills selected for this action research project. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale of “always,”

"sometimes," and "never." The students' perceptions are indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

Figure 14. Student Perceptions of Behavior from Site B

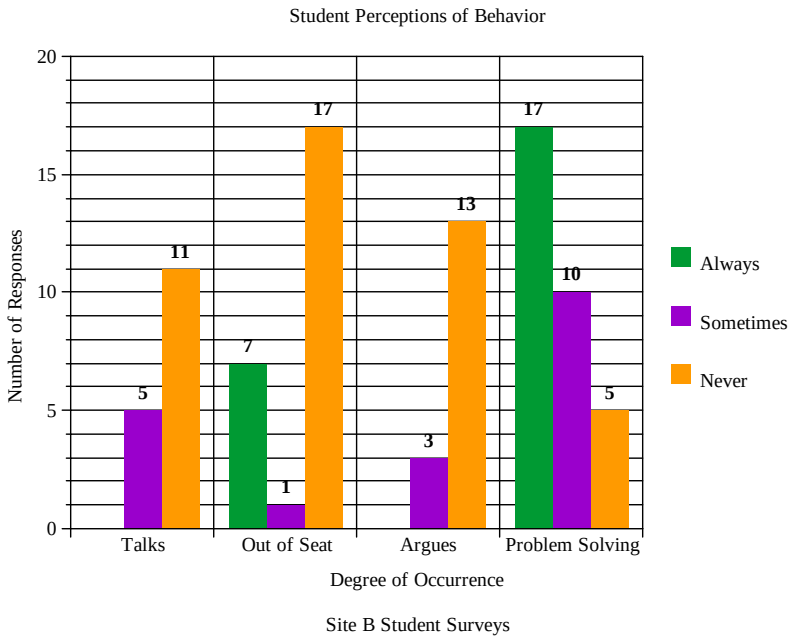


Figure 14 shows the results of the student surveys given at Site B. The students in this setting were middle school special education students in an urban setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to the behavior of "talking" in the classroom setting. The "out-of-seat" section on this figure relates to two questions on the student survey. The "argue" section of the figure corresponds to two questions on the student survey. The "problem solving" portion relates to four questions on the student survey. All of the other questions on the student survey were eliminated for the purposes of this graph as they did not relate to the social skills selected for this action research project. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale

of “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.” The students’ perceptions are indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

Figure 15. Student Perceptions of Behavior from Site C, Classroom C

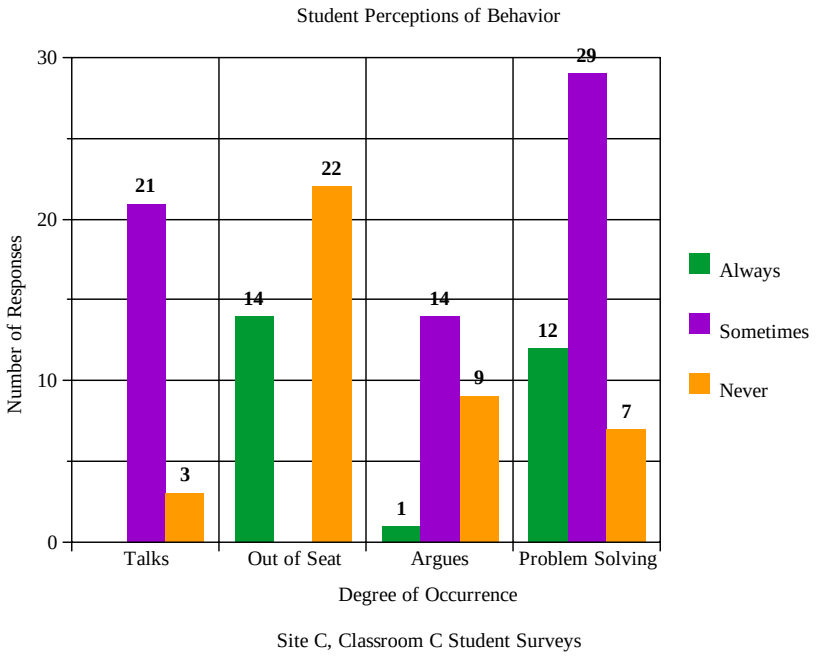


Figure 15 shows the results of the student surveys given at classroom C in Site C. The students in this setting were high school students in an urban setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to “talking” behavior in the classroom setting. The “out-of-seat” section on this figure relates to two questions on the student survey. The “argue” section of the figure corresponds to two questions on the student survey. The “problem solving” portion relates to four questions on the student survey. All of the other questions on the student survey were eliminated for the purpose of this graph as they did not relate to the social skills selected for this action research project. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale of “always,” “sometimes,”

and “never.” The students’ perceptions are indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

Figure 16. Student Perceptions of Behavior from Site C, Classroom D

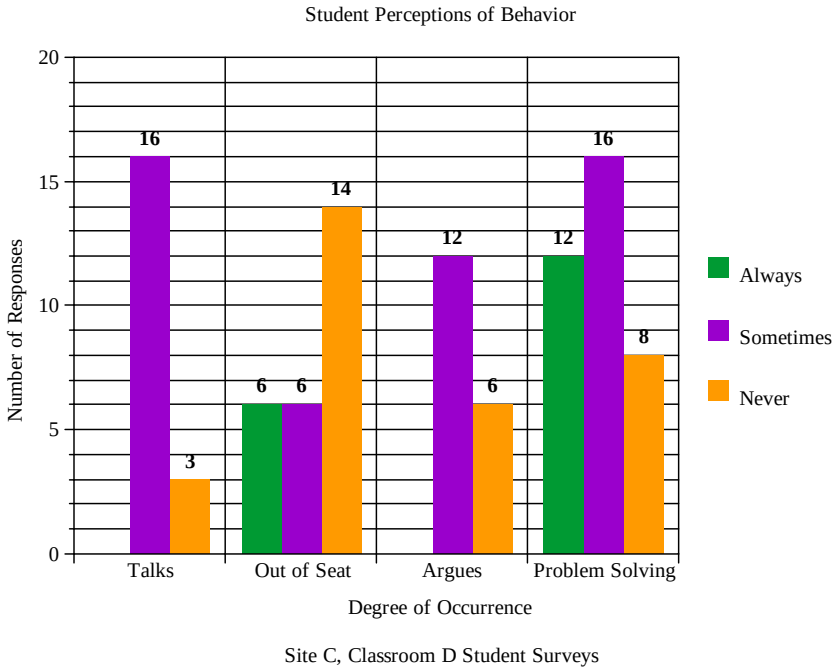


Figure 16 shows the results of the student surveys given in Classroom D at Site C. The students in this setting were high school students in an urban setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to “talking” behavior in the classroom setting. The “out-of-seat” section on this figure relates to two questions on the student survey. The “argue” section of the figure corresponds to two questions on the student survey. The “problem solving” portion relates to four questions on the student survey. All of the other questions on the student survey were eliminated for the purposes of this graph as they did not relate to the social skills selected for this action research project. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale of “always,” “sometimes,”

and “never.” The students’ perceptions are indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

Figure 17. Student Perceptions of Behavior from Site D

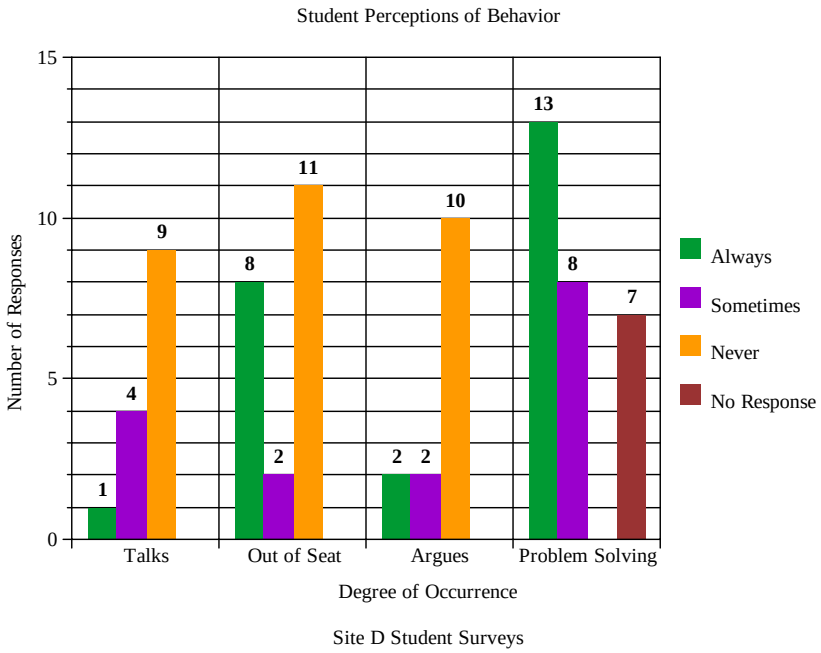


Figure 17 shows the results of the student surveys given at Site D. The students in this setting were first grade special education students in an urban setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to “talking” behavior in the classroom setting. The “out-of-seat” section on Figure 17 relates to two questions on the student survey. The “argue” section of the figure corresponds to two questions on the student survey. The “problem solving” portion relates to four questions on the student survey. All of the other questions on the student survey were eliminated for the purposes of this graph as they did not relate to the social skills selected for this action research project. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale of “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.” The students’ perceptions are indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

The student survey given to each student in Sites A, B, C, and D consisted of twenty-three questions. The teacher researchers chose 11 questions on that survey that directly pertained to the behaviors being observed. The data from the questions were compiled and represented in Figures 13 through 17. The teacher researchers chose to eliminate the other questions from data analysis because the students required direction and/or assistance on those items. The teacher researchers felt as though the assistance provided could have led to inaccuracy in responses as students tended to respond in a manner that would have been consistent with what the students perceived as their teacher's expectations. Sites A, B, and D included students with special needs. The results of the surveys in Sites A, B, and D are remarkably similar. The pattern across these three sites showed that the students indicated that they never displayed the inappropriate behaviors of "talking," "arguing," or being "out-of-seat" in the classroom setting. The students in these sites did indicate that they "sometimes" or "always" displayed the appropriate behavior of problem solving. The perceptions of the students at Site C (Classroom C and Classroom D) are probably more indicative of their actual behavior in the classroom setting. The students at Site C were regular division students. The teacher researchers conclude that these typically developing students were more capable of selecting a response that coincided with their actual classroom behavior. It was observed that the special education students responded in a way that corresponded with the appropriate classroom behavior choice as opposed to the response that correlated with their actual classroom behavior.

Teacher Observation Checklist

The purpose of the teacher observation checklist (See Appendix A) was for the teacher researchers to observe and document various misbehaviors that related to the three inappropriate social skills being studied: active listening, staying on task, and problem solving. The teacher observation checklist was completed by the teacher researchers during the pre-documentation period. There was a 100% return rate because the checklists were completed by the teacher researchers. Upon completion of the pre-documentation the teacher researchers utilized the data to create lesson plans that focused on the three areas of concern: active listening, staying on task, and problem solving. It was the intent of the teacher researchers to use the teacher observation checklists again as a post-documentation tool. The checklist was only completed during the pre- and post-documentation periods. The checklist was completed within each of the teacher researchers' classrooms. The checklist was in a grid-like structure that consisted of the 16 misbehaviors in the left column and horizontal boxes in the additional columns. Each horizontal box indicated a 60-second interval. At the beginning of each interval, the teacher indicated the observed behaviors with a checkmark in the corresponding boxes within the cooperative group being observed. Located above the grid, the four time intervals (transition times, during direct instruction, during group work, and closure of the class period) were also listed. The researcher then checked off which time interval corresponded to the activity being observed. The following graphs indicate pre-documentation and post-documentation results from the teacher researchers' compiled data. The observed behaviors were divided into three areas of concern: "inability to be active listeners," "stay on task," and "to problem solve."

Probable Causes

A lack of appropriate social skills was evident within all five teacher researchers' classrooms. Because social skills were so detrimental to the learning process, the teacher researchers focused their study, not only on possible solutions, but also on the causes as to why their students lacked these basic social skills.

Media

One well-known probable cause was the effects of the media on students' social skills. Most often, children who have not received the proper training of social skills, turn to television and video games to fill that particular socialization void (Kagan, 2003). According to Spencer Kagan, children spend approximately 1,180 minutes a week watching television and only 38.5 minutes a week having meaningful conversations with parents (Kagan, 2003). According to a study conducted by the American Academy of Pediatrics, children who viewed excessive amounts of television were more prone to violence, laziness, and decreased imagination (Rainey, retrieved 2006). Unfortunately, the media consisted of too many role models with inappropriate social behavior for students to admire. This inappropriate social behavior was in regards to moral values, thinking styles, and patterns of behavior (Rainey, retrieved 2006).

Deficits

According to the National Association of School Psychologists, there were four deficits that caused students to display inappropriate social skills in the classroom (NASP, 2002). The first deficit referred to was an acquisition deficit (due to a lack of knowledge). Students with this deficit did not know the appropriate skills or did not know how to discriminate when a skill was most appropriate (NASP, 2002). Students were

never taught this skill, therefore, when a situation arose in the classroom, the student displayed the inappropriate skill.

A second deficit, which caused students to display inappropriate social skills, was known as performance deficit. Performance deficits were observed when students knew how to perform the appropriate social skill, but failed to do so consistently or at an acceptable level of proficiency (NASP, 2002). According to the National Association of School Psychologists, the third deficit that caused inappropriate use of social skills in the classroom was referred to as fluency deficits (NASP, 2002). Fluency deficits were best described as deficits that occurred when the student knew how to perform the appropriate skill and were motivated to perform; however, the student demonstrated inadequate performance due to a lack of performance or a lack of adequate feedback (NASP, 2002). Finally, the fourth deficit was said to be caused by internal or external factors that interfered with the student demonstrating a learned skill appropriately (NASP, 2002). Some factors included depression, anxiety, family problems, and negative motivation (NASP, 2002).

Families

Various situations that occurred at home could also have affected the students' social skills. Basic family and extended family relationships have also affected students' social skills (McClellan, 2001). The changes in the economy may be one cause for the need of two incomes to support a family. If a child has been raised in a single parent family, the single parent was required to work extra hours in order to make ends meet. Working extra hours caused the single parent to have less available time to socialize with children, thus not allowing for the proper social skills to be addressed (Kagan, 2003).

Another change that occurred was that more families were becoming more mobile, which caused the neighbors not to know the children in the neighborhood as well (Kagan, 2003). Because the neighbors were not familiar with the children, this caused the neighbors to not keep a watchful eye on the children; thus the children not being corrected when inappropriate social skills were displayed (Kagan, 2003).

Causes due to family situations will not be addressed in this action research project as the teacher researchers do not and will not have control of these variables.

Peer Influence

According to Spencer Kagan, peer socialization has become the primary socializer among today's youth (Kagan, 2003). For some young children, advice from peers was of more importance than advice from parents or teachers. Youth gangs have become a substitute family for children who lack the appropriate social skills training. (Kagan, 2003). Unfortunately, adult supervision was lacking, which required the children to make adult decisions and to develop their own "rights" and "wrongs" (Kagan, 2003).

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Numerous programs have been designed to improve social skills within the classroom. However, the best curriculum for teaching social skills does not exist, due to the full range of problems associated with social skills and social skill settings (Sugai, 1996). Strategies could be implemented at a school-wide, specific setting, classroom, or individual level; but all levels should emphasize the teaching of the desired skill. It is important not to focus on the negative aspect of punishment due to inappropriate behavior (NASP, 2002). Various studies have shown that in order to teach social skills, it is essential for the person teaching the skill to model, role-play, and coach the desired behaviors. Assessment strategies, such as observation checklists, parent surveys, and teacher surveys, can be used to identify children who are in need of more instruction for targeted social skills. Such strategies include activities in active listening, on-task behavior, problem solving, and cooperative learning.

Active Listening

In order to decrease the number of interruptions during instruction time, active listening skills should be implemented as a targeted social skill (Croom, 2006). Active listening skills may include facing the speaker, having eyes on the speaker, and being able to respond to the speaker. The teacher could encourage the use of active listening by asking students to set specific academic goals for themselves (Ragozzino, 2003). Daily goal journals could be established in which students record, at the end of the day, whether

or not they met their specified goals. Included within the recommended social skill curriculum, a teacher checklist and a conference time are established with the student in order to provide feedback (Croom, 2006). Teachers would be able to conference with students, using a checklist that was completed during class, in order to provide feedback to the student regarding appropriate active listening skills. During the conferencing, teachers may suggest alternatives to inappropriate active listening behaviors.

On-Task Behavior

Videotaping can be used to illustrate the presence of appropriate or inappropriate social skills within the natural setting of the classroom and within group activities (Croom, 2006). Through the observation of videotapes, teachers, as well as the targeted participants, are able to determine the appropriate social skills needed in the classroom environment. The students are assessed through observation, evaluation, and videotaped behavior. Using teacher checklists of students' on-task behaviors, students' interactions are recorded within the group's natural setting (Sugai, 1996). Students will have the opportunity to identify a more suitable social skill for that particular situation.

Problem Solving

According to Croom (2006), students do not know how to interact with others effectively without being taught the proper skills. In addition to teaching the proper social skills, problem solving skills should also be taught, modeled, and reinforced within the curriculum. Problem solving skills include behaviors such as making positive statements, the ability to negotiate effectively with others, and the ability to express anger appropriately (Sugai, 1996). Parents, teachers, and peers could also be included in the

behavioral observation through the use of interviews, checklists, and surveys (Sugai, 1996).

Cooperative Learning

The goal of cooperative learning is to have the teacher as the facilitator and to assist the students in order for them to become more independent learners (Halpern, retrieved 2005). In order to increase student academic achievement, cooperative learning offers an alternative to traditional, instructional teaching (Siegel, 2005). Throughout cooperative learning, students are actively involved with the content and with other learners. In order for a successful implementation of cooperative activities, the activities should be planned, organized, and structured with other tasks that are related to the objectives (Halpern, retrieved 2005). Think-pair-share (discussions among pairs of students), jig-sawing (used to gather a lot of information in a short amount of time by dividing tasks among group members), role playing (acting out the social skills), and graphic organizers (t-charts, concept maps, KWL, and the fishbone) are useful cooperative learning strategies in order to assist with the instruction of the appropriate social skills (Bremer, 2004).

Project Objective and Processing Statements

The targeted primary, middle and high school students were to demonstrate an increase in the percentage of appropriate listening skills. This was accomplished by using cooperative group strategies, as a result of social skill instruction. This instruction will occur between October 2006 and December 2006. Teacher surveys, student surveys, parent surveys, and teacher observation checklists demonstrate the need for appropriate listening skills to be taught.

To achieve this objective, the following processes were used.

1. Brainstorming the topic of social skills to identify what it was

2. Creation of direct instruction of appropriate listening skills

3. Creating lesson plans on active listening, on-task behavior, and problem solving, for students to practice the skills of participating in cooperative learning groups

4. Reflecting on the learned social skill through the use of PMI's and reflective journaling

Project Action Plan

Pre-Study (July 14, 2006 - August 18, 2006)

- Teacher researchers were given surveys and consent forms.
- Teacher researchers created and prepared lesson plans, worksheets, and materials for mini-lessons.
- Prepared reflection booklets.

Pre-Documentation (October 2 – October 13)

Week 1 October 2-6

- Parent Consent Forms were sent in the mail to parents/guardians on Monday.
- Parent Surveys were sent home with consent forms on Monday.
- School-wide Faculty Surveys were given to faculty members at each research site on Monday and collected by Friday.
- Student Surveys were completed by each student in the selected class(es) at each site.

- Child Assent Forms were completed by students aged twelve or over in the selected class(es) at each site.

Week 2 October 9-13

- Teacher Observation Checklists were completed on each student in the selected class(es) at each site by the teacher researchers.
- Teacher Surveys were delivered by teacher researchers on Monday and collected by Friday.

Interventions (October 16 – December 8)

Week 3 October 16-20

- Teacher researchers introduced the topic of social skills through whole group direct instruction on Monday.
- Tuesday through Thursday, teacher researchers introduced the concept of cooperative groups. The teacher researcher taught how to get into and out of groups, role-playing within the group, and behavior expectations.
- Friday, teacher researchers taught the process of reflective thinking and how to complete the reflective journals.

Week 4 October 23-27

- The concept of Active Listening were introduced on Monday through the use of a “looks like/sounds like” T-charts.
- Teacher researchers taught a daily mini-lesson on listening skills.
- Students participated in two cooperative group activities in which they practiced the listening skills discussed throughout the week.
- Friday, students completed an entry in their reflective journal.

Week 5 October 30 – November 3

- Monday, students reviewed the active listening skills learned in the previous week by completion of a blank T-chart.
- Students were asked to think-pair-share their completed T-charts.
- Teacher researchers taught a daily mini-lesson on listening skills.
- Students participated in at least one more cooperative group activity in which they practiced the listening skills discussed throughout the previous two weeks.
- Friday, students completed an entry in their reflective journal.

Week 6 November 6 - 10

- The concept of on-task behavior was introduced on Monday through the use of a “looks like/sounds like” T-chart.
- Teacher researchers taught a daily mini-lesson related to on-task behavior.
- Students participated in two cooperative group activities in which they practiced the on-task behaviors discussed throughout week.
- Friday, students completed an entry in their reflective journal.

Week 7 November 13 - 17

- Monday, students reviewed the on-task behaviors learned in the previous week by the completion of a blank T-chart.
- Students were asked to think-pair-share their completed T-charts.
- Teacher researchers taught a daily mini-lesson related to on-task behavior.
- Students participated in one cooperative group activity in which they practiced the listening skills discussed throughout the previous two weeks.

- Friday, students completed an entry in their reflective journal.

Week 8 November 20 - 22

- The concept of problem-solving was introduced on Monday using a “looks like/sounds like” T-chart.
- Teacher researchers taught a daily mini-lesson on problem solving behavior.
- Students participated in two cooperative group activities in which they practiced problem solving behaviors discussed throughout the week.
- Students completed an entry in their reflective journal.

Week 9 November 27 – December 1

- Monday, students reviewed the problem solving skills learned in the previous week by the completion of a blank T-chart.
- Students were asked to think-pair-share their completed T-charts.
- Teacher researchers taught a daily mini-lesson on problem solving behavior.
- Students participated in at least one more cooperative group activity in which they practiced problem solving behaviors discussed throughout the previous two weeks.
- Friday, students completed an entry in their reflective journal.

Week 10 December 4 - 8

- Monday, teacher researchers reviewed active listening skills.
- Tuesday, teacher researchers reviewed on-task behavior.
- Wednesday, teacher researchers reviewed problem solving skills.
- Throughout the week students worked in cooperative groups on a cumulative project.

Post-Documentation (December 11 – December 22)

Week 11 December 11 - 15

- Teacher researchers completed the Teacher Observation Checklist on each student in the designated class.

Week 12 December 18 - 22

- Parent Surveys were mailed on Monday to be collected by Friday.
- Teacher Surveys were delivered on Monday to be collected by Friday.
- Student Surveys were completed by each student within a class period selected by the teacher researchers.

Post-Study (January 8, 2007 – January 2013)

- One teacher researcher secured all documents used in this study in a safe and secure file cabinet following the conclusion of the study until May of 2007, upon which they were destroyed.

Methods of Assessment

Teacher Observation Checklist

The purpose of the teacher observation checklist (See Appendix A) for post-documentation purposes was to record the number of behaviors observed within specific time periods for each member of the class. The results of this data were compared with the results from the pre-documentation phase. This comparison allowed the teacher researchers to determine the effect of the strategies used in the intervention process.

Teacher Survey

The teacher survey (See Appendix B) was given to teachers on December 18, 2006 after the intervention period ended. The results from these surveys were compared

to the pre-documentation results in order to determine the effectiveness of the interventions when compared with the post-documentation results. Finally, the comparison of pre-documentation and post-documentation results indicated transferability of the learned behaviors to various environments within the school setting.

Student Survey

The student survey (See Appendix D) was given during Week 1 and again, in the teacher researchers' classes, during the week of December 18, 2006 through December 22, 2006. These results were compared with the pre-documentation results to determine whether the students' perceptions of their personal social skills had changed as a result of the strategies used during the intervention period.

Parent Survey

Upon completion of the intervention portion of the study, parent surveys (See Appendix E) were mailed to the parents on December 18, 2006 for the purpose of post-documentation. Parents were asked to return the surveys to the teacher researcher at their respective schools by December 22, 2006. The results of these surveys were used to determine if the parents noticed a change in the behavior of their child based on the intervention program used to teach social skills.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve social skills in primary, middle, and high school regular and special education students. In order to accomplish this task, the teacher researchers implemented lessons focusing on particular areas of active listening, staying on task, and problem solving through cooperative learning strategies.

During the pre-intervention, the teacher researchers administered parent surveys, school-wide faculty surveys, student surveys, and teacher observation checklists. The parent surveys and the school-wide faculty surveys were administered to provide baseline data for research. The student surveys and the teacher observation checklists focused on specific classroom behaviors. These were used to provide insight into specific social behaviors that needed to be improved for a better classroom environment.

Behaviors of students were documented within the classrooms being researched. Other teachers outside of the teacher researchers' classrooms, also documented those students targeted during this action research project. The checklist focused on behaviors taking place during transition, direct instruction, group work, and end-of-period activities. The teacher researchers kept a tally of communicative, off-task, and lack of problem solving behaviors using the checklist created by the researchers. This documentation was recorded as baseline data that would be compared to the same data tallied after intervention.

Throughout the intervention process, the teacher researchers used a variety of activities in the classroom. Each week a lesson pertaining to a targeted social skill was

taught and reinforced through the use of role playing, worksheets, class discussions, and graphic organizers. On Friday, of that particular week, students reflected in journals on those particular intervention strategies. Due to time constraints and scheduling conflicts, activities were at times, limited to only once per week.

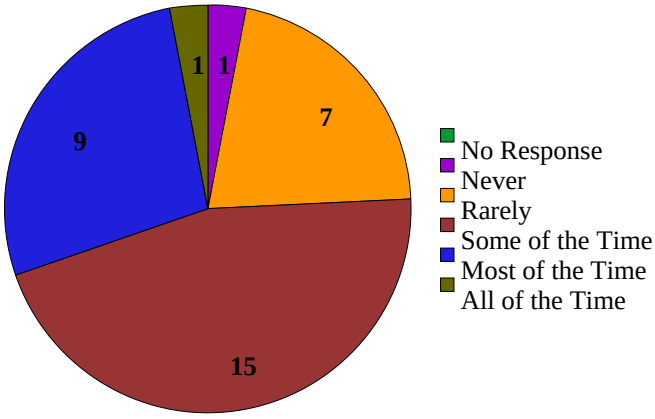
The last week of documentation was used to analyze and document post-intervention data. Post-intervention surveys provided data that were compared to baseline information from the pre-documentation surveys. The post-intervention surveys also provided the teacher researchers with student opinions of the importance of social skills in the classroom.

Presentation and Analysis of the Results

Parent Survey

The parent survey (See Appendix E) was given to the parents of the participants at the beginning and at the end of the study. The purpose of the parent survey was to gain feedback from the parents of the social skills that they observed during post-intervention. The parent surveys produced a 73% return rate. Parent surveys were mailed home to the parents of the participants and request was made to return them within one week. Fourteen questions were included within the parent survey in the form of a Likert Scale. Numbers ranged from one to five, with one being “never” and five being “all of the time.”

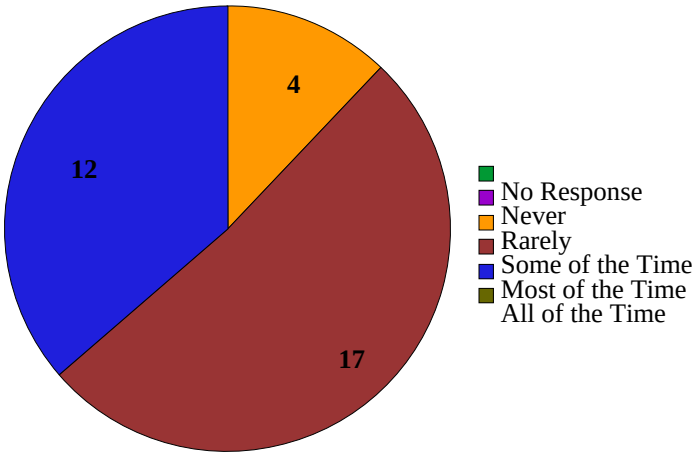
Figure 18. The Number of Parent Responses for the Behavior of Arguing



Source: Post-Documentation of Parent Surveys of Sites A, B, C, and D

Figure 18 shows the results of the degree to which students argue from the parent perception survey. Using a Likert Scale, parents' perceptions were rated on different aspects of their children's behavior outside of the school environment. Due to the length of the questionnaire, the teacher researchers selected four survey questions that directly related to the social skills being studied. In terms of arguing, the largest proportion of the responses showed that students exhibited this behavior "some of the time."

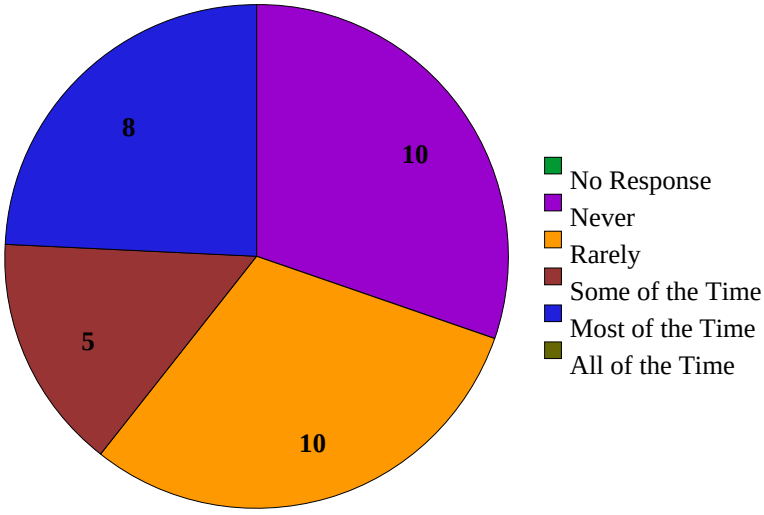
Figure 19. The Degree to Which Students Interrupt



Source: Post-Documentation of Parent Surveys of Sites A, B, C, and D

This pie graph in Figure 19 reports the parent survey responses in regards to interruption. This behavior also showed the highest number of responses for "some of the time."

Figure 20. The Number of Parent Responses for the Behavior of Being Out of Their Seat

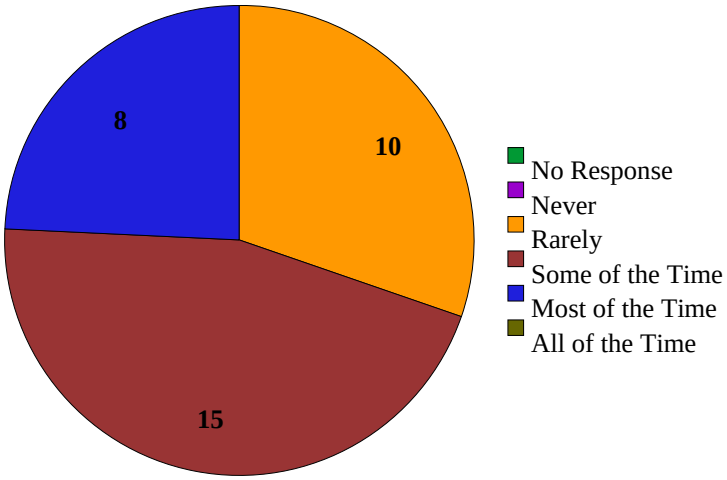


Source: Post-Documentation of Parent Surveys of Sites A, B, C, and D

Figure 20 shows that the out-of-seat responses on the parent survey varied greatly from the first two survey questions as indicated in the pie graphs in Figures 18 and 19.

The two largest portions of the pie graph show that most of the parents' perceptions of their children's out-of-seat behavior were "never" and "rarely."

Figure 21. The Number of Parent Responses for the Behavior of Problem Solving



Source: Post-Documentation of Parent Surveys of Sites A, B, C, and D

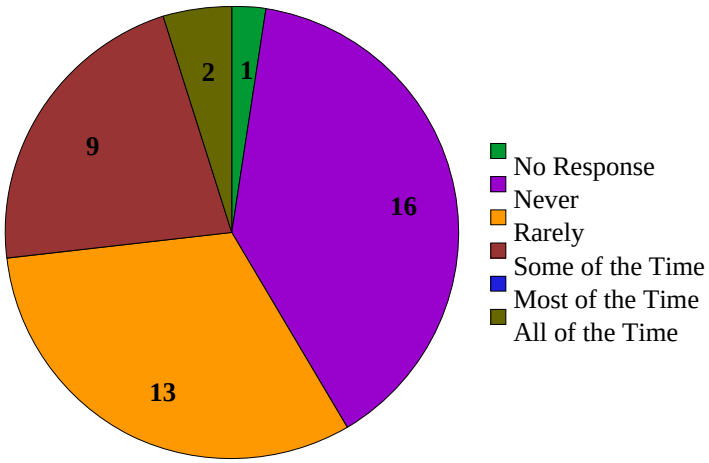
Figure 21 shows the responses from the parent survey on the question related to problem solving behavior. The graph reveals that the responses of "some of the time," "most of the time," and "all of the time" were closely distributed among the three responses indicated by parents.

Teacher Survey

The purpose of the teacher survey was to gather input and opinions of various misbehaviors within other teachers' classrooms, relating to the three social skills being studied. Additional teachers, who were involved with the participants, were given a survey to complete. There was a 100% return rate on the teacher surveys given out to additional teachers. The teacher surveys were completed as a post-documentation tool. This survey was given to selected teachers who had contact with the participants outside

of the teacher researchers' classrooms. The teacher survey was in the form of a Likert Scale (See Appendix B). Twelve misbehaviors that related to the three social skills were listed in the left column; for each misbehavior, the observer was required to circle the number that best corresponded to the student's behavior in his/her classroom. The numbers ranged from one to five, with one being "never" and five being "all of the time." The following graphs represented a compilation of each of the teacher researchers' data collected at each of the sites.

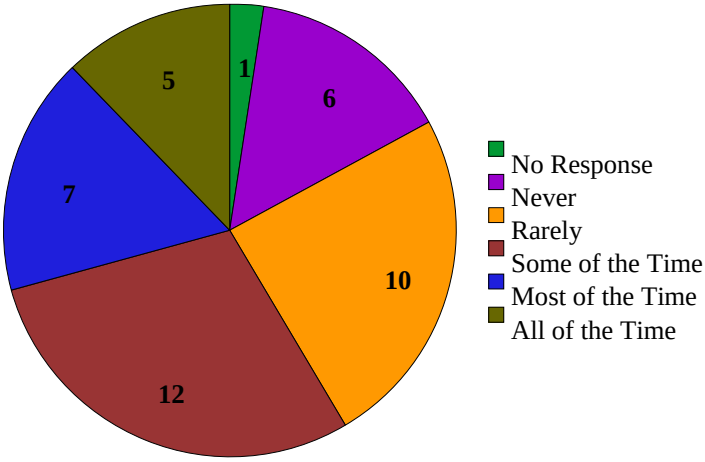
Figure 22. The Number of Teacher Responses for the Behavior of Arguing



Source: Post-Documentation from Teacher Surveys of Sites A, B, C, and D

Figure 22 indicates the results for the question on the teacher survey of observed behaviors regarding the degree to which students argue in the classroom environment. The response "most of the time" was not used on this particular question on the teacher survey of observed behaviors.

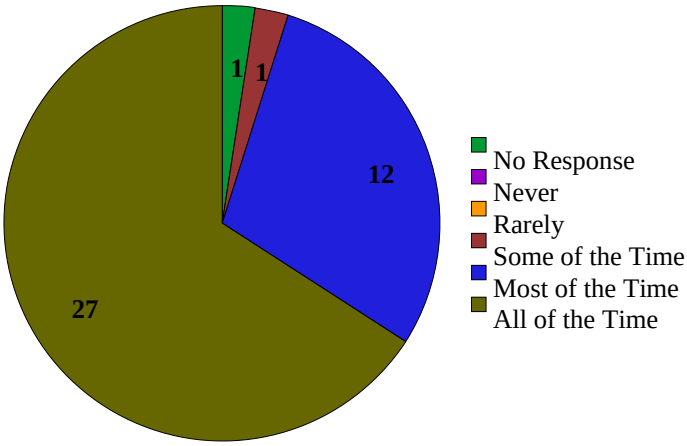
*Figure 23.*The Number of Teacher Responses for the Behavior of Talking



Source: Post-Documentation from Teacher Surveys of Sites A, B, C, and D

Figure 23 indicates that “some of the time” was the most commonly recorded response on the teacher survey of observed behaviors. This number of responses was closely followed by the response of “rarely.”

*Figure 24.*The Number of Teacher Responses for the Behavior of Remaining in the Area

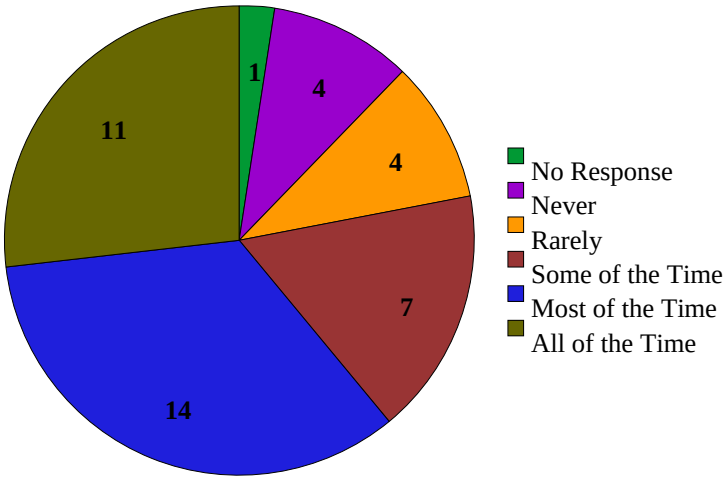


Source: Post-Documentation from Teacher Surveys of Sites A, B, C, and D

The pie graph in Figure 24 shows the responses from the teacher survey of observed behaviors on the teachers’ perceptions of the degree to which students remain in their assigned areas. The options of “rarely” and “never” were not selected as responses

on this particular survey item. The graph shows an overwhelming selection of the response “all of the time.”

*Figure 25.*The Number of Teacher Responses for the Behavior of Completing Work



Source: Post-Documentation from Teacher Surveys of Sites A, B, C, and D

Figure 25 represents the teachers’ perceptions of the degree to which students complete assigned work in the classroom environment. The graph indicates that teachers most frequently selected “most of the time” in terms of work completion.

Student Survey

The post-documentation student survey (See Appendix D) was given out to all participants within each teacher researcher’s classroom. The purpose of the student survey was to determine the students’ perceptions of their own social skills within the classroom environment. One hundred percent of the student surveys that were distributed were collected. During the pre- and post-documentation periods, student surveys were distributed in class. Each participant was given the first ten minutes of class to complete the survey. The responses include “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.”

Figure 26. Student Perceptions of Behavior, Site A

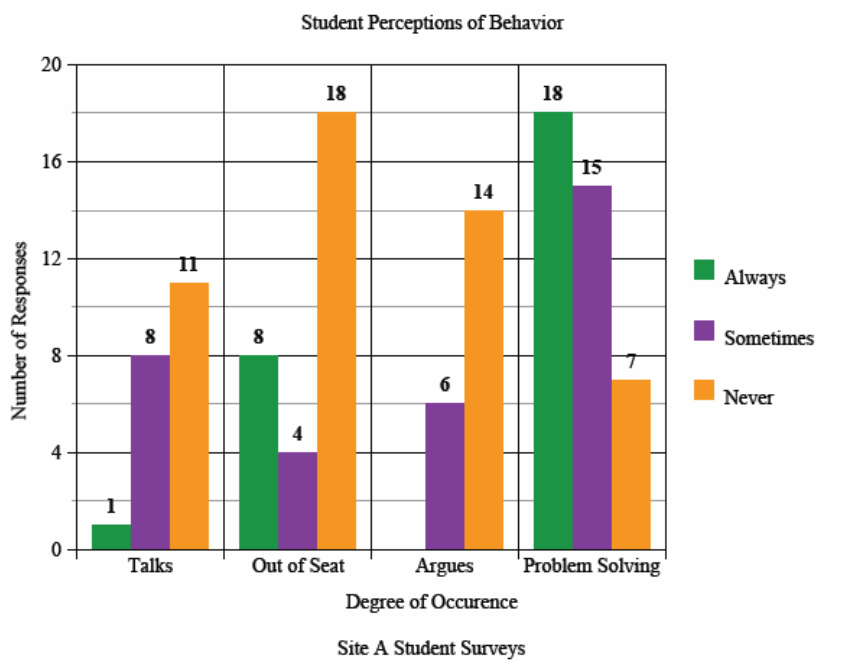


Figure 26 shows the results of the student surveys given at Site A. The students in this setting were high school special education students in a rural setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to talking within the classroom setting. The out-of-seat section on this figure relates to three questions on the student survey. The argue section in this figure corresponds to two questions on the student survey. The problem solving portion relates to four questions on the student survey. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale of “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.” The students’ perceptions were indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

Figure 27. Student Perceptions of Behavior, Site B

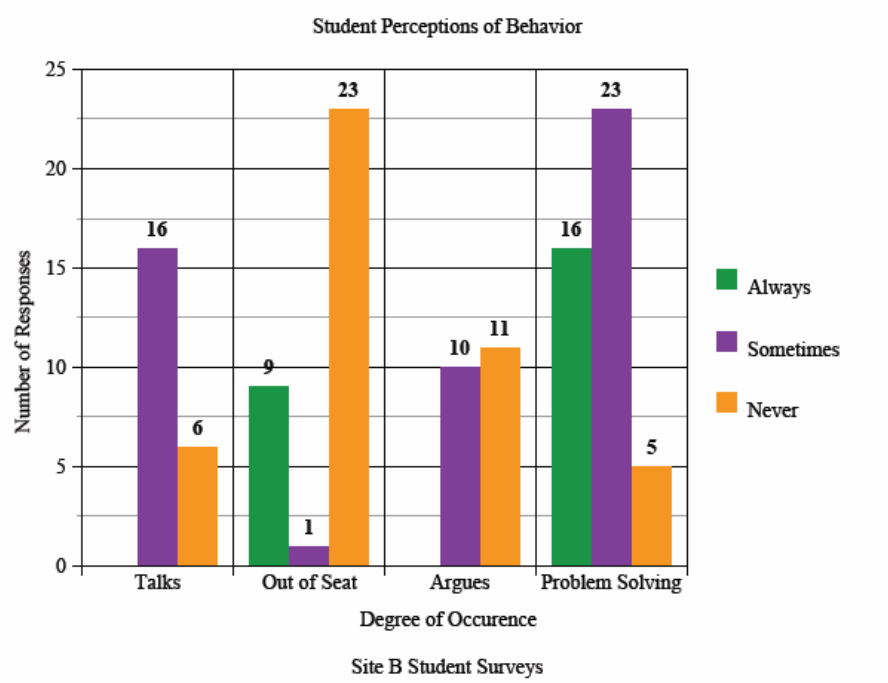


Figure 27 shows the results of the student surveys given at Site B. The students in this setting were middle school special education students in an urban setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to talking in the classroom setting. The out-of-seat section on this figure relates to three questions on the student survey. The argue section of the figure corresponds to two questions on the student survey. The problem solving portion relates to four questions on the student survey. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale of “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.” The students’ perceptions were indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

Figure 28. Student Perceptions of Behavior, Site C, Classroom C

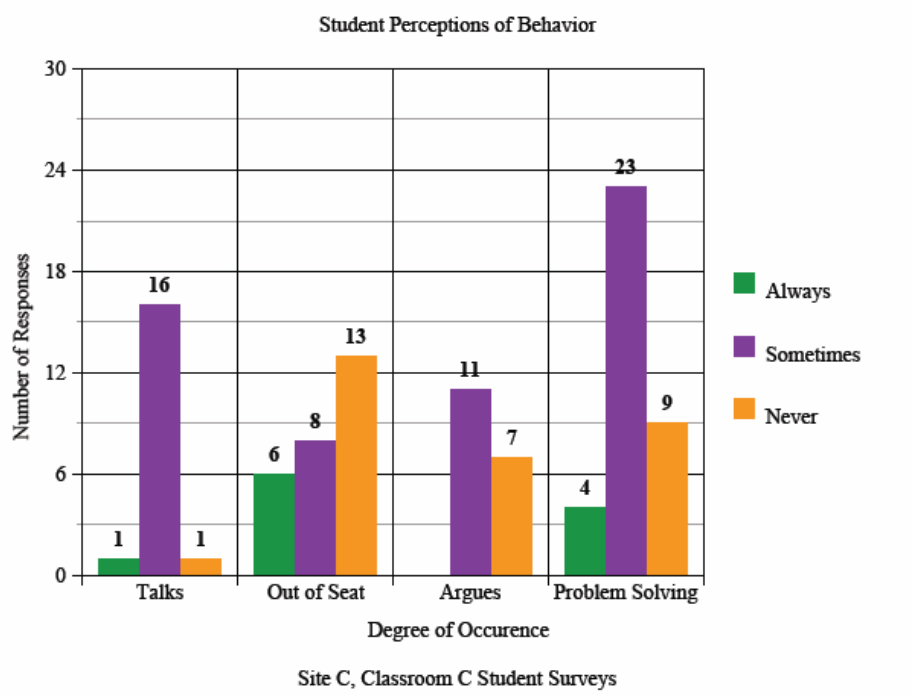


Figure 28 shows the results of the student surveys given at Classroom C in Site C. The students in this setting were high school students in an urban setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to talking within the classroom setting. The out-of-seat section on this figure relates to three questions on the student survey. The argue section of the figure corresponds to two questions on the student survey. The problem solving portion relates to four questions on the student survey. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale of “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.” The students’ perceptions were indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

Figure 29. Student Perceptions of Behavior, Site C, Classroom D

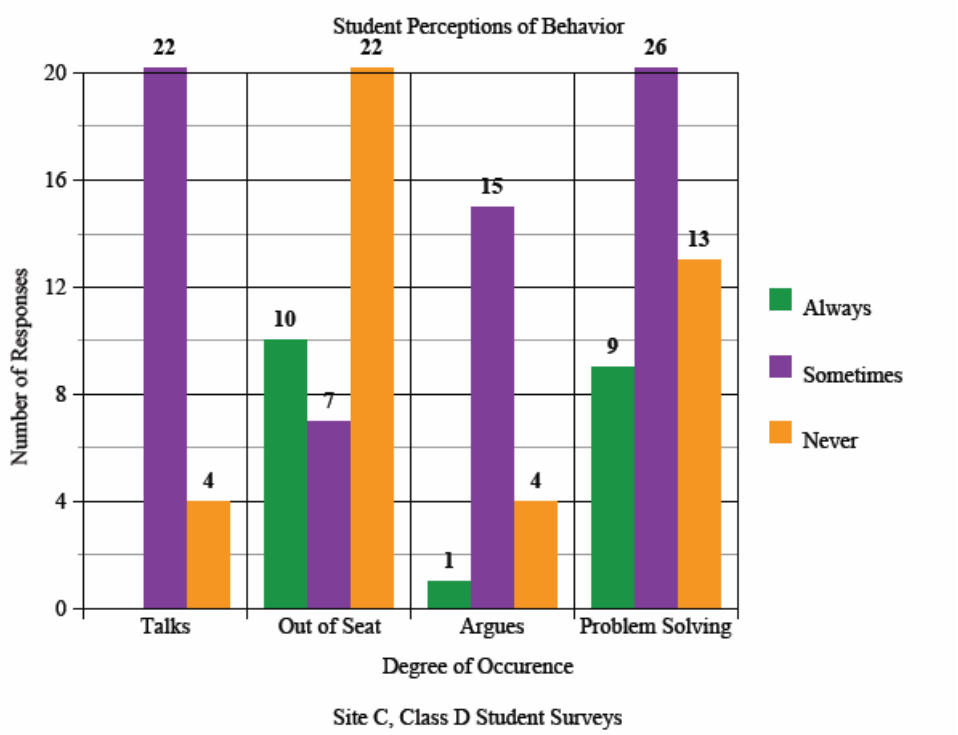


Figure 29 shows the results of the student surveys given in Classroom D at Site C. The students in this setting were high school students in an urban setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to talking within the classroom setting. The out-of-seat section on this figure relates to three questions on the student survey. The argue section of the figure corresponds to two questions on the student survey. The problem solving portion relates to four questions on the student survey. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale of “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.” The students’ perceptions were indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

Figure 30. Student Perceptions of Behavior, Site D

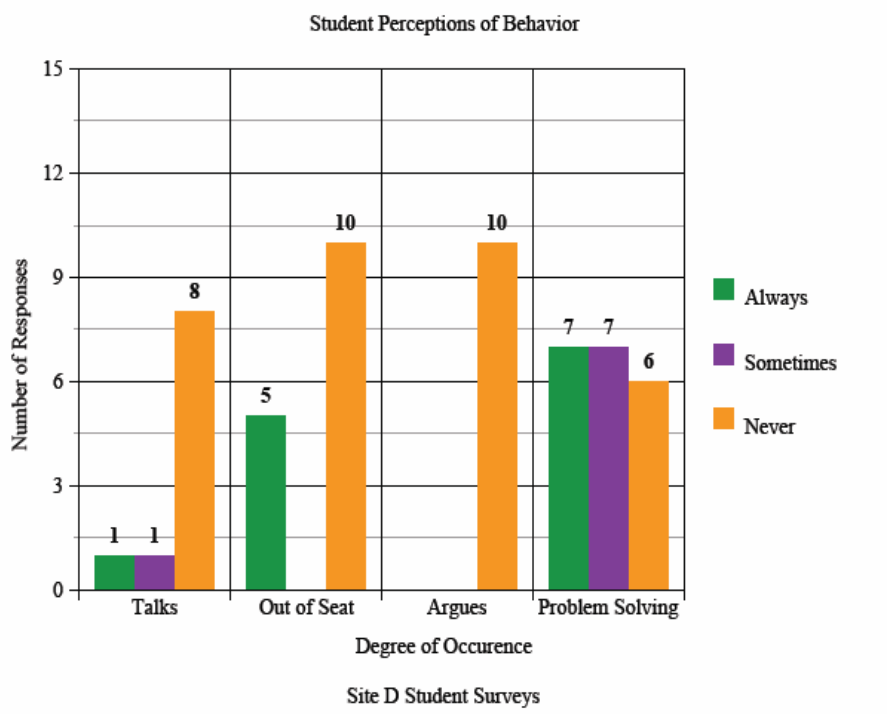


Figure 30 shows the results of the student surveys given at Site D. The students in this setting were first grade special education students in an urban setting. Two questions on the student survey referred to talking within the classroom setting. The out-of-seat section on this figure relates to three questions on the student survey. The argue section of the figure corresponds to two questions on the student survey. The problem solving portion relates to four questions on the student survey. The students were asked to rate the occurrence of their own behaviors on a Likert Scale of “always,” “sometimes,” and “never.” The students’ perceptions were indicated on the bar graphs based on the number of responses for each question on the surveys.

The student survey given to each student in Sites A, B, C, and D consisted of eleven questions that directly pertained to the behaviors being observed. The data from

those questions were compiled and represented in Figures 26 through 30. The teacher researchers chose to eliminate twelve of the original questions from the student surveys because the students required direction and/or assistance on those items.

Teacher Survey

In order to determine the effectiveness of the intervention strategies used in this action research project, the teacher researchers developed a chart to list both the pre-and post-documentation results of the teacher survey (See Appendix B). The four social skill areas addressed within this action research were included in the chart.

Figure 31. Pre- and Post- Documentation Results from Teacher Survey

Teacher Survey

	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
	Never	Never	Rarely	Rarely	Some of the Time	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Most of the Time	All of the Time	All of the Time
Talks	3	6	15	10	13	12	7	7	1	5
Completes Work	0	4	2	4	8	7	19	14	11	11
Remains in Area	0	0	0	0	3	1	11	12	26	27
Argues	17	16	15	13	8	9	0	0	1	2

Figure 31 shows the chart created by the teacher researchers to indicate the pre- and post- documentation results from the teacher surveys. The teacher researchers then determined the percentage of change between the teacher pre- and post- documentation surveys. Numbers indicated with a negative sign show a decrease in percentage from pre-documentation survey to post-documentation survey. A positive number shows an increase in percentage from the pre-documentation to the post-documentation surveys. The percentage of change was determined by dividing the difference between the pre- and post- documentation results and then dividing that number by the total of the pre- and post- documentation results.

Figure 32. The Percentage of Decrease/Increase from the Teacher Survey

Percentage Decrease/Increase Teacher Survey

	Never	Rarely	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	All of the Time
Talks	33%	-20%	-4%	0%	67%
Completes Work	100%	33%	-7%	-15%	0%
Remains in Assigned Areas	0%	0%	-50%	4%	2%
Argues	-3%	-7%	6%	0%	33%

Figure 32 shows the percentage of increase or decrease in the results from the teacher survey as determined by the pre- and post-documentation results.

Figure 33. Results of Behavior Change

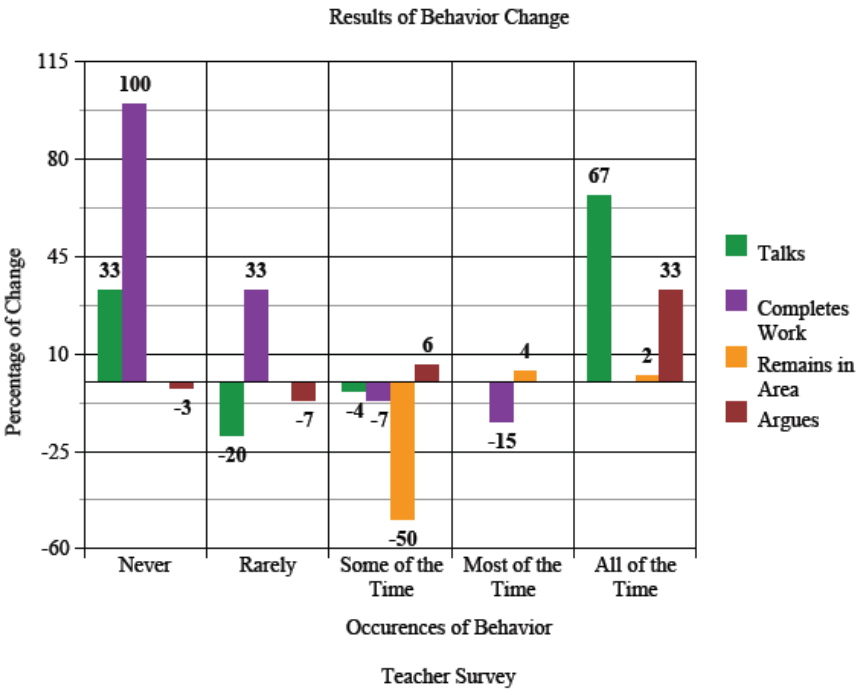


Figure 33 shows the percentage of change from the pre-documentation teacher survey to the post-documentation teacher survey. Bars on the graph that rise above the

zero line show a positive percentage change. Bars on the graph that descend below the zero line indicate a negative percentage change in the documentation results.

The social skill of talking is indicated in green on Figure 33. The Likert Scale option, of “never”, increased thirty-three percent in post-documentation. “Rarely” was chosen 20% less during post-documentation than it was during pre-documentation. “Some of the time” was selected four percent less often during post-documentation than it was during pre-documentation results. There was no change in the pre- and post-documentation results for “most of the time” for talking. Talking “all of the time” increased by 67% in the post-documentation results.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The increase in the “never” rating for talking in the post-documentation results is encouraging that the action research decreased the amount of talking in the classroom. However, the higher percentage in “most of the time” indicates that more children talked “most of the time” in post-documentation results. This indicates a negative impact of the action research on the social skill of talking. However, children tend to talk in classrooms more as they become more familiar with their surroundings and more comfortable in the environment. Since children talked more as the year progressed, this is not necessarily an indication of a negative impact on the social skill of talking.

The social skill of work completion is indicated in purple in Figure 33. For the never response on the teacher survey, zero surveys indicated this option in the pre-documentation survey. Four surveys indicated this option in the post-documentation survey. Figure 33 shows this as a 100% change. It is important to keep in mind that at the beginning of the year most students will attempt to complete at least a portion of the work

assigned. However, as the year progresses, many factors affect work completion. Familial situations, deaths, complexity of assignments, and skill level of the students, all affect the ability to which students complete work. While a 100% change is shocking, other factors must be taken into consideration when observing this change in Figure 33. It is also important to note that the social skills training took some class time. Prior to the intervention period, students were utilizing time in class to complete assignments, as opposed to additional social skills training that was incorporated during the intervention period. This disallowed students time during class to complete content-related assignments.

Due to the demographics of the schools involved and the many outlying conditions that arise due to those demographics, it can be assumed that some children did not have the appropriate conditions outside of the school environment to complete assignments.

Figure 33 indicates that the percentage of change for the extent to which students argued increased for the options of “all of the time” and “some of the time.” However, the percentage of change for “never” and “rarely” decreased. Children tend to defy authority figures more as they become familiar with the nuances and tolerance limits of those figures.

The social skill of remaining in the appropriate area shows a negative percentage change for “some of the time.” This means that teachers indicated that less of the children stayed in their assigned area “some of the time” on the post-documentation survey. This showed a positive percentage of change for the options of “most of the time” and “all of

the time," indicating that children stayed in their assigned areas more during the post-documentation period than the pre-documentation period.

Parent Survey

In the parent survey (See Appendix E), the number of responses for the social skills of interrupt, argues, leaves the area, and task completion for pre- and post-documentation were combined into a chart by the teacher researchers. It should be noted that the teacher researchers found that with five responses within a survey, the respondents settled toward the choice in the middle range.

Figure 34. Pre- and Post- Documentation Results from the Parent Surveys

Parent Survey

	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
	Never	Never	Rarely	Rarely	Some of the Time	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Most of the Time	All of the Time	All of the Time
Interrupt	2	0	5	4	23	17	11	12	1	0
Argues	2	1	6	7	22	15	7	9	6	1
Leaves Area	6	10	19	10	15	5	4	8	0	0
Completes Task	1	0	5	10	22	15	11	8	3	0

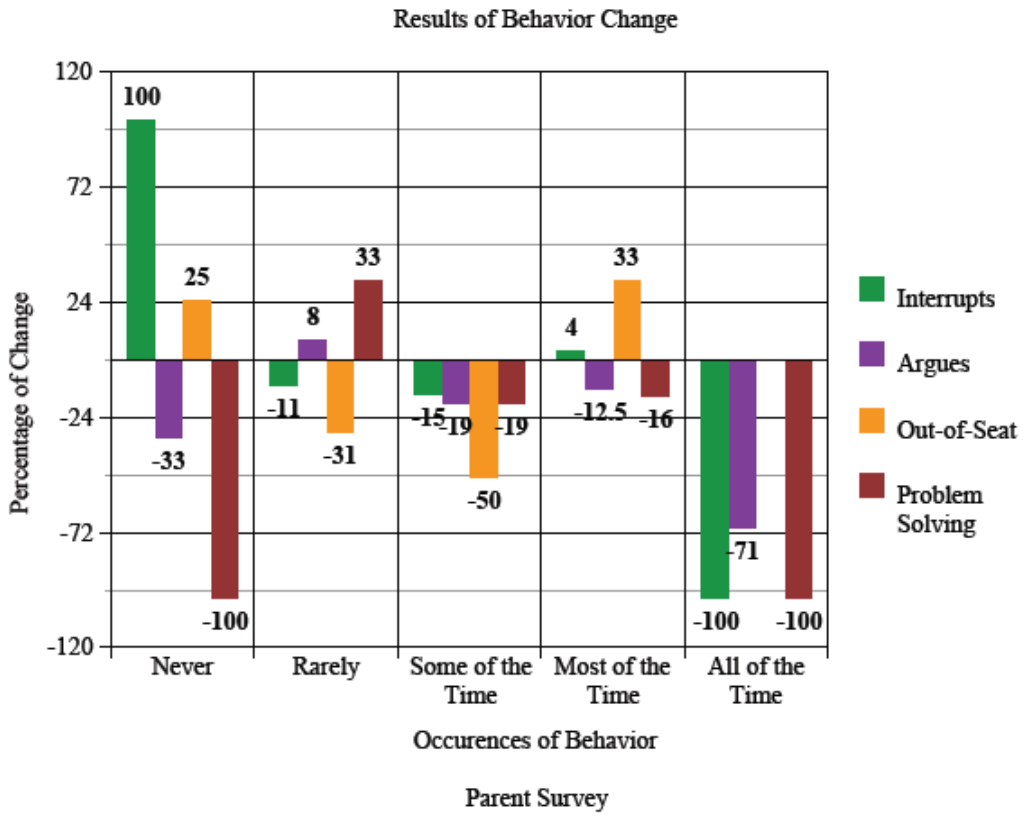
Figure 35. Percentage of Increase or Decrease of Change from the Parent Surveys

Percentage Decrease/Increase Parent Survey

	Never	Rarely	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	All of the Time
Interrupts	100%	-11%	-15%	4%	100%
Argues	-33%	8%	-19%	-12.5%	-71%
Out of Seat	25%	-31%	-50%	33%	0%
Problem Solving	-100%	33%	-19%	-16%	-100%

The percentage of change was figured by dividing the difference between the pre- and post-documentation results, and then dividing that number by the total of the pre- and post- documentation results.

Figure 36. Results of Behavior Change According to Pre- and Post-Documentation Results from the Parent Surveys



The largest percentage of change between the pre- and post- documentation results on the parent surveys were in the “never” and the “all of the time” categories. This indicated that more children “never” interrupted during the post-documentation phase. It also indicates that fewer children interrupted “all of the time” during the post-documentation phase.

Figure 36 shows the percentage of change for arguing in purple on the graph. Fewer parents selected the choice of “never” when indicating their child’s behavior for arguing. Also, fewer parents indicated that their children argued “all of the time” during the post-documentation phase. Also shown in Figure 36, parents indicated on the post-

documentation survey that their children were never out-of-their seat. Fewer parents indicated that their children were out-of-their seat “rarely” or “some of the time.”

The percentage of change for never displaying problem solving skills decreased as reported by the post-documentation parent surveys. More parents indicated that their children displayed problem solving skills rarely during the post-documentation period. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of change for problem solving skills displayed some and most of the time.

The parent survey indicated a more positive change in their children’s behaviors than did the teacher survey (See Appendix B). It is important that skills learned in the classroom are transferred to other environments. One reason the perception of positive change could have been noted by parents may have been due to their awareness of the interventions being taught in class, thus allowing for the transfer of ideas to other situations.

Student Survey

Upon completion of the student surveys (See Appendix D), it was determined by the teacher researchers that the questions prompted students to answer in an expected manner. Therefore, the researchers felt that the data collected were irrelevant to the action research project.

Reflection

Towards the beginning of the project, we started as a group of four. A few months later, we added a new member to our group against the recommendation of Saint Xavier faculty and staff. However, our group has excelled throughout this project and we have

matured together not only as individuals, but also as professionals. We would not change the group make-up as it is today.

The initial criteria of the project seemed overwhelming. As the curriculum progressed, the magnitude of what was expected began to subside. During our action research, we encountered an overwhelming amount of information due to the collection of data from five different classrooms. This caused the documentation of information to be very lengthy and at times, it was difficult to convey to the reader what was observed. In addition, the implementation of intervention strategies was often modified because of the various types of classrooms. The one consistency that all the researchers felt, was the need to implement appropriate social skill lessons within their curriculum. Overall, the action researchers have noted the importance of continuous reinforcement of appropriate social skills within their classrooms.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Group Members:

Please check activity in progress:

☐ Transition ☐ Direct Instruction ☐ Group Work ☐ End of period

Start Time: Stop Time:

Communicative Behaviors																								
talking																								
sleeping																								
looking the wrong way																								
engage in another activity																								
deny eye contact																								
other																								
OFF-TASK: not engaging in expected behavior																								
moving																								
diversion of topic																								
talking																								
refusal to complete work																								
leave/escape/move away																								
engage in another activity																								
other																								
Lack of Problem Solving Behavior																								
refusal to complete work																								
arm crossing																								
leave/escape/move away																								
arguing with teachers or students																								
refusal to participate																								
other																								

Each horizontal box indicates a 60-second interval. At the beginning of each interval, the observer indicates the behaviors seen with a checkmark in the corresponding box(es) within the cooperative group being observed.

APPENDIX B

Teacher Survey of Observed Behaviors

Teacher: _____ Student: _____

Date: _____Subject Area: _____ Grade Level: _____

This student will be participating in an Action Research Project conducted by _____ in regards to improving social skills within the classroom environment. Please answer the questions in regards to the student listed at the top of the form, only. Thanks for your assistance in this data collection process.

Directions: Circle the answer that best fits your perception of the student's behavior.

Observation of behaviors during: Transitions, Direct Instruction, Group Work, and End of the period activities	**1 Never**	**2 Rarely**	**3 Some of the time**	**4 Most of the time**	**5 All of the time**
Talks	1	2	3	4	5
Sleeps	1	2	3	4	5
Looks the wrong way	1	2	3	4	5
Engages in another activity	1	2	3	4	5
Denies eye contact	1	2	3	4	5
Displays inappropriate movement	1	2	3	4	5
Talks off topic	1	2	3	4	5
Refuses to complete work	1	2	3	4	5
Leaves/escapes/moves away from the group	1	2	3	4	5
Crosses arms	1	2	3	4	5
Argues with teachers or peers	1	2	3	4	5
Refuses to participate in activities	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

School-Wide Faculty Survey

Date: _____ Subject Area: _____ Grade Level: _____

Approximate Number of Students in Class: _____

Years of Teaching Experience: ____ Years in Building: ___ Years in District: ___

Do you feel students in your class have appropriate social skills? Yes No
If yes, what are they? _____
What social skills are they lacking? _____

If off-task behavior occurs in your classroom, at what time during your class period does most off-task behavior occur? Please circle the appropriate location.

Transitions Direct Instruction Group Work End of period

To what extent do you feel you lose significant teaching time due to poor social skills?

Never Rarely Some of the time Most of the time All of the time

Which behaviors are the most distracting to effective instruction?

Poor listening skills Off-task behavior Lack of problem solving
Additional: _____

How do poor social skills effect peer relations and/or interactions in your classroom?
_____

What are the detrimental effects (in the school environment) for students with a lack of appropriate social skills? _____
_____
_____

What can students gain in the classroom with appropriate social skills? _____
_____
_____

Why is it so important for educators to provide appropriate social skill instruction?
_____
_____
_____

How do you teach social skills in your own classroom? Circle any that apply.

I don't Direct instruction Small Groups

Do you feel you have had enough training to teach social skills in the classroom? Yes No
What would help you teach social skills more effectively? _____

APPENDIX D

Student Survey

Student: _____Date: _____

Directions: Circle the answer that best describes your behaviors.

1. Do you talk when the teacher is talking?

Always Sometimes Never

2. Do you talk when you should be doing work?

Always Sometimes Never

3. Do you sleep in class?

Always Sometimes Never

4. Do you look around the room when your teacher is teaching?

Always Sometimes Never

5. Do you ever do something else when your teacher is teaching?

Always Sometimes Never

6. Do you ever move around the room without permission?

Always Sometimes Never

7. Do you ever move your body when your teacher is teaching?

Always Sometimes Never

8. Do you talk about something else when your teacher asks a question?

Always Sometimes Never

9. Do you decide not to do your assignments?

Always Sometimes Never

10. When you are frustrated, do you complete your assignments?

Always Sometimes Never

11. Do you ever leave the room when your teacher is teaching?

Always Sometimes Never

12. Do you ever cross your arms when your teacher is talking to you?

Always Sometimes Never

13. Do you ever cross your arms when your friends are talking to you?

Always Sometimes Never

14. Do you ever argue with your teacher?

Always Sometimes Never

15. Do you ever argue with your classmates?

Always Sometimes Never

16. Do you raise your hand to ask your teacher for help?

Always Sometimes Never

17. Do you ask your classmates for help?

Always Sometimes Never

18. Do you discuss ideas with your group?

Always Sometimes Never

19. Do you know how to disagree with someone in a nice way?

Always Sometimes Never

20. Do you think your ideas are always right?

Always Sometimes Never

APPENDIX E

Parent Survey

Please answer these questions in terms of the child in _____'s classroom.

Age: _____ Grade: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Sex: _____

At home, how often do you see the following behaviors?	**1 Never**	**2 Rarely**	**3 Some of the time**	**4 Most of the time**	**5 All of the time**
Interrupts someone who is talking	1	2	3	4	5
Looks the wrong way when you are speaking to them	1	2	3	4	5
Refuses to make eye contact when being spoken to	1	2	3	4	5
Talks off topic	1	2	3	4	5
Crosses arms when being spoken to	1	2	3	4	5
Argues with adults or other children	1	2	3	4	5
Refuses to follow directions	1	2	3	4	5
Fails to participate in family activities	1	2	3	4	5
Fails to participate in group activities outside the home	1	2	3	4	5
Leave designated areas without permission	1	2	3	4	5
Fail to complete tasks when they are frustrated	1	2	3	4	5
Ask for help when appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
Disagree with someone in a nice way					
Think his/her ideas are always right					

Please return by _____.

APPENDIX E

Parent Survey

Please answer these questions in terms of the child in _____'s classroom.

Age: _____ Grade: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Sex: _____

At home, how often do you see the following behaviors?	**1 Never**	**2 Rarely**	**3 Some of the time**	**4 Most of the time**	**5 All of the time**
Interrupts someone who is talking	1	2	3	4	5
Looks the wrong way when you are speaking to them	1	2	3	4	5
Refuses to make eye contact when being spoken to	1	2	3	4	5
Talks off topic	1	2	3	4	5
Crosses arms when being spoken to	1	2	3	4	5
Argues with adults or other children	1	2	3	4	5
Refuses to follow directions	1	2	3	4	5
Fails to participate in family activities	1	2	3	4	5
Fails to participate in group activities outside the home	1	2	3	4	5
Leave designated areas without permission	1	2	3	4	5
Fail to complete tasks when they are frustrated	1	2	3	4	5
Ask for help when appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
Disagree with someone in a nice way					
Think his/her ideas are always right					

Please return by _____.