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An analysis of social skills instruction provided in teacher education and in-service training programs for general and special educators

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AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL SKILLS INSTRUCTION PROVIDED IN TEACHER
EDUCATION AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS
FOR GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATORS

by

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Bachelor of Education
Spelman College
1996

Master of Education
University of Nevada Las Vegas
2000

A dissertation in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Special Education
Department of Special Education
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Graduate College
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May 2007

UMI Number: 3261072

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Dissertation Approval

The Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

April 10, 2007

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AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL SKILLS INSTRUCTION PROVIDED IN
TEACHER EDUCATION AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS
FOR GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATORS

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

An Analysis of Social Skills Instruction Provided in Teacher Education and In-Service Training Programs For General and Special Educators

By

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Professor of Special Education
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The effective demonstration of social skills in classroom and personal settings is essential to successfully develop and sustain professional and personal relationships. Students with disabilities often exhibit social skills deficits which, in turn, place them at risk to experience school failure, peer rejection, and/or mental health problems (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006). There is an increasing number of students with disabilities receiving instruction in the general education classroom setting (U. S. Department of Education, 2003). Direct instruction of social skills is imperative to ensure the academic and personal success of students.

The research supports the direct instruction of discrete social skills behaviors to prevent or remediate a lack of social competence (Tolan & Guera, 1994). However, teachers often lack the instructional skills necessary to provide direct social skill instruction. Most teacher training programs focus on the management of behavior. The level, type, and area of social skills instruction provided in pre-service and in-service

settings were explored in this study, by distributing an online questionnaire to licensed general and special education teachers. This study also compared the level of instruction received by special education teachers who provide instruction in self-contained settings, and those who teach in resource room settings. A similar comparison was also made between general education teachers and special education teachers who teach in resource rooms.

The results of this study indicate that general and special education teachers receive a limited amount of direct and incidental social skills instruction in their pre-service and/or in-service training programs. The general and special education teachers reported receiving more instruction in particular various areas of social skills within their in-service training. Special education teachers who teach in self-contained settings do not receive more social skills instruction than resource room teachers in pre-service or in-service training programs. However, special education teachers who teach in resource rooms do receive more social skills instruction than general education teachers, but only in their pre-service training programs.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give all thanks to my Father and Creator. I have accomplished all things because my God has strengthened me. I have been blessed with an opportunity to seek out and conquer what to many, may seem impossible. In the words of Howard Thurman, I have heard the sound of genuine deep within my soul, and I gladly welcome the next great adventure my Lord and Savior has predestined for me. To Mama Lily, my guardian angel on high, Big Mama, my guardian angel on earth, I am so blessed to carry to you in my spirit each day.

I honor my parents for giving me life, direction, and discipline. I am grateful for the day of high school graduation, when my dad said, “Nicole, the world is yours, I have guided you to this point in your life, and the rest is up to you. You have the power to take the world by storm, only you can stop yourself!” Thanks Dad. To my first role model, mentor, inspiration, and mother, I thank you for pushing me beyond the limits. Mom, you taught me to never settle for anything less than what God has planned for me. Many thought you were spoiling me, but I always knew you had to do exactly what you did to ensure I ended up exactly where I am today. Momma, Daddy, Mom and Dad it is because of you I have grown into the woman, wife, and mother that I am today.

To the Love of my life, our dissertation is a testament of our love. We survived the late study nights, the added expenses, and the ever changing completion date. I honor

your faith in me, and your constant ability to ignore my attempts to throw in the towel. You became my rock, and the little voice in my head that truly kept me focused. From the moment our eyes met, we saw the greatness in each other, and I love you for giving me unyielding support throughout our journey. Our love will be walking across the stage together.

There are two young men who are among my greatest triumphs. I love you guys for allowing your mom to be absent at times when you may have needed me. You both knew Mommy's work was important, and you graciously understood when I was unable to do things that other mommies were doing. I will always love my two gifts from God. To my sister and brothers, I love you guys for just smiling, standing back and being proud of me.

I want to thank Dr. Kyle Higgins, for looking into my eyes many years ago, and seeing the possibility of this great feat. Thanks Dr. Higgins for believing in me. Dr. Pierce, over the years I have admired your leadership, your teachings, and your humor. Thanks Dr. Tincani for your help and support over the years. I no longer fear statistics, thanks to Dr. Tandy, the greatest stats teacher ever.

To my fellow RCL members and Sisters-I love you all. You understand my unpredictable personality, and you accept me for who I am. Who would have thought so many years ago, we would all be experiencing such wondrous moments in our lives? Certainly not us, but that is the beauty of our sorority. There is enough love, hope, faith, trust, encouragement, and quirkiness between all of us that the world should be scared because the Women of RCL are armed with doctoral degrees, and are ready to take on the anything and everything. Rainbows for ever.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Participation in society involves the ability to navigate social interactions appropriately. An individual's overall successful development is typically judged on the ability to develop and demonstrate accepted social behaviors at the right time, in the correct settings (Gresham, 2002). Children are expected to exhibit appropriate social behaviors prior to demonstrating mastery of academic skills. When children do not behave according to these expectations, it is assumed that there are social developmental problems that should be addressed through direct instruction (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006). The goal of this instruction is to address the impact that a lack of social skills may have on a child. Without direct intervention, a child/youth may be caught in a cycle of ineffective and unproductive social interactions that lead to peer rejection and a lack of positive social relationships (Asher, 1990). Because social interactions impact the emotional and personality growth of children/youth, educators must be knowledgeable concerning the direct instruction of social skills, appropriate methods for implementing social skill instruction, and research supporting the effectiveness of social skill programs (Elliott & Gresham, 1993; Hops, Finch, & McConnell, 1985).

With the increase in the number of students identified as having emotional disabilities (U. S. Department of Education, 2003), educators work with an increasing number of students who struggle with initiating and maintaining appropriate social interactions

(Baker, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 1995). As a result, teachers must be prepared to implement behavioral and social skills curricula (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006; Baker, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 1995). Proactive teaching practices for addressing the social/emotional difficulties often experienced by these students must be adopted (Severson & Walker, 2002). Thus, in order to comply with federal mandates, teachers in both general and special education settings must teach social skills through direct instruction (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001).

Because appropriate social skills training of students with disabilities relies on teachers to provide the instruction, it is imperative to ascertain the level of expertise held by teachers in this area. Educators cannot assume that students with disabilities will learn appropriate social skills on their own (Battalio, & Stephens, 2005). With teachers reporting that they spend more time managing behavior than teaching appropriate behavior (Jones, Dohrn, & Dunn, 2004), a situation may exist in which the focus of teacher preparation programs is on behavior management rather than on direct social skill instruction.

Social Skills Defined

Multiple definitions of social skills are found in the literature (Gresham, 1983; Mathur & Rutherford, 1994; Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). In the late 1970s, social skills were defined in terms of peer acceptance, behavior, and competence correlates (Asher, Oden, & Gottman, 1977; Foster & Ritchey, 1979). Popularity among peers exhibited through kinship was often equated to social skills (Gresham, 1997). In the 1980s, Morgan & Jenson (1988) defined social skills as the interpersonal behaviors that

allowed an individual to interact successfully with others. This included the verbal and nonverbal behaviors used to interact and create an enjoyable and reinforcing situation.

Currently, social skills are defined as situation specific behaviors that enhance the overall social functioning of a person, resulting in personal and social satisfaction (Mathur & Rutherford, 1994). This includes the ability to secure reinforcement from peers in a variety of settings and decrease the likelihood of punishment or extinction. Gresham, Sugai, and Horner (2001) have expanded this definition to focus on the correlation of social behaviors and social competence. Rather than defining social skills by the actual observations of behavior, they maintain that social skills must be taught, learned, and performed for a person to be considered socially competent.

Components of Direct Social Skills Training

Social skills training enables a student to elicit positive responses from others (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). This elicitation can improve self-esteem, enhance positive relationships, and reduce the use of undesirable or unacceptable behaviors (Jones, Dohrn, & Dunn, 2004). Social training, when taught comprehensively, promotes social competence through the provision of systematic, targeted, and proactive lessons (Ziglar, Taussig, & Black, 1992). According to Gresham (1991), when implemented and maintained correctly, social skills training improves the social competence of students, thus, increasing opportunities for success beyond school. However, little research exists to determine the extent to which social skills training is generalized and maintained by teachers and students (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001).

The components of effective social skills instruction have been identified as: (a) skill acquisition, (b) skill performance, (c) removal of competing problem behaviors, and (d) facilitation of generalization and maintenance (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). Effective social skills instruction is designed to remediate skill deficits through operant, social-learning, and cognitive-behavioral approaches (Elliott & Gresham, 1993; Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006). The social skills domains that comprise effective instruction include: (a) peer relations, (b) self-management, (c) academic, and (d) compliance. These domains are important for teachers to use as they plan social skill instruction because they provide: (a) a typical social skill classification system, (b) a profile of social skill strengths and weakness, (c) a template on which to design social skills instruction, (d) an outcome-based measurement system, and (e) assessment in terms of cause, prognosis, and responsiveness to social skill interventions (Caldarella, & Merrell, 1997).

Impact of Social Skills Training

The ability of a child/youth to communicate, play, and be accepted by peers is crucial to the overall achievement in school and life (Merrell & Gimpel, 1998). Individuals who are accepted and have the ability to accept others will engage in more positive social encounters throughout life without experiencing the peer rejection that often occurs with social skills deficits. (Asher, 1990 & Jones, Dohrn, & Dunn, 2004).

Positive Impact of Social Skills Training

Socially appropriate behavior patterns enable students to gain social reinforcement and acceptance as well as deal with and avoid aversive social situations (Mathur & Rutherford, 1996). Without social skills instruction students may be at risk for a variety

of negative outcomes, such as school failure, peer rejection, absence of close friends, substance abuse, and dropping out (Hinshaw, 1992). Thus, social skills training should be viewed as an essential component of the public school curriculum (Allsopp, Santos, & Linn, 2000).

Negative Impact of a Lack of Social Skills Training

In a review of the literature, Parker and Asher (1987) found acceptance, aggressiveness, and shyness/withdrawal to be predictors of poor social relations. They maintain that these poor relations could lead to maladjustment in later life. Many children/youth, who experience peer rejection during adolescence, will continue to be victims of rejection throughout life (Asher & Rose, 1997).

Without appropriate training, students with disabilities will experience failure in establishing and maintaining social relationships in school and beyond the school experience (Gresham, 1991). This cycle of inept social skills cannot be broken by chance. It is only through the direct instruction of social skills that students with disabilities will increase their social competence (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). This direct instruction should include engaged collaboration, targeted pro-social skills, teachable steps, instruction plans, implementation plans, and opportunity for generalization.

The Inclusion of Social Skills Training in Teacher Education

General and special educators feel unqualified to work with the diverse populations that are now present in inclusive classrooms (Kirk, 1998). Merrett and Wheldall (1993) found that many secondary school teachers considered behavior management to be critical to their professional performance. However, the same teachers also reported

receiving poor instruction in their teacher training programs. The teachers expected opportunities to practice and receive feedback concerning behavior management in their pre-service education, but reported that most lectures focused on content learning and lesson planning (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). In a recent study concerning teacher perceptions of social skills, 94% of the teachers surveyed reported that social skills training is crucial to the education of students with behavioral needs (Battalio & Stephens, 2005).

Gresham, Sugai, and Horner (2001) identified the four areas in which educators must be trained in order to teach social skills to students with disabilities: (a) acquisition of skills, (b) enhancement of skill performance, (c) removal of competing problem behaviors, and (d) facilitation of generalization and maintenance. This training sequence crosses all skills (e.g., listening, saying thank you, expressing affection) and provides an instructional blueprint for the educator when working with students to acquire a skill.

Typically, social skills are taught through the direct instruction of a targeted skill, following a structured lesson plan, or through incidental instruction that occurs spontaneously in a classroom at unplanned moments (Rutherford, Quinn, & Mathur, 1996). However, a review of the literature using *Academic Search Premier*, spanning 1975 to present, revealed a limited amount of research investigating or describing the type of social skill instruction provided to teachers in their teacher education program (Battalio, & Stephens, 2005; Cornell, 2002; Cooley-Nichols, 2004; Cosden, Iannaccone, & Wienke, 1990; Eaton & Wall, 1999; Fischer, 2004; Elksnin, 1998; Ford, Pugach, & Otis-Wilborn, 2001; Katsiyannis, Landrum, Bullock, & Vinton, 1997; Lerman, Vorndran, Addison, & Kuhn, 2004; Williams, 1990). Many of these studies examined the impact

of social skills on the social, academic, and personal achievement of students with disabilities (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001; Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006). However, few examined the implementation of social skills instruction in the classroom. Rather, they focused on behavior management techniques and controlling the behavior of students as opposed to remediating social skills deficits through the instruction of socially appropriate behaviors (Knitzer, Steinberg, & Fleish, 1990).

Statement of the Problem

Most social skills training programs focus on teaching social skills as discrete, isolated behaviors without promoting effective participation by the child/youth in a variety of social settings (Rutherford, Quinn & Mathur, 1996). Many studies concerning the effectiveness of social skill instruction fail to demonstrate plans for the generalization and maintenance of pro-social behaviors beyond the training setting for students with disabilities (Power, 2003). With the increasing number of students being identified as having emotional disabilities (U. S. Department of Education, 2003) and the knowledge that these students often do not form satisfactory interpersonal relationships, the direct instruction of social skills is imperative to insure the academic and personal success of these students. While the research supports the direct instruction of discrete social behaviors to prevent or remediate a lack of social competence (Tolan & Guera, 1994), teachers often lack the instructional skills to prevent and respond to social problems (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995).

This study evaluated the level of training in social skill instruction provided in teacher education programs throughout the United States. A questionnaire adapted from the

Teacher/Staff Skill Streaming Checklist (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997) was by completed by education students in nine teacher education programs. The study focused on the amount and type of social skills training received by special educators and general educators in these teacher training programs and in their school-based, in-service training.

Specifically, the following questions were addressed:

Research Question 1: What type of social skills instruction training do general education teachers receive in their teacher education programs?

Research Question 2: What type of social skills instruction training do special education teachers receive in their teacher education programs?

Research Question 3: What type of social skills instruction training do general education teachers receive in their in-service training?

Research Question 4: What type of social skills instruction training do special education teachers receive in their in-service training?

Research Question 5: Do special education teachers receive more overall social skills training (direct and incidental) in their teacher education programs as compared to general education teachers?

Research Question 6: Do special education teachers receive more overall social skills instruction training (direct and incidental) in their in-service training as compared to general education teachers?

Research Question 7: In what areas of social skills do general education teachers receive the most training in teacher education programs?

Research Question 8: In what areas of social skills do special education teachers receive the most training in their teacher education programs?

Research Question 9: In what areas of social skills do general education teachers receive the most training in their in-service training?

Research Question 10: In what areas of social skills do special education teachers receive the most training in their in-service training?

Research Question 11: Do special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their teacher education programs than do teachers who teach in resource rooms?

Research Question 12: Do special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their in-service training than do teachers who teach in the resource room?

Research Question 13: Do special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction training in their teacher education programs than do general education teachers?

Research Question 14: Do special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills training in their in-service training than do general education teachers?

Significance of the Study

The degree to which a child/youth is able to interact successfully with peers, teachers, and parents represents one of life's most significant developmental accomplishments.

The extent to which a child/youth can establish and maintain satisfactory interpersonal

relationships, gain peer acceptance, make meaningful friendships, and terminate negative social interactions currently defines social competence (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). Students who are socially competent will, in turn, experience life-long emotional and social success (Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990; Parker & Asher, 1987). Researchers have concluded that social competence is imperative for students with social deficits to function cognitively, academically, emotionally, and behaviorally in school and life (Gresham & McMillian, 1997).

General and special education teachers are responsible for delivering instruction to students with disabilities. The instruction must be comprehensive and individualized to meet the goals and objectives of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (Friend & Bursuck, 2006). Students will not develop appropriate social skills by chance. Thus, general and special education teachers must teach social skills to students with disabilities who exhibit social skill deficits (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006).

There is currently a modest amount of research concerning the training of teachers to teach social skills. The findings of this study have contributed to the knowledge base concerning effective teacher preparation programs in the areas of: (a) social skills instruction, (b) social skills program implementation, maintenance, and generalization, (c) appropriate training components in teacher education programs, and (d) effective instruction in teacher education programs. In this study, the level and type of social skills instruction provided to special education and general education teachers in their teacher education preparation programs was evaluated through a nationally distributed questionnaire. The level and type of the social skills instruction was determined based

upon the level of instruction received (e.g., none, direct, or incidental) the type of instruction (e.g., teacher education program or in-service training).

Definitions

The terminology listed below was used in this study. The specific interpretations are critical to the understanding of the study.

Children/Youth with disabilities. Children with disabilities are students eligible to receive special education services under the provisions of the P. L. 108-446, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

Direct instruction. Research-based instructional approach in which the teacher presents subject matter using a review of previously taught information, presentation of new concepts or skills, guided practice, feedback and correction, independent student practice, and frequent review (Friend & Bursuck, 2006).

Incidental instruction. Instruction conducted during unstructured activities for brief periods of time typically when students have shown an interest or have been involved with related materials and activities (Brown, McEvoy, & Bishop, 1991).

In-service training. Professional development training sessions offered through a school district to contracted licensed employees.

Nationwide. Encompassed a sample of teacher training programs from across the United States. The following universities participated in the study: (a) California State University, Northridge, (b) Emporia State University, (c) New Mexico State University, (d) Ohio State University, (e) San Diego State University, (f) Southern Connecticut State

University, (g) University of Nevada, Las Vegas, (h) Vanderbilt University, and (i) Western Washington University.

Social skills. Social behaviors in specific situations that predict important social outcomes for students (Gresham, 1983).

Social skills training. Training that enables a student to elicit positive responses from others (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001).

Teacher education. The training of individuals, in a higher educational setting, who are working towards fulfillment of a specific degree requirement in General or Special Education.

Modified teacher/staff skillstreaming questionnaire. The *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklist* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997) was designed to evaluate the perceived proficiency of a student's ability to perform social skills. For the purpose of this study, a modified version of the checklist was used to evaluate the social skills instruction provided in teacher education and school-based in-service training to general and special educators. Permission to use the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklist* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997) was granted by the authors.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were:

- 1). Data were collected via an online questionnaire, therefore, participation may have been low due to the lack of face-to-face contact with the participants.

2) The *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* used in this study was modified from the original format to measure factors others than the authors intended.

3) The questionnaire required participants to report their perceptions concerning the level of training received in their teacher education programs. Participants may not have given truthful answers in order to present themselves in a positive light.

4). University professors announced the initial request for participation in the study in their classes. Interested participants were directed to a website to complete the online questionnaire. Participants may have volunteered to complete the questionnaire out of an obligation to the university professor.

5). To increase participation and protect anonymity, participants were not required to give identifying information such as the state in which they resided, university they attended, or school districts in which they worked or received training.

Summary

Social skills are critical to the overall social, emotional, academic, and developmental functioning of children/youth. Students with disabilities often exhibit poor social skills that can impact their life in school and after graduation. Social skills cannot be learned in isolation, teachers must teach social skills through direct instruction. There is a limited amount of research describing the type of social skills instruction provided to special and general education teachers in their teacher education programs or in their in-service training. The purpose of this study was to evaluate social skills instruction delivered in teacher preparation programs and in-service programs nationwide. This study contributes to the literature by presenting evidence for the inclusion of effective social skills

instruction in teacher education and in-service training. Without educators being appropriately trained to teach social skills, students with disabilities will be negatively impacted in school and as they transition to the world outside of the school setting. Through appropriate social skills training, educators are provided with one more tool to facilitate the successful inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Effective social skill training is imperative to the overall development of students.

Gresham (1983) defined social skills as social behaviors essential to the proficient execution of social tasks. However, many teachers are not prepared to deliver direct instruction in the area of social skills (Battalio & Stephens, 2005).

The definition of social skills has evolved over the past 35 years. In the early 1970s, researchers defined social skills in terms of peer acceptance of social behaviors (Foster & Ritchey, 1979) and social competence (Gresham, 1997). Researchers in the 1980s attempted to conceptualize social skills in terms of classroom settings, teacher perceptions, social skill interventions and trainings, and assessment (Gresham, 1997). They delineated the differences between social skills and social competence (McFall, 1982) and this delineation led to the development of three basic components of social skills training (e.g. acquisition, performance, and generalization) (Ladd & Mize, 1983). In the 1990s, the literature began to debate the importance of social skills training in terms of the context of behaviors and the social skills deficits of the person (Gresham, 1997). Research focused on the identification of social skills deficits in order to provide effective social skills training for specific contexts, promote the generalization of skills to a variety of contexts, and measure the outcomes in these contexts (Gresham, 1981; Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001).

In 2001, Gresham et al. defined social skills as behaviors that must be taught, learned, and performed in specific situations. They maintained that the performance of these skills served as predictors of social outcomes for a student's emotional and behavioral health. This definition grew out of Gresham's work in 1997 maintaining that effective social skills training involves pairing the intervention to the social skills deficits of the students, providing instruction in contextually appropriate settings, and evaluating outcome measures. The current belief is that the performance of social behaviors across personal, academic, and professional settings is crucial to human development (Gresham, Bao Van, & Cook, 2006).

Caldaraella and Merrell (1997) conducted a search of the research literature spanning from 1974 through 1994 to develop a taxonomy of social skills dimensions for children and adolescents. The taxonomy encompassed the following skill dimensions: (a) assertion, (b) self-management, (c) academic skills, (d) peer relations, and (e) compliance. Caldaraella and Merrell (1997) concluded that the delineation of social skills dimensions provided: (a) a typical social skill classification system, (b) a profile of social skill strengths and weakness, (c) a template on which to design social skills instruction, (d) an outcome-based measurement system, and (e) assessment in terms of cause, prognosis, and responsiveness to social skill interventions.

Effective social skills instruction remediates skill deficits through operant, social-learning, and cognitive-behavioral approaches (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006; Elliott & Gresham, 1993). Effective social skills instruction concentrates on: (a) skill acquisition, (b) skill performance, (c) removal of competing problem behaviors, and (d) facilitation of generalization and maintenance (Gresham et al., 2001).

Currently, most students with disabilities receive special education services in the general education setting, rather than the special education classroom (Lane, Givner, & Pierson, 2004; Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), 2004). Thus, it is imperative that general and education teachers be trained to instruct all students based on their academic and social needs. The following will explore social skills in terms of perceived importance, effective instruction, and teacher education.

Importance of Social Skills Training

Social competence is a person's ability to execute social tasks proficiently as evaluated by the judgment of others, established criteria, relationship to normative samples, and overall successful participation in social settings (Gresham et al., 2001; McFall, 1982). Social competence is an evaluative term based on the belief that the social skills can be performed satisfactorily across settings (Gresham, 1998). According to Kupersmidt, Coie, and Dodge (1990) social competence can predict long-term psychological and social development. Students with poor social competencies and deficient social skill acquisition are at-risk for poor interactions with their parents, teachers, and peers (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992; Reid, Patterson, & Snyder, 2002; Walker & Severson, 2002).

Teacher Perceptions

Students spend a vast amount of time with educators in the school settings. Teachers are responsible for meeting the academic and social needs of all students. It is important to understand the teachers' perception of social skills, since they must deliver instruction through a comprehensive curriculum.

In an attempt to determine the level of importance teachers place on the impact of social skills for a student's achievement in the classroom, Lane, Wehby, and Cooley (2006) rated the level of teacher expectation of student behavior. The purpose of the study was to explore: (a) the correlation of social skills expectations in terms of elementary, middle school, and high school as well as general and special education, (b) the skills teachers consider crucial, and (c) the rating of social skills for students identified as at-risk for problem behavior.

Four hundred and fifty-two general and special educators at schools with at least one self-contained classroom for students with disabilities were invited to complete a survey. The teachers completed a modified version of a questionnaire used in an earlier study (Lane, Pierson & Givner, 2004). The questionnaire consisted of two sections focusing on social skill characteristics and participant demographics.

The first section was comprised of 30 social-skill items from the *Social Skill Rating System* (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). The second section required the teacher to provide demographic information (e.g. gender, grade level currently taught, program type, amount of teaching experience, credentials, and degree earned). The first section was a 3-point Likert-type scale with zero being not important, one being important, and two being critical. The teachers used the scale to evaluate the importance of the social skills for student success in the classroom. The items were identified as belonging to three sub-domains: (a) assertion, (b) self-control, and (c) cooperation.

The results of the questionnaire were analyzed by three, two-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) to determine the level of significance for program type, school level, and teacher expectations in the areas of self-control, cooperation, and assertion. Results

indicated that for elementary and middle school teachers (general and special education) there was no significance for the self-control domain of social skills. However, the teachers perceived social skills that support effective instruction as important (e.g., cooperation). High school special education teachers perceived self-control as a more critical skill than did general education teachers at the same level.

Elementary and middle school teachers indicated four social skills as being critical for school success in the self-control domain: (a) controls temper in conflict situation with peers, (b) responds appropriately to peer pressure, (c) controls temper in conflict situations with adults, and (d) responds when pushed or hit. Six skills were identified as critical in the cooperation domain: (a) uses free time in an acceptable way, (b) follows directions (c) ignores peer distractions when doing class work, (d) attends to instructions, (e) easily transitions from one classroom activity to another, and (f) gets along with people who are different. The high school teachers indicated seven social skills as crucial for school success. Two skills were identified in the self-control domain: (a) controls temper in conflict situation with peers, and (b) controls temper in conflict situation with adults. Five skills were identified in the cooperation domain: (a) follows directions, (b) attends to instructions, (c) transitions from one classroom activity to another, (d) produces correct schoolwork, and (e) listens to classmates.

Lane et al. (2006) concluded that both general and special education elementary and middle teachers rate self-control skills as significant to classroom success. Conversely, in high school, special education teachers perceived self-control as more critical than did general education teachers.

Beebe-Frankenberger, Lane, Bocian, Gresham, and MacMillian (2005) explored the types of social skill expectations held by elementary and secondary teachers of students with and without disabilities. Elementary and secondary teachers rated students on their level of social skills execution in the instructional environment. The teachers assessed student performance levels of social skills and their personal perception levels of importance in a classroom setting.

The teachers nominated 33 students who were classified as being at risk for having behavioral problems in the classroom setting. The students attended elementary schools in seven different school districts. Twenty-six elementary teachers and twenty-seven secondary teachers completed the *Social Skills Rating System-Teacher Version* (Gresham & Elliott, 1990) on the students.

The teacher survey consisted of 57 social skill dimensions encompassing problem behaviors and academic competence. The dimensions focused on 30 social skills in the areas of cooperation, assertion, and self-control. Eighteen problem behaviors were addressed in terms of externalizing, internalizing, and hyperactivity. The remaining nine items dealt with academic competence. The teachers rated these domains on a 3-point Likert-type scale (e.g. zero being never, one being sometimes, and two being very often). The survey also required teachers to rank the level of importance of each skill to the classroom setting (e.g. zero being important, one being very important, and two being critical).

Beebe-Frankenberger et al. (2005) grouped all of the teacher survey responses on the elementary rating scale into two groups, problem behavior (PB) and comparison group (COMP) according to the nonoccurrence of inappropriate behaviors. The problem

behavior group (PB) was comprised of students who received a standard score of greater than 115 on problem behaviors. There were 13 students in the PB group. The comparison group (COMP) was comprised of students who received a standard score of less than 115 on problem behaviors. There were 24 students in the comparison group.

Beebe-Frankenberger et al. (2005) analyzed the rating scales from the teachers using descriptive procedures to evaluate teacher perceptions of the importance of specific social skills. Social skills were classified as important when teachers rated the skill as critical on the survey. A skill was considered socially significant when it was identified as critical by 60% of the teachers. The social skill domains of cooperation, self-control, assertion, and responsibility were used to differentiate the skill expectations held by the teachers.

Beebe-Frankenberger et al. (2005) found that elementary teachers of the students in the PB group rated the following eight items as critical: (a) produces correct schoolwork, (b) ignores peer distractions while working, (c) easily makes transitions, (d) finishes class assignments on time, (e) puts work or school materials away, (f) appropriately tells when treated unfairly, (g) keeps desk clean and neat, and (h) introduces self to new people.

Teachers of students in the elementary COMP group only rated *ignore peer distractions* as a critical social skill. Secondary teachers of students in the PB group rated eight items as critical: (a) produces correct schoolwork, (b) controls temper in conflicts with peers, (c) uses time appropriately, (d) complies with directions, (e) attends to directions, (f) finishes class assignments on times, (g) easily makes transitions, and (h) ignores peer distractions while working. Teachers of the secondary COMP group rated five of the same skills as critical: (a) produces correct schoolwork, (b) ignores peer distractions while working, (c) attends to instruction, (d) complies with directions, and

(e) uses time appropriately. All teachers (elementary and secondary) rated most of the skills in the cooperation domain as critical (e.g., produces correct schoolwork, ignores peer distractions while working, easily makes transitions, finishes class assignments on time, puts work or school materials away, appropriately tells you when treated unfairly, keeps desk clean and neat, introduces self to new people).

According to Beebe-Frankenberger et al. (2005), the results of their study indicated that teachers do value social skills. Overall, teachers view cooperation as a skill necessary for classroom success. These findings are consistent with the literature (Lane, Givner, & Pierson, 2004a; Lane, Wehby, & Cooley, 2006). Teachers tend to place significance on those social skills, particularly cooperation skills which directly impact their ability to deliver effective instruction in an inclusive setting.

Fischer (2004) explored the frequency and duration of social skills instruction to students in kindergarten through sixth grade. The goal was to examine teacher perceptions of social skills instruction to their students. A survey was developed to determine how often and the length of social skills instruction that was implemented by the teachers and their perceptions of direct and incidental social skills instruction in the classroom.

Six hundred surveys were distributed through the mail to 300 general education teachers and 300 special education teachers. The mailers included: (a) a letter explaining the purpose of the study, (b) a copy of the instrument, (c) a self-addressed reply envelope, and (d) a token of appreciation (a bookmark). The cover letter clearly stated that completion of the survey was voluntary. A second mailing of the survey was conducted

due to low return rates. In total, 230 teachers completed and returned the instrument (96 general educators and 134 special education teachers).

Fischer (2004) developed the *Survey of Social Skills Instruction* for use in the study. The participants were asked to respond to five open-ended questions (e.g. In the classroom, what is the typical number of times per day that you provide students with incidental social skills instruction?) and 21 Likert-type questions based on a 5-point scale (e.g. one being strongly disagree, two being disagree, three being neither agree nor disagree, four being agree, and five being strong agree). The survey measured the frequency and intensity of social skills instruction and the teachers' perception of direct or indirect social skills instruction.

Descriptive statistics, two canonical analyses, and 24 multiple-linear regression analyses were used to examine the data. Fischer (2004) found that teachers taught social skills through direct instruction for 20 minutes at least two day a week on average. The teachers perceived social skills instruction as important and reported that students who received social skills instruction usually replaced inappropriate behaviors with acceptable behaviors. According to the data, Fischer (2004) concluded that even though teachers reported that social skills instruction was important, approximately 27% reported not having adequate time to provide effective direct or incidental instruction of social skills.

Lane, Pierson, and Givner (2004) conducted two studies to determine the social skills that secondary level teachers consider critical to student success in a classroom setting. The study examined the social skill expectation levels of secondary teachers concerning: (a) the effect of teacher type (e.g., secondary general and special education teachers) on the perception of social skills critical for success, (b) the effect of secondary level and

type of classroom setting (e.g., general and special education) on teacher perceptions concerning the importance of self-control, cooperation, and assertion skills, and (c) the degree that teacher demographic data determines the level of importance teachers attribute to cooperation, assertion, and self-control.

Two-hundred and forty secondary teachers volunteered to complete a questionnaire concerning the social competencies they perceived to be crucial for achievement in the secondary setting. Eighty-three percent of the teachers taught in general education settings and 12.5% taught in special education settings. There also were 4.18% participants classified as other.

The questionnaire was completed by the teachers during a staff meeting and consisted of two sections focusing on the social skill characteristics and participant demographics. Section one was comprised of 30 social skill items from the *Social Skill Rating System* (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). The second section required the teachers to provide demographic information (e.g. gender, grade level currently taught, program type). The first section was a Likert-type scale, with one being not important and three being critical. The questionnaire items asked the respondents to evaluate individual students on the frequency of social skill use and the importance of skill proficiency. The frequency scale contained three sub-domains: (a) assertion, (b) self-control, and (c) cooperation.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures was used to analyze the differences among teacher perception levels concerning the importance of assertion, self-control, and cooperation. Three, two-way fixed-effects Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted to compare the different perceptual levels of social competence held by general education and special education secondary teachers.

Lane et al. (2004) concluded that both secondary general education and special education teachers consider self-control and cooperation skills to be critical social competencies for students in the classroom setting. The data indicated that secondary teachers reported similar levels of importance for self-control and cooperation. The majority of the secondary teachers did not perceive assertion as being critical to classroom success. At least 50% of the middle school teachers indicated six skills as being vital to classroom success: (a) responds appropriately to aggression from peers, (b) responds appropriately to teasing by peers, (c) attends to instruction, (d) controls temper with peers, (e) complies with directions, and (f) responds appropriately to peer pressure. High school teachers rated eight social skills as being crucial to success: (a) responds appropriately to aggression from peers, (b) responds appropriately to teasing by peers, (c) receives criticism well, (d) attends to instructions, (e) controls temper with peers, (f) controls temper with adults, (g) complies with directions, and (h) responds appropriately to peer pressure. Both middle and high school teachers agreed on six skills: (a) responds appropriately to aggression from peers, (b) attends to instructions, (c) controls temper with peers, (d) controls temper with adults, (e) reacts appropriately to peer pressure, and (f) complies with directions.

Lane, Givner, and Pierson (2004) also examined the expectation level of general and special education teachers for student behavior at the elementary level. The purpose of this second study was to: (a) examine the extent to which teachers perceive assertion, self-control, and cooperation as vital to school success, (b) identify the specific social skills viewed as critical, and (c) determine whether classroom level, program type, or experience impacts expectation levels of social behaviors.

One-hundred and twenty-six teachers volunteered to participate in the study. One-hundred and five participants were general education teachers and 18 participants taught in a special education setting. Three teachers listed themselves as other. The grade level taught by the teachers ranged from: (a) primary (kindergarten to grade three), (b) intermediate (grades four to six), and (c) combined (kindergarten to grade six).

Similar to the study focusing on middle school and high school teachers (Lane et al., 2004a) the teachers completed a questionnaire during a staff meeting. The questionnaire was comprised of 30 social skills from the *Social Skills Rating System* (SSRS) (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). The SSRS was the same questionnaire used in the Lane et al. (2004) study. Three, one-way fixed effects multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to identify significant disparities in the perceived importance of social skills among the following subgroups: (a) primary, lower levels, and combined teachers, (b) general educators and special educators, and (c) novice teachers and experienced teachers.

Assertion was viewed as being least significant to the overall success in the classroom by the majority of the teachers. Over half of the teachers rated the seven social skills related to self-control and cooperation as vital to student success: (a) controls temper with peer, (b) uses free time acceptably, (c) controls temper with adults, (d) follows directions, (e) responds appropriately when hit, (f) attends to instructions, and (g) gets along with people.

Lane et al. (2004b) concluded that general education and special education elementary teachers perceive self-control and cooperation as critical for student success in the elementary classroom environment. They maintained that students with behavioral

problems or social skill deficits who are included in the general education classroom should be taught social skills that general education teachers perceive to be critical for classroom success by the general education teachers. Lane et al. (2004b) indicated that all teachers must be aware of the varying expectation levels concerning social skills in order to develop effective individualized instruction for students with social skills deficits.

Merrell and Merz (1992) investigated the relationship between social competency skills and disability labels across 12 school districts. Students with mild disabilities in the categories of learning disabilities, mental retardation, and behavior disorders were compared to students without disabilities and students labeled at risk for school failure who received some form of compensatory or remedial services.

The participants were early childhood and elementary education students in kindergarten through sixth grade. The students ranged in age from 5 to 13- years-old and were separated into five groups: (a) students with learning disabilities, (b) students in general education without disabilities, (c) students with mental retardation, (d) students with emotional disabilities, and (e) students in general education who received remedial supports.

The general education and special education teachers randomly selected students from their class and rated the students using the *Walker-McConnell Scale of Social Competence and School Adjustment* (SSCSA) (Walker & McConnell, 1988). The SSCSA consists of 43 Likert-type items, with a 1 to 5 rating scale (e.g., one being never occurs, to five being frequently occurs). The items on the scale describe adaptive social behavioral competencies in a school setting. The SSCSA is comprised of three subscales

that measure a teacher's preferred social behavior, peer-preferred social behavior, and school adjustment behavior.

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to establish group membership based on disability across all groups. The students in the general education group demonstrated lower social competency deficits than did all of the other groups of students. Overall, the students with behavioral problems scored the lowest. Merrell and Merz (1992) concluded that students with mild disabilities are more likely to develop social behavioral competence deficits than students without disabilities.

Research conducted by Baumgart, Filler, and Askvig (1991) attempted to identify the level of importance that special education teachers and other professionals place on social skill instruction within the curriculum. They also correlated the importance of social skill instruction within the curriculum to the frequency of social skill goals as indicated on the Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs).

Two hundred and eighty-six special education teachers participated in the study. Thirty-six special education experts also participated in the study based on geography, disability, availability, previous professional contact with authors, and their willingness to participate. Experts were defined as professionals (e.g. university professors, special education administrators, and school site administrators).

Baumgart et al. (1991) created a 5-point Likert-type questionnaire to assess:

- (a) teacher and expert perceptions concerning the importance of social skills, and
- (b) teacher and expert rankings of social skills as compared to other skill areas (e.g. balancing a checkbook, managing a home budget, and using a calculator to solve story problems).

The survey was comprised of seven skill descriptions with an

explanation of a disability and various skills. All participants rated the skill descriptions on a scale of one to five (one being not important and five being essential).

Data were collected in two phases. In Phase I, the participants completed the questionnaires. The return rate for the questionnaire was 58.3% for teachers, 49.6% for parents, and 58.3% for experts, for an overall return rate of 43.3%. In Phase II, interviews were conducted with 26 teachers and the Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) of the teachers were reviewed for the level, content, and instructional method of social skills being provided. The experts did not participate in Phase II of the study.

Questionnaire data were analyzed using a three-way, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA revealed significance for the rater group (e.g., teacher and expert) and the disability category (e.g., learning disability, moderate disability, and severe disability). Teachers and experts rated social skills as critical for students regardless of disability category. The interview data indicated that 83% of the 26 teachers included social skills goals in the IEPs for 34% of their students. The interviews also revealed that 45% of the teachers incorporated social skills instruction into the curriculum at regularly scheduled times; 33% of the teachers conducted one-on-one social skill instruction with students; 22.1% conducted small group instruction; 22.1% provided instruction in large groups; and, 22.1% used combination instructional methods.

Baumgart et al. (1991) concluded that teachers and professionals rated certain social skills (the specific skills were not identified by the authors) as important. It appears that teachers and experts within the field perceive social skill instruction as an integral component of the curriculum.

The literature is consistent with regards to the value teachers place on social skills and the positive impact social skills has on the ability to deliver effective instruction in an inclusive setting. Both special and general education teachers value social skills. In order to develop effective individualized instruction for all students with social skills deficits, educators must be exposed to and taught how to instruct the diverse social skill levels present in school settings. Teachers must be afforded appropriate training, time, and resources to provide effective direct or incidental instruction of social skills.

Parental Perceptions

Parents play a vital role in the educational achievement of their children. They are charged with providing a nurturing environment to help their children development socially, academically, and emotionally. The successful performance of social skills is not only essential in a classroom setting, but also within the home. Educators must be familiar with the behavioral, academic, and social expectation of parents as it is possible that the expectations may differ for each setting.

As part of a follow-up study that examined the social skill expectations of elementary and secondary teachers of students (Beebe-Frankenberger, Lane, Bocian, Gresham, & MacMillan, 2005) examined the behavioral expectations held by parents for their children in instructional settings and home settings. Thirty-three elementary students were selected to participate in the study based on teacher-identified academic and/or behavioral concerns. Parents completed the *Social Skills Rating System-Parent Version (SSRS-P)* (Gresham & Elliott, 1990).

The parent survey was comprised of 52 items. Forty items assessed the frequency of social skill occurrence at home and parental perception of the importance of social skills.

Twelve items addressed specific problem behaviors. All items were rated on a 3-point Likert-type scale (e.g. zero being never, one being sometimes, and two being very often). The parent survey evaluated parental perception of a skill's importance to their child success (e.g. zero being not important, one being important, and two being critical).

Beebe-Frankenberger et al. (2005) combined the parental responses to the *SSRS-P* into a problem behavior (PB) group and a comparison group (COMP). The problem behavior group (PB) consisted of nine boys and four girls who received a standard score of greater than 115 on problem behaviors. The comparison group (COMP) consisted of 15 boys and nine girls who received a standard score of less than 115 on problem behaviors.

Beebe-Frankenberger et al. (2005) used descriptive procedures to analyze the data collected. They evaluated parental perceptions of the importance of specific social skills. Social skills were considered important when parents scored the skill as critical on the survey. A skill was considered socially significant when it was identified as critical by at least 60% of the parents. The social skills domains of cooperation, self-control, assertion, and responsibility were used to differentiate the skill expectations held by the parents.

Beebe-Frankenberger et al. (2005) found that parents of students in the PB group scored 11 skills as critical: (a) informs parent before going out with friends, (b) avoids situations likely to result in trouble, (c) follows household rules, (d) reports accidents to appropriate persons, (e) controls temper in conflicts, (f) ends disagreements calmly, (g) speaks in an appropriate tone of voice, (h) acknowledges praise from friends, (i) appropriately expresses feelings when wronged, (j) receives criticism well, and (k) is self-confident in social situations. However, in the COMP group only three skills

were rated as critical by the parents: (a) informs parent before going out with friends, (b) controls temper in conflicts with you, and (c) ends disagreements calmly. The parental ratings of social skills for the COMP group primarily fell under the self-control domain. No social skills were marked as critical by the parents in the cooperation domain for this group.

Beebe-Frankenberger et al. (2005) concluded that overall parents valued social skills in the self-control domain. They also maintained that parents assess the importance of social skills based on the impact of the behaviors in the home setting.

Baumgart et al. (1991) investigated the level of importance that parents place on social skills instruction within the school curriculum. They also correlated the ratings of importance of social skills instruction within the curriculum with the frequency of social skill goals within an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and the number of social interactions among students with disabilities and their typical peers within the school setting.

Two hundred and eight-six parents of children with disabilities were selected to participate in the study. The parents were nominated by their child's teacher based on previous working relationships and the possibility they would participate.

Baumgart et al. (1991) created a 5-point Likert-type questionnaire to assess: (a) parent perceptions concerning the importance of social skills, and (b) parent rankings of social skills as compared to other skill areas (e.g. balancing a checkbook, managing a home budget, and using a calculator to solve story problems). All parents rated the skill descriptions on a scale of one to five (one being not important and five being essential). The return rate on the questionnaire from parents was 49.6%.

The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using a three-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The majority of the parents rated social skills as either important or somewhat important (e.g. the specific skills were not identified by the authors). Baumgart et al. (1991) concluded that the parental expectations varied depending on the social or academic demands of a home or classroom setting. Overall, parents perceived social skills as an important and integral component in the instructional curriculum.

Parents do indeed value social skills. However, parental expectations vary depending on the social or academic demands of a home or classroom setting. Overall, the research indicates that parents consider social skills as an important and integral component in the instructional curriculum (Beebe-Frankenberger, Lane, Bocian, Gresham & MacMillan, 2005; Baumgart et al., 1991).

Effectiveness of Social Skills Training for Students

With Disabilities

Several studies have been conducted to examine the effectiveness of social skills training for students with learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, and mental retardation. Researchers have found significant treatment effects when exploring the impact of social skills training on the overall social skill and social competence abilities of students with disabilities (Forness & Kavale, 1996; Kavale, Mathur, Forness, Rutherford, & Quinn, 1997; Gresham, Cook, Dean, & Kern, 2004; Gresham et al., 2006; Mathur, Kavale, Quinn, Forness, & Rutherford, 1998; Quinn, Kavale, Mathur, Rutherford, & Forness, 1999).

Gresham et al. (2006) investigated the impact of rigorous social skills instruction on the behavioral deficits of students. The purpose of the study was to: (a) solicit participation of students who display similar social skill deficits, (b) explore the implementation of a social skills intervention, and (c) examine the effects of differential reinforcement of other behaviors across settings and time.

Four general education students between the ages of six and eight were nominated by their teachers to participate based on observed social skill deficits. Student A had difficulty interacting with peers. Student B struggled with initiating relationships with classmates and joining playgroups during recess. Student C was inattentive, impulsive, and being treated for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Student D demonstrated physical aggression towards his classmates and difficulty controlling his temper.

The measures used for this study included the *Social Skills Rating System-Teacher* (SSRS-T) (Gresham & Elliott, 1990), the *Critical Events Index* (Walker & Severson, 1990) and direct observations. In the first phase of the study, teachers nominated students based on an operational definition of inappropriate behaviors displayed by students at risk for emotional and behavioral difficulties. The student behaviors were rank-ordered on a scale of 1 to 10 (one being the most severe and ten being the least). The operational definition included: (a) often starts fights and/or arguments with peers, (b) demonstrates verbal and/or physical aggressive towards peers, and (c) exhibits hyperactive, inattention, defiance, and noncompliance in a classroom setting.

The teachers completed the *Social skills Rating System* (SSRS) (Gresham & Elliott, 1990) during pre-intervention and post-intervention and the *Critical Events Index* (CEI) (Walker & Severson, 1990) for the students. The SSRS is a 30-item rating scale to

measure three social skill domains (e.g., problem behaviors, social skills, and academic competence). The *CEI* is comprised of 33 items designed to assess the intensity, frequency, and externalizing/internalizing factors of challenging behaviors that may or may not have occurred in the last six months. Students were considered for participation in the study if they had: (a) a total social skills score of less than 85 and a total problem behavior score greater than 115 on the *SSRS*, and (b) a score of one or greater on the *CEI*.

The direct observations were conducted to determine the effectiveness of social skills training in decreasing challenging behaviors. Total disruptive behavior (TBD), alone time (AT), and negative social interaction (NSI) were assessed during baseline, intervention, and maintenance across settings and over time. Total disruptive behaviors were actions that interrupted the classroom environment and instruction. Alone time consisted of a student being five feet or more away from another student and not socially engaged or not participating in typical playground (recess) activities (e.g., sitting alone, kicking balls of wall alone). Negative social interactions involved the student exhibiting physical or verbal aggression towards their classmates (e.g., biting others, hitting others, pinching, cursing, or threatening others).

In four, single-subject reversal designs (ABAB) data were collected for five sessions per phase targeting TBD, AT, and NSI. All students received social skills instruction for 20 weeks for a total of 60 hours. The social skills instruction included: (a) direct instruction, (b) rehearsal, (c) feedback/reinforcement, (d) and reductive procedures. Social skill lessons were presented through verbal and modeled instruction. Rehearsal allowed for practice of the skill topic. Specific feedback and evaluation were given based on the quality of student skill execution during role-play performance. Reductive

behavioral strategies were employed to decrease or remove competing behaviors (e.g., timeout, response cost, forms of differential reinforcement).

Gresham et al. (2006) used estimates of the effect sizes for each of the target behaviors to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. According to the data, all four students demonstrated improvement across all three target behaviors (e.g. total disruptive behavior, alone time, and negative social interaction). Students A and D demonstrated the largest improvement for total disruptive behaviors and alone time. Students A, B and D demonstrated improvement in AT on the playground. All students were rated higher by their teachers on the *SSRS-T* during post intervention. Based on the findings, Gresham et al. (2006) concluded that students who receive extensive social skills training exhibit a reduction in inappropriate behaviors and a improvement in the acquisition and performance of social skills.

Miller, Lane, and Wehby (2005) studied the effects of social skills training on inappropriate classroom behavior of students with high-incidence disabilities. The study focused on: (a) establishing an individualized instructional program focusing on acquisition deficits, (b) using evidence-based instructional strategies, (c) implementing a generalization phase, and (d) conducting the intervention in a realistic setting. The multiple-baseline design study involved five males and two female students. Three of the seven students were labeled as having an emotional disability, two had a specific learning disability, one had mental retardation, and one had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The classroom teacher nominated the students for participation in the study based on social skill acquisition deficits. The teacher completed the *Social Skills Rating System-*

Teacher Version (Gresham & Elliott, 1990) to establish baseline behaviors and during the post-intervention phase to evaluate student progress. Students were placed in the two groups based on grade level and gender. Two intervention groups were established based on acquisition deficits, which in turn provided the basis for the social skill instruction. During the intervention phase, the classroom teacher taught social skills through direct instruction, three to four days a week for 30 minutes in a special education classroom. Both groups received the same amount of social skills intervention. The intervention phase lasted for six weeks. Following every fifth session, the students completed a review lesson to re-teach and assess mastery levels. Make-up lessons were completed at this time as necessary.

The intervention sessions were adapted from *Social Skills Intervention Guide* (Elliott & Gresham, 1991) and were organized to address five behavioral domains (e.g. cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self control). The intervention involved the following steps: (a) demonstration, (b) modeling, (c) guided practice with feedback, (d) independent practice, and (d) generalization. The students received positive reinforcement when they exhibited appropriate behaviors.

The study used a multiple-baseline design across the two groups of students. The data were analyzed across the groups for inappropriate classroom behaviors and academic engagement through visual inspection. The behaviors (e.g., arguing, provoking comments, teasing others, threats of aggression toward others, physical aggression towards others, and aggressive physical acts) were tracked for 15-minute intervals during the social skills lesson in all phases of the design. The individual student's token economy served as an additional data collection method to evaluate student performance.

Through visual inspection, comparisons of the mean scores, and calculation of effect sizes, the data demonstrated a decrease in inappropriate classroom behavior and an increase in academic engagement between the baseline and intervention phases for all participants. Problem behaviors for several students decreased and academic engagement increased. The results of the *Social Skills Rating System-Teacher Version* completed by the teachers following intervention confirmed the social skill progress of the students.

Lane (1999) examined the effectiveness of academic and social skill interventions to improve the academic and social behaviors of young children. The goal was to intervene early with students considered at-risk for developing anti-social behavior in order to decrease the potential of destructive social behavior.

Six first-grade teachers participated in the study. The teachers were asked to: (a) nominate students for participation in the study, (b) complete the *Social Skills Rating System* (Gresham & Elliott, 1990) and the *Critical Events Index* for each student (Walker & Severson, 1992), and (c) assess the acceptance and effectiveness of the intervention.

Fifty-three children who returned signed parental consent forms participated in the study. Thirty-nine of the children were selected to participate as a result of teacher nomination and 14 students were selected randomly to participate.

Six classrooms were randomly assigned to one of three different intervention groups: (a) academic intervention, (b) social skills intervention, and (c) treatment contact control group. Over a six-week period, the three intervention groups met four days a week for 30 minutes.

In the academic intervention condition, *the Phonological Awareness Training for Reading Program* (Torgesen & Bryant, 1994) was used to supplement the reading lesson in the form of 25 scripted lessons. During the social skills intervention, the students received direct instruction of social skills using the *Social Skills Intervention Guide: Practical Strategies for Social Skills Training in 25 lessons* (Elliott & Gresham, 1991). The control group received the presentation of information not associated with the other two conditions (e.g. jobs in the community, measures of time, safety signs, and the five senses).

A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each condition of the intervention phase. According to the data neither intervention (e.g. social skills intervention or academic intervention) demonstrated significance in increasing academic performance or social competence. Decreases in inappropriate behaviors over time were evident for the students in the academic intervention group. Even though the results did not provide evidence as to whether academic or social skills intervention were successful in improving student academic or social performance, Lane (1999) concluded that the minimal improvements the participants experience (e.g., improvements in reading and phonological awareness) were maintained over time.

In a study designed to investigate the impact of a school-wide discipline program on the occurrence of problem behaviors displayed by young children, Lewis, Sugai, and Colvin (1998) examined the effects of a social skills instructional program paired with direct interventions on inappropriate behavior. The study focused on behavior support across three school settings (e.g. recess, cafeteria, and hallway transition). Problem behaviors were paired with a positive replacement behavior. School rules, exclusive to

each setting, were then paired with the replacement behaviors. Next, social skill lessons targeting each school rule and setting were developed and implemented.

One hundred and ten elementary school students and seven teachers (five general and two special education) participated in the study. All students attended a suburban elementary school that had been identified as an at-risk school.

A multiple-baseline design across settings (recess, cafeteria, and hallway transition) was used to ascertain the effect of social skills instruction and direct intervention on problem behaviors. Following one week of baseline data collection, social skill instruction aimed at cafeteria problem behaviors began. Transition began two and three weeks after baseline. Once the social skills instruction was implemented across all settings, direct setting intervention began to promote generalization. Probes were collected one month after the direct settings intervention.

Visual inspection was used to identify significance between conditions and for each condition. A single-rate data point was used to represent all of the tally counts of the target behaviors. Stability of the data was set at 80% of the data points within a range of 15% of the mean. The data established a decrease in problem behaviors across all targeted settings (cafeteria, recess, and hallway transition) following social skills instruction and maintenance was demonstrated during follow-up. According to the data, Lewis et al. (1998) concluded that social skills instruction paired with direct instruction produced reasonable reductions in the targeted behaviors across all settings.

Chalmers and Townsend (1990) investigated the impact of social skills training on institutionalized female delinquents. The study was designed to ascertain whether social skills training through role playing would increase the perspective-taking abilities of the

girls. Chalmers and Townsend (1990) also anticipated that social skills training would result in generalization effects for the following behaviors: (a) interpersonal problem analysis, (b) empathy, (c) acceptance of individual differences, and (d) referential communication.

Sixteen girls, 10 to 16-years-old, participated in the study. All participants were residents of a minimum security institution for youth considered to be habitually antisocial or maladjusted. The participants were grouped into two treatment conditions: (a) social perspective training (SPT), or (b) fitness training.

The students were given several assessments during pre-training and post training. The first was a shortened version of the *Social Perspective-Taking Task (SPT)* (Chandler, 1973) that measured whether the student comprehends the perspectives of others. The student is given a scenario and told to retell the story from the point of view of the main character. A score of zero is given for demonstration of advanced social perspective taking, and four is given for not being able to differentiate the knowledge and emotions of others. The second assessment measure was the *Interpersonal Problem Analysis Task* (Marsh, Serafica, & Barenboim, 1980). This measure determines one's ability to: (a) define interpersonal problems, (b) propose alternative solutions, (c) specify probable consequences, and (d) select an adequate solution that takes into account the other characters in the dilemma. The assessment is scored on a scale of zero to 16 with zero being not able to analyze or resolve interpersonal scenarios and 16 being advanced abilities. *The Index of Empathy* (Bryant, 1982) was used to measure a student's emotional response to perceived emotional experiences of others. The *Index* consists of 22 yes or no questions (e.g. It makes me sad to see a girl who can't find anyone to play with). The

Acceptance of Individual Differences (Duke & Nowicki, 1972) was used to measure the approximate physical distance (e.g. personal space) someone would allow from a person of the same gender and/or age. The final pre-assessment measure was the *Referential Communication Task* (Cohen & Klein, 1968) and was used to assess a student's ability to communicate intelligibly with others.

The students met in 15, one-hour sessions over six weeks. The format of the *SPT* session was: (a) explanation of specific interpersonal skills, (b) student demonstration of the skills, (c) practice and rehearsal of skill, and (d) coaching, feedback and comments recorded by the teacher. During the final session of the *SPT*, the participants chose, set up, and staged the most popular scenarios for video-recording. In the fitness condition, the students: (a) set personal and fitness goals, (b) planned fitness activities, and (c) carried out pre-and-post assessments. During the last session of the fitness training, the students worked on trampoline coaching.

Through observation and an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures, Chalmers and Townsend (1990) found that the *Social Perspective-Taking Task* significantly increased the ability of the students in the *SPT* group to consider the viewpoint of others in various social scenarios. The girls in the *SPT* group demonstrated an increase in the acquisition of social skills more than did the fitness training group. Chalmers and Townsend (1990) found significant levels of improvement in resolving interpersonal problems, demonstration of empathy, the acceptance of individual differences, and the ability to communicate appropriately for the *SPT* group. Even though both groups received comparable amounts of teacher attention and the opportunity to participate in a special program, Chalmers and Townsend (1990) concluded that students

who demonstrate inappropriate behaviors can indeed exhibit improvement in interpersonal skills through social skills instruction. Even though the students in the fitness control group, did not exhibit an increase in appropriate behaviors, there was a decrease in negative behaviors.

Gresham and Reschly (1986) investigated the social skill deficits of students with a documented learning disability. Similar to prior research, they attempted to differentiate social skills deficits between students with and without disabilities. However, the students with learning disabilities who participated in this study were included in general education classrooms for at least 50% of the school day.

Two hundred students, between the ages of 7.5 and 11.5, participated in the study. One hundred students with learning disabilities were nominated to participate by 35 school psychologists. One hundred general education students were nominated by general educators to participate based on attending the same schools as the students with disabilities.

Gresham and Reschly (1986) used various rating scales to evaluate the social skills of students with learning disabilities across teachers, parents, and peers. The *Social Behavior Assessment-Teacher (SBA-T)* (Stephens, 1981) was used by the teachers to evaluate the social skills of the students in kindergarten to eighth grade. The *SBA-T* is a 4-point Likert-type scale that evaluates 134 social skills in areas such as: (a) environmental behaviors, (b) interpersonal behaviors, (c) task related behaviors, and (d) self-related behaviors. A total score is generated from the sum of the four domains. Teachers rate a student's behavior based on the observations of the behavior (e.g. appropriate levels, low levels, and never exhibited in academic settings). The *Social*

Behavior Assessment-Parent (SBA-P) (Crouch, 1980) is a 3-point Likert-type scale consisting of 128 items. It was used by parents to rate their child's social skills at home. The *SBA-P* is separated into the same four categories as the *SBA-T*. A total score is generated from the sum of the four domains.

Three scales were used to measure the acceptance levels of the students by their peers: (a) *Play with Rating Scale (PWR)* (Oden & Asher, 1977), (b) *Work with Rating Scale (WWR)* (Oden & Asher, 1977), and (c) *Structured Peer Assessment (SPA)* (Asher & Hymel, 1981). The *PWR* and the *WWR* require peers to rate the extent to which they like to play and work with each other by completing a 5-point Likert-type scale. The *SPA* asks students to rate how often their classmates exhibit 13 behaviors (e.g. says nice things to others, says please and thank you, smiles at others).

The general education teachers completed the *SBA-T* for the 200 students in the study. The parents of the students in the study completed the *SBA-P* on their child during a home interview or independently. The students completed the *PWR*, *WWR*, and *SPA* in a group format that was facilitated by the general education teacher in the classroom.

Several fixed-effects, one-way multivariate analyses (MANOVAs) were conducted to assess the teacher rating scale (*SBA-T*), the parent rating scale (*SBA-P*), and the peer behavioral rating scales (*PWR* and *WWR*). Analyses of the data indicated that students with learning disabilities demonstrated significant social skills deficits based on the teacher, parent, and peer-rating scales. Specifically, significant deficits in task-related, interpersonal, and self-related social skills were identified at school, home, and with peers. Gresham and Reschly (1986) concluded that the information gathered was critical to the understanding of the impact social skills deficits have on students with learning

disabilities. Not only is the impact visible in the classroom setting, but also in the home environment.

Recognizing the importance of addressing social skills deficits in students, Bierman and Furman (1984) investigated the impact of social skills training and peer involvement on a student's ability to be accepted by other peers. They specifically focused on conversation skills training, peer acceptance, and involvement.

Fifty-six students were selected to participate in the study based on pre-assessed low levels of peer acceptance and conversational skills. Fifty-six additional students who demonstrated high levels of peer acceptance and conversational skills also participated in the study. The 112 students were assigned randomly to one of four treatment conditions: (a) individual coaching, (b) group experience, (c) group experience with coaching, or (d) no treatment. Prior to and following intervention the participants' conversational ability, peer acceptance, and self-perceptions were assessed through: (a) a structured conversation, (b) observation of verbal abilities with peers, (c) completion of the *Conversational Skill Concept Scale* (created for the study), (d) completion of *Roster and Rating Scale* (Hymel & Asher, 1977), (e) observation of peer interaction rates across settings, and (f) completion of the *Social Self-Efficacy Scale* (created for the study).

In the pre-assessment phase, a structured conversation was conducted with each student. The students were presented with a series of prompting statements to gauge: (a) self-expression, (b) questioning other about themselves, and (c) giving suggestions and advice. In the observation phase, students were observed in two, 15-minute intervals with typical peers of the same gender. The *Conversational Skills Concept Scale* required

students to list optional verbal responses to three scenarios (e.g., talking to peers during lunch).

The *Roster and Rating Scale* is a 5-point Likert type scale used by the students to assess the acceptance level of their peers. During the observations of verbal peer interactions across settings, observers recorded the occurrence and nonoccurrence of verbal peer interactions in the lunchroom. Teachers evaluated the verbal peer interaction in the classroom by completing a 7-point Likert type scale for six questions:(e.g., How often does this child talk with others in the class?). The authors created the *Social Self-Efficacy Scale* which contained 15 items that used a 9-point Likert type scale (e.g., In a group of kids from your class, how good are you at expressing your opinion and saying what you think?). Students evaluated how they felt about their self-expression skills and potential to be accepted by their peers.

The study was conducted over a period of six weeks with a total of ten, 30-minute training sessions. In the coaching condition the students received a presentation of the conversational skills, followed by a discussion of the skills, and practice of the skill under the guise of creating a video to teach college students about the language of adolescents.

In the group experience condition, students with low levels of peer acceptance and conversational skills collaborated with two peers who exhibited high rates of peer acceptance and conversational skills. The students received directions similar to the coaching condition, but did not receive prompts, cues, or rewards for skill performance. The group experience condition was conducted similar to the coaching condition in which the trainer introduced and discussed the skills with the students. The students practiced the conversational skills and received feedback after viewing the video.

A series of Multivariate Analyses of Covariance (MANCOVAs) were conducted to determine the treatment effects for the three areas under investigation (conversational skills, peer acceptance, and peer interaction). The results indicated that social skills training in the form of conversational skills training and peer involvement did have a significant treatment effect on peer involvement. Students in the coached group were observed being more involved and accepted by their peers six weeks after the intervention. Students in the combined group were able to acquire social skills and successfully use those skills in social settings. The post intervention scores demonstrated that the students were speaking with peers more at lunchtime and in the classroom. Bierman and Furman (1984) concluded that the provision of coaching and peer interaction was an effective tool in the acquisition of social skills.

In a multiple baseline across settings study, Hazel, Schumaker, Sherman, and Sheldon (1982) investigated the impact of social skills training on social and problem-solving skills. The goal was to ascertain the effect of social skills training on the acquisition and generalization skills of youth with learning disabilities.

Twenty-one secondary students were assigned to three groups based on either: (a) having a documented learning disability, (b) not having a disability, or (c) participation in a court-mandated program. The group of students with learning disabilities was comprised of six boys and one girl who ranged in age from 13-years-old to 15-years-of age. The students were assigned to the learning disability group based on: (a) achievement assessment scores, (b) evaluation of personal history, and (c) final determination by a validation team consisting of teachers and school psychologists.

Following the initial evaluation, the validation team nominated the students for the study based on verification of no cultural, physical, or emotional disabilities.

The second group consisted of students without disabilities who attended the same school as the students with learning disabilities. The validation team used the same procedures to assign students to this group (e.g. assessment scores, review of school and personal records). Seven girls without learning disabilities (ages 13 to 18) were assigned to the second group.

The third group of students included five boys and two girls (ages 14 to 17) whose records were not evaluated for the diagnosis of a learning disability. The students were referred to the study based on recommendations from their probation officers. The referral was based on the social skills deficits of the students. This group of students did not attend the same school as the students in the other two groups.

The participants were assessed on all of the social skills prior to the intervention to determine grouping. Various scenarios requiring the use of social skills were presented to each student and they were directed to respond to the situation as they typically would. The pre-assessment continued until the student was observed on each social skill. Based on these pretest scores the students with and without learning disabilities were assigned randomly to two groups. The students on probation comprised a third group and received social skills training separately from other participants.

All participants received group social skills training based on six skills targeted as being critical for adolescents with learning disabilities. The skills were: (a) giving positive feedback, (b) giving negative feedback, (c) accepting negative feedback, (d) resisting peer pressure, (e) negotiation, and (f) problem solving in social situations.

All students attended weekly, 2-hour social skill sessions for 10 weeks. The sessions were conducted by group leaders who did not know the disability classification of the student.

The social skills training schedules consisted of seven steps: (a) introduction and description of the skill, (b) discussion of skill rationale, (c) discussion of appropriate settings for skills use, (d) teaching of skill steps, (e) modeling of skill through role play, (f) verbal rehearsal of the skills steps, and (g) rehearsal of the skills through role play and feedback. During the sessions each student was required to role play the skills at least twice until he/she performed the skill without prompting or use of the skills sheets.

A checklist was completed by the group leader to assess the student response to social skills training. The checklist was comprised of six social skills (e.g. accepting negative feedback, giving positive feedback, giving negative feedback, negotiation, problem solving, and resisting peer pressure) and contained all steps required to complete the skill proficiently. Randomly selected scenarios were used during the role-play portion of the intervention. The scenarios correlated with the six skills of the checklist.

Through visual inspection, Hazel et al. (1982) found that all of the students demonstrated significant gains across the six skills taught and were able to generalize skill use across settings. Specifically, the students with learning disabilities were able to learn the skills at the same level and rate as the other students in the study. Hazel et al. (1982) concluded that social skills training can increase the acquisition and performance rate of social skills for students with disabilities, that social skills training is useful for students with or without learning disabilities, and students exhibiting delinquent behavior benefit from social skills training.

In a similar study, Schumaker, Hazel, Sherman, and Sheldon (1982) examined the relationship of learning disabilities and social skills deficits in adolescents. Schumaker et al. (1982) focused on social skills that were representative of a typical adolescent's social skill repertoire and social setting requirements. The skills measured were: (a) giving positive feedback, (b) giving negative feedback, (c) resisting peer pressure, (d) negotiating conflict situation, (e) following instructions, (f) conversation, (g) personal problem solving, and (h) accepting negative feedback.

Two hundred and thirty-six students in the ninth through twelve grades participated in the study. The students came from three different groups: (a) students without learning disabilities (n=60), (b) students with learning disabilities (n=119), and (c) court-adjudicated youth (n=57). All of the students lived in the same county, however, only the group of students without disabilities attended the same school.

Checklists comprised of the eight social skills were used to assess participant performance level of the eight social skills. The checklists contained the steps required to complete the skill proficiently. The checklists were completed by trained observer-testers, who observed and rated the performance of the social skills. Randomly selected scenarios were used during the role-play portion of the intervention. The scenarios correlated with the eight skills of the checklist.

During the assessment, the trainer described the requirements and the scenario of a role play situation to the students. The students were instructed to act out the scenarios along with the trainer. The trainer then rated each student's performance. At the end of the assessment session, a score was calculated based on the total skill steps performed appropriately.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the differences, if any, that existed between the social skills of students with learning disabilities, without learning disabilities, and students with apparent social skills deficits. Schumaker et al. (1982) found that students without disabilities successfully performed the eight social skills (66% of the time), whereas students in the other groups performed the skills at a slightly lower rate. The students with learning disabilities performed the skills correctly approximately 54% of the time. The students on probation scored the lowest of all, at 51% of the time.

Based on the findings, Schumaker et al. (1982) concluded that there is a significant difference between the accurate performance of social skills of students with and without disabilities as well as students on probation. The students with learning disabilities performed slightly better than students on probation. Schumaker et al. (1982) concluded that students with learning disabilities or social deficits may be at risk for failure in future social settings (e.g. the classroom) or in employment opportunities.

Rotheram (1982) attempted to address behavior of students identified as being underachievers by investigating the impact of social skills training on the social interactions and academic achievement of children identified as: (a) disruptive, (b) underachievers, (c) disruptive and underachievers, and (d) exceptional. Students who demonstrated a range of abilities in both academic and social skills were included in the study.

Based on teacher rating scores, 101 students were assigned randomly to either a social skills training condition (n=47) or a control condition (n=54). The social skills condition

included two 4th grade and two 5th grade classrooms. The control group included one 4th grade, one 5th grade, and two 6th grade classes.

The initial teacher ratings scales of achievement and behavior were based on a scale of 1 to 10. The students were assigned to the treatment conditions based on the categories: (a) underachievers (n=17) (achievement score of less than or equal to three), (b) disruptive (n=40) (behavior score of less than or equal to three), (c) multiple problems (n=29) (achievement and behavior score less than or equal to three), and (d) exceptional (n=15) (achievement and behavior score of great than or equal to seven). Each group consisted of six participants.

The intervention was conducted over a 12-week period and student progress was monitored one year following the study. The students met twice a week and participated in social skills training. In the training the social skills training session leaders:

(a) presented a summary of the selected skill, (b) presented the problem situation, (c) facilitated a group problem solving of the situations, and (d) provided practice of social skills and guided feedback.

The intervention was assessed according to interpersonal problem solving and assertiveness, teacher ratings, peer ratings, and academic performance. Following the intervention, interpersonal problem solving, and assertiveness were evaluated through the administration of an assertion quiz and the problem solving test. The assertion quiz (Rotheram, 1982) requires participants to give their most likely response to 20 interpersonal problem situations ranging from passive, assertive, and aggressive choices. The problem-solving test (Spivack, Platt, & Shure, 1976) involved the reading of seven unfinished stories. Students provided the middle of the story when only the beginning and

ending where provided by the evaluator for five of the seven stories. The teacher and peer ratings occurred prior to and following the intervention. Teachers scored the popularity and behavior of the student on a scale of one to ten. The students identified three other classmates who they considered to be their best friends. Academic performance was monitored through grade point average before the intervention, one month after the intervention, and one year after the completion of the study.

Rotheram (1982) used a factorial design to explore the influence of social skills training on behaviors. The results indicated a significant impact of social skills training. The participants demonstrated an increase in problem solving, assertiveness, teacher perceptions, grades, and popularity among peers. The social skills group presented more assertive responses for the problem-solving test and the assertion quiz. Rotheram (1982) concluded that social skills training increased the overall social and academic abilities of the students and the improvement was evident one year after the study as reported by teachers' rating of achievement.

Students with learning disabilities or social deficits may be at risk for experiencing future social settings (e.g. the classroom) or future employment opportunities. Students who receive extensive social skills training can experience a reduction of inappropriate behaviors across all settings.

Social Skills Training in Teacher Education

Social skills training is viewed as being a critical component of the overall development of students by general and special education teachers. However, many teachers report not being adequately prepared to provide effective social skill instruction

for students who may demonstrate skill deficits (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). While studies have reported that teachers view social skills as being an important component of school success, only a limited amount of research has been done to describe or demonstrate the type of instruction or support provided to general and special educators in the pre-service or in-service setting (Battalio & Stephens, 2005). It may be that a first year or experienced teacher should be capable of delivering instruction in all areas, especially in implementing a comprehensive behavior management system. However, this is the area in which most teachers, first year and experienced, consider themselves to be the least prepared (Goodlad & Field, 1993).

Battalio and Stephens (2005) conducted a study that not only investigated the actual implementation of social skills in the classroom setting, but also the perception of social skills held by elementary and secondary special education teachers. Specifically, the study investigated: (a) the perception of special education teachers in terms of social skills and social skills training, (b) implementation and monitoring methods of social skills training, (c) provision of generalization and maintenance of social skills, and (d) attitudes towards professional development in the areas of social skills. However, the study as reported by Battalio and Stephens (2005) has some limitations. The authors did not provide comprehensive information on the research design or data collection.

Battalio and Stephens (2005) surveyed 118 elementary and secondary special education teachers in a large urban school district. Seventy-four surveys were returned out of the 118. Twenty-one respondents were elementary teachers and 28 taught in either junior high or high school. The survey was designed to allow the teachers to assess their

instruction of social skills, their training in the area of social skills, and their perception of its importance in the school setting.

Teachers considered social skills and social skills instruction as crucial to the overall development of students according to Battalio and Stephens (2005). Ninety-four percent of the total respondents consider social skills important, and 49 respondents reported that they attempted to find time to incorporate social skills instruction into the curriculum at least two to three times a week. Although the results indicated that several of the respondents were unclear on how to best incorporate social skills into the curriculum, many used a *train and hope* method. This method was described by the researchers as teaching social skills with the hope that they will be generalized across settings (Battalio & Stephens, 2005).

Many teachers reported using either self-made materials or commercially purchased products. They determined what social skills to teach based on their own judgment, understanding student needs, and addressing current challenging behaviors. Battalio and Stephens (2005) concluded that although many teachers regard social skills instruction as important, most did not adequately implement social skills instruction due to the perceived invasiveness, comprehension, and time allotment required.

In a qualitative study, Shook (2003) explored the knowledge, skills, and temperament of general education teachers for providing instruction to elementary students with behavior challenges. Shook (2003) interviewed the general educators to ascertain their perceptions concerning their preparedness to effectively develop, implement, and maintain effective classroom management. The data were triangulated with observation reports and a knowledge test. The purpose of the study was to explore pre-service teacher

perceptions of their level of knowledge, skills, and dispositions for working with students in the general education setting who exhibit behavioral challenges.

Nineteen pre-service teachers in elementary education who were completing their last semester of coursework prior to graduation participated in the study. The participants had taken a classroom management course as part of their traditional training program in which they were introduced to the principles of behavior analysis and several classroom management strategies. Shook (2003) triangulated three different measures for use in the study: (a) a knowledge test, (b) interview, and (c) observation reports.

The knowledge test was based on the *Florida Professional Education Test* (FTCE) (Florida Department of Education, 1999). The knowledge test assessed the material a pre-service teacher should have obtained during their pre-service training. The test specifically dealt with information from coursework in classroom management and inclusive classrooms at the elementary school. The test consisted of ten items concerning strategies and accommodations applicable to address challenging behaviors in the classroom.

A 40-minute interview was conducted in person and consisted of three questions: (a) Do you think you spend too much time on matters of order and control? (b) Do you think your college coursework and experience gave you sufficient preparation in terms of classroom behavior management? (c) Do you think your college coursework and experience gave you sufficient preparation in terms of special education needs? The interviews were tape recorded.

The interview was designed to gather information regarding the pre-service teachers' perceptions of managing behaviors. The classroom observations were conducted by

university and master-teacher supervisors and they evaluated teacher proficiency in administering appropriate behavioral practices. The teachers were observed approximately 8 times over a 15-week period.

Carney's Ladder of Analytical Abstraction (Carney, 1990) was used to develop a data structure to allow for visual inspection of the data. The results demonstrated that the pre-service teachers did consider themselves well trained in the areas of classroom management. However, they did not perceive themselves as able to effectively address challenging behaviors. Many pre-service teachers reported that they were knowledgeable of valuable strategies, but were of how to successfully implement and modify strategies to address individual student behaviors. Shook (2003) concluded that in order for pre-service teachers to successfully deliver instruction in an inclusive setting, their training must include not only the characteristics of students with disabilities or behavior problems, but also how to effectively implement intervention concepts and strategies.

In a study designed to identify the preparedness of teachers to integrate social skills into the curriculum, Cosden, Iannaccone, and Wienke (1990) investigated the level of social skills training that teachers perceived they needed and the variables they believed necessary to ensure they would use the skills in the classroom with students. Cosden et al. (1990) specifically focused on: (a) status of current social skills curricula and its implementation in secondary classrooms, (b) teacher perceptions of effective models of social skills instruction, (c) access to curriculum resources and materials, (d) level of teacher knowledge of social skills instruction, and (e) variables that impact the importance of social skills instruction.

Twenty-three general education teachers and five special education teachers participated in the study. All of the participants taught on the same high school campus.

A survey was used to identify the level of social skill instruction, social skill knowledge, resources, and level of social skill significance perceived by the teachers. The survey was designed to evaluate a teacher's level of engagement with social skills instruction. The survey consisted of multiple choice items, multiple selection items, and likert-type scale items. Questions were scaled on a continuum from the level of social skills activities incorporated into the curriculum and the creative techniques used in social skills instruction. The middle of the continuum reflected the breadth to which social skills was actually presented in the curriculum. The bottom of the continuum evaluated the reactive or incidental performance of social skills instruction to deal with challenging or inappropriate behaviors. The survey also requested the teachers to select one of these options on the continuum and provide an explanation of their perception of a best practice social skills lesson or activity. The teachers rated their access to resources, personal knowledge, and perception of social skills instruction. Teachers then indicated whether these areas enhanced, inhibited, or had no impact on their actual implementation of social skills instruction.

A series of *t* tests were conducted to evaluate teacher survey responses. Overall, both general and special education teachers indicated a great interest in providing and developing social skills instruction and curricula, however, the majority stated a lack of knowledge of curricular materials or appropriate teaching strategies. Forty-six percent of the teachers reported an interest in teaching social skills as a distinct content area, while 50% of the teachers indicated an interest in integrating the instruction within other

subject areas. Sixty percent of the teachers reported limited or no access to resources to support the explicit teaching or inclusion of social skills instruction. Overall, the teachers reported a lack of knowledge specifically in the following areas: (a) assessing social skills, (b) planning social skills instruction, (c) providing social skills instruction, (d) evaluating student acquisition of skill, and (e) communicating with team members. Cosden et al. (1990) concluded that teacher education must expand current programs to incorporate collaborative pre-service and in-service instruction in the foundations of social skills and curriculum development. Furthermore, pre-service teachers, both general and special educators, must have opportunities to take part in the conceptualization, development and implementation of social skills instruction in self-contained and inclusive classroom settings.

Although research demonstrates that teachers regard social skills instruction as important, it also indicates that teachers do not implement social skills instruction because of a lack of training, time, and resources. There is a limited amount of research available exploring the level of pre-service instruction provided to teachers in this area. Pre-service training programs must provide opportunities for general and special pre-service teachers to explore, investigate, conceptualize, develop, and accurately implement social skills instruction in various self-contained and inclusive classroom settings prior to employment. Without effective social skills instruction, students with and without disabilities will not be successful in school or in life after school.

Summary

The population of general education classrooms are expanding to include more students with disabilities. These students may present a great challenge to teachers who are not prepared effectively to provide social skills instruction. Managing a whole class or individual student behavior is quite different, especially when a teacher must consider the unique needs of a student with disabilities. Efficiently providing instruction requires teachers, both general educators and special educators, to be prepared to deal with a range of behaviors that may be disruptive, aggressive, or non-age appropriate.

Research demonstrates the effectiveness of social skills instruction as a tool to address the challenging behaviors of students with and without disabilities. However, research also indicates that teachers believe they possess a limited amount of knowledge and resources. There is research to support: (a) the definition of social skills, (b) the importance of social skills from the perspective of teachers and parents, (c) the positive impact of social skills instruction on students with disabilities, and (d) the perception of the lack of social skills instruction and access to resources at the pre-service level. Considering the lifelong impact of social skills on students with and without disabilities, it is imperative that this social skills training be offered in a more comprehensive manner at the pre-service level and at the in-service level upon employment. This will ensure that teachers are better prepared to provide instruction to a more diverse population.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Overview

The extent to which students can create and sustain satisfactory interpersonal relationships, gain peer acceptance, make meaningful friendships, and terminate negative social interaction defines social competence (Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990; Parker & Asher, 1987). Children/youth who exhibit poor social skills and lack social competence will not develop the aptitude necessary to avoid negative outcomes as an adult. An inability to form relationships can lead to anxiety, depression, and unemployment (Elksnin, & Elksnin, 2006).

This study investigated the level of social skills training received by general and special education teachers in their teacher education programs and in-service sessions. Teachers taking classes at nine universities sites completed an online questionnaire. The universities were Western Washington University, California State University Northridge, New Mexico State University, Emporia State University, Ohio State University, Vanderbilt University, San Diego State University, Southern Connecticut State University, and the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Convenience sampling was employed in the design of the study through the selection of the university sites; however the respondents were representative of a large sample of teachers from rural, urban and suburban settings.

Research Questions

Data were collected to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher education training (program-based and in-service) using a questionnaire comprised of questions focusing on the direct and incidental instruction of social skills identified on the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklist* developed by McGinnis & Goldstein (1997). The following questions were asked.

Research Question 1: What type of social skills instruction training do general education teachers receive in their teacher education programs?

It was predicted that general education teachers receive a limited amount of direct or incidental instruction concerning social skills development and instruction for students with disabilities in their teacher education programs.

Research Question 2: What type of social skills instruction training do special education teachers receive in their teacher education programs?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive a limited amount of direct or incidental instruction concerning social skills development and instruction for students with disabilities in their teacher education programs.

Research Question 3: What type of social skills instruction training do general education teachers receive in their in-service training?

It was predicted that general education teachers receive a limited amount of direct or incidental instruction concerning social skills development and instruction for students with disabilities in their in-service training.

Research Question 4: What type of social skills instruction training do special education teachers receive in their in-service training?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive a limited amount of direct or incidental instruction concerning social skills development and instruction for students with disabilities in their in-service training.

Research Question 5: Do special education teachers receive more overall social skills instruction training (direct and incidental) in their teacher education programs as compared to general education teachers?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive more direct and incidental social skills instruction training in their teacher education programs than do general educators.

Research Question 6: Do special education teachers receive more overall social skills instruction training (direct and incidental) in their in-service training as compared to general education teachers?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive more direct and incidental social skills instruction training in their in-service programs than do general educators

Research Question 7: In what areas of social skills do general education teachers receive the most training in teacher education programs?

It was predicted that general education teachers receive social skills instruction only in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills.

Research Question 8: In what areas of social skills do special education teachers receive the most training in their teacher education programs?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive social skills instruction only in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills.

Research Question 9: In what areas of social skills do general education teachers receive the most training in their in-service training?

It was predicted that general education teachers receive social skills instruction only in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills.

Research Question 10: In what areas of social skills do special education teachers receive the most training in their in-service training?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive social skills instruction only in the area of beginning social/classroom survival skills.

Research Question 11: Do special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their teacher education programs than do teachers who teach in resource rooms?

It was predicted that special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their teacher education programs than do resource room teachers.

Research Question 12: Do special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their in-service training than do teachers in the resource room?

It was predicted that special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their in-service programs than do resource room teachers.

Research Question 13: Do special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction training in their teacher education programs than do general education teachers?

It was predicted that special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction in their teacher education programs than do general educators.

Research Question 14: Do special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction training in their in-service training than do general education teachers?

It was predicted that special education teachers who teach in resource classrooms receive more social skills training in their in-service programs than do general educators.

Participants

This study included general education teachers and special education teachers. The teachers invited to participate in the study were enrolled in degree programs at institutions in rural, urban, and suburban areas nationwide. The study included teachers who taught across all educational settings (special and general education) and levels

(elementary and secondary). All participants completed digital informed consent forms prior to accessing and completing the online questionnaire (see Appendix A).

Special and General Education Teachers

Special education teachers who volunteered to participate in the study were enrolled in a degree or certification program in curriculum and instruction (elementary or secondary) or special education. All teachers were currently teaching. Teacher demographic information was collected (see Table 1).

University Facilitators

Eighteen university professors in the area of special and general education were invited to assist in the facilitation of the online questionnaire. All university facilitators signed an informed consent form prior to participation in the study (see Appendix B). Demographic information was collected from the university facilitators (see Table 2).

Table 1

Demographics of Special and General Education Teacher

Characteristics	Special Education Teachers	General Education Teachers
Gender		
Male	40	18
Female	110	69
Ethnicity		
Anglo-American	108	68
African-American	26	9
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	2
Hispanic	8	2
Middle Eastern	0	2
Other	3	4
<i>(table continues)</i>		

Table 1 (*continued*)*Demographics of Special and General Education Teacher*

Characteristics	Special Education Teachers	General Education Teachers
Teacher Education		
Bachelors	150	87
Masters	49	68
Educational Specialist	5	1
Doctorate	5	2
Area of Concentration		
Elementary	0	54
Special Education	150	0
Secondary	0	33
Teaching Experience		
Number of Years Teaching		
1 – 3 yrs	150	87
4 – 10 yrs	0	0
10 years or more	0	0

(table continues)

Table 1 (*continued*)*Demographics of Special and General Education Teacher*

Characteristics	Special Education Teachers	General Education Teachers
<hr/>		
Current Teaching Assignment*		
Resource Room	69	7
Self-contained Classroom	58	11
Collaborative Consultant	18	0
Grades Taught		
Early Childhood		
K – 1	9	20
2 – 3	16	24
4 – 5	8	20
6 – 8	13	19
9 – 12	8	7
Disabilities among Students*		
Learning Disabilities	100	46
Emotional Disabilities	73	28
Mental Retardation	55	14
Orthopedic Impairments	19	5
Autism	74	25
Speech or Language Impairments	58	31
<hr/>		
*Note. Some respondents may teach in multiple classroom settings		(table continues)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Demographics of Special and General Education Teacher

Characteristics	Special Education Teachers	General Education Teachers
Disabilities among Students		
Visual Impairments	25	14
Other Health Impairments	58	17
Hearing Impairments/Deafness	24	9
Physical Impairments	25	9
Traumatic Brain Injury	21	4

Table 2

Demographics of Special and General Education University Facilitators

Characteristics	Special Education Facilitators	General Education Facilitators
Gender		
Male	2	7
Female	8	2
Years Teaching in		
Higher Education	55	40

Setting

Nine Colleges of Educations were invited to participate in this study. The universities are located throughout the United States of America in rural, urban, metropolitan, and suburban areas.

Participating Universities

University professors were contacted via email and their participation solicited. Professors from the following universities agreed to participate: Western Washington University is located in the northwestern region of the United States. Western Washington University has an annual enrollment of approximately 12,700 undergraduates, and 2,500 graduates. One thousand nine hundred-and seventy- three students are enrolled in the Woodring College of Education (Western Washington University, 2005). Ninety-three percent of the students are enrolled in either elementary or secondary initial licensure programs.

California State University, Northridge has an annual enrollment of about 33,000 students with 1,730 students being enrolled in the College of Education (California State University, Northridge, 2005). California State University Northridge is one of the largest campuses in the California State University system and is located near Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley.

New Mexico State University is located in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The College of Education has an annual enrollment of 2,804 students. Nearly 27,000 students are enrolled in the main and branch campuses of the university (New Mexico State University, 2005).

Emporia State University, located in Emporia, Kansas, has an annual enrollment of 6,194 students. Five hundred students are enrolled in the Teachers College (Emporia State University, 2005). The university is located in a rural county in Kansas.

The Ohio State University at Lima is located in Lima, Ohio. There are regional campuses located throughout Ohio. The Columbus campus is currently the largest single campus in the United States. The Lima Campus has an annual enrollment of about 1,700 students. Approximately 650 students are enrolled in the College of Education (The Ohio State University at Lima, 2005).

Vanderbilt University is located in Nashville, Tennessee and is a private university. The University has an annual enrollment of 11,294, students and the Peabody College of Education has an enrollment of 1,669 students (Vanderbilt University, 2005).

San Diego State University is located in Southern California and has annual enrollment of 33,441 students. The College of Education is the largest college on campus.

In the year 2003, over 700 students successfully completed California State licensure requirements in the College of Education (San Diego State University, 2006).

Southern Connecticut State University is located in the eastern region of the United States. Southern Connecticut State University has an annual enrollment of 12,127 students. The College of Education has an enrollment of 3,500 students (Southern Connecticut State University, 2005).

The University of Nevada Las Vegas has an enrollment of 25,000 students with 2,800 admitted to the College of Education. The University of Nevada Las Vegas is located in a large urban community (University of Nevada Las Vegas, 2005).

Instrumentation

The instruments used in the study evaluated the type of social skills training received by general and special education teachers in their teacher education programs and school-based in-services. The questionnaire developed was a compilation of the checklists from the *Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child* (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997) and the *Skillstreaming the Adolescent* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) and contained 87 items.

The Modified Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire

Research Press, the publishers of the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklists*, granted permission to adapt the two checklists and use the resulting questionnaire in the study (see Appendices C & D). The original checklists are screening tools designed to allow teachers, staff members, parents, and children/youth to rate the occurrence of a specific social skill using a five-point Likert scale. The goal of the checklist is to determine the order in which to teach social skills to students experiencing social problems in a school

setting. The *Modified Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* was used to identify the level, type (none, direct, or incidental) and area of social skills instruction provided to general and special education teachers in their teacher education and school-based, in-service training sessions (see Appendix E).

Materials

Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire

For the purpose of this study, the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* was used by the participants to rate the level and type and area of social skill instruction training received during their teacher education programs or school-based in-service training. The 87-item questionnaire focused on whether the teacher received incidental, direct, or no instruction on specific social skills in teacher education or in-service training. For each item, teachers indicated on a 5-item, Likert scale whether instruction on the social skill was: (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught; (2) mentioned, and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies covered through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or (5) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction. A web designer, who specializes in online questionnaires, assisted in the development of the online tool. The questionnaire was posted online through a dedicated IP address. A hyperlink, <http://131.216.58.222/ndobbins/> was established on the first page of the website linking participants to the questionnaire.

Website

The *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* was accessible to participants online. Participants, who volunteered to complete the questionnaire, were given a dedicated web address through which to access the online questionnaire. The website was accessible for a six-month period. All the questionnaire responses were categorized and maintained electronically. Access to the information compiled from the questionnaire on the dedicated website was limited to one person. Information obtained was used solely for the purpose of statistical analysis and dissemination of information pertaining to the purpose of this study.

Design and Procedures

This study was conducted over a six-month period and consisted of five phases. The phases included online questionnaire development, participant solicitation, questionnaire distribution, data collection, and data analysis.

Phase One

Online questionnaire development research. Research Press was contacted and granted permission for using and modifying the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklist* (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997; Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) (see Appendix C & D). The adolescent and elementary skillstreaming versions of the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklist* were modified to create the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire*. The result was a questionnaire that combined all the social skills listed in the original checklists (see Appendix E). The resulting questionnaire contained 87 social skills arranged in categories as identified by McGinnis & Goldstein (1997) and Goldstein &

McGinnis (1997). The categories were: (a) Classroom Survival Skills/Beginning Social Skills, (b) Friendship-Making Skills/Advanced Social Skills, (c) Skills for Dealing with Feelings, (d) Skill Alternatives to Aggression, (e) Skills for Dealing with Stress, and (f) Planning Skills.

The Campus Computing Resource Center on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas was instrumental in converting the paper format of the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* to an online format. The website was designed to allow online access to approximately 320 participants. A dedicated IP address was generated to permit access. The first page of the website displayed the request for informed consent prior to participation in the study (see Appendix A). Digital consent was requested on the first page of the site. Digital consent is considered to be a legal consent (C. Lee-Tataseo, Office of the Protection of Human Subjects, personal communication, September 17, 2005). Participants were not able to access the questionnaire link, unless informed consent was given by selecting, "Yes, I consent to participate." Once consent was granted by clicking on "Yes," participants were directed to the online questionnaire. At the completion of the questionnaire, participant responses were compiled and categorized according to response and question number.

Phase Two

Consent. Nine Special Education professors from a convenient representative sample of rural, urban, and suburban Colleges of Education solicited participation from students in their classes. The professors served as site facilitators and were responsible for inviting one professor from general education to solicit participation of general education students. Thus, at each university there were special and general education professors

soliciting student participation. All professors who agree to participate signed informed consent forms (see Appendix B).

Participant selection. At each university the two facilitators (general and special education) were responsible for identifying one course scheduled during the fall of 2006 and spring of 2007 in which there were at least 30 students. This course served as the setting in which student participation was solicited. Each facilitator presented the study to the class prior to the start of instruction. They stressed that participation in the study was voluntary and would not have any impact on their performance in the class. The university facilitators were given a protocol description to read (see Appendix F) and distribute that described the purpose of the study and how to access the online questionnaire. Each protocol was coded through the listed IP address to track participant completion of the questionnaire.

Phase Three

Questionnaire distribution. University facilitators provided the written instructions to participants concerning the purpose of the study, accessing the questionnaire, and completing the online questionnaire. Participants were directed to the questionnaire website where informed consent was completed prior to accessing or completing the survey. The protocol contained a randomly assigned coded IP address to track participant access of the online questionnaire. Once participants completed the questionnaire, they were unable to access the website again.

Phase Four

Data collection. The online questionnaire was accessible for a six-month period. During this time period participant responses were downloaded into a dynamic reporter system.

Phase Five

Data analysis. Participant responses were downloaded into a dynamic database and grouped based on the reply given. Data from the questionnaire were entered into a database using the statistical program *SPSS* (SPSS, Inc., 2001).

Data Collection

Demographic and *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* responses were collected and coded electronically through the online database for six-months. University facilitators solicited student participation in their university courses at least three times during the fall 2006 and spring 2007 semesters. The dynamic data were organized through a database.

Treatment of the Data

Data from the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* were analyzed to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: What type of social skills instruction training do general education teachers receive in their teacher education programs?

Analysis: In order to determine significant differences between the type of social skills instruction provided to general education teachers in their teacher education

programs, a 2 x 5 (program x type) Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test was conducted. An alpha level of .05 was set.

Research Question 2: What type of social skills instruction training do special education teachers receive in their teacher education programs?

Analysis: In order to determine significant differences between the type of social skills instruction provided to special education teachers in their teacher education programs, a 2 x 5 (program x type) Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test was conducted. An alpha level of .05 was set.

Research Question 3: What type of social skills instruction training do general education teachers receive in their in-service training?

Analysis: In order to determine significant differences between the type of social skills instruction provided to general education teachers in their in-service programs, a 2 x 5 (program x type) Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test was conducted. An alpha level of .05 was set.

Research Question 4: What type of social skills instruction training do special education teachers receive in their in-service training?

Analysis: In order to determine significant differences between the type of social skills instruction provided to special education teachers in their in-service programs, a 2 x 5 (program x type) Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test was conducted. An alpha level of .05 was set.

Research Question 5: Do special education teachers receive more overall social skills instruction training (direct and incidental) in their teacher education programs as compared to general education teachers?

Analysis: In order to ascertain the significant differences between the level of instruction (direct and incidental) provided to special education teachers in their teacher education programs, an Independent t-test were conducted. An alpha level of .05 was set.

Research Question 6: Do special education teachers receive more overall social skills instruction training (direct and incidental) in their in-service training as compared to general education teachers?

Analysis: In order to ascertain the significant differences between the level of instruction (direct and incidental) provided to special education teachers in their in-service training, an Independent t-test was conducted. An alpha level of .05 was set

Research Question 7: In what areas of social skills do general education teachers receive the most training in teacher education programs?

Analysis: An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses for the level of instruction provided to general education teachers in their teacher education training for the six social skills groups [e.g., (1) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (2) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (3) skills for dealing with feelings, (4) skill alternatives to aggression, (5) skills for dealings with stress, and (6) planning skills.] An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis.

Research Question 8: In what areas of social skills do special education teachers receive the most training in their teacher education programs?

Analysis: An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses for the level of instruction provided to special education teachers in their teacher education training for the six social skills groups [e.g., (1) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (2) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (3) skills for dealing with feelings, (4) skill alternatives to aggression, (5) skills for dealings with stress, and (6) planning skills.] An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis.

Research Question 9: In what areas of social skills do general education teachers receive the most training in their in-service training?

Analysis: An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses for the level of instruction provided to general education teachers in their in-service training for the six social skills groups [e.g., (1) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (2) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (3) skills for dealing with feelings, (4) skill alternatives to aggression, (5) skills for dealings with stress, and (6) planning skills.] An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis.

Research Question 10: In what areas of social skills do special education teachers receive the most training in their in-service training?

Analysis: An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses for the level of instruction provided to special education teachers in their in-service training for the six social skills groups [e.g., (1) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (2) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (3) skills for dealing with feelings, (4)

skill alternatives to aggression, (5) skills for dealings with stress, and (6) planning skills.]

An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis.

Research Question 11: Do special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their teacher education programs than do teachers who teach in resource rooms?

Analysis: An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses for the level of instruction provided to special education teachers in their teacher education programs for the five levels (e.g., (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (2) mentioned, and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or (5) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction) between special education teachers who teach in resource rooms and special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis.

Research Question 12: Do special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their in-service training than do teachers in the resource room?

Analysis: An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses for the level of instruction provided to special education teachers in their in-service training for the five levels (e.g., (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (2) mentioned, and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or (5) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction) between special education

teachers who teach in resource rooms and special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis.

Research Question 13: Do special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction training in their teacher education programs than do general education teachers?

Analysis: An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses for the level of instruction provided to special education teachers in their teacher education programs for the five levels (e.g., (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (2) mentioned, and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or (5) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction) between special education teachers who teach in resource rooms and general education teachers. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis.

Research Question 14: Do special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction training in their in-service training than do general education teachers?

Analysis: An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses for the level of instruction provided to special education teachers in their in-service training for the five levels (e.g., (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (2) mentioned, and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or (5) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction) between special

education teachers who teach in resource rooms and general education teachers. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Successful involvement in academic, social, and family relationships is dependent on a student being able to acquire and perform social skills effectively as judged by others (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). Students with social deficits often experience cognitive, academic, emotional, and behavioral difficulties across settings that may impede their ability to be involved in a variety of settings and activities. According to the literature, general and special education teachers report that social skills are important, however, many are naive as to the appropriate manner in which to provide social skills instruction (Battalio & Stephens, 2005).

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the level of social skills instruction provided to general and special education teachers in pre-service and in-service training. An online questionnaire was developed for use in the study and a dedicated URL address was generated to provide access to the questionnaire. A modified version of the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklists* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997) was used to determine the level, type, and area of social skills instruction provided to general and special education teachers in their pre-service and

in-service training programs (see Appendix E). Nine university facilitators across the country advertised the questionnaire to over 480 licensed general and special education teachers enrolled in university-based degree programs. A total of 237 participants completed questionnaire (see Table 1). Data were collected over a six-month period and were analyzed using quantitative analyses.

Modified Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire

The *Modified Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* (see Appendix E) was adapted from the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklist* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997) by compiling the adolescent and the elementary versions of the two checklists. For the purpose of this study, the *Modified Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* was used to identify the level, type (none, direct or incidental), and area of social skills instruction provided to general and special education teachers in their pre-service and in-service training sessions. The *Modified Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* consisted of 87 items focused on whether the teacher received instruction on a particular social skill in teacher education or in-service training. For each item, teachers indicated on a 5-item Likert scale whether instruction on the social skill was: (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (2) mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or (5) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: What type of social skills instruction training do general education teachers receive in their teacher education programs?

It was predicted that general education teachers receive a limited amount of direct or incidental instruction concerning social skills development and instruction for students with disabilities in their teacher education programs.

Questionnaire data were analyzed using a Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test to determine if differences existed among the five categories of social skills instruction provided to general education teachers in their teacher education programs (see Table 3). An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results of the Chi-Square test indicated a significant difference in the skill categories based on type of skill instruction and program ($\chi^2 = 2601.472, p < .0001$). A significant number of general education teachers reported that within their teacher education program they received a limited amount of instruction on social skills or specific social skill strategies. Forty-two percent of the responses were in category one (i.e., not mentioned/no specific strategy taught) indicating that general education teachers received a limited amount of instruction on social skills or specific social skill strategies in their teacher education programs. While only 8% of the responses were in category five (i.e., mentioned/specific strategy taught through direct instruction), indicating that general educators received a limited amount of direct instruction on social skills.

Research Question 2: What type of social skills instruction training do special education teachers receive in their teacher education programs?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive a limited amount of direct or incidental instruction concerning social skills development and instruction for students with disabilities in their teacher education programs.

Questionnaire data were analyzed using a Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test to determine if differences existed among the five categories of social skills instruction provided to special education teachers in their teacher education programs (see Table 3). An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results of the Chi-Square test indicated a significant difference in the skill categories based on type of skill instruction and program ($\chi^2 = 642.05, p < .0001$). A significant number of special education teachers reported they received a limited amount of social skills instruction within their teacher education program. Twenty-eight percent of the special education teachers' responses were in category one (never mentioned and no specific strategy taught) and 18% reported social skills being mentioned and a specific strategy being taught through direct instruction in their teacher education.

Research Question 3: What type of social skills instruction training do general education teachers receive in their in-service training?

It was predicted that general education teachers receive a limited amount of direct or incidental instruction concerning social skills development and instruction for students with disabilities in their in-service training.

Questionnaire data were analyzed using a Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test to determine if differences existed among the five categories of social skills instruction

provided to general education teachers in their in-service education programs (see Table 3). An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results of the Chi-Square test indicated a significant difference in the skill categories based on type of skill instruction and program ($\chi^2 = 3439.57, p < .0001$). A significant number of general education teachers reported that within their in-service training they received a limited amount of instruction on social skills or specific social skill strategies. Forty-six percent of the responses were in category one (i.e., not mentioned/no specific strategy taught) indicating that general education teachers received a limited amount of social skills instruction or specific social skill strategies in their in-service training. Only 8% of the responses were in category five (i.e., mentioned/specific strategy taught through direct instruction), indicating that general education teachers received a minimal amount of direct instruction regarding social skills in their in-service training.

Research Question 4: What type of social skills instruction training do special education teachers receive in their in-service training?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive a limited amount of direct or incidental instruction concerning social skills development and instruction for students with disabilities in their in-service training.

Questionnaire data were analyzed using a Chi-Square Goodness of Fit to determine if differences existed among the five categories of social skills instruction provided to special education teachers in their in-service education programs (see Table 3). An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results of the Chi-Square test indicated a significant difference in the skill categories based on type of skill instruction and program ($\chi^2 = 5674, p < .0001$). A significant number of special education teachers

reported that within their in-service training they received a limited amount of instruction on social skills or specific social skill strategies in their in-service training. Forty-six percent of the responses were in category one (i.e., not mentioned/no specific strategy taught) indicating that special education teachers received a limited amount of instruction on social skills or specific social skill strategies in their in-service trainings. Ten percent of the teacher responses were in category five (i.e., mentioned/specific strategy taught through direct instruction) indicating that special education teachers received a limited amount of direct social skills instruction in their in-service training.

Table 3

Summary of the Responses of Special Education Teachers and General Education Teachers

Program	Special Education Teachers		General Education Teachers	
	Teacher Preparation	In-service Training Program	Teacher Preparation	In-service Training Program
Category				
Never Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	(28%)	(46%)	(42%)	(46%)
Mentioned/No Specific Strategy Taught	(15%)	(13%)	(18%)	(15%)
Mentioned/Strategies Mentioned Incidentally	(19%)	(17%)	(18%)	(17%)
Mentioned/Specific Strategy Discussed	(19%)	(13%)	(14%)	(13%)
Mentioned/Specific Strategy taught through Direct Instruction	(18%)	(10%)	(8%)	(8%)

Note. Percentage of response per category for Special Education Teachers and General Education Teachers

Research Question 5: Do special education teachers receive more overall social skills instruction training (direct and incidental) in their teacher education programs as compared to general education teachers?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive more direct and incidental social skills instruction training in their teacher education programs than do general educators.

Tests of normality and homogeneity of variance indicated violations of the assumptions; therefore, the Mann-Whitney non parametric test was performed to compare the average responses for the level of instruction provided in teacher education programs. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results of the Mann-Whitney test revealed that special education teachers had significantly more social skills instruction than general education teachers in their teacher education training programs ($U= 4724$, $Z= -3.54$, $p=.0004$) (see Table 4).

Research Question 6: Do special education teachers receive more overall social skills instruction training (direct and incidental) in their in-service training as compared to general education teachers?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive more direct and incidental social skills instruction training in their in-service programs than do general educators.

Test of normality and homogeneity of variance indicated violations of the assumptions; therefore, the Mann-Whitney non parametric test was performed to compare the average responses for the level of instruction provided in their in-service training. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results of the Mann-Whitney test revealed no significant difference between special education teachers and general

education teachers in their in-service training programs ($U= 6446.5$, $Z= -.154$, $p=.8773$). This indicates that special education teachers did not receive more social skills in-service training than general education teachers (see Table 4).

Table 4

Summary of Mann-Whitney Test Statistics

	Special Education Teacher (n=150)	General Education Teacher (n=87)
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Teacher Education	99.7	83.7
Special Education	78.1	75.7

Research Question 7: In what areas of social skills do general education teachers receive the most training in teacher education programs?

It was predicted that general education teachers receive social skills instruction only in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills.

The general education teachers' average score was evaluated for the level of instruction provided in their teacher education programs for the six social skills groups [e.g., (1) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (2) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (3) skills for dealing with feelings, (4) skill alternatives to

aggression, (5) skills for dealings with stress, and (6) planning skills.] The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated a violation of the normality assumption (alpha level set at .05); therefore, Friedman's nonparametric test for repeated measures was used for data analysis. Mann-Whitney U tests were used for post hoc comparisons. The post hoc alpha level was adjusted to account for the number of comparisons made (.05/15=.0033). The Friedman's test was significant ($\chi^2 = 88.24, p < .0001$) (see Table 5). The results of the Mann-Whitney post hoc tests revealed significant differences ($p \leq .0002$) between Group One (i.e., beginning social skills/classroom survival skills) and the other five groups (i.e., advanced social skills/friendship making skills, skills for dealing with feelings, skill alternatives to aggression, skills for dealing with stress, and planning skills). The social skills group that the general education teachers reported receiving the least amount of training in was Group Five (i.e., skills for dealing with stress). The social skills group that the general education teachers reported receiving the most training in their teacher education programs was Group One (i.e., beginning social skills/classroom survival skills).

Research Question 8: In what areas of social skills do special education teachers receive the most training in their teacher education programs?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive social skills instruction only in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills.

The special education teachers' average score was evaluated for the level of instruction provided in teacher education programs for the six social skills groups [e.g., (1) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (2) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (3) skills for dealing with feelings, (4) skill alternatives to

aggression, (5) skills for dealings with stress, and (6) planning skills]. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated a violation of the normality assumption (alpha level set at .05); therefore, Friedman's nonparametric test for repeated measures was used for data analysis. Mann-Whitney U tests were used for post hoc comparisons. The post hoc alpha level was adjusted to account for the number of comparisons made (.05/15=.0033). The Friedman's test was significant ($\chi^2 = 86.41, p < .0001$) (see Table 5). The results of the Mann-Whitney post hoc tests revealed no significant differences between Group One (i.e., beginning social skills/classroom survival skills) and Group Four (i.e., skill alternatives to aggression). The social skills groups that special education teachers reported receiving the least amount of training in their teacher education programs was on Group Five (i.e., skills for dealing with stress) and the social skills group that special educators reported receiving the most training in their teacher education was Group One (i.e., beginning social skills/classroom survival skills).

Research Question 9: In what areas of social skills do general education teachers receive the most training in their in-service training?

It was predicted that general education teachers receive social skills instruction only in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills.

The general education teachers' average score was evaluated for the level of instruction provided in their in-service training for the six social skills groups [e.g., (1) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (2) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (3) skills for dealing with feelings, (4) skill alternatives to aggression, (5) skills for dealings with stress, and (6) planning skills]. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated a violation of the normality assumption (alpha level set at .05); therefore,

Friedman's nonparametric test for repeated measures was used for data analysis. Mann-Whitney U tests were used for post hoc comparisons. The post hoc alpha level was adjusted to account for the number of comparisons made (.05/15=.0033). The Friedman's test yielded significance ($\chi^2 = 46.49, p < .0001$) (see Table 5). The results of the Mann-Whitney post hoc tests revealed significant differences ($p < .0001$) among Group Four (i.e., skill alternatives to aggression) and Group Five (i.e., skills for dealing with stress). Contrary to the prediction, the social skills group that general education teachers reported receiving the most training in their in-service training was Group Four (i.e., skill alternatives to aggression) and the social skills group they reported receiving the least training was Group Five (i.e., skills for dealing with stress). There was no significance between the area of instruction covered in their in-service training between Group One and Group Four for general education teachers.

Research Question 10: In what areas of social skills do special education teachers receive the most training in their in-service training?

It was predicted that special education teachers receive social skills instruction only in the area of beginning social/classroom survival skills.

The special education teachers' average scores were evaluated for the level of instruction provided in their in-service training for the six social skills groups [e.g., (1) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (2) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (3) skills for dealing with feelings, (4) skill alternatives to aggression, (5) skills for dealings with stress, and (6) planning skills]. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated a violation of the normality assumption (alpha level set at .05); therefore, Friedman's non parametric test for repeated measures was used for data analysis. Mann-

Whitney U non parametric tests were used for post hoc comparisons. The post hoc alpha level was adjusted to account for the number of comparisons made (.05/15=.0033). The Friedman's test was significant ($\chi^2 = 41.94, p < .0001$) (see Table 5). The results of the Mann-Whitney post hoc tests indicated significant differences ($p < .0001$) between Group Four (i.e., skill alternatives to aggression) and Group Five (i.e., skills for dealing with stress). Contrary to the prediction, the social skills group that special education teachers reported receiving the most training in their in-service training was Group Four (i.e., skill alternatives to aggression) and the social skills group they reported receiving the least training was Group Five (i.e., skills for dealing with stress). There was no significance between the area of instruction covered in in-service training between Group One and Group Four for special education teachers.

Table 5

Summary of Chi Square Test of Independence Statistics

Program	Special Education Teacher (n=150)			General Education Teacher (n=87)		
	χ^2	df	p	χ^2	df	p
Teacher Education	86.41	5	.0001*	88.24	5	.0001*
In-Service Training	41.94	5	.0001*	46.49	5	.0001*

Note. * $p < .05$

Research Question 11: Do special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their teacher education programs than do teachers who teach in resource rooms?

It was predicted that special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their teacher education programs than do resource room teachers.

An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses between special education teachers who teach in resource rooms and special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms for the level of instruction provided in teacher education programs for the five levels [e.g., (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (2) mentioned, and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or, (5) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction]. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results of the independent *t*-test indicated no significant difference between the two groups ($t_{111} = 0.231, p = .4087$) (see Table 6). In their teacher education programs, special education teachers, working in self-contained settings did not receive more social skills instruction than special education teachers working in resource room.

Research Question 12: Do special education who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their in-service training than do teachers who teach in resource rooms?

It was predicted that special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms receive more social skills training in their in-service training than do resource room teachers.

An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses between special education teachers who teach in resource rooms and special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms for the level of instruction provided in their in-service training for the five levels [e.g., (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (2) mentioned, and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or, (5) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction]. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results of the independent *t*-test indicated no significant difference between the two groups ($t_{111} = 0.62, p = .2672$) (see Table 6). In their in-service training, special education teachers working in self-contained settings do not receive more social skills instruction than do resource room teachers.

Table 6

Summary of Independent t-test's

Program	Special Education Resource Teacher (n=69)		Special Education Self-Contained Teacher (n=58)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Teacher Education	247.87	98.10	252.37	108.55
In-Service Training	184.56	92.22	196.00	102.69

Research Question 13: Do special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction training in their teacher education programs than do general education teachers?

It was predicted that special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction in their teacher education programs than do general educators.

An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses for special education teachers who teach in resource rooms and general education teachers for the level of instruction provided in their teacher education programs for the five levels [e.g., (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (2) mentioned, and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or, (5) mentioned and a specific strategy

taught through direct instruction]. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results indicated a significant mean difference between the two groups ($t_{147} = -3.56, p = .0002$) (see Table 7). Special education teachers working in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction in their teacher education programs than general education teachers.

Research Question 14: Do special education teachers who teach in resource rooms receive more social skills instruction training in their in-service training than do general education teachers?

It was predicted that special education teachers who teach in resource classrooms receive more social skills training in their in-service training than do general educators.

An Independent *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean responses between special education teachers who teach in resource rooms and general education teachers for the level of instruction provided in their in-service training for the five levels [e.g., (1) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (2) mentioned, and no specific strategy taught, (3) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction, (4) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed, or, (5) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction]. An alpha level of .05 was set for this analysis. The results did not indicate a significant difference between the groups ($t_{147} = -.5650, p = .2865$) (see Table 7). Special education teachers working in a resource room do not receive more social skills training in their in-service training than general education teachers.

Table 7

Summary of Independent t-test's

Program	Special Education Resource		General Education Teacher	
	(n=69)		(n=87)	
Program	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Teacher Education	247.87	98.09	197.02	75.95
In-Service Training	184.56	92.18	192.64	81.39

These analyses suggest that the amount of social skills instruction special education and general education teachers receive in their teacher education or in-service training programs, if any, is limited. According to the data, most social skills instruction that is provided typically is done through incidental instruction.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Failure to form interpersonal relationships with peers, family members, and teachers can place youth/children at risk for negative outcomes in academic and social settings (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). Appropriate social skills are imperative to achieve developmental milestones throughout school. Social competence is dependent upon a child's ability to perform a particular behavior proficiently (Gresham, 2002).

Students with disabilities may exhibit social skills deficits that can impede achievement in classrooms or personal settings. These deficits require mediation using direct social skills instruction (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006). However, teachers report that they are being prepared in teacher education programs to manage or punish inappropriate behaviors rather than provide effective social skills instruction (Jones, Dohrn, & Dunn, 2004). Research indicates that teachers and parents believe social skills are important to the success of children/youth (Fox & Boulton, 2003; Gresham, 1998; Lane, Givner, & Pierson, 2004; Mathur & Rutherford, 1996). However, little research exists to describe the preparation (pre-service or in-service) of special or general educators to deliver appropriate social skills instruction.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the level of social skills instruction provided to general and special education teachers in pre-service and in-service training

nationwide. Comparisons were made between the type and area of social skills instruction provided to general and special education teachers. Data were collected using an online questionnaire adapted from the *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklists* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997).

The modified version, *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire*, (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997), measured the level of social skills instruction (direct or incidental) in six areas of social skills: (a) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (b) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (c) skills for dealing with feelings, (d) skill alternatives to aggression, (e) skills for dealing with stress, and (f) planning skills. The questionnaire also evaluated the type of instruction: (a) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught (b) mentioned and no specific strategy taught (c) mentioned and strategies mentioned through incidental instruction (d) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed or, (e) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction.

Type of Social Skills Instruction

Questions One through Four were analyzed to determine the type of instruction received by general and special education teachers in their pre-service and in-service training programs. Question One focused on the type of social skill instruction provided to general education teachers in teacher education programs. The data indicated that nearly half (42%) of the general education teachers received no social skills instruction at all or where taught no specific social skill strategies in their teacher education programs. This finding supports why teachers feel unprepared to provide implement social skills

instruction (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). Only 8% percent of the general education teachers reported receiving direct instruction on social skills strategies in teacher education programs. The findings in this study support the research that maintains teachers feel ill-equipped to provide the necessary social skills instruction and accommodations for students with disabilities (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). It appears that without this training it is difficult for general education teachers to provide adequate instruction in social skills for all students in their classrooms (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995).

Question Two centered on the type of social skills instruction provided to special education teachers in their teacher education programs. The majority of the special education teachers (28%) also reported receiving no social skills instruction and no mention of social skill strategies in their teacher education programs. This may be due to the tendency within special education programs to focus on specialized content learning (e.g., development of Individualized Educational Plans, causes and prevalence of specific disabilities, or academic/functional teaching strategies) rather than social skills instruction (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). It appears that social skills training is a low priority nationally in special education teacher education programs.

Question Three analyzed the type of instruction provided to general education teachers in their in-service training. Over half of the general education teachers (46%) reported that they received no social skills instruction in their in-service training. This may indicate that social skills instruction may not be viewed as a critical curricular component in general education settings, especially if it is assumed that students will develop academic and social milestones naturally. In-service training conducted in school districts that pertains to social skills, positive behavioral supports, or behavior

management may limit attendance to only special education teachers. It may be assumed by school districts that students with social or behavior concerns are typically served in special education settings not in general education classrooms. This is an inaccurate assumption since the majority of students with disabilities are served in the general education classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Question Four focused on the type of instruction provided to special education teachers in their in-service training. Almost half of the special education teachers (46%) reported receiving no social skills instruction or strategy training in their in-service training. Only, 10% of the special education teachers reported receiving direct social skills instruction and strategies training in an in-service setting. These findings support current research in which special education teachers indicate they feel unprepared to include social skills instruction into the curriculum (Battalio & Stephens, 2005). It may be that special educators continue to receive specialized trainings in the areas of academic strategies, legal mandates and collaborative strategies rather than social skills instruction, even though research indicates teacher weakness in this area (Battalio & Stephens, 2005; Schumm & Vaughn, 1995).

Overall Level of Social Skills Instruction

Questions Five dealt with the level of social skills training special education teachers receive in their teacher education programs as compared to the training level received by general education teachers. Findings indicated that special education teachers received more social skills instruction in their teacher education programs than did the general

education teachers. Even though the special education teachers received more instruction, the overall findings of this study indicate that the level of this instruction is very limited.

Question Six identified the level of social skills instruction provided to special education teachers as compared to general education teachers in their in-service setting. The data revealed no significant difference in the amount of social skills instruction provided to special education teachers compared to general education teachers in their in-service training. This could be due to a lack of knowledge on the part of special and general education teachers concerning social skills instruction. If a teacher has not received adequate training in pre-service education, they can not be expected to seek out information on something they know little about. In essence, they don't know that they don't know. This may result in both special and general educators being reluctant to attend non-mandatory trainings. It is possible that there are limited amount of social skills in-service opportunities due to the current focus on standard based assessment as mandated by *No Child Left Behind* (2001). In this era of scrutiny on content learning (e.g., reading, math, science), it may be that schools districts are not focusing on in-services that do not result in measurable academic outcomes.

Area of Social Skills Instruction

Questions Seven through Ten focused on the areas of social skills in which general and special educators received instruction in their in-service and pre-service training as evaluated through the modified *Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Questionnaire* for the six social skills: (a) beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, (b) advanced social skills/friendship making skills, (c) skills for dealing with feelings, (d) skill alternatives to

aggression, (e) skills for dealing with stress, and (f) planning skills. Question Seven evaluated the area of social skills in which general educators received training in their teacher education programs. The data indicated that general educators in their teacher education programs received more instruction in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills. The skills within this area are addressed in most classroom management curricula as exemplifying appropriate behaviors that are valued in the general education setting (e.g., listening, saying thank you, completing assignments, following instructions, asking questions, bringing materials to class) (Allsopp, Santos, & Linn, 2000; Lane, Givner, & Pierson, 2004a; McGinnins & Goldstein, 1997). This indicates that general educators have surface knowledge of social skills instruction.

The area in which general education teachers reported the least amount of training was Group Five that dealt with skills for dealing with stress. Group Five contains skills that are more advanced or deep social skills, meaning skills that exist within a student. The exclusion of deep social skills instruction from teacher education may be due to the assumption that students will develop these skills naturally as they mature (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006). This may be a dangerous assumption due to the stress experienced by many students in school today (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006). Not attending to deep social skills instruction may lead to alienated students.

Question Eight focused on the area of social skills instruction provided to special educators in teacher education programs. The data indicated that special educators receive approximately the same amount of social skills training in the areas of Group One (beginning social skills/classroom survival skills) and Group Four (skill alternatives to aggression). Again, it appears that special education teacher training also focuses on

surface social skills (Group One), however there is a focus on strong behavior management (Group Four). Group Four consists of skills related to proactive behaviors to avoid problem situations. While it is apparent that some incidental instruction is occurring in this area for special education teachers in their pre-service training, the level at which it is provided indicates a more reactive response as opposed to direct instruction of a skill to prevent the occurrence of problem behaviors.

Question Nine explored the area of social skills instruction in which general education teachers received the most training in their in-service training. General education teachers reported receiving a limited amount of instruction in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills in their in-service training. However, they reported receiving the most training in the area of skill alternatives to aggression in their in-service programs. The skills classified under Group Four deal with topics such as: (a) asking permission, (b) keeping out of fights, (c) avoiding trouble with others, (d) accepting consequences, and (e) dealing with consequences.

These findings may indicate that the escalation of inappropriate behaviors within the general education classroom is a rising concern within many school districts. Many school systems are attempting to implement and provide in-service training that address these issues (Martella, Nelson & Marchand-Martella, 2003). The focus on these two areas may be because: (a) teachers receive poor instruction in behavior management strategies in pre-service training, (b) teachers may lack the knowledge of how to interpret and draw conclusions about student behavior, and (c) typically teachers use a reactive approach when dealing with classroom behaviors.

Question Ten focused on the areas of social skills instruction received by special education teachers in their in-service training. Similar to general education teachers, the special educators received a limited amount of instruction in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills, but they reported receiving incidental instruction in the area of skill alternatives to aggression. This is an important finding in that general and special educators received the same type of in-service training. If they are to function in a collaborative environment it is important that they be on the same page when dealing with surface social skills and behavior management. However, this is a disappointing finding in that special educators do not report receiving deeper social skills training that may be necessary for students with more severe disabilities. This may lead to special educators feeling ill-prepared to address more severe social skills deficits and behavior problems that may arise in the special and general education classrooms.

Teacher Placement versus Level of Training

Questions Eleven through Fourteen explored whether special education teachers in self-contained or resource room placements received more social skills instruction in their teacher education or in-service training programs. This set of questions also asked whether teachers in resource room placements received more social skill instruction in their teacher education or in-service training than did general educators. The responses were evaluated based on five levels: (a) never mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (b) mentioned and no specific strategy taught, (c) mentioned and strategies mentioned incidentally, (d) mentioned and a specific strategy discussed or, (e) mentioned and a specific strategy taught through direct instruction.

Question Eleven focused on whether special education teachers in self-contained settings received more social skills training in their teacher education than did special education teachers in resource room placements. The data indicated that special education teachers in self-contained settings received no more social skills instruction than special educators in resource room placements. Apparently, there may be a one size fits all instruction occurring in special education teacher preparation programs. That is to say, one course in behavior management is offered and all teachers, regardless of teaching environment, take that one course. It appears that teachers in self-contained classrooms receive no more specialized training opportunities due to the nature of the disabilities of the students with whom they interact; this is an area that requires further investigation.

Question Twelve explored whether special education teachers in self-contained classrooms received more social skills training in their in-service programs than did teachers in resource room placements. The data showed no significant difference between the levels of social skills instruction provided through in-service training to special educators in self-contained settings or special educators who teach in resource rooms. Once again, there may be no differentiation between the level of in-service opportunities made available to special education teachers in self-contained settings and/or resource classrooms. Further investigation is required to determine the general types of in-service opportunities offered within school districts and the demographics of those who attend them.

Question Thirteen asked whether special education teachers who teach in resource rooms received more social skills instruction in their teacher education programs than did general education teachers. The data revealed that special education teachers who teach

in resource rooms received more social skills instruction in their teacher education programs than did general educators. This is consistent with other findings in this study that suggest special education teachers receive more social skills instruction in their teacher education programs.

Question Fourteen examined whether special education teachers who teach in resource rooms received more social skills instruction in their in-service training than did general educators. The data indicated no significant difference between the level of social skills instruction provided during in-service trainings to special educators who teach in resource classrooms and general educators. These findings could be attributed to the availability of in-service training in local school districts. If funding is limited, similar trainings may be provided to both resource and general education teachers, which may explain why there is no observable difference between the two groups.

Conclusions

Several conclusions may be drawn from this study based on the quantitative data that were collected. These conclusions must be viewed in light of the limitations of the study.

1. General education and special education teachers receive a limited amount of direct and incidental social skills instruction in their in-service and teacher education training programs.
2. Special education teachers receive more overall social skills training (direct and incidental) in both their teacher education programs and in-service trainings.
3. General education teachers receive more social skills training in the area of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills in their teacher education

programs, whereas, special education teachers receive more social skills training in both areas of beginning social skills/classroom survival skills and skill alternatives to aggression in their teacher education programs.

4. General education teachers and special education teachers receive the most social skills instruction in the area of skill alternatives to aggression in their in-service trainings.
5. Special education teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms do not receive more social skills instruction in their teacher education or in-service programs than special education teachers who teach in resource classrooms.
6. Special education teachers who teach in resource classrooms receive more social skills training in their teacher education programs than did general education teachers.
7. Special education teachers who teach in resource classrooms do not receive more social skills training in their in-service training than do general education teachers.

Summary

Children/youth must be able to competently perform social skills across settings in order to develop meaningful personal and professional relationships with peers, family members, and teachers (Gresham, 2002). Students who exhibit social skill deficits are at risk of experiencing school failure, difficulty initiating and maintaining relationships, mental illness, or unemployment (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006). The literature indicates the importance and effectiveness social skills and social skills instruction (Baumgart, Filler,

& Asking, 1991; Beebe-Frankenberger, Lane, Bocian, Gresham, & MacMillian, 2005; Gresham, 2006; Lane, Wehby, & Cooley, 2006).

This study contributes to the current knowledge base by providing evidence concerning the lack of instruction provided to pre-service teachers (special and general education) and in-service teachers (special and general education) in the area of social skills. The fourteen research questions in this study focused on the level, type, and specific area of social skills instruction provided to educators in their pre-service and in-service training program. The data indicate that neither special education nor general education teachers are prepared adequately to provide social skills instruction to students within a classroom setting. Overall, teachers do not receive direct social skills instruction in pre-service or in-service training programs.

Because schools and teachers are being held accountable for the level of knowledge obtained by their students (*No Child Left Behind*, 2001) the focus of pre-service and in-service training may be on the learning of academic curricula, rather than social skills instruction. A concern for educators, as classrooms become more inclusive, is that teachers must be prepared to deliver instruction that addresses academic deficits, as well as social deficits. The data from this study indicate that pre-service and in-service teacher education programs are not preparing educators (special and general education) to adequately address social skill deficits.

Recommendations for Further Study

Teachers and parents consider social skills to be very important for the overall development of children/youth. However, current research indicates that teachers feel ill-prepared to provide effective social skills instruction in a classroom setting. This study indicates that this may be due to a limited amount of direct social skills instruction in their teacher education and in-service programs. Because social skills are important to life-long success, additional research is needed to extend the current understanding of social skills instruction in teacher education, local school districts, and general and special education classrooms. Based on the results of this study, the following areas are suggested for further study.

1. Further research should focus on the comparison of courses provided in teacher education programs to the social skills curricula presented in in-service trainings.
2. Further research should investigate federal, state, and district policies regarding social skills instruction at the pre-service and in-service level to determine if mandates are implemented effectively.
3. This study examined the perceptions of special and general education teachers regarding social skills instruction provided in pre-service and in-service trainings. Further research should compare the perceptions of higher education faculty members to school district administrators nationwide regarding social skills instruction in teacher education and in-service trainings.

4. Future research should compare the actual classroom implementation of social skills instruction to the direct instruction of social skills provided in teacher education and in-service settings.
5. This study revealed no significant differences between the social skills training provided to special education teachers who taught in self-contained classrooms and resource rooms. Further research should explore the reasons for this finding.
6. This study found that direct social skill instruction was not being provided in teacher education and in-service programs. Research should be conducted that explores the most effective methods to provide direct social skills instruction in teacher education programs and in-service training.
7. Social skill deficits appear across disability type (e.g. learning disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, autism). Further research should explore the type of social skills instruction provided in teacher education programs depending upon certification requirements.

APPENDIX A

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Special Education

TITLE OF STUDY: An Analysis of Social Skills Instruction Provided in Teacher Education to General and Special Educators

INVESTIGATOR(S): Nicole Dobbins and Kyle Higgins

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 895-3205

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is research the type of social skill instruction provided to teachers in their teacher education programs and in-service training.

Participants

You are being asked to participate in the study because you are currently teaching in a special education or general education classroom, and are enrolled in a degree or certification program through a major institution of higher learning.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: (a) access an online questionnaire via the given web address, and (b) provide truthful responses to all items as listed. It is anticipated that the study will last ten weeks.

Benefits of Participation

There *may/may not* be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn the level and type of social skills instruction provided in teacher education programs and in-service training to general and special educators.

Risks of Participation

There are risks involved in all research studies. This study involves completing a questionnaire online. Information will be disseminated through University Facilitators. This study includes only minimal risks. You may feel uncomfortable when responding to the questionnaire items, or may feel pressured by the University Facilitator to participate.

Cost /Compensation

There will not be financial cost to you to participate in this study. You will participate in this study online. The completion of the questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes *of* your time. You will not be compensated for your time. *The University of*

INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Special Education

TITLE OF STUDY: An Analysis of Social Skills Instruction Provided in Teacher Education to General and Special Educators

INVESTIGATOR(S): Nicole Dobbins and Kyle Higgins

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 895-3205

Nevada, Las Vegas may not provide compensation or free medical care for an unanticipated injury sustained as a result of participating in this research study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Kyle Higgins or Nicole Dobbins at 895-3205. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints, or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 702-895-2794.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for at least 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

Participant Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Special Education

TITLE OF STUDY: An Analysis of Social Skills Instruction Provided in Teacher Education to General and Special Educators

INVESTIGATOR(S): Nicole Dobbins and Kyle Higgins

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 895-3205

Participant Name (Please Print)

Participant Note: Please do not sign this document if the Approval Stamp is missing or is expired.

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY FACILITATOR CONSENT FORM

SPECIAL EDUCATION

INFORMED CONSENT
Department of Special Education

TITLE OF STUDY: An Analysis of Social Skills Instruction Provided in Teacher Education to General and Special Educators

INVESTIGATOR(S): Nicole Dobbins and Kyle Higgins

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 895-3205

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is research the type of social skill instruction provided to teachers in their teacher education programs and in-service training.

Participants

You are being asked to participate in the study because you are currently a university instructor at an institution of higher learning teaching in the area of special education or general education, and will be providing instruction in the spring 2006 semester to at least 30 students enrolled in a degree or certification program.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to disseminate the study description and online access information to 30 university students prior to the start of class. It is anticipated that the study will last ten weeks.

Benefits of Participation

There *may/may not* be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn the level and type of social skills instruction provided in teacher education programs to general and special educators.

Risks of Participation

There are risks involved in all research studies. This study involves you disseminating information to assist in the completing a questionnaire online by your students currently enrolled your university courses. This study includes only minimal risks.

Cost /Compensation

There will not be financial cost to you to participate in this study. You will participate in this study by facilitating the distribution of questionnaire information to participants. The facilitation of the questionnaire information to students will take approximately 15 minutes *of* your time. You will not be compensated for your time. *The University of*

INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Special Education

TITLE OF STUDY: An Analysis of Social Skills Instruction Provided in Teacher Education to General and Special Educators

INVESTIGATOR(S): Nicole Dobbins and Kyle Higgins

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 895-3205

Nevada, Las Vegas may not provide compensation or free medical care for an unanticipated injury sustained as a result of participating in this research study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Kyle Higgins or Nicole Dobbins at 895-3205. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the **UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 702-895-2794.**

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for at least 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

Participant Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Special Education

TITLE OF STUDY: An Analysis of Social Skills Instruction Provided in Teacher Education to General and Special Educators

INVESTIGATOR(S): Nicole Dobbins and Kyle Higgins

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 895-3205

Participant Name (Please Print)

Participant Note: Please do not sign this document if the Approval Stamp is missing or is expired.

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION TO USE TEACHER/STAFF SKILLSTREAMING CHECKLIST

SKILLSTREAMING THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILD

Permission to Use Copyrighted Material

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

I, Research Press

holder of copyrighted material Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklist, 2003

authored by Ellen McGinnins, Ph.D and Arnold P. Goldstein, Ph.D

and originally published in Skillstreaming the Elementary, Revised Edition, New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills, 1997

hereby give permission for Nicole Dobbins to use the above described material in total or in part for inclusion in a doctoral dissertation at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

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Date

Karen Steiner
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Research Press
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APPENDIX D

PERMISSION TO USE TEACHER/STAFF SKILLSTREAMING CHECKLIST SKILLSTREAMING THE ADOLESCENT

Permission to Use Copyrighted Material

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

I, Research Press

holder of copyrighted material Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklist, 2003

authored by Ellen McGinnis, Ph.D and Arnold P. Goldstein, Ph.D

and originally published in Skillstreaming the Adolescent, Revised Edition, New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills, 1997

hereby give permission for Nicole Dobbins to use the above described material in total or in part for inclusion in a doctoral dissertation at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

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11/15/05
Date

Karen Steiner
Name (Typed)

Managing Editor
Title

Research Press
Representing

APPENDIX E

TEACHER/STAFF SKILLSTREAMING QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Information

Please complete the following information, by providing a response or placing a checkmark in the space provided. All information provided will be confidential.

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Ethnicity: Caucasian American _____ Hispanic American _____
 African American _____ Native American _____
 Asian-American _____ Middle Eastern American _____
 Pacific Islander _____ Other (Please fill in) _____

Teacher Education:

BA/BS _____ MA/MS _____ EdS _____ EdD/Phd _____

Area of Concentration (e.g. elementary, special education, secondary):

Additional Endorsements:

Teaching Experience:

Number of Years Teaching _____

Current Teaching Assignment:

Special Education

- Resource Room _____
- Collaborative Consultant (CC/Co-op) _____
- Self-contained Classroom _____
- Grades Taught _____

General Education

- Grade(s) Taught _____
- Content Areas taught, if Secondary _____

Please circle the identified disabilities among students you instruct in your current teaching assignment:

Learning Disabilities	_____	Visual Impairments	_____
Emotional Disturbance	_____	Other Health Impairments	_____
Mental Retardation	_____	Hearing Impairments/Deafness	_____
Orthopedic Impairments	_____	Physical Impairments	_____
Autism	_____	Traumatic Brain Injury	_____
Speech or Language Impairments	_____		

This questionnaire is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of social skills instruction training that is provided to educators in teacher education programs and in-service training.

Social Skills: Social significant behaviors in specific situations that predict important social outcomes for students (Gresham, 1983).
Incidental instruction: Instruction conducted during unstructured activities for brief periods of time typically when students show an interest in or are involved with materials and activities (Brown, McEvoy, & Bishop, 1991).
Direct Instruction: Research-based instructional approach in which the instructor presents subject matter using a review of previously taught information, presentation of new concepts or skills, guided practice, feedback and correction, independent. (Friend & Bursuck, 2006).

Please rate the level of instruction received in your teacher education program and in-service training in your school district for each of the following social skills:

- Circle 1 if the area was never mentioned and a specific strategy was never taught
- Circle 2 if the area was mentioned, but and no specific strategy was taught
- Circle 3 if the area was mentioned, and strategies were mentioned incidentally
- Circle 4 if the area was mentioned, and a specific strategy was discussed
- Circle 5 if the area was mentioned, and a specific strategy was taught through direct instruction

Group 1
Beginning Social Skills/Classroom Survival Skills

	Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
1. Listening: Teaching a youngster to pay attention to someone who is talking and make an effort to understand what is being said.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training.....	1	2	3	4	5
2. Starting a Conversation: Teaching a youngster to talk to others about light topics and then lead into more serious topics.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
3. Having A Conversation: Teaching a youngster to talk to others about things of interest to both of them.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training.....	1	2	3	4	5
4. Asking a Question: Teaching a youngster to decide what information is needed and asking the right person for that situation.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
5. Saying Thank You: Teaching a youngster to let others know that he/she is grateful for favors, etc.?					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
6. Introducing Yourself: Teaching a youngster to become acquainted with new people on his/her own initiative.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group 1
Beginning Social Skills/Classroom Survival Skills

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
7.	Introducing Other People: Teaching a youngster to help others become acquainted with one another.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Giving a Compliment: Teaching a youngster to tell others that he/she likes something about them or their activities.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Bringing Materials to Class: Teaching a youngster to remember the books and materials he/she needs class.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Completing Assignments: Teaching a youngster to complete assignments a his/her independent academic level.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Saying Thank You: Teaching a youngster to tell others he/she appreciates help given, favors, and so forth.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Following Instructions: Teaching a youngster to understand instructions and follow them?					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group 1
Beginning Social Skills/Classroom Survival Skills

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
13.	Contributing to Discussions: Teaching a youngster to Participate in class discussions in accordance with classroom rules.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Offering Help to an Adult: Teaching a youngster to offer to help you at appropriate times and in an appropriate manner.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Asking a Question: Teaching a youngster to know how and when to ask a question of another person.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Ignoring Distractions: Teaching a youngster to ignore Classroom distractions.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Making Corrections: Teaching a youngster to make the necessary corrections on assignments without getting frustrated.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Deciding on Something to Do: Teaching a youngster to find something to do when he/she has free time.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Setting a Goal: Teaching a youngster to set realistic goals for himself/herself and take the necessary steps to meet these goals.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group II
Advanced Social Skills/Friendship Making Skills

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
20.	Asking for Help: Teaching a youngster to request assistance when he/she is having difficulty.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Beginning a Conversation: Teaching a youngster to know how and when to begin a conversation with another person.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Ending a Conversation: Teaching a youngster to end a conversation when it is necessary and in an appropriate manner.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Playing a Game: Teaching a youngster to Play games with classmates fairly.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Asking a Favor: Teaching a youngster to know how to ask a favor of another person. appropriate manner.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Offering Help to a Classmate: Teaching a youngster to Recognize when someone needs or wants assistance and offer this help.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group II
Advanced Social Skills/Friendship Making Skills

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
26.	Giving a Compliment: Teaching a youngster to tell others that he/she like something about them or something they have done..					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Accepting a Compliment: Teaching a youngster to accept these comments given by adults or his/her peers in a friendly way.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Suggesting an Activity: Teaching a youngster to suggest appropriate activities to others.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Sharing: Teaching a youngster to be agreeable to sharing Things with others and , if not, does he/she offer acceptable reasons for not sharing.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Joining In: Teaching a youngster to decide on the best way to become part of an ongoing activity or group.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Giving Instructions: Teaching a youngster to clearly explain to others how they are to do a specific task.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group II

Advanced Social Skills/Friendship Making Skills

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
32.	Following Instructions: Teaching a youngster to pay attention to instructions, give his/her reactions, and carry the instructions out adequately.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Apologizing: Teaching a youngster to tell others that he/she is sorry after doing something wrong.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Convincing Others: Teaching a youngster to attempt to persuade others that his/her ideas are better and will be more useful than those of the other person.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group III
Skills for Dealing with Feeling

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
35.	Knowing Your Feelings: Teaching a youngster to try to recognize which emotions he/she has at different times.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Expressing Your Feelings: Teaching a youngster to let others know which emotions he/she is feeling.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Understanding the Feeling of Others: Teaching a youngster to try figure out what other people are feeling.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Dealing with Someone Else's Anger: Teaching a youngster to understand other people's angry feelings.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Expressing Affection: Teaching a youngster to let others know what he/she cares about them.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Dealing with Fear: Teaching a youngster to figure out why he/she is afraid and do something to reduce the fear.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group III
Skills for Dealing with Feeling

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
41.	Rewarding Yourself: Teaching a youngster to say and do nice things for himself when the reward is deserved.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
42.	Recognizing Another's Feelings: Teaching a youngster to try to figure out in acceptable ways how others are feeling.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
43.	Expressing Concern for Another: Teaching a youngster to express concern for others in acceptable ways.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
44.	Dealing with Your Anger: Teaching a youngster to use acceptable ways to express his/her anger.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
45.	Dealing with Another's Anger: Teaching a youngster to Understand another's anger without getting angry himself/herself.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group IV
Skill Alternatives to Aggression

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
46.	Asking permission: Teaching a youngster to figure out when permission is needed to do something and then ask the right person for permission.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
47.	Sharing Something: Teaching a youngster to offer to share what he/she has with others who might appreciate it.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
48.	Helping Others: Teaching a youngster to give assistance to others who might need or want help.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
49.	Negotiating: Teaching a youngster to arrive at a plan that satisfies both him/her and others who have taken different positions.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
50.	Using Self-Control: Teaching a youngster to control his/her temper so that things do not get out of hand.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
51.	Standing Up for Your Rights: Teaching a youngster to assert his/her rights by letting people know where he/she stands on an issue.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group IV
Skill Alternatives to Aggression

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
52.	Responding to Teasing: Teaching a youngster to deal with being teased by others in ways that allow him/her to remain in control of himself/herself.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
53.	Avoiding Trouble with Others: Teaching a youngster to stay out of situations that might get him/her into trouble.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
54.	Keeping Out of Fights: Teaching a youngster to figure out ways other than fighting to handle difficult situations.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
55.	Problem Solving: Teaching a youngster to when a Problem occurs, think of alternatives, choose an alternative, then evaluate how well this solved the problem.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
56.	Accepting Consequences: Teaching a youngster to accept the consequences for his/her behavior without becoming defensive or upset.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
57.	Dealing with an Accusation: Teaching a youngster to deal in positive ways with being accused of something.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group V
Skills for Dealing with Stress

	Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
58. Making a Complaint: Teaching a youngster to tell others when they are responsible for creating a particular problem for him/her and then attempt to find a solution for the problem.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
59. Answering a Complaint: Teaching a youngster to arrive at a fair solution to someone's justified complaint.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
60. Being a Good Sport: Teaching a youngster to express an honest compliment to others about how they played a game.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
61. Dealing with Embarrassment: Teaching a youngster to do things that help him/her feel less embarrassed or self-conscious.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
62. Dealing with Being Left Out: Teaching a youngster to decide whether he/she has been left out of some activity and then do things to feel better about the situation.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
63. Standing Up for a Friend: Teaching a youngster to let other people know when a friend has not been treated fairly.					
Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group V
Skills for Dealing with Stress

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
64.	Responding to Persuasion: Teaching a youngster to carefully consider the position of another person, comparing it to his/her own, before deciding what to do.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
65.	Responding to Failure: Teaching a youngster to figure out the reason for failing in a particular situation and what he/she can do about it in order to be more successful in the future.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
66.	Dealing with Contradictory Messages: Teaching a youngster to recognize and deal with the confusion that results when others tell him/her one thing, but say or do things that indicate that they mean something else.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
67.	Dealing with an Accusation: Teaching a youngster to figure out what he/she has been accused of and why, then decide on the best way to deal with the person who made the accusation.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
68.	Getting Ready for a Difficult Conversation: Teaching a youngster to plan on the best way to present his/her point of view prior to a stressful conversation.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group V
Skills for Dealing with Stress

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
69.	Dealing with Group Pressure: Teaching a youngster to decide what he/she wants to do when others want him/her to do something else.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
70.	Dealing with Boredom: Teaching a youngster select acceptable activities when he/she is bored.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
71.	Deciding What Caused a Problem: Teaching a youngster to asses what caused a problem and accept responsibility if appropriate.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
72.	Dealing with Losing: Teaching a youngster to accept losing at a game or activity without becoming upset or angry.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
73.	Reacting to Failure: Teaching a youngster to figure out the reason(s) for his/her failure and ways he/she can be more successful the next time.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
74.	Accepting No: Teaching a youngster to accept being told no without becoming unduly upset or angry.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group V
Skills for Dealing with Stress

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
75.	Saying No: Teaching a youngster to say no in acceptable ways to things to things he/she doesn't want to do or to things that may get him/her into trouble.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
76.	Relaxing: Teaching a youngster to relax when tense or upset.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
77.	Dealing with Group Pressure: Teaching a youngster to decide what he/she wants to do when others pressure him/her to do something else.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
78.	Dealing with Wanting Something That Isn't Yours: teaching a youngster to refrain from taking things that don't belong to him/her.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
79.	Being Honest: Teaching a youngster to be honest when Confronted with a negative action.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group VI
Planning Skills

		Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
80.	Deciding on Something to Do: Teaching a youngster to deal with feeling bored by starting an interesting activity.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
81.	Deciding what Caused a Problem: Teaching a youngster to find out whether an event was caused by something that was within his/her control.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
82.	Setting a Goal: Teaching a youngster to realistically decide on what he/she can accomplish prior to starting a task.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
83.	Deciding on Your Abilities: Teaching a youngster to realistically figure out how well he/she might do at a particular task.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5
84.	Gathering Information: Teaching a youngster to decide what he/she needs to know and how to get that information.					
	Teacher Education Program.....	1	2	3	4	5
	In-Service Training	1	2	3	4	5

Group VI
Planning Skills

85. **Arranging Problem by Importance:** Teaching a youngster to decide realistically which of a number of problems is most important and should be dealt with first.

Teacher Education Program.....
In-Service Training

86. **Making a Decision:** Teaching a youngster to consider possibilities and make choices that he/she feels will be best.

Teacher Education Program.....
In-Service Training

87. **Concentrating on a Task:** Teaching a youngster to make those preparations that will help him/her get a job done.

Teacher Education Program.....
In-Service Training

Not Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ No Specific Strategy Taught	Mentioned/ Strategies Mentioned Incidental	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy Discussed	Mentioned/ Specific Strategy taught Direct Instruction
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX F

PROTOCOL DESCRIPTION

Dear Prospective Participant:

You are being invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to research the level and type of social skills instruction received by general and special education teachers in their pre-service and school-based in-service training programs.

Your input is needed to contribute to the knowledge base of how teachers are prepared to teach in inclusive settings. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

This study involves the completion of an online questionnaire, which should only take about 30 – 45 minutes of your time. If you wish to volunteer, please go to the following URL address <http://131.216.58.222/ndobbins/>. Once you press enter, you will be directed to the homepage of the questionnaire. It would be greatly appreciated if you could complete the questionnaire by September 24, 2006.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Dr. Kyle Higgins or Nicole Dobbins, at (702) 895-3205.

Thank you for your time.

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