# Teaching Principled Negotiation Skills to Parents and their Children

## The Impact of Parental Involvement

Kelly-Joelle Rizzo, B.A., B.Ed.

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate

Studies in Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

Faculty of Education, Brock University

St. Catharines, Ontario

Abstract

This study explored the impact of training parents and children concurrently in principled negotiation skills for the purpose of developing negotiation skills and problem solving abilities in children. A second experimental group was utilized to determine the viability of negotiation skills training of junior elementary students for the purpose of improving problem solving and conflict resolving abilities. The student population in each experimental group was trained using The Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996). A control group was also established using the remaining grade four and five students attending the participating school. These students did not receive training as part of this study.

Student group distribution was as follows: Experimental group 1 (students with parent participant) consisted of 10 (5 grade five and 5 grade 4 students), Experimental group 2 students without parent participant) consisted of 48 (20 grade 4 and 28 grade 5 students), and the Control group 3 (55 grade 4 and 5 students).

The impact of training was measured using the Five Factor Negotiation Scale developed for use with the Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996). This measure was employed as a pre- and post-test questionnaire to the total student population, (113 students) to determine levels of ability in each of the key elements of negotiation, personal initiative, collaboration, communication, conflict based perspective taking, and conflict resolution approach (Nakkula & Nikitopoulos, unpublished). This measure has a coefficient alpha of .75 which is acceptable for this type of affective instrument. As well, open ended ability questions designed to measure ability, knowledge, and behaviour as they relate to negotiation skill application were given to the total student population, (113 students). Finally, journals were maintained by the students in both experimental groups, and informal feedback discussions were held with students and parents participating in the study.

The intent of using both qualitative and quantitative measures was to provide an overall perspective of student abilities as they related to principled negotiation skills. While the quantitative measures were from the student perspective, more qualitative information was sought from parents and teachers through informal interviews, discussions, and use of confidential feedback cards. For analysis purposes, the ability questions were randomly selected for Experimental group 2 and Control group 3 in an effort to balance the groups more equitably with Experimental group 1.

The findings of this study indicate that students of the junior elementary school age can be taught how to perceive conflict in a more constructive way. However, they are not as likely to use their skills when the conflict is with a sibling as they are with a peer, a teacher, or a parent. While no statistically significant differences between mean scores for Experimental groups 1 and 2 exist some subtle differences are noted. Overall, increases in mean scores for grade 4 students exceeded the increases for grade 5 students within Experimental group 1. The implication being that younger students benefit more from having a parent trained in principled negotiation skills than older students.

The skill level of a parent in principled negotiation can not be underestimated. Without a consistent and effective role model the likelihood of developing student skill level to a point of automaticity is greatly reduced. Enough so that perhaps the emphasis should be placed on training parents more so than the students.

Acknowledgements

Success is not measured by the position one has reached in life, rather by the obstacles overcome while trying to succeed. Booker T. Washington

The success of this body of research is due in part to the support and guidance I received from my committee. I would also like to thank Dr. K. Kirkwood for his assistance in analyzing the collected data. The co-operation of C. Nikitopoulos and M. Nakkula of Harvard University was also greatly appreciated. Finally, I owe a great debt of gratitude to my family and friends who supported me through all the hurdles in the completion of this work.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

# CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

## Introduction

This is a study which explores the impact of parental negotiation skills on elementary school age children's abilities to resolve conflicts and solve problems. Much research has been conducted in the field of behaviour modification, such as the development of conflict resolution skills, to reduce violent incidents. Many researchers have determined the locus for change to be the child, and are school based. These interventions do not involve parents directly. (Webster-Stratton & Herbert, 1994). Such interventions typically take one of two forms, (a) where a hypothesized deficit in social behaviour is targeted and (b) where a broad skill set, including problem solving is targeted using cognitive behavioral methods (Boyle, 1991). Others have emphasized the role of the parent(s), and tend to be community based (Webster-Stratton & Herbert, 1994). The former approach would aim to reduce symptoms in the child, incorporating a variety of strategies including individual, group, cognitive and behavioral therapies. The latter would emphasize family therapy, parent management training, and support groups as a means of intervention. (Boyle, 1991)This study intends to reveal the impact parental participation level has on student conflict resolving abilities. By teaching parents and their children negotiation techniques for resolving conflict together and comparing the results of this group with a second experimental group consisting only of children who received the same instruction, and finally comparing to a control group where no negotiation instruction will be given, this impact should be apparent. This method of training is a cognitive behavioral approach which addresses a broad skill set, including teaching perception taking skills, an awareness of empathy, and strategies to communicate wants and needs effectively.

Compared with younger elementary school age students, adolescents generally depend upon their parents less for decision making purposes. According to Bulkeley and Cramer (1990), Verduyn, Lord, and Forrest (1990), and Wise, Bundy, Bundy, and Wise (1991), early adolescence is the best time for intervention when working on social skill development (as cited in Ogilvy, 1994). Fine (1979), identifies the years between 6 and 12 as the time when children are maturing in their social relationships. This is also the time when children are expected to participate in a large number of group activities for learning.

There are two major approaches to studying conflict resolution behaviour of elementary aged students (D. Johnson, R. Johnson, Dudley, Ward, & Magnuson, 1995). The first is a social psychological approach, and second is a cognitive developmental approach. These two perspectives differ in the age requirements for negotiation skill acquisition. The former approach maintains that in the right conditions, students of all ages can learn to negotiate. The latter approach claims only more mature students can be taught to negotiate effectively. Johnson et al. (1995), conducted conflict resolution research successfully with students aged 7 to 12 years. With this research in mind, this study will focus specifically on pre-teenage students. It is expected that these students will yield the greatest effects from having their parents learn with them. At the preteen stage of development students are still highly reliant on their parents for provisions and decision making. Parents are also still valued as leaders by their children; children look up to them. Therefore, to have their parents learn with them should serve to reinforce the importance of the skills being taught and also provide the children with trained persons with whom to practise these skills. Finally, such a model also serves to reduce the chances of inconsistency. When children are taught skills that the parents are not familiar with, it is reasonable to expect some conflict in the home setting when the children attempt to employ their skills. This is particularly true when children are still learning the skills and may be using them incorrectly. Having their parents trained should allow

the children to learn and consolidate their skills more effectively because they can receive guidance at home as well as at school. To quote author Marvin Fine (1979), "the modelling and reinforcement effects of the parent are reflected dramatically in the child's pattern of problem solving and peer relationships" (p. 42). To delay such training into teen years would not likely be as effective because students at that stage of their development are attempting to sever, or at least loosen, ties from parents as decision makers and want instead to make more choices independent of parent's wishes. Johnson and Johnson (1998) claim that the earlier students are taught constructive strategies for resolving conflict, and the longer the training continues, the more likely students are to integrate these skills and make use of them into adulthood.

## Background

In recent years educators have had to address, more than ever, the development of social and related communication skills of students. More than ever, students appear to be floundering in this area of their development. Newspapers, television, and educational journals are filled with articles reporting on children who bully other students and even adults who appear to have no qualms about confronting authority figures and who have committed heinous crimes either in the community or in the schools themselves. According to Elliot (1994), youth violence has taken the lead as the primary preventable cause of death for adolescents (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1996). This appears to be a growing trend in many areas of Western society and yet, more than ever, educators are trying to teach social skill development in their classrooms. In Ontario, educators are also asked to evaluate these skills in a section of the provincial report card entitled, Learning Skills. Since no clear direction from the province is available as to how to teach or evaluate this aspect of student development, many teachers are left to their own devices. Some are obviously more confident and experienced than others in this domain, which may influence the nature of instruction and assessment employed. Clearly, not everything that has been tried is working.

Many schools have initiated programs specifically for resolving conflict, such as, peer mediation. According to the National Association for Mediation in Education, as many as 8,000 conflict resolution programs were employed in American schools in 1994 ( Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Others have offered training to parents for better management of rebellious children. Agencies in the community are accessed by educators to gain greater understanding of the social and emotional aspects of child development and maladjustment. Even with all these strategies in place, students do not appear to be developing critical social skills. If the strategies were working, stories like the 1990 Time magazine article entitled, "Shameful Bequests to the Next Generation,"

should not exist. "Every 8 seconds of the school day, a child drops out. Every 26 seconds, a child runs away from home. Every 47 seconds, a child is abused and neglected .... Every day 135 000 children bring guns to school." (Gibbs, 1990, p. 42). With statistics like those quoted from this article there can be little question as to the problems facing children, their parents, and the community at large. According to Gibbs (1990), even children from the most comfortable surroundings are at risk. While these statistics are American, it should not make them any less alarming for Canadians to read and respond to with concern for their own. This is particularly true in light of a recently publicized high school shooting which occurred in Alberta, Canada in early May 1999. The accused is a 14 year old boy who has been described by peers as someone who, "didn't get along" with the other students.

## Statement of the Problem

If educators, parents, and community agencies are honestly trying to improve the communication and social skill development of students in an effort to reduce the number of interpersonal problems they develop, then what explanation can be given for why so many problems of that very nature persist? Perhaps the weak link is not in what educators, parents, and community agencies have tried but in how they have tried to accomplish it. In their 1996 thorough review of the relevant research, Johnson and Johnson conclude that little documentation of either the nature or frequency of conflict in schools exists. Without this key information it is difficult to determine whether violence in schools is actually increasing or if it is being overdramatized (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). While violence in schools may have been found to be somewhat overemphasized, Johnson and Johnson do acknowledge the serious concern which is warranted for how students manage their conflicts. According to Deutsch's (1973)

interpretation of social interdependence theory, it is the way in which conflict is perceived and interpreted which is important, more so that the type of conflict.

As for the type of conflict, Deutsch differentiates types based on control over resources, differing preferences, values, beliefs, and goals for the relationship (Deutsch, 1973). Teaching students strategies for recognizing and managing conflict should be crucial if the observable symptoms of this problem, such as verbal disputes and aggression, are to be ameliorated.

Framing conflicts more positively, by teaching students how to resolve them constructively helps to ensure (1) actualization of potential from student diversity (2) safe, constructive classrooms and schools (3) effective use of conflict for instructional purposes, and (4) student ability to manage conflicts in any number of contexts including school, family, and community (Johnson & Johnson, 1998).

Parents and teachers have for many years acted as partners in the education and socialization of children. Recently, according to Woody, Yeager and Woody (1990) there has been a tendency for schools to place greater blame for the social failings of children with the family (as cited in O'Callaghan, 1993). Likewise according to Woody et. al. (1990) parents tend to blame schools for increasing behaviour and academic problems (as cited in O'Callaghan, 1993). Meanwhile, community agencies, such as the police are blaming both systems (O'Callaghan, 1993). Each element operates, often, in isolation of the others. Communication, one of the very skills which is to be taught to the students, is frequently very poor between, and even within, the parties involved. The result is often duplication of service and /or overlooked service areas because someone thought the matter was being dealt with elsewhere. The solution seems fairly straight forward, get these groups together so that energy and resources are expended in efficient and effective ways.

In the United States, the implementation of the school based family therapy model has attempted to accomplish exactly that (Evans & Carter, 1997). Using the

school as the facility for delivering therapy, students, educators, parents, and a school based family counsellor work together to address specific areas of need for specific students, as well as the school community at large. By bringing these parties together, the likelihood of completely addressing problem areas is increased (Evans & Carter, 1997). This approach is also in keeping with the philosophy advocated by O'Callaghan (1993) which claims to best understand and treat the needs of children the entire environment of that child must be considered.Thus, school, family, and community need to be involved.

In addition to how programs should be delivered, consideration of when should also be made. Often attention from all parties concerned is only given once a serious problem reveals itself. Until that point is reached, educators address social problems in the school setting and parents do the same in the home, while community agencies remain uninvolved. Thus, any joint programs are entered into at the intervention stage rather than the preventative stage. Rather than wait for a problem to arise, perhaps preventative programs should also be jointly participated in.

Not all programs will be equally supported or participated in by parents. According to Prinz & Miller (1994) parents who are economically disadvantaged, socially isolated, single, or depressed and whose children are at the greatest risk are the least likely to participate or benefit from parent training programs. Programs which teach life skills that are viewed by the participants as useful should be the most appealing. According to Sattes (1985), when parents can see the direct benefits of programs for their child they view the program as meaningful. Sattes also states the importance of making the parents feel their involvement is helping and in supporting parents in their learning. Parents are more likely to participate if they believe they will be successful (as cited in McAllister - Swap, 1993). Furthermore, according to Cunningham, Bremner, and Boyle (1995), group parent training programs which allow parents to discuss solutions to problems, collaborate on strategies, share success, and provide feedback, yield more

advantageous results than a more didactic approach. Among the advantages are positive participation during sessions, greater adherence, improved sense of self efficacy, and more positive feedback.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study is to first establish whether teaching parents negotiation skills with their child will significantly improve their child's ability to resolve conflict and solve problems of an interpersonal nature. Consideration will also be given to the impact of teaching negotiation skills on the problem solving and conflict resolving abilities of junior elementary age students within the regular classroom program. If a statistically significant impact is found in the former group of participants but not in the latter, schools aiming to improve the social functioning of children, specifically their abilities to resolve conflict and solve problems effectively, should include a parental component in the design. If equal improvement is noted in the second group, the students only group, schools could implement programs as part of the regular health or social studies curriculum to teach children how to negotiate effectively. This would also provide teachers with greater insight into students' interpersonal skills so that they might be able to evaluate and report accurately in the learning skills development section of the provincial report card. Any program development or implementation should be undertaken with input and support from experts in the field to ensure program validity.

## Questions to be Answered

A number of programs are currently in place within elementary schools with the purpose of teaching conflict resolving communication and problem solving skills. Most of these programmes emphasize the mediation aspect of resolving conflict, which means

the majority of the population is untrained and relies on those with the training to assist in the resolution of conflict. If this skill is of value, why should only a minority population be trained? Further, the ability to resolve conflict and problem solve requires a higher level of creative thinking skills, being able to see in the abstract, possibilities for solutions. This area of social development, present in being able to negotiate solutions to problems, is a life skill which should serve to benefit all students right into adulthood. Why then should not all students be given the opportunity to acquire the tools necessary to resolve their own conflicts? Are there specific types of conflicts where principled negotiation (for a win win outcome), or integrative negotiation skills (Johnson & Johnson, 1996), are more likely to be employed than the win - lose, or distributive negotiation skills (Johnson & Johnson, 1996)? At what age can these specific skills be taught in a meaningful way? If an ability to think in the abstract is required, are primary age students too young to benefit from such training? Is it more reasonable to have primary age students exposed to mediators to model problem solving? Furthermore, do such young children see their parents as the final authority? This may make talking about issues using such a level form of communication very difficult. Would parents of primary age students be willing to empower their child to enable effective expression of their wants and needs in this way? These are only some of the questions which may fuel future explorations into ways to enhance the communicating abilities of children for the purpose of building better relationships and satisfying basic needs and wants constructively rather than destructively.

## Description of Program

The Program for Young Negotiators (PYN) is an American developed program designed for use in schools by trained teachers with students in grades 6 to 8 (Curhan, 1996). The focus of this program is on teaching children the formal steps in principled

negotiation in an effort to attain win win outcomes as often as possible. The program requires approximately 15 hours of instruction time. Instruction is broken down into modules which address broader concepts such as perspective taking and empathy as well as specific negotiation strategies such as stating and evaluating options.

The goal of PYN is to teach middle school children how to communicate their wants and needs effectively for the purpose of having those needs and wants met to the extent as it is possible without causing detriment to others.

A pilot of this program was facilitated by this researcher, a trained instructor, in a Canadian grade 7 classroom in 1996. Statistical data regarding attitudes towards and skills necessary for win - win negotiation was collected and sent to Harvard University for compilation. At the time this study was conducted, no summary data was available from Harvard. A concurrent pilot was also run in a high school in the North end of Toronto. In 1997 the program was employed in 4 other grade 7 classrooms by this researcher in conjunction with the classroom teachers.

## Definition of Terms

Conflict is perhaps the most misunderstood phenomena in relationships. Gordon (1970), suggests that a relationship without apparent conflict may be more unhealthy than one with conflict. Also according to Gordon, how conflicts are resolved is the most critical factor in determining the health of any relationship (Gordon, 1970). Conflict resolution can be defined in a number of ways, depending upon the context.
Deutsch (1973), defines conflict as, "a state of incompatible behaviours" (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, p. 463). According to Johnson and Johnson (1996), conflict is a variable within a relationship that involves two or more parties. They also identify three different types of conflict: controversial conflict, conceptual conflict, and conflict of interests. Controversial conflict occurs when the ideas, theories, or opinions of one

individual differ from those of another, and the two individuals try to reach an agreement (Johnson & Johnson, 1979). Conceptual conflict is closely linked to controversial conflict. It occurs when two or more conflicting theories or ideas exist in the mind of a single individual and must be resolved (Johnson & Johnson, 1979). For the purposes of this study the emphasis will be placed on conflicts of interest, whereby parties experience interference by another while trying to achieve their goals (Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

Negotiation can also be defined in more than one way depending upon the goals of the parties involved. Distributive negotiation is based on the premise that one can only have their needs and wants met at the expense of the other parties involved. Integrative negotiation is based on a different premise, whereby the parties involved attempt to maximize the gains for all sides. Again, for the purposes of this study, emphasis will be placed on the latter form of negotiation, the integrative approach. The Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996), described earlier, is based on principled negotiation which originated at the Harvard Negotiation Project. As is the case with the integrative approach, principled negotiation stresses mutual gain, rather than a one side takes all at the other's expense, approach (Fisher & Ury, 1983). Principled negotiation takes into account not only the goal but also the quality of the relationship. Neither is expendable.

Programs designed to teach social skills, such as resolving conflicts and solving problems, should be classified based on approach. Pelligrini and Urbain (1985), identified four approaches for social skill intervention programs. They are (a) contingency management, (b) modelling, (c) coaching, and (d) cognitive problem solving. In contingency management, desirable behaviours are reinforced while undesirable ones are ignored. This approach is most appropriate for reinforcing existing skills rather than teaching new ones. Modelling on the other hand, consists of repetitively demonstrating behaviours, and can be used to teach and/or modify existing skills. Coaching teaches using specific rules or instructions which the child is then to apply in a

variety of situations. Feedback and further support is given as needed for skill acquisition. The final approach is based on teaching interpersonal cognitive problem solving skills. It also requires direct instruction, however the instruction is not in the form of rules but is, instead, on training thinking processes (Ogilvy, 1994). The Program for Young Negotiators is a combination of the last two approaches. Specific steps are given to conduct principled negotiations but at the same time emphasis is placed on changing how students think about conflict and resolving it.

## Rationale

Within the educational community, concern is frequently voiced about the apparent lack of social skill development of students today. Out of necessity, programs are put into place which address the observable symptoms of the problem, such as school yard violence. Programs such as mediation through peers may address the observable conflict but not the underlying problem which led to the conflict in the first place. Greater skill in communicating wants and needs effectively may have prevented the conflict altogether. The occurrence of conflict and the need to resolve problems is a fact of life present in all relationships at some time or another. It is reasonable to assume that those members of society, be they children or adults, who are most skilled in the area of communication, will be most successful in satisfying their needs and wants in a manner which is not detrimental to existing relationships.

According to Ogilvy (1994), social skills training aimed at bringing about change in how children manage real life situations may be necessary, but it may not be enough. Difficulties have been identified in areas beyond the social realm which have been linked to deficits in social skill development (Ogilvy, 1994). There is a substantial amount of literature, including that of Cartledge and Milburn (1980), Michelson, Sugai, Wood, and

Kazdin (1983), and Hughes and Sullivan (1980), which supports the claim that poor social skills contribute to academic underachievement.

Children who learn effective social skills (such as principled negotiation) in the school environment and are able to practise using them both in the school setting and in the home should consolidate their learning more quickly. Seeing parents, educators, and peers who share in the belief that communication is key to getting needs and wants met will reinforce for the student that there are peaceful means to obtain what they want or need. Repeated use of this strategy as a young student may reduce the likelihood of the student, as an adult, resorting to violent means to achieve their goals. Beyond improved communication, teaching integrative/principled negotiation skills may also serve to teach students patience and perseverance as well as tolerance for others as the needs and wants of others must also be considered and acknowledged.

As professionals, educators are constantly looking for signs of growth in students. Many become discouraged when they read headlines in newspapers like, "When Children Murder." Rather than improvement, there appears to be a deterioration in the abilities of today's children to resolve conflicts in their lives despite the extraordinary efforts of many concerned parents and educators. The problem may be that the majority of programs employed to address related social skills are too specific, focussing on anger management or relationship skills, where negotiation skills are a more generalizable skill for both children and adults. There may, as a result, be greater opportunity to employ these skills than a skill such as anger management. According to the research of Ellis and Whittington (1983), two flaws in social skill programs persist. First, some are too specific and lack any higher order integratable skills, which supports the claim made earlier. A second weakness is that some are too general, and lack any specific behavioral point of reference (as cited in Ogilvy, 1994). Ogilvy claims that the problem lies in the lack of any theoretical model of social skills to govern such programs.

Another problem with programs geared to teach such social skills as resolving conflicts peacefully and solving problems effectively, according to a review of the literature by Gresham (1985), was the selection of children. Age was not found to be the crucial component but rather the need to match the developmental level of the children to the strategies being used (as cited in Ogilvy, 1994).

Finally, the assessment of skill performance before and after intervention is yet another difficulty for social skill programs identified in the literature by Hughes and Sullivan (1988), (as cited in Ogilvy, 1994). Gresham (1985) claims that using a paper and pencil test such as the Means End Problem Solving Test may give a formal analysis but it is not reliable or valid enough to assess cognitive behaviour training. Therefore assessment, according to Gresham and Elliott (1984), should include additional components, such as interviewing (as cited in Ogilvy, 1994). This study will attempt to combine qualitative and quantitative data in an effort to depict a more wholistic picture of the findings.

## Importance of the Study

If the instruction of negotiation skills for parents and children together is found to be a significant factor in a child's ability to resolve conflict and solve problems, two things may follow. First, schools and community agencies may offer negotiation training to staff, students, and parents to increase the likelihood of students using their skills. Second, agencies such as Community Mental Health may use a similar model for the delivery of other skill based treatment programmes. This might prove to be especially valuable to parents uncomfortable in the school environment.

If a significant improvement is noted in the children only experimental group, it is hoped that the instruction of negotiation skills would become integrated with future curriculum taught in elementary schools.

By and large the area likely to be impacted by the results of this study is the area of practice, although it is hoped some contribution to the theory behind teaching negotiation skills to elementary students to enhance their management of conflict might be made.

## Scope and Limitations

This study will focus specifically on Canadian elementary school age children from low to middle income families attending an urban public school. Any findings will be specific to this sample population. While some extrapolation on the significance of these findings for older public school students may be made, they will not be the primary focus.

It is believed that further long term study of participants as high school age students may be necessary to determine the full impact of parental participation in negotiation skills training. This could be an extension of the current study. Research by Ogilvy (1994), suggests good support in the short term for specific changes in trained social behaviours, but admits there is little evidence to suggest that these benefits extend beyond the short term. It is also unclear as to whether these specific skills have any "generalizability".

Students in the high school age group typically seek opportunities to operate independent of their parents. However, reaching this point will likely mean many conflicts along the way. Therefore the students whose parents were also trained to negotiate for win - win outcomes may navigate their way through the mine field of adolescent development more successfully than students of parents without these skills. If training were to be delayed until this point, it seems unlikely that parents and their children would see much progress because of the limited time frame to practise their skills. Also, getting adolescents to “buy into the idea” may be less likely because of the

developmental shift from parental influence emphasis to peer influence emphasis. For these reasons, preadolescent students and their parents make up the sample population.

The sample size was limited to 10 parents and 10 students in Experimental group 1, 48 students in Experimental group 2, and 55 students in Control group 3 (the control group). Numbers were limited to ensure manageability of sessions, allowing for maximal instructor trainee contact for constructive feedback. However the N of 10 for Experimental group 1 may present problems as it may reduce the statistical power.

A final limitation is the availability of primary sources. Where efforts made to locate the primary sources failed, secondary sources have been relied upon.

## Outline of Remainder of the Document

The following four chapters will address the relevant literature available, the methodology employed, the findings of the current study, and a summary.

The literature review includes articles, books, and relevant research from the past ten years and beyond in the fields of parent - child communication and relationships, negotiation skills in elementary age students, conflict resolution skills in elementary age students and adults, school based family therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, a family systems perspective on therapy, and identifiable commonalities in maladaptive problem solvers.

Chapter three, the methodology, covers the research design of the current study, the instrumentation employed, the classroom procedures, and a brief explanation regarding the underlying methodology.

Chapter four is a presentation of the results of the current study. Results, once stated are interpreted in terms of the hypothesis.

The final chapter, summarizes the study. Conclusions reached will be presented, as will the implications for future study of negotiation training for students and their

parents. Related areas for later study will be explored as new questions grow out of this study. Limitations of this study will be discussed and suggestions made for reducing them in future endeavours.

# CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

## Introduction

In an attempt to better understand the behaviour of children, much research has been conducted both in the home and school settings. This research takes many different forms depending on the proposed locus for change. In some studies emphasis has been placed on what parents do to activate specific behaviours in their children (Webster-Stratton & Herbert, 1994). Other studies place greater emphasis on what the child chooses to do in order to change their behaviour (Webster-Stratton & Herbert, 1994). Much of this research centres around a common element, communication within relationships. This is the most basic element of the current study and will be the first area explored in this literature review. In addition to studies focussing on communication within parent and child relationships, the research on communication for the purpose of resolving conflict between children and their peers will also be reviewed.

Upon examination, weak basic communication skills have been found to be a keystone in identifying and predicting problem areas for a child's social development, particularly their problem solving abilities (Robin & Foster, 1989). A number of contributing factors for the development of weak communication skills in the home have also been identified. The second area for review is the aspect of flawed communication and its implications for child development as it is related to their ability to resolve conflict and solve problems.

Once flaws in communication have been acknowledged, the next step is to determine the best treatment, plan of intervention, or prevention of further dysfunction. The third area explored in this review is the theoretical implications for various forms of intervention and prevention. Included in this are a family systems perspective on therapy, cognitive behavioral therapeutic intervention, and school based family therapy.

The focus of this study is the impact of parental participation in negotiation skills training for the purposes of improving children's problem solving and conflict resolution skills in the school setting. While no research was found specific to this topic, a single Australian social skills program which does incorporate parents will be briefly reviewed. Some data on general parenting skills programs is relevant and will also be reviewed. Finally, research on negotiation skills of children, and school based conflict resolution programs as they relate to this study, will also be reviewed.

## Communication Skills

Communication is defined by the Webster's English Dictionary as, "the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information, by speech, writing, or signs." The most fundamental aspect of human interaction is the ability to communicate effectively. How children come to know and use this principle of human behaviour depends on their first teachers, their parents.

According to Robin and Foster (1989), communication between parents and their children can be interpreted using a cognitive behavioral, three term, contingency analysis (see figure 1). In this model cognitions and affect mediate between responses. Thoughts that precede a response or consequence are called expectations and are based on the likelihood a response or consequence will occur. These expectations would be experience generated. The thoughts which follow the response or consequence are interpretations of what has occurred, and are called attributions (Robin & Foster, 1989).

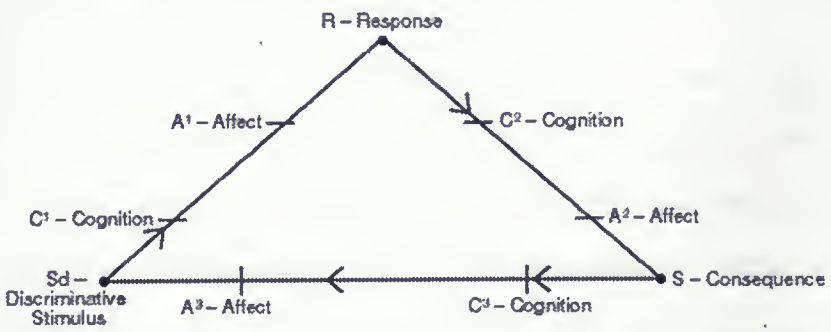


Figure 1. Cognitive behavioral three term contingency analysis.

Consider the following illustration of this model. A parent repeatedly asks their child to put away a toy from the yard. When the child fails to do so, the parent responds by removing a privilege (such as an allowance). From the parent's perspective, the child's failure to pick up and put away their toy is a discriminative stimulus which may lead to the child failing to take responsibility for themselves later in life. In an effort to prevent this, the parent must respond. The parent's response is a discriminative stimulus from the child's perspective and may lead the child to make claims about the parent's fairness, or the seriousness of the situation. Once these cognitions take place, behavioral responses will follow, such as anger and complaints.

Robin and Foster (1989), have identified three aspects of cognition which typically occur within a family. They are, the relationship between thoughts and feelings, information processing, and finally, basic assumptions underlying (dysfunctional) cognitions. The third aspect is of particular interest for the current study. Children make assumptions in their thought processes which are reactions to parental discriminative stimuli. They do this without considering or discussing the parental perspective. Likewise, parents react to the discriminative stimuli of children without an understanding of the child's perspective. What results is often a flawed interpretation of the situation which results in faulty cognitions and subsequent behavioral responses. As this experience becomes ingrained, the likelihood of either party putting an end to it is reduced. Instead greater expectations about the stimuli are developed and each member of the family may begin to view their relationships within the family negatively (Robin & Foster, 1989).

According to Beck (1967, 1976), there are a number of possible flaws in how information gets processed. Among them are arbitrary inferences, selective abstraction, overgeneralization, magnification, and minimization (as cited in Robin & Foster, 1989). These flaws will be used to influence behavioral interactions and subsequently to form further cognitions unless family members are taught how to break the cycle.

Researchers, Keeney and Ross (1992), see human communication as inclusive of words spoken, non-verbal accompanying actions, posture, facial expressions, and silence. Also included is the effect an individual may have on another because of their message content and behaviour. Presented in their 1992 research is a Cybernetic Model of Multiple Communication which emphasizes the interrelation of change and stability in terms of communication (see figure 2). Based on the work of Gregory Bateson (1972), all change should be understood as an effort to maintain constancy, and all constants are maintained through change (as cited in Keeney & Ross, 1992).

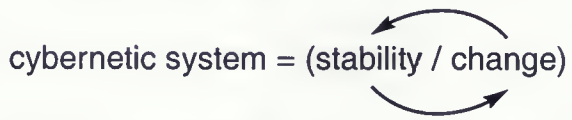


Figure 2. A cybernetic model of multiple communication

If this model is applied to the relationship between parents and their children conflict can be better understood. Parents wishing to maintain an influence over their children will need to change the way in which they communicate that influence from the time they are youngsters into their teenage years. Perhaps resolving conflicts is the keystone for this balance. An effective analogy is provided by Keeney and Ross, " the way to remain balanced while standing in a canoe is to make it rock" (p. 36). To allow children to develop into responsible decision makers and problem solvers, they must be given opportunity to resolve conflict. If they rely on their parents to do this for them, they will not learn for themselves. Conflict between parents and children should therefore be viewed as an opportunity for development rather than a problem to be avoided.

When children are required to communicate with a peer for the purposes of resolving conflict a number of theoretical strategies may be employed (Johnson, & F. Johnson, 1994; Johnson, & R. Johnson, 1991). These strategies are the five possibilities arrived at when concern for the relationship and desire to achieve the goal are

prioritized. The first strategy children use with one another is withdrawal. This entails giving up on both the relationship and the goal. Second is forcing, which emphasizes goal attainment at the expense of the relationship. Smoothing is the opposite, it preserves the relationship at the expense of the goal. Promising is giving up part of the goal with some cost to the relationship. Finally, integrative negotiation requires equal emphasis on both the goal and the relationship (as cited in D. Johnson et al., 1995). In actual fact students usually employ a range of strategies from avoidance to overpowering the opposition. These strategies will be further explored in the Intervention and Prevention section of this review.

## Communication Flaws: Contributing Factors and Their Implications

Should communication between parent and child deteriorate, the impact will likely be seen in both the school performance and the social performance of the child throughout their development. Keeney (1982), makes the claim that how children come to know, construct, and maintain their world experience will determine, to a great extent, how they will approach, interpret, and ultimately resolve conflict (as cited in Amatea & Sherrard, 1995). Obviously, the child's first environment will play a critical role in this process. If communication skills between parents and between parent and child are strong, this should be reflected in the interactions of the child throughout their development. Conversely, the work of Green (1989) states that confused or disoriented communication skills observed in parents is reflected in the cognitive performance of the child (as cited in Amatea & Sherrard, 1995). In a 1994 study by Rasku-Puttonen, Lyytinen, Poikkeus, Laakso and Ahonen involving 60 mother child pairs, the claim made by Green (1989) was supported. Of the 60 participants, 30 children were learning disabled (LD), the other 30 were considered normal learners. The mothers of the LD children gave less precise instructions and more ambiguous explanations to their children

than the non LD children's mothers. Both groups of children asked for clarification to the same degree. According to this work, children who were exposed to poor communication early in their development displayed deficits, such as a learning disability (as cited in Amatea & Sherrard, 1995). Of interest is the long term effects of this experience and whether there is any possibility of a reversal or reduced impairment. If for example, these LD children were exposed to clear, concise instructions and explanations (communication) for a period of time prior to adolescence, could this deficit be minimized? If this was found to be the case, parents seeking solutions to their child's apparent difficulties in school may be able to do more to help in the home environment if they received effective training to that end.

How communication skills evolve is at least in part dependent upon the degree of involvement parents take in their children's lives. Two pathologies in child parent communication have been identified. The first develops when parents are over involved and the second occurs when parents are disengaged or under involved (Amatea & Sherrard, 1995). In the former, relationship ties between parent and child are very strong. There tends to be a high degree of rigidity and over organization in such family structures. As a result, children tend to internalize their problems which may include obsessional worry, performance anxiety, or passive negativism. In the latter situation parents and children tend to have a weak relationship. Just as in the over organized structure, there are problems inherent to the disengaged structure (Amatea & Sherrard, 1995). It has been linked to attentional and conduct disorders in children. In studying underachieving children, Dornbusch and Ritter (1992), Humphries and Bauman (1980), and Kohn and Rosman (1974) all found a correlation between the degree of rigidity in family structure and lack of conflict resolution skills in families (as cited in Amatea, & Sherrard, 1995). Robin and Foster (1989) suggest that either the use of excessive imposition or complete relinquishment of authority to restore balance in family conflict situations will result in clinically significant conflict issues. Instead they advocate for

improved communication skills and democratic problem solving to promote effective conflict resolution skills in children, especially adolescents.

When conflict in the home is between siblings, how parents manage the situation impacts the sibling relationship (Gentry & Benenson, 1993). For example, when parents choose a winner (authoritarian style), or separate the children without addressing the conflict (resolution avoidance), the sibling relationship is negatively impacted (Gentry & Benenson, 1993). According to Gentry and Benenson (1993) parents who had negative sibling experiences themselves tend to use strategies involving power assertion ( i.e. threats of punishment for fighting). Where parents with more positive sibling relationships tend to encourage their children to resolve their problems themselves.

If conflict is not resolved constructively in the home setting it will impact on how the child handles conflict in the school setting. The notion that beliefs and behaviours children internalize in one setting, be they positive or negative in nature, are transferable to another setting is generally accepted by parents, academicians and mental health professionals (Gentry & Benenson, 1993). Minuchin (1967) found high conflict interactions in the disengaged family structure. The resolution of conflict was accomplished through threats and counter threats rather than discussion. An apparent deficit in verbal and non verbal communication skills requiring logic and the use of words was replaced with physical action, such as yelling. The lower the communication skills, the higher the physical action. Minuchin added that within such family structures heavy or extreme emphasis was placed on the familial hierarchy to gain compliance. This was in lieu of cognitively arrived at long term solutions. Finally, Minuchin also makes note of the inconsistency in discipline within such family structures. Rewarding and punishing behaviour was found to be highly contingent upon parental mood rather than the merits or demerits of the child's actions. A number of researchers, including Robin and Foster (1989), have indicated that under-organized family structures are linked to disruptive communication styles. This inability to communicate wants and

needs effectively will limit a child's ability to accurately take in information necessary to resolve conflict, and will usually mean the child attracts authoritarian control from school officials at an early age (Amatea & Sherrard, 1995).

Parents are not entirely to blame for this poor communication according to the work of Ginott (1965). In this research, children were often found to be reluctant to dialogue with their parents for fear of criticism. Obviously this would be a learned behaviour and the responsibility of an early care giver. However, when communication or dialogue was attempted, both sides were found to be equally poor listeners. The parental perspective often takes the form of instruction and criticism while that of the child is typically denial and pleading (Ginott, 1965). These perspectives, if not acknowledged and resolved, will impede effective conflict resolution.

Recommendations made by Ginott suggest that such an unproductive situation can be repaired if communication between the two parties preserves the self respect of both, and if criticism or instruction are preceded by a statement of understanding. This may be seen as an early form of perspective taking. To criticize or instruct at a time of high emotion is ineffective communication and may only serve to heighten the emotional state (Ginott, 1965). Constructive communication is more likely to result when the emotions have been diffused. Accepting this claim to be valid, instructing parents and children alike to make a statement of understanding of the needs and wants of the other person before proceeding with a negotiation would be prudent. Understanding the needs and wants of another presupposes an understanding of the other party's perspective, and is key to resolving conflicts using principled negotiation. In doing this, neither party need feel diminished in any way and the communication can take on a more constructive, win win outlook.

School performance, while not directly related to this study, is of interest from the perspective it gives on the child's ability to learn new information and skills. The work of Dornbusch et al., (1987), found school performance of adolescents to be

positively associated with firm parental control (as cited in Jones, 1995). This was particularly the case when such control utilized clear behavioral standards tempered with an active response to the needs and wants of the child, and allowed for their input in decision making. This form of constructive communication is a key component in the instruction of integrative or principled negotiation skills. Both parties are required to state not only what it is they want but also the reason why. In so doing there must be mutual consideration for the needs and wants of both parties (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). To teach this skill, clear behavioral standards would have to be established and maintained in each family. When such behavioral standards are missing from a child's social development it is reasonable to assume some difficulties may arise.

Delinquency in youth has been, and continues to be, the focus of considerable research. When asked, these children cite familial issues as the primary influencing factors on their behaviour. Secondary influences include peers and drugs, followed by school and community issues (Seydlitz & Jenkins, 1998). A number of studies including, Barnes et al. (1994), Cernkovich and Giordano (1987), Conger (1976), Dentler and Monroe (1961), Denton and Kampfe (1994), Gold (1970), Hirsch (1969), Kafka and London (1991), Nye (1958) and Peterson et al. (1994), have all found that good communication in the family setting reduces the likelihood of the child developing delinquent tendencies, including substance abuse (as cited in Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984). The link between disrupted family problem solving and antisocial behaviour does not have a long history but, according to Harbin and Madden, (1983) and Patterson, (1983), disrupted problem solving has been correlated with a higher incidence of familial pathology (as cited in Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984).

In a study by Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber (1984), parental effectiveness coping with interpersonal conflict in the home setting was measured and compared with measures of delinquent behaviour. The hypothesis was that low problem solving effectiveness, monitoring behaviours, discipline, and reinforcement, would correlate with

high delinquency. This was not found to be the case entirely. While strong correlations were found for monitoring and discipline behaviours, reinforcement and problem solving did not reveal the same high correlation (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984). However, in a concurrent study, these behaviours were found to correlate significantly with measures of pro - social behaviour with peers and academic skills (as cited in Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984).

In later work, the occurrence of family conflict and how it is resolved, was found to be a contributing factor to the development of delinquent tendencies. According to Messner and Krohn (1990), Nye (1958), Wells and Rankin (1988), when conflicts arise, parents who explain their rules and feelings, and use moderate supervision with normative control will reduce the likelihood of delinquent tendencies developing in their children (as cited in Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984).

## Implications for Intervention and Prevention: A Theoretical Perspective

Relevant to the current study is literature focussed on cognitive behaviour modification, a family systems perspective on therapy, and school based family therapy, as a model for program delivery. None of the above are highlighted in terms of their own validity, they will only be reviewed in the context of their applicability to teaching children and their parents' integrative or principled negotiation strategies.

Cognitive therapy is based on the premise that how one thinks largely impacts upon how one will behave and is one aspect of the cognitive system (Beck & Weishaar, 1995). The other aspect is cognitive behaviour modification and is primarily the work of Donald Meichenbaum (1977). In this application of cognitive therapy, a therapist instructs the client on how to first identify a problem accurately, then generate and select an appropriate solution. Finally, the client would be taught how to evaluate the solution for effectiveness. Meichenbaum claims that behaviour can be changed if a new pattern of thinking can be activated and practised (Meichenbaum, 1977). For example, in a 1996 study by Deffenbacher, Oetting, Huff, Cornell, and Dallager, a cognitive behavioral approach was used to teach social skills to participants. The purpose of this study was to teach clients to effectively address and resolve disagreements or conflicts which would normally incite anger and an ineffective response. The results indicate that this strategy was effective in both the short and long term follow up (Deffenbacher, et al., 1996). Within the current study, cognitive behaviour modification occurs with respect to how children will interpret and process conflicts and problems. According to D'Zurilla (1988), D'Zurilla and Goldfried (1971), rational problem solving is a cognitive behavioral process which requires the individual to follow a logical sequence of steps to an acceptable solution (as cited in Robin & Foster, 1989). The aim of the Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996), is to change the way in which children attempt to have their needs and wants met by changing the way they think about conflict from a

win - lose perspective to a win - win perspective. It also provides participants with logical and sequential steps for accomplishing a successful negotiation.

According to Spivack, Platt, and Shure (1976), seven basic skills are necessary to problem solve effectively. They include, (a) recognizing when a problem exists, (b) collecting data to articulate the problem accurately, (c) generating solutions, (d) judging the costs and or benefits from a variety of perspectives, (e) choosing a solution which maximizes benefits and minimizes costs, (f) implementing the plan, and (g) evaluating the solution for its effectiveness (as cited in Robin & Foster, 1989). These skills are essentially translated into steps in the Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996).

According to Beland (1996) and Voydanoff (1989), schools are tackling non - academic realms of student development in response to increased levels of community violence. This movement has led toward the development of full service schools which attempt to provide services in education, health, and social areas for at risk children and their families. According to Adelman (1996), this means schools need to restructure themselves in such a way as to integrate community programs with educational or school based programs (as cited in Evans & Carter, 1997). It is essential that programs designed to teach children how to manage conflict be accessible to those families who do not currently have access or choose not to participate in community services available (Offord, 1996). According to Evans and Carter (1997), school based family therapy can meet many of the current challenges in schools today because it involves all the parties important to the development of children. It may also serve to expedite the movement toward full service schools. They also advocate for one person in every school to be designated to this role, which differs from a marriage and family counsellor, administrator, school psychologist, or teacher (Evans & Carter, 1997). This individual serves to promote partnerships between family, school, and community which often develop into more complex interactions than would be seen otherwise (Evans & Carter, 1997). Together these partners strive to improve classroom behaviour/achievement and at

the same time address the underlying causes of problems which may exist. The school based family counsellor will focus on assisting students having difficulties in the classroom as well as work to prevent student problems in the community (Evans & Carter, 1997). As a member of the school environment familiar with staff, students, and programs, the school based family counsellor, is able to identify and implement classroom interventions as well as provide counselling services.

This is a unique position to be in as most counsellors work from a community base and generally rely on client disclosures to design treatment and many do not involve school personnel in their plan of treatment. Teachers of students receiving treatment outside the school setting frequently comment that if only the service providers could see and work with the child in the school environment, they would have a much better sense of the problems. However, in these days of economic constraints, providing such a specialized service may be more than can be hoped for. Furthermore, studies have shown, Offord, Boyle, Szatmari, Rae-Grant, Links, Cadman, Byles, Crawford, Munroe-Blum, Byrne, Thomas, & Woodward (1987), a significant number of aggressive students, students who presumably have difficulty resolving conflicts non-violently or in a constructive manner, do not receive professional clinical assistance. In fact the parents of many of these children do not feel such assistance is needed. According to Cunningham et. al., (1995) and Kazdin, Holland and Crowley (1997), the parents of children who are at greatest risk are the least likely to enroll in or complete programs aimed at diffusing aggressive behaviour tendencies.

The current study attempts to utilize this general model of program delivery with some exceptions. First, it is not assumed that all the participants are experiencing difficulties with their problem solving or conflict resolving abilities in or out of the classroom. Second, the training which is provided both to parents and children will be facilitated by a special education teacher currently working on the school staff who may or may not work with the students directly for academic programming. Unfortunately, a

school based family counsellor in the truest sense is a luxury not afforded elementary schools in the region of Hamilton-Wentworth.

According to Robin and Foster (1989), the family unit strives to be homeostatic. Within the family life cycle many changes occur as children mature. These changes often cause stress and disequilibrium for the family unit because its homeostatic nature is threatened. The change which occurs in families is normal, problems occur as a result of chronic mismanagement of the change (Dykeman & Noble, 1997). The family systems perspective described by Robin and Foster (1989) basically suggests that each person within the family unit is able to influence the behaviour of every other family member and is similarly affected by every other family member's behaviour. Therefore, the normal changes which occur for maturing children impacts the parents and other siblings. Dysfunctional families generally react badly to such change because their strategy is to use "more of the same." Consider the dilemma for parents of a maturing girl described by Gerson (1995). A girl desires greater autonomy in her life which leads her parents to worry about her safety. Their response is to heighten restrictions on her behaviour. This is resented by the girl who may not understand their motivation and could spur her on to rebel (as cited in Dykeman & Noble, 1997).

This perspective of the family has implications for any intervention which aims to change behaviour. According to Dykeman and Noble (1997), if therapy with an individual is successful, the entire system, of which the client is a part, should also be affected once the treated individual is reintegrated (Dykeman & Noble, 1997). Therapeutic interventions such as the Milan approach, designed by Mara Selvini-Palazzoli, Lugi Boscolo, Gianfranco Cecchin and Giuliana Prata in the late 1960's, places the emphasis on the context and meaning of behaviours which organize and represent the observable symptoms (as cited in Keeney & Ross, 1992). The goal is to assist the family in reorganizing itself. Therefore it is necessary to understand how each

member contributes to the current organization and what purpose their behaviour serves in the family unit (Keeney & Ross, 1992).

This study maintains that the problem solving skills of family members will be affected by the skills of other family members. Once problem solving skills, either effective or maladaptive, become well established inside the family it is reasonable to expect similar behaviours to be tried outside the family unit. For example, the child who has learned that if they make a loud enough fuss about not getting their way at home usually results in their parents giving in, may generalize the same behaviour to the school setting with peers and teachers. If however, the family is practised in using effective problem solving and conflict resolving strategies, it should be expected that the child will attempt to utilize the same strategies outside the home.

Families have been classified as either skilled or non skilled in the area of communication for problem solving. According to Alexander (1973); Prinz, Foster, Kent and O'Leary (1979); Robin and Weiss (1980); Vincent-Roehling and Robin (1986) the non skilled families are characterized by more negative communication, intense disputes and more negative problem solving strategies than the skilled families (as cited in Robin & Foster, 1989). These studies, while consistent with the family systems perspective, are correlational and not causal in nature (Robin & Foster, 1989).

The aim of the current study is to assist children in communicating their wants and needs to others effectively using principled negotiation strategies. The purpose behind having a parent participate in the same training program is to increase the likelihood of the child practicing their skills in the home environment, thus increasing the likelihood of these skills being generalized to other settings, such as the school. Based on the family systems perspective described above, change for any one member of a family should impact the entire family to some degree. However this study is interested in the significance, if any, of having a parent trained in the same skills students are taught to resolve conflicts and solve problems. If it is reasonable to expect some change

in the family unit as a result of one child receiving the training, is it reasonable to expect a greater change if a parent and a sibling is also trained?

## Intervention and Prevention Programs

When discussing intervention or prevention (programs), it is necessary to clarify just what is being targeted by such actions and for what purpose. The primary focus of this study is to better understand the role parents can play in the development of conflict resolving skills in their children, for the purpose of improving these and related interpersonal skills. The skill development of children taught the same integrative negotiation strategies without a parental co-participant will also be addressed. Therefore this portion of the literature review will include programs which target the broadest social development of children.

A substantial amount of literature exists, including that of, Cartledge and Milburn (1980), Michelson et al. (1983), and Hughes and Sullivan (1988), which supports the claim that ineffective social skills contribute to academic underachievement. As well, such social deficits act as strong predictors for the wellness of later social and psychological functioning, including delinquency, anti-social behaviour, and adult psychoses. Social skills has been defined by Rinn and Markle in 1979 as:

> a repertoire of verbal and nonverbal behaviours by which children affect the responses of other individuals (e.g. peers, parents, siblings, and teachers) in the interpersonal context. This repertoire acts as a mechanism through which children influence their environment by obtaining, removing, or avoiding desirable and undesirable outcomes in the social sphere (as cited in Ogilvy p. 74).

This definition does not speak directly to the resolution of conflict, however it is reasonable to expect that in order to "influence their environment" children will

experience conflict. How they cope with these experiences will serve to develop their social skills.

Intervention is warranted, according to Ogilvy, in an effort to diffuse current social dysfunctions and prevent any negative long term effects. According to Petersen and France (1992), children who are otherwise healthy but fail to develop pro-social skills and appropriate peer relations, are at risk of developing further social, emotional, and behavioral problems into adulthood. In many cases a proactive strategy is employed in the hopes of preventing the onset of significant problems. Interventions typically take one of two forms; they are school based and individual child focussed or parent focussed and community based. Preventative programs tend to target the general population and are school based. The current study falls into the preventative category and is school based, however, it is both child and parent focussed. Therefore, programs of both natures will be reviewed.

The purpose of most parental programs is to teach more effective parenting techniques. An example of such a program is the BASIC parenting program developed by Webster-Stratton in 1981, 1982 and 1984. This program is based on Bandura's 1977 modelling theory and requires that parents view video taped vignettes and then discuss their significance with a trained therapist (Webster-Stratton & Herbert, 1994). Results were found to significantly improve when parents were also given training in parental personal skills such as effective communication skills, anger management, a means for coping with depression, and problem solving strategies (Webster-Stratton & Herbert, 1994). From this work, it appears that effective parents are mentally well, communicative, and efficient problem solvers.

Gordon (1970) developed a community based, American program called Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.). Initially this course was for parents already having trouble with their children but it has since evolved into a more preventative type program. The emphasis in this training is on teaching parents how to communicate

effectively and resolve conflicts in a manner which strengthens rather than weakens relationships (Gordon, 1970). In this program, power is identified as a key element in the occurrence of interpersonal conflict within the family. According to Gordon, parents typically see only win/lose scenarios. The approach taken by parents to address conflict falls into one of two categories. In the first, the parent's perception of a win means it is necessary to assert their authority over the child and ensure that the child loses. The second approach is one of leniency, whereby the child is the winner at the expense of the parent. In each approach the winner is disrespectful and inconsiderate of the needs of the other. Often, parents are able to not only recognize which of the two approaches they use, but also see them as ineffective. Gordon reasons that parents continue to employ one of these strategies, as ineffective as they are, because they know no other alternatives. Gordon proposes an approach in which both parties' needs are considered. In teaching parents this form of conflict resolution it is hoped that the power struggle can be eliminated because any agreements which are reached are mutual, not because one party felt they had no alternative (Gordon, 1970).

A social skills program developed in Australia, called the STOP THINK DO Social Skills Training Program was found to be rather unique because it offers complimentary training for parents and teachers (Petersen & France, 1992). The purpose of which is to enrich the experience for children and increase maintenance of the skills taught into multiple environments (Petersen & France, 1992). The overall aim of this program is to improve adult and child relations as well as peer relations. Participants are taught how to think through a problem situation using the STOP THINK and DO steps. In the STOP stage they are taught communication skills like, how to look and listen to others as well as recognize feelings in themselves and others. In the THINK stage they are encouraged to develop a variety of alternative solutions to solve the problem situation while considering how each impacts themselves and others who are involved. Finally, the DO stage involves choosing a solution which is most agreeable for everyone involved

and to try it. They are encouraged to use these strategies, which may yield more acceptable results than their old habits which have not served them well (Petersen & France, 1992). While these steps are similar they are not the same as those employed in principled negotiation.

In 1994 the National Association for Mediation in Education estimated there were between five thousand and eight thousand conflict resolution programs in American schools (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). The research review conducted by Johnson and Johnson in 1996 gives a thorough overview of not only the impact and type of such programs, but also into the nature of the conflicts being resolved. Authors Johnson and Johnson cite three types of conflict. Conceptual conflict (D.W. Johnson & R. Johnson, 1995), controversy (D.W. Johnson & R. Johnson, 1979) and conflict of interests (Deutsch, 1973). Levy (1989) and Maxwell (1989) categorize conflict resolution programs as being either, preventative in nature and curriculum based programs which teach about conflict and suggest alternatives to violent resolutions, or are peer mediation programs (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1996). According to Cunningham & Cunningham (1998) mediators on a playground can intervene in conflicts in their early stage and prevent minor differences from escalating into aggressive situations. For boys this anti-social behaviour, which warrants intervention, is typically physical in nature, while girls tend to experience conflict on a more relational level. For girls, the aim is to damage or manipulate peer relationships (Crick, Bigbee, & Howes, 1996). Another clarification is provided by Opotow (1991) and focuses on the approach used. Opotow divides peer mediation and conflict resolution programs into one of two categories. First, are academically oriented approaches which teach intellectual and cognitive strategies for resolving conflict. Second, are skill oriented approaches which emphasize the instruction of interpersonal and small groups skills for conflict resolution (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1996). For the purposes of this study, emphasis will be placed on conflict resolution programs which teach negotiation techniques for resolving

interpersonal conflict which occur when, according to Deutsch (1973), "the actions of one person attempting to reach his or her goals prevent, block, or interfere with the actions of another person attempting to reach his or her goals" (as cited in Johnson & Johnson p. 463). Negotiation, the process whereby individuals or groups having shared and different interests attempt to work out a settlement is further differentiated based on approach. D.W. Johnson and F. Johnson (1997) and Walton and MacKersie (1965) identify two negotiation approaches, distributive and integrative. The distributive approach is based on an assumption that in order to have one's own needs met, the needs of the other party must be sacrificed. The integrative approach emphasizes the maximal fulfilment of both party's needs (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

Also relevant to classifying negotiation strategies, is the work of Roger Fisher and William Ury found in their 1983 book entitled, Getting to Yes, Negotiating Agreements Without Giving In. These authors claim that everyone negotiates, but not many do it well because they only see two alternatives, play soft and lose or play hard and win at all costs. In the first approach the negotiator often feels taken advantage of or exploited, as the loser. In the second approach, the negotiator often sacrifices relationships in order to get what they want. Fisher and Ury offer a third alternative, based on the work of Harvard's Negotiation Project, called principled negotiation. This strategy is merit driven. Each side looks for opportunities for mutual gain whenever possible. According to Johnson and Johnson (1996) this approach to negotiation is effective at maintaining and possibly enhancing relationships because both sides are permitted to win. Fisher and Ury outline three criteria by which to judge negotiation as either wise or unwise. This criteria includes, (a) whether it produces a wise agreement when agreement is possible, (b) whether it improves or at least does not impair an existing relationship, and (c) whether it is efficient or not (Fisher & Ury, 1983). Fisher and Ury reason that when all the attention is given to positions, the underlying concerns, or interests, go largely ignored. This kind of strategy can cause significant damage to a

relationship because only one side's needs can be met while the other's are sacrificed. This can cause resentment, particularly if it is the same person who feels they repeatedly give in to the demands of the other. This imbalance of power is not uncommon between parents and their children, as was discussed earlier.

In order for principled negotiations to be effective, or wise, as Fisher and Ury call it, four points must be made. First, negotiators must separate the people from the problem. In fact, Fisher and Ury suggest that both negotiators view the problem as the opponent. Second, focus must be on the interests of the negotiators rather than on their positions. Third, both negotiators should generate a number of alternative solutions to the problem and choose one together which meets the needs of both. Finally, negotiators should agree to an objective criteria by which solutions can be measured, rather than rely on the perspective of either side (Fisher & Ury, 1983).

Prior to any training, a range of strategies used by students to resolve conflict can be identified. In a study conducted by DeCecco and Richards in 1974, four strategies or outcomes were identified in a population of 8000 students and 500 faculty in American junior and senior high schools. The majority of students, (90%) reported conflicts were either unresolved or resolved through avoidance or overpowering the other party. Others (55%), reported imposed resolutions by school authorities, while negotiations were only reportedly used in 17% of the conflicts (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1996). In a later study, D.W. Johnson, R. Johnson and Dudley (1992) found zero occurrence of negotiation. Their study was conducted in a suburban middle class elementary school with untrained students in grades one through six. The strategies used here were telling the teacher, repeating the request, or arguing (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Similarly, D.W. Johnson, R.Johnson, Dudley, and Acikgoz (1994) studied untrained third through sixth grade middle class suburban students and found their strategies included telling the teacher, withdrawing, and repeating the requests. In a Canadian suburban high school, Stevahn, Johnson, Johnson, Green, and Laginski (in press) found students most

frequently used verbal forcing to resolve their conflicts (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Based on these findings it is reasonable to conclude that integrative negotiation is not a well utilized strategy by students attempting to resolve conflicts in schools.

With the introduction of conflict resolution programs it should be expected that the strategies reported above would change. Much research has been done on how to negotiate in a distributive manner, including the work of Druckman (1977); D.W. Johnson and F. Johnson (1997); Rubin and Brown (1975); Walton and McKersie (1965); however, little has been done to assess the use of integrative negotiation. Studies of this nature include Follett (1940); D.W. Johnson (1966, 1967, 1971); Pruitt (1981); Pruitt and Lewis (1977), (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Dudley, Johnson, and Johnson (in press) conducted pre- and post-test assessments when studying the impact of the Peacemaker program (D.W. Johnson & R. Johnson, 1995) on the negotiating approach used by sixth through ninth grade students. They found, if given a choice, over 90% of the untrained students chose to negotiate in a distributive manner which placed the emphasis on maximizing their own benefits (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

Studies documenting changes in the general nature of the interpersonal behaviour of children and their parents, including changes in parental perceptions of the adjustment of their child following training, show some promise. Among such studies is the work of Gentry and Benenson (1993) which focused on frequency and intensity of conflicts with siblings before and after participation in a school based peer mediation program. The purpose of which was to identify the degree to which skills learned at school would be transferred to the home setting. In this study involving students from grades 4 to 6 the findings are positive, conflict management skills learned at school appear to have transferred to the home setting for use in conflicts there (Gentry & Benenson, 1993). In the past a lack of "generalizability" has been cited as a downfall in both the child and parent focussed behaviour modification programs. According to Webster-Stratton and Herbert (1994), there is some promise for programs which involve both parents and

teachers because they yield more generalizable results (Webster-Stratton & Herbert, 1994). In the case of the 1993 Gentry and Benenson study cited above, teachers also received training in conflict management skills, however participation was limited to completing a structured interview with the researchers. According to Kazdin, (1987) and Kazdin et. al., (1987) the failure of social skills programs to generalize to various settings could be due to the emphasis on the child as the locus of change, to the exclusion of the familial unit (as cited in Webster-Stratton, 1994).

In addition to these findings is the work of D. W. Johnson, R. Johnson, and Dudley (1992), where it was reported that students used negotiation and mediation strategies taught at school, with their friends, and in the home setting with parents and siblings (as cited in Johnson, & Johnson, 1996). A possible explanation for the difference in findings related to generalizability may be due to the specific nature of the training.

If the work of Webster-Stratton and Herbert, (1994) is interpreted in terms of negotiation training being the interpersonal skill targeted, then programs such as The Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996), which targets problem solving and conflict resolving skills of children, would have better results when parents were involved with the training. This claim is further supported by the work of O'Callaghan (1993) who claims that the best way to affect change in the social behaviour of children is to provide problem solving training which involves all the adult managers of the children, including the children themselves. If, on the other hand, the work of D.W. Johnson et al., (1992) is accepted, then regardless of whether students are trained with their parents or not, a general improvement in the abilities of students to resolve conflict using integrative negotiations should be expected from such training (as cited in Johnson, & Johnson, 1996).

Most child centred programs are school based, time limited, and do not involve parents in the training process. A possible explanation for why program developers have apparently ignored studies which indicate better results from parental involvement may

be the logistics of delivering such a program. Most school based programs would occur during the school day, a time when, these days, both parents are busy at work. Recruiting long term parental involvement at the end of their work day, and the end of a full school day for their children, may be more than many parents would be willing to do in order to improve the social problem solving and conflict resolving abilities of their children. Programs seeking to do this then must give parents and their children the most "bang for the buck" as it were. Maximize their skills in a minimal amount of time. Just what the optimal number of hours is to achieve this end is not known at this time but would likely vary depending upon the nature of the program. Mediation as a school wide program intended to benefit all students, has many strengths according to Cunningham, Bremner and Boyle (1995) and Kazdin, Holland, and Crowley (1997). Among them is the fact that they are not affected by low parental involvement or dropouts.

Measuring growth in students who have been taught negotiation strategies for resolving conflicts is another area identified in the literature as pertinent to program assessment. D.W. Johnson, R. Johnson, Dudley, and Magnuson (1995) performed a negotiation and mediation skill retention test eight months following initial training using the Teaching Students to be Peacemakers program, (D.W. Johnson, & R. Johnson, 1995). Their findings indicated that 92% of the trained students were able to write, from memory, the steps to integrative negotiation and mediation. An ability to restate what should be done to resolve a conflict using integrative negotiation is one thing, but applying these skills is a separate thing altogether. The work of D. W. Johnson et al., (1994) and D.W. Johnson, R. Johnson, Dudley, and Magnuson, (1995) measures written responses to conflict scenarios. Oral responses were also measured by D.W. Johnson, and R. Johnson, Dudley and Magnuson, (1995) using interview responses. Finally, role played conflict situations were video taped and analyzed in a study by, D.W. Johnson et al., (1994). The results from these studies are consistent. Even with a five month gap

between training and testing, the majority of students trained used integrative negotiation strategies to resolve conflict. These are promising findings for the current study.

The behaviour of children both in school and in the home says quite a lot about how these children have been taught to resolve conflict and solve social problems for themselves. As this review indicates, some children are better equipped than others. The review conducted by Johnson and Johnson (1996) was key in providing up to date data on integral aspects for the current study to build upon. Included in this are data on the nature of student conflicts as well, the degree of success with intervention programs, and the strategies found to be most effective.

# CHAPTER THREE : THE METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methods employed in the current study. As well, a brief explanation is given regarding the underlying methodology of this study.

The problem under investigation is the impact parental participation in principled negotiation skills training has on the abilities of their children to resolve conflicts and solve problems of a social nature. This chapter will describe how participants were selected, how group differentiation was made, how skills were evaluated prior to training and following training. As well, there will be an overview of the program utilized.

## Research Methodology

A quasi experimental design was employed utilizing two experimental groups and one control group. Quantitative data about conflict resolving abilities and attitudes towards using negotiation was collected from student participants using The Five Factor Negotiation Scale which was originally designed for use with The Program for Young Negotiators (PYN) (Curhan, 1996). This instrument is a self report measure designed to assess the essential elements of negotiation, including, personal initiative, collaboration, communication, conflict based perspective taking, and conflict resolution approach (Nakkula & Nikitopoulos, unpublished). This questionnaire was administered pre and post training. An open ended style questionnaire and accompanying rubric was also used to evaluate student knowledge, behaviour, and attitudes towards negotiation (Keane, unpublished) prior to and following training. Qualitative data was gathered using a combination of participant observation, interviews, and journals. This anecdotal

information indicates how the student participants felt, and what they thought about their abilities to resolve conflict and solve problems before, during, and following training. In addition to the self reporting of students, the observations of parents, and comments from teachers were also solicited prior to and following training, using an open ended question format. Parents were invited to verbalize their comments during the evening training sessions and were asked to write general anecdotal comments in private at the conclusion of the program. Teachers were also asked for comments throughout the program.

## Research Design and Participant Selection

This study was conducted over a 12 week period in the fall of the 1999-00 school year. The first 9 weeks were spent in training parents and students in principled negotiation skills as outlined in The Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996). The remaining three weeks were used to gather follow up data.

All student participants attend an elementary school in the small town of Dundas, Ontario. Approximately 48 are in grade four and another 65 are in grade five. This population is heterogeneous in academic abilities, and includes students of average ability as well as students with identified learning disabilities in each group. No gifted students have been identified in this population.

Student participants were divided into one of two experimental groups. Experimental group 1 consisted of 10 grade four (5) and five (5) students whose parent was also trained. The participation of the parent in this training is an independent variable. Student membership in Experimental group 1 was determined by the enrollment of a parent in the evening program. Experimental group 2 consisted of approximately 48 grade four and five students. This group was established with the remaining students in the grade 4 and 5 classes whose parents did not participate in the evening training program. A control group of approximately 55 students was established

using a combination of the grade five and four students from the remaining school population.

Both experimental groups were instructed on how to use principled negotiation (Fisher & Ury, 1983), to solve interpersonal conflicts using The Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996). This instruction is the second independent variable. This negotiation training begins in unit one by generating definitions of conflict and identifying goals. This is accomplished through discussion and activities. Unit two is devoted to teaching participants how to understand the situation through activities focussing on perception taking, empathy, identifying interests, and designing back up plans. The third unit introduces solution brainstorming and choosing from the multitude of possibilities generated. It also touches on the emotion of anger which may be confronted in a negotiation of an interpersonal nature. The final unit is application based, where participants have an opportunity to put all the skills taught together in role played negotiations.

This training program was taught by this researcher, who is currently employed in the school as a Learning Resource teacher, and has received training in its administration. Classroom teachers participated in the program delivery as well. Their assistance was sought for role plays and debriefing discussions

## Instrumentation

Two dependent variables were used in addition to the qualitative data collected through interviews and journals. The first was a questionnaire developed through The Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996). Its purpose is to assess the attitudes towards, and the abilities to use, negotiation techniques. This is accomplished through self evaluation. The coefficient alpha for the questionnaire is .76 at pre-test and .80 at post-test. The second dependent variable was a series of five open ended ability

questions and an accompanying rubric (Keane, unpublished) to assess knowledge, behaviour, and attitudes towards negotiation. Samples of each dependent variable can be found in Appendix A and B respectively.

## Data Collection and Recording

In separate group interviews, student participants completed the pre- and post-test questionnaires designed through The Program for Young Negotiators and the ability questions designed by Keane (unpublished). They were asked to comment generally on the Program For Young Negotiators. At the conclusion of the study they submitted their journals. At this time they were also asked if there was anything from their training they would like to discuss and if they had a specific story to share which related to their ability to resolve conflict since participating in the training sessions. This anecdotal information was recorded and is reported on in the findings of this study. Comments from parents were collected anonymously on the first and final evenings of training using open ended questions to stimulate a written response. Teachers were asked for feedback comments throughout the training and were asked to comment generally on the outcomes they observed in their students at the conclusion of the training.

## Classroom Procedures

For the delivery of the Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996) to student participants, classroom health periods were utilized. Time was blocked into approximately 40 minute sessions, although more time could be made available if needed. Students completed one of the modules from the training program in each of these 40 minute sessions. At the conclusion of each session, students were asked to write in their journals about the day's events as they pertain to their management of conflict

and the specific area of focus from the training for the day. During these sessions the regular classroom teacher was present in the room, and did participate in the training as required (i.e. if a student needed a partner, generating options etc.).

The instruction of the parents for Experimental group 1 occurred in the evenings. Parents were asked to come to the school library for approximately 90 minutes once a week for a seven week period. In this time parents were instructed on the same skill areas their children were during the school days of that same week. In the event that a session was missed no make up time was scheduled. The modules build on one another sufficiently to allow for review of skills through the normal progression of the training. In the final week of instruction the students from Experimental group 1 joined their parents in the evening to practise using their skills together. At this time constructive feedback was offered by this researcher.

## Methodological Assumptions and Limitations

In order to gather the data necessary to discern the impact of parental involvement in this training there must first be parental participants. Since the student instruction occurred in the school day, ensuring participation was less of a concern. However, the parent group were required to give up one evening a week for a six week duration. This may have been viewed by some to be more than a reasonable time. It must also be said that those parents who did volunteer to participate may be uncharacteristic of a general population in terms of their interest in the conflict resolving abilities of their children and or in their willingness to undergo training.

The Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996) was originally designed for use in middle school (grades 6-8) populations. The current study is attempting to utilize the same program with younger (grades 4 and 5) students. It was assumed that a certain degree of assistance with interpretation of problems presented would be necessary to

ensure student understanding, as their language skills may not be as fully developed as those of middle school students. As well, some of the problems presented required modification to reflect age-appropriate interests.

A relative strength of this study was its attempt to collate data from a variety of sources using a variety of methods, both qualitative and quantitative in nature. However there was no data on the reliability of the rubric and questions designed by Keane (unpublished) which have been modified slightly to reflect the focus of this study.

A final limitation was the time line for the study. Twelve weeks is sufficient time to deliver the program and assess its effectiveness. However while students may be able to recall and use the correct steps for integrative negotiation three weeks following training, they may not be able to do so after six months. It may therefore be appropriate to do some follow up in the spring of the 1999-2000 school year to determine the retention rate.

## The Problem Operationalized

The purpose of this study was to teach parents and students principled negotiation strategies. The intent of which was to reveal the impact, if any, of parental training on the ability of their children to resolve conflict.

# CHAPTER FOUR: THE FINDINGS

## Presentation and Analysis of Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the differences, if any, of training parents and children concurrently in principled negotiation skills for the purpose of developing negotiation skills and problem solving abilities in children. A second question was whether the training of students at all would yield improved ability to resolve conflict and problem solve using principled negotiation. Participants in this study consisted of 113 students, (47) in grade 4 and (66) in grade 5, 10 parents and two classroom teachers. The student population was made up of 63 males and 50 females and was divided into three groups, two experimental and one control. Overall distribution of student groups can be found on Table 1.

Instruments used include the Five Factor Negotiation Scale (Curhan, 1996), open ended ability questions with accompanying rubric (Keane, unpublished), informal interviews with participants, and student journals. Copies of the Five Factor Negotiation Scale and ability questions with the rubric can be found in Appendix A and B respectively, of this document. The Five Factor Negotiation Scale is a self report measure, originally designed for use with the Program for Young Negotiators' (Curhan,1996) pilot project. The five factors assess the essential elements of negotiation, including personal initiative, collaboration, communication, conflict based perspective taking, and the conflict resolution approach (Nakkula & Nikitopoulos, unpublished).

In this chapter the results of the analyses are presented in a number of different ways. First, the pre-test percentages for the total population are given for each of the 41 items on the questionnaire. These can be found on Tables 2 through 6. This is followed by an examination of the mean differences across summated scores for group, gender, and grade using a one - way analysis of variance. Next will be a summary of the open

ended ability questions used to discern more in depth responses from the participants in the knowledge, skill, and behaviour domains. In addition, a contingency analysis including chi - square was used to determine differential response patterns by group and gender across a number of specific items. Finally, paired t- tests were utilized to examine significant mean differences on the four summated scores for the pre- and post-tests. A notation about student journal entries and informal interview discussions with parents and students, as additional subjective data, will also be made.

Table 1

Population Distribution by Group

| Group | n | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Experimental 1 | 10 | 8.8 |
| Experimental 2 | 48 | 42.5 |
| Control 3 | 55 | 48.7 |

Note: Experimental Group 1 (students with parents receiving training), Experimental Group 2 (students without parents receiving training), Control 3 (students receiving no training)

It is important to note the unequal distribution between groups. Experimental group 1 consisted of 10 student participants where a parent had also participated in the principled negotiation skills training. This group size was limited by the number of parental volunteers who were willing and able to participate in this study. Interest on the part of four other parents was expressed however due to timing in the week for the training sessions and current demands on time they were not able to commit to the study. One parent did attend the initial session and then found there was a conflict of time. Consequently her son was removed from Experimental group 1. Experimental group 2 consisted of 48 students in grades 4 and 5 who participated in the principled negotiation skills training as part of a health unit. These students made up one of two grade 4 classes and one of two grade 5 classes in the participating school. Training of group 2 occurred during the course of regular school days and was therefore not limited by ability to participate. One student did move to a new school part way through the study and was removed from the Experimental group 2 population. Finally, Control group 3 consisted of 55 students in grades 4 and 5 who did not participate in the principled negotiation skills training, nor did they have a parent who participated in the study. This group was made up of the remaining grade four class and the remaining grade five class in the participating school. A total of three students were removed from this population due to absenteeism, which prohibited survey completion.

The personal initiative scale (Section A) gives insight into student perception of their ability to lead, express their opinions, effect change, and resolve differences. These are important skills necessary for effective enactment of principled negotiation skills and beliefs. Items 3 and 5 give indication of student perceptions of their willingness to plan to change things either for the attainment of something desirable or the elimination of something undesirable. Interestingly only 9.5% of the total student population always makes a plan to get something they want, while 19.5% will always make a plan to change things if they are dissatisfied. Thus dissatisfaction appears to be a greater

motivator to plan than desire for attainment of something. Items 4, 6, and 7 give indication of success rate in attainment of goals, the comfort level with disclosure of opinion to friends, and willingness to discuss opinions with teachers respectively. Only 3.5% of students believe they are always successful in getting what they want through talking to people. However, 31.9% always feel confident giving their opinions when they disagree with friends. This leads to the assumption that while students may not feel uncomfortable confronting conflict with their peers they are not usually very successful in resolving it in constructive ways. Not surprisingly, student willingness to confront adults, in this case teachers, with difference of opinion is significantly lower than when students disagree with peers. Only 14.2 % of the population said they would always talk to a teacher if they thought a grade was unfair. This may be in part due to student inability to express themselves effectively with adults, and or their belief that adults are not going to listen to what a child thinks anyway. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Section A: Personal Initiative Pre-test Results for Total Student Population

| Item | N | R | S | F | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | % | | |
| 1. People usually follow my lead | 8 | 29.2 | 40.7 | 17.7 | 4.4 |
| 2. My friends listen to my ideas | .9 | 6.2 | 38.9 | 28.3 | 24.8 |
| 3. When I want something I make a plan to get it | 18.6 | 26.5 | 25.7 | 18.6 | 9.7 |
| 4. People usually give me what I want if I talk to them about it | 5.3 | 33.6 | 38.9 | 17.7 | 3.5 |
| 5. If I don't like something I make a plan to change it | 15 | 19.5 | 31 | 14.2 | 19.5 |
| 6. When I disagree with my friends I feel confident giving my opinion | 4.4 | 15.9 | 26.5 | 20.4 | 31.9 |
| 7. If I thought a grade on an assignment was unfair I would talk to the teacher | 34.5 | 22.1 | 17.7 | 10.6 | 14.2 |

*N (Never), R (Rarely), S (Sometimes), F (Frequently), A (Always)

The Collaboration scale (Section B), gives valuable information about student beliefs, attitudes and their approach to working with others, when compared to an independent approach to solve problems, resolve conflict, and achieve goals. Items 1 and 2 indicate willingness to work with others to achieve goals compared to working independently. 45.1% of the population does not want to do better than those who participated in a group project however, 15.9% of the population says it is always better to work alone in order to achieve what they want. Thus, while students do not seem to want to do better than their peers on a group task they do recognize that they may be more successful in the task if they work alone. This is suggestive of student recognition of poor group skill development. This independent approach to goal achievement is revisited in items 3 and 4. These items point to more interpersonal issues, rather than school work. Student responses here indicate a significant difference in willingness and attitude toward asking for help when the issue is perceived as a big decision. 30.1% always ask for help when making big decisions and 32.7% always believe it is best not to handle things alone when something is difficult. Thus students seem more willing to collaborate on interpersonal issues than on school work production. A willingness to compromise is measured on item 5 and indicates only 5.3 % would give up on what they want just because they can't get exactly what it is they want while 70.8% of the population would rarely or never do this. Relating this to item 4 from Section A of the questionnaire, (student perception of success with getting what they want through discussion), it appears that while students may be willing to compromise what they want, either they are not doing this, or they are having little success with it, as only 3.5% feel they always get what they want through discussion. The implication being that training in collaboration techniques may yield higher results for item 4 in Section A on the post-test questionnaire. The results are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Section B: Collaboration Pre-test Results for Total Student Population

| Item | N | R | S | F | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | % | | |
| 1. When I work on a project with others I want to do better than them | 45.1 | 28.3 | 12.4 | 7.1 | 6.2 |
| 2. To get what I want, working alone is better than working with others | 27.4 | 24.8 | 25.7 | 5.3 | 15.9 |
| 3. I ask for help when making big decisions | 2.7 | 10.6 | 20.4 | 35.4 | 30.1 |
| 4. When something is difficult it is best not to handle it alone | 6.2 | 8.8 | 23.9 | 27.4 | 32.7 |
| 5. If I can't get exactly what I want then I don't want it at all | 40.7 | 30.1 | 17.7 | 5.3 | 5.3 |
| 6. If I have a problem with a person I can solve it with them | 4.4 | 11.5 | 24.8 | 28.3 | 29.2 |
| 7. I can do what my friends want or what my parents want but not both | 36.3 | 18.6 | 19.5 | 10.6 | 12.4 |

*N (Never), R (Rarely), S (Sometimes), F (Frequently), A (Always)

The Communication scale (Section C), assesses student communication skills and attitudes relating to problem solving, resolving conflicts, (their own and those of others), and expressing themselves. These are summarized in Table 4. This differs slightly but significantly from the Personal Initiative scale in that it measures student perceived skill level rather than motivation to make changes. The ability to communicate effectively and assertively are important aspects in negotiation skill development. It follows that being willing to make changes is only part of successful negotiation, there must be a reliable skill set to go with this willingness for results to be positive. Most notable from this scale are the results for items 2, 5, and 7. Less than a third of the population always thinks about what they are going to say to someone and why, (30.1%). This leaves ample room for development of thoughtful communication skills. Item 5 explores student willingness to help others work out their difficulties by talking to both sides. The combined percentages for frequently and always, as choices, is 56.6%, suggesting that students like helping others. In item 7 40.7% indicated that they always try to avoid fights by talking. It is worth mentioning again the existence of a well - established peer mediation program in this school, as these scores may be a reflection of the overall tone set by this program for the school.

Table 4

Section C: Communication Pre-test Results for Total Student Population

| Item | N | R | S | F | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | % | | |
| 1. When I get mad at people, I can tell them what's bothering me | 8 | 15.9 | 31.9 | 19.5 | 24.8 |
| 2. Before I talk to someone, I think about what I'm going to say and why | 1.8 | 8.8 | 30.1 | 29.2 | 30.1 |
| 3. When I disagree with someone I have trouble getting them to see my point of view | 5.3 | 23.9 | 39.8 | 21.2 | 9.7 |
| 4. I have trouble expressing my feelings when I disagree with someone | 17.7 | 32.7 | 24.8 | 15.9 | 8.0 |
| 5. I like helping others work out their arguments by talking to both sides | 7.1 | 12.4 | 23.9 | 23.9 | 32.7 |
| 6. I have an easy time expressing feelings when I argue with someone | 12.4 | 28.3 | 27.4 | 15 | 16.8 |
| 7. I try to avoid fights by talking | 8.8 | 11.5 | 17.7 | 20.4 | 40.7 |

*N (Never), R (Rarely), S (Sometimes), F (Frequently), A (Always)

The Conflict Based Perspective Taking scale (Section D), combines together elements from the Collaboration scale, and student ability to see alternative perspectives to resolve situations of conflict. To what extent students believe that win - win outcomes are possible is also addressed in this scale. Table 5 indicates interesting results for items 2, 5, 7, and 8. Item 2 addresses student acceptance of a win - win outcome. Only 11.5% responded that one person has to win and one has to lose in a disagreement, leaving 89.5% of the population at varying degrees of acceptance for the possibility of win - win outcomes. Item 5 indicates that only about a third of students are very accepting of differences of opinion as part of interpersonal relationships. 33.6% say that is never the reason why problems can not be solved, leaving 65.4% at varying degrees of acceptance of this notion. Recognizing that opinions may differ but that solutions can be found which meet the interests of both sides in a conflict situation are key factors in successful principled negotiations. The bridge to that level of understanding will be willingness to compromise and the ability to see another person's perspective of the conflict. Student perceptions of these elements are measured with items 7 and 8. 30.1% of students indicate they always feel giving up part of what they want is worth it to settle an argument. Another 20.4% say they frequently believe this to be true suggesting 50.5% of the student population is inclined to compromise to resolve conflict. Understanding where the compromises should be made requires an appreciation of what is important to the other person, thus the ability to see their side is key. 23.9% of students claim they always see the other person's side of the story. Another 27.4% noted they frequently are able to see the other person's side of the story. Roughly 51.3% of the population is able to see things from the perspective of another most if not all of the time by their account. This bodes well for instruction in principled negotiation skills. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Section D: Conflict Based Perspective Taking Pre-test for Total Student Population

| Item | N | R | S | F | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | % | | |
| 1. When I'm in an argument I can't see the other person's side | 15.9 | 38.9 | 30.1 | 9.7 | 5.3 |
| 2. In a disagreement, one person has to win and one has to lose | 35.4 | 25.7 | 21.2 | 5.3 | 11.5 |
| 3. In a disagreement, once I make up my mind, nobody can change it | 19.5 | 29.2 | 27.4 | 10.6 | 13.3 |
| 4. If I have a serious disagreement with someone, I'm likely to lose that person as a friend | 37.2 | 24.8 | 22.1 | 10.6 | 5.3 |
| 5. Problems can't be solved if people have opposite opinions | 33.6 | 24.8 | 24.8 | 7.1 | 9.7 |
| 6. If people disagree over something strongly, a fight I likely to occur | 1.8 | 14.2 | 38.9 | 29.2 | 15.9 |
| 7. It's worth giving up part of what I want to settle an argument | 4.4 | 11.5 | 33.6 | 20.4 | 30.1 |
| 8. When I'm in an argument, I can see the other person's side of the story | 8.0 | 8.8 | 31.9 | 27.4 | 23.9 |

*N (Never), R (Rarely), S (Sometimes), F (Frequently), A (Always)

The Conflict Resolution Approach scale (Section E) measures preferred options for resolving conflict. Students were instructed to choose their top three choices in rank order for each of the five items. The results are summarized in Table 6. For the purposes of consistency in the tabulation of data only the top choice in each category was included in this researcher's calculations. Interesting are the percentages from items 1 and 2. Item 1 indicates 69% of the students choose to talk out disagreements with parents and 23.9% argue, leaving 7.1% to walk away from a disagreement. The distribution for item 2, how students handle disagreements with teachers, is somewhat more diverse. 77% choose to talk out disagreements, 12.4% would argue, 8.8% would walk away and 1.8% would engage in a physical fight. It seems that more students feel they would talk to a teacher about a problem than a parent. Perhaps this is in part due to the nature of the relationship between teachers and students, which tends to emphasize discussion of information. Also interesting is that more students would argue with a parent than a teacher. This may be due to the nature of the relationship between parent and child. Living together provides much greater opportunity for one to one interactions which may be used to sway an argument in their favour. Where as teachers typically interact with students in groups, which would reduce the opportunity for arguing. This also speaks well of the possibility for negotiation training to be an effective means to solve conflicts in schools. Students are already accustomed to discussing issues with their teachers and could be guided through the negotiation process through repeated practise with teachers.

Table 6

Section E: Conflict Resolution Approach Pre-test Results for Total Student Population

| Item | PF | A | WA | TO |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | | |
| 1. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with parents/guardians? | 0 | 23.9 | 7.1 | 69 |
| 2. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with teachers? | 1.8 | 12.4 | 8.8 | 77 |
| 3. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with friends? | 8 | 30.1 | 4.4 | 57.5 |

| | PF | A | WA | TO | NS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with brothers/sisters? | 28.3 | 29.2 | 8.8 | 23 | 9.7 |

| | PF | A | WA | TO | GA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with people your own age who are not your friends? | 12.4 | 20.4 | 16.8 | 22.1 | 27.4 |

* PF (Physical Fight), A (Argument), WA (Walk Away), TO (Talk it Out), NS ( No siblings), GA ( Get an Adult)

Since this is also the highest ranked choice for dealing with disagreements with parents, it follows that appropriate training in principled negotiation skills for students and parents may reduce the amount of arguing in homes to settle disagreements. In comparison only 23% of students choose to talk out disagreements with siblings, where 28.3% would engage in a physical fight and 29.2% would argue with a sibling. Should training in negotiation skills prove effective the area for greatest improvement in conflict resolution strategies is that of sibling disagreement. Further, if a parent as well as a child are trained negotiators, it is reasonable to expect other children in the family would pick up on these skills and utilize them in their own interpersonal relationships by way of exposure and practise in day to day experiences at home.

To compare mean scores for each of the three groups on the first four sections of the survey, pre and post program implementation, a one - way analysis of variance was performed. This data is presented on Table 7 and follows a brief discussion of the findings by survey section.

To begin, Section A (SA) was a measure of personal initiative. Experimental group (1), where students and a parent had received training in principled negotiation skills, indicates a mean of 20.70. Experimental group (2), where students were trained in principled negotiation without parental participants indicates a mean of 20.15 and finally the Control (3) has a mean of 21.60. Total population mean score is 20.90. For this section the control group has the highest mean score. In the post-test analysis the mean scores have changed somewhat. Experimental group (1) is now at a mean of 21.00, Experimental group (2) is at 20.52 and the Control (3) is at 21.18. The overall mean is 20.88. The growth in this section is not significant ($p>.05$) but it can be noted as an observation that while both experimental groups' mean scores increased that of the control decreased.

Section B (SB) measures tendency toward collaboration. Experimental group (1) has a mean of 34.20 at the pre-test and 26.20 at the post-test. Experimental group (2) has

a mean of 26.08 at the pretest and 25.88 for the post-test. The Control group (3) is at 25.80 at the pretest and 24.87 at the post-test. The total mean changed from 26.66 to 25.42. The decreased mean scores in both experimental groups for this section are concerning, albeit not significant ($p>.05$), as collaboration is a key element to successful principled negotiation.

Section C (SC) is a measure of communication skills. Mean scores for each of the three groups are as follows, Experimental (1), 22.90, Experimental (2), 23.29, Control (3), 24.11 and total mean 23.65. In the post-test analysis only the mean score of Experimental (1) increased. Post-test scores are as follows, Experimental (1), 23.20, Experimental (2), 23.13, Control (3), 23.25 and total mean, 23.19. There were no significant mean differences.

Finally, Section D (SD) measures conflict based perspective taking. Mean scores on the pretest are as follows, Experimental (1) 28.10, Experimental (2) 27.56. Control (3) 27.29, and total, 27.48. While not statistically significant ($p>.05$), it can be noted as an observation that both Experimental groups' mean scores were found to increase, where the Control group's score decreased. The post-test scores are as follows, Experimental (1) 29.60, Experimental (2), 28.58, Control (3), 27.02, and total mean, 27.91. Rank order of scores remains consistent pre-and post-test (See Table 7).

Table 7

Comparison of Group Mean Score by Section for Pre- and Post-test Questionnaire Responses

| | | N | Mean (Pretest) | Mean (Post-test) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SA | 1 | 10 | 20.70 | 21.00 |
| | 2 | 48 | 20.15 | 20.52 |
| | 3 | 55 | 21.60 | 21.18 |
| | Total | 113 | 20.90 | 20.88 |
| SB | 1 | 10 | 34.20 | 26.20 |
| | 2 | 48 | 26.08 | 25.88 |
| | 3 | 55 | 25.80 | 24.87 |
| | Total | 113 | 26.66 | 25.42 |
| SC | 1 | 10 | 22.90 | 23.20 |
| | 2 | 48 | 23.29 | 23.13 |
| | 3 | 55 | 24.11 | 23.25 |
| | Total | 113 | 23.65 | 23.19 |
| SD | 1 | 10 | 28.10 | 29.60 |
| | 2 | 48 | 27.56 | 28.58 |
| | 3 | 55 | 27.29 | 27.02 |
| | Total | 113 | 27.48 | 27.91 |

Note: SA (Section A), SB (Section B), SC (Section C), SD (Section D)

1 (Experimental group 1) 2 (Experimental group 2) 3 (Control group 3)

Having completed the mean score comparison by section and group the next task is to further analyze mean scores by gender and grade to establish whether these are in fact correlated to the acquisition of principled negotiation skills. Table 8 speaks to the summated scores for each section of the survey by gender. Interestingly, female students scored higher than male students on all but one section in the pretest. The only section where males indicate a higher mean score is the collaboration scale, Section B. This is somewhat surprising given that females are often stereotyped as more cooperative in tasks than males. Also interesting is the comparison of mean scores within gender across the four sections of the survey. In all but one section, the Conflict Based Perspective scale, the mean scores of male students declined on the post-test. Female students were split, increasing their mean score on the Personal Initiative scale and on the Conflict Based Perspective scale but decreasing their score slightly on the Collaboration and Communication scales.

Table 8

Gender Comparison of Mean Scores Pre- and Post-test

| Gender | | SA | SA (Post) | SB | SB(Post) | SC | SC(Post) | SD | SD(Post) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mean | 20.37 | 20.32 | 26.84 | 24.97 | 22.79 | 22.41 | 26.51 | 26.70 |
| | N | 63 | 63 | 63 | | 63 | 63 | 63 | 63 |
| | Std. Deviation | 4.27 | 3.60 | 10.03 | 3.80 | 4.33 | 4.06 | 5.01 | 4.74 |
| 2 | Mean | 21.58 | 21.60 | 26.44 | 25.98 | 24.74 | 24.18 | 28.70 | 29.44 |
| | N | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| | Std. Deviation | 4.65 | 4.68 | 4.07 | 2.78 | 4.37 | 3.75 | 4.63 | 4.12 |
| Total | Mean | 20.90 | 20.88 | 26.66 | 25.42 | 23.65 | 23.19 | 27.48 | 27.91 |
| | N | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 |
| | Std. Deviation | 4.46 | 4.14 | 7.93 | 3.41 | 4.43 | 4.01 | 4.95 | 4.66 |

Note: (1) male students, (2) female students

Comparison of mean scores for summated sections by grade, found on Table 9, does not yield any statistically significant differences ($p>.05$) although some general observations can be made. Grade four students showed the greatest change on the Personal Initiative and Conflict Based Perspective Taking scales. Grade five students showed an increased mean score for the Conflict Based Perspective Taking scale only, and a decrease in each of the other areas of the questionnaire. Although a marginal difference, the change in mean score for grade five students on the Conflict Based Perspective Taking scale was greater than the change in the grade four students' mean score. According to Nakkula & Nikitopoulos (unpublished paper), this scale embodies the essence of negotiation as a construct. Having positive change in both grade four and five mean scores for this scale is a promising sign.

Closer examination of the pre-test responses on the Conflict Resolution Approach scale, Section E reveals some interesting differences between gender and groups. Specific details can be found on Tables 10 - 16. Question 1 addresses how students prefer to handle disagreements with parents/guardians. No students indicated they would use physical force to handle the situation with parents/guardians. Question 2 applies the same situation to teachers. 3.2% of the male students responded they would use physical force to handle a conflict with a teacher, where 0% of the female students responded in such a way. In both situations presented in questions 1 and 2 the most popular response for males and females was the talk it out option. Question 3 asks how students handle conflict with their friends. A notable difference in preferred strategy is found here where 12.7% of the males, and 2.0% of the females indicated they would use a physical fight to handle the situation. Performing chi - square tests for these five questions did reveal a statistically significant difference, ($x^2=5.282$, $df=1$, $p=.022$) for question 3 (See Table 15).

Table 9

Comparison of Mean Scores by Grade

| Grade | | SA | SA (Post) | SB | SB (Post) | SC | SC (Post) | SD | SD (Post) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Mean | 19.55 | 19.91 | 26.87 | 26.02 | 23.60 | 23.21 | 27.96 | 28.11 |
| | N | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 | 47 |
| | Std. Deviation | 4.60 | 4.03 | 11.31 | 2.91 | 4.04 | 3.93 | 5.12 | 4.60 |
| 5 | Mean | 21.86 | 21.58 | 26.52 | 24.98 | 23.70 | 23.18 | 27.14 | 27.77 |
| | N | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 |
| | Std. Deviation | 4.14 | 4.12 | 4.22 | 3.69 | 4.72 | 4.09 | 4.83 | 4.74 |
| Total | Mean | 20.90 | 20.88 | 26.66 | 25.42 | 23.65 | 23.19 | 27.48 | 27.91 |
| | N | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 |
| | Std. Deviation | 4.46 | 4.14 | 7.93 | 3.41 | 4.43 | 4.01 | 4.95 | 4.66 |

Note: (4) grade 4, (5) grade 5

Question 4 marks another notable result in that for the first time for both sexes, the talk it out option is not the most common. Dealing with disagreements with siblings appears to be more challenging for students of both sexes than handling conflict with friends. 38.1% of the male students indicated they use physical force when managing disagreements with siblings, a 25.4% difference from their score when dealing with friends. For female students the argument option is the most popular in this situation, with 38% of the female students choosing it. Generally speaking the boys appear to prefer more confrontational means to managing disagreements regardless of who the conflict is with. While confrontation is not completely foreign to female students they tend to reserve it as an option for their disagreements with siblings.

Performing a chi - square analysis of these same questions by group for the pre-test does yield statistically significant differences. Once again there is little variability in choice of option when the disagreement is with a parent or teacher. A notable difference surfaces at question 3 where 0% of the students in Experimental group 1, 2.1% of the students in Experimental group 2, and 14.5% in Control group 3, indicated they would use physical force to address a disagreement with a friend ($x^2$=13.053, df=6, p=.04).

Pre- and post-test differences on questions 3 and 4 in Section E for gender are statistically significant, ($p < .05$). Responses are shown in percentages on Tables 15 and 16 respectively. Question 3 addresses how students choose to handle conflict with a friend, ($x^2$=10.853, df=3, p=.01). Question 4 addresses student choice in strategy when in conflict with a sibling, ($x^2$=12.971, df=4, p=.01). Most notable is the increase in the male selection of the talk it out option for conflict strategy used with siblings. This score jumped from 19% to 22.2% for the post test. While the percentage of females who chose the talk it out option on the pre-test was greater than males, the increase from the pre-test was not as great as it was for the male students. 28 % of females selected the talk it out option on the pre-test, 30% did so on the post test. In this particular situation more males than females changed their minds about the best way to handle conflict with a sibling.

Table 10

Crosstabulation of Group and Conflict Resolution Approach for Conflict with Parents/Guardians

| QE1 | | Responses shown in % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | (pre) | 0 | 30 | 10 | 60 |
| | (post) | 0 | 40 | 0 | 60 |
| 2 | (pre) | 0 | 20.8 | 6.3 | 72.9 |
| | (post) | 0 | 16.7 | 8.3 | 75 |
| 3 | (pre) | 0 | 25.5 | 7.3 | 67.3 |
| | (post) | 0 | 21.8 | 20 | 58.2 |

(1) Physical fight, (2) Argument, (3) Walk away, (4) Talk it out

Table 11

Crosstabulation of Group and Conflict Resolution Approach with Teachers

| QE2 | | Responses shown in % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | (pre) | 0 | 30 | 10 | 60 |
| | (post) | 0 | 20 | 20 | 60 |
| 2 | (pre) | 2.1 | 12.5 | 8.3 | 77.1 |
| | (post) | 0 | 14.6 | 10.4 | 75 |
| 3 | (pre) | 1.8 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 80 |
| | (post) | 0 | 7.3 | 9.1 | 83.6 |

(1) Physical fight, (2) Argument, (3) Walk away, (4) Talk it out

Table 12

Crosstabulation of Group and Conflict Resolution Approach with Friends

| QE3 | | Responses shown in % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | (pre) | 0 | 30 | 20 | 50 |
| | (post) | 0 | 30 | 10 | 60 |
| 2 | (pre) | 2.1 | 35.4 | 2.1 | 60.4 |
| | (post) | 8.3 | 27.1 | 16.7 | 47.9 |
| 3 | (pre) | 14.5 | 25.5 | 3.6 | 56.4 |
| | (post) | 10.9 | 34.5 | 5.5 | 49.1 |

(1) Physical fight, (2) Argument, (3) Walk away, (4) Talk it out

Table 13

Crosstabulation of Group and Conflict Resolution Approach with Siblings

| QE4 | | Responses shown in % | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| 1 | (pre) | 30 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 10 |
| | (post) | 10 | 60 | 0 | 30 | 0 | 10 |
| 2 | (pre) | 35.4 | 29.2 | 4.2 | 25 | 6.3 | 0 |
| | (post) | 35.4 | 14.6 | 6.3 | 35.4 | 8.3 | 0 |
| 3 | (pre) | 21.8 | 30.9 | 10.9 | 21.8 | 14.5 | 0 |
| | (post) | 30.9 | 32.7 | 5.5 | 16.4 | 14.5 | 0 |

(1) Physical fight, (2) Argument, (3) Walk away, (4) Talk it out, (5) No Siblings,

(9) No response

Table 14

Crosstabulation of Group and Conflict Resolution Approach with Peers who are not Friends

| QE5 | | Responses shown in % | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| 1 | (pre) | 0 | 30 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 0 |
| | (post) | 10 | 20 | 10 | 50 | 10 | 0 |
| 2 | (pre) | 14.6 | 20.8 | 8.3 | 16.7 | 37.5 | 2.1 |
| | (post) | 8.3 | 20.8 | 14.6 | 31.3 | 25 | 0 |
| 3 | (pre) | 12.7 | 18.2 | 21.8 | 25.5 | 21.8 | 0 |
| | (post) | 12.7 | 29.1 | 12.7 | 25.5 | 20 | 0 |

(1) Physical fight, (2) Argument, (3) Walk away, (4) Talk it out, (5) Get an adult, (9) No response

Table 15

Crosstabulation of Gender and Conflict Resolution Approach for Conflict with Friends

| QE3 | | Responses shown in % | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Males | (pre) | 12.7 | 33.3 | 4.8 | 49.2 |
| | (post) | 14.3 | 38.1 | 7.9 | 39.7 |
| Females | (pre) | 2.0 | 26.0 | 4.0 | 68.0 |
| | (post) | 2.0 | 22.0 | 14.0 | 62.0 |

Note: (1) Physical fight, (2) Argument, (3) Walk away, (4) Talk it out

Table 16

Crosstabulation of Gender and Conflict Resolution Approach for Conflict with Siblings

| QE4 | | Responses shown in % | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Males | (pre) | 38.1 | 22.2 | 9.5 | 19.0 | 11.1 | 0 |
| | (post) | 42.9 | 17.5 | 4.8 | 22.2 | 12.7 | 0 |
| Females | (pre) | 16.0 | 38.0 | 8.0 | 28.0 | 8.0 | 2 |
| | (post) | 16.0 | 40.0 | 6.0 | 30.0 | 8.0 | 0 |

Note: (1) Physical fight, (2) Argument, (3) Walk away, (4) Talk it out, (5) No siblings, (9) No response

Another change of some significance between pre- and post-test scores by group can be found from responses to question 4, how students would handle disagreements with siblings (See table 13). 30% of students in Experimental group 1 indicated they would use physical force at the time of the pretest, this number was 10% at the post-test. The percentage of students in Experimental group 2 who would use physical force did not change on the post-test. Control group 3 students indicated an increased preference for the physical force strategy. As well, both Experimental groups have increased student response indicating preference for talking out disagreements with siblings ($x^2$=15.459, df=8, p=.05).

A paired t- test for the pre- and post-test summated scores was performed for the total population (N=113) to determine the nature and significance of differences between the pre- and post-test scores. Of the four sections from the questionnaire, only section B, the Collaboration scale, indicated a significant difference, (p=.04), with 112 degrees of freedom, which is within acceptable limits for significance. The t- value for this scale was 1.76. When a paired t - test was performed for Experimental group 1 there was no statistically significant value indicated, (p>.05) with 9 degrees of freedom and a t value of 1.88, however it was noted that the standard deviation for the Collaboration scale was greater than any of the other scales for that group, with a mean difference of 8.00 and a SD=21.30. The mean difference for Experimental group 2 on the Collaboration scale was .21 with a SD=3.99. While the mean score for Control group 3 on the Collaboration scale was .93 with SD=4.29.

Frequency of response at each level, by group, for question 1 of the Ability Questions can be found on Table 17. The five level rubric for the Ability Questions can be found in Appendix B. Question 1 measures student knowledge of negotiation skills. The Very Weak level indicates student failure to list a single negotiation skill. Weak, indicates part of a negotiation skill was described. Satisfactory means a single skill was described. Good indicates two skills were described and Excellent indicates three or

more skills were described. In the pre-test zero responses were at the level of Excellence. In the post-test a total of three students, one from Experimental group 1 and two from Experimental group 2, described three or more negotiation skills. Further, zero students in the Experimental groups scored below the Satisfactory level on the post-test, but 5 students were below this level from the Control group.

Table 17

Frequency of Rubric Response by Group for Question 1 of Ability Questions

(Write in point form the best way to solve problems between two people)

| Group | | VW | W | S | G | E | NR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (pre) | 0 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | (post) | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | (pre) | 1 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | (post) | 0 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 3 | (pre) | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | (post) | 0 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Note: Group 1 (N= 10), Group 2 (N=12), Group 3 (N=11)

VW (Very weak), W (Weak), S (Satisfactory), G (Good), E (Excellent),

NR (No response)

Questions 2, 3, and 4 measure student behaviour in applying negotiation skills. Question 2 addresses conflict with a friend. Question 3 and 4 address conflict with an unfamiliar peer and a family member respectively. Frequency of response is recorded on Tables 17 though 20. Using the same rubric as Question 1, Very Weak means the student was unable to list any negotiation skills. Weak indicates a student listed negotiation skills that were incomplete or inappropriate to the situation. Satisfactory indicates the student described one negotiation skill. Good indicates the student listed two negotiation skills, and Excellent indicates the student was able to list three or more negotiation skills.

Most notably from the results for Question 2, is the lack of student responses in the Excellent level. Experimental group 1, with zero responses in the Good level at pre-test and four responses at this level at post-test indicate the greatest improvement in ability to state appropriate negotiation behaviour. Experimental group 2 also had zero responses at the Good level for the pre-test and one for the post-test. Zero responses at the Good level were indicated on either the pre- or post-test for Control group 3 indicating zero growth in ability to state negotiation behaviour appropriate to the situation.

Question 3 addresses how students deal with a conflict when the other party is an unfamiliar peer. Similar to responses recorded for Question 2, zero responses in the Excellent level can be found for any of the three groups on the pre- and post-test. Little change is seen in either the second Experimental group or the Control group. The greatest change in response is found in Experimental group 1 where 6 responses were at the weak level on the pre-test and only three remained there for the post-test. The movement being in the upward direction on the scale, 4 responses now at the Satisfactory level, and 2 at the Good level, is seeming to indicate some change in student behaviour as they see it.

The final question addressing negotiation behaviour is Question 4 and it deals with conflict with a family member. Again, zero responses are at the Excellent level for

any of the three groups on the pre- or post-test. Very little change is found in the level of response for each of the three groups. One observation of interest is the general upward shift on the scale for both Experimental groups 1 and 2 and the general downward shift for the Control group. Where two responses from Experimental group 1 were at the Very Weak level on the pre-test, zero responses were at that level for the post-test, increasing the number of Weak and Satisfactory responses each by one. Similarly for Experimental group 2, seven responses were at the Very Weak level on the pre-test and only five remained there on the post-test. Weak, Satisfactory, and Good responses all doubled in number on the post-test.

Table 18

Frequency of Rubric Response by Group for Question 2 of Ability Questions (What would you do if a friend started to yell at you?)

| Group | | VW | W | S | G | E | NR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (pre) | 1 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | (post) | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | (pre) | 2 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | (post) | 2 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | (pre) | 4 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | (post) | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Note: Group 1 (N= 10), Group 2 (N=12), Group 3 (N=11)

VW (Very weak), W (Weak), S (Satisfactory), G (Good), E (Excellent),

NR (No response)

Table 19

Frequency of Rubric Response for Question 3 of Ability Questions

(What would you do if a student you do not know called you names?)

| Group | | VW | W | S | G | E | NR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (pre) | 1 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | (post) | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | (pre) | 4 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | (post) | 4 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | (pre) | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | (post) | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Note: Group 1(N= 10), Group 2 (N=12), Group 3 (N=11)

VW (Very weak), W (Weak), S (Satisfactory), G (Good), E (Excellent),

NR (No response)

Table 20

Frequency of Rubric Response by Group for Question 4 of Ability Questions

(What would you do if someone in your family started to bother you?)

| Group | | VW | W | S | G | E | NR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (pre) | 2 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | (post) | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | (pre) | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | (post) | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | (pre) | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | (post) | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Note: Group 1 (N= 10), Group 2 (N=12), Group 3 (N=11)

VW (Very weak), W (Weak), S (Satisfactory), G (Good), E (Excellent),

NR (No response)

Question 5 addresses student attitude toward helping other students resolve conflict. A response that indicated students should not help other students resolve conflicts measured Very Weak on the rubric scale. A Weak level was obtained by stating they did not believe students should help other students resolve conflict and providing a reason why they believe this. A Satisfactory response indicates students should help other students resolve conflict but do not include a reason. A response that indicated the student agreed that students should help other students resolve conflict and provided an example measured Good on the scale, and if they were able to elaborate further a level of Excellent was achieved. This information can be found on Table 21.

Responses for Question 5 show a tendency toward agreement that students should help other students resolve conflict. Again, a general upward shift is seen in the responses of Experimental groups 1 and 2. A more scattered movement is observed in the post-test scores of Control group 3. The number of responses at the Good level of the scale increased by two for all three groups from pre- to post-test.

Table 21

Frequency of Rubric Response by Group for Question 5 of Ability Questions

(Do you think students should help other students solve problems? Why?)

| Group | | VW | W | S | G | E | NR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (pre) | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | (post) | 0 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | (pre) | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| | (post) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| 0 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | (pre) | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| | (post) | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 |

Note: Group 1 (N= 10), Group 2 (N=12), Group 3 (N=11)

VW (Very weak), W (Weak), S (Satisfactory), G (Good), E (Excellent),

NR (No response)

This researcher attempted to collect data using a number of different instruments, including a questionnaire, open ended questions, journals, and informal discussions. The intention being to provide a multi faceted understanding of student ability, attitude, and behaviour as they related to using negotiation skills to resolve conflict and problem solve. It must be stated that at the outset of this study the researcher also planned to include teacher and parent questionnaires to gather data from a different perspective on these same qualities. The hope was to reveal a more complete picture of the student. However this researcher realized the potential difficulties with analyzing this quantity of data and chose not to use parent or teacher questionnaires in this study. Instead anecdotal comments from parents and teachers were used.

Students in Experimental groups 1 and 2 maintained journals for the duration of the training and for a three week period following the training, roughly 12 weeks in total. Students included information presented in their training sessions as well they responded to questions designed to elicit information about their ability, behaviour, and attitudes toward negotiation skills. For example, when asked what skill they think will benefit them most in addressing situations of conflict following training completion the most popular responses were, collaboration and negotiation skills in general. When asked what they will do differently in situations of conflict the most popular responses were, find out interests of the other person, try to empathize more, don't get mad as much, and handle the problem better. A small number of students said they wouldn't do anything differently because it would be harder. A number of students indicated that they had been using their skills to resolve conflict and that they had been successful. Others said they had tried but were unsuccessful. The overall tone of the journals was positive, many students used them to get specific advice on how to manage situations they were currently experiencing.

Informal interviews with parents indicated an overall positive tone following the training. Parents were asked, "Is there anything that has changed in the way conflict is

approached at home?" Parental feedback included comments like, "the games gave my son and I a way to talk about things." In fact in more than one case, the games were used with other members of the family as well as with the trained student, including spouses. An overall positive comment from parents was in reference to the empowerment element of these skills. These parents no longer felt as though they had to impose a solution for their child's problems. Instead they could encourage their child to verbalize clearly their needs and interests and solutions were then sought out together. This is a great sign of growth in student ability to manage conflict from the parents' perspective. Teachers were equally positive, commenting more on the need to strengthen these skills in students as a regular part of their development at school. In fact on more than one occasion a teacher found they were using the steps in principled negotiation to resolve conflicts within their classroom and the students recognized this. Furthermore, students have asked to negotiate problems with their teachers with some regularity since completing their training.

## Summary of Findings

Overall, the instruction of the Program for Young Negotiators has served to increase student awareness of alternatives to violent solutions in conflict situations, by helping them to understand how to break down the conflict and communicate more effectively. The data from the questionnaire does not reveal statistical significance, however, the Ability Questions data consistently reveals an upward shift in scores for Experimental groups 1 and 2 on each of the five questions. The scores for Control group 3 remain fairly stable from the pre- to post-test. The journal entries of most participants indicate a positive attitude toward using principled negotiation skills.

Post-test summated mean scores for the first four sections of the Five Factor Negotiation Scale (Curhan, 1996) consistently reveal higher scores for Experimental group 1 compared to the total population. This was not the case for the pre-test scores. The post-test scores for Experimental group 2 are higher than the total population on the Collaboration section only (Section B). This was not the case for the pre-test scores. Control group 3 has higher post-test mean scores on the Personal Initiative scale (Section A) and the Communication scale (Section C). This is consistent with their pre-test scores also. The suggestion being that participation in Program for Young Negotiators increased student ability to collaborate and in the case of Experimental group 1, it also increased their ability to see other perspectives in conflict based situations. These are positive signs of growth.

# CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Conclusions

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the impact, if any, of teaching students and their parents principled negotiation skills to increase student ability to resolve conflicts and solve problems. A secondary purpose was to determine the impact of teaching junior elementary age students principled negotiation skills to increase their ability to resolve conflicts and solve problems.

In order to determine the extent of the impact this researcher conducted a quasi-experimental study. Three groups, two experimental and one control, were established. The first Experimental group consisted of students who had a parent participating in the negotiation skills training. Experimental group 2 consisted of students who did not have a parent participating in negotiation skills training and the Control group 3 consisted of students who neither participated in negotiation skills training nor had a parent receiving training.

A number of instruments were used in this study. First, pre- and post-test questionnaires were used to collect data on elements considered essential to the development of principled negotiation skills. The Five Factor Negotiation Scale , developed for use with the Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan, 1996) has a coefficient alpha of .75 which is acceptable for this type of affective instrument. These questionnaires were completed by all student participants. According to Gresham (1985) paper and pencil tests may not be valid enough to assess cognitive behaviour training and for that reason two other instruments were employed to collect data. The second instrument was open ended Ability Questions (Keane, unpublished) which were given to all student participants in order to collect data on knowledge, behaviour, and attitude as they relate specifically to negotiation skills. Students in the experimental groups

maintained journals for the duration of the study and participated in informal group discussions about negotiation. Finally, informal anecdotal comments were solicited from parents of students in Experimental group 1 and participating classroom teachers.

According to Fine (1979) students mature in their social relationships between the ages of 6 and 12. Bulkeley and Cramer (1990),Verduyn, Lord, and Forrest (1990), Wise, Bundy, Bundy, and Wise (1991) agree that early adolescence is the best time to intervene when teaching social skills. This being the case, the participants in this study are within the age and developmental ranges identified as the most appropriate for intervention. Can students within this group be taught how to resolve conflicts and solve problems using principled negotiation skills taught in Program for Young Negotiators (Curhan,1996)? Analysis of the questionnaire data indicates that these students can be taught how to perceive conflict in a more constructive way. This is revealed through the increased mean scores on the post-test in Section D of the questionnaire (Conflict Based Perspective scale) for both Experimental groups 1 and 2. The mean score for Control group 3 is found to decrease on this scale. Further, student responses to Ability Question 1 indicate a positive growth in ability to solve a problem between two people. Having 33% of student responses from Experimental group 2 at the Good or Excellent level on the post-test and only .08% at that level on the pretest is a good indication that students can be taught principled negotiation skills. Similarly, 60% of Experimental group 1 indicated responses at the Good or Excellent level for the post-test and only 30% did so on the pretest. Finally, only .09% of Control group 3 responses were at this level on the pretest and 0% were so on the post-test. The indication being that through participation in the training program the students in both experimental groups increased their awareness of negotiation as a means for resolving conflict.

Having found that it is possible to increase student knowledge of principled negotiation skills through training the next question should be, are there specific types of conflict where these skills are more likely to be employed than any other strategy known

to the student. Again, looking to the questionnaire data, the answer appears to be yes. Section E of the survey measures Conflict Resolution Approach. The approach is situation specific in that who the conflict is with is defined. From this data 66% of trained students indicated conflicts with parents/guardians would be talked out following participation in negotiation skills training. Conflicts with teachers would be talked out by 67% of trained students. 46 % of trained students indicated they would talk out a disagreement with friends and only 31% of these students indicated they would talk out a disagreement with a sibling. Finally, 33% said they would choose to talk out a disagreement with an unfamiliar peer. As such, it appears as though students are selective in choosing with whom to use their negotiation skills. The greatest likelihood is with teachers and the lowest is with siblings. Extrapolating from this, it is reasonable to believe the nature of conflict between a student and a teacher would differ significantly from that of a student and a sibling, and thus when students choose to use their skills is conflict specific. In fact, according to Gentry and Benenson (1993) 75% of children having siblings experience at least one violent episode per year. Such an episode would be physically aggressive in nature and may cause bodily harm. The average number of such episodes is 21. Further to this is the response of students to Ability Questions 2 and 4, where Question 2 asks how they deal with a disagreement with a friend, and Question 4 asks how they would handle the disagreement when it is with a family member. More trained students scored at the Satisfactory level or above for how they would handle a disagreement with a friend than did the same group responding to how they would handle disagreements with family members.

Finally, it was suggested that students in Experimental group 1, having a parent trained in principled negotiation skills, would consolidate their skills more readily than students without parental participants. This should have translated into improved scores for Experimental group 1. While there were no statistically significant differences between Experimental group 1 and 2's mean scores on the questionnaire there were

subtle differences. For example, the boys in Experimental group 1 showed increased mean scores on sections A, C, and D of the questionnaire. Experimental group 2 also showed increased mean scores but on sections C and D only. The change in Section A, the Personal Initiative scale, is unique to the males in Experimental group 1. Receiving positive reinforcement and encouragement from parents to assert themselves in negotiations may explain this difference. Having seen how asserting themselves positively at home can help them to negotiate successfully, perhaps these boys have developed a greater sense of personal initiative.

Upon closer examination it was found that grade four boys in Experimental group 1 showed an increase in mean scores on the Personal Initiative, Communication and, Conflict Based Perspective Taking scales. While grade four boys in Experimental group 2 showed an increase in mean scores on the Collaboration and Conflict Based Perspective Taking scales. Grade five boys in Experimental group 1 showed an increase in mean score for the Personal Initiative scale only, while boys in Experimental group 2 demonstrated increased mean scores on Personal Initiative, Communication, and Conflict Based Perspective Taking scales. Thus in comparing the gains made by grade four boys to those made by grade five boys it seems the younger students benefited more broadly from having a parental participant.

The same pattern does not hold true for the female population in Experimental group 1. Only one mean score, Section D, the Conflict Based Perspective Taking scale, was found to increase. However, in Experimental group 2 mean scores increased on Sections A, B, and D. For the female participants there appears to be no benefit to having a parent participate when compared to training without a parental participant. Upon closer discrimination an interesting difference within this population can be found. Grade four girls have increased mean scores on the Personal Initiative, Collaboration, Communication, and Conflict Based Perspective Taking scales. For the grade five girls in Experimental group 1 no scores increased, in fact all scales but the Conflict Based

Perspective Taking scale, decreased. Together, the overall increase in mean scores for grade four participants in Experimental group 1 exceed the increases in scores for grade five participants in the same group. Although not statistically significant, the implication is that younger students do benefit more from having parental support while learning to use principled negotiation skills.

The statistical data collected on the Five Factor Negotiation Scale (Curhan, 1996) was one form of data collection used in this study. This researcher found in reviewing the literature on training students in related social skills, such as mediation, that data collection through questionnaires only was a weakness in study design and could not provide sufficient insight into student knowledge, attitudes, or behaviour. Studies where all data collection was subjective in nature were also criticized in the literature. In an effort to improve upon this the researcher attempted to combine both subjective and objective data collection strategies. In point of fact this researcher discovered too late the difficulties with using more subjective data collection strategies. The Ability Questions (Keane, unpublished) proved to be most unwieldy for two reasons mainly. First, the students were not given specific guidance as to how to complete this section, i.e., what the researcher was looking for as possible choices. Consequently students appear to have followed the example set from Section E of the Five Factor Negotiation Scale (Curhan, 1996) and simply selected one or more of the choices provided there rather than elaborate. For example, in describing, using point form, the best way to solve a problem between two people, many students wrote, talk it out or get help but very few elaborated in any way about how they would accomplish this end. This created problems when the researcher began evaluating the responses using the accompanying rubric. The second problem with this instrument was the sheer number of responses to tabulate, 226 students (N=113 pre- and post-test questionnaires) multiplied by 5 questions each is 1130 questions. To address these issues the researcher elected to randomly select students using student identification numbers for the second Experimental group and the

Control group but evaluated all of Experimental group 1. The result of this selection process: group numbers which did not differ significantly from one another, Experimental group 1 (10 students), Experimental group 2 (12 students), and the Control group 3 (11 students).

## Limitations

There are a number of limitations with the current study which must be taken into account when considering the findings. First, the imbalance of group size is recognized as a weakness. Having only ten parental participants limited the number of students in Experimental group 1 to a population of ten which has a low statistical power. The second experimental group was significantly larger at 48 students, and the control larger still at 55 students. This researcher also acknowledges the difficulty with group determination. Students in Experimental group 1 may not be representative of the general population of grade four and five students. These students were selected because they had a parent willing and able to participate in the study. Experimental group 2 was made up of the remaining students in the grade four and five classes whose teachers had agreed to participate in the study. To improve upon this would be difficult due to the dependence on parent volunteers. A possible alternative could be to solicit parent volunteers first. Once the number of parents was determined the second experimental group and the control group could be randomly selected from the remaining population to match the number in the first experimental group more closely.

A second limitation acknowledged has to do with the circumstances under which the Program for Young Negotiators was taught. Teachers feel incredible pressure to squeeze in as much curriculum as possible. While the Program for Young Negotiators does cover a number of expectations in the Health curriculum for grades four and five the time allotted for training was limited by schedules to cover core curriculum areas.

This often meant periods of instruction had to be condensed to fit a 30 - 40 minute window of time. Early on in the training this was not a problem at all. However as skills became more involved there was a sense, on the part of the researcher, that students would have benefited from more time to process the information. This is another aspect of the current study which could be improved upon.

A third limitation of the current study is the population. Within the entire population there are a number of students who have demonstrated very poor interpersonal skills in the past. In fact due to the severity of the problems with this particular group of students the Behaviour Specialist team was called in to work with a number of them last year. As such it does not seem reasonable to assume that the results from this study can be generalized beyond this population.

The fourth limitation to be addressed is the short time line in which data was collected. Although the length of the current study is not uncharacteristic of similar studies, it has been acknowledged by Ogilvy (1994), that the effects may not extend beyond the short term. This being the case it might prove interesting to re administer the survey in a year to determine whether the effects observed in the current study remain stable.

A final limitation is the pencil and paper instruments used in this study. The scoring schemes may be problematic and they may be sensitive enough to pick up all the nuances associated with change in this specific program.

## Recommendations

The occurrence of interpersonal conflict is a reality faced by all students. Some will cope with this conflict in more constructive ways than others. This was clearly indicated by the pretest results from the Five Factor Negotiation Scale instrument used in the current study. To what extent and under which conditions students can be taught

more constructive ways to resolve conflict and solve problems remains somewhat unclear. While some differences in impact between experimental group models have been identified in the current study, further research is required to determine the best model suited for the developmental stage of the target population. In the social psychological approach to teaching negotiation skills it has been suggested that students of all ages can learn to negotiate, while the cognitive developmental approach claims only more mature students can learn to negotiate effectively. It seems from the current study that younger, more than older students benefit from having a parent participate in the training of principled negotiation skills. The durability of this impact should be further researched.

If younger students do in fact benefit more from having a parent participate how old do students need to be before schools and parents can begin to teach principled negotiation skills? Furthermore, at what point is the gain from having a parent participate statistically significant? Would the gap between gains for having parental participation have been greater if this study had compared grade four students to grade 6 students? These questions should be explored further using a larger sample size, in order to determine the optimum program design for student training at various stages of their development.

Understanding which program designs are most effective will be key in assisting schools in planning programs for students at all stages of development. Encouraging greater skill in resolving conflicts using non - violent strategies is of value at any age. However to be able to identify at what age parent participation is crucial and at what age it becomes less significant to skill acquisition would be of value to those who are setting up programs.

The results obtained from the current study are both population and area specific. It would therefore be of great value to conduct a similar study on a larger scale, to include each separate school district. This would provide greater insight into which areas

would benefit most from programs designed to teach principled negotiation skills, and using which model for delivery.

The methods of data collection in the current study have been both quantitative and qualitative, however, there has been great emphasis placed on the perspectives of the student. It is recommended therefore that in a future study, more quantitative data be collected from both the parents and teachers, thereby including all aspects of the child's environment in the evaluation of their skills.

The current study has served to increase awareness of the role parents can play in the acquisition of principled negotiation skills in students of junior elementary age. Current trends in education encourage greater input from parents. Perhaps parents can do much more for their children than assist with math and language homework. In fact, the training of parents, more so than the students themselves, should be the focus when attempting to develop student abilities in principled negotiation. Without the consistent reinforcement parents are able to provide it is unlikely that students will ever develop their skills to an automatic level.

There are no shortages of programs in schools today that claim to teach non - violent strategies for resolving conflict to students. Unfortunately, in many cases little research has been done to determine the efficacy of the program before it is implemented. Understanding which program models are best suited for which stage of student development should prove invaluable. School boards are forced to cut programs and yet the need for student skill development in the area of conflict resolution appears to be on the rise. Students, parents, and teachers would be well served by a greater understanding of the efficacy of the programs being taught in schools, rather than blindly accepting them as a way to deal with problems stemming from student inability to deal with conflict.

Appendix A

The Program for Young Negotiators Student Questionnaire

# *Survey ! Survey! Survey!*

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. Your answers will help educators to learn more about young people like you. Please take care to answer every question as honestly as possible.

Please circle the item that best describes you in each category.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | ❑ male | ❑ female |
| Grade | ❑ 4th | ❑ 5th |
| Age | ❑ 9-10 | ❑ 11-12 |

Today's date: _____

# *Section A*

Please circle the number that best fits with your response to the following statements:

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People usually follow my lead | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends listen to my ideas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I want something, I make a plan to get it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| People usually give me what I want if I talk to them about it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If I don't like something I make a plan to change it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I disagree with my friends I feel confident giving my opinion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If I thought a grade on an assignment was unfair I would talk to the teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# *Section B*

Please circle the number that best fits with your response to the following statements:

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| When I work on a project with others, I want to do better than them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| To get what I want, working alone is better than working with others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I ask for help when making big decisions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When something is difficult it is best not to handle it alone | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If I can't get exactly what I want then I don't want it at all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If I have a problem with a person I can solve it with them | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I can do what my friends want or what my parents want but not both | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# *Section C*

Please circle the number that best fits with your response to the following statements:

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| When I get mad at people, I can tell them what's bothering me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Before I talk to someone, I think about what I'm going to say and why | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I disagree with someone I have trouble getting them to see my point of view | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have trouble expressing my feelings when I disagree with someone | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I like helping others work out their arguments by talking to both sides | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have an easy time expressing my feelings when I argue with someone | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I try to avoid fights by talking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## *Section D*

Please circle the number that best fits with your response to the following statements:

| | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| When I'm in an argument I can't see the other person's side | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| In a disagreement, one person has to win and one has to lose | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| In a disagreement, once I make up my mind, nobody can change it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If I have a serious disagreement with someone, I'm likely to lose that person as a friend | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Problems can't be solved if people have opposite opinions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If people disagree over something strongly, a fight is likely to occur | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It's worth giving up part of what I want to settle an argument | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I'm in an argument, I can see the other person's side of the story | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# *Section E*

For each question below, please indicate your top 3 choices for how you handle disagreements.

Be sure to list three options for each question.

Put a #1 on the line for the first choice, a #2 on the line for your second choice and a #3 on the line for your third choice.

1. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with parents/guardians?

   ❑ physical fight ❑ argument ❑ walk away ❑ talk it out

2. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with teachers?

   ❑ physical fight ❑ argument ❑ walk away ❑ talk it out

3. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with friends?

   ❑ physical fight ❑ argument ❑ walk away ❑ talk it out

4. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with brothers/sisters?

   ❑ physical fight ❑ argument ❑ walk away ❑ talk it out

   ❑ I don't have brothers or sisters

5. How do you usually handle the situation when you disagree with people your age who are not your friends?

   ❑ physical fight ❑ argument ❑ walk away ❑ talk it out ❑ get an adult

Ability Questions

1. Write in point form the best way to solve problems between two people.

2. What would you do if a friend started to yell at you?

3. What would you do if a student you do not know called you names?

4. What would you do if someone in your family started to bother you?

5. Do you think students should help other students solve problems? Why?

| CRITERIA | QUALITY | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Excellent | Good | Satisfactory | Weak | Very Weak |
| Knowledge | student listed 3 or more negotiation skills for first question | student listed 2 negotiation skills for first question | student listed 1 negotiation skill for first question | student listed part of a negotiation skill for first question | student was unable to list negotiation skill for first question |
| Behaviour | student was able to list 3 or more negotiation skills for each of the questions 2,3, and 4 | student listed 2 negotiation skills in each of question 2,3 and 4 | student listed 1 negotiation skill in each of questions 2,3, and 4 | student listed negotiation skills which were incomplete or inappropriate to the situation | student was unable to list any negotiation skills for questions 2,3, or 4 |
| Attitude | student agreed that students should help students resolve conflict and were able to elaborate why | student agreed that students should help students resolve conflict and gave an example | student agreed that students should help other students resolve conflict | student did not agree that students should help other students resolve conflict and gave a reason why | student did not agree that students should help other students resolve conflict |

# References

Amatea, E. & Sherrard, P. (1995). Inquiring into children's social worlds: A choice of lenses. In B. Ryan, G.R. Adams, T. P. Gullotta, R. P. Weissberg, R. L. Hampton (Eds.), The family - school connection: Theory, research and practice. (pp. 29 - 43). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Beck, A. T. & Weishaar, M. E. (1995). Cognitive therapy. In R. J. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), Current psychotherapies (5th ed.), (pp. 229 - 261). Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock.

Beland, K. R. (1996). A school-wide approach to violence prevention. In. R. Hampton, P. Jenkins, & T. Gullotta (Eds.), Preventing violence in America (pp. 209-232). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Boyle, M. H. (1991) Children's mental health issues: Prevention and treatment. In L.C. Johnson & D. Barnhorst (Eds.), Children, families and public policy in the 90's (pp. 73-104). Toronto, Canada: Thompson Educational Publishing.

Bulkeley, R. & Cramer, D. (1990). Social skills training with young adolescents. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 19, 451-463.

Cartledge, G. & Milburn, J. F. (1980). Teaching social skills to children. New York, NY: Pergamon Press.

Crick, N. R., Bigbee, M. A. & Howes, C. (1996). Gender differences in children's normative beliefs about aggression: How do I hurt thee? let me count the ways. Child Development, 67, 1007-1014.

Cunningham, C. E., Bremner, R. B. & Boyle, M. (1995). Large group school-based courses for parents of preschoolers at risk for disruptive behaviour disorders: Utilization, outcome, and cost effectiveness. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 36, 1141-1159.

Curhan, J. (1996). The program for young negotiators. [School Curriculum Program]. Cambridge: Mass. The Consensus Building Institute.

Deffenbacher, J., Oetting, E. Huff, M., Cornell, G., & Dallager, C. (1996). Evaluation of two cognitive behavioral approaches to general anger reduction. Cognitive Therapy & Research, 20 (6), 551 - 571.

Deutsch, M. (1973). The resolution of conflict. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dykeman, C. & Noble, F. (1997). Counseling couples and families. In D. Dykeman & D. Gross (Eds.), Introduction to the counseling profession (2nd ed.), (pp. 366 - 397). Needham Heights, Mass: Allyn & Bacon.

Evans, W.P. & Carter, M.J. (1997) Urban school-based family counseling: Role definition, practice applications, and training implications. Journal of Counseling & Development vol. 75, (5), 366 -374.

Fine, M. (1979) Parents vs. children: Making the relationship work. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice - Hall, Inc.

Fisher, R. & Ury, W. (1983). Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Gentry, D.B. & Benenson, W.A. (1993) School to home transfer of conflict management skills among school age children. Families in Society, The Journal of Contemporary Human Services, 67-73.

Gibbs, N. (1990, October 8). Shameful bequests to the next generation. Time 42 - 47.

Ginott, Dr. H. G. (1965). Between parent and child: New solutions to old problems. New York, NY: The Mac Millan Co.

Gordon, Dr. T. (1970). P. E. T parent effectiveness training: The tested new way to raise responsible children. New York, NY: Peter H. Wyden, Inc.

Hughes, J. N. & Sullivan, K. A. (1988). Outcome assessment in social skills training with children. Journal of School Psychology, 26, 167-183.

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T.(1998). Teaching students to manage conflicts in diverse classrooms. In J.W. Putnam (Ed.), Cooperative learning and strategies for inclusion: Celebrating diversity in the classroom (2nd ed.), (pp 167-184). Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co,

Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1996). Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs in elementary and secondary schools: A review of the research. Review of Educational Research, Winter vol. 66, (4), 459 - 506.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R.T., Dudley, B., Ward, M., & Magnuson, D. (1995). The impact of peer mediation training on the management of school and home conflicts. American Educational Research Journal, Winter vol. 32, (4), 829 - 844.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R., Dudley, B. & Acikgoz, K. (1994). Effects of conflict resolution training on elementary school students. Journal of Social Psychology, 134, 803-817.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R.T., (1979). Conflict in the classroom: Controversy and learning. Review of Educational Research, Winter vol. 49, (1). 51 - 70.

Jones, D. S. (1995). Parent child interactions and school achievement. In B. Ryan, G.R. Adams, T. P. Gullotta, R. P. Weissberg, R. L. Hampton (Eds.), The family - school connection: Theory, research and practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kazdin, A. E., Holland, L. & Crowley, M. (1997). Family experience of barriers to treatment and premature termination from child therapy. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 65, 453-463.

Keane, N. (1999). Using classroom meetings to transfer conflict resolution skills. Unpublished master's thesis, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

Keeney, B. P., & Ross, J. M. (1992). Mind in therapy: Constructing systematic family therapies. Pretoria, South Africa: University of South Africa.

McAllister - Swap, S. (1993). Developing home - school partnerships from concepts to practice. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Meichenbaum, D. (1977). Cognitive behavior modification: An integrative approach. New York, NY: Pfenum Press.

Michelson, L., Sugai, D.P., Wood, R.P. & Kazdin, R.E. (1983). Social skills assessment and training with children. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Nakkula, M., & Nikitopoulos, C. Negotiation training and interpersonal development: An exploratory study of early adolescents in Argentina, (unpublished paper) Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., United States of America.

O'Callaghan, J. B. (1993). School - based collaboration with families: Constructing family school agency partnerships that work. San Francisco, CA: Jossey - Bass.

Offord, D. R. (1996). The state of prevention and early intervention. In R. Peters & R. McMahon (Eds.), Preventing childhood disorders, substance abuse, and delinquency intervention (pp 144-160). New York, NY: Sage Publications.

Offord, D.R., Boyle, M. H., Szatmari, P., Rae- Grant, N., Links, P. S., Cadman, D., Byles, J. A., Crawford, J. W., Munroe - Blum, H., Byrne, C., Thomas, H., & Woodward, C. (1987). Ontario study II: Six month prevalence of disorder and rates of service utilization. Archives of General Psychiatry, 44, 832-836.

Ogilvy, C. (1994). Social skills training with children & adolescents: A review of the evidence on effectiveness. Educational Psychology, vol. 14, (1), 73 - 83.

Patterson, G. R., & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1984). The correlation of family management practices & delinquency. Child Development, 55, 1299 -1307.

Pellegrini, D. S., & Urbain, E. S. (1985). An evaluation of interpersonal cognitive problem-solving training with children. Journal of Child Psychology, 22, 17 - 47.

Petersen, L., & France, M. H. (1992). STOP THINK DO: A systems based pro-social skills training program. Guidance & Counseling, vol. 8, (2), pp. 24 - 35.

Prinz, R. J. & Miller, G. E. (1994). Family - based treatment for childhood antisocial behavior: Experimental influences on dropout and engagement. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 62, 645-650.

Seydlitz, R., & Jenkins, P. (1998). The influence of families, friends, schools and community on delinquent behaviour. In T.P. Gullotta, G. R. Adams, & R. Montemayor (Eds.), Delinquent violent youth: Theory and interventions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Verduyn, C. M., Lord, W. & Forrest, G. C. (1990). Social skills training schools: An evaluation study. Journal of Adolescence, 13, 3-16.

Voydanoff, P. (19890. Work role characteristics, family structure demands and work/family conflict. Journal of Marriage and Family, 50, 749-761.

Webster - Stratton, C., & Herbert, M. (1994). Troubled families - problem children. Ontario, Canada: John Wiley & Sons.

Webster's universal college dictionary (1997). New York, NY: Random House, Inc. p. 163.

Wise, K. L., Bundy, K. A., Bundy, E. A. & Wise, L.A. (1991). Social skills training for young adolescents. Adolescence, 26, 233-241.