

DR. STIRLING MCDOWELL
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RESEARCH INTO TEACHING



**TEACHING AND LEARNING
RESEARCH EXCHANGE**

The Effects of Social
Skills Groups During
and After Periods of
Regular Group
Meetings

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- Judy Pope, the in-house counselor hired for the ten weeks of direct intervention.

Executive Summary

THE PRINCIPAL RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the effects of social skills groups on students in the classroom setting during and after periods of regular group meetings led by a counselor?

THE SOCIAL SMART PROGRAM AND THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Guided by discussions among teachers, administrators, parents, and our pupil services team of school counselor, speech and language pathologist, social worker and educational psychologist, two resource teachers from Roland Michener School established a social skills program for selected students in the school. The program was under the guidance of a trained counselor, who was hired for ten weeks of on-site leadership from September 30 to December 6, 2002. In addition to working directly with children, the counselor led a staff PD session and an informational parent night. These events were followed by individual consultations with teachers and parents throughout as well as at the end of the ten-week period. Teachers, parents and the students involved in the program completed behavior assessment checklists before, during and after the ten weeks of intervention. Anecdotal comments were also collected, as well as children's pictorial representations of what the project meant to them.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Metacognitive behavior changes for students seemed greatest in children in the middle age category (ages 9-11), followed by the older age category (ages 11-13). The youngest age category (under 9 years of age) showed the least behavior changes.
2. Children in the youngest age category responded to the positive attention offered by the program without taking full ownership for their behavior choices.
3. Anecdotal comments proved more sensitive in defining behavior changes in students than the data provided by the assessment checklists.
4. Some students marked themselves lower on the assessment checklists the second time they did them, perhaps having learned new vocabulary to assist them in fully understanding and applying descriptions of their behavior.

5. Parents, students and teachers felt that the Social Smart Program was, in most cases, highly supportive of children's social and related academic development.
6. Wrap-around benefits for teachers and parents were noted in addition to direct benefits for the students involved in the program.
7. Communication time between the counselor and teachers was difficult to find but essential to effecting changes in students and the school environment.
8. There are a variety of supports available for students, including school personnel, outside agencies, and community members. This variety helps to avoid over-dependence on one facilitator.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES

1. Support of students' social skills requires trained facilitators who are given the time to build relationships with children, teachers, and parents during school hours and who can provide long-term, individual counseling when needs are discovered.
2. These facilitators need to teach collaboratively in classrooms as much as possible as well as work on students' social skills on a pull-out basis. Transfer of skills and peer support is enhanced by team teaching within the classroom setting.
3. Examination is needed of the numbers of students in our school system requiring assistance with social skills so that requests for intervention may build on these numbers. The study found the numbers of students needing intervention to be much greater than initially expected.
4. The Saskatoon Public system's pupil services team should be expanded to provide in-house counselors and social workers who have the time to lead programs of this nature.
5. Further exploration of ways to support students, teachers, and parents through school-based counseling programs and/or alternative programs is highly recommended.

The work done at Roland Michener is only a starting point for addressing what we in the field perceive to be a growing need for services related to special education. Considering that a child's social/emotional development has a direct impact on academic development, and given that social dysfunction is a stated possible outcome of learning disabilities, this is an area of support that cannot be left to chance. We are committed to continuing the direction provided to us by our temporary counselor. We have students working hard to nurture positive relationships begun this year. We have teachers applying new strategies with other students as well as the students directly involved in the project. We have supportive pupil services personnel who are continuing direct interventions with individual students and parents, who are supporting teachers, and two of whom will be working with one of the middle-grade groups of students to continue the students' development in terms of a friendship circle.

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Introduction

For a number of years, the issue of social skills had been discussed at team planning meetings in reference to particular students at Roland Michener School.

Roland Michener is a suburban school with a population of approximately 250 students. It is not classified as “inner-city” or “perimeter” and is exempt from the special funding these classifications entail in our province. Yet it is a school where students place considerable demands on the pupil services consultants who serve this population. “If only we had a social skills group for this child,” we heard ourselves and others saying, often. The contexts for this kind of statement varied greatly, but they included the following:

- a child who had recently been put on medication for ADHD and told by his doctor that related social skills training programs would be appropriate,
- a child whose academic testing, completed by our educational psychologist, showed her to be particularly weak in the area of social reasoning,
- a child who displayed a large vocabulary and excellent general knowledge of the work, but couldn't seem to complete a school task,
- a child whose parents lamented her lack of friends,
- a child whose teacher noted he had poor anger management strategies, and
- a child in a home that one parent had recently vacated.

The difficulty was that the children in the contexts described above were not single cases. Our school had many children like these, as well as other cases needing attention. Our social worker and school counselor had more referrals than were reasonable for a school our size, and we wondered as a team how to squeeze more time with supports for our students. We wondered also what kind of time would be most beneficial. Would a short term, very supportive skills group have any long-lasting effects?

We counted the number of our kids who could benefit from such a group. Forty names came to mind. Now what?

“Why don't you look for a grant?” suggested one member of our team during a lunch-time meeting.

Why not?

So we looked towards the McDowell Foundation for help. Two weeks later the research proposal was in, and shortly after that we learned that our proposal had been accepted. Now came the serious planning!

Purpose and Objectives

Our study was designed to examine the usefulness of social skills training groups by gathering information before, during, and after intervention. It also examined the efficacy of positive parenting groups, which addressed parents' need for skills similar to those that the students learned. The effects of these groups on student skill retention were identified.

Description of Program

In the spring of 2002, all classroom teachers were invited to submit preliminary referrals of students who, in their opinion, might benefit from work in one or more of three target areas: school survival skills (organization, listening skills, etc.), friendship skills, and anger management (see Appendix A). The invitation was issued again in the fall of 2002.

Project researchers then examined the lists of names and chose 35 students whom they perceived as being high priority.

An advertisement for someone to fit the role of project counselor was developed and publicized (see Appendix B). Information about the project itself was provided in a school newsletter.

Project researchers developed a checklist to assist them in developing baseline data for describing the social skills issues of the referred students (see Appendix C). Teachers received a half-day release with substitute teacher support in order to meet with one of the project researchers and complete the checklists for each of their students.

Parents were contacted and informed that their children were invited to take advantage of the Social Smart program. Follow-up information letters as well as parent permission forms were distributed. Parents were also asked to fill out a behavior checklist similar to the one that the teachers had completed. After the written permission forms were returned, students were divided into age-similar groupings, and skill areas were identified by the project researchers.

Hiring interviews were held to select a counselor to fulfill the role of "research assistant" as described in our McDowell application. The interviews were carried out by a team consisting of the project researchers and the Pupil Services' school counselor.

The counselor began providing service to the student groups on October 2 after one day of organizational work to set up her component of the project. Students completed self-assessment checklists of their behavior similar to the checklists that the parents and teachers had already completed.

A special staff luncheon was held to allow the counselor to describe the philosophy of the counseling program. In addition to the pull-out component of the program, she offered classroom support through consultation and recommendations.

A parent night was also held to allow the counselor to describe the philosophy of the Social Smart program to the students' families and offer parenting support through consultation regarding various skill areas.

The counselor participated in the monthly Pupil Services team meetings at the school and took part in aspects of school life such as school assemblies and staff lunches. Informal, frequent meetings were held between the counselor and the project researchers as well as with teachers. In addition, the counselor made contacts with parents by phone or met with them at school by appointment.

The Social Smart Program for students was run in 45-minute sessions three times a week for ten weeks.

During the ninth week, which coincided with parent-teacher interviews at the end of our school's reporting term, parent meetings were held in which the counselor discussed students' progress (see Appendix D). At this time, the students began to develop pictorial representations of their experiences with the Social Smart Program, and bridges were made between particular students and staff members in terms of on-going mentoring. For example, a group of at-risk male students had a pizza lunch with two male staff members, hosted by the counselor to establish lines of communication. Also, a "donut" recess and then a tea party were held with a group of female students and two female staff members, hosted by the counselor to establish similar lines of support. Supports were also identified in terms of the ways that the students could support each other.

The last week in which the counselor was present in the school was devoted to final group meetings with students, and record keeping. During this time, the project researchers collected a second round of data using the same checklists that had been filled out earlier by parents, teachers and students. Anecdotal records were also used to gather information about the effects of the program on students and teachers.

A month after the counselor's support had ended, data were again collected. This time anecdotal feedback was requested from parents and students, while teachers were asked to complete the behavior checklists for the third time in addition to completing a summary of pertinent anecdotal information.

The data showed that the support of the school counselor was effective in increasing positive behaviors from students in the three skill areas (school survival, friendship skills, and anger management).

Methodology

RESEARCH QUESTION

The methodology was guided by the research question:

What are the effects of a school-based social skills training program on students during and after periods of regular group meetings led by a counselor?

This research question was generated to give us focus, guide our collection of data, and provide a direction for interpreting checklists and anecdotal information.

The process of data-gathering was supported by substitute teachers, who gave classroom teachers the time they needed to address issues relating to their students. Questions were generated from dialogue that resulted in emphasis on anecdotal evidence rather than on the checklists, which by their nature were limited in the scope of information that they provided.

Methodologies used by the counselor included discussion, role playing, and direct instruction as well as reciprocal teaching and the use of audio-visual examples (Program Model, Appendix E).

VARIABLES AFFECTING THE STUDY

- The make-up of each group of students was different in terms of needs. In some groups, students seemed to be more supportive of each other than in others.
- A few students who were not able to interact positively within the small group setting were given individualized Social Smart sessions. This individualization took time away from potential parent group meeting times.
- Due to teaching and supervision schedules, some teachers had more time than other teachers to connect with the counselor during the days she was at our school.
- Definitions of success in terms of social skill development differ. Thus, the rating scales could be viewed differently by each person who used them. Rather than use these scales to compare students to each other within a population, we used them to indicate differences in individuals over time. Although we planned to examine these differences in terms of the skill levels themselves, we were able to also consider differences in terms of how students perceived their choices to be related to these skills—basically, “How well did students understand the meaning of this skill terminology, and how accurately could they rate their own behavior?”

- The time it took teachers to build a relationship with a new “staff” member differed. Some people were able to take advantage immediately of the counselor’s expertise, while others were just beginning to develop rapport as the project was concluding.

DESCRIPTION OF DATA COLLECTED

Data were examined from three rounds of data collection. This data took the form of information from checklists (parent, student, and teacher), anecdotal comments (written up as part of discussion protocol as well as recorded on portions of the checklist forms) and discussion between the project co-ordinators and the Social Smart counselor.

TIME LINES

- May, 2002 Project co-ordinators, pupil services personnel, and administrators met to consider general procedures, and the project was briefly presented to classroom teachers.
- June, 2002 Classroom teachers referred potential students during a staff meeting.
- Sept., 2002 Project co-ordinators met to develop specific procedural considerations. Classroom teachers made student referrals. Project co-ordinators prioritized the names of students who had been referred and developed tentative group lists. Classroom teachers received half-days (supported by substitute teachers) to complete informational (baseline) checklists on students. Parents were contacted, and permission forms sent home. The Social Smart counselor was hired.
- Sept. 30 - The Social Smart counselor provided direct intervention Mondays,
- Dec. 6, 2002 Wednesdays, and Fridays. Contacts were made with teachers and parents as well as with students.
- Dec., 2002 The project co-ordinators met again with teachers to complete checklists and list anecdotal comments. Parents and students also completed the appropriate questionnaires.
- Jan. 2003 The project co-ordinators met with teachers for the last time to complete information surveys (checklists and anecdotal comments). Students and parents were also invited to evaluate skills one last time.

The project co-ordinators analyzed data and completed a final evaluation of the program. They then completed the final report.

Data/Results/Observations

DIFFICULTIES AND LIMITATIONS

Using the checklists for comparison before, during, and after the Social Smart program proved challenging because it was difficult to ensure that students understood the working of the instrument. Some students significantly lowered their scores on the second administration of the checklist. The students' scores often differed greatly from the parent and/or teacher scores. After the Social Smart sessions, a greater awareness and understanding of certain concepts and an expanded vocabulary may, in fact, have challenged students to score themselves according to more stringent criteria. Also, difficulties in collecting all parent surveys made it difficult to compare some of the scores before, during, and after the program.

Due to these difficulties in collecting information from the checklists, we based many of our recommendations and considerations on the anecdotal information gleaned through interviews with all three groups (teachers, parents, students). Comparisons of students' pictorial insights into themselves before and after the sessions were also used to determine the impact of the program.

CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS

Near the end of the Social Smart program, interviews indicated both positive and challenging aspects of the experience. The challenges included:

- The stress of assisting students to keep up in their academic courses while they were out of the classroom for two-and-a-quarter hours per week for Social Smart.
- The need to reconsider the length of the program. Some teachers and parents felt it would be easier to accommodate the program and perhaps it would be more beneficial for the students if program hours were reduced. To compensate for this reduction, the length of the program would be increased. For some of the students with more intense needs, a longer time frame for the program was recommended by teachers and parents as well as by the students themselves.
- Transferring the skills learned in the pull-out sessions to the classroom. This transfer of learning remained hard for some of the students involved, and some teachers with limited available time to consult with the Social Smart facilitator found it hard to assist them.
- The reluctance of some older students to leave their larger peer group to attend the pull-out sessions. Future recommendations from some of the teachers included a more classroom-based approach to social training.

Despite the challenges, our teachers unanimously supported the intent and process of the project. They supplied comments such as, “I truly see the need for such a program.” Near the conclusion of the program, teachers observed that the students in general enjoyed the program, were willing to accept the help offered, and were more aware of their behavior choices. In addition, it was observed that particular students:

- displayed evidence of increased self-esteem and confidence and greater comfort in dealing with personal issues;
- dealt with anger in new ways;
- communicated more freely;
- established new and stronger friendships; and
- created fewer disruptions in class and fewer difficulties on the playground.

Strategies used with target children were seen as useful with other students and generally were helpful in the larger classroom environment.

IMPACT ON TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS

Because some issues arose that were unexpected and required more intense support, both teachers and parents were more comfortable with having a skilled and trained professional in the area of social skills leading the Social Smart program. The perspective of another professional gave a new view of students and encouraged staff to see students in a different way. Teachers indicated a desire for having an “in-house counselor” to provide ongoing communication about students and more intense support for the school population. Having the facilitator hired as a direct employee of the school division was suggested in order to ensure optimum involvement of the school’s support team and provide a consistent process for dealing with disclosures.

Two months after the completion of the project, teachers were again interviewed, and similar reactions were noted. The opportunity to collaborate with the facilitator had proved beneficial to the students and teachers overall. Teachers noted that the project recognized the reality that many students need direct instruction and practice of social skills. In their view, the success of the project implied that schools require a program of this scope. The focus on social skills in our school emphasized the “importance of social skill development in children,” a focus that might have been otherwise neglected. One teacher found that her understanding of social skill programming had changed from an idea that specific social skills were best learned independently to an idea that teaching the student how to “manage their reactions to the circumstances life presents,” was critical. Linked to this kind of realization was the request from teachers for more information, more inservice, and continued support.

The impact on students varied greatly for each individual. This variation was displayed in the comments that ranged from “I saw radical changes in _____’s behavior” to “I did not notice that the program had any major impact on _____”. Generally, improvements were noted during and shortly after the sessions. An inability to retain the skills once the program had ended was reported quite consistently.

An interesting observation to come out of the evaluations was the difficulty experienced by special needs students in understanding and incorporating learning from the social skills groups into their own repertoire of social skills. Many found it difficult to express feelings, communicate about relationships and needs, role play skills in various situations, and generally alter their behavior. The abstractness of this model may have been more challenging for them than a concrete model using reinforcement for attempted positive behaviors would have been.

All teachers reported the need for social skill intervention with students over the long term, either in continued direct service or as support through follow-up sessions. They noted that it is difficult for teachers to assist students with poor social skills and personal problems, due to the increases in class size and diversity. The students who often feel “lost” in the larger classroom respond well to guidance and mentoring in a small group, where they are provided with a safe and supportive environment in which to work on areas of concern. Teachers expressed their belief that discovering some of the students’ “wounds” had encouraged them to be more patient and empathetic toward the students.

Some teachers also expressed the belief that social skills instruction should be a part of the regular curriculum and carried out by classroom teachers. In addition, a pull-out group led by a facilitator should be available for those students who require more intensive education in this area. Time for classroom visits by the counselor in order to observe group dynamics and provide a clearer picture of student needs was desired. It was recognized that communication with all stakeholders...parents, administrators, classroom teachers, resource teachers...is critical to the success of a pull-out program. Teachers saw the program as extra support available for the families, “which could be one of the biggest benefits.”

Some parents were initially uncomfortable with the groupings, topics, and amount of time that their children would be pulled into the program. Three families declined the program for their children, feeling it did not meet their specific needs. The change in behavior and relationships caused concern for a few families who felt that their children were excluded from particular peer groups. In other cases, the change was considered beneficial as children developed new friendship groupings. One parent returned the final evaluation form without completing it, stating that she “did not think much of the program.” Breaking groups down into even more specific need groups was requested by some parents, while others reported benefits from the students practicing skills that up until now had not been seen as weak.

Most parents, however, were supportive of the program, wishing that it had been available for their children years ago. A desire was stated to have training in social skills, such as listening, ignoring distractions, problem solving and self-control, as part of the health curriculum for all students. Parents reported that their children demonstrated increased confidence and an enjoyment of the

sessions. After the program, some families described their children attempting assertive behaviors and assisting children who were being bullied.

Long-term programming and future involvement in a similar program was desired in order to maintain these new skills and transfer them to new or more challenging situations and environments. One parent summed it up in these words, "It is hard to measure change in a child after being involved in a program for just a few months. I think that when a child is given strategies, it takes a lot of attempts to use those strategies effectively." For several families, the Social Smart program has led to continued counselling for their children and a new awareness of how to support and view their children's behavior.

In the students' comments and pictures of themselves before and at the conclusion of the program, they described what they had learned as follows: "don't be a bully," "being able to express feelings," it "helped me to understand friends," and "I've gained a little more patience." The program sessions were called "great" and associated "with good memories" and "lots of laughing together." Some students stated that they felt "encouraged" and the program "made my life better" or "helped me feel better about my life". When considering the end of the group sessions, some commented, "it feels bad...it feels sad...like you [the counselor] are abandoning us."

A strong sense of the group and loyalty to other group members came out in the pictures. There were also illustrations of the students themselves grown larger, more colorful, and more in control of their lives than in their earlier depictions of themselves (Appendix E). The program was described by one person interviewed as an "outlet of hope".

After two months without the regular sessions with our facilitator, students were again interviewed. Again, there were several students who reported that they had learned nothing during the sessions, had not enjoyed the program, and felt that it had a negative impact on themselves and their friendships. When asked whom they would go to now for support with social issues, they said, "No one."

Others reported that they had enjoyed the sessions, mentioning everything from the treats they shared, the discussions and topics covered and the group members themselves. Several key highlights were noted. The relationship with the facilitator was still a strong positive for many of the students. The support of the group continued to be mentioned by several students, and for those who continued to participate in a social skills group with our school counselor and social worker, group support remained important. The learnings that were most frequently remembered and mentioned were specific strategies for managing anger, avoiding trouble, understanding and dealing with bullying, and talking positively to oneself.

When asked what was the most important thing about Social Smart, the students' answers included:

- realizing "all the people you can trust keeping my secrets",
- "...not to hit or hurt anybody, not to be really bad bullies",
- "it has changed a lot for my relationship with my friends",
- "it made us feel better about life, it made me feel good", and
- "what stays in the room doesn't go away to someone else".

One concern about the program was the feeling the students had that they were unsupported and alone after the facilitator was gone. However, because of inclusion of other adults towards the end of the sessions, most students could name several support people within and outside of the school who could support them regarding social skill issues.

Benefits and Considerations

BENEFITS

- Having an “in-house counselor” three days per week provided more intense service for students than is currently available, and it allowed for the development of relationships with students, families, and staff in a short period of time.
- Consistent programming and direct involvement by the facilitator aided students in feeling supported in their personal situations and behavior development.
- The research project provided professional development for school staff in the area of social skills as well as training and support for families.
- The Social Smart program allowed the school to provide support for the emotional and social needs of students, not just their academic and physical needs. However, as a result of the program, the academic performance of some students did improve.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Trained personnel hired as school division employees are the best candidates for social skill development with students, staff and families.
- The high numbers of students needing support in the social/emotional/social skill area must be taken into account when establishing support staff levels within a school/school division.
- The long-term goals for the students will determine the model used in a social skill program. A counseling perspective allows for personal growth and behavior changes but does imply long-term support.
- A classroom-based, collaborative approach appears to be favored by staff, families, and many students since it allows for the broadest distribution of skills instruction, involves more students within the larger group, and provides the greatest opportunities for effective communication and professional development for the teaching staff.

- Allowance for a variety of supports—large group, small group, and individual sessions—is necessary to meet all levels of need.
- Involvement of and communication with students' families is essential to any social skills program. Written and verbal communication about the content of the program is critical throughout the program
- Special needs students appear to need concrete instruction rather than a therapeutic approach to learning social skills

Conclusion

The Social Smart program, despite some challenges, has had a positive impact in our school. Most importantly, this program has allowed many students to look at their own behavior and create behavioral change in a safe, supportive, and objective environment. Families and school staff have gained from the program another perspective from which to view the children in their care, and they have learned strategies to encourage positive behavior choices.

A need for “in house counseling” services is evident by the numbers of students referred for assistance, the positive reaction to the sessions, and the desire by families and school staff to effect change in student behaviors in order that all students might reach their full academic and personal potential.

This Social Smart program has provided a glimpse into what “could be” in a school with regards to addressing the social skills needs of students. It is essential that each child’s social/emotional development be addressed based on its intrinsic value as well as its impact on students’ future academic success.

Future Planning

Our school staff will continue to share what they are learning in the area of social skill development. Continuous communication with students, parents, and each other is an on-going goal. Our pupil services staff, who have been involved in the Social Smart program as guides and observers, will continue to provide support for students at our school including the continuation of one of the small groups. The resources we have purchased will add to our classroom instruction in this area (Appendix G).

Appendix A: Identification of Students

Preliminary Nomination of Students for Social Skills Groups for Fall/02

Current Teachers' Name: _____

Students' Name: _____

Skill: _____

(e.g., anger management, friendship building, talking to adults, school survival skills, dealing with grief/family changes, etc.)

Letter of Invitation to Parents of Potential Students

Dear _____:

As discussed by phone, your child is invited to participate in Roland Michener's Social Smart Program led by facilitator Mrs. Judy Pope. Group sessions will occur for three 30-45 minute periods Mon, Wed, and Fri, from Sept. 30-Dec. 6, and topics for discussion and role-playing include:

Please find enclosed a parent checklist to assist in evaluating progress. We would appreciate the return of the checklist as well as the signed bottom portion of this letter, granting that your child may participate in this program.

Mrs. Pope will be contacting you by phone at a later date to provide further information regarding this program.

Yours truly,

Bev Brenna & Gail Sajtos, Resource Teachers

I grant permission for my son/daughter _____
to take part in Roland Michener's Social Smart program this term.

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Job Description for Social Skills Facilitator

Att'n: Grad Students – Are You Looking for a Part Time Job (3 days a week, 10 weeks) Next Fall?

Social Skills Facilitator

Social Skills counselor wanted for a ten week period, three days per week (Sept. 30 –Nov. 1; Nov. 4 – Dec. 6) at Roland Michener School in Saskatoon. This project is funded by a McDowell grant, examining the impact of social skills training on students K-8 in the school setting.

Duties: To conduct social skills training with small groups of age-similar students in half hour sessions, three times per week. Leadership of parent education group (meeting once weekly) and staff inservice is also an expectation.

Salary: Payment is set at \$160.00 per day for each of the thirty days spent at school during the ten week period.

Experience: Teaching background and graduate studies in the area of counseling an asset. We are looking for a self-directed person with strong leadership and communication skills.

For more information, call Bev Brenna or Gail Sajtos at Roland Michener, mornings (306-683-7440).

Application deadline is Monday, June 10. Interviews will take place Monday, June 17. The successful candidate will require a criminal records check.

Appendix C: Teacher, Parent and Student Rating Scales

(These scales have been adapted from the SKAMP rating scale and the AGS guidelines.)

TEACHER SCALE (GR. 1-8)

Name of Respondent _____

For Student _____

Date _____

SCHOOL SURVIVAL

Please rate the statements using the scale given below:

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Usually 4	Always 5
1. The student gets started quickly on classroom tasks.					
2. The student completes homework.					
3. The student stays on task in the classroom.					
4. The student has materials ready in class to begin work.					
5. The student follows the teacher's directions.					
6. The student completes classroom assignments.					
7. The student keeps desk area clean and neat.					
8. The student listens to the teacher when a lesson is being taught.					
9. The student is quiet in class when it's required.					
10. The student ignores others who are disruptive in class.					
11. The student stays seated when it's seat-work time.					
12. The student is polite to the teacher/teacher associate.					
13. The student produces neat and accurate work.					
14. The student tries his/her best in all activities.					

FRIENDSHIP SKILLS

Please rate the statements using the scale given:

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Usually 4	Always 5
1. The student offers to help other students in the classroom.					
2. The student tries to understand when people are sad or mad.					
3. The student tells adults when they have done something that's appreciated.					
4. The student starts conversations with other kids.					
5. The student asks other kids for help in class.					
6. The student plays with others at recess.					
7. The student makes friends easily.					
8. The student smiles at others.					
9. The student looks towards people who are talking to him/her.					
10. When the student talks to other kids, he/she sometimes asks questions.					
11. The student asks before using other people's things.					
12. The student is polite to others.					
13. The student joins sports or clubs.					
14. The student gives other students compliments.					

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Please rate the statements using the scale given:

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Usually 4	Always 5
1. The student tells others calmly when he/she is upset with them.					
2. The student disagrees with adults without arguing with them or being impolite.					
3. The student controls his/her temper when others are angry with him/her.					
4. The student states his/her point of view about things he/she doesn't think are fair.					
5. The student tries not to do things that get him/her in trouble.					
6. The student ends fights calmly.					
7. The student asks adults for help when other children act as bullies.					
8. The student talks things over when there's a problem.					
9. When the student is angry, he/she uses ways to calm down that don't hurt people or property.					
10. The student understands that others might have different opinions than he/she has					

PARENT SCALE (GR. 1-8)

Name of Respondent _____

For Student _____

Date _____

SCHOOL SURVIVAL

Please rate the statements using the scale given below:

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Usually 4	Always 5
1. My child tries his/her best in all school activities.					
2. My child completes any homework willingly.					
3. My child has a good attitude about coming to school.					
4. My child keeps school materials.					
5. My child assists with home & school communication.					
6. My child uses assertiveness skills in dealing with others.					
7. My child demonstrates respect for peers.					
8. My child demonstrates respect for adults.					

FRIENDSHIP SKILLS

Please rate the statements using the scale given below:

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Usually 4	Always 5
1. My child offers to help others.					
2. My child tries to understand when people are sad or mad.					
3. My child tells adults when they have done something for him/her that he/she likes.					
4. My child starts conversations with other kids.					
5. My child asks other kids for help in class.					
6. My child plays with others at recess.					
7. My child makes friends easily.					
8. My child smiles at others.					
9. My child looks toward people who are talking to him/her.					
10. My child asks before using other people's things.					
11. My child is polite to others.					
12. My child joins sports or clubs.					
13. My child gives other people compliments.					

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Please rate the statements using the scale given below:

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Usually 4	Always 5
1. My child tells others calmly when he/she is upset with them.					
2. My child disagrees with adults without arguing with them or being impolite.					
3. My child controls his/her temper when others are angry with him/her.					
4. My child politely states his/her point of view about things he/she doesn't think are fair.					
5. My child tries not to do things that get him/her in trouble.					
6. My child ends fights calmly.					
7. My child asks adults for help when other children act as bullies.					
8. My child talks things over when there's a problem.					
9. When my child is angry, he/she uses ways to calm down that don't hurt people or property.					
10. My child understands that others might have different opinions than he/she has.					

STUDENT SCALE (GR. 1-2)

Name of Respondent _____

For Student _____

Date _____

SCHOOL SURVIVAL

Please rate the statements using the scale given below:

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Usually 4	Always 5
1. I start my school jobs right away.					
2. I do my homework.					
3. I work hard on my jobs in the classroom.					
4. I have my belongings ready.					
5. I do what the teacher asks.					
6. I finish my work.					
7. I keep my desk clean and neat.					
8. I listen to the teacher when he/she is talking.					
9. I am quiet in class when it is work time.					
10. I ignore others who are noisy.					
11. I stay seated when it is work time.					
12. I am polite to the teachers.					
13. I am neat when I do my work.					
14. I try my best in all activities.					

FRIENDSHIP SKILLS

Please rate the statements using the scale given below:

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Usually 4	Always 5
1. I offer to help other students in the classroom.					
2. I try to understand when people are sad or mad.					
3. I say thank you to adults when they do something for me I like.					
4. I start talking with other kids.					
5. I ask other kids for help in class.					
6. I play with others at recess.					
7. I make friends easily.					
8. I smile at others.					
9. I look at people when they talk to me.					
10. When I am talking to other kids, I ask questions.					
11. I ask before using other people's things.					
12. I am polite to others.					
13. I join sports or clubs.					
14. I say nice things to other people.					

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Please rate the statements using the scale given below:

	Never 1	Sometimes 2	Often 3	Usually 4	Always 5
1. I use my words calmly when I am upset.					
2. I disagree with adults without arguing or being rude.					
3. I control my temper when others are made at me.					
4. I use polite words to say I think things aren't fair.					
5. I try not to do things that get me in trouble.					
6. I end fights calmly.					
7. I ask adults for help when other children bully or pick on me.					
8. I use my words when there's a problem.					
9. When I'm angry, I try to calm down without hurting people or things.					
10. I know people have different ideas than me.					

FINAL EVALUATION – SOCIAL SMART PROGRAM

January, 2003

Parents, this is the final evaluation for the Social Smart program in order to see if there are any lasting effects from the program. Please share your thoughts and comments as these give us the most insight as to whether the experience was a positive one for your child and what we should consider for similar programs in the future.

Questions to guide your thinking could include:

- In what ways was the program helpful to your child? To you?
- What were the most valuable parts of the program?
- What did your child learn from the program?
- What did you learn to support your child?
- Did your child exhibit changes in behavior due to the project? Positive or negative?
- Were there changes in behavior that you hadn't expected?
- Were there changes you wanted to see but didn't?
- Would your child be part of the project again?
- In your opinion, would there be a benefit to a full-time project like Social Smart? What would the benefit be?

List any other comments regarding the program. (Use the back if you need more room.)

Please return these comments by **January 29th**. **Thank you once again** for your support for the Social Smart program and your children at school. If you are interested in the final report, let us know and we can share that with you when it is published.

Mrs. Brenna/Mrs. Sajtos

Appendix D: Progress Report Template

SOCIAL SMART PROGRAM

Roland Michener School
October to December, 2002

CHILD'S NAME: _____

During the 10 weeks of Social Smart your child has been provided with information about the skills listed below. We have discussed these skills, and your child has had opportunity to think about how they can be used at school and in the rest of their lives. We have practiced these skills in a variety of ways.

- Identifying differences in levels of emotional intensity – big feeling/small feeling
- Naming their own level of emotional intensity in different situations
- Beginning to identify and regulate (manage) one's own emotions and level of emotions
- Recognizing the relationship between feelings and thought
- Identifying their difficulty concentrating in the classroom if their feelings are intense
- Developing coping strategies for dealing with their own intense feelings – choosing strategies that work for them in their unique situations
- Developing an expanded vocabulary of words to tell how we feel
- Understanding the concept of “self-esteem”
- Putting words to how we feel about ourselves
- Recognizing we have choice about how we want to think and feel about ourselves
- Identifying patterns of thinking which undermine our sense of self-esteem (FEEDING THE MONSTER)
- Beginning to recognize our individual ways of talking to ourselves (self-talk)
- Recognizing we have the power to choose to keep or change our patterns of self-talk
- Recognizing we live with the effects of talking to ourselves negatively and/or positively – and that we all do some of both

- Beginning to recognize some of the patterns of thinking which lead us to poor self-esteem and therefore poor choices of behaviour (“faulty self-talk”)
- Practicing identifying our own unique patterns of self-talk and therefore being able to make choices about changing a specific pattern of self-talk
- Considering self-esteem “do’s and don’ts”
- Understanding so we can choose different aspects of communication skills that help us get along better with others:
 - Appropriate use of eye contact
 - Listening skills
 - Problem solving – especially in situations where emotions are strong
 - Following directions
 - Expressing thoughts and wishes in ways that adults are more likely to hear what we say
 - Expressing our feelings in words rather than physically
 - Recognizing facial and body cues (non-verbal communication)
- Identifying patterns of dealing with anger (hot/cold/cool – escalating/stuffing/managing)
- Identifying our own personal patterns of coping when we are angry (usually a combination of the above)
- Exploring options – recognizing we have choices
 - acknowledging that it’s OK to feel angry, everybody experiences feeling angry
 - looking at different ways we can express feeling anger, without hurting ourselves or anyone else
- Considering “anger busters” and choosing which ones work best for each of us – thinking about actual situations in which we can use anger busters
- Bullying – identifying the emotions and self-esteem that lie behind bullying behaviour
 - looking at ways we bully others and/or take the position of being bullied (victim)
 - considering options for boosting self-esteem and coping with emotions that reduce bullying or victim behaviour choices
- Problem Solving (Freeze Frame)
 - identifying situations from our own lives that didn’t turn out well (we wish we had done something different)
 - naming the problematic behaviour
 - naming the thoughts and feelings present in the situation
 - recognizing that our thoughts and feelings were providing us with information
 - identifying and naming what we needed in the situation, given our thoughts and feelings at the time
 - looking at possible alternative behaviours that would allow us to meet our needs, but in a more positive fashion

- Assertiveness
 - recognizing and naming our right to be ourselves, to have thoughts and feelings and needs that may be different from someone else
 - looking at “hot” and “cold” ways we attempt to meet those needs, recognizing that neither really gets us what we need
 - looking at “cool” approaches to communicating about who we are, what we want and what we need
 - practicing the use of assertive body language (eg. eye contact) and language to express ourselves
 - using the “I statement” – I feel _____ when you _____, I want _____. Or, I feel _____ when you _____. What do you need to trust me to _____?
 - naming the different ways we feel when we can communicate assertively (confident, having some self-control and power to say what I think/feel)

Throughout our group times, we have practiced using the information and skills in the context of group interactions. When children encountered conflict we talked about the skills learned to date and how they might use these skills to solve their conflicts in positive, constructive ways. I then supported them in putting their new skills to work!

While the topics covered have been listed above as individual skills, the learning of them in fact took place in a very integrated fashion. We talked about specifics of any given skill, then tied them to the children’s daily experiences. The focus remained on helping the children:

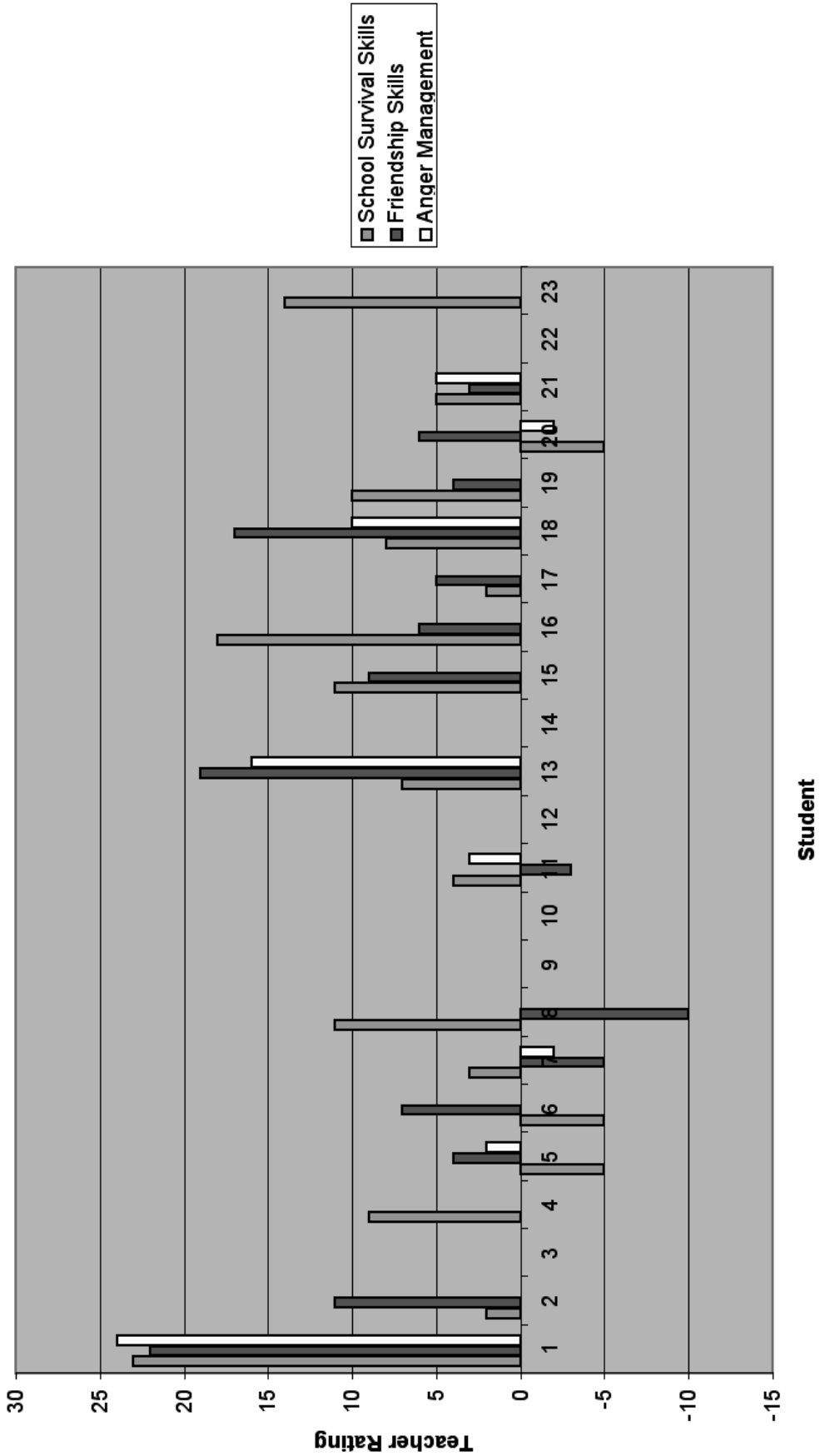
- identify for themselves how they do and don’t use each skill,
- identify that they have choice about using these new skills, and
- encourage their use of these skills in the Social Smart groups, in the many interactions in their school day, and in the remainder of their daily lives.

Throughout the Social Smart groups, I encouraged and facilitated the children to consider the perspectives of others in their group, in order to:

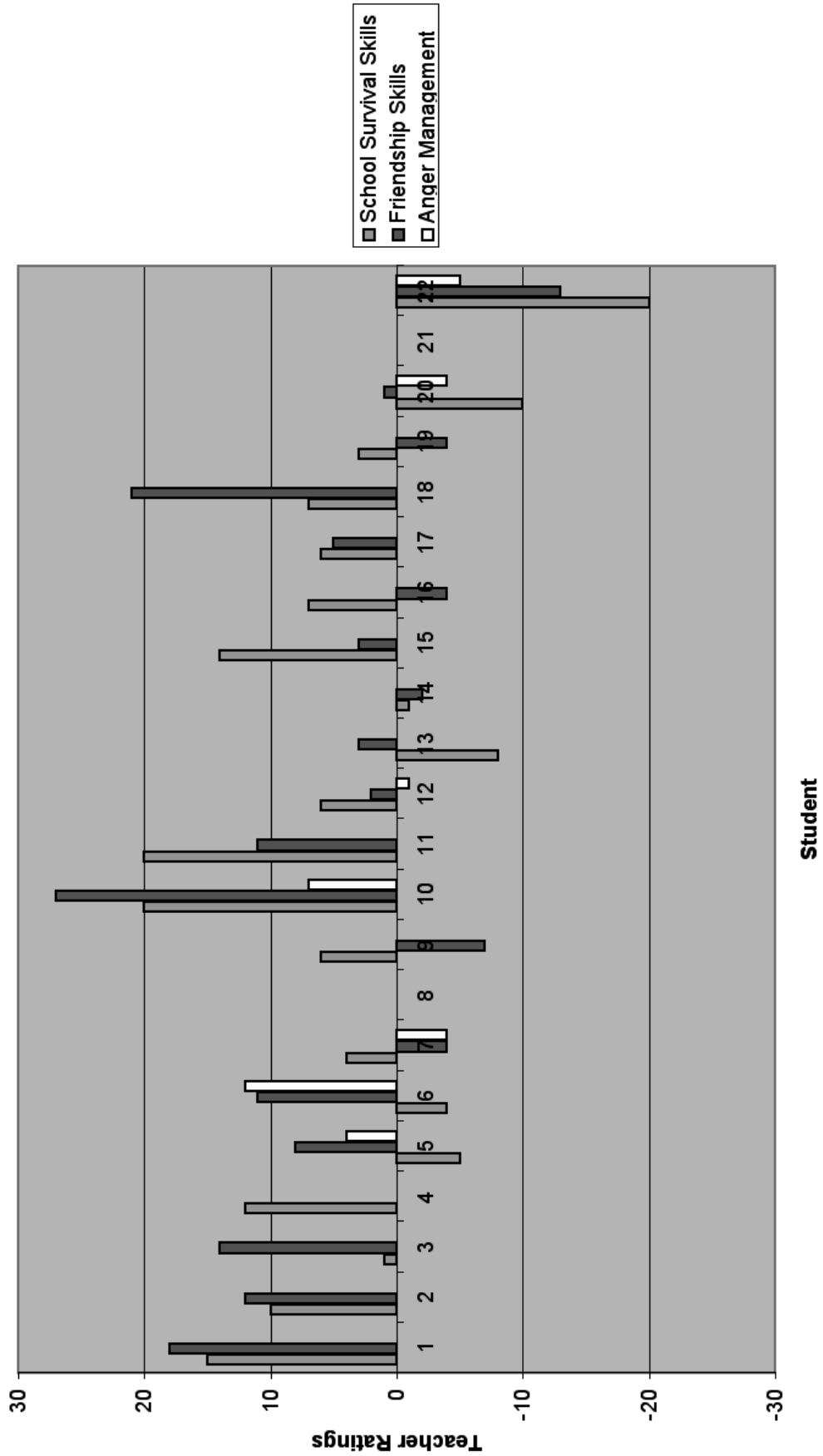
- increase their ability to both express perspectives through words, and
- honour the validity of a perspective or emotion different from their own.

While the topics listed above provide you with some idea of the areas of learning in which your child was engaged, from my perspective, the real learning took place in the interaction between the children, and the children and myself as together we tried out ways of interacting with others that hold promise of us all being, at the end, a bit more Social Smart.

**Social Skills Behavior
Teacher Comparative Ratings
Sept 30/02 - Jan 30/03**



**Social Skills Behavior
Teacher Comparative Ratings
Sept 30/02 - Nov 30/02**



Appendix E: Program Model

Many social skills programs start with a problem behaviour
Then identify lacking social skills
Then teach to change the behaviour

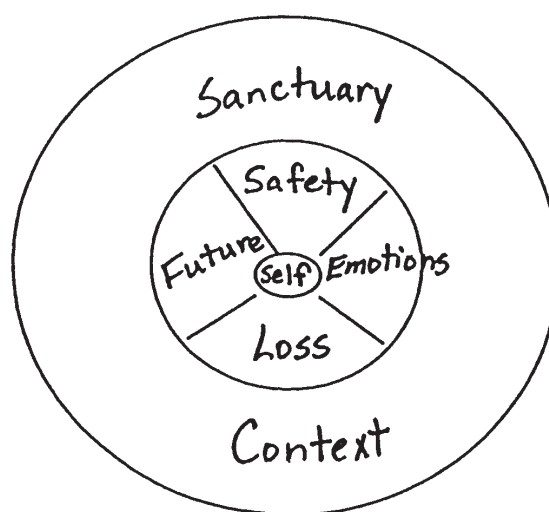
(compliance = success)

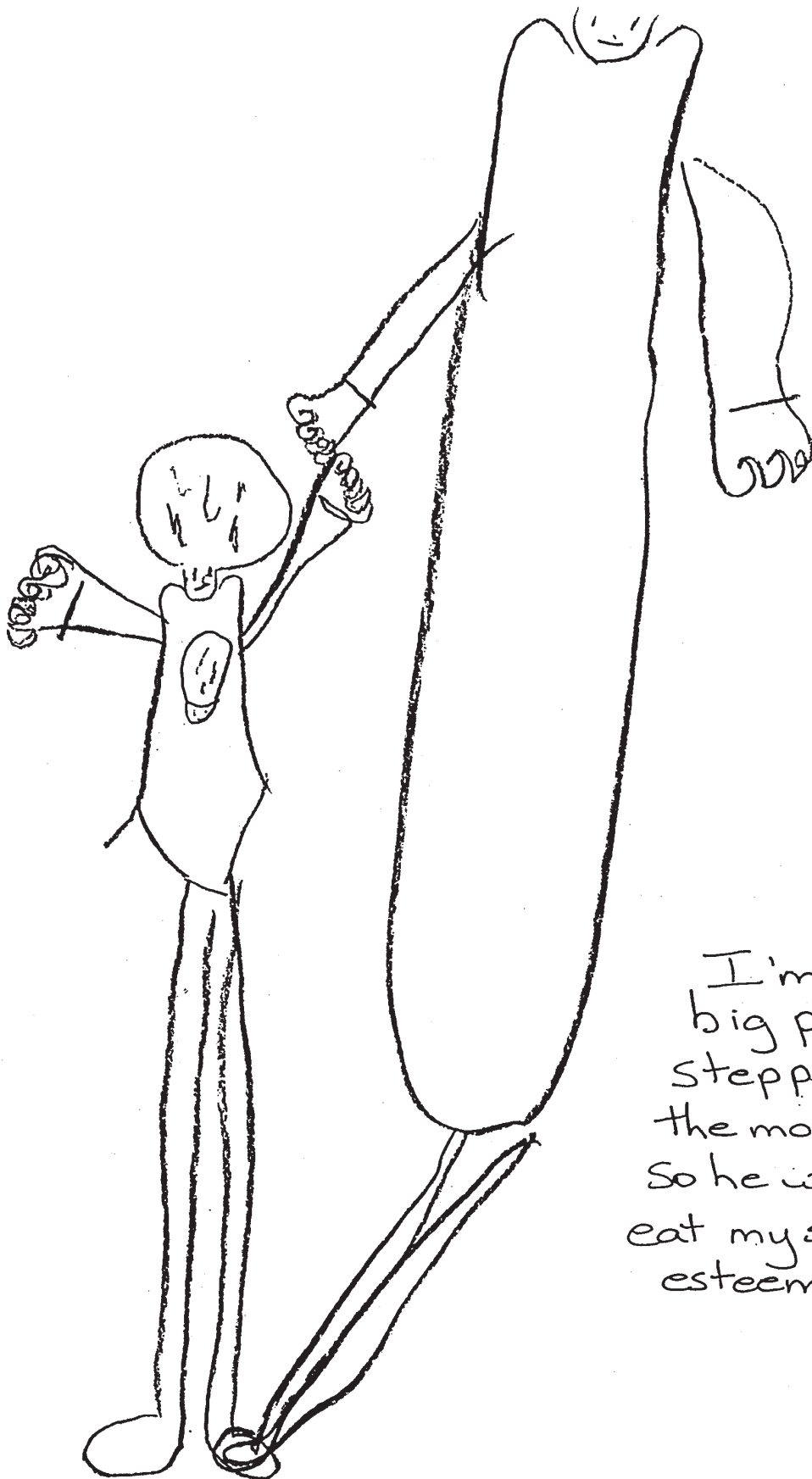
Our facilitator used a “Narrative Framework” which considers that each student is in the process of writing their life story. The focus centres around the sense of self and meaning in the student’s life. Biological, emotional, cognitive, relational, and physical influences are taken into consideration.

The students’ behaviours are seen as their best attempt to adapt and interpret their life story. Therefore, the facilitator asked:

- What is this child’s behaviour saying?
- What is this child attempting to achieve?
- How is this child experiencing life? School?

The model chosen for the Social Smart groups is based on the SAGE model – A Self Perspective, by Sandra Bloom; it involves the process of incorporating into sense of self rather than content.

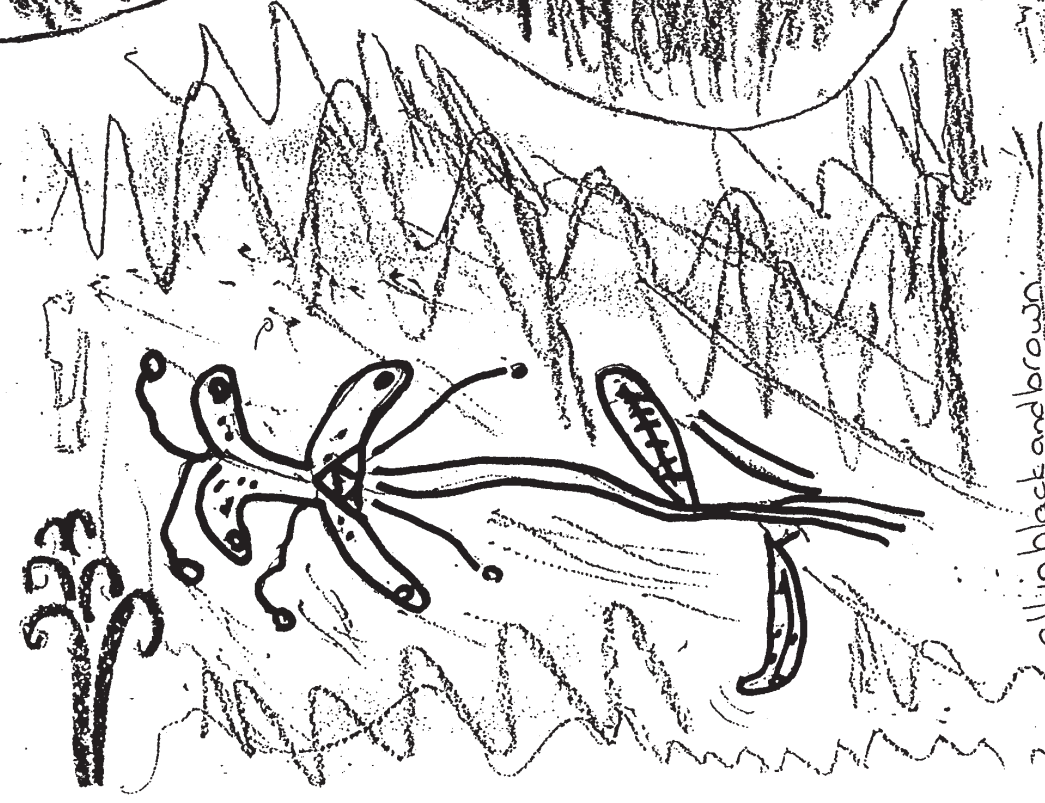




I'm the
big person
stepping on
the monster
so he won't
eat my self-
esteem



Beter Sochial Smart



Appendix F: Resources

Adams, Christine and Butch, Robert. *Happy to Be Me! A Kid's Book about Self-Esteem*. One Caring Press. ISBN# 0-87029-355-9

Agassi, Martine. *Hands Are Not for Hitting*. Free Spirit Publishing. ISBN# 1-57542-077-5

Doyle, Terrence Webster. *Why Is Everyone Always Picking on Me? A Guide to Handling Bullies*. Weatherhill Inc. ISBN# 0-8348-0467-0

Moser, Adolph. *Don't Feed the Monster*. Landmark Editions Inc. ISBN# 0-933849-38-9

Nelson, III, W. Michael and Finch, Jr., A. J. *"Keeping Your Cool": The Anger Management Workbook*. Workbook Publishing. ISBN# 1-8888-05-09-9

Nelson, III, W. Michael and Finch, Jr., A. J. *"Keeping Your Cool": The Anger Management Workbook, Part 2*. Workbook Publishing. ISBN# 1-8888-05-10-2

Prestine, Joan Singleton. *Sometimes I Feel Awful*. Fearon Teaching Aids. ISBN#0-86653-927-1

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