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Social Skill Generalization with "Book in a Bag": Integrating Social Skills into the Literacy Curriculum at a School-Wide Level

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Social Skill Generalization with “Book in a Bag”: Integrating Social Skills
into the Literacy Curriculum at a School-Wide Level

Buddy D. Alger

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Educational Specialist in School Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Social Skill Generalization with “Book in a Bag”: Integrating Social Skills into the Literacy Curriculum at a School-Wide Level

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Social skill instruction is needed in both targeted and universal contexts. This research utilized a universal social skill intervention, Book in a Bag (BIB), to increase the use of a specific social skill by all students within an elementary school, including students identified as at-risk for behavior problems. BIB was designed to integrate social skills into the curriculum by way of children’s literature, specifically a read-aloud book using a direct instruction strategy. The results indicate that BIB had a positive effect on students’ behavior in the classroom both for students identified and those not identified as being at-risk for behavior problems. Outcomes suggest that students used the skill across a variety of instructional, independent work, and group work settings. Teacher perceptions of the research were reported as acceptable. Teachers noted positive changes in their classroom. Implications of this research for practice include using BIB as a universal intervention to target specific social skill deficits in students, and using social skill instruction to increase positive student behavior.

Keywords: social skills, social competence, universal interventions, bibliotherapy, positive behavior support, compliance, generalization

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INTRODUCTION OF STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

This thesis, *Social Skill Generalization with “Book in a Bag”: Integrating Social Skills into the Literacy Curriculum at a School Wide Level*, is written in a hybrid format, which brings together traditional thesis requirements and journal publication formats. The preliminary pages of the thesis reflect requirements for submission to the university. The thesis report is presented as a journal article and conforms to length and style requirements for submitting research reports to education journals. The literature review is included in Appendix A.

Background

Social competence is the ability to interact, build, and maintain positive relationships over time (Krieger, 2009). Gresham, Cook, and Crews (2004) refer to social skills as “academic enablers” because they facilitate academic performance. Adelman and Taylor (2000) argue that schools whose primary focus is solely on academic instruction fall short. Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, and Walberg (2007) add that social and emotional skills are particularly important, as students who lack these skills are less likely to succeed in school and will continue to have long-term struggles into adulthood. Malecki and Elliot (2002) conclude that social skills for elementary school students offer greater access to the knowledge found at school. In fact, researchers report that third grade prosocial skills are the strongest predictors of academic success in eighth grade, even more so than third grade academic skills themselves (Capara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000).

The majority of children do not begin school prepared to handle problems with little or no conflict; rather, it is through teacher instruction and personal experience that they develop a sense of social competence as they journey through the various stages of their school career (Bowen, Jensen, & Clark, 2004). However, there are those for whom this journey does not result in the development of social competence. These students continually struggle with social skills. According to researchers, such students miss out on meaningful relationships that can be forged at school and are less likely to be successful in their academic performance (Gresham, Cook, & Crews, 2004; Malecki & Elliot, 2002). Therefore, it is imperative that they receive some form of intervention to promote social skill development.

Social Skills Instruction

According to Walker, Ramsey, and Gresham (2004), social skill instruction has four primary goals: to (a) promote skill acquisition, (b) teach new skills, (c) decrease the amount of competing negative behaviors, and (d) facilitate generalization or the use of students' social skills across settings. Researchers also advocate certain principles to make social skill instruction more effective so that these goals are more likely to be achieved. These principles are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

The first principle is that social skill instruction should be implemented frequently in schools (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). There are several ways to teach social skills regularly without consuming core instruction time. One recommendation is for social skill instruction to be integrated into the general curriculum (Gresham, 1998). An integrative approach may increase teachers' acceptance and ultimately their implementation of social skill instruction in the classroom.

A second principle to consider is for skills to be taught where they are most likely to be used. This suggestion grows out of the concern that most social skill instruction fails due to decontextualization (Gresham et al., 2001). For example, teaching social skills in pullout settings, such as a resource classroom, leads to decontextualization because the skills are taught outside of the general education classroom where they are typically expected. Therefore, it is recommended for the instruction to occur in the general education classrooms. Selecting this context provides more natural, real-life application. Using the general education teacher as the social skill instructor can facilitate such an effort, as can the use of peers to reinforce the skills so they are more likely to be repeated in the future (Gresham et al., 2001; Maag, 2006).

The third principle researchers recommend is matching student social skill deficits to social skill instruction (Gresham et al., 2001; Maag, 2005). Through systematic identification of students' social skill deficits, the problem behaviors are discovered. These problem behaviors can be the competing behaviors or the lack of social skills noticed by the teacher or others. Once these competing behaviors have been identified, they can be targeted and replaced with more socially acceptable behaviors (Gresham et al., 2001). Interventions are more likely to have positive outcomes after the specific deficits have been identified (Maag, 2006).

A fourth principle, key to the success of any social skills intervention, is that generalization is an essential component. Traditionally, many believed that generalization was a natural outcome of any behavior change process. However, the process of generalization is not just a passive process; it can and should be programmed into the behavior change process (Stokes & Baer, 1977). Stokes and Baer define generalization as “relevant behavior under different, non-training conditions (i.e., across subjects, settings, people, behaviors, and/or time)” (p. 9). According to their definition of generalization, once students are trained using a particular social skill or social behavior, any time or place the student uses that skill, generalization of the behavior is occurring. Thus, the general education classroom and curriculum are ideal for allowing generalization to occur as the subject matter, people, and time are constantly changing.

Gresham et al. (2001) also note the importance of treatment fidelity. The absence of fidelity in implementing social skills instruction minimizes the effectiveness of such instruction. A summary of the treatment fidelity research indicates that the extent to which interventions are implemented as intended directly relates to the degree of behavior change (Landrum, Takerseley, & Kauffman, 2003). There are evidence-based principles that should be applied during instruction, such as modeling, reinforcement, and role-playing, because they are likely to foster

social skill development (Maag, 2005). It is important to remember that an effective intervention requires accurate implementation that is continually monitored and thoroughly evaluated (Bowen et al., 2004).

School-Wide Behavior Intervention

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a model that is quickly gaining support due to empirical evidence that indicates that this model prevents and remediates students' behavior problems in addition to providing social and emotional support for all students, including those with special needs (Morrissey, Bohanon, & Fenning, 2010). This model is ideal for school-wide social skills training and fulfilling the goals and principles discussed above (Gresham et al., 1998, 2001; Maag, 2005, 2006; Sugai & Horner, 2001). Many social skills programs and interventions are designed to focus primarily on populations with exceptionalities, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, conduct disorder, depression, and emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) (Chung et al., 2007; Corkum, Corbin, & Pike, 2010; Miller & Cole, 1998; Pfiffner & McBurnett, 1997; Wu, Lo, Feng, & Lo, 2010). These populations typically receive social skills interventions in a targeted context, such as small groups and special education classrooms. A targeted intervention may be effective for some students but may also contribute to the issues of decontextualization discussed above. In contrast, universal or school-wide social skill instruction is designed so that all students receive similar social skills training in an applied learning environment.

Though not commonly instituted, a school-wide social skills approach holds promise for promoting generalization and reducing decontextualization. Walker, Ramsey, and Gresham (2004) suggest implementing a universal social skills intervention where all children are systematically taught the same social skill over time. The social skills instruction is designed to

strengthen and reinforce the students' current social skills and foster the development of new skills. The purpose of teaching social skills to all students is to minimize, even prevent, the emergence of anti-social behavior patterns. Ideally, 80–90% of the student body will respond successfully to a universal intervention and need no additional support (Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002). Students who continue to struggle within the context of a universal intervention are more likely to respond to targeted interventions afterwards due in part to their involvement at a universal level. According to Walker et al. (2004), universal interventions provide an important foundation and context for the application of more targeted interventions.

Although schools have access to many popular universal interventions, there is limited empirical evidence to validate the effectiveness of such programs, particularly in terms of generalization effects (Durlak, Weissberg, Schellinger, Dymnicki, & Taylor, 2011; Gresham et al., 2001; Maag, 2005). Gresham (1999) argues that generalization is a key component to any social skills program. He recommends that generalization data should be a primary focus for social skill efforts, including research projects. However, many schools are reluctant to put resources toward even the minimal aspects of implementing a social skills program, let alone design a generalization focus, due to the increased emphasis currently being placed on academic achievement (Zins et al., 2007).

An Alternative Approach to Social Skill Instruction

Marchant and Womack (2010) suggest that, with the need to promote social skills in school communities, but with the limited time and resources available, there may be a “natural fit” for integrating social and emotional development into the school structure. Leffert, Brady, and Siperstein (2009) extend these recommendations and advocate specifically integrating social skills instruction into the existing academic curriculum. They believe that this approach provides

the needed context for students to acquire and generalize the social skills being taught. Using an integrative approach to teach social skills allows the teacher to be present to model and reinforce new social skills as well as other positive behaviors.

Teachers who find ways to successfully increase students' positive school behaviors in the classroom will spend less time managing disruptive behavior (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). In a poll of teachers, 19% reported losing two to three hours per week to classroom disruptions (Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, & Sprague, 2001). Teachers can earn back a significant amount of their teaching time by increasing students' positive classroom skills and will thus be able to spend more time helping students be successful academically, socially, and behaviorally. Social skill instruction is one means by which teachers can reclaim this valuable instructional time.

One example of an integrated approach to teaching social skills is the Book in a Bag (BIB) program, developed to streamline teachers' efforts in building students' academic and social success (Marchant & Womack, 2010). BIB was designed to integrate social skills into the curriculum by way of children's literature, specifically a read-aloud book. BIB integrates children's literature and direct social skill instruction into four simple instructional steps. The direct instruction lessons are paired with children's literature to allow the teacher to merge read aloud time with the teaching of prosocial behavior. The skills are reinforced by the children's literature books in which main characters are used to demonstrate parallels to the social skill being taught (Marchant & Womack, 2010). The social skill lesson is taught explicitly to the students, resulting in an effective, evidenced-based method (Johns, Crowley, & Guetzloe, 2005).

Promising preliminary research demonstrates that BIB is effective with targeted small groups (Krieger, 2009; Womack, Marchant, & Borders, 2011) for students with high incidence

disabilities (Womack, Marchant, & Borders, 2011), and is generally acceptable to teachers (Marchant & Womack, 2010). Krieger (2009) used BIB with small targeted groups of students (first and second grade) who were identified as having behavior problems. These behaviors included physical aggression, disrespect for others, and noncompliance. Krieger (2009) found that the students were able to both acquire identified social skill steps and generalize these behaviors across settings. However, this research was conducted in a pullout setting. One of Krieger's recommendations for future research was to access the general education teacher and classroom to teach and further promote the generalization of social skills for students targeted with behavior problems.

Womack, Marchant, and Borders (2011) found similar success to Krieger's findings when using BIB. When investigating students (third and fifth grade) with high incidence disabilities and their capacity to acquire and generalize social skills, Womack and colleagues reported students could remember and recite with 100% accuracy the steps of each social skill taught. They also reported anecdotal evidence of students using the skill at home and in the classroom. Womack et al. reported that their study lacked direct measurement of student behaviors across settings and time and consequently recommended that future research focus on systematically measuring students' generalization of the skills.

In sum, schools could do more to focus on providing social skill interventions at a universal level. While there is significant empirical support for providing universal interventions, much of the current research has failed to focus on key principles recommended for social skills training (i.e., generalization). BIB is an alternative approach to teaching social skills at a universal level that ideally requires no additional teacher time and has favorable preliminary findings.

Statement of the Problem

Sugai, Horner, and Gresham (2002) suggested that 80-90% of children are likely to respond positively to universal interventions. The goal at this level of intervention is to strengthen and reinforce students' current social skills and prevent other anti-social problems from developing. However, there is minimal evidence-based research that has investigated the effects of universal interventions particularly in terms of teaching and the generalization of social skills with all students, including students identified as being at-risk for behavior problems.

Statement of the Purpose

BIB has shown promise as a targeted intervention, specifically for those with high incidence disabilities and those at risk for behavior disorders (Krieger, 2009; Womack, Marchant, & Borders, 2011). Additional preliminary results also indicate its general acceptability with teachers (Marchant & Womack, 2010). The purpose of this research was to examine whether a universal intervention, BIB, increases all student's social skill use, including those who are at risk for behavior problems. More specifically this intervention proposed to increase all students' social skill use inside a contextual learning environment and outside of the teaching context (i.e. the classroom during social skill instruction) rather than design separate interventions that specifically target various levels of students' needs (i.e., tiers 1, 2, and 3). This research also provided a systematic measurement of students' actual behaviors in the classroom (the generalization of the learned skill), a piece of the research that is currently lacking.

Research Questions

Two research questions were investigated during this study.

1. What is the effect of Book in a Bag (BIB), when taught in the general education classroom, on elementary students' (both identified and non-identified as at-risk for

behavior problems) prompted and un-prompted use of social skills outside of the social skills teaching context?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of the value of social skill instruction, including both their use and acceptability of social skill instruction as part of the standard curriculum?

Method

In an effort to address the research questions of this study, a particular methodology was designed. First, the method is described in terms of the participants, settings, and materials. Second, the method is described in terms of the experimental design, including descriptions of the dependent and independent variables, and the data collection and the data analysis process.

Participants

The participants for this study included 26 teachers and 15 targeted students. The selection process and details of the participants are discussed below.

Selection of participants. Student and teacher participants were selected from a local elementary school grades kindergarten to six. Each teacher at the school was asked to participate in the study and in the beginning all teachers agreed to participate. Twenty-six teachers with an average of 13 years teaching experience participated. Each teacher nominated two students in their respective classroom to be targeted throughout the study. The process of selecting target students and demographic information about the students is described below.

The teachers used the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD; Walker & Severson, 1992) to nominate students. The SSBD is a multi-gated instrument normed to be used with elementary school students (first through sixth grade). Although the SSBD has not been completely normed in kindergarten, there has been research suggesting the validity of the SSBD for other populations than those previously evaluated (Lane, Little, Menzies, Lambert, & Wehby,

2010; Caldarella, Young, Richardson, Young, & Young 2008). In general, the SSBD has been found to be a valid and reliable screening tool for evaluating children at risk for or who have been diagnosed with an emotional or behavioral disorder (Walker & Severson, 1992).

For this study, the teachers used only gate 1 of the SSBD to select the targeted students. Previous research has demonstrated that the SSBD gate 1 can successfully identify almost 90% of students at risk for a behavior disorder (Walker et al., 1988). Since the intent of this research was to make comparisons of at-risk students to unidentified students within a universal social skills intervention, it was deemed sufficient to only use gate 1 to identify at-risk students.

The first gate required teachers to group their students into two lists of ten students per list. One list included students who exhibit externalizing behavior symptoms and the other list included students demonstrating internalizing behavior symptoms. At this point the researcher collected the lists, and the top two nominations from each category, externalizers and internalizers, were selected. These names were shared with the teacher. The teachers were instructed to select one student from the top two of either list based on two criteria: the student attended their classroom the majority of the day, and the student had 80-90% attendance.

Additionally, the teachers were instructed to randomly select another student from their class, one not found on either list and who also had 80-90% attendance. A total of two students from each class were ultimately targeted for this study: One randomly selected student, (hereafter referred to as the non-identified student), as they were not found on either list of the teacher's SSBD, and one student identified with externalizing or internalizing behavior symptoms, (hereafter referred to as the identified student).

Selection of target students. Originally a total of 52 students were selected as the target students. Twenty-six teachers agreed to participate by collecting data on the two targeted

students from their classroom. During data collection there were teachers who implemented the social skills lessons but failed to track data on their students. The breakdown of students identified as being at-risk for behavior problems versus non-identified students was as follows: Of the identified students (i.e., those with internalizing or externalizing symptoms), 27 participated in pre-intervention, 18 during intervention, and 7 in the post-intervention. Of the non-identified students (i.e., those randomly selected), 23 participated in pre-intervention, 15 during intervention, and 8 in post-intervention. Although there was variation in the number of students who participated across group and time, the attrition rate of students was similar in both groups. However, for purposes of data analysis, only students who were tracked across all three conditions were included in the analysis. Table 1 is included to summarize participant data. More information about all three experimental conditions is included below.

Table 1
Student Participant Characteristics

Student classification	Number included in analysis	Behavior characteristics	Grades represented
Externalizer	5	outward aggressive, oppositional, or disruptive manner	K, 1, 2, 6
Internalizer	2	anxiety, depression, social withdrawal and somatic problems	K, 3, 5
Non-identified	8	Student not found to be manifesting at-risk levels of external nor internal behaviors	K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

Settings

This study took place at an elementary school located in a suburban neighborhood within the western United States. The school serves grades K-6 with a total of 26 grade-level teachers.

Approximately 680 students attended the elementary school. The ethnicity of the student-body consisted of 70% Caucasian, 22% Latino, 5% Pacific Islander, 2% African American, less than 1% Asian, and less than 1% American Indian/Alaskan. Students eligible for the free or reduced lunch program totaled 42% of the population. According to the UPASS report, the students at the school were 84% proficient in Language Arts, 77% in Math, and 80% in Science. The school's attendance was 88%.

Classroom setting. Although the specific layouts of the classrooms differ by grade and teacher, the general layout consisted of individual student desks, a small carpet area for class reading, small group worktables, and some computer stations. During a typical day the students participated in whole-class instruction, small group work, and independent deskwork.

Promotion of generalization through settings and curriculum. Stokes and Baer (1977) define generalization as “relevant behavior under different, non-training conditions (i.e., across subjects, settings, people, behaviors, and/or time)” (p. 9). According to their definition of generalization, once students are trained using a particular social skill or social behavior, any time or place the student uses that skill, generalization of the behavior is occurring. Thus, the general education classroom and curriculum are ideal for allowing generalization to occur as the subject matter, people, and time are constantly changing.

Materials

Materials for this project included children's literature books, lesson plans, and lesson support materials. These materials were assembled into bags (similar to those found in a library) for the teachers' convenience. The bag included a children's book, a lesson plan for the social skill “How to Follow Directions,” the Lion's Pride Implementation Log, the Lion's Pride Data Collection Sheet, and lesson support materials (e.g., posters for the classroom and school

reminding students of the social skill lesson plans, props for role-plays, coloring paper, reinforcements). The books that were used to teach the social skill “How to Follow Directions” were: *We Share Everything* (Munsch, 1999), *Girl Critically Injured* (Adams, 2008), *Heckedy Peg* (Wood, 1992), and *No! David* (Shannon, 1998). A description of each book is found in Appendix B.

Experimental Design

A 2 x 3 factorial research design was used involving two groups of students. This design is used with two or more independent variables and when two or more variables will be analyzed (Collins, Dziak, & Li, 2009). The two independent variables that were analyzed were group (identified or non-identified) and time (pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention). Pre-intervention (before the BIB lesson) was implemented by the teachers to gather a baseline of how well the students were following directions. Intervention was the month the teachers were required to teach the skill and reinforce the skill, as has been described previously. Post-intervention refers to the final month, when the lesson would no longer be reviewed.

The first group was referred to as the identified group, specifically, those identified as at-risk for behavior problems. The second group of students is referred to as the non-identified group, as these students were not found on the SSBD filled out by the teacher. This design for data analysis was ideal as it allowed the researcher to look at the main effect of the intervention, BIB, as well as the interaction effects between the two groups (identified and non-identified).

Dependent variable. The dependent variable was the students’ ability to generalize the selected social skill, “How to Follow Directions,” using the four steps adapted from McGinnis and Goldstein (1997):

- 1) Look at the person

- 2) Say “okay” or acknowledge the directions were received
- 3) Do it fast (within 5 seconds)
- 4) Check back, if necessary

The dependent variable included the students’ use of the social skill, “How to Follow Directions,” in two distinct categories, student unprompted and teacher prompted. A student unprompted response consisted of a student following directions without any additional prompts from the teacher. For example, the teacher asked the student to pull out his worksheet in preparation for review; the student made eye contact with the teacher, pulled out his worksheet immediately (within 5 seconds), and nodded signaling he was ready to begin the review. A teacher prompted response consisted of a response following direct prompting by the teacher. For example, after directions were given, if the student did not immediately begin the task (within 5 seconds), and the teacher reminded the student using a prompt. If the student adhered to the teacher’s directions after the prompt, the response was considered to be a prompted rather than an unprompted response.

Prompts from the teacher consisted of reminders from the social skill lesson and references to the content from the books. So, an example of a teacher prompt might consist of this: A child is asked to pull out his math book and begin his work. The child does not follow the teacher’s direction. So, the teacher might use the following statement to remind the student what was learned earlier that week during the social skill lesson: “Why did the children in Heckedy Peg get into trouble? Because they failed to follow the directions of their mother to avoid strangers and fire. How can you avoid getting in trouble right now?” The desired outcome was that the child would respond by looking, saying “okay,” and doing what was asked by getting out his book and starting his work.

Independent variables. The independent variable was Book in a Bag (BIB), an integrated curriculum approach to teaching social skills (Marchant & Womack, 2010). Book in a Bag integrates children's literature with direct social skill instruction. The direct social skill lessons, used to teach grades K–6, are paired with children's literature to allow the teacher to use during read-a-loud time. The books were specifically chosen and paired with the skills to help reinforce instruction and teach the skill in the classroom "How to Follow Directions." The lesson plans used in BIB were based on the lessons from Brigham Young University's Book in a Bag (BIB) Project (Erickson, Marchant, Young, Womack, & Waterfall, 2006). Teachers and other staff from the elementary school helped create the lesson plans that were used in their school to better match the individual school needs.

The teachers recorded their use of the BIBs on the Lion's Pride implementation log. The teachers were also provided with social skill posters that were displayed in their classroom and around the school that included the four steps so that each student could receive prompts (reminders) if needed throughout the month the skill was being taught. The purpose of these posters was to foster reinforcement in the classroom and help students generalize their skills to other locations in the school where they were posted (e.g., cafeteria, gymnasium, hallways).

The teachers were trained in the BIBs and other procedures over the course of two faculty meetings. During the first meeting, the teachers learned how to use the lesson plan and the Lion's Pride Implementation Log. The teachers were provided several BIB examples on their table and the researcher exposed them to the content of the BIBs. Additionally, they were shown the different parts of the lesson as well as the four steps of the social skill to be taught, specifically reading/reviewing the book, checking for student understanding, modeling the skill, and having the students repeat the steps aloud. The training also included a question and answer session

about the books, lesson plans, and other general questions about the research. The Lion's Pride Implementation Log was also distributed to them for review. The teachers were told to put an X by each part of the lesson they used during the instruction time. They were told to complete an Implementation Log after using BIB to teach the social skill.

During the second meeting the teachers were introduced to the Lion's Pride Data Collection Sheet and instructed on how to collect the data (see Appendix C). The researcher distributed the data sheets to each teacher and asked them to review the form. After the introduction to the form, the researcher described which behaviors to record and the recording procedures. The teachers were provided with several written scenario examples and non-examples related to the social skill "How to Follow Directions." At the end of the training the teachers demonstrated understanding of the data recording process by successfully identifying verbal examples/non-examples of following directions and completing the data collection sheet with 100% accuracy.

Data collection. The settings where data were collected included all activities during the day excluding lunchtime, recess, and physical education. There were several variations between class schedules, such as play practice, art, and music that several classes attended throughout the day; however, as the students attended these activities data were still collected by the classroom teacher. The teachers collected the data over the course of three months for two weeks at a time. These time periods correspond with the following terms: pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention, and are defined above in the Experimental Design section. The pre-intervention denotes when the teachers were gathering baseline data for two consecutive weeks prior to BIB being implemented in the classroom. The intervention period is the two-week period after BIB was implemented in the classroom. Lastly, the term post-intervention is used to indicate the two

steps an X was not recorded and the box remained blank. The teachers were also instructed to provide students with one additional prompt if the student missed one of the steps or if the student failed to follow directions completely. If the student complied with the request or directions after receiving the prompt, the teacher would record the behavior under teacher prompted social skill use.

The data collection sheet also contained a comments box. The teachers completed this box, which provided feedback to the researchers regarding the teacher's impressions about the student's behaviors that day and the teacher's feelings about the record keeping process.

A Lion's Pride Implementation Log (Appendix D) was included with each BIB. The teacher, (to ensure that the lesson plan was implemented as intended), completed the log one time immediately following the delivery of the lesson. The teachers were asked to mark with an X each part of the lesson they used during the instruction time. The overall percentage of treatment fidelity was 96% for all teachers who participated in the study across all three conditions ($n=15$). In other words, the treatment was implemented with an overall 96% accuracy, as per the self-report data provided by the teachers. This log was used as a measure of reliability of the teachers' instruction of the social skill lesson. The Lion's Pride Implementation Log was the sole measure of treatment fidelity used in this study.

Data analysis. The data were analyzed using a Split-Plot ANOVA (Repeated Measures ANOVA). The Split-Plot ANOVA allowed for two independent variables to be used and main effects compared for one dependent variable. The two independent variables used to organize the data were time (pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention) and group (identified and non-identified as being at-risk for behavior problems). The dependent variable was teacher reported use of the target student's social skill use across all three conditions of time. The two

independent variables were compared to determine the relationship between group and student's social skill use across time. This same process was used for the student unprompted data and the teacher prompted data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and organize the ordinal data found in the survey. All the data were analyzed using SPSS 17.

Social validity. Social validity was assessed using the Lion's Pride Survey (see Appendix E). The purpose of the social validity survey was to assess the teachers' perceptions of social skill instruction. The 26 teachers filled out the survey before beginning the intervention. During a faculty meeting, when preliminary research was being conducted, the survey was distributed to the teachers. The teachers completed the survey and returned it to the researcher that day. The teachers who were not in attendance received a copy in their box with a return label.

The survey consisted of six items that used a 5-point scale from 1 = *Strongly Agree* to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*, and one item that used a 5-point scale from 1 = *Every Week* to 5 = *0-3 Times Per Year*. The six items asked the teachers to rate the following statements: (a) social skill instruction is a welcome part of the curriculum, (b) social skill instruction is capable of being done within my typical day with available resources, (c) the direct instruction model we use for social skill lessons is an acceptable model, (d) it is easy to find time to teach a planned social skill lesson, and (e) social skill instruction makes a positive difference in student behavior in my classroom. The last item asked the teachers how frequently they taught a planned social skill lesson. The data from this survey is presented in the results section.

Results

In an effort to provide answers to the research questions of this study, the analyses of the data are provided below. First, the data associated with student unprompted social skill use is

presented, followed by the teacher prompted social skill use. A Split-Plot ANOVA was used to evaluate the effect of Book in a Bag on the students' (both identified and non-identified) unprompted use of the social skill. The teachers' self-report survey data, as an outcome of the social validity questionnaire, is also discussed in the results section.

Student Unprompted Social Skill Use

According to the data about the student unprompted social skill use, the results indicated that there was a main effect for time ($p = .021$) in the students' overall social skill use. The data also show that there was no interaction effect ($p = .783$) for time and group. Table 2 provides further information to reflect at which times the significant change occurred. There was no significant change from time 1 (pre-intervention) to time 2 (intervention) ($p = .266$). There was a significant change from time 1 (pre-intervention) to time 3 (post-intervention) ($p = .021$), and from time 2 (intervention) to time 3 (post-intervention) ($p = .012$). These data are also summarized graphically below (Figure 2). An effect size for time 1 to time 3 was calculated using Cohen's d . The effect size was 0.96. This suggests a large effect size from pre-intervention to post-intervention in terms of students social skill use over time.

The data also suggest that the non-identified students began the study performing at a higher level than the identified students and improved over time after using the designed intervention. The identified students, while under performing compared to their class-based peers in the beginning, demonstrated similar significant improvement over time. There was not an interaction effect for group and time; the identified students and non-identified students improved at a similar rate.

Table 2

Time Comparison for Student Unprompted Social Skill Use

Time	Time	Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>p</i>
1	2	2.750	2.372	.266
	3	-5.188*	2.004	.021
2	1	-2.750	2.372	.266
	3	-7.938*	2.748	.012
3	1	5.188*	2.004	.021
	2	7.938*	2.748	.012

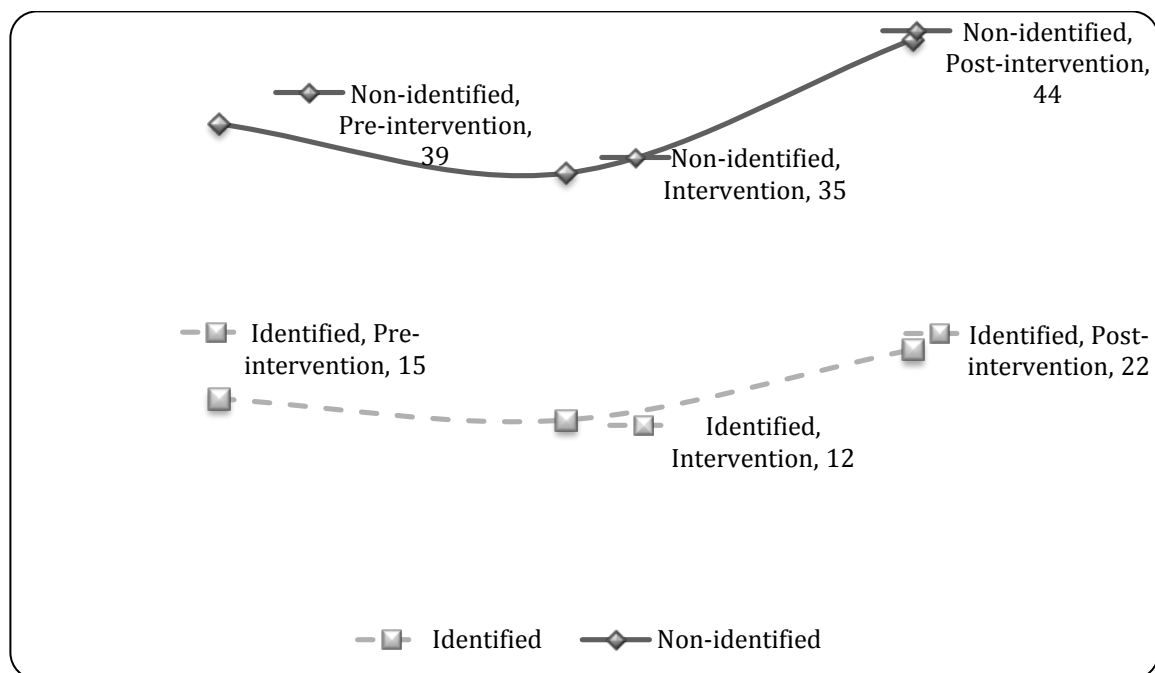


Figure 2. Graphical representation of student unprompted social skill use.

Teacher Prompted Social Skill Use

For the teacher prompted use of the social skill, the data outcomes suggest that there was no significant change from time 1 (pre-intervention) ($p = .947$), to time 2 (intervention) ($p = .824$), or to time 3 (post-intervention) ($p = .764$), in terms of teacher promoted social skill use over time. Please refer to Table 3 for further details about these data.

Table 3

Time Comparison for Teacher Prompted Social Skill Use

Time	Time	Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>p</i>
1	2	.188	2.771	.947
	3	-.500	1.634	.764
2	1	-.188	2.771	.947
	3	-.688	3.041	.824
3	1	.500	1.634	.764
	2	.688	3.041	.824

Social Validity

The second set of research questions were answered by using a social validity questionnaire. Sixty-eight percent of teachers agreed that social skill instruction is a welcome part of their curriculum, 24 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, and eight percent disagreed. Sixty percent of teachers agreed that in a typical day and with available resources they are capable of teaching social skills, 32 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, and eight percent disagreed. Sixty percent of teachers agree that direct instruction, the method of instruction used for this research, is an acceptable model to teach social skills, 36 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, and four percent disagreed. Forty-eight percent agreed that social skill instruction makes a positive difference in the classroom, 48 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, and four percent disagreed. However, 76 percent of teachers disagreed that it is easy to find time to teach a social skill lesson, 24 percent neither agreed nor disagreed, and 0 percent agreed. Thirty six percent of teachers reported teaching a planned social skill lesson one time a month, 16 percent reported teaching two-three times a month, four percent reported teaching four-five lessons per year, and 16 percent reported teaching a lesson zero-three times a year. Overall, it appears that a

majority of teachers find several aspects of social skill instruction acceptable, while other aspects appear to be less favorable or impartial according to the teachers.

Discussion

As outlined previously the purpose of this research was to validate a universal intervention, Book in a Bag (BIB), to determine if it could successfully increase the social skill use of both at-risk and general populations of students. More specifically this intervention tracked students over time and was able to improve their use in this particular skill inside an inclusive contextual learning environment (e.g., the classroom) without separating interventions for the various levels of students' needs (e.g., Tiers 1, 2, and 3) within a PBS model.

Extension of Previous Research

The present study extended previous research in the following ways. First, it provided a systematic measurement of students' actual behaviors in the classroom and in other settings (Womack, Marchant, & Borders, 2011). As previously mentioned, Stokes and Baer (1977, p. 9) defined generalization as "relevant behavior under different, non-training conditions (i.e., across subjects, settings, people, behaviors, and/or time)." According to their definition of generalization, once students are trained using a particular social skill or social behavior, any time or place the student uses that skill, generalization of the behavior is occurring. Thus, each time the students used the social skill after the training they were generalizing the social skill. Second, the researchers used a contextual learning environment, meaning that the students were taught and modeled the social skills where the skills were primarily expected to be used (Gresham et al., 2001). And last, the social skill instruction did not require additional teacher time, as it was implemented during the general curriculum as part of the daily read-a-loud time

(Capara et al., 2000; Leffert, Brady, & Siperstein 2009; Malecki & Elliot, 2002; Marchant & Womack, 2010; Zins et al., 2007).

The findings of this study support the use of BIB as a universal intervention in the general education setting, which is a facet of social skills research that has been in need of further examination, especially in terms of social skill generalization (Durlak, Weissberg, Schellinger, Dymnicki, & Taylor, 2011). More specifically, the non-identified students began the study following directions at higher levels than the identified students and improved over time. The identified students, while under-performing compared to their class peers in the beginning, demonstrated similar significant improvement over time. This suggests the possibility that students at all levels of functioning (high and low-level compliance to teacher directions) can benefit from using BIB as a universal intervention.

In terms of the teacher prompted use of the social skill, there were no significant findings. The students from pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention did not require additional prompts. These outcomes may indicate that BIB does not require a significant number of additional teacher prompts to foster social skill development. This not only simplifies universal instruction for teachers, it helps reduce the amount of time teachers spend managing problem behavior in the classroom (Krieger, 2009; Marchant & Womack, 2010; Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). This may also indicate that the significant improvement in overall student social skill use during post-intervention is not related to teacher practice effects, but rather to students' actual increase in social skills.

Another strength of this study was the use of the general education teachers as the implementers of the social skills curriculum and instruction. As recommended by Caldarella, Christensen, Kramer, and Kronmiller (2009) and Krieger (2009), using the general education

teacher to implement the intervention is an element of the research that is currently lacking and is believed to help achieve the goals of social skill training (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001).

Leffert et al. (2009) believe that an integrative approach provides the needed context for students to acquire and generalize the social skill being taught. Generalization is a key piece of any social skill instruction. Generalization is not just a passive process but should be programmed into the behavior change (Stokes & Baer, 1977). Thus, the general education classroom, the general education teacher, and curriculum are ideal for allowing generalization to occur as it provides significant opportunities for practice, feedback, and reinforcement (Gresham et al., 2001).

Limitations

A limitation of this research is that the study was not blind to the teachers. The teachers were informed as to what to look for in terms of social skill use and what data to collect for the study. The teachers implemented the intervention as well as gathered data on their students. Therefore, the teachers' data collection and participation may have been influenced by their knowledge of the students and the research study. As such, the data should be interpreted with this limitation in mind, recognizing that it may, in fact, impact the validity of the actual findings. In addition, the data reported for treatment fidelity purposes is also self-reported data from the teacher, as opposed to researcher collected. Therefore, the validity may be questionable.

While a measure of the students' actual classroom behavior was recorded, the frequency of teacher requests (total number of directions given) was not. Therefore, the researcher is unable to determine an accurate ratio of skill compliance to teacher requests but only an increase in overall skill usage. Future research could include a measure of teacher requests to form an accurate ratio. Another way to strengthen this limitation would be for the researchers to collect reliability data that can be compared with the teacher data.

Another limitation of this study was the attrition rate of teacher and the resulting small sample size. This small sample size may also have decreased the statistical power in terms of data analysis. While the researcher was unable to attribute this decrease to any systematic bias, it may be possible that the teachers who continued to gather data were those favorable towards the program. Additionally, while BIB did not take extra time for teachers to teach the social skills lesson, tracking student responses did. This may be part of the reason for a significant attrition rate. The inclusion of independent observers in future research to collect data and having teachers only responsible for implementation may address this limitation by making the research process simpler and less time intensive. It may also be of interest to compare social validity data to attrition data. This was not possible in the present study because social validity data were anonymously collected in order to encourage participation and reduce pressure to respond favorably (social desirability).

Finally, although identified and non-identified students were compared, there was no true comparison group that did not receive the intervention. Therefore, the students' increase in social skill use may have been due to other variables such as classroom context, teacher behavior, increases or decreases in the number of teacher requests for compliance, student maturation, regression artifacts, or interactive/additive effects. Future research should focus on using a comparison group that includes a demographically similar school or classroom where no social skills intervention is being utilized. This comparison group would help reduce the above-mentioned confounding variables.

Implications for Practice

As noted previously, teachers report losing many precious hours of teaching time dealing with behavior problems (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). The teachers in this research

reported a similar sentiment with regard to finding time to implement social skill instruction into their day, but noted that they saw value in teaching a social skill lesson. The teachers' concerns may be addressed by using BIB as an integrated curriculum. Ideally, BIB should not take additional time away from instruction by using read-aloud time to read the story and teach the lesson. Additionally, BIB should help teachers decrease problem behaviors in their classes by increasing positive social skill use, which is likely to maximize the instructional time in the classroom.

Conclusion

BIB showed promise as a way to increase students' social skill use in the classroom across a variety of classroom settings and teaching topics. This study adds to the current literature by systematically supporting generalization as it integrated social skill instruction into the school curriculum, used peers as role models, and utilized teachers as the interventionists. While there are several limitations to the current study, the findings suggest that BIB is a unique universal intervention. In addition, students responded without additional teacher prompts. The study supports the idea that BIB had a positive effect on students' behavior in the classroom for students identified and non-identified for being at-risk for behavior problems. Furthermore, it appears that a majority of teacher endorsed the idea social skills training. Overall, the apparent effectiveness of BIB in the present study suggests that this approach could be reasonably implemented in schools, and warrants further study.

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Appendix A: Literature Review

Social and Emotional Problems in School

Social competence is the ability to interact, build and maintain positive relationships (Krieger, 2009). Some students, however, will exhibit behavior and social deficits that limit their individual learning as well as the learning of other students. It is estimated that approximately 20% of all children and adolescents have some kind of mental health concern that limits their daily functioning (Duchnowski, Kutach, & Friedman, 2002). These limits include problems such as poor academic development, low self-esteem, and negative social interactions (Greenbaum et al, 1996; Landrum, Takerseley, & Kauffman, 2003).

Children who struggle with positive social interactions are sometimes identified with an emotional and behavioral disorder (EBD) (Murray & Greenberg, 2006). According to the Code of Federal Regulations, EBD is defined as having five criteria: (a) an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, (b) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers, (c) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances, (d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, and (e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (Title 24, Section 300.7(c)(4)(i), 2008). It is clear that the above-mentioned criteria are problematic for students both in an academic and social sense. This is an issue not only for the child, but also for those within his/her influence, including family members, teachers, peers, and others within the school community.

The following data offers information as to the far-reaching effect of these problem behaviors. In a recent poll of teachers, 17% reported losing four or more hours of teaching time per week due to disruptive behavior; another 19% reported losing two or three hours per week

(Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). In urban areas, 24% of teachers report losing two or more hours of precious teaching time due to behavior disruptions and other classroom problems (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). With so much teaching time being lost each week, it is clear that a few student problems can create and foster problems for the entire school system.

Schools Responses to Social and Behavioral Issues

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) imposes two important responsibilities on school systems when it comes to educating students with disabilities. First, schools are to ensure that each child receives an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, and second, they are to maintain a safe and conducive learning environment (Wilcox, Turnbull, Rutherford, & Turnbull, 2000). There are various ways in which schools and researchers attempt to maintain safe and conducive learning environments that support students, including those with behavioral challenges. Some of these methods will be discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

Traditionally school responses to social and behavior problems have been reactive in nature. Reactive strategies are interventions used immediately following a problem behavior in an attempt to alter the frequency of that behavior in the future (DuPaul & Weyandt, 2006). Some strategies that are often implemented include verbal reprimand, time-out, debriefing, behavior contracts, and suspension. However, these strategies may not be in line with current research. DuPaul and Stoner (2003) reported that relying exclusively on reactive approaches rarely is effective for students with behavior problems, especially disruptive type problems.

Rather, DuPaul and Stoner (2003) recommended a balance between preventative procedures and evidenced based consequence strategies. In order to strike this balance, schools, particularly teachers, must be willing to adopt strategies in their classrooms that promote

socialization. Of course, there exists some concern about teachers' plates being full with the demands to teach academics (Marchant & Womack, 2010; Zins et al., 2007). Fortunately, research has demonstrated that integrating academic, behavior, and social instruction can be successful.

Three Pillars of Learning

Academic, behavior, and social instruction could be coined as the “three pillars of instruction” as they all affect the degree to which a child can succeed in school. Academic learning is the pillar that individuals are most familiar with; it includes subjects such as math, reading, and social studies. How schools attend to academic instruction is fairly well defined by national, state, and local agencies; whereas, strategies that support social and emotional learning within our school systems are not as well defined, but are equally as important to the educational process of all students. According to Payton et al. (2008), “Social and emotional learning is the process through which children acquire skills to recognize and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and handle interpersonal situations effectively” (2008, p. 4). Schools would be wise to incorporate social and emotional strategies as part of their school system as a means of prevention (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg & Walberg, 2007). More specifically, current research demonstrates mounting evidence for the effectiveness of prevention programs, in particular those aimed at preventing child and adolescent substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, school failure/dropout, and juvenile delinquency and violence (Nation et al., 2003).

Prevention and Interventions

Prevention refers to the end result of a series or variety of interventions, whereas interventions are “a collection of approaches or processes that allow for the achievement of prevention; that is, intervention becomes a means to an end” (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004, p. 207). In order to successfully achieve prevention of social and behavior problems in schools, teachers and other school personnel must use a series of interventions. There are two important levels in creating and implementing social and emotional interventions: universal and selective. Bierman and Greensberg (1996) define the two levels as follows: universal interventions are a general intervention geared towards all students, and selective interventions are directed to those children who have shown behavioral deficits. No matter which level of intervention, universal or selective, there are several important considerations to be considered.

Bowen, Jenson, and Clark (2004) recommend the 4Ps – Proven, Practical, Positive, and Preventative, when selecting an intervention. A proven intervention is one that is backed by empirical support. Practical interventions are interventions that are easy to implement and easy to track progress overtime. A positive intervention is one aimed at teaching prosocial skills and not just aimed at extinguishing negative behaviors. Lastly, a preventative intervention is one that relies on predicting when and where problem behaviors occur and altering those conditions so that the behavior is less likely to occur in that context.

Since most problem behaviors are contextual it is important to provide interventions that appropriately match the context. Kauffman claims that “interventions must be adapted to fit particular circumstances and individuals” (1999, p. 448-468). The Positive Behavior Support model can provide much needed organization for student interventions and help schools meet the ultimate goal of prevention.

Positive Behavior Support

Inside a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) model prevention occurs at three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary (Positive Behavior Support Initiative, 2010). The PBS model is one way in which schools provide proactive behavior support for children. Positive Behavior Support aims to not only change student behavior but to change the entire school system and environment. The main elements of the PBS model include a prevention-focused support system. According to Sugai and Horner (2002) there are five main elements of the PBS model: (a) prevention-focused continuum of support, (b) proactive instructional approaches to teaching and improving social behaviors, (c) conceptually sound and empirically validated practices, (d) systems change to support effective practices, and (e) data-based decision making. These five elements are key to finding, adopting, and sustaining effective academic and behavioral strategies. One of the main goals of PBS is to strive to understand the purpose of students' behavior, teach prosocial replacement behaviors and encourage gaining appropriate attention to their feelings and needs (Ruef, Higgins, Glaeser, & Patnode, 1998).

There are several positive outcomes associated with using PBS on a school-wide level. Smith-Bird and Turnbull (2005) found that PBS has the potential to increase the quality of life of both individuals and families. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), a review of the PBS research shows that half of the studies found an approximate 90% reduction in targeted students problem behaviors and just under 30% of the studies showed a complete elimination of student problem behaviors after a PBS approach was undertaken (NASP, 2001).

Lewis, Powers, Kely, and Newcomer (2002) investigated the effectiveness of teaching children appropriate playground behaviors using positive behavior school-wide supports. They

found that across three recess periods the frequency of problem behaviors on the playground decreased significantly. It also appears that students not only reduced problem behaviors but increased positive behaviors such as proper use of playground equipment, respectful use of hands in classrooms, and appropriate ways to keep activities already in progress from being interrupted. When a positive behavior support model is paired with appropriate skill-based instruction, teachers and students benefit from reduced problem behaviors as well as increased prosocial skills. Most, if not all, students' social and emotional needs are likely to be attended to as various interventions are implemented within these differing levels.

Behavior Strategies

A few examples of behavioral interventions found effective for school-wide PBS include social skill training, mystery motivators, token economies, time-out, thinking out loud (self-talk), and home notes. A specific example of one of these interventions, time-out, was analyzed by Vegas, Jenson, and Kircher (2007). The researchers performed a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of time-out, a consequence based intervention, in reducing classroom behavior. They found that while time-out can be effective, it is most successful when paired with additional interventions, specifically, those interventions aimed at keeping students in the learning process (2007). For example, rather than putting the student out in the hall the teacher could use a "sit and watch" approach. This alternative to time-out gives the student the opportunity to still be involved in the learning environment but not allowed to continue to participate with his peers (White & Bailey, 1990).

Another example of a successful school-based intervention is found in the research of Bierman, Cole, and Dodge (2010). The researchers used an adaptation of the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum (Kusche & Greenberg, 1993) to teach and

promote social and emotional competence. The researcher trained teachers to use the PATHS curriculum to teach children feelings words, as well as recognize internal and external cues to better understand self-control. The universal intervention included two to three lessons taught by the teacher each week for eight months. The researchers also included a generalization component where the students would be asked throughout the day to use “Feeling Faces” on their desk to describe how they were feeling. They found that using the PATHS program, specifically designed to teach students emotional self-regulation skills, significantly reduced teacher and peer-reported students’ aggressive and hyperactive behaviors. School-based interventions, such as those discussed above, should not be thought of as additional responsibilities for teachers but rather an integral part of helping students succeed.

Importance and Benefits of Social Skill Training

Sometimes teachers assume that students will acquire social skills by way of observational learning (Bowen et al., 2004). While this may be true for some individuals, it is not necessarily true for others. Clearly, there are some students who can benefit from more explicit and direct social skill instruction (Johns, Crowley, & Guetzloe, 2005). The importance and benefits of explicitly teaching social skills will be discussed below.

Students who struggle with social skills are not only missing out on the meaningful relationships that can be forged at school, but according to the research, they will fall behind academically as they do not have the same access to the material as their grade-level peers. Adelman and Taylor (2000) argue that schools whose primary focus is solely on academic instruction fall short as they fail to eliminate other barriers that limit teaching and learning. Gresham, Cook, and Crews (2004) refer to social skills as “academic enablers” because they facilitate academic performance. Zins and colleagues add that social and emotional skills are

particularly important, as students who lack these skills are less likely to succeed in school and will continue to have long-term struggles into adulthood (2007). In fact, researchers report that third grade prosocial behaviors are the strongest predictors of academic success in eighth grade, even more so than third grade academic success (Capara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000). Malecki and Elliot (2002) also concluded that social skills for elementary school students allow them greater access to the knowledge found at school.

According to Walker et al. (2004), social skill instruction has four primary goals: to (a) promote skill acquisition, (b) teach new skills, (c) decrease the amount of competing negative behaviors, and (d) facilitate generalization or the use of students' prosocial skills across settings. Researchers advocate certain principles to make social skill instruction more effective so that these goals are more likely to be achieved. These principles are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

The first principle is for social skill instruction to be implemented frequently (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001). There are several ways to teach social skills regularly without consuming core instruction time. One recommendation is for social skill instruction to be integrated into the general curriculum (Gresham, 1998). An integrative approach may increase teachers' acceptability and ultimately their implementation of social skill instruction in the classroom.

A second principle to consider is for skills to be taught where they are most likely to be used. This suggestion grows out of the concern that most social skill instruction fails due to decontextualization (Gresham, et al.). For example, teaching social skills in pullout settings, such as a resource classroom, leads to decontextualization because the skills are taught outside of the general education classroom where they are typically expected. Therefore, it is recommended for

the instruction to occur in the general education classrooms. Selecting this context provides more natural and real life application. Using the general education teacher as the social skill instructor can facilitate such an effort, as can the use of peers to reinforce the skills so they are more likely to be repeated in the future (Gresham et al., 2001; Maag, 2006).

The third principle researchers recommend is matching student social skill deficits to the social skill instruction (Gresham et al., 2001; Maag, 2005). Through systematic identification of students' social skill deficits the problem behaviors are discovered. These problem behaviors can be the competing behaviors and/or the lack of social skills noticed by the teacher or others. Once these competing behaviors have been identified, they can be targeted and replaced with more socially acceptable behaviors (2001). Interventions are more likely to have positive outcomes after the specific deficits have been identified (Maag, 2006).

A fourth principle, key to the success of any social skills intervention, is that generalization is an essential component. Traditionally, many believed that generalization was a natural outcome of any behavior change process; however, the process of generalization is not just a passive process but can and should be programmed into the behavior change process (Stokes & Baer, 1977). Stokes and Baer define generalization as “relevant behavior under different, non-training conditions (i.e., across subjects, settings, people, behaviors, and/or time)” (p.9). According to their definition of generalization, once students are trained using a particular social skill or social behavior, any time or place the student uses that skill, generalization of the behavior is occurring. Thus, the general education classroom and curriculum are ideal for allowing generalization to occur as the subject matter, people, and time are constantly changing.

Lastly, Gresham et al. (2001) noted the importance of treatment fidelity. The absence of fidelity in implementing social skills instruction minimizes the effectiveness of such instruction

(2001). A summary of the treatment fidelity research indicates that the extent to which interventions are implemented as intended, directly relates to the degree of behavior change (Landrum, Takerseley, & Kauffman, 2003). There are evidence-based principles that should be applied such as modeling, reinforcement, and role-playing, that are likely to foster social skill development (Maag, 2005). It is important to remember that an effective intervention requires accurate implementation that is continually monitored and thoroughly evaluated (Bowen et al., 2004).

Universal Social Skill Research

Many of the above cited social skill instruction principles have been implemented into current research. The research summarized below includes evidence of their effectiveness but also includes several limitations for practice. These articles are not intended to be an exhaustive list, rather, a summary of several of the strongest articles located in this current literature review.

A nationally acclaimed social skill program that has been implemented since 1990 in over 1,500 schools nationwide is the *Stop and Think Social Skills Program*. According to Project Achieve, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Collaborative for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning have praised its efforts (Project Achieve, 2007). Ironically, while this program has received such high praise there is little empirical data to support this program as a stand-alone primary intervention (Hall, Jones, & Claxton, 2008).

Hall et al. (2008) implemented the *Stop and Think Social Skills Program* as a stand-alone class wide primary prevention social skill training program using a sequential cohort involving two groups of kindergarten students. The researchers collected data using the Social Skill Rating System (SSRS). They concluded that the program did increase all students' use of both social

and academic skills. Additionally, they found that not only did the school wide program increase social skills for students it also decreased some problem behaviors, which, as discussed earlier, is a goal of PBS. According to the researchers, the *Stop & Think Social Skills Program* was an effective class wide or universal social skills program. This provides much needed support for implementing other school wide social skills programs. While these results look promising there are several limitations to this study that need to be addressed.

The study conducted by Hall et al. (2008) included only students that were homogeneous in nature, and they collected no information or included any special education students in the study. They also collected no information as to the students' current need for a social skill intervention nor did they incorporate or measure for maintenance or generalization. Therefore, it is unknown to what extent the students generalized the behaviors across settings or time. As noted previously, Gresham (1998) argues that generalization is a key component to social skills program and should be incorporated into social skills research, both universal and targeted research efforts.

Recently, a study conducted provided additional support for delivering universal social skill interventions. Caldarella, Christensen, Kramer, and Kronmiller (2009) evaluated *Strong Start: A Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum* (Merrell, Juskelis, Tran, & Buchanan, 2008) inside two elementary school classrooms—a treatment and a control group. The *Strong Start* program is a program aimed at increasing students' prosocial behaviors as well as reducing students external and internalizing behaviors. The lessons focus on learning about being a friend, solving problems, dealing with anger, and handling anxiety.

Caldarella et al. (2009) used the School Social Behavior Scales (SSBS) and the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) as the dependent variables. A relevant finding from this research is

that the students in the control group experienced an increase in internalizing behaviors and a decrease in prosocial behaviors unlike the treatment group who experienced increases in prosocial behaviors, decreases in internalizing behaviors, and a slight decrease in externalizing behaviors. Caldarella et al. findings suggest that this curriculum offers preventative possibilities.

One limitation of this study is of particular interest. Although the general education teacher was present during each lesson, the actual lesson was delivered by a specialist. The researchers suggest having the regular education teacher teach the lessons rather than having a “break in teaching would help extend the literature” (p.55). By having the general education teacher integrate the social and emotional learning into the curriculum of their classroom the students receive the instruction in a more natural and applied learning context. This supports Gresham et al.’s (2001) theory that a more natural setting that draws from its typical stimuli, such as the teacher and students, is more likely to promote generalization and maintenance of skills. Natural settings and real-life examples allow students to take advantage of both classroom situations and interactions with peers and adults when learning.

Another study conducted in 2001 by Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, and Sprague used a school-wide positive behavior support model to teach children a specific social skill. The skills the researchers focused on were: be respectful, put ups not put downs, cooperation, and solving problems peacefully. The teachers used an instructional design adopted from Kameeuni and Simmons (1990) to teach these skills school-wide. This design consisted of helping the students explicitly understand what they were expected to do, how to do the expected behavior, and how to prevent the problem behaviors from occurring. The design also provided teachers with instruction about how to give positive and corrective feedback. The lessons were approximately 50 minutes in length and were extended over a three-week period. In addition, positive

reinforcement of appropriate behavior was increased throughout the school by using a ticket system to reward students for following the specific behavior expectations. A new system for referring students to the office for positive behavior was also implemented, as well as a computer based praise note system.

Metzler et al. (2001) noted that prior to their interventions the school had 1746 total discipline referrals. After the intervention period, the school referrals declined 28%. After a year of maintenance and reinforcement for good behavior, discipline referrals dropped by 41%. This decline in referrals for negative behavior is promising for the use of a school-wide behavior program that includes social skill instruction. Metzler et al.'s research study is particularly relevant to the proposed study in that it uses a school-wide social skill training program that is executed by the teachers in the general education classroom. However, it did not include a measure of socially appropriate behaviors, something that the current study addressed.

Most recently in 2011, Durlak, Weissberg, Schellinger, Dymnicki, and Taylor conducted a meta-analysis of 213 school-based, universal social and emotional learning (SEL) programs. Although these programs are in some ways different than other social skill interventions described above, their findings are relevant to the current research and further support the importance of social and emotional training in schools. The researcher reported that when compared to control groups, students who participated in a SEL program showed 11-percentile-point gains in academic achievement, an overall increase in students' positive attitudes towards self, others, and school, an increase in prosocial skills (e.g., goal setting, perspective taking, interpersonal problem solving, decision making), and lastly, an increase in positive social behaviors (e.g., getting along with others). They also concluded that because many of these SEL interventions were taught by school teachers and staff, it is possible for these interventions to be

incorporated into the routine education practices and not require additional outside support in order to be effective. In the end, however, the authors noted that one of the limitations of their analysis is that it fails to capture the effects of generalization due to many studies omitting this very important element in social and emotional training.

Although schools may have access to many popular interventions, there is limited empirical evidence to validate the effectiveness of social skill and SEL interventions that include a measure generalization effects (Durlak, et al, 2011; Gresham et al., 2001; Maag, 2005). Few if any of the studies, cited above, measure for generalization effects, nor do they systematically program for generalization in their study. Gresham (1999) argues that generalization is a key component to any social skills program and that generalization data should be a primary focus of such studies.

An Alternative Approach

Marchant and Womack (2010) suggest that with such a need existing in schools there is a “natural fit” for integrating social and emotional development into schools as students’ current academic performance may be highly related to their social skills (Capara et al. 2000; Zins et al. 2007; Malecki & Elliot, 2002). Leffert, Brady, and Siperstein (2009) also advocate integrating social skill instruction into the existing academic curriculum. Leffert et al. believe that this approach provides the needed context for students to acquire and generalize the social skill being taught. Traditionally, many believed that generalization was a natural outcome of any behavior-change process; however, the process of generalization is not just a passive process but can and should be programmed into the behavior-change efforts (Stokes & Baer, 1977).

Stokes and Baer define generalization as “relevant behavior under different, non-training conditions (i.e., across subjects, settings, people, behaviors, and/or time)” (p.9). According to

their definition of generalization, once students are trained in using a particular social skill, any time that skill is used by the student generalization of the behavior is occurring. Thus, the general education classroom and curriculum are ideal for allowing generalization to occur as the subject matter, people, and time are constantly changing and there are abundant opportunities for safe practice and reinforcement.

Smith and Gilles (2003) argue similarly that a tool or instructional device is needed in order to make instruction time effective when teaching children social skills and social interaction. This systematic programming or instructional device used to facilitate generalization should be something that is already integrated into the curriculum but also a tool that is engaging for children. Using an integrative approach to teach social skills will also allow for the teacher to be present to model and reinforce the new social skill as well as other positive behaviors. Previous research in the area of infusing social skills into the curriculum has focused on teaching small groups social skills through bibliotherapy.

Bibliotherapy is predominantly used in schools by school counselors or school psychologists to work with individual students or small groups of students on a specific topic (Cook, Earles-Vollrath, & Ganz, 2006). Furthermore, Cook et al. claim that the premise behind bibliotherapy is to help students identify with literary characters and “release emotions, gain new directions in life, and explore new ways of interacting with peers and adults” (p. 93). These aspects of bibliotherapy are similar to many of the goals of social skill training. In fact, Cartledge and Kiarie (2001) recommend the use of bibliotherapy to teach children social skills. However, there is limited empirical evidence to date that supports this recommendation. This presents an area needing further research to combine bibliotherapy and social skill instruction.

Book in a Bag

Book in a Bag (BIB) is an ideal approach for educators who are integrating social and emotional curriculum into an already existing academic curriculum. BIB is an integrated curriculum approach to teaching social skills that was developed to help simplify teachers' goals to help students succeed at the universal level (Krieger, 2009). BIB was designed to integrate social skill instruction into the curriculum. BIB integrates children's literature with direct social skill instruction using four easy steps to learning new social skills. The explicit social skill lessons are paired with children's literature to allow the teacher to share his or her read-a-loud time with social skill instruction. The steps of the skill are reinforced by the children's literature, where main characters are used to demonstrate parallels to the social skill being taught.

There have been several important preliminary studies to the BIB research, lending support and further recommendations that are important considerations for the current study. Krieger (2009) used a small, targeted group of students. Each student was identified as having a similar but varied behavior problems including: physical aggression, a lack of respect for adults and peers, ignoring teacher warnings, talking incessantly during class, damaging property, difficulty concentrating and maintaining attention, disruptive, touching others, and being disobedient. Krieger found that students, when taught social skills using the BIB approach, were able to both acquire the social skill steps and generalize the skills across settings, after being taught the skills in a pullout setting. As such, they suggest that future research investigate using the general education teacher and classroom to teach and to promote student social skill use. They claim, specifically, that this may help significantly promote the students' social skill generalization.

Womack, Marchant, and Borders (2011) found similar success when measuring the ability of students with high incident disabilities to acquire and generalize social skills when using an integrated approach to teaching them. The researcher reported students could remember and recite with 100% accuracy the steps of each social skill taught. The researcher also reported anecdotal evidence of students using the skill at home and in the classroom. Womack et al. reported, however, that the study lacked direct measurement of the student behaviors across setting and time and recommended that future research focus on systematically measuring students' use of the skills.

Currently, the effect of the BIB approach on the social skills of students has been evaluated primarily with targeted groups of students, as described above. Preliminary data suggest that it has teacher appeal and that it promotes positive outcomes in children's social behavior at the universal level (Marchant & Womack, 2010). An area needing further research is BIB's impact as a universal social skill intervention, particularly examining students' social skill use within an applied context, such as the classroom and non-classroom, school settings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Womack, Marchant, and Borders (2011) cite five specific benefits to implementing BIB for educators who are interested in fostering students' social skills. The benefits include: (a) time efficiency, (b) real-life contexts, (c) engagement, (d) peer mediation, (e) and self-confidence. If teachers can successfully implement a universal intervention, this might help minimize the number of children who would require more intensive social skill interventions. These benefits to addressing students social and emotional needs far outweigh any of the drawbacks to extending time focused on a social skill curriculum, especially since that curriculum is embedded into the educators typical routine and the adopted curriculum.

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Appendix B: Description of Children's Literature Books

<u>Book Title</u>	<u>Annotations</u>	<u>Social Skill</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Girl Critically Injured	A 12-year-old girl was seriously injured when she ignored a stop sign and ran into an approaching car. If she had followed the rules of the road she would not have been hurt.	How to Follow Directions	6
Heckedy Peg	When the mother leaves her seven children to go to market, she gives them specific instructions to keep them safe. But when a witch comes and tricks the children into disobeying their mother's directions and steals them away, the mother must rescue her children.	How to Follow Directions	3
No! David	David is shown doing many activities that he should not be doing. He is told he should not do those things. Finally he feels sorry for doing bad things and learns that he is happier when he follows directions.	How to Follow Directions	1
We Share Everything	During their first day of school, Jeremiah and Amanda discover they are supposed to share. They follow directions by sharing everything—including their clothing!	How to Follow Directions	K

* The grades that didn't have books designated specifically for their grade used the teachers used a book and lesson plan from a similar grade.

Appendix C: Lion's Pride Data Collection Sheet

Teacher Name _____ Grade _____

Week of _____

Student: _____ (internalizer, externalizer, other)

<i>Record instances of student use/application of the social skill by placing student names and dates in the appropriate space below. Insert additional notes/ comments when possible.</i>	
<p>Initiated by student <i>Place a check mark for each instance the child used the social skill</i></p> <p>Monday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Thursday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Friday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Comments:</p>	<p>Prompted by other (peer/teacher/other) <i>Place a check mark for each instance the child used the social skill</i></p> <p>Monday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Thursday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Friday <input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Comments:</p>

Make sure this form gets put in the raffle box by the end of the month in order to qualify for the raffle.

The definitions by example of what constitutes SSK use are as follows:

Student Unprompted	Other Initiated-prompts
Words demonstrating the SSK	“What do you need to do in order to accept responsibility?”
“That’s like in I need to(demonstrates SSK)	“What did (character) do in” “Remember how that was handled in”
Child spontaneously uses social skill without words. i.e. writes a thank-you or an apology	Points to SSK chart as a prompt

I have reviewed the definitions of student use of the social skill.

Appendix D : Lion's Pride Implementation Log

Date: _____

Teacher Name: _____

Grade Level: _____

Title of Book: _____

Social Skill Taught: _____

Social Skill Lesson Plan

Social Skill Lesson took _____ minutes

Please check the items you completed

- I read or reviewed the book with the students
- I elaborated on the social skill using examples from the book
- I provided rationale to the students for using the social skill
- I checked for understanding of the social skill terms

- I modeled the social skill
- I used the provided materials to model the social skill
- I checked for student understanding
- I had the students say the steps aloud as a class/group
- I called on individual students to check for fluency
- I completed the guided practice section of the lesson plan
- I provided specific feedback and praise
- I closed the lesson with an invitation to practice the social skill
- I had the students complete the independent practice activity provided in the lesson plan

Social Studies lesson Plan

Social Studies Lesson Plan took _____ minutes

Please check the items you completed

- I used _____ of _____ ideas in the Instruction Procedures portion of the social studies lesson plan
- The students showed appropriate participation in the class discussion
- The students showed individual signs of learning
- I had the students complete the independent practice activity provided in the lesson plan
- I used the social studies extension activities included in the BIB
- I used _____ number of the extension activities

Literacy Lesson Plan

Literacy Lesson Plan took _____ minutes

Please check the items you completed

- I used _____ of _____ ideas in the Instruction Procedures portion of the Literacy lesson plan
- The students showed appropriate participation in the class discussion
- The students showed individual signs of leaning
- I had the students complete the independent practice activity provided in the lesson plan
- I used _____ number of the extension activities

Additional Comments: (Please include a description of any item you modified/extended/supplemented.)

Appendix E: Lion's Pride Survey

Circle the number that matches the strength of your agreement or disagreement with each statement below.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Social skill instruction is a welcome part of the curriculum.	5	4	3	2	1
Social skill instruction is capable of being done within my typical day and with available resources.	5	4	3	2	1
The direct instruction model we use for social skill lessons is an acceptable model.	5	4	3	2	1
It is easy to find time to teach a planned social skill lesson.	5	4	3	2	1
Social skill instruction makes a positive difference in student behavior in my classroom.	5	4	3	2	1

I teach a planned social skill lesson	Every week	2-3 times a month	1 time a month	4-5 times a year	0-3 times a year
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I have taught at this school since _____.
(Year)

Additional comments: