

Running Head: Help Seeking Behaviour

Examining the Relationship Between Student's Perception
Of Costs and Benefits of Asking For Help In the Classroom
And the Avoidance of Help Seeking Behaviour

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Asking for help is an important strategy that contributes to student learning. The student who asks for help when requiring assistance not only alleviates immediate academic difficulties but also gains knowledge and skills that can be a positive self-help skill to acquire (Newman, 1990). This is a useful self-advocacy tool of particular importance to the student who is struggling with a learning difficulty in the classroom setting.

However, in spite of the obvious importance of asking for help in school, students often do not ask questions or ask for assistance when it is needed. This leads to a major question that is often asked by educators, "Why are those students who truly need help with their schoolwork the ones who seem to be most reluctant to ask for help?" Of concern are the findings that indicate that the lower the students' achievement the greater their reluctance to ask for help (Newman & Goldin, 1990). For example, a study by Ryan and Pintrich (1997) found that achievement in math was negatively related to avoidance of asking for help while it was positively related to students' perceptions of their cognitive competence in math. This suggests that the students who need help the most are the least likely to ask for it. Similar findings point towards the fact that students with lower GPAs were more likely than students with higher GPAs to be concerned with how their ability compares with that of others

and are thereby more inclined to hide their lack of ability (Middleton & Midgely, 1997).

Also consistent with these findings is the vulnerability hypothesis of help seeking which proposes that individuals with low self-esteem have a greater need than do those with high self-esteem to avoid situations in which they feel threatened by an admission of failure and thus are more likely to avoid asking for assistance (Newman, 1990). According to Newman, there are thought to be five characteristics of the child that are related to help-seeking behaviour: perceived competence, motivational orientation, attitudes and beliefs and age. Students weigh the perceived benefits and costs of asking for help and based on this decide whether to ask for help. A recent study found that students as young as eight years of age are aware of the costs and benefits of asking questions in the classroom (Newman, 1990, Newman & Goldin, 1990).

During the last decade there has been increasing interest in looking at help seeking as an important strategy for learning and success in school. After all a classroom where only academically confident children seek help seems less than ideal (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997). In a pilot study of why children were reluctant to ask for help with their schoolwork there were four reasons that were revealed. The reason that was given most often was that there was an expectation that they already knew the material. The answer that the children gave spontaneously most often was fear of negative consequences while other important concerns given were that they wanted to work by themselves and that there was a lack of desirable helpers to give them appropriate assistance (Newman & Goldin, 1990). This literature review will

examine three aspects of help-seeking behaviour. Asking for help is both a learning strategy and social interaction and both of these components will be examined (Ryan, Gheen & Midgley, 1998). First the review will examine the characteristics of students and the aspects of these characteristics that lead them to avoid asking for help. Second, the review will look at the factors within the classroom environment that contribute to the students' reluctance to ask for assistance. Third, the literature review will consider those in the social environment, primarily teachers and peers, and how they impact the students' propensity to ask for help. Finally, the review will examine implications for practice in the context of help seeking in the classroom.

Student Characteristics

Recent studies examining help seeking behaviour have determined that there are student characteristics that will increase the likelihood of the student making a judgement of the costs and benefits of asking for help and base help seeking decisions on the weight of these perceptions (Newman & Goldin, 1990). Whether they chose to ask for help or avoided asking for help is influenced by these characteristics.

This section will address several related areas that contribute to the students' likelihood to avoid asking for help. First, it will examine the particular characteristics that students have that may be a factor in the students' avoidance of seeking help. Second, it will look at how the attitudes and beliefs of the students will play a role in whether they are more likely to view help-seeking as a benefit or a cost. Last, it will

look at student motivation and the part motivation has to play in students' help-seeking choices.

Ryan and Pintrich (1997) define avoidance of help seeking as instances when a student needs help but does not seek it. Some examples given of this behaviour would include when the student might skip a problem altogether or put down any answer rather than ask for help. Ryan and Pintrich point out that when a student does not get help when it is needed there is a missed opportunity for learning and bettering his or her academic achievement. When a student encounters a situation where assistance is required to continue in an academic situation, the student must first become aware of needing help. This metacognitive function is then followed by the motivation needed to seek help. The final part of this help seeking sequence is the consequent behaviour of implementing strategies to engage another person's help (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; Newman, 1994).

Developmental Differences and Help Seeking Behaviour

Newman and Goldin (1990) examined developmental differences in attitudes about help seeking. They found that there is a developmental increase in the frequency of children seeking academic assistance from teachers, parents and peers. Older children at the elementary school level are usually more actively involved in their learning than are younger children. This study looked at whether there were grade related differences in school children's attitudes and beliefs about asking for help. In a comparison of grade 2, grade 4 and grade 6 students, it was discovered that older

students were more reluctant to ask questions even though they believed more strongly that asking questions is beneficial to learning. Newman and Goldin attributed this finding to the hypothesis that a sense of passivity among low achievers increases over the elementary school years. As well, early adolescents are more concerned than younger children about peer groups, experience greater sensitivity to and feel more vulnerability in peer relations thus experiencing increased fear of embarrassment in the classroom.

Adolescents having greater metacognitive skills are better able to consider their academic performance and determine their need to ask for help in academic situations. In spite of this, many adolescents do not ask for help with their schoolwork when it is needed (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; Newman, 1990; Newman & Goldin, 1990). As examined later in this review, adolescents' perception of competence and achievement goals were found to be related to their attitudes toward asking for help in the classroom. It is also noted that teachers may view students who receive praise and positive attention by properly soliciting instructional feedback and assistance as more capable and likeable (Alber, Heward & Hippler, 1999).

Gender Differences

In their 1990 study on children's reluctance to ask for help with their schoolwork Newman and Goldin found that girls were more likely than boys to report a belief that parents and teachers might think they are dumb when they ask a question about mathematics; however, there was no sex difference when the question-asking was in reading. They speculated that this finding may be a result of negative expectations

and girls may be more hesitant than boys about asking for help due to parents' and teachers, expectancies for children's success in mathematics. Gender also seemed to make a difference when Newman and Goldin (1990) compared second grade girls who were more concerned with possible negative reactions from teachers and parents than were similarly aged boys. By fourth grade, girls were more concerned about possible negative reactions from classmates than from parents or teachers, but by sixth grade boys had a similar concern. It would appear that the increased fear of embarrassment from looking dumb in front of peers may become more evident for girls several years earlier than for boys (Newman & Goldin, 1990).

Attitudes and Beliefs

Perceptions of Competence

Ryan & Pintrich (1997) looked at how the adolescent student's perception of competence and achievement goals were related to attitudes toward asking for help and self-reported help seeking behaviour in the math classroom. This study relayed that there were several factors involved in whether a student asks for help or not. These factors were developed in the context of the student as a self-regulated learner, that is, a student who is involved in his or her learning and has the ability to use others as a resource to cope with difficulty in the learning process. This study examined how the motivational characteristics of the student's perception of his or her competence was related to attitudes in asking for help in the classroom. The participants in the study were seventh and eighth grade students (n= 203) and they

responded to a questionnaire on their perceptions of social and cognitive competence, achievement goals and attitudes, and avoidance of asking for help in the classroom. Perceived benefits and threats were found to influence the effects of goals and perceptions of cognitive competence on avoidance of help seeking (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997). Results of this study indicated that those who need help the most were least likely to ask for it. Perceived competence achievement goals as well as attitudes towards asking for help were found to affect the decision to ask for help. These results are consistent with Newman's hypothesis of help seeking: those who are unsure of their ability feel threatened and thus are less likely to ask for help (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; Newman, 1990).

Another set of studies looked at how students' competence or level of ability was perceived by their peers when they received assistance from teachers or peers. Graham and Barker (1990) discussed how help from others might be a mixed blessing. The goal of help is to improve performance, but there is an increasing body of social psychological literature that contrasts these positive outcomes with negative consequences such as perceived inequity, feelings of helplessness and negative self-criticism (Graham & Barker, 1990).

Graham and Barker (1990) looked at what they termed to be the "down side of help", that is, they examined the possibility that unsolicited help can function as a low-ability cue. In one study, children 5 to 12 years old looked at a videotape of two boys in a classroom setting. One boy was viewed receiving help from a teacher or peer while the other did not receive any help. In the second study children aged 4 to 12 viewed the videotape. The participants were then asked to judge the ability and

effort of the boys shown on the videotape. In the second study they were also asked which boy they would prefer as a workmate. All children except for the 4-5 year olds inferred that the student who received help was lower in ability than the boy who did not receive help. What they found was that the seemingly positive behaviour of offering help may unintentionally function as a low-ability cue. The boy in the videotape who received unsolicited help was perceived by children as a less able student who was less likely than the video-taped boy who did not receive help to do well in the future and to be perceived as a desirable workmate. Also cited were reports that other teachers' behaviours that are thought to be positive such as praise for success at easy tasks and displays of sympathy can also be interpreted as the student being low in ability indicating the sometimes-negative consequence of receiving help from others (Graham & Barker, 1990).

Another aspect of students' perception of their ability in the classroom was examined in an analysis by Eisenberger, Pierce & Cameron (1999). This study pointed out that events leading to greater perceived self-determination or perceived competence increased intrinsic motivation. However, events that decreased perceived self-determination or competence lessen intrinsic motivation. This finding supports the need to further examine how motivation affects the students' pursuit of assistance or avoidance of assistance in the classroom.

Role of Motivation in Help Seeking Behaviour

Motivation and self-regulated learning are interdependent. Self-regulated learners have the ability to use others in the classroom as a resource when they come across an academic difficulty (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997, Newman, 1994).

In assessing the costs and benefits of asking for help some individual students may be motivated by either the prospect of attaining success or avoiding failure. For some of these students the goal of avoiding looking stupid or avoiding judgements from others may be dominant. In a study by Middleton and Midgely (1997) the focus was on the goals or purposes that are perceived for achievement behaviour. Although motivation is usually described in terms of approach and avoidance tendencies this study used the framework of goal orientation research primarily to look at demonstrating ability (performance-approach) and developing ability (task). The scale developed looked at the goal of avoiding the demonstration of lack of ability (performance-avoid). Test anxiety and avoidance of seeking academic help in the classroom when needed were the measures selected by Middleton and Midgely (1997) to represent maladaptive outcomes in the questionnaire that was administered to 703 sixth grade students. To conduct factor analysis, the full sample was split into two sub-samples with an exploratory factor analysis conducted on one sample (n=342) and a confirmatory factor analysis conducted on the other sub-sample (n=361). The results indicated that performance-avoid goals, that is those items that were developed to assess students' orientation to avoiding the demonstration of lack of ability in mathematics were a positive predictor of both avoiding help seeking and test anxiety in math. An example of a performance-avoidance goal scale item is "One of my

main goals in math is to avoid looking like I can't do my work" (Middleton & Midgley, 1997, p. 713). One of the major contributions of this study was the development of the scale to assess the avoidance component of performance goal orientation. Middleton and Midgley also found results similar to previously cited studies that the lower achieving students are particularly concerned with how their ability compares with that of others and are therefore oriented to hiding their lack of ability or to showing their superiority relative to others.

Motivational factors are an important component in the student's decision-making process the student goes through when evaluating whether to ask for help or use an avoidance strategy. Newman (2002) looks at help seeking as a strategy of self-regulated learning recognizing that the student must often take the initiative to gain the help of teachers and peers. Newman refers to help seeking as part of a "tool-kit" of strategies for dealing with academic challenges. He states that the self-regulated learner possesses and is motivated to use appropriate strategies at the appropriate times. Personal motivational resources are a component of this help seeking tool-kit and include cognitive competencies (knowing when help is necessary, knowing others can help, knowing how to ask a question), social competencies (knowing who is the best person to approach for help, knowing how to make a request for help in a socially acceptable way) and personal motivational resources (personal goals, self-beliefs, and feelings associated with tolerances for task difficulty as well as asking for assistance when necessary) (Newman, 2002).

Classroom Environment

Classroom Goal Structure – Mastery and Performance Goal Orientation

Classroom context also relates to the students' willingness to ask for academic help in the classroom setting. This literature review has looked at individual goal orientation in terms of motivation; however, goal structure in the classroom environment is another important factor in help seeking behaviour. Three studies were found that investigated the effects of classroom goal structure on help seeking behaviour. These recent studies examined the relation between the purpose of achievement behaviour that is communicated to and perceived by the students, also known as the classroom goal structure, and student beliefs and behaviours. (Ryan, Gheen, & Midgely, 1998)

Some students are motivated by personal learning goals; however, the teacher can establish different types of classroom goals. Newman (2002) suggests that the extent to which teachers accommodate individual differences in children can influence whether the student will ask for help in the classroom when it is needed. Newman reports that when both classroom and personal goals emphasize learning, students are especially likely to ask for help. However, when both types of goals emphasize performance, students are more reluctant to ask for help when needed. As well, when students who are concerned with grades and looking smart in front of peers are placed in a learning environment classroom they tend to overcome their personal tendency to avoid asking for assistance (Newman, 2002).

A second example of this recent research on classroom environment is a longitudinal study by Turner et al (2002). Turner and colleagues looked at whether

aspects of the classroom environment contributed to the student use of avoidance strategies in help seeking and whether teaching practices affected student performance. The relationship between the learning environment and students' reports of avoiding asking for help focussed on the relation between students' perception of the classroom goal structure and instructional practices and how both affect help seeking behaviours. The purpose of the study was to look at classroom characteristics and student avoidance of help seeking. Sixth grade students completed surveys on avoidance of help seeking. As well, classroom observers categorized the classrooms as to goal structure determining whether the classroom had a mastery goal structure or a goal structure based on performance. They found that in classrooms where there was a greater emphasis on learning, improving and understanding (mastery goals) there was less inclination on the part of the student to use avoidance strategies. In contrast, students reported a higher incidence of avoiding asking for help in classrooms where little emphasis was given to helping the student build understanding and where motivational support was low (performance goals). Results of this study suggest that a mastery goal structure is more conducive to help seeking behaviour than a performance goal structure.

In a third study examining the relation between the learning environment and the students' reported use of avoidance of asking for help Ryan, Gheen and Midgely (1998) also looked at classroom goal structure. Again sixth grade students and their math teachers were given questionnaires. The student questionnaire had items that assessed avoidance of help seeking and student's judgement of his or her own capability to complete work successfully. The teacher questionnaire addressed the

teacher's perception of their role in the students' social-emotional well-being. Both students and teachers were asked to report on the goals emphasized in the classroom, specifically whether the classroom was perceived to be task focussed or had a relative ability goal structure. They found that avoidance of help seeking was associated with both individual student characteristics and characteristics of the classrooms. Again, as seen in the Turner et al (2002) study the students' perception of a task focussed classroom structure was associated with a lower level of help avoidance while a perception of relative ability classroom goal structure was associated with a higher level of help avoidance. The study indicated that in classrooms where the focus was on understanding, mastery and the intrinsic value of learning, rather than on competition and evaluation, the students were more likely to seek help with their academic work when they needed it (Ryan, et al., 1998).

Students with Special Needs in the Classroom

Recent legislative guidelines, both in Canada and the United States, encourage schools to educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom environment (Daniel, 1997). With the increase in special education students in the general classroom setting, there is a growing need for changes to the educational environment which would include careful preparation, attention to teachers' attitudes and use of innovative and imaginative materials, and methods. There are studies that show that some teachers experience discomfort, anxiety and stress when dealing with children with special needs (Sprinthall, 1998).

Integration, or mainstreaming, places students with special needs in separate classrooms for part of the school day and in the general classroom for another part of the day. This is not considered to be full-time inclusion of the special needs into the general classroom setting (Daniel, 1997). The most common range of placement for students with special needs are self-contained classrooms, where the students are solely in a special classroom setting and resource withdrawal, which would be the aforementioned integration. Full inclusion is the practice of placing all students with special needs in a regular classroom setting regardless of the nature of severity of their disabilities. (Daniel, 1997)

Recent findings by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996, as cited in Alber, et al., 1999) discovered that while most general education teachers were supportive of inclusive education, two thirds indicated that they had insufficient training or resources to properly accommodate students with disabilities. Special education teachers report that as a result of the inclusion movement they have less instruction time with students. As a consequence, some students with deficient academic and social skills are expected to cope with the higher standard of the general classroom setting while receiving less skill training than they did in the special classroom. The study also revealed that although general education classroom teachers are expected to make instructional adaptations and accommodation for the student with special needs they are not always able to do so (Alber & Heward, 2000).

The student to teacher ratio is less in the special education classroom setting than in the general classroom setting. As a result, positive behaviours are more likely to be noticed in the special education classroom than in the general classroom setting.

Because the regular classroom is such a busy environment teachers may not notice when students are having difficulty especially low-achieving students who are less likely to ask for help (Alber et al., 1999).

A number of studies were found that examined the effect of training students to appropriately ask for assistance or instruction in the general classroom setting thereby encouraging the recruitment of positive attention from the classroom teacher. These students had varying levels of special needs and ages. A consistent result of these studies was the increased frequency of students using this training to ask for assistance and teacher input.

For instance, in a study by Alber, Heward and Hippler (1999) 4 fifth grade students with learning disabilities were taught to show their work to the teacher and ask for help 2 to 3 times per session while they worked on assignments in the general classroom setting. Training took place in the special education classroom and consisted of modelling, role-playing, error correction and praise. Examination of the results of this study showed that by following this training protocol there was an increase in frequency of students approaching the teacher for instructional feedback, which furthered the opportunity for the teacher to praise the students, and there was an increased accuracy with which students completed their work assignments. In a review by Alber and Heward (2000) ten studies were found that examined the result of teaching students with disabilities to appropriately and courteously approach the classroom teacher and ask for assistance or instructional feedback. They concluded that teaching students to respond to this training is one strategy for promoting successful inclusion into the regular classroom setting. They attributed this increased

success to the training enabling the student to actively influence the quality of instruction they receive and this is more likely to be maintained by the positive attention they receive as well.

Not only are effective interventions beneficial for students experiencing difficulties in the classroom but also it is being discovered that there is a diffusion effect with both the target or experimental students and control students benefiting from the intervention. Although this diffusion effect may contaminate the control group of research experiments it does indicate that when a positive intervention is done in the classroom it may have a beneficial effect on the other students in the classroom as well (Craven, Marsh, Debus, Jayasinghe, 2001).

Social Context of Help Seeking Behaviour

Seeking help is a social interaction as well as a learning strategy. The social climate of the classroom is important in understanding why some students avoid asking for help even though they are aware of the benefits of asking for assistance. Studies are finding that positive relationships in the classroom that affect both academic and social concerns are likely to support students' efforts to ask for assistance when it is needed (Ryan, et al., 1998).

Influence of Teacher Involvement

Newman (2002) studied beliefs about help seeking behaviour and stated that teacher involvement forms the basis of students' beliefs and feelings about both the benefits

and costs of help seeking. Teachers can create classroom environments that encourage or discourage students from asking for help (Ryan, et al., 1998). As well, Turner and colleagues (2002) report that anecdotal information gathered from teachers suggests that teachers may attribute students' avoidance of asking for help to factors such as laziness, devaluing of school and lack of parental support. In a study designed to examine the nature and accuracy of teachers' judgements about students' motivation as it related to mathematics, Givvin, Stipek, Salmon and MacGyvers (2000) looked at 17 classrooms where, in each, 6 target students were selected. The teachers were asked to rate the 6 target students' motivation 4 times during the school year. Target students did the student's version of the questionnaire that enquired about their own perceptions of their ability, learning goals and positive and negative emotions at the same time as the teachers evaluated them. Review of these measures found that teachers' judgements of students' motivation had little similarity to students' judgement of their own motivation. Teachers made more global judgements of students and the stability of their judgements over time suggesting that teachers' observations of students and the interpretation of their behaviour were consistent through the year. This did not reflect the students' reports that showed self-perceptions that were more changeable. The researchers suggest that this actor-observer bias, where the observers (teachers) make less differentiated judgements than the actors (students), may lead to the teacher failing to notice changes in students self-confidence, goals or feelings about course material (Givven, et al., 2000). As a result, teacher intervention and practices may not accurately address the needs of the student.

Relevant to this discussion is the finding that teacher feedback influences children's perceptions of their peers. Research by White and Jones (2000) explored the effects of teacher feedback and the resulting effect it had on children's preferences and perceptions of a target child with behaviour problems. Children from the first and second grade were shown videotapes of a child who was presented as having a liked, average or disliked reputation. A second videotape presented a teacher's verbal responses to the child's behaviour as positive, neutral, or corrective. It was found that these two sources of information do influence children's perception of their peers. Reputation and teacher feedback was found to be significant for positive perceptions of the target child. However, there was found to be at least minimal effects when looking at other aspects of child reputation and teacher feedback. These findings indicate there is the potential for teacher feedback to change peer perceptions over time (White & Jones, 2000).

Peer Influence

Peer involvement can also influence help seeking behaviour. Newman (2002) found that when students are working with friends, they are most likely to ask for help and thus reinforce help seeking as an effective learning strategy. In contrast, when students are in conflictual relationships they are usually reluctant to let others know that they are experiencing difficulty and probably would not expect to receive help if they asked for it. However, Newman also found that social affiliation does not guarantee that help seeking will lead to academic success. Although students may appear to be working together they may be "goofing off" and requests among friends

can sometimes be socially inappropriate, such as, shouting questions across the room or cognitively inappropriate, such as, requesting unnecessary help. As a student gets older they tend to become more concerned with maintaining a positive image, and social status goals may act to discourage asking for help. In fact Ryan and colleagues (1997) found that the more strongly students felt that social approval from peers is important the more they are embarrassed to ask for help in the classroom.

Discussion

An important strategy for promoting academic success is to ask for help in the classroom. Asking for help is obviously a better choice when students encounter a situation where it becomes apparent that they need assistance in order to complete their work, rather than giving up early or waiting passively, and more efficient than persisting unsuccessfully on their own (Newman & Goldin, 1999).

Certain classroom behaviours have been reported as related to academic success. Active participation in the classroom as well as appropriate interaction with teachers and peers have been cited as being positively correlated with academic achievement. Research suggests that there is a window of opportunity when these classroom behaviours should be fostered in the early primary grades before they become fixed (Crosby & French, 2002). This would suggest that early intervention for students identified to be at risk by socio-economic factors or other indicators in methods of appropriately interacting with teachers and peers would be positive. Interventions such as those with an established and proven protocol for appropriately soliciting

assistance and instructional feedback in the classroom setting would be beneficial for students' academic achievement.

Avoiding asking for assistance in the classroom when it is needed can be very detrimental since not seeking help when it is needed predictably leads to lower academic achievement. As recent studies have demonstrated (Ryan et al., 1996; Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Newman & Goldin, 1990) students who avoid asking for help in the classroom the most were usually the ones who need it the most. Middleton and Midgley (1997) suggest that it is important to consider whether there are some school and classroom level policies and practices that are particularly likely to cause avoidance behaviours.

As a result of recent studies researchers and practitioners applying effective supportive interventions within typical school settings have begun to identify and to teach socially desirable alternative behaviours such as social skills and choice making. (Kincaid, Knoster, Harrower, Shannon, & Bustamante, 2002)

There is a growing body of studies examining the student's use of avoidance strategies when help is needed in the classroom setting and what the contributors may be. However, there does not seem to be much in the way of addressing what may be effective in the way of intervention in order to promote increased frequency of help seeking behaviours in the classroom.

In this literature review there is an examination of two bodies of studies. First are the studies that investigate the costs and benefits of help seeking behaviour in the classroom setting and the reasons for the student's use of avoidance strategies in help seeking even though there is recognition that assistance is needed. The second are the

studies looking at teaching students to recruit positive teacher attention in the classroom. The latter studies look at teaching students to solicit teacher attention by appropriately approaching the teacher for help and instructional feedback. In bringing research into practice, these two sets of studies became the basis for the accompanying study for increasing help seeking behaviour in the classroom setting. The proven training protocol for appropriately requesting teacher assistance and instructional feedback was linked with the perceived costs and benefits of help seeking behaviour to create a study where student and teacher perceptions of help seeking behaviours were measured before and after skill training in asking for help in the classroom. The result was increased frequency of help seeking behaviour; however, there was found to be no corresponding difference in perceptions of teacher and student perceptions.

References

Alber, Sheila R. & Heward, William L. (2000). Teaching Students to Recruit Positive Attention: A Review and Recommendations. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 10, 4, 177-204.

Purpose of this study was to examine relations of both family and school contexts on students' perception of their motivation and academic self-competencies between school and family contexts and achievement.

Alber, Sheila R., Heward, William L., Hippler, Brooke J. (1999). Teaching Middle School Students with Learning Disabilities to Recruit Positive Teacher Attention. *Exceptional Children*, 65, 2, 253.

Positive teacher attention and praise are powerful influences on student performance. Teaching students how to recruit positive teacher attention is one way to gain positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour.

Craven, R. G., Marsh, H., Debus, R. L., Jayasinghe, U. (2001). Diffusion Effects Control Group Contamination Threats to the Validity of Teacher-Administered Interventions. *Journal Of Educational Psychology*, 93, 3, 639-645.

Within class experimental designs with experimental and control groups in the same classroom are subject to diffusion effects whereby both experimental and control students benefit from the intervention.

Crosby, Edward D. & French, Joseph L. (2002) Psychometric data for teacher Judgements Regarding the Learning Behaviors of Primary Grade Children. *Psychology of the Schools*, 39, 235-244.

A teacher rating scale was investigated using primary grade children. Students were rated on measures academic achievement, competence and social skills.

Daniel, Larry G. & King, Debra A. (1997) Impact of Inclusion Education on Academic Achievement, Student Behaviour and Self-Esteem, and Parental Attitudes. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 91, 2, 67-80.

The effects of students' placement versus non-placement in an inclusion classroom were determined in four sets of dependent variables: parent concerns, teacher and parent reported instances of students' problem behaviour, academic performance, and self-reported self-esteem.

Eisenberger, Robert, Pierce, David W., Cameron, Judy. (1999). Effects of Reward on Intrinsic Motivation-Negative, Neutral, and Positive: Comment on Deci, Koestner, and Ryan (1999). *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 6, 677-691.

Meta-analyses indicating that rewards increase perceived self-determination and that rewards effects on intrinsic depend on the performance requirement.

Givven, Karen B., Stipek, Deborah J., Salmon, Julie M., MacGyvers, Valanne L. (2001) In the eyes of the beholder: students' and teachers' judgements of students' motivation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 321-331.

Study examining the nature and accuracy of teachers' judgements about students' motivation related to mathematics.

Graham, Sandra & Barker, George P. (1990). The down side of help: An attributional-developmental analysis of helping behavior as a low-ability cue. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82, 1, 7-14.

Two studies examined the possibility that unsolicited help can function as a low-ability cue.

Kincaid, Donald, Knoster, Tim, Harrower, Joshua K., Shannon, Patrick, Bustamante, Selina. (2002). Measuring the impact of positive behavior support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 4, 2.

Study assessing issues related to social validity of positive behaviour approach interventions. Evaluation of behavioural outcomes and quality of life outcomes measured by assessments of child-centred teams.

Middleton, M.J. & Midgley, C. (1997). Avoiding the Demonstration of Lack of Ability: an Underexplored Aspect of Goal Theory. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 89, 4, 710-718.

Goal orientation research. Task goals predicted academic efficacy, self-regulated learning and avoiding seeking academic help in the classroom.

Newman, Richard S. (2002). How Self-Regulated Learners Cope with Academic Difficulty: The Role of Adaptive Help Seeking. *Theory Into Practice*, 41, 2, 132-138.

Help seeking is a unique strategy of self-regulated learning. Teachers and peers play an important role in students becoming self-regulated learners.

Newman, Richard S. (1990) Children's Help-Seeking in the Classroom: The Role of Motivational Factors and Attitudes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82, 1, 71-80.

Questionnaires administered to 177 third, fifth and seventh graders to assess attitudes and intentions regarding help-seeking behaviour. Discussion focuses on developmental and individual differences related to help-seeking and academic performance.

Newman, R. S., & Goldin, L. (1990) Children's Reluctance to Seek Help With Schoolwork. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82, 92-100.

Elementary school children were asked why they do or do not ask for help from parents, teachers and classmates when they have problems in math and reading. Discussion focuses on ways attitudes differ according to academic subject and identity of helper.

Ryan, Allison M., & Pintrich, Paul R. (1997). "Should I Ask for Help?" The Role of Motivation and Attitudes in Adolescents' Help Seeking in Math Class. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89, 2, 329-241.

Study investigated motivational influences on help-seeking behaviour in math classrooms, focussing on early adolescents perceptions of the benefits and threats associated with asking for help.

Ryan, A. M., Gheen, M.H., Midgley, C. (1998). Why Do Some Students Avoid Asking for Help? An Examination of the Interplay Among Students' Academic Efficacy, Teachers' Social-Emotional Role, and the Classroom Goal Structure. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90, 3, 528-535.

Student reports of help seeking were related to student and classroom characteristics.

Sprinthall, Richard C., Sprinthall, Norman A., Oja, Sharon N. (1998) *Educational Psychology, A Developmental Approach. Seventh Edition.* McGraw-Hill. New York.

Book focussing on issues in education such as the following: child development, learning theories, learning in the classroom, teaching effectiveness, educational research and measures and managing students in groups.

Turner, J. C., Meyer, D.K., Anderman, E.M., Midgley, C., Gheen, M., & Kang, Y. (2002). The Classroom Environment and Students' Reports of Avoidance Strategies in Mathematics: A Multimethod Study. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 94, 1, 88-106.

The relation between learning environment and students' reported use of avoidance strategies

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Exploration of teacher feedback modified children's preferences and perceptions of a target child with behaviour problems.

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Running Head: Help Seeking Behaviour

Can Help Seeking Behaviour of Special Education Students
Be Increased?

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A thesis paper submitted to the Department of Psychology of Algoma University College in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honours degree of Bachelor of Arts.

The present study investigated whether training special education students to appropriately ask for help, increased frequency in help seeking behaviour in the regular classroom setting. Four grade six students were taught to appropriately approach the teacher for instructional feedback and assistance. Training took place in the special education classroom. Prior to student training three measures were taken: Classroom observation recorded the frequency of help seeking behaviours in the classroom; a student questionnaire examined student perceptions of help seeking (avoidance of help seeking, threat from peers, and benefits of help seeking); a survey given to the classroom teacher measured teacher perception of student motivation. These measures were repeated after the student training of help seeking. Although no difference was found in the attitudes of either students or teachers there was a significant difference found when the frequency of help seeking behaviours of the trained students was compared to the frequency observed of the randomly selected control group.

Asking for help is an important strategy that contributes to student learning. The student who asks for help when it is required not only alleviates immediate academic difficulties but also gains knowledge and skills that can be a positive self-help skill (Newman, 1990). The ability to ask for help is a useful self-advocacy tool of particular importance to the student who is struggling with a learning difficulty.

However, in spite of the obvious importance of asking for help in school, students often do not ask questions or ask for assistance when it is needed. This leads to a major question that is often posed by educators, “Why are those students who truly need help with their schoolwork the ones who seem to be most reluctant to ask for help?”

Asking for help in the classroom is an essential strategy for achieving academic success. The studies reported here examine how the seemingly simple act of asking for help is not utilized by some students, in particular those most in need of the assistance. The primary purpose of this study was to investigate whether the frequency of special education students’ help seeking behaviours could be increased in the regular classroom setting. The secondary purpose of this study was to examine the relation of training the student strategies to ask for help and attitudes of students and teacher.

The general classroom setting can be a very busy place. As a result the classroom teacher may not always notice a student’s use of positive behaviour or the student’s indication that he or she is in need of assistance (Alber & Heward, 2000). This is especially valid for a child who is experiencing learning difficulties

in the classroom. With educational policies promoting inclusion, the placement of students with disabilities in the regular education classroom, it is becoming more common to find a number of students, with special needs of varying degrees, in the general classroom (Daniel & King, 1997). Participants of this study were special education students who receive the majority of their academic instruction in the general classroom but are also receiving resource support in the special education classroom for a portion of their school day. General education classrooms are characterized by instruction directed towards large groups of students with little time spent by the teacher addressing individual needs (Alber, Heward & Hippler, 1999). Hence, students who have the ability to use help seeking strategies are more likely to obtain academic instruction thus increasing their likelihood of achieving academic success. This ability is especially important for the student who is experiencing additional difficulty because of a learning exceptionality. Why then, in spite of the obvious benefits, do some students avoid asking for help in the general classroom setting?

Avoidance of Help Seeking

Perceived Costs and Benefits

Ryan and Pintrich (1997) define avoidance of help seeking as instances when a student needs help but does not ask for assistance. Examples of this behaviour would include instances when a student might skip a problem altogether or put down any answer rather than ask for help. Recent research on learning and success in school and in particular, help seeking behaviour in the classroom finds

that students who are academically confident are more likely to ask for help (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997). Conversely, findings indicate that the lower the students' achievement the greater their reluctance to ask for help (Newman & Goldin, 1990). For example, a study by Ryan & Pintrich (1997) found that achievement in math was negatively related to avoidance of asking for help while it was positively related to students' perceptions of their cognitive competence in math. This suggests that the students who need help the most are the least likely to ask for it. Similar findings point towards the fact that students with lower GPAs were more likely than students with higher GPAs to be concerned with how their ability compares with others and are thereby more inclined to hide their lack of ability (Middleton & Midgley, 1997).

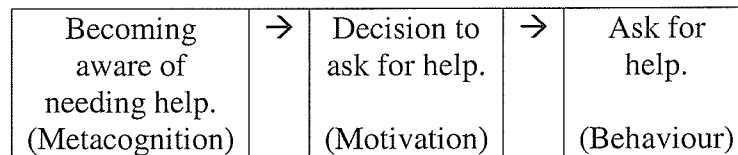
Also consistent with these results is the vulnerability hypothesis of help seeking which proposes that individuals with low self-esteem have a greater need than do those with high self-esteem to avoid situations in which they feel threatened by an admission of failure and thus are more likely to avoid asking for assistance (Newman, 1990). Such conclusions imply that the larger influence on acquiring strategies to access help seeking behaviours is determined by the child's concept of his or her academic achievement. However, according to Newman, there are thought to be five characteristics of the child that are related to help seeking behaviour: perceived competence, motivational orientation, attitudes and beliefs and age. Students weigh the perceived benefits and costs of asking for help and based on this decide whether to ask for help. A recent study found that

students as young as eight years old are aware of the costs and benefits of asking questions in the classroom (Newman, 1990; Newman & Goldin, 1990).

During the last decade there has been increasing interest in looking at help seeking as an important strategy for learning and success in school. In a pilot study of why children were reluctant to ask for help with their school work there were four reasons that were revealed. The reason that was given most often was that there was an expectation that they already knew the material. The answer that the children gave spontaneously most often was fear of negative consequences. Other important concerns expressed were that they wanted to work by themselves and that there was a lack of desirable helpers to give them appropriate assistance (Newman & Goldin, 1990).

Further research on help seeking behaviour and its use in the classroom reveals that help seeking can be a more complex process than it may appear to be at first glance. Ryan and Pintrich (1997) broke down the help seeking process into three components that happen when a student encounters a situation where assistance is required. The student must first become aware of needing help. This metacognitive function is then followed by the motivation needed to seek help. The final part of this help seeking sequence is the consequent behaviour of implementing strategies to engage another person's help (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; Newman, 1994).

Fig. 1 The components of help seeking behaviour.



Studies of the developmental aspects of help seeking behaviour indicate that there are related attitudes that become apparent at different ages. Older children at the elementary school level are usually more actively involved in their learning than are younger children (Newman & Goldin, 1990). However, Newman and Goldin discovered even though older children at the elementary level are usually more actively involved in their learning they are also more reluctant to ask questions. This was in spite of the fact that the students believed more strongly that asking questions is beneficial to learning. Newman and Goldin suggest that there is a sense of passivity that increases among low-achievers over the elementary school years. As well, research indicates that early adolescents are more concerned than younger children about peer groups, experience greater sensitivity to and feel more vulnerability in peer relations thus experiencing increased fear of embarrassment in the classroom (Newman & Goldin, 1990; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997).

There are a number of recent studies looking at motivational factors as an important component in the student's decision-making process when assessing the costs and benefits of asking for help in the classroom (Newman, 2000). Asking for help is a strategy of learning that recognizes that the student must often take the initiative to gain the help of teachers and peers. Newman (2002) refers to asking for help as part of a "tool-kit" of strategies for dealing with academic challenges. Personal motivational resources are a component of the help seeking tool-kit. These resources include personal goals, self-beliefs and feelings associated with tolerances for task difficulty as well as asking for assistance when necessary.

Asking for help is a learning strategy as well as a social interaction (Ryan, et al. 1998). Therefore, others in the students' social environment, in particular teachers and peers, may play a role in the students' decision making process on whether to ask for help or not. For instance, a study by Graham and Barker (1990) found that help from a teacher might be perceived by other students in the classroom as an indication that the student receiving the assistance is lower in ability and effort. In what they termed to be the down-side of help, Graham and Barker found that unsolicited help, sympathy from a teacher following poor student performance, generous praise and minimal blame sometimes precipitate student perceptions of low ability.

Teacher and Peer Influences

Teacher Influence

Teachers can create classroom environments that encourage or discourage students from asking for help (Ryan, et al., 1998). Some students are motivated by personal learning goals; however, the teacher can be an important influence by establishing different types of classroom goals. Newman (2002) suggests that the extent to which teachers accommodate individual differences in children can influence whether the student will ask for help in the classroom when it is needed. When both classroom and personal goals emphasize learning, students are especially likely to ask for help. However, when both types of goals emphasize performance, students are more reluctant to ask for help.

In a study designed to examine the nature and accuracy of teachers' judgements about students' motivation as it related to mathematics, Given, Stipek, Salmon, and MacGyvers (2000) looked at 17 classrooms where, in each, 6 target students were selected. The teachers were asked to rate the 6 target students' motivation 4 times during the school year. At the same time the target students did the student version of the questionnaire that enquired about their own perceptions of their ability, learning goals, and positive and negative emotions. Review of these measures found that the teachers' judgements of students' motivation had little similarity to students' judgement of their own motivation. Teachers made more global judgements of students and the stability of their judgements over time suggested teachers' observations of students and the interpretation of their behaviour were consistent through the year. This did not

reflect the students' reports that showed self-perceptions that were more changeable. (Givven, et al., 2000).

Peer Influence

A previous study found that gender and age play a role in peer influences in help seeking. Newman & Goldin (1990) looked at the age at which boys and girls were more likely to be concerned about possible negative reactions from classmates. They found that by fourth grade girls were more concerned than boys about possible negative reactions from classmates but by the sixth grade boys had a similar concern. It would appear that the increased fear of embarrassment from looking dumb in front of peers may become more evident for girls several years earlier than for boys (Newman & Goldin, 1990). As a student gets older they tend to become more concerned with maintaining a positive image, and social status goals may act to discourage asking for help (Newman, 2002). In fact, Ryan and colleagues (1997) found that the more strongly students felt that social approval from peers is important the more they are embarrassed to ask for help in the classroom.

Peer involvement can also influence help seeking behaviour. Newman (2002) found that when students are working with friends they are more likely to ask for help and thus reinforce help seeking as an effective strategy. In contrast, when students perceive conflict in a situation they are usually reluctant to let others know that they are experiencing difficulty and probably would not expect to receive help if they asked for it.

The Present Research

In the experiment reported here it was predicted that the frequency of special education students' help seeking behaviour can be increased in the general classroom setting by training the students to use strategies to appropriately and effectively ask for assistance and instructional feedback. In review of the literature it was found that variations of the training protocol developed by Alber and colleagues (1999; 2000) was effective after a short period of time across a range of settings and levels of abilities. This training protocol was the manipulated, or independent, variable in this study.

For each major question that the study addressed there was a separate corresponding measure or dependent variable. The primary questions that were posed in this study are outlined as follows:

- Does instructing students how to ask for help actually increase the frequency of asking for help? To measure the frequency of help seeking behaviour the researcher conducted in-class observations prior to, and after the training protocol was administered to the target group of students.
- What is the effect of this training on student attitudes about asking for help? To measure the effect of training on student attitudes about asking for help a questionnaire was given to the target students prior to and after training. The survey addressed three areas of concern: avoidance of asking for help, perceived threat from peers and perceived benefits of asking for help.

- Does this training have an effect on the teacher's perception of students' ability and attitude? A questionnaire was given to the classroom teacher before and after training protocol was administered to the target students that measured the teacher's perception of the students' abilities and attitudes.

In this study's examination of help seeking behaviour in the general classroom setting there were three specific hypothesis that were tested:

- There will be a greater frequency in help seeking behaviour by the target group of special education students that received the skills training than the in-class control group that did not receive the training.
- There will be a difference in the students' attitudes towards help seeking, namely in the areas of perceived benefits, threat from peers and avoidance of help seeking after receiving the training and using the strategies in the classroom.
- Consistent with the findings of the study by Givven, Stipek, Salmon and MacGyver (2001) the teacher's judgement of student motivation and ability over time will remain stable.

Method

Participants

This study involved 4 participants who were sixth grade students at an elementary school. There were originally 6 students however 2 students were removed from

the study: one due to a school suspension, the other due to a high rate of absenteeism. Of the participants, 3 were female and 1 was male. The parents signed statements of informed consent. All students enrolled in the study were resource withdrawal students, that is, they spent a portion of their school day receiving resource support in the special education classroom setting from a special education teacher. These students did however receive the majority of their academic instruction in the general classroom setting. The participants of the study were selected by the special education teacher. To be considered eligible for the study the student had to be identified as a special education student. For the purposes of the study it was not necessary to know their specific category of exceptionality.

There were four control students who were selected from the same regular classroom as the target students. These students were selected at the conclusion of the study using the Random Numbers Table.

Teachers

The teachers participating in the study were the special education teacher, the grade six classroom teacher and a student teacher. The special education teacher, gave the students the skills training by following the training protocol, and administered the student questionnaire to the students. The grade six classroom teacher filled out the teacher questionnaire. The student teacher taught all the math classes, which were observed for the study, however, the classroom teacher, was present in the classroom.

Settings

The study was conducted in two classrooms: the general education classroom and the special education classroom. The training protocol for the help seeking behaviour took place in the special education classroom and was administered by the special education classroom teacher. The observations of the students took place in the general classroom setting. All observations took place during the daily math session, which was scheduled between 11:00 to 11:45 on most mornings. There were two classroom observation sessions done prior to the students receiving the training protocol and three classroom observation sessions done after the students received the training protocol.

Procedures

During the course of this study data was collected from three sources. First, using classroom observation the frequency of the rate of students' requests for assistance or instructional feedback was recorded. Second, there was a questionnaire that was given to the students who received the training protocol to examine the effect of the training on student attitudes about asking for help. Third, there was a questionnaire given to the classroom teacher to determine if the training had an effect on the teacher's perception of students' ability and attitude. There is a body of studies on student recruitment of positive teacher attention that examines training students to appropriately ask for help in the classroom. The training gives the student strategies to appropriately ask for assistance and gain

instructional feedback. The recruitment training is considered to be a relatively low-cost, low-effort strategy (Alber et al., 1999). Studies conducted by Alber and colleagues show that training may require only two to three twenty minute training sessions to increase a student's frequency of help seeking in the classroom. This training has proven to be an effective method of increasing academic achievement and social success in the classroom (Alber, 1999). A review of prior studies shows this training to be effective across many age ranges and levels of ability (Alber & Heward, 2000). Dr. Sheila Alber of the University of Southern Mississippi sent a copy of the recruitment training protocol used in the previous studies to the author of the present study, and a variation appropriate to the conditions of the present study was used. (See Appendix A)

The present study consists of three sections:

- 1) During the pre-training phase, classroom observations were conducted in 2 math classes to establish a baseline measure of help seeking behaviours. The students and teacher involved in the study were given questionnaires to fill out. The general classroom teacher was aware of the nature of the study but not the specific behaviour being observed.
- 2) The help seeking skills training phase consisted of 3 training sessions using the training protocol (see Appendix A) to acquire the skills to successfully seek help in the general classroom setting.
- 3) The post-training phase where the students were again observed in math class for three sessions after having been trained in the strategies to appropriately

ask for assistance or teacher feedback. The students and classroom teacher were again given questionnaires to fill out.

Measures

Data for this study was collected from three sources. The first source of data was classroom observations of the students in the general classroom setting. The second source of data collected was the questionnaire that was given to the 4 target students. The third source of data was the questionnaire that was administered to the classroom teacher. All data was collected prior to and after the training protocol was given to the target students in the special education classroom.

Classroom Observations

Data on student help seeking behaviours was collected during teacher instruction and independent seatwork time in the general education math classroom. The researcher was the classroom observer and to minimize observer bias was not aware of which students in the classroom were the target students. Thus target behaviours were recorded of all classroom students. This was to ensure test validity as well as to be able to randomly select a control group from the class at the conclusion of the study.

The target behaviour to be recorded was defined as follows:

The student will appropriately obtain teacher assistance by raising his or her hand or politely addressing the teacher and waiting to be recognized by the teacher. He or she will wait quietly until the teacher recognizes him or her either verbally or

by moving to the student's desk. The student will then courteously voice a question to the teacher about his or her academic work. The help seeking behaviour to be recorded was considered to have begun when the teacher spoke to the student or walked to the student's desk and ended when the teacher walked away from the student's desk (Alber & Heward, 1999). Each instance of the target behaviour was then recorded on a tally sheet by the classroom observer. This method of data collection was chosen since frequency tallying is considered to be a good method for classroom observation when the target behaviour has a clear beginning and end and does not occur at an extremely high rate (Fox, Gunter, Davis & Brall, 2000).

Altogether there were five classroom observation sessions. Two took place prior to the training sessions and three took place after the training sessions. Several observation periods recorded initially were eliminated due to a change in seating arrangements in the classroom. The tally sheet was based on student seating since the observer was "blind" to which students were the target students. During a school break the janitor rearranged the desks so the seating assignments were then changed. This necessitated the design of a new tally sheet to reflect the seating changes and the observations were commenced anew.

Student Attitude Scale

A measure of student attitudes about asking for help was taken at two points in the study: once before the treatment phase and once again after the treatment phase. The student questionnaire was used in the Ryan & Pintrich (1997) study and was

sent to the author of the present study by Dr. Allison Ryan from the University of Illinois. Three subscales of the student help seeking measures were used. The first subscale, avoidance of help seeking, was reported to be reliable ($\alpha > .75$) with young adolescents, grade 5 to 8 students (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; Ryan, Hicks & Midgley, 1997; Ryan, Gheen & Midgley, 1998). The second subscale, threat from peers regarding help seeking, was used with grade 7 and 8 students in the 1997 study by Ryan & Pintrich and found to be reliable ($\alpha > .87$). The third scale, benefits of help seeking, was used with grade 7 and 8 students in the Ryan & Pintrich (1997) study and was found to be reliable ($\alpha > .79$). (personal correspondence)

Samples of items in the three subscales are as follows:

- 1) Avoidance of help seeking: I don't ask questions in math class, even when I don't understand the lesson.
- 2) Threat from peers regarding asking for help: Other kids will think I am a nerd if I ask for help.
- 3) Benefits of asking for help: I feel smart when I ask a question in math.

The items were specific to the math class and were measured on a Likert-type scale (1=not at all true to 5 = very true).

Teacher Scale

Teachers were asked to rate their perception of student ability and attitude twice during the study: before and after the treatment phase. Survey items were taken from a questionnaire used in the study by Givven, Stipek, Salmon, and

MacGyvers (2001) on student motivation and the teacher's judgement of students' ability and attitude. Dr. Deborah J. Stipek of the University of California Los Angeles sent the items in this scale to the author of the present study. The questionnaire was divided into three subscales. Items were measured on a Likert-type scale (1="not at all/not much/almost never" to 6= very much/a great deal/almost always). All questions were worded to focus primarily on math class. The first question was to measure the teacher's judgement of the students' abilities and the single question in this subscale was "How confident is the child in his/her math ability?" The second subscale focussed on students' reactions to their work (How does he/she react when he/she encounters difficulty in math?). The third subscale was the teacher's judgement of the students' mood, whether that is negative or positive (Emotions expressed while working on math tasks/activities: frustration, enthusiasm).

Table 1 Teacher questionnaire

Subscale	Mean Difference	t score	Sig.
Ability	.5000	1.000	.391
Reactions			
Positive	-.5000	-.271	.804
Negative	.7500	1.567	.215
Emotions			
Positive	-.7500	-.600	.591
Negative	-2.000	-2.828	.066

Results

There was no statistically significant difference found between the teacher's response to questionnaire items when comparing the difference between the results of the first administration of the test prior to the students' training and after the students' training. The paired samples test conducted showed no statistical difference in teacher judgement of student ability, ($t(3)=1.000$, ns); student negative emotion, ($t(3)=-2.828$, ns); student positive emotion, ($t(3)=-.600$, ns); student negative reaction, ($t(3)=1.567$, ns); student positive reaction, ($t(3)=-.271$, ns). (See Table 1)

There was no statistically significant difference found between the students' response to the questionnaires that they filled out prior to and after the completion of the help seeking behaviour training. The paired samples test conducted showed no statistical difference in student attitude on the following scales: avoidance of help seeking, ($t(3)=2.014$, ns); perceived threat from peers, ($t(3)=-2.724$, ns); perceived benefits of help seeking, ($t(3)=-1.987$, ns); and overall difference, ($t(3)=1.050$, ns). (See Table 2)

Table 2

Student Questionnaire

Student	Avoidance		Peer Threat		Benefit		Total		
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
A	18	14	10	14	9	8	37	36	(17)
B	20	7	11	10	8	8	39	25	(16)
C	13	14	11	15	8	7	32	36	(17)
D	8	6	7	7	9	6	24	19	(18)

Numbers in parenthesis indicate combined total difference in items scored in all categories.

The primary question was whether the frequency of the help seeking behaviours could be increased in the target students that had received the training to appropriately request assistance and instructional feedback in the general classroom when necessary. There was found to be a significant difference when the results of the observed behaviours were contrasted with the randomly selected control students. The analysis of variance showed a significant difference in the effectiveness of the training protocol ($F(1,6)=9.63, p<.05$). The students that were given the training experienced a greater increase in their frequency of help seeking behaviours than the control group. (See Table 3) The level of statistical significance in this study was set at $p<.05$.

Table 3

Rates of Help Seeking Behaviour in the General Classroom Setting

Target				
Student	Pre-Training	Post-Training	Difference	
A	.00	.66	.66	
B	.00	1.5	1.5	
C	.00	.33	.33	
D	.00	1.30	1.30	
			Total	.95
Control				
Student	Pre-Training	Post -Training	Difference	
A	.00	.00	.00	
B	.00	.33	.33	
C	.50	.33	-.17	
D	.00	.00	.00	
			Total	.16

Frequency of help seeking behaviour per math class based on the average percentage of helps seeking behaviours per session.

Discussion

The present study first looked at whether giving students training in strategies to ask for help when it is needed would increase the frequency of students asking for help. The results of this study indicate that training in help seeking behaviours does have a relationship with increased frequency of asking for help in the general education classroom. Specifically, skills training had a significant relationship with increases in asking for instructional feedback and assistance for special

education students in the general classroom setting when they were compared to non-trained peers, who were not special education students, in the same classroom setting. The success of the second part of the study was somewhat contingent upon the training actually having an effect on student help seeking behaviour and attitude.

Second, this study was designed to look at whether there was a change in the teacher's judgement of student motivation and ability over time, subsequent to the student training, or whether the teacher's perception would remain stable. The teacher's assessment of students' motivation and attitude was similar across the three subscales and there was no statistically significant difference (See Table 1). As predicted, the teacher made stable judgements based on their perceptions of student behaviours observed before the student training and again after the student training. This is similar to the results from the earlier study by Givven et al. (2001) on teachers' judgements of student motivation. The present study found stability in the teacher's ratings over time. However, the lack of change in the teacher's perception may also be reflective of the short time span between the first administration of the questionnaire and the second questionnaire. There was a 10 day span between the questionnaires and this may have been a limiting factor in the results of the survey. The prior study using the same survey items had a much longer span of time between testing times.

It was predicted that after receiving skills training and using help seeking strategies in the classroom there would be a difference in student attitudes toward several aspects of asking for help in the classroom. However, the experiment

showed no such results with there being no significant difference found between the students' attitudes before and after the training phase. (See Table 2)

Although there was a slight shift in some items it is likely that there was not enough time between the first survey, the training phase and the second survey for any differences to become apparent. Similar to the teacher's questionnaire this has been a limiting factor in the present study.

The implications of this analysis suggest that it would be beneficial that future studies attempt to replicate the present study with larger populations over a longer period of time. There are other factors that might have contributed to the low rate of difference seen in the test results. First, it might have been a factor that a student teacher and not the regular classroom teacher were conducting the math lessons. Second, most of the time was taken by instruction and writing on the blackboard and comparatively little to independent seatwork. The more limited time period when the students were doing their seatwork seemed to be more conducive to asking for help or asking questions. This may be a consideration when developing a day plan for the class scheduling of subject material to be covered. The studies show that for students asking for help or instructional feedback is important to academic achievement. However, there may be a lack of studies addressing the time available to the student when it may be more advantageous to ask for such assistance. This may be a consideration for future research.

The present findings provide a basis for future investigations into the influence of strategy training on the students' help seeking. The relationship of the students'

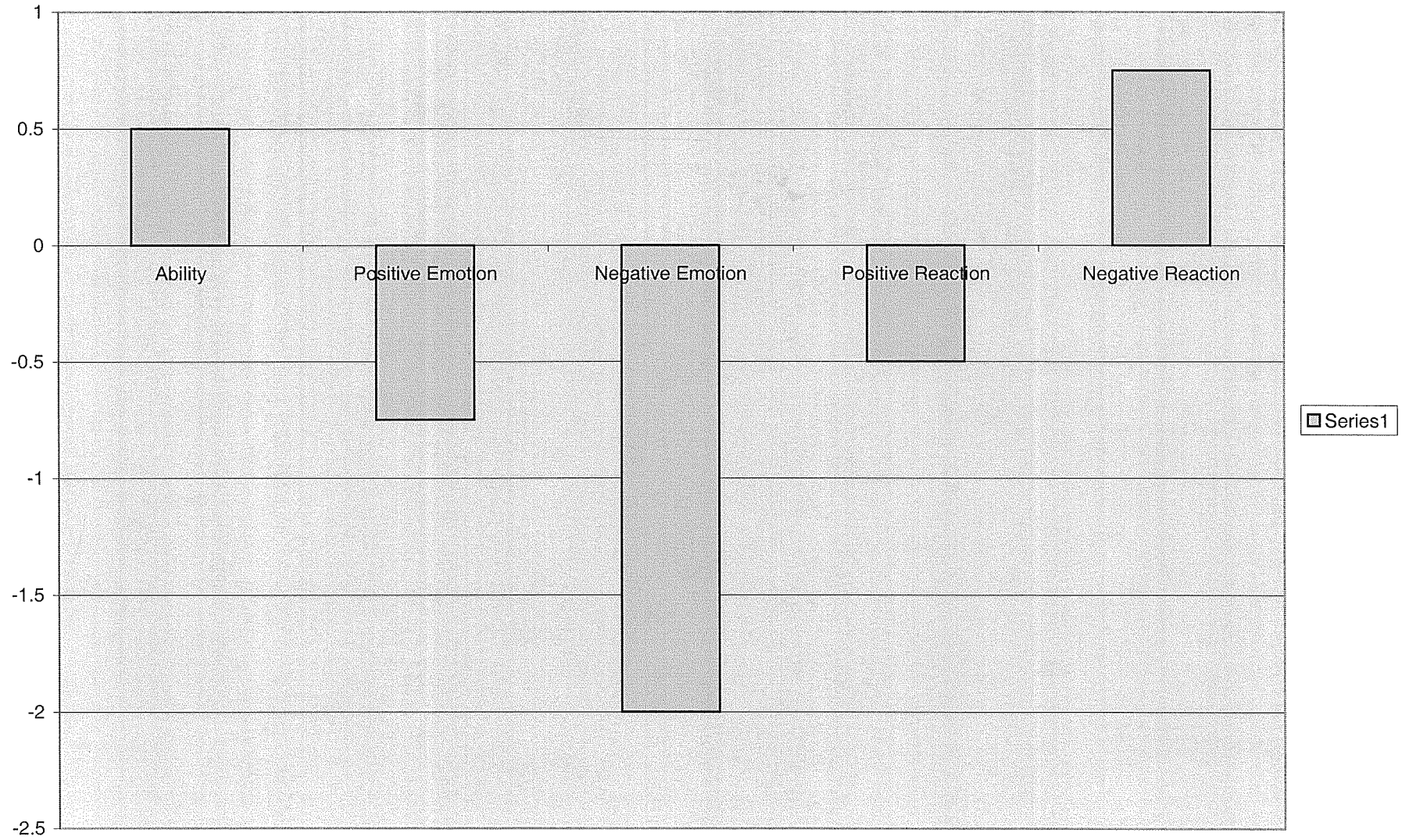
receiving training and the increase in help seeking behaviour was strong enough to suggest that such factors should be considered when developing the Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) for special education students. In summary, the results of the present research provide new insights into how skills training of beneficial classroom behaviours such as a students' asking for help may result in increased frequency of such behaviour thus fostering greater academic success.

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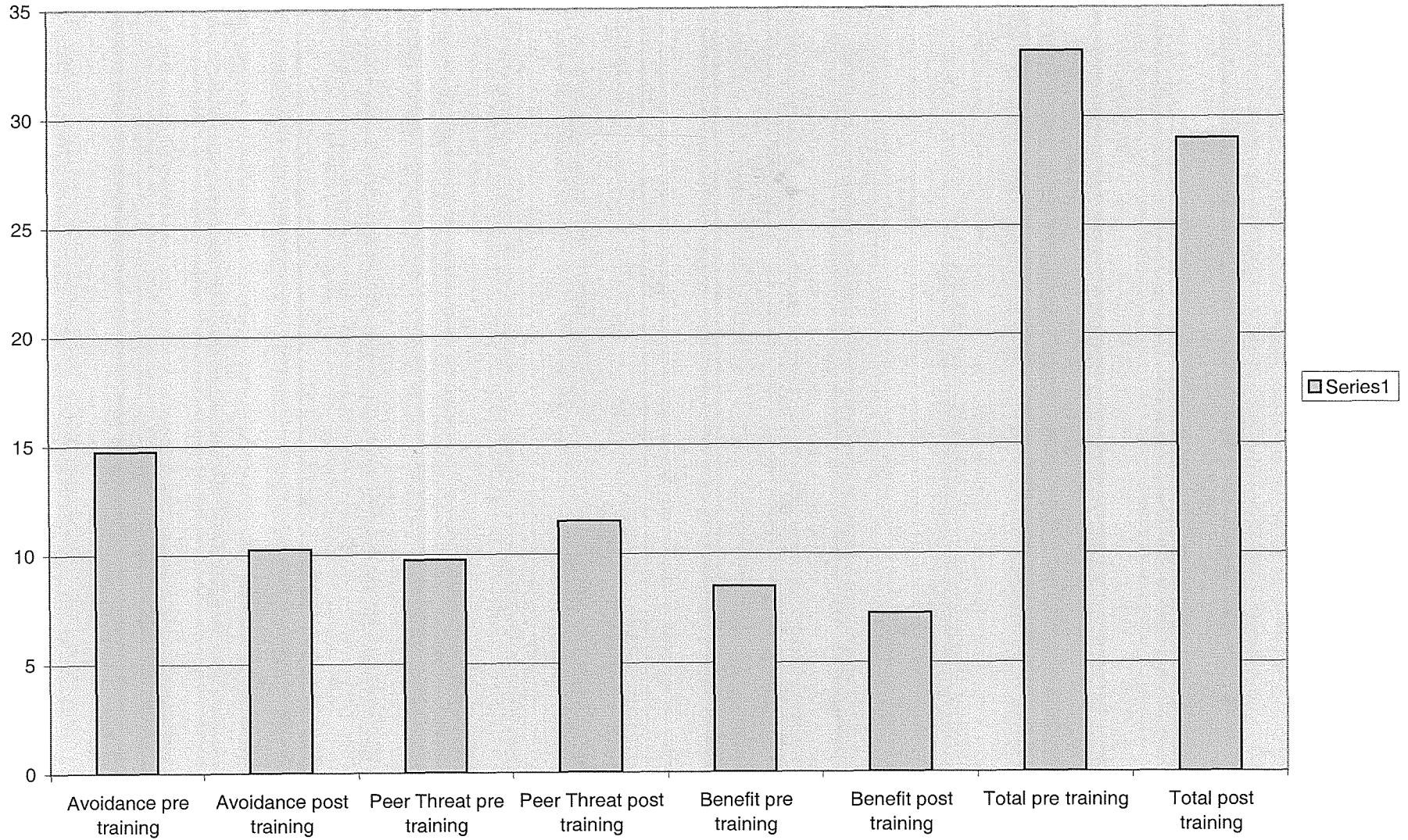
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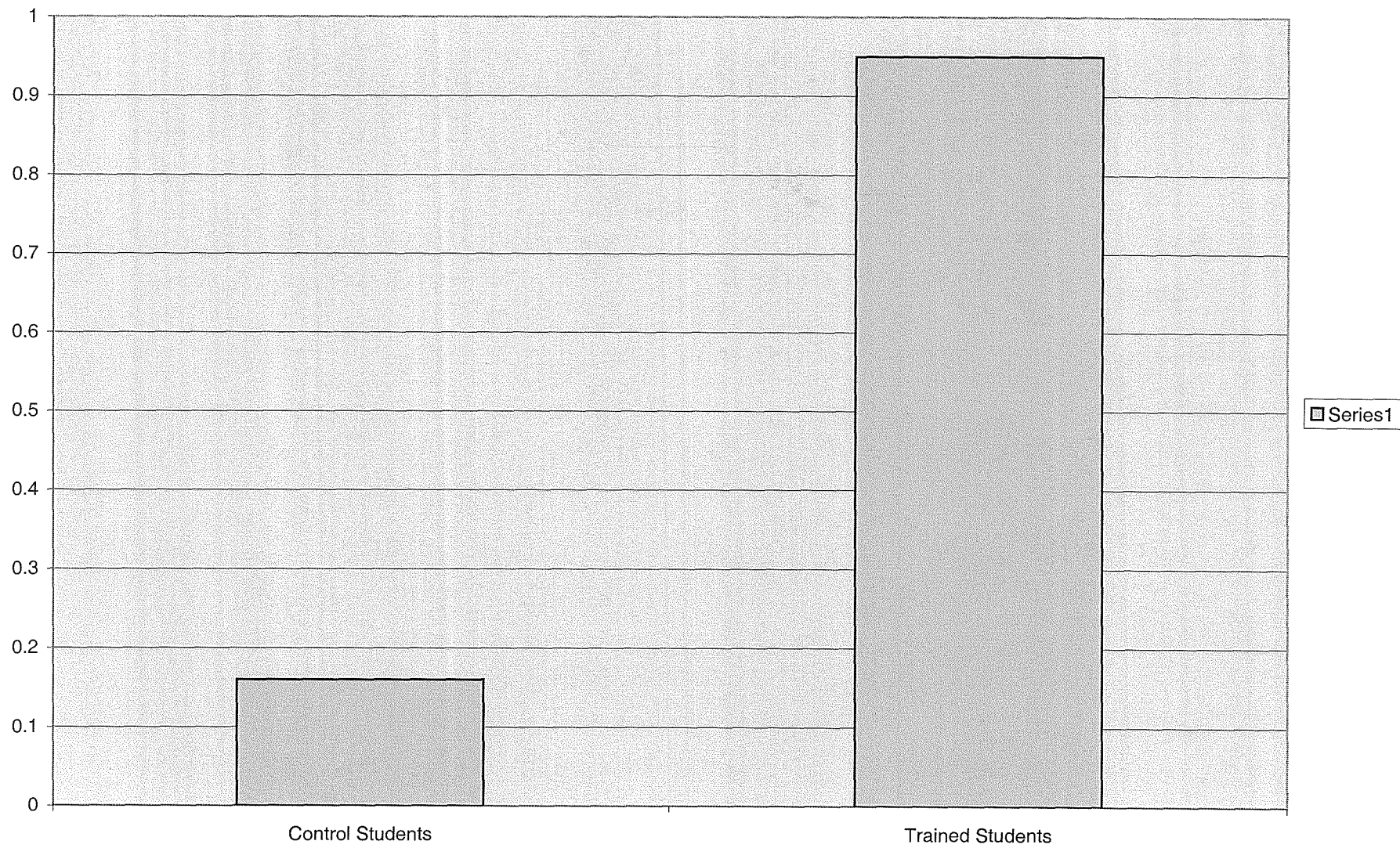
Before and After Differences in the Teacher's Perception of Students' Ability and Attitude



Students' Attitudes About Asking for Help: Before and After Training



Difference Between Trained Students and Control Group Students



PROTOCOL MANUAL

Thesis Study
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Preamble

Help-seeking behaviour has been found to be both a learning strategy and social interaction. (Ryan, 1998) This protocol in its simplest terms is a skills training of help-seeking behaviour which is an effective means of assisting the student in acquiring self-advocacy skills. Self-advocacy skills are a desirable skill for the students to attain especially in view of the busyness of the inclusive classroom setting. The following protocol was developed for a study to recruit positive attention in the classroom setting by asking the classroom teacher for assistance. This skills training is used in this study to develop help-seeking behaviour - essential to the purpose of this study.

Recruitment Training

The training procedure is divided into six parts:

- (1) Introduction and Rationale for Recruiting
- (2) When to Ask for Help
- (3) How to Ask for Help
- (4) Modeling and Role Playing
- (5) Daily prompts

An outline and script of the recruitment training procedures follows. The first four parts of training are to be conducted in one 20-minute session on the first day of training. The following school day a second 20-minute training session is conducted in which the first four parts are to be repeated. A third training session of the first four parts can be repeated on a third training day if necessary. Part 5 is conducted during a regular time period, consisting of several minutes, on the following school days, through the generalization and maintenance phase.

In the following script "Teacher" always refers to the special education teacher.

Introduction and Rationale for Recruiting

The special education teacher prompts the student responses in the following way. If the student answers the teacher's question with one statement, the teacher prompts the student to extend his or her answer, e.g., "Can you tell me another reason?" If the student does not make a response to some of the teacher's questions she/he can provide the student with an example and prompt the student to say other examples, e.g. "If the teacher sees you got the answers right on your paper she might say 'good job' what else might she say?"

Teacher: Sometimes when you are doing your work in class, you might need extra help, or you might want the teacher to check your work to see if you are doing it right. But you usually don't ask the teacher for help. Why would it be a good idea to ask the teacher to check your work after doing part of it?

Student: To make sure it is right, so you don't do the whole page wrong and get a bad grade.

Teacher: Good. Now, what would happen if you checked over your work, were pretty sure it was correct, and then asked the teacher to look at it?

Student: The teacher would like it and say, "Good job" or "Very good."

Teacher: How does that make you feel when the teacher tells you that you did a good job?

Student: Happy, good, etc.

Teacher: Teachers sometimes like it when their students do good work, but sometimes they don't notice your good work unless you tell them. Today we are going to learn how to show the teacher your work, so she will either help you or tell you how well you are doing. Why is it a good idea for you to complete your work and do it right?

Student: Better marks, the teacher will think you are a good student, might get extra privileges or rewards the teacher will say nice things, etc.

When to Ask for Help

Show the student samples of their own work. Then guide the student through each assignment indicating which were less than 50% complete, 50% complete, more than 50% complete and 100% complete. Then tell the student that the appropriate time to signal the classroom teacher is when the work is 50% complete, then another time when the work is 100% complete. The student will practice identifying when their work is ready to be checked. Instruct the student that the best time to signal the teacher is when the teacher is available.

Teacher: When would be a good time to signal the teacher?

Student: When she is not talking to another teacher, when she is near my desk, when she is not busy.

How to Ask for Help

Teacher: What would be the best way to get the teacher's attention?

Student: Raise your hand?

Teacher: Good! (If the student said "get out of your seat" or "call the teacher's name" provide corrective feedback.)

Teacher: What will happen next?

Student: The teacher will come to my desk.

Teacher: Now when you talk to the teacher, you should look at her face, and use a polite voice. What are some things you should say?

Student: Is this right? Am I doing a good job? Please check my work? How am I doing? (Stress the importance of varying the responses so the student will sound more natural)

Modeling and Role Playing

Next, model the recruiting response by using a "think aloud" technique. For example, "O.K., I finished half of my work, now I am going to check it. Oops, I made a mistake here. I'll just fix it. Now, where's the teacher. She's walking around the room checking work. I will raise my hand now. She sees me. She's coming over to my

desk. I am going to look at her, smile, and say in a polite voice, "Ms/Mr _____, would you please tell me how I am doing so far?" The teacher might say "This looks very good." I will say, "thank you, Ms/Mr _____,"

Then guide the student through a role-play of the recruiting procedure, providing praise and corrective feedback for the student's performance. Model and role-play three to five scenarios. For example, if the teacher does not come over because she is busy with someone else, the student should put his or her hand down and try again in a few minutes when the teacher is not busy. The teacher may tell the student to make corrections, in which case the student should thank the teacher for her help.

Not every recruiting response will result in teacher praise and some may even be met with criticism or reprimands such as "Can't you see I'm busy." Or "This is all wrong. Pay better attention next time." Use role-playing to prepare the student for these possibilities and have the student practice polite responses. E.g. "Thank you for helping me with this." or "I'm sorry. Would you show me how to do this later?"

Another recruiting concept to teach is to limit the number of times the student recruits. How often a student should recruit teacher attention will vary. Ideally appropriate rates of student recruiting should be determined by recommending the student of one to a maximum of three recruitment responses during a certain work period. Remind students to spread their recruiting responses across the class period and to vary the statements used to recruit feedback.

Give the students a physical prompt to recruit. Students can be given a physical prompt to recruit that can be taken to the classroom. They can be provided with prompting cards, which can be taped to a file folder and inserted in their notebooks. Three boxes can be drawn on each card for the student to check each time they recruit. These will also serve as self-recording devices.

Daily Prompt

The day following the first day of training (and each day thereafter throughout the continuous reinforcement part of the generalization programming condition) for several minutes in the resource room to review recruiting, and then prompt the student to recruit in (math) class.

Example

Teacher: Do you remember what we practiced yesterday about how to get your teacher to look at your work?

Student: Yes

Teacher: Good. Let's review it. After you finish part of your work, what do you do?

Student: Check it to make sure it's right.

Teacher: Good. What do you do after you check your work?

Student: Raise my hand and wait quietly for the teacher. Then when the teacher comes to my desk, I'll say, "How does my work look?"

Teacher: Very good. What should you do when the teacher checks your work and gives you help or says it looks good?

Student: Say "Thank You."