School Violence Prevention Programs and Changes in Violence Incidents in New Jersey (2002-2005)

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SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND CHANGES IN VIOLENCE INCIDENTS IN NEW JERSEY (2002-2005)

BY

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the implementation of a K-2 school violence intervention program, I Can Problem Solve (ICPS), in Camden and Passaic New Jersey (2002-2005). Archived data from the Camden and Passaic studies were used with permission from the Violence Institute (of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, UMDNJ). Analyses were conducted of the possible usefulness, application and shortcomings of ICPS as well as other violence prevention programs.

Through examination of school violence, the researcher studied the affects of the environment, heredity, and exposure to violence, societal pressures, and even classroom conditions (e.g., class size) as possible sources of violent behavior in youth. Various attempts to reduce school violence were also observed, including specific measures to define, categorize and report on violent behavior in New Jersey schools.

In the first year of the Camden study (2003-2004), mean improvements were reported in 3 behavior rating categories—positive, aggressive and miscellaneous activities—using the Mann-Whitney U test (when evaluating 2 independent groups, in this case the instruction and the comparison groups). In the second year (2004-2005), there were no significant differences between the 2 groups. In the Passaic study, ANOVA (analysis of variance) showed mean changes (between the pre- and post-behavior rating means) in years 1 and 2 (2002-2003, and 2003-2004). Independent sample t-tests (which also show mean changes between pre- and post-behavior ratings) in year 3 (2004-2005) revealed no significant differences between instruction and comparison groups. In both school districts, it appeared that the instruction was initially promising, but results were not sustained in the last year of each study. The available data was inconsistent, incomplete, and misaligned. It is also possible that there was a lack of concern over accuracy or even implementation of ICPS by the staff members of each district.

Recommendations included using school violence prevention programs that have scientific-based research behind them; better precision and consistency in reporting; parental involvement in education; smaller classes; and a less fatalistic outlook from school leaders.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my parents, Joseph and Annette, a special thanks for instilling in me a work ethic and faith in myself...

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Dr. Glenn Morgan, and
Dr. Brian McAndrew,
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To my favorite editor,
My niece, Loren...

And especially to my wife, Angela—
You are truly "the wind beneath my wings"
And the love of my life...
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I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Violence in Society and in Schools

Violence is a pervasive problem facing adults and children alike. In schools, students have a hard time trying to learn in a violent environment and teachers have difficulty teaching. Zanna, a psychologist and member of the trauma team that provided counseling to the survivors and their families after the April 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, referred to the present period as the “Age of Rage” (Rochester, NY Democrat and Chronicle News, February 13, 2005, 8A).

Suicide bombings in Iraq, road rage on the highways, aggressive action in public places, obnoxious behavior on reality television shows, as well as violence in video games, music and popular movies are all negative influences on children. If they are fortunate enough to come from a non-violent background, they are nevertheless exposed to malicious behavior through the media. It is not surprising, then, that acts of violence in schools are increasing (www.nces.ed.gov). On January 9, 2006, it was reported that the principal of PS 21 in Brooklyn, NY was suspending outside recess to protect students from being shot due to numerous violent incidents around the school neighborhood (Eyewitness News, New York). The American Psychological Association (APA), citing statistics from the National Center for Juvenile Justice, predicts that the number of youths (age 10-17) who are arrested for violent crimes (based on arrest rates between 1983-1992) could more than double by the year 2010 (APA, 2006).

Due to pressure for improved tests scores in reading, math and science, teachers seem to spend more time preparing for standardized tests and less on behavior and character training. Thus, any time devoted to these elements needs to be used well (and result in thorough evaluations, with positive results). A study of the actual implementation of an early violence intervention program is useful in analyzing its possible usefulness, application and even shortcomings.
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National Perspective on School Violence

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) publishes an online report entitled "MMWR" ("Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report"). Once a year, the results of the "YRBSS" ("Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System") are included, which monitors priority health-risk behaviors among more than 15,000 youths and young adults across the nation (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5202ai.htm). According to these self-reports, the following are behaviors that contribute to violence and percentages of high school students (grades 9-12) who engaged in the behaviors prior to the survey (for 2004, during the months of February through December 2003): 17.1% carried a weapon (e.g., a gun, knife, or club); 6.1% carried a gun; 33% had been in a physical fight one or more times; 4.2% had been in a physical fight one or more times that resulted in injuries that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse; 6.1% carried a weapon on school property; 9.2% had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times, 12.8% had been in a physical fight on school property; 5.4% had not gone to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school; and 29.8% had their property (e.g., car, clothing, or books) stolen or deliberately damaged on school property one or more times. These counts are duplicated.

Current Origins of School Violence Issues

National School Safety and Security Services reports that children can be negatively influenced as a result of abandonment by family members, violence or neglect, lack of discipline at home, peer pressure, drug or alcohol use, subculture enticement (i.e., gang activity), abuse, fear of failure or rejection, television violence, and even pressure to achieve (www.schoolssecurity.org/trends/warning-signs.html). Victims of school violence suffer from a variety of difficulties, many which may have long-lasting effects, such as loneliness, depression, adjustment problems (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Nansel et al., 2001), truancy (Ringwalt et al., 2003) poor academic achievement (Wei & Williams, 2004) and high drop-out rates (Beauvais et al., 1996).

Some research has shown a correlation between television viewing and violent behavior. In one study, 707 boys and girls were tracked for 17 years. Even after
School Violence Prevention Programs controlling for neighborhood violence, socio-economic status or SES, parental education, childhood neglect or psychiatric disorders, the link between watching violent television programs and behaving aggressively as an adult remained (Johnson et al., 2002). In another longitudinal study of boys, a significant relation between exposure to television violence at eight years of age and antisocial acts—including serious criminal offenses and spousal abuse—was found after 22 years (APA, 2006). Researchers have recommended that since violent media exposure has been associated with aggressive behavior, child health care professionals need to counsel families on limiting exposure (Chung et al., 2004). Television intensifies violent behavior by desensitizing the viewer to violence, increasing the viewer’s appetite for becoming involved with violence, and demonstrating how desirable commodities can be obtained through aggression and violence (Johnson et al., 2002).

In testimony presented to the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, White (executive director of The Lion and Lamb Project, a Bethesda, MD organization created in 1995 to reduce violence in the media) reported that children’s programming, such as cartoons, averages 20-25 violent acts every hour. Furthermore, by the time the average child leaves elementary school, he or she has seen an estimated 100,000 acts of violence as well as 8,000 murders on television (White, 2001). According to a news release from the Kaiser Family Foundation (www.kff.org/entmedia), 2,000 children ranging from ages 8 to 18 who were surveyed in 2005 spent about 6.5 hours per day using some form of media outside of school (radios, CDs, MP3 players, video games, music and television).

Graphic depictions of violence have become viewed in many quarters as attractive, commercially necessary content for amusement. Through films, television, toys, games, music and general media, children are exposed to violent content in multiple daily doses (Donnerstein, Slaby & Eron, 1995).

Barbacane, who chairs disciplinary hearings for the Lancaster, PA school district, made a connection between school violence and an increased number of children who come to school from stressed, single-parent homes. He also attributed violent student behavior to medical problems, especially fetal-alcohol syndrome. Due to medical
School Violence Prevention Programs advances, “children are surviving pregnancies and births that 10 years ago they weren’t, and they’re coming to school with minimal brain dysfunction and growing needs.” Other theories for the causes of aggression in school-aged children include abusive homes, NFL football, and intimidating, violent parents who come to schools angry when their children are disciplined (Barbacane, as reported by Troppo, 2003, January 12, p. 1A).

Psychologists espouse the belief that since some violence is learned, the home is the most fertile breeding ground for violent behavior. According to the American Psychological Association, there is also a connection between this type of behavior and inherited traits: impulsivity, learning difficulties, low IQ, or fearlessness can possibly make a child prone to violence (www.apa.org/ppc/issues/phviolence.html). One researcher referred to the set of behaviors that reduce the likelihood of success in school as “behavioral risk factors” (Fina, 1993, p. 1). Some students may actually begin primary school predisposed to disengagement from attending school regularly, arriving on time, listening to teachers, and completing assignments. Finding school experiences unpleasant and teachers uncaring, these students begin to withdraw and retreat from active engagement with their peers and teachers at an early age.

When teachers and school leaders are telling children that there are better ways to solve problems than by punching someone, and parents may be telling them to hit anyone who gets in their way, there is a dual message that is confusing. If children live in a household or community where the first line of defense in handling problems is to get loud, violent or aggressive, then that is how they will learn to behave in problem situations in schools. One principal stated that often, children come into school screaming. She first asks them to sit down and relax, and then asks them if they need to yell at home to be heard. When they tell her that there is screaming and yelling at home, she responds by assuring them that they don’t have to yell in her office, which usually calms them down (Tallerico & Barstyna, 2004).

Reports of serious violent crimes are more likely to occur in large schools (with student populations of over 1,000) than in smaller ones (under 300). The differences are not in educators’ concerns for student safety, but rather in their abilities to implement effective strategies, with desired outcomes (Klonsky, 2002). While large schools depend
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upon more external measures to control behavior (e.g., metal detectors and security
guards), smaller ones stress engagement among the faculty, school community and
students as well as personalization, high student visibility and close collaboration of
teachers. Small schools create opportunities for staff members to get to know their
students and intervene before problems become crises, and students resort to violence or
destruction: "The anonymity that often characterizes large schools is the enemy of safety
and security" (Klonsky, 2002).

Large class size is another factor that researchers have linked to behavior. In the
Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) study, researchers tested 11,600 students
over the four-year period of the experiment (1985-1989). Students were randomly
assigned to small classes (average of 15 students to 1 teacher), regular classes (average of
25 students to 1 teacher) or control, and regular classes with a teacher aide (average of 25
students to 1 teacher and an aide). Among other things, students in small classes
exhibited fewer examples of poor discipline than did the control groups (Achilles et al.,
1996, p. 28). This was substantiated through a decrease in referrals to the office (for
behavioral infractions). Researchers also found that, regarding teacher and student use of
space, that crowding affects student behavior in a negative way as well (Achilles, 1999).
In addition, researchers noted that students who begin their school careers in small
classes are less likely to be retained in grade, be suspended, or drop out of school later
(Achilles & Finn, 2000, p. 312).

Also, Success Starts Small (SSS), a structured observation study conducted
during school year 1993-1994, showed a 50% decline in student referrals to the office in
a school setting with classes of 14 or so over time, compared to a matched school with
class sizes of 25 or so (Achilles, 1999, p. 53). Students in smaller classes are more
engaged in learning and pro-social behaviors and less in disruptive activities than are
students in larger classes (Finn, Pannozzo & Achilles, 2003, 321-368).

In another study, researchers argued that the school environment itself, which is
highly structured, controlling, and even oppressive ("prison-like") causes students to
react in violent ways (Watts & Erevelles, 2004, p. 271). Schools serve as institutions of
social control by chastising students; who misbehave with reprimands, isolation (placing
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them in hallways or in the back of the classroom), and sending them to the office for further discipline (Watts & Ervelles, p. 280). Furthermore, schools are far more interested in restricting student movements than with teaching them about mutual respect, mediation skills and how to resolve conflicts peaceably (Watts & Ervelles, p. 283).

Finally, other researchers studied 2,245 students in grades 3-8 in 11 public schools and found that a combination of demographic variables (i.e., age, grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, and parental composition at home); parental monitoring (the degree to which a parent is aware of his or her child’s daily activities and friends); television viewing habits (how many hours children watched television per day, and what shows they preferred); and exposure to violence (e.g., threats, slapping, hitting, punching, beatings, knife attacks and gun violence) explained 45% of students’ self-reported violent behaviors (Singer, Miller, Guo, Flannery, Frierson & Slováč, 1999, p. 878).

Violence in Young Children

Studied have shown that children under the age of four are affected psychologically by exposure to violence, contrary to the popular belief that they are too young to understand or remember. Posttraumatic disorder symptoms have been found among infants and toddlers (Scheerings & Zeannah, 1995). An elementary school principal in rural Wisconsin stated, “Some of my most violent kids have been in kindergarten, first and second grade. They simply lose control, and it comes out in extremely violent manners” (Tropp, 2003, January 12, p. 1A). In a study of the effects of aggression levels in the first grade on later behavior in middle school involving 19 public elementary schools, it was discovered that strong interactive effects were found on the risk of being highly aggressive in middle school, and the level of aggression in the same student’s first grade classroom (Kellam et al., 1998).

Children who experience the adverse affects of premature birth; neglectful, low-quality or even harsh parenting; or poor nutrition will be more at risk for negative behaviors when they enter school than children who have had fewer incidences of such harmful conditions (Campbell, S.B., 2002, p.2). Young, aggressive preschool-age
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children who have social difficulties and conduct problems, such as defiant, oppositional and impulsive behaviors, are often asked to leave four or five schools by age six (Mihalic, et al., 2001, p. 5). Early intervention is crucial in reducing aggression before it becomes worse (and more permanent).

Some studies have shown a disturbing pattern of violent behavior in young children. Increasing numbers of kindergartners and first-graders are acting aggressively in schools, using profanity, and even biting, kicking and hitting adults. Incidents of rage and explosive behavior are becoming more frequent than before, resulting in special elementary schools for disruptive youngsters (Wallis, 2003, pp. 52-53). First-graders, kindergartners, and even preschoolers are being suspended every day for fighting, disorderly conduct, lack of cooperation, and even indecent exposure (Troppos, 2003, January 12, p. 1A). Law enforcement officials blame the war on terrorism for redirecting money and attention away from school safety, while gang activity is on the rise. Some school violence is created (and controlled) by gangs (Troppos, 2004, p. 6D), even among young children.

School Violence Averages

While the majority of public schools are relatively safe places (Wild, http://greatschools.net/), some schools have serious problems that place children and educators in danger. In these schools, some students have difficulty abiding by the written rules and regulations, "Codes of Conduct," or even classroom rules. School violence seems to be stabilizing. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), there have been general improvements in school safety since 1992, when 48 students out of 1,000 were victims of violent crimes at school, compared with 2001, when the figure dropped to 28 students out of 1,000. Violence includes simple assault, aggravated assault, fighting, gang or group fighting, robbery, extortion, sex offenses, threats, terrorist threats, kidnapping, harassment, intimidation, or bullying (including bias intimidation). Additional categories, such as vandalism, weapons, and substances, were not addressed in the research. On the other hand, the National School
School Violence Prevention Programs

Safety and Security Service reported that recent school-related violent deaths are at an all-time high: in school year 1999-2000, the figure was 33 out of 1,000. In 2000-2001, it was 31. It dropped to 17 in 2001-2002, and again to 16 in 2002-2003. It increased, however, to 49 in 2003-2004 (www.schoolsecurity.org). School-related violent deaths include homicides, suicides, or any non-accidental deaths inside a school, on school property (including a bus), on the way to or from school or a school-sponsored event, or as a clear result of an incident or conflict, function or activity associated with school, regardless of whether it was on or off school property.

"Indicators of School Crime and Safety," an annual report produced by NCES in the U.S. Department of Education, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in the U.S. Department of Justice, includes information gathered from surveys of students, teachers and administrators across the nation as well as data collected from federal agencies such as the BJS, NCES, the FBI, and CDC. In 2003, according to their data, 1 in 20 students was a victim of violence or theft (half of what was reported in 1993. 1 in 10 students). In addition, there were about 28 crimes of rape, sexual assault, robbery and physical assault for every 1,000 students in 2003. In 1993, there were 59 incidents per 1,000 students, or nearly twice as many as in 2003. School safety experts have attributed the drop in school crime, at least partly, to the installation of metal detectors, the hiring of more security personnel, as well as the implementation of programs aimed at conflict resolution, problem solving, and curbing bullying and sexual harassment.

Safe Schools

Numerous attempts have been made to regulate school safety and promote prevention measures. In 1984, the National School Safety Center was organized (www.nssc1.org). The federal government mandated the Drug Free Schools and Community Act in 1985, which evolved into the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1991, and finally became the Safe Schools Act in 1997 (www.ed.gov). The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence was founded at the University of Colorado in 1992 (www.colorado.edu/cspv/), followed by the Center for the Prevention of School Violence in 1995 (www.ncjdp.org/cpsv/). The U.S.
School Violence Prevention Programs


New Jersey and School Violence Prevention

Whether or not children who attend public schools have experienced violent acts at home, on television, or elsewhere, school district administrators and teachers in New Jersey are obligated, ethically and through state department of education mandates (New Jersey Administrative Code (NJAC), 6A: 16-5.1) to provide a safe environment, conducive to learning. This is usually attempted by establishing and enforcing rules and regulations that students are expected to follow (www.state.nj.us/).

School “Codes of Conduct,” written by school district personnel in order to maintain uniformity of behavior, typically address student responsibilities, rights, disciplinary sanctions, due process, and positive reinforcement for good behavior (NJAC 6A: 16-5.1). The statute mandates that each board of education both develop and implement student conduct guidelines for standards and rules defining acceptable student behavior. Codes are supposed to incorporate community and local ethical values, to be reviewed and updated yearly, and to be distributed among school personnel, students and parents.

Sometimes, codes are abbreviated and summarized in a “Student Handbook” so that students and their parents know what is considered misconduct and what the punishments are for various misdeeds. Punishments often include detention, suspension, or expulsions. Detention involves staying after school; suspension, a removal for a limited time; and expulsion, permanent or long-term removal.
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Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse in New Jersey Schools

The New Jersey Commissioner of Education issues a report to the state education committees about incidences of school violence each school year. Since 1999, the “Violence, Vandalism and Substance Abuse” (VVSA) reports have included general information about school violence, definitions of terms, and statistics regarding numbers of reported incidents by county, which is further subdivided by district. These figures represent aggregates of the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS) that all school districts in New Jersey are required to maintain. In other words, the designated school administrator of a given school is expected to complete an electronic report for every incident of school violence, vandalism or substance abuse. Unfortunately, there is not any way to determine the accuracy of these reports, but testimony given to the State Board of Education by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education indicates that accuracy has actually improved with the strengthening of local and state reporting via the EVVRS (Walker, Achilles & Frances, 2006, p. 476).

Information about school violence in New Jersey can be found online, for anyone to access, from the state: www.state.nj.us/education/schools/vandal/. The electronic reporting system has been in effect since school year 1999-2000. Therefore, a person researching the safety of any school or district in New Jersey could conceivably look back to year 1999. The information in the reports is also pertinent to Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (PL 89-10), as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2002 (www.ed.gov/nclb). The NCLB section regarding Choice and Supplemental Educational Services contains a component entitled the Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO), which gives parents whose children have been victims of violent crimes while in school, or who have attended schools that are deemed as “persistently dangerous,” the right to transfer their children to safer schools. In New Jersey, a “persistently dangerous” school is defined as having seven or more “Category A” offenses or a score of 1.0 or greater on the index of “Category B” offenses for three consecutive years. Category A (which follows the federal Gun-Free Schools Act) includes a firearms offense, an aggravated assault upon a student or staff member, or an
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assault with a weapon. Category B (consisting of all other felonies not involving weapons) includes simple assault, possession or sale of a weapon (other than a firearm), a gang fight, robbery, extortion, a sex offense, a terroristic threat, arson, the sale or distribution of drugs, harassment and bullying (www.nj.gov/ajd/degrants/sclb/policy/unsafe_facts.htm).

In New Jersey, a school that meets the criteria as a persistently dangerous school (PDS) in a given year must follow early warning guidelines: the State Education Agency (SEA) must be notified and the school in question is required to submit a school safety plan, outlining the steps the school will take to reduce criminal activities. Essentially, a PDS has up to three years to improve before being designated as “persistently dangerous.” Policy requires parental notification once a school is identified as a PDS.

The SEA will provide assistance and monitoring to assure that the corrective action plan is being utilized. New Jersey policies also include contingency plans for appealing as well as for removal from PDS status (Gooden & Harrington, 2005, pp. 133-139).

Although the electronic reporting system has made it possible to standardize incidences of violent acts of behavior in schools across the nation, it has also led to discussion about accuracy. Trump, a school safety consultant in Ohio, is of the opinion that federal rules allowing students to transfer out of “persistently dangerous” schools will tempt principals to underreport. His belief is that “school administrators are going to be very, very cautious in terms of how they’re documenting both disciplinary incidents and crime to avoid being slapped with the label of ‘persistently dangerous’” (Troppo, 2003).

VLSA Definitions

To clarify the reporting of violent incidents for school administrators, the following definitions are set forth in the user manual for the electronic reporting system of school violence (http://homeroom.state.nj.us/evvrs/userman.htm, pp. 16-18):
Assault, aggravated: a person attempts to cause serious bodily injury to another, or causes such injury purposely or knowingly, or under circumstances manifesting indifference to the value of human life, recklessly causes such injury (e.g., injury which creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ). This category should be used only when the attack is very serious. A homicide would be reported in the aggravated assault category.

Assault, simple: a person attempts to cause, or purposely, knowingly, or recklessly causes bodily injury to another.

Extortion: obtaining money or material things (regardless of value) from another by means of stated or implied threat of future violence.

Fight: mutual engagement in a physical confrontation that may result in bodily injury to either party. Does not include verbal confrontation or a minor confrontation such as a shoving match.

Gang/Group fight: a fight between two or more members of identified groups or an assault by two or more members of one group upon members of another group. The groups may be gangs per se, or cliques or groups of students “working together,” even though the groups may not have a formal partnership.

Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (includes bias intimidation): Any gesture or written, verbal (sic: oral) or physical act that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory handicap, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus and that: (a) a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of
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harming a student or damaging the student’s property; or (b) has the effect of insulting or
demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause substantial
disruption in, or substantial interference with the orderly operation of the school (New

Kidnapping: Per NJSA 2C: 13-1, unlawful removal of a student from school or school
grounds or a substantial distance from where he or she is found in or on school grounds;
or confinement of the victim with the purpose of holding the victim for ransom or reward
as a shield or hostage, or confinement for a substantial period of time to facilitate
commission of a crime or flight thereafter, or to inflict bodily injury or to terrorize the
victim.

Robbery: obtaining money or other material things (regardless of value) from another by
means of violence or threat of immediate violence.

Sex offense: subjecting another to sexual contact or exposure. For the incident to be
considered a sex offense, the offender must (1) intentionally touch, either directly or
through clothing, the victim’s intimate parts, for the purpose of degrading or humiliating
the victim; (2) sexually arouse or sexually gratify himself or herself in view of the victim
whom the offender knows to be present; (3) force or coerce the victim to participate in
any contact or exposure; or (4) commit any act of sexual assault defined under NJSA
2C:14-2, which includes provisions related to the age of the victim and the offender.
Incidents of sexual assault should be reported in this category. Intimate body parts are
defined by statute (NJSA 2C: 14-1e) to include “sexual organs, genital area, anal area,
inner thigh, groin, buttock or breast of a person.”

Terroristic threat: threatening to commit one of the following offenses: homicide,
assault, sexual assault, robbery, kidnapping or arson with the purpose of placing others in
imminent fear of one of the violent acts under circumstances reasonably causing the
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victim(s) to believe the immediacy of the threat and the likelihood that it will be carried out.

Threat: attempting by physical menace (e.g., verbal threats) to put another in fear of future serious bodily injury. Does not include bomb threats.

VVSA Categories and Recommendations

For each violence category above, NJDOE recommends that the age and developmentally appropriate behavior be considered before an incident is reported. To assist administrators in making accurate reports, scenarios are provided for clarification.

For example:

John says to Ron, “I think you should let me have that pen. Like right now.”

That’s a beauty.” Ron gives John the pen.

In the robbery/extortion category, this would not be reported because based on the words alone, there was no threat of immediate violence, nor was there any stated or implied threat of future violence (http://homeroom.state.nj.us/evre/userman.htm, p. 57).

Besides examples and tips on reporting, details regarding incident types, definitions of offenders and victims, how to categorize students with disabilities, and many other recommendations are explained clearly.

With each VVSA annual report, the NJDOE includes a section on addressing school violence on the state level, as well as local district violence-prevention efforts.

Many school districts in New Jersey use three or four different violence-prevention programs, depending on the targeted student behavior and grade level (for example, drug abuse, bullying, violence, alcoholism, smoking, etc.). There are hundreds of school violence-prevention programs. Besides those listed in the state report each year, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado (http://www.colorado.edu/espv/) has rated more than 600 such programs and categorized them (primarily, by whether they are sustainable and able to be replicated). At the University of Arkansas’s School Violence Resource Center, about 100 programs are described (http://www.eval.net/).
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It is, therefore, extremely difficult for administrators and staff members of a school district to choose a prevention program that will work for them. Even if a program has been effective in another school district, whether in New Jersey or in another state, there is no prevailing reason to believe that it will necessarily be successful in a problem district (with high incidents of violence).

The Problem

Although violence in society in general may never be eradicated, every attempt must be made to eliminate acts of violence from schools, once considered to be safe havens. Since minors are required to attend schools, student safety should be foremost. Also, effective schools correlate safe and violence-free places, conducive to learning, with student outcomes (e.g., high achievement rates). School violence is a health concern that compromises the well being of the students and needs to be addressed. The prevention of assaults, fights, threats and other offenses against students should be a primary concern of everyone involved in education, including school boards, administrators, teachers and other staff members, parents, community groups and local business leaders. Even though there has been a slight decrease in violence over the last five years, there has also been an increase in fatalities.

Many violence-prevention programs recommended for use in New Jersey, as well as model, effective and promising programs that have been evaluated by recognized, independent researchers, have typically been implemented with middle school and high school students. An important question that should be researched is whether or not it is effective to espouse programs enhancing problem solving and ways to control impulsive behavior with five to six year olds, who are still developing cognitively, to reduce (and ultimately prevent) violent behaviors before they emerge. Although it is never too late to implement school violence-prevention programs, it is logical that the earlier violence is addressed, the better chances there are for success.

Even though research regarding the possible causes of violent behavior suggests that it may be grounded in early childhood experiences, including pre-natal conditions, empirical evidence supporting one early intervention method over another is lacking. The
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The present study aspires to contribute to the body of knowledge on school violence prevention through an evaluation of the carrying out of the *I Can Problem Solve* (ICPS) K-2 program in two school districts in New Jersey.

The Purpose

Studies have shown that aggressive childhood activities predict future problems of delinquency, depression, dropout, substance abuse, early parenthood, and other high-risk behaviors (Cairns et al., 1989). Furthermore, there is a continuity of aggression suggesting that elementary school children who display hostile behavior are more likely to show antisocial and even violent behavior as adolescents and into young adulthood than children who do not (Farrington, 1991; Tremblay et al., 1992). Physical violence such as hitting, biting, pinching or kicking is more common among boys, while relational aggression (e.g., ostracism or malicious gossip) is more prevalent among girls (Crick & Grottopter, 1995). Researchers advocate early intervention as an appropriate way of breaking the chain of events linking early signs of hostility with later violence (Yoshikawa, 1994; Tremblay & Craig, 1995).

Because of the overall violence in schools (or the perception of violence), developers have attempted to design prevention programs to address and effectively curtail the problem. Unfortunately, there have not been enough programs developed which have been shown, through scientific-based research (SBR) and evaluation, to be successful. Even though there is a great amount of research on early intervention in general, a review of the literature illustrates that research on violence-reduction programs (in grades K-2) is lacking. Also, despite the popularity of curricula regarding social skills, conflict resolution and violent behavior, there is little evidence that they have reduced violent behavior in either the short term or the long term.

Therefore, the purpose of this analysis is for the researcher to study and evaluate the outcomes of *I Can Problem Solve* (specifically the K-2 version) to determine if ICPS seems to be a promising program for preventing violence in young children in grades K-2 and, as a result, add to the existing body of knowledge regarding school violence in these grade levels. In attempting to identify and evaluate an early-intervention program, the
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researcher found what appeared to be a model that was based on scientific research and was also promising.

*I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) Program*

The *I Can Problem Solve* program, developed by Myrna B. Shore (Department of Psychology, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA) focuses on helping young people as early as preschool develop problem-solving skills that relate to behaviors. The primary goal is to prevent later, more serious problems in life by addressing early behavioral predictors. An added goal is to teach parents intervention methods that enable them to use problem-solving communication that will ultimately guide children to think and solve problems on their own. The program takes 10-12 weeks to complete and has been reported as especially effective for young (ages four to five), poor, urban children who may be at the highest risk for behavioral and interpersonal problems (http://www.thinkingchild.com/icps.htm#schools).

The program consists of 83 lessons divided into three sections that train children to generate a variety of possible solutions to problems, consider the consequences, and to recognize the feelings and thoughts that generate such situations. One purpose of the program is to teach children to think before they act. Their teachers use a variety of techniques: pictures, role-playing, puppets, group interaction and word recognition.

In student groups of 6-10, children are first taught pre-problem-solving skills and words: “is/ not” (acting and not acting), “some/ all” (some solutions work with one but not others), “or/ and” (recognizing alternatives), “if/ then” (the results of actions), “same/ different” (searching for multiple solutions), “how people feel,” “are you listening to me?” and other lessons totaling 47 (http://www.researchpress.com).

The next lessons are concentrated on identifying the feelings of oneself as well as sensitivity to others. Here, children can learn to influence the responses of others through learning to recognize their emotions. The focus is on alternative solutions and consequences.

The last lessons are simulations of role-playing and dialogue, which foster skills in problem solving. Given a series of hypothetical situations, students are expected to
School Violence Prevention Programs recognize problems, generate solutions and consider the consequences of their choices. Some examples of lesson titles are "Is That a Good Idea?" "What Might Happen Next?" "What Might Happen If I Do That?" and "What's That Problem?"

As children become more sensitive to feelings (both their own and others'), they begin to understand that their acts have consequences. In addition, they learn to evaluate alternative solutions and to plan a sequence to complete their goals. They benefit in learning problem-solving skills by displaying less aggression and frustration, and enhancing positive behaviors such as sharing, empathy, cooperation and fairness (http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/vabp/).

The ICPS program was nationally recognized as a promising program by both the US Department of Education and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention in 2001. Shure and Spivak (a colleague and co-author of many books and journal articles) received awards from the National Mental Health Association (1982). The American Psychological Association conferred the "Distinguished Contribution Award" to them in 1984, named ICPS as a "Model Prevention Program" in 1986, and (to Shure) named ICPS a "Model Prevention Program" again in 1993. The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice also recognized it as a model program in 1999. In the same year, the Center for the Study of Prevention of Violence named ICPS as promising, and the American Federation of Teachers recognized the program as an effective research-based discipline and violence-prevention program in 2000.

The ICPS and Raising a Thinking Child (workbook) also received accolades by the Department of Health and Human Services (1997), the National Association of School Psychologists (1998), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service (1999) and the NJDOE (2000).

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and the Violence Institute

In reports on violence (e.g., VVSA in NJ '99-'00, p. 17; '00-'02, p. 20; '01-'02, p. 31; and '02-'03, p. 25), the state of New Jersey has recognized the Violence Institute of New Jersey, which was established at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) to conduct research, identify resources and share information about
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violence issues in New Jersey schools. The Violence Institute (http://www.umdnj.edu/vinjweb/) is located in Piscataway, New Jersey, with branches in six other locations throughout New Jersey (Camden, Newark, New Brunswick, Somerset, Scotch Plains and Stafford, http://www.umdnj.edu).

Although the Violence Institute is a multi-disciplinary center, some mission statements pertain to youth violence and best practices:

- Conducts research into the causes, prevention, and reduction of all types of violence including youth violence...
- Develops policies and programs that address violence which are based on good science and objective evaluation...
- Conducts evaluations of programs designed to prevent or reduce violence to determine their efficacy... (http://www.umdnj.edu).

In its effort to reduce the incidences of violence in New Jersey schools, the Violence Institute recommended and evaluated prevention programs in the Passaic (New Jersey) Public School District. One of the programs was ICPS, which was also evaluated in Camden, New Jersey, schools.

Study Context: Passaic and Camden, New Jersey

The city of Passaic, New Jersey, is located 12 miles west of New York City in Passaic County, on the Passaic River between the First Watchung Mountains (to the west) and the Hackensack Meadows (to the east). The city occupies 3.2 square miles. During the last United States Census (2000), the population was 67,861. School racial and ethnic demographics indicate a Hispanic/Latino population of approximately 80%, African-American 13%, Asian 5%, and Caucasian 3% (Passaic Board of Education, 2003). Passaic Public Schools include grades pre-K through 12, with over 11,000 students in two early childhood centers, 12 elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school (http://www.cityofpassaic.com/).
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Camden is a New Jersey city of 8.8 square miles located in Camden County, 5 miles from Philadelphia, PA. The population in 2000 was 79, 909. Race/ethnicity demographics for Camden are: African-American 53%, Hispanic/Latino 39%, and White 7%. There are 10 public primary/middle schools and four public high schools in Camden, a district with over 18,000 students (http://www.city-data.com/city/Camden-New-Jersey.html).

According to NJDOE (VVSA 1999-2004), the Passaic Public School District and Camden schools had the following numbers of violent incidents, as reported electronically:

Table 1. Reported Violent Incidents in the Passaic City and Camden City Schools, 1999-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Passaic (N)</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Camden (N)</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there were high numbers of incidents in Passaic in school year 2001-2002 (142), there was a large decrease (to 100) in school year 2002-2003 and an even more dramatic reduction in school year 2003-2004 (to 53). Similarly, Camden reported a rather high number in 2001-2002, compared with decreases in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004.

While incidences of violence are more prevalent among middle school students (e.g., on VVSA reports), these decreases may be related to school violence prevention programs implemented in the years following 2001-2002 and which are still being used in both the Passaic and Camden public schools (2005-2006). Other factors may also be influencing these outcomes, such as school size, student ethnicity, socio-economic factors, class size, location, and grade level.
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Questions Guiding the Study

1. To what extent does violent behavior exhibited by students in public schools in New Jersey (specifically, Passaic and Camden) seem to be influenced by intervention or prevention programs? What are the discernable differences between students who have participated in violence prevention training, such as ICPS, and those who have not?

2. How can social and emotional skills be taught, and what is the relationship between acquiring social/emotional skills and a reduction in aggressive behavior?

3. What connections can be drawn about the effects of the program and gender, grade, race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status (SES)?

4. How do these results (e.g., in Camden and Passaic) compare with other school violence reports in New Jersey?

5. What are the national averages in comparison?

6. What trends, correlations, comparisons, suggestions, recommendations, or connections can be formulated from the data?

Delimitations

Some factors within the researcher’s control may affect the external validity of the research (or the extent to which the findings can be applied to individuals or settings beyond the scope of the study). The population chosen for this study was taken from the same school district, grade levels and school years (not randomly selected). Although students chosen may have been from a number of socioeconomic as well as ethnic backgrounds, the research was delimited to the students who lived in the district and attended its schools.

The project sample was delimited to K-2 students in the Passaic Public School District in 2002-2005. During the first two years if the study, students (n=242) who were in kindergarten in 2002-2003 and first grade in 2003-2004 were rated using pre- and post-test behavior measurements. Some students (n=24) were in the comparison group (who did not experience a prevention program) for two consecutive years, others (n=102) in ICPS instruction groups for two consecutive years, still others (n=111) in the ICPS group.
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in first grade only, and finally five students were in the instruction group during the first year (K) and then switched to the comparison group during year two. The comparison and two-year instruction groups were characterized by race/ ethnicity (African-American, Hispanic, White, and Asian) and SES (as measured by qualification for free or reduced-price lunch).

In Camden, no data were available regarding violence reports by grade levels. However, in year one of the study (2003-2004), the instruction group consisted of children from three schools and from six classes (n=81) while the comparison group was taken from five classes in four schools (n=59). In the second year (2004-2005), five schools with nine classes were used as the instruction group (n=126). The comparison group consisted of students from five classes in three schools (n=52). No data about selection conditions were available.

Of the overall (Camden) treatment children (n=207), 47% were male and 53% were female. Gender makeup for the overall comparison group (n=111) was 54% male and 46% female. The race/ethnicity count for the treatment group was 70% African-American, 29% Latino/Hispanic, and 1% Asian. In the comparison group, the breakdown was 80% African-American and 20% Latino/Hispanic.

Limitations

The researcher had no control over the demographics, such as the ethnic makeup of the students involved. The Passaic and Camden public school districts were solely responsible for assigning students to classes. There was also no control over the amount and frequency of violence to which the same students have been exposed prior to (or even during) the prevention program. The present study cannot influence whether students in the comparison group contaminated the instruction group (or vice versa) by talking to one another. Therefore, since the ability to completely isolate the instruction group from the comparison group was beyond the capabilities of the researcher, some diffusion of information could have impacted the post-test scores of the comparison group.
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In the third year of the Passaic study (2004-2005), the number of students receiving instruction, compared with year two (2003-2004), was markedly reduced from n=102 to n=50. At the same time, the comparison group increased from n=24 to n=44. In Camden, there was an increase in the instruction group from 81 in year one (2003-2004) to 126 in year two (2004-2005).

Data regarding gender were only available for Passaic students for year three of the study (2004-2005). There were no gender data reported from years one (2002-2003) and two (2003-2004). Thus, the ability to generalize to the entire school population (or beyond, such as the state of New Jersey) is severely limited. Another non-variable is the choice of a specific school violence-prevention program as opposed to other program options.

The ratio of males to females was beyond the control of the researcher, as well as the ability to generalize based upon the sample (the students involved may not be suitable examples or typical cross-sections). Since this study examined the change in behavior that occurred between the pre-test and post-test, prior knowledge was not significant to the outcome (it is assumed that the instruction group and the comparison group were similar in their prior knowledge of non-violent problem-solving techniques). There was also no control over the way in which different teachers interpreted and implemented this program (causing inconsistencies), as well as their responses.

Another limitation was that the researcher treated ordinal or ranked data, which were retrospective (already collected). The available information was not interval data (continuous, where differences were interpretable on a scale). Thus, analyses relied primarily on non-parametric statistics.

The fact that the Hahnemann Behavior Rating Scale (HBRS) instrument used in year one of the Passaic study was modified into the Modified Hahnemann Behavior Rating Scale (MHBRS) in year two was limiting in that the pre- and post-test measurements were not exactly the same across the years (only during common years). In addition, there were inconsistencies in using data over the years in which numbers of students (n) change.
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No school data were kept on verbal altercations, school-ground fighting, and other anti-social behaviors not reported on the EVVRS. Referral, detention, suspension and expulsion data for specific students were also unavailable to the researcher. No additional studies with these groups were planned for the future to ascertain later outcomes. There were no site visits by the researcher during the implementation of ICPS in either district.

Finally, the study was limited by the validity and reliability of the data collected by the UMDNJ researcher, by the specific instrument used to gauge student ability to solve problems (as opposed to other types of pre- and post-tests), and teacher skill in responding to or in conscientiously completing the forms to provide valid information.

Summary

Chapter I was an introduction to the theme of school violence. A glimpse of violence in society and in schools was given to underscore the effects it has had on children. Emphasis was on reporting and intervention in New Jersey schools, especially the EVVRS definitions, categories and recommendations. Even though there are programs being implemented to ameliorate violence in New Jersey schools, there is a lack of scientifically based research on early intervention and there is a gap in the research on programs addressing students in K-2. A grant from the Department of Justice awarded to Passaic and Camden, New Jersey, schools made it possible for the researchers from the Violence Institute (of UMDNJ) to conduct a study of the ICPS intervention program over a two- and three-year period. The findings from the research were useful in making connections between the program and race/ethnicity, gender, and SES as well as comparisons to state and national school violence averages. The purpose of the present study is to add to the body of knowledge about school violence prevention.

The second chapter includes a synopsis of the research and literature base, starting with a research model upon which the present study is based. In addition, research on school violence intervention programs (especially Second Step, Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, and I Can Problem Solve) and relevant national and regional prevention centers are analyzed. A theoretical framework upon which the present study is organized is presented.
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II. RESEARCH AND LITERATURE BACKGROUND

This chapter presents a review of the research and literature and its relationship to the present study. It also includes the model upon which the study on I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) is based, investigation into three recognized early violence prevention programs (as well as others), useful references categorized by type, and the development of a theoretical framework for this study. Because behavior and student safety are extremely relevant issues, the researcher attempted to find a program that would reduce violence and instill problem-solving strategies in young people.

Research Model

The schematic below is a model of the proposed research upon which the present study is based:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violence Reports Statistics (local, state, national)</td>
<td>RCCP</td>
<td>Socio-economic</td>
<td>Statistics Trends Correlations Outcomes</td>
<td>Conclusions Recommendations Future research Policy Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second StepUMDNIInitiativesICPS</td>
<td>School-sizeLocationGrade levelsRace/ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Research Model for the Study of School Violence Prevention Programs

The model traces the steps that the researcher followed in investigating the problem of school violence, examining programs addressing early intervention, determining what roles variables have in influencing efficacy (if any), studying the outcomes for any revelations, and making recommendations as a result of the findings.

In other words, incidents of school violence (in this study), based upon state reports and statistics, may have been addressed by implementation of specific programs designed to educate students in handling problems in non-violent ways, such as the ICPS program. Variables that may impact the results, such as socio-economic status (SES) of the students, school size, location, and grade levels must also be considered and documented in any evaluation.
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The findings could also be analyzed for trends or significant differences between students who have been subjected to the program compared with those who have not. Finally, conclusions and suggestions could be made regarding school violence prevention programs and their effectiveness.

The research and literature fall into six general categories: a) articles, journals, and websites about school-based violence prevention programs reviewed for this study, especially ICPS, including comments from others, awards and recognition; b) the State of New Jersey, especially the Department of Education (NJDOE), the Administrative Code, UMDNJ (and the Violence Institute), and information about Passaic and Camden, New Jersey; c) the federal government, together with the U.S. Department of Education and NCES (including the Institute of Educational Services) and Centers for Disease Control, or CDC (which falls under the auspices of the Department of Health and Human Services, or DHHS); d) various articles and centers regarding violence in general, school violence, and violence prevention; e) medical and psychological journals and citations about studies linking aggression at home, heredity and exposure to violence in young people with adult anti-social behaviors; and f) research theory from educational journals and reviews that were useful in assisting the researcher in organizing and categorizing.

Research

Of the school-based violence prevention programs, not all have been carefully implemented and evaluated. Besides ICPS, by 2005, two other early intervention programs, Second Step and Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP), had been evaluated using empirical methodology. Each of these programs is reviewed briefly here.

Second Step

Second Step is quite comparable to ICPS: They both offer curriculum to children in preschool through kindergarten (as well as developmentally sequenced programs for older children). Second Step intervention consists of three units: Empathy training (12 lessons), impulse control (10 lessons) and anger management (six lessons) presented one to two times each week for 10-20 minutes. Materials include photographs accompanied
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by stories and discussion questions, warm-up activities using puppets and games, and role-playing exercises. Closure activities provide reinforcement and transfer of training from the class to the playground and at home. The purpose of the Second Step curriculum is to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children, and to increase their level of social competency (Moore & Beland, 1992).

Early studies of Second Step, conducted by Sylvester and Frey (1994) indicated that participation produced positive changes in behavior in 85 school children (compared with 38 control students) at the preschool-kindergarten level. Even though the researchers hypothesized that, as a result of Second Step, the students would gain social skills knowledge and improved problem-solving skills (evident by posttest improvement over pretest indicators), one reported statistical data and outcomes as well as the lack of random assignment to groups involved in the study limit credibility.

In a later study, statistical validation was reported. In 1997, a team of researchers examined Second Step in 12 schools (n=790 of pre K-K students) and found an overall decrease in physical aggression, such as hitting, shoving and kicking (via behavioral observations) and an increase in either neutral or pro-social behavior in the experimental group, compared with the control group (Grossman et al., 1997). Even though a randomized control was utilized, the reported inter-observer score (K=.60) was only moderate. External validity, therefore, could not be used to support generalizing the findings in any robust way.

Following the expansion of Second Step from a one-year to a three-year program, another study was conducted (Van-Schoick-Edstrom, Frey & Boland, 2002), using 714 students. Results from year one were inconsistent, since students in one grade level were presented with the year-one curriculum, while students in the next grade level received the curriculum for year two (therefore, they could not be compared accurately). Year-two participants were less likely to endorse aggressive behaviors than were non-participants, and they also demonstrated an increased ability to perform social skills.
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The above study was limited, due to the failure to assign participants randomly to groups designated as intervention (making inferences regarding causality invalid). Additionally, participants were allowed to self-report, allowing them to present themselves in socially acceptable ways, which may have been attributable to the Hawthorne Effect (rather than the intervention program). The researchers also concluded that long-term exposure to this type of training would most likely have longer-lasting effects than one-time training (Van Shoiaack-Edstrom et al., 2002, p. 213).

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)

According to the RCCP Research Group, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program is not only one of the longest running, school-based violence prevention programs in the United States, but also one of the largest (RCCP, 1997). It was originally designed to promote conflict resolution skills, as well as intercultural understanding.

The 51-lesson curriculum includes peer mediation and conflict-solving strategies that are useful both in school and in social situations outside of the school environment. Goals consist of reduced violence and violence-related behavior, caring and cooperation among others, and the promotion of inter-group understanding and positive relations (Aber et al., 1996, p. 82).

Developmental in context, RCCP is based upon the premise that social cognitive processes, such as hostile attribution bias and aggressive fantasies, predispose behavior in children to engage in more aggressive and fewer acceptable negotiation strategies when faced with conflict situations. Since normative beliefs about aggressive behavior and hostility develop early (Dodge, 1986; Farrell & Meyer, 1997), the RCCP creators theorized that in an attempt to alter the development of aggressive and violent behavior in children, intervention during this critical period (grades two through six) would modify the normative development pattern and help students to adapt acceptable alternative strategies (Aber, 1996).

Using more than 5,000 children in New York City public schools, Aber and colleagues conducted a study of RCCP in 1996, with a culturally diverse group and
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various levels of involvement randomly assigned: no intervention; beginning (one to two classes per school); consolidation (several grades); and saturation (school-wide).

After one year, the saturation group had the highest growth rates in retardation of aggressive problem-solving and hostile attribution bias (Aber, Jones, Brown, Chaudry & Samples, 1998). A high level of intervention included teacher training, a majority of lessons taught, and few peer mediators (Van Schoiack-Edstrom, Frey & Behand, 2002). “The children’s developmental trajectories were improved by receiving more classroom instruction in conflict resolution and related skills by RCCP” (RCCP Research Group, 1997, p. 27).

Unfortunately, the New York study only measured the short-term effects of RCCP. Another limitation was that even though the program was designed for students in grades K-12, the student sample only included grades two through six, and only “at-risk” children who lived in low SES areas. Finally, there was no mention of the “intercultural understanding” goals purported to be part of the comprehensive nature of RCCP.

I Can Problem Solve

Information contained in articles written about ICPS by Shure and colleagues is essential to the understanding of the relevance of the present study. Shure and Spivack (1979) collaborated on an article for the Journal of Clinical Child Psychology. As professors in the Department of Mental Health Sciences at the Hahnemann Community Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center in Philadelphia, PA, they co-authored several books and manuals regarding how well children who differ in social adjustment work through interpersonal problems.

The authors studied very young children, particularly those in pre-K (nursery school)-K, to determine whether or not they were capable of learning how to think for themselves in order to solve everyday problems with other children. Furthermore, they attempted to find out whether those who could learn through cognitive skills were more likely to be better adjusted (than those who could not).
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In seven prior studies (Spivack, Platt & Shure, 1976) they also found that those children who were overly impatient or excessively unable to control behaviors were more deficient than their more well-adjusted peers in two areas: a) formulating alternative solutions to social problems (e.g., how to share a toy) and b) consequential thinking (e.g., the ability to foresee what might happen if the toy were taken away by another child).

Through their research (1973-1974), they had discovered that impulsive children improved their behaviors through learning about how to solve problems: they learned how to wait for what they wanted, share, take turns, and not to become easily upset. The researchers also explained not only that ICPS training reduced and prevented such behaviors, but also that the impact lasted at least one year (Shure & Spivack, 1973 and Spivack & Shure, 1974).

Shure and Spivack (1980) published the results of a study they conducted of pre-K and kindergarten students (n=219) over a two-year period to determine the possibility of identifying mediating skills in four and five-year-olds by using the ICPS behavioral adjustments. Findings were noteworthy: The clearest mediation of behavior as a result of learning the ICPS skills was the ability to conceptualize alternative solutions to problems. Students in ICPS also became better able to cope with typical, everyday problems than those who did not benefit from the training. As they learned to consider various solutions and consequences, they also became more capable of coping with frustrations, better able to wait, and less emotional and aggressive whenever immediate satisfaction was not possible.

Shure and Spivack (1982) reported on implementation of the ICPS intervention over a two-year span to prevent impulsive and inhibited behaviors in four and five-year olds school children. The purpose included assisting children in learning to solve problems and in building cognitive strengths in coping with daily conflicts, in order to lessen the risks of serious social dysfunction.

The focus of the evaluation was on the immediate effects (after a three month period), mediating linkages (whether or not gains in behaviors could be attributed to gains in the ICPS skills), holding power (would the effects last?), amount and timing of
School Violence Prevention Programs interventions (the differences in training pre-K, kindergarten, or both) and prevention impact (whether or not ICPS may prevent behavior problems that occur later).

In year one, 113 children in pre-K were in the treatment group and 106 were in the comparison group. The 131 still available in kindergarten were placed into four groups: twice-trained (n=39), once-trained nursery (n=30), once-trained kindergarten (n=35), and never trained controls (n=27).

Results showed that favorable behaviors lasted at least one year, training was as effective in kindergarten as in pre-K, one year of intervention had the same immediate influence as two years, and that children trained in pre-K were less likely to show behavioral difficulties over the two-year period than were comparable comparison group students.

Shure wrote a summary regarding a five year longitudinal study (n=562) that was conducted using a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, and National Institute of Mental Health (Shure, Final Report Guidelines, 1993). The aims of the project included hypothesis testing of whether a longer term (three to four years) impact of early ICPS training, rather than previous findings (over one to two years) were possible; whether or not two years of intervention in kindergarten and first grade would have more positive, long-term effects than only one year; if a model in which a parent reinforced school training would be more favorable in terms of results than one delivered solely by a teacher; and to discover if and when additional training might be indicated when positive effects have diminished.

The reported results were encouraging. In year one, positive significant correlations were found between interpersonal cognitive problem-solving skills and measures of behavior. In year two, ICPS skills had an impact on behavioral gains, suggesting that ICPS plays a significant role in mediating behaviors. In year three, alternative solution thinking remained at the end of grade two (as opposed to using aggressive ways in which to solve problems). In the fourth year (grade three), children who most improved in behaviors were those whose mothers best learned how to apply the problem-solving approach when there were conflicts at home. In the last year of the project, three years after the initial ICPS training, in the areas of impulsivity, inhibition,
School Violence Prevention Programs and total problems, the two-year teacher-trained group emerged as superior to the mother-trained and never trained groups.

All of the above-referenced studies conducted by Shure and others employed scientific-based research methodology, “research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs” and “persuasive research that empirically examines important questions using appropriate methods that ensure reproducible and applicable findings” (NCLB Act, 2002, Section 7891, p. 37).

Other School Violence Prevention Programs (pre-K to grade six)

In addition to Second Step, Resolving Conflict Creatively Program and I Can Problem Solve, there are other programs designed for children in grades pre-K through six: Project ACHIEVE (pre-K to grade five), PeaceBuilders and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, or PATHS (K-5), and the Child Development Project, or CDP (K-6).

Project ACHIEVE (pre-K to grade five)

Project ACHIEVE is a social skills program aimed at building strong schools and strengthening student outcomes through “effective whole-school design/school reform,” and by helping schools and school districts to maximize students’ academic achievement through the creation of safe school environments, positive school climates, effective teaching, problem solving strategies, parental involvement, learning clusters, and effective data management. This process usually takes place over a three-year period and includes each class, the school, the district, the parents, and the community (http://www.projectachieve.info/).

The curriculum for Project ACHIEVE includes developmentally appropriate ways to teach students “the interpersonal, problem-solving, and conflict-resolution skills” they need. This is accomplished through instruction in more than 60 social skills which, when mastered, help children increase self-control, leading to academic engagement, as well as safe schools (http://www.projectachieve.info/).
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Schools that used *Project ACHIEVE* were encouraged to collect data on discipline reports, suspension/expulsion rates, numbers of referrals, attendance records, and student achievement scores to see whether or not there were any improvements (based on pre-post data) as a result of the program ([http://www.projectachieve.info/](http://www.projectachieve.info/)).

After 10 years of *Project ACHIEVE*, based on data collected during the year prior to implementation compared with averages taken during the 10 years of implementation, one school district in southern Florida (averaging n=700 over the 10-year period) reported decreases in special education referrals (61%), overall discipline referrals (16%), suspensions (29%) and grade retentions (47%), and increases in reading, math and language arts standardized tests. Another Florida school (averaging n=502 over a seven year period) also reported similar decreases in discipline and referrals and increases in test scores after *Project ACHIEVE* instruction. An elementary school in Texas (averaging n=1,000 over a five-year period) reported overall decreases in office referrals (80%) and positive trends in student reading and math scores as a result of *Project ACHIEVE* ([http://www.projectachieve.info/](http://www.projectachieve.info/)).

Only one published referred evaluation was conducted on *Project ACHIEVE* using a quasi-experimental design, with one instruction and one comparison elementary school (1990-1998). School leaders need to apply for involvement, and guarantee that at least 80% of the staff agree to participate ([http://www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/](http://www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/)).

*PeaceBuilders Program (K-5)*

*PeaceBuilders* is designed to increase student academic achievement by addressing risk factors which typically predict violence and by reducing aggression while promoting language development, teaching pro-social skills, increasing parenting skills, creating inclusion for the special-needs school populations and fostering safe communities ([http://www.peacebuilders.com/](http://www.peacebuilders.com/)). The main principles of the *PeaceBuilders* program are praise, avoiding put-downs, seeking wise people, noticing hurts, and righting wrongs. The program is not offered as a specific curriculum over a prescribed time limitation; rather, it incorporates long-term strategies, used in the everyday classroom routine on a daily, ongoing basis (Flannery et al., 2003, p. 294).
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In one evaluation of the effectiveness of PeaceBuilders, children from eight urban schools (n=2,380) showed evidence of decreased aggression and increased social competence after instruction, when evaluated with comparison groups (Vászonyi, Belliston & Flannery, 2004, p. 185). In another study, children from eight matched schools (n=2400) were randomly assigned to either immediate or delayed (comparison) PeaceBuilders intervention over a two-year period. Results showed reductions in aggressive behaviors and increases in teacher-rated social competence skills after one year of instruction when compared to the delayed (comparison) groups. Most effects were maintained for the instruction groups in year two (Flannery et al., 2003, p. 292).

In the larger study (n=4,000), however, there was significant attrition between years by students, as well as by teachers during treatment years (caused by schools which dropped out of the program). Self-rating by students resulted in some inconsistencies; for example, students in one of the instruction groups rated themselves less pro-social than the students in the comparison groups. Finally, although teachers were instructed to withhold strategies until appropriate, some felt that they needed immediate intervention and therefore taught the skills they felt were necessary, regardless (Flannery et al., 2003, pp. 304-308).

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), K-5

Teachers deliver the PATHS curriculum to their students three times a week for 20-30 minutes each day. Among the components of the curriculum are lessons about emotional literacy, self-control, social competence, positive peer relations, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. The object is to prevent or reduce behavioral and emotional problems (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2002). The materials are divided into four units: readiness and self-control (12 lessons); feelings and relationships (56 lessons); problem-solving (33 lessons) and supplemental, containing 30 review and extended lessons (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005).

Evaluations have shown evidence of improvements in self-control and the understanding and recognition of emotions, increased toleration of frustration, the use of
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more effective conflict-resolution skills, and improved thinking and planning after experiencing the PATHS program (when compared to controls). At the same time, decreases in anxiety, depression, conduct problems and sadness have also been noted (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2002).

Three controlled studies (using randomized control versus experimental groups) were conducted between 1983 and 1995, using one year of PATHS implementation with pre, post and follow-up data. One study involved typical children (n=236) in grades two and three in an urban district with 42% minority students; another involved children with special needs (n=126) in grades one through four special-needs classrooms, with 35% ethnic minority in three urban and suburban school districts; and another involved deaf/ hearing impaired children (n=57) in grades one through three, with 17% ethnic minority students in four urban and suburban school districts. In all three studies, teachers reported improvements in their students' pro-social behaviors and reductions in behavioral problems. Overall, PATHS improved protective factors and reduced behavioral risks in elementary school-aged children as reflected in teacher ratings, as well as self-reports, child testing and interviewing, and independent ratings conducted by impartial classroom observers (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005).

Teachers who delivered the curricula expressed concern over taking class time away from academic instruction to teach PATHS, and reported difficulty with fitting a new topic into their already overcrowded classroom schedules (http://www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/, pp. 6-7).

The Child Development Project (CDP), K-6

The Child Development Project (CDP) is a school-change program focused on creating a caring, supportive learning environment fostering a sense of belonging and connection to school among students. Methods include cooperative learning approaches, classroom as well as school-wide community-building activities, a curriculum that covers moral and pro-social attitudes, values, skills and motives, and literacy development (Developmental Studies Center, 2006).
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In one study conducted over a four-year period (1991-1995, the first year as the baseline followed by three years as instruction), 12 CDP instruction schools were matched with 12 comparison schools in different districts (in each of the 24 schools, n=541-582). Results of CDP instruction, when compared with comparison schools, showed increases in students’ sense of school as a community, school-related activities and academic motivation, and social attitudes, values and behavior; decreases were found in problem behaviors (Battistich, 1999, pp. 2-4).

In a later study, students from three instruction schools and their matched (comparison) schools that had participated in the study during elementary school (in grades three through five) were located throughout 11 middle schools in participating school districts (n=525) and reassessed via student and teacher questionnaires, as well as ratings of student behaviors and examinations of student records. In 65% of the outcome variables, differences favored instruction students over comparison. Variables included school-related attitudes, academic performance, personal and social attitudes, positive and negative behaviors, friends’ positive and negative behaviors, and teacher ratings of behavior (Battistich, 2001, pp. 2-4).

Concerns regarding CDP implementation have been in the areas of small sample sizes, whether or not positive outcomes would continue two to four years after the program ends, and differences between instruction and comparison schools which only took place within years and were not sustained during the second year of implementation (Solomon, Battistich & Watson, 1993, pp. 9-10).

Relevant References

As long ago as 1979, Edmonds (an early activist, with Brookover, Lezotte, Rutter et al., in what later became known as the Effective Schools Movement) advocated an orderly and safe school atmosphere, conducive to teaching and learning, in his “Correlates of Effective Schools” (Edmonds, 1979, pp. 15-24). As a result of research in elementary schools, Edmonds showed that student achievement was diminished unless students were kept free from the threat of physical harm, so student safety should be a primary concern for all educators. Since the absence of a safe learning environment
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impedes the learning process, effective school leaders should minimize such incidents as much as possible.

Noddings theorized that happiness should be an important goal in education: “We (educators) must provide the conditions under which children can be happy. Happy people are not cruel and violent and, because they do suffer with others, they will act to prevent or alleviate that suffering” (Noddings, 1992, p. 49). In fact, Noddings suggested “the best schools should resemble the best homes,” to “protect from harm without deliberately inflicting pain” (Noddings, 2003, p. 260). In order to create an environment that closely replicates a caring, loving home, educators need to show (through their own behavior) what it means to care by modeling (Noddings, 1998, p. 190). It is also important for teachers to speak directly about as well as explore their own attitudes about caring (Noddings, 1998, p. 191). To nourish children who will care for others, teachers need to give them opportunities to practice caring and reflection on those experiences (Noddings, 1998, p. 191). The last component in teaching children about caring is through recognition and affirmation of their actions (Noddings, 1998, p. 192).

The references regarding New Jersey were relevant to understanding the policies or schools in the state. The EVVRS is regulated by the NJDOE, as well as by the guidelines and definitions of violent behavior by students. Past and present VVSA reports were comparable sources of information regarding numbers of incidents, prevention programs being used in New Jersey schools, and specific incidents reported by county, district and school. The NJAC was useful as a legal reference and as a source of information regarding student discipline, due process, codes of conduct and specific case law. The UMDNJ website and the hyperlinks to the Violence Institute provided a number of exemplary school violence prevention programs being used throughout New Jersey, and specifically in the Passaic-City and Camden School Districts. The websites regarding the cities of Passaic and Camden provided useful geographic and demographic information.

The federal governmental sites, most notably the US Department of Education, provided linkages to statistics (National Center for Educational Statistics and Centers for Disease Control) that establish needs for school violence prevention programs in the
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Elementary grades. The “other” resources were private (National School Safety and Security Services, National School Safety Center), federal (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center), state (Center for the Prevention of School Violence), university (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence), and non-profit (e.g., the Council of Great City Schools) agencies. Together, these were of use in "setting the stage" for the way schools have been subjected to violent incidents over the last several years, as well as the perceptions and misconceptions about what is really happening in schools in New Jersey (and the nation).

References to medical and psychological journals (such as American Psychologist, American Medical Association, Development and Psychopathology, Developmental Psychology, etc.) and citations established a credible foundation for connecting adult anti-social behavior to early childhood (and even prenatal) experiences. The studies connected aggression, criminal activity and violence in adulthood to early childhood events, including trauma, witnessing violent activities at home or in the media (especially television), violent tendencies inherited from parents, stress due to pressure to succeed, being placed in schools with large student populations, and conditions into which children were born (such as fetal alcohol syndrome, or single-parent families).

The research theory information, gleaned from educational journals and reviews, was valuable in assisting the researcher in categorizing the present study (e.g., post-hoc, quasi-experimental, correlational, explanatory, retrospective, effect evaluation), and in using a prior study (the UMDNJ findings) to formulate new data and to make recommendations for improvements.

Theoretical Framework

School violence prevention represents a critical issue in education that affects students, teachers, parents, the community, and society itself. The literature indicates that the rates of incidents of school violence are rising while, at the same time, effective early intervention programs remain untested. In addition, there are many studies linking adult antisocial and even criminally violent acts to childhood aggression.
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Figure 2 is a representation of the theoretical framework guiding the present study. One conceptual element of research on school violence is based on literature suggesting that some children come to schools with violent tendencies as a result of exposure to aggression at home, unrestricted television or media violence, and heredity.

Violence exhibited in schools has detrimental effects on student achievement, classroom climate, and learning. Overcrowded, inadequately lighted schools with poor overall facilities are prone to violence. Since schools with persistently high incidences of violence are sanctioned and face loss of funding, both state and federal departments of education recommend prevention plans.

Although there are many school violence intervention programs, few have demonstrated, through scientifically based research, effectiveness in grades K-2. The ICPS program, which shows up on many lists as promising (including NJDOE and UMDNJ), has been implemented in two urban school districts in New Jersey recently (2004-2005) and is used for comparative purposes. As a result of the present study, essentially a “study of a study” (an analysis of ICPS as implemented in Camden and Passaic), re-analysis of the original data, review of related research, and recommendations regarding school policy, practice and future research are made in the final chapter.
Summary

The current study is based upon a research model which includes the problem of school violence, programs that address it, possible variables such as race/ethnicity, gender and SES, evaluation of the results, and recommendations for future research. Findings from studies on three school violence prevention programs (K-2 versions) were discussed, including Second Step, RCCP and ICPS. Other intervention programs were included for comparative purposes: Project ACHIEVE, Peacemakers Program, PATHS, and the CDP. References from the USDOE, NCES and CDC were valuable in making statistical comparisons, while NJDOE and UMDNJ sites were useful in cross referencing model and effective programs and information about Camden and Passaic schools.

The theoretical framework upon which the present study is based is a graphic representation of how the research about school violence, including the suggested causes, results in outcomes that may impact schools and society. The framework also depicts
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how the findings of one early intervention program, ICPS, can possibly be used to make recommendations about the future of childhood violence prevention programs.

Chapter III contains a discussion of the design used to conduct the present study. Chapter III also explains how and why the findings were gathered by both quantitative and qualitative techniques used by the UMDNJ researcher. The procedures and behavioral ratings used in the Passaic and Camden research are also described. A discussion of how the original research was incorporated into the present study is included for clarification.
III. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher describes the actual design used in the present study and explains how and why qualitative and quantitative methods are used to gather, summarize, and extend the data from the UMDNJ findings on the implementation of the I Can Problem Solve treatments in Passaic and Camden, NJ. Additionally, the procedures used to re-analyze the I Can Problem Solve programs in Passaic and Camden, NJ, are described, and behavioral ratings used in both studies are discussed in detail. The purpose of the study is to examine ICPS in greater detail than presented in earlier chapters, to determine if it appears to have potential in reducing violence in young children, in grades K-2, in the two New Jersey sites.

Design

The present study is basically a post-hoc evaluation, using available data from the implementation of the ICPS program in the Passaic Public School District over the three years of the grant (2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005) and in the Camden schools during two years (2003-2004 and 2004-2005).

A quasi-experimental or even non-experimental design (Johnson, 2001) is used to structure the assessment of ICPS, since the researcher had no control over when and from whom the measurements were originally taken (in an experiment, controls over conditions, or treatments, are maintained: Kremer & Achilles, 1979, p. 23). The design contains instruction and comparison groups, time-series and state data for each year (used as benchmarks). The researcher had no control over establishing true experimental and comparison groups. The terms instruction and comparison are used to explain the two conditions and groups analyzed. The term benchmark is used to describe the numbers of reported incidents of violence for each school district in New Jersey.

The instruction groups are those students in Passaic and Camden, grades K-2, who experienced ICPS; comparison groups are made up of those who did not. The years of implementation (each school year for either two or three consecutive years) represent the time-series, and the state data (benchmarks) are the violence reports for each year.
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The study involves relationships between variables. These relationships were used to find patterns and make predictions about possible outcomes (Johnson, 2001, 3-4). Age, race/ethnicity, and SES (what Johnson refers to as “extraneous variables”) could have an impact on student behavior, in addition to the ICPS implementation. They could also possibly affect each other.

Quantitative, extraneous (independent) variables cannot be manipulated, but can be used to examine inter-relationships. It is a type 7 design, that Johnson calls a “retrospective, explanatory research study” (p. 10), named for crossing the time dimension of the research with the objective. It is retrospective in time because it applies to things that have happened in the past: ICPS was implemented for three school years in the districts in this study. It is explanatory in its objectives because the researcher is interested in understanding any influence the program may have had in addition to the relationships of the other variables mentioned above.

The design and methods of the study follow what Kremer and Achilles call an “effect evaluation,” which they defined as relating actual program operations to “either intended or unanticipated outcomes, or both” (p. 23). In the present study, the intended outcome of ICPS is violence prevention, but there may be others too (e.g., reduction). Another type of quasi-experimental design discussed by the researchers is referred to as the non-equivalent control group by some (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Weiss, 1972) and the pretest-posttest comparison group by others (Riecken & Boruch, 1974). Subjects are not assigned randomly to either instruction or comparison conditions; rather, the groups are convenient and available. Due to their likeness to the instruction group, similar groups are used for comparisons. In the UMDNJ study, the comparison group was made up of students whose parents did not give permission for their participation in ICPS.

The UMDNJ researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative analytic processes. Surveys completed by teachers who implemented the ICPS program in their classrooms were used to obtain qualitative information that required teachers to report observations of their students prior to and after a specific learning activity. The results were then transformed into numerical codes that were analyzed statistically (quantitative
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research). Thus, the original research design included triangulation of the data in order to ideally, produce the most valid and reliable information possible.

Methodology and Background

The study is essentially an in-depth examination of the use of ICPS as a violence prevention measure as evaluated by the UMDNJ researcher in the Passaic and Camden schools, a "study within a study." The desired results are to use the findings of both studies to make suggestions and recommendations that are meaningful in reducing future aggressive behavior in school-aged children.

The method of the present study includes an examination of ICPS initiation, implementation, and fidelity. This approach attempts to sort out and determine who, using which research instruments, administered ICPS, during which school years, in which classes. It also investigates how findings were recorded, reliability and validity, and statistical analyses of the results. The researcher attempted to discover the reasons for the instrument change, from one survey to another, and to extend the findings to add to knowledge of program outcomes overall.

UMDNJ Study

Through piloting and evaluating violence prevention programs, the Violence Institute of UMDNJ serves as a source of ideas for school administrators and others who are searching for strategies to assist young people in living physically, emotionally healthy, and safe lives (http://umdnj.edu/vinjweb/).

Using a grant from the Juvenile Justice Department, Passaic public schools adapted the ICPS program into select district schools, to be implemented over the course of three school years: 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005. Camden schools were also chosen for school years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. Background information needed for the present study was obtained from evaluation reports prepared by the UMDNJ researcher and others (see Appendices A, B, and C).
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ICPS in Passaic

In the first year of the Passaic study (2002-2003), the director of curriculum informed the parents of the incoming kindergarten students that their children may be taught to solve problems in nonviolent ways, be sensitive to the feelings of others as well as their own, anticipate the consequences of their actions, and that they may learn coping skills. Parents were asked to sign consent forms and to return them to the school district, giving permission for their children to participate (see Appendix D). The children of the parents who responded negatively or not at all became the comparison group (not receiving the ICPS training).

In the second year (2003-2004), ICPS instruction was provided to the same children from the previous year, who were now first graders. Another first-grade group (who had not received prior instruction in kindergarten) benefited from ICPS instruction, and the same comparison group from the first year continued to be the comparison group for year two.

In the final year of the study, project year three (2004-2005), the instruction group was comprised of students in the ICPS instruction classroom for either three consecutive years, two years (first and second grades only, because during their kindergarten year they were not in an ICPS classroom, not in-district, or in a comparison class or school), or one year (second grade only, since during kindergarten and first grade, they were either in a comparison group, non-participating school, or not in-district). The comparison group from years one and two were still the comparison group for year three of the study.

Methods used by the prior researcher included an analysis of the actual instruments used, scoring procedures and estimates of reliability, and ways to analyze data. Archived data, which were reported for years one, two and three of the implementation from the UMDNJ Violence Institute, were used for data analysis. Students (n=242) were listed as either in the comparison group (in kindergarten and first grade within the same schools as the ICPS students), in the ICPS instruction group for two years (kindergarten and first grade), in the ICPS group for one year (first grade only),
School Violence Prevention Programs or in the ICPS instruction group in kindergarten and then switching to the comparison group in first grade.

School-level variables used in the prior analyses included school size, class size, and students’ eligibility to receive free or reduced lunch. Demographic characteristics were also enumerated, to determine whether or not there were any differences between the groups in either the race/ethnicity category (African American, Hispanic, White, or Asian), or in socio-economic status (SES). SES was measured by student eligibility for free or reduced lunch status (see Appendix A).

Behavioral Ratings Used in the Passaic Study

The classroom teachers gave the instruction and comparison students (K-3) pre- and post-test behavior ratings. In year one, the teachers assessed the students’ behavior using the Hahnemann Behavior Rating Scale, or HBRS (Shure & Spivak, 1974) in 12 activities, using a scale of 1 (not true at all) to 9 (extremely true). Teachers rated the HBRS categories (n=12) pre and post treatment (see Appendix E).

In year two the behavior rating was obtained differently at pre- and post-test by way of an expanded, somewhat modified version of the HBRS used in year one. An additional 16 items from a previously published scale (Crick, Casas & Mosher, 1997) were added to the original HBRS, providing a total of 28 items. The new version, MHBRS (Modified Hahnemann Behavior Rating Scale) demonstrated reliability (Cronbach’s alpha=.91, according to the UMDNJ researcher: see Appendix A) and assessed the new 16 items, in addition to the original HBRS (n=12) items.

In the third and final year of the grant (2004-2005), the MHBRS surveys were again used to assess behavior at the beginning and the end of the school year (pre and post). The aggregated data were specifically defined and available by grade levels, numbers of students in the comparison group and the instruction group, race/ethnicity and SES (the predictors). The role of the data was to show whether or not there were any observable trends or patterns between the predictors and the outcome (student behavior, after participation in the ICPS program). The data-gathering instruments were the pre- and post-surveys completed by the classroom teachers, regarding student behaviors before
and after the treatment). Reports of the results of the implementation for years one through three of the Passaic study that the UMDNJ researcher conducted are in Appendices A and B.

ICPS in Camden

In addition to the Passaic Public School District, the Camden (New Jersey) school system was awarded a similar grant to implement the ICPS program in selected schools. Data from the two years of that study, school years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, are also included in the present study for purposes of comparison to the Passaic data and to expand the evaluation of ICPS (see Appendix C).

Behavioral Ratings Used in the Camden Study

The Camden school system study used a 12-item HBRS survey pre- and post-test for both years of the implementation as a behavior rating of the students, with a rating of 1 (not at all) to 9 (very well). The survey was similar to the HBRS used in Passaic, but contained a few changes by incorporating concepts from the MHBRS to explain the HBRS ideas more fully (see Appendix C). For example, the HBRS originally said:

"Is physically aggressive: hits, pushes or in other ways hurts children."

The expanded HBRS, used in Camden, said:

"Is physically aggressive: hits, pushes, ruins others' things (e.g., art projects, toys); or in other ways hurts or attacks others."

The UMDNJ Study and the Present Study

The prior study, conducted by the UMDNJ researcher, used the demographic information about the student populations of the Camden and Passaic students who were involved in the ICPS implementation, and the pre- and post-surveys their teachers completed, to draw conclusions about the findings. Essentially, the researcher reported on whether or not any changes in behavior attributable to the intervention program could be found, as well as discussing any influences on the survey results possibly caused by the variables of age, grade, gender, race/ethnicity, and SES.
School Violence Prevention Programs

In the present study the researcher employed the following methods to develop the findings of the prior study further, and to then consider likely causes, trends, connections, and recommendations beyond the original research:

1. **Use the available data to conduct an analysis of research that has already been done, such as the ICPS implementations (post-hoc, or retrospectively).**
   In the present study, the data from the UMDNJ research are included for examination (findings from years one through three, Appendices A, B, and C).

2. **Analyze the relationships between variables (a correlational study).** In the UMDNJ study, the variables of age, grade, gender, race/ethnicity, and SES are used to evaluate possible connections. The original data regarding demographics (Appendix A) are imported into the present study.

3. **Examine the data in order to understand the effects of a program and impact of the variables (using explanatory research).** The findings from the UMDNJ investigation are integrated and expanded.

4. **Relate actual programs to anticipated or unintended outcomes (an effect evaluation).** The original purposes for implementing a violence prevention program such as ICPS are given, as well as the outcomes (intentional or not).

5. **Extract new, relevant information that contributes overall to the body of knowledge on the research topic.** Using any useful information from the prior study along with other essentials discovered from additional research, new connections are found, evaluations of the overall results (from both the prior and present explorations) are provided, and recommendations are made that may benefit future practice, policy, or research.
Summary

In Chapter III, details about quasi-experimental, correlational, and explanatory/retrospective research are given to shed light upon the type of study design being presented and the rationale behind it. The present study is classified as an effect evaluation, since the intended outcome (effect) is violence prevention.

The methodology and approach used by the UMDNJ researchers are explained, based upon available reports. Variations of surveys were completed by the teachers who taught the ICPS instruction and comparison groups in Camden and Passaic, NJ, pre- and post-implementation, to see if there were any discernable differences between students benefiting from the program and those who did not.

The present study incorporated the findings of the prior study to replicate and, when possible, extend the original data and analyses, draw additional parallels between school violence and pre-conditions, discuss possible causes, make demographic connections, evaluate the implementation of the ICPS program, and suggest ways to improve school violence prevention.

The original “Questions Guiding the Study” from Chapter I are included in the next chapter, along with the data relating to each question, in attempting to find answers or reasons for each. The ICPS research conducted by the UMDNJ researcher contained both quantitative (coding) and qualitative (survey) data, which are incorporated into the analyses in Chapter IV.

Even though the implementations of ICPS in Passaic and Camden were somewhat different, they both yielded similar findings. The data and analyses are in Chapter IV, which includes an explanation of how the data from the UMDNJ studies are combined and examined in unique ways. In this way, useful conclusions are extracted that contribute to the body of knowledge about school violence prevention (presented in Chapter V).
IV. ANALYSES AND RESULTS

In this chapter, the “Questions Guiding the Study” (from Chapter I) and the data from the UMDNJ studies of the ICPS implementation in both Passaic and Camden, New Jersey (from Chapter III), are incorporated into the present research. Besides an explanation of how the original studies were conducted and what was found, analyses of the data for the variables of gender, race/ethnicity, and SES are now included. The conditions and possible reasons for the outcomes and the researcher’s added findings are given when these data are available, after applying added ways of examining the data from the prior studies are presented. Discussions of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in Chapter V.

Questions Guiding the Study Revisited

1. To what extent did violent behavior exhibited by students in public schools in New Jersey (specifically, as represented by data from Passaic and Camden) seem to be influenced by intervention or prevention programs? What were the discernable differences between students who had participated in violence prevention training, such as I Can Problem Solve (or ICPS) and those who did not?

2. How were social and emotional skills taught, and what was the relationship between acquiring social/emotional skills and a reduction in aggressive behavior?

3. What connections were drawn about the effects of the program and gender, grade, race/ethnicity or SES?

4. How did these results (e.g., in Camden and Passaic) compare with other school violence reports in New Jersey?

5. What were the national averages in comparison?

6. What trends, correlations, comparisons, suggestions, recommendations, or connections were formulated from the data?
School Violence Prevention Programs

Collection of Data

For this study, the findings from school years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, combined, and 2004-2005 of the ICPS implementation in Passaic, and 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 in Camden, as determined by the original evaluators, were the basis for secondary and extended comparisons and analyses. Permission to use the findings from the UMDNJ study for Passaic and Camden was granted by the UMDNJ researchers and the superintendent of schools (see Appendix F). The results were reported in the following ways:

1. Descriptive data comparisons, listing the school districts, the school years during which the ICPS programs were implemented, the numbers of students in instruction and comparison groups, and SES based on eligibility for free or reduced lunch for Passaic and Camden (Table 2).

2. Demographics, indicating race/ethnicity of instruction and comparison students in Passaic and Camden who participated in the original study (Table 3).

3. Archived materials, such as letters to parents describing the study and asking for permission to allow their children to participate, sample behavioral ratings completed by classroom teachers before and after the instruction, and reports for the UMDNJ on Passaic and Camden.

4. Specific information about the Passaic instruction, including project samples, demographics, SES, gender, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and independent sample t-tests by school years and numbers of students (Tables 4-12).

5. Specific information about the Camden instruction, including project samples, demographics, SES, gender, and mean improvements on selected activities from the behavioral ratings by school years and numbers of students (Tables 13-20).
School Violence Prevention Programs

Unfortunately, the available data contain inconsistencies and gaps. Data on ethnicity and gender were not always reported or analyzed. There was no explanation for changing the survey instrument in year two (2003-2004) of the Passaic study. Since the present researcher had no access to the raw data, the present study used available reports containing tables of statistical treatments done by the UMDNJ researcher as well as summaries of analyses done in the original study (which can not be verified).

Table 2 shows the total numbers of Passaic students in the ICPS instruction and comparison groups over three years of the implementation, as well as the SES of the students based upon eligibility for free or reduced lunches (FL). The first and second year data were combined, because that is how the findings were reported by the UMDNJ researcher (see Appendix A). The same data were given for the ICPS treatment in Camden, although the SES information was not provided by the UMDNJ researcher (see Appendix C).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Instruction (n)</th>
<th>Comparison (n)</th>
<th>SES* (FL) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passaic</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* obtained by free/reduced lunch status in all tables (FL=free or reduced lunch)
School Violence Prevention Programs

Table 3 provides the demographic descriptions of students in four race/ethnicity groups: Hispanic, Af-Amer (African-American), Asian, and White, for students involved in the ICPS instruction and comparison groups in both the Passaic and Camden studies. Gender data from both studies were incomplete and only reported for Passaic, school year 2004-2005 (Table 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools/Year(s)</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Af-Amer</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passaic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camden</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The race/ethnicity totals indicate a predominantly Hispanic student population in the Passaic study, while the Camden children were mostly African-American.
School Violence Prevention Programs

Materials/instruments

Behavioral ratings, sample letters to parents and reports for the UMDNJ are found in Appendices A through E. Following a cover sheet containing basic information including the date, the name of the child (either ICPS instruction or comparison) being rated, age, gender, school and the rater’s name, a two-page rating document was used. In Passaic, the child’s teacher was requested to rate the child using a 9-point scale (1=not at all true, 5=a little true, 5=moderately true, 7=quite a bit true, and 9=extremely true) in selected behaviors, pre- and post-treatment. The original behavioral rating had 12 categories in year one (2002-2003), later expanded by 16, totaling 28 in year two (2003-2004). The 12-category rating was used throughout the Camden study (2003-2004 and 2004-2005), using the same 9-point system.

A parental consent form (the sample was used in Passaic) was sent to the parents of incoming kindergartners, explaining the purpose of the implementation of ICPS and asking for permission to allow their children to participate. Children whose parents granted permission became the instruction group, while those who were not given permission (or who did not respond to the consent form) became the comparison group.

The UMDNJ reports for Passaic included a description of the project sample (e.g., numbers of children in instruction and comparison groups, grade levels, race/ethnicity, SES based on free/reduced price lunch status, and gender), data analysis (comparing mean change scores of instruction and comparison groups, based upon pre- and post-ratings), and a general discussion of the findings. The Camden reports also provided information about the students (such as numbers, race and gender) as well as mean changes based on instruction compared with comparison groups. In addition, the 12 behavioral items were categorized into groups and analyzed. The report ends with a summary of the findings.
School Violence Prevention Programs

Data and findings

Analyses

Descriptive statistics, such as mean scores for pre- and post-tests for every group (three year, two year, one year, and control), percentages of total numbers in each group (e.g., what percentage of the total number of students was the comparison group?), race/ethnicity breakdown, and SES are analyzed in Tables 4-12 (Passaic) and Tables 13-20 (Camden). All data are reported by groups to protect anonymity.

Analyses are conducted to determine what relationship the independent variables (or predictors) of the ICPS program, race/ethnicity, and SES, have upon the dependent variable (outcome) of student behavior by using data obtained from the behavioral ratings completed by the teachers. This information could also be useful in determining which of the predictors had the greatest impact on behavior, as well as whether or not the predictors influenced each other.

Results of the statistical analyses were used to compare with school violence percentages statewide as well as nationally, as derived from the research. The data were thoroughly analyzed for similarities, relationships and/or differences.

ICPS in the Passaic Public Schools

The following tables (4-12) summarize the project samples, demographic characteristics, socio-economic status, gender, and mean score changes by instruction status in the Passaic study conducted by the UMDNJ researcher.

Table 4 describes the Passaic students for years one (2002-2003) and two (2003-2004) that were involved in the ICPS study as kindergartners or first graders, in either the instruction or comparison groups. Some children were only on the instruction group in year two, and still others changed from instruction in year one to comparison in year two.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Project Sample</th>
<th>Project Sample</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>Project Sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(kindergarten)</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>comparison group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(first grade)</td>
<td>for two years</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICPS group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for two years</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICPS in first grade only</td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICPS group in year one (in kindergarten), then changed to comparison</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>242</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next table (Table 5) contains information about year three (2004-2005) students in Passaic. Besides the three-year instruction and comparison groups, some children were only in instruction for two or even one year.
### Table 5. ICPS Project Sample, Year Three: Passaic Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Project Sample</th>
<th>Year Three</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>comparison group</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for three years</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICPS group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for three years</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICPS group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for two years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(first and second grades only)*</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICPS for one year (second grade only)**</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Either not in an ICPS group, not in district, or in a comparison group in K.
**Either in a comparison group, non-participating school, or not in district K-1.

As shown in Table 4, 102 students were in the ICPS study group for two years. There was a noteworthy reduction in the number of students who received instruction between years two and three (see Table 5), from 102 students to 50 students. At the same time, there was an increase in the comparison group (from n=25 to n=44). The Violence Institute suggested that some challenges of implementing the program and conducting a research project such as the present study in an urban district with many other needs as possible reasons for this shift in numbers.
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The numbers of children by race/ethnicity in years one and two of the Passaic study are given in Table 6, by numbers and percentages in both comparison and instruction groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Race/ Ethnicity</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>2-Year Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Af-Amer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 contains the same information (race/ethnicity, comparison and instruction) for year three (2004-2005) in the Passaic study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Race/ Ethnicity</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>1-3 Years Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Af-Amer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the Violence Institute did not provide specific data, the researchers reported that chi-square analyses revealed no statistically significant differences between the groups by race/ethnicity in years one and two. In year three, the comparison group was made up entirely of Hispanic students (see Table 7) compared with about 82% of the
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ICPS group. Nevertheless, statistical analyses, using t-tests to compare Hispanic and non-Hispanic students in both comparison and instruction groups, revealed that ethnicity was not related to outcomes. While reported by the UMDNJ researchers, data were not available.

Tables 8 and 9 describe the numbers of students in the Passaic study who were eligible to receive free or reduced lunch in years two and three (no data were available for year one).

**Table 8. ICPS Socio-Economic Status (SES), Year Two Based on Eligibility for Free or Reduced Lunch: Passaic Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>2-Year Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>Free or reduced lunch</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not eligible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9. ICPS Socio-Economic Status (SES), Year Three: Passaic Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>1-3 Year Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>Free or reduced lunch</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not eligible</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No statistically significant differences between groups were found when chi-square analyses were conducted regarding SES, as measured by eligibility to receive free
School Violence Prevention Programs

or reduced-price lunch, in years two or three. Thus, the group can be considered equivalent on this factor.

Although no data were reported regarding gender for the Passaic study in years one and two, there were data for year three (2004-2005), given below in Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>1-3 Year Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When chi-square analyses were conducted for year three, no significant differences between instruction and comparison group test scores were found based on gender. Overall, none of the factors from Tables 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 (SES as determined by eligibility for free or reduced lunch, race/ethnicity and gender) were found to cause any differences between instruction and comparison group behavior rating scores.

In Tables 11 and 12, mean scores of the Passaic students in instruction and comparison groups were compared for differences after one, two (Table 11) and three years (Table 12) based on the Modified Hahnemann Behavior Rating Scale (or MHBRS). P-values <.05 (meaning occurred less than 5% by chance) are shown in bold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two-Year Instruction (n=102)</th>
<th>One-Year Instruction (n=111)</th>
<th>Two-Year Comparison (n=22)</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>P-value (significance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean pretest</td>
<td>207.72</td>
<td>212.34</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.557 (ns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean posttest</td>
<td>220.79</td>
<td>218.84</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean change</td>
<td>13.07</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Students in the instruction and comparison groups did not differ significantly when pretest behavior ratings were conducted. After receiving one year of ICPS instruction, however, the mean scores improved by 6.49 (significant at p < .008); with two years, mean scores improved by 13.07 (significant at p < .012). Therefore, students who benefited from the ICPS instruction exhibited improved behavior after only one year, and even more so after two years.

Table 12. ICPS Independent Samples T-Test: Mean MHBRS Scores by Treatment, Year Three (Passaic Study)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year Three Instruction (n=141)</th>
<th>Year Three Comparison (n=44)</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>P-value (significance) (n=141)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean pretest</td>
<td>210.99</td>
<td>222.42</td>
<td>(not reported)</td>
<td>(not reported)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean posttest</td>
<td>211.94</td>
<td>226.57</td>
<td>(not reported)</td>
<td>(not reported)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean change</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.90 (ns)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the tables (containing information from the UMDNJ summaries in Appendices A and B) are available and not the data, the F and P values cannot be computed. These students were either in the instruction group for three years (K-2), for two years (grades one through two) or one year (second grade only). There was no significant difference between students in the ICPS instruction and comparison groups in year three of the study (p < .05).

ICPS in the Camden School System

The following tables (13-20) contain data from the Camden study conducted by the UMDNJ research team. In year one (2003-2004) of the two-year study, the instruction group consisted of 81 children and the comparison group consisted of 59. No information about race/ethnicity, gender or SES for the year one population was available in the data set. Mean scores were also unavailable. Mean changes and p-values, however, were grouped into three sections and presented in the report: positive activities and characteristics, aggressive activities and characteristics, and miscellaneous activities and
School Violence Prevention Programs

characteristics. The activities were derived from the rating system used in the Camden study, which was the 12-item Hahnemann Behavior Rating Scale (HBRS) also used in year one of the Passaic study.

**Positive**
- Is liked by peers
- Shows concern for others
- Has good learning skills
- Displays positive behaviors

**Aggressive**
- Is physically aggressive
- Causes psychological harm
- Is emotionally aggressive
- Is verbally (sic) aggressive

**Miscellaneous**
- Is isolated
- Has poor emotional control
- Is inhibited
- Is victimized

Table 13 shows the results of mean improvements (comparing the pre- and post-behavior rating scores of the instruction group with the comparison group, which did not benefit from ICPS). The ratings pertained to the four "positive" characteristics. The following abbreviations were used: sig (significant) and ns (not significant).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Liked</th>
<th>Shows Concern</th>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Positive Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>.48 (ns)</td>
<td>.05 (sig)</td>
<td>.45 (ns)</td>
<td>.14 (ns)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instruction group improved on all of the positive attitudes after receiving the ICPS program for one year, as shown by the mean changes and p-values from the Mann-Whitney U test (used for rank data, when there are two independent groups).

In the four "aggressive" items taken from the behavioral rating, displayed in Table 14, there were differences between the instruction and comparison groups in year one. The numbers shown in bold represented p-values <.05, using the Mann-Whitney U test.
School Violence Prevention Programs

Table 14. ICPS Mean Improvements* on Aggressive Activities (2003-2004): Camden Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Physical Aggression</th>
<th>Psychological Harm</th>
<th>Emotional Aggression</th>
<th>Verbal Aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>-.83</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.0016</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note that improvement would be a decline (-).

The instruction group improved on all of the aggressive activities after one year of training (negative values indicated worsening).

Regarding the four "miscellaneous" items, an evaluation of the means from the comparison and instruction groups (again, using the Mann-Whitney U test) is shown in Table 15.

Table 15. ICPS Mean Improvements on Miscellaneous Activities (2003-2004): Camden Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Isolated</th>
<th>Poor Control</th>
<th>Inhibited</th>
<th>Victimized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>-.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the instruction group improved on all of the miscellaneous activities and the comparison group worsened on three of them.

Tables 13, 14 and 15 indicated that the overall results of the ICPS program in Camden showed evidence of students benefiting after one year in positive, aggressive and miscellaneous categories. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the means of the two independent groups (ICPS instruction group and comparison group, without ICPS
School Violence Prevention Programs training). The instruction group improved in 11 out of the 12 categories and the comparison group lost ground in nine of 12. The improvements were significant at p<.05 in seven of the 12 categories.

In the second and final year of the Camden study (2004-2005), 126 students were in the instruction group and 52 were in the comparison group. Gender and race/ethnicity data are enumerated and compared in Tables 16 and 17:

**Table 16. ICPS Gender Comparison (2004-2005): Camden Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Comparison (%)</th>
<th>Instruction (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 17. ICPS Demographics by Ethnicity (2004-2005): Camden Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Comparison (%)</th>
<th>Instruction (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Af-Amer</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Hispanic</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>not reported</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although data regarding outcomes by gender and ethnicity were not provided and therefore not available for added analysis, the UMDNJ researchers reported that the differences of gender and ethnicity were small and statistically non-significant.

For year two of the Camden study, the categories from the Hahnemann Behavior Rating Scale (HBRS) 12-item survey used by the UMDNJ researchers were grouped in the same way they were in year one: positive, aggressive, and miscellaneous activities. The mean improvements, using the Mann-Whitney U test, are listed in Tables 18-20. P-values of <.05 are bolded.
### Table 18. ICPS Mean Improvements on Positive Activities (2004-2005) by Groups for Instruction and Comparison: Camden Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Liked</th>
<th>Shows Concern</th>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Positive Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td></td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ICPS instruction group improved in all the positive activities, except for the “Liked” category.

### Table 19. ICPS Mean Improvements* on Aggressive Activities (2004-2005) by Groups for Instruction and Comparison: Camden Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Physical Aggression</th>
<th>Psychological Harm</th>
<th>Emotional Aggression</th>
<th>Verbal Aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>-.92</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>-.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td></td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note that improvement would be a decline (-).

In the aggressive activity categories, both the instruction and comparison groups showed a decline in all of the survey items. The comparison group actually did better than the instruction group on all the items.
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Table 20: ICPS Mean Improvements on Miscellaneous Activities (2004-2005) by Groups for Instruction and Comparison: Camden Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Isolated</th>
<th>Poor Control</th>
<th>Inhibited</th>
<th>Victimized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>-.80</td>
<td>-.82</td>
<td>-.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instruction group showed some improvements in the areas of inhibition and victimization, while decreasing in isolation and emotional control.

Although there was evidence of students benefiting from the program in both years of the study, improvements were less robust in year two than in year one. The instruction group improved in only five of the 12 total items overall, suggesting (with less than one-half success) that the instruction or the learning, or both, were less than successful.

Commentary on Data and Findings, by Questions

To what extent does violent behavior exhibited by students in public schools in New Jersey (specifically, Passaic and Camden) seem to be decreased by intervention or prevention programs? What are the discernable differences between students who have participated in violence prevention training, such as ICPS and those who have not?

The first question guiding the present study asks about the extent to which violent behavior exhibited by the students in the ICPS studies was decreased as a result of participation. The results of this study suggest that ICPS may be an effective program in preventing violence with a population of suburban adolescents who attended schools in New Jersey, if implemented correctly. The data suggest that there was a significant decrease in antisocial behaviors typically associated with violent activities in years one
School Violence Prevention Programs and two of the ICPS effort. Findings imply that the students may have learned, at least initially, to resolve conflicts in a pro-social way and were able to use these skills to deal with interpersonal differences. Students who have participated in ICPS contribute to the overall sense of safety and security in the school, therefore helping to create a more conducive academic environment in which to learn. There was no evidence to support the sustainability of this method of violence prevention.

In both the Passaic and Camden studies, there was some evidence of improved pro-social behaviors after the ICPS implementation. Unfortunately, there was also statistical verification that in the third year (in Passaic) and the second year (in Camden), there were no significant differences in behavior ratings between comparison groups and instruction groups.

*How can social and emotional skills be taught, and what is the relationship between acquiring social/emotional skills and a reduction in aggressive behavior?*

It would be prudent to implement such programs during the early, formative years of a child’s education. Learning about problem solving and handling confrontations while in school could possibly serve as a counterbalance to the outside influences of violence present in families, media and in society in general.

Studies have shown a positive correlation between witnessing violence and future aggressive behavior (Gray, 1988; Widom, 1989). Along the same lines, exposure to violence (in particular, victimization and behavior) has been shown to be associated with future engagement in violence and the use of force to manage interpersonal conflicts (Richters & Martinez, 1993; Singer et al., 1995). Widom (1989) referred to the link between witnessing violence and future aggression as “the cycle of violence.” Literature also indicates that prevention and conflict resolution training are likely to teach individuals to use prosocial techniques to manage conflict (Caulfield, 2000; Dishion & Andrews, 1995; Van Schoiack-Edstrom, 2000).
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The American Psychological Association (APA) stated it this way: “Rather than waiting until violence has been learned and practiced and then devoting increased resources to hiring policemen, building more prisons, and sentencing three-time offenders to life imprisonment, it would be more effective to redirect the resources to early violence prevention programs, particularly for young children and adolescents” (www.apa.org/ppovissues/pbviolence.html). The APA advised starting as early as possible, educating parents in prevention strategies, and addressing aggression as an antisocial behavior in a child. Effective programs should focus on developmental and socio-cultural risk factors and sustain their preventive approach over time.

Just how early prevention should begin and continue can be illustrated by the APA directorate: Since prevention programs that start early in childhood and continue through adolescence have the best chance for success, “it should begin even before birth” (proper prenatal care can reduce the risk of birth defects that could cause learning difficulties, which are often associated with aggressive behaviors).

What connections can be drawn about the effects of the program and gender, race, ethnicity or SES?

There were no significant differences among the student races/ethnicities or SES represented in the ICPS studies. Data were not reported and available regarding gender, although the UMDNJ research team report indicated that no significant differences were found.

Research regarding early intervention programs has shown that minority youth benefit the most because such programs offer them exposure to the social norms and values of the majority (Donatovich & Greenberg, 2000; Farrell & Meyer, 1997; Leff, et al., 2001). It is likely that culture, mores, values and experiences (such as viewing television, or what they observe at home) impact upon the expression of anger among children and especially among minority and low SES children, who may be exposed to violence (e.g., by viewing television programs without supervision, as key
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children). Exact mechanisms, however, are not clear and few studies have been conducted in this area.

Ethnicity, SES and number of years of ICPS instruction did not correlate positively to significant differences in the reported results. In Passaic, however, there were some accounts of teachers who were resistant to training (as reported by an evaluator and an ICPS trainer). The changing population of the instruction and comparison groups may have been the result of the difficulties in implementing a program and conducting a study in an urban school district (with a number of other needs and high mobility rates). Perhaps the time and effort for teaching staff members were devoted to other local, state, and federal mandates.

In the Camden schools, there were problems with the data. There were significant gender, ethnicity, and age differences between the instruction and comparison groups in year one (2003-2004); this was not evident in year two. Also, since only a limited number of teachers were used as raters (using the behavioral survey), the results were dependent upon the way in which a few individuals interpreted the scores (in both years). Data were not normally distributed and, therefore, difficult to analyze accurately.

Even though Shure (one of the original developers of ICPS) was part of the collaboration with the Camden schools, there were no data regarding how well teachers presented the curriculum. Scoring was also left open for interpretation, leading to a possible lack of reliability in the reporting of outcomes.

*How do these results compare with other school violence reports in New Jersey?*

The overall reduction in violent incidents recorded in the VVSA report for Passaic is encouraging (from 100 incidents in 2002-2003 to 53 in 2003-2004). There is no evidence of a connection between ICPS and the lower results in 2003-2004, however. In Camden City, there was also an overall reduction in violence of more than 700 incidents (from 976 to 222) reported for the year following the ICPS implementation, 2003-2004. It is not clear whether there was any connection between the ICPS instruction and the number of incidents recorded in the state report.
School Violence Prevention Programs

What are the national averages in comparison?

The following table depicts the rates per thousand of violent incidents in Camden and Passaic schools, compared with state and national rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Passaic</th>
<th>Camden</th>
<th>New Jersey</th>
<th>Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The New Jersey rates are based on the VVSA reports for 2002-2003 ([www.state.nj.us/njded/schools/vandyl](http://www.state.nj.us/njded/schools/vandyl)). National rates are taken from the NCES report on school violence statistics in “Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2003” ([http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=20066001](http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=20066001)). Unfortunately, the VVSA report and the numbers of violent incidents across the nation for school year 2004-2005 were not available at the time of the present study.

Overall, the rates for Passaic are below the New Jersey and national averages for 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. Camden is higher for 2002-2003 and lower for 2003-2004. It is not clear whether the lower numbers and intervention are connected, however. Future research could possibly show a relationship when the K-2 children who were in the study are in middle or high school.

Summary

In Chapter IV, prior studies of ICPS were examined in innovative ways. In addition, discussions of each of the variables and findings were included in order to find whether or not such violence prevention programs have relevancy and practical applications in New Jersey schools.

Chapter V, the final chapter, contains a summary including a brief review of the present research, a discussion of the problems the researcher encountered with the
School Violence Prevention Programs
available data, and insights about the ICPS implementation in Passaic from a teacher whose class was directly involved.

The last question that guided the study is then addressed, leading to an interpretation of the findings; recommendations for policy, for practice, and for future research, and final thoughts complete this report.
Summary

The present study was conducted because evidence has shown that violence among school-age children is detrimental to their health and safety, and is also an impediment to learning. Some research has suggested that the earlier violence intervention is addressed, the better the results will be. Violence exhibited by antisocial behavior in children has many causes, including genetics, environment, upbringing, media, and exposure to violence at an early age. School programs to reduce violence have been somewhat successful, but results are neither consistent nor long lasting.

The researcher had some difficulty in verifying and assessing the data and results from the UMDNJ reports on the implementation of *I Can Problem Solve* (ICPS) in Camden and Passaic, New Jersey. For example, there were unexplained changes in the behavioral rating surveys, incomplete or missing data (e.g., gender), differences in reporting between Camden and Passaic (making comparisons impossible), possible misunderstandings about the present research and why data were being requested, and confidentiality concerns. Although violence prevention implementation for the students who participated in the ICPS programs was not followed by significantly improved behavior, there may be reasons to believe that early intervention is valuable nonetheless.

Even though the researcher did not make any site visits to schools where ICPS was being implemented, some contact took place between the researcher, an administrator, and a teacher in the Passaic district whose class was used as one of the instruction groups. The teacher commented that in his opinion, the students in his class did not benefit as much as they could have if he had been involved in evaluating their surveys, given feedback about the results of the surveys, and provided better instructions about the use of ICPS materials and activities.
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On the other hand, the teacher also mentioned that the program was valuable in teaching his students to implement strategies in building levels of confidence (especially in children who were shy), improving self-esteem, learning how to solve problems, and developing learning skills. He also stated that since their involvement in ICPS, his students have continued to use the concepts they learned to stop bad thoughts, think before acting, and help them to multi-task without getting frustrated.

Since all but one of the questions guiding the present study have already been addressed in Chapter IV, there is only one remaining question, with regard to trends and connections that were discovered in the research:

What trends, correlations, comparisons, suggestions, recommendations or connections can be formulated from the data?

The literature cited throughout the present study suggested that school violence was a public health issue that negatively impacted upon the education of students in New Jersey, as well as nationwide. There continues to be a scarcity of validation supporting the effectiveness of specific early (K-2) intervention studies on improving student in-school behavior. However, study of class size and student behavior including experiences, meta-analyses, and reviews, generally show that in small classes, in grades K-3 and beyond (n=15-18 students), there are major reductions in student referrals for violence/misbehaviors when compared to larger classes (n=24 or more students). The objective of the research was both to study the implementation of a violence prevention and conflict resolution program, ICPS, and to provide evidence about outcomes where such data were lacking; the stated purpose of this study was to add to the existing body of knowledge on school violence, K-2.

This study explored, to some degree, the programs designed to reduce violence in schools. Prevention programs and the curricula that support them are valuable assets in assisting school children to learn about problem solving and behavioral skills in a controlled environment, where they can practice responding to others in non-violent
School Violence Prevention Programs ways. Violence prevention programs in K-2 also increase the abilities for students to interact in positive, pro-social ways (to counteract the aggression that sparks violent behavior). These programs draw upon the cognitive and behavioral development that children experience early in their schooling, attempting to break the chain of expressive violence. Logically, if antisocial behavior is addressed while children are learning about how to think for themselves, then prevention programs will not be needed when they get older. If violence is dealt with at an early age and children learn what is acceptable and what is not, later aggressive behavior should be diminished.

The results provided some insight about school violence and its prevention. They also shed light on useful information regarding one district in northern New Jersey and another in southern New Jersey that could be valuable in addressing the needs of the student population.

Although scientifically based research techniques were used to examine the effectiveness of ICPS in former studies (mentioned in Chapter II), and while the implementation of ICPS in Passaic and Camden showed initial positive changes in behavior, the results were not sustained and were seemingly short-lived. The possible reasons for this phenomenon were listed in the UMDNJ reports (for both Passaic and Camden), and are also discussed below.

Findings

In both the Passaic and the Camden studies, larger sample sizes, better monitoring and control over teacher training and evaluation, limitations on student age-in-grade levels, and standardization in scoring could have possibly improved outcomes. Behavioral rating surveys contained a scoring system of 1-9 (making selections arbitrary and difficult); perhaps a 1-5 system would have been easier for teachers to use, and more precise. Ideally, the instruments should have been aligned more accurately from year-to-year (surveys were changed without explanations). The findings were not tied to the schools in which the evaluations took place. Some reports from UMDNJ contained only summary tables and summary results of statistical analyses conducted by the original researchers, so the findings could not be verified or expanded because full data tables
School Violence Prevention Programs
(e.g., the n’s) were not available to review or extend. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to replicate the original study as it was described and reported.

Unexpected limitations developed during the current study. Although the UMDNJ researcher was cooperative at the onset of the current research (see Appendix F), later correspondence was not well received by the UMDNJ group. The current researcher was told not to make contact with UMDNJ during or after the evaluations. Thus, questions and concerns about missing data and other seemingly inconsistent analyses in the reports from UMDNJ and Camden (Appendices C, D, and E) could not be addressed. Future studies that involve available data of ongoing research, re-analyses or extended analyses should be conducted in a more open manner, where both parties (the researcher and the original practitioner) agree on the parameters, including confidentiality, the protection of individual rights, the purposes of the use of the data, and the right to review the findings of the researcher conducting the study.

The UMDNJ reports for Passaic and Camden were not aligned, another limitation that was unanticipated. The researcher could not verify whether the same researcher or others collected the data for the reports; regardless, it was difficult to compare or extract reliable information because information from one report (e.g., the data used in Table 16) did not include gender data; another report (used in Table 17) did not include race/ethnicity data; and another (used in Table 12) did not include F and P values. These factors made it difficult to compare the data to form opinions or to make recommendations. Although the present researcher constructed the tables cited as a way to seek comparability, the data necessary to use them reliably were missing or not reported. A compilation of the types and frequencies of student behaviors considered as violence categories would also have been helpful in analyses.

An editorial in Research in the Schools identified a number of common problems found in educational research that apply to the original UMDNJ reports: Lack of appropriate structure, important procedural information omitted, one or more important statistics omitted, sample size unclear or contradictory, inadequate information about instruments, and inconsistent figures or tables (Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2005, p. 3).
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The use of two different behavioral surveys is an example of what Dunkin (1996) referred to as “unexplained selectivity” in a guide to the types of errors sometimes encountered in summarizing or reviewing research in education. The use of classroom teachers to implement the ICPS curricula and also to score students is an illustration of another issue: a possible “conflict of interest” (Achilles & Finn, 2006). When feasible, “reasonably disinterested” teachers should conduct the evaluation of students. However, the realities of evaluating a program in the ongoing daily operation of schooling often form challenging tasks for staff members who are already overburdened with test preparation, delivery of the curricula, remediation, classroom management, and other necessities.

Additional steps recommended to improve educational research include more careful research and literature review, performed by the person conducting the study; better attention to validity (i.e., believability) and reliability (i.e., replication); more precise editing; the use of reviewers who actually conducted the study; and more accurate definitions (Achilles, 2005, pp. 15-16).

Comparing the available data from the ICPS implementation with the other school violence prevention programs outlined in Chapter II, there were similar problems. In some of the Second Step implementations, children were not randomly assigned; neither were the ICPS students (they were placed in comparison groups if their parents did not return the waivers).

In the ICPS studies, there were only short-term effects. The same phenomenon occurred in both the RCCP and the CDP interventions. Like PeaceBuilders, there was a high attrition rate from year to year in the Passaic ICPS study (e.g., from n=213 in 2003-2004, to n=143 in 2004-2005). Finally, in both the Camden and Passaic studies, teachers who delivered the ICPS instruction expressed concern over not having enough time to teach the grade-level curriculum while also teaching the ICPS material (the same problem reported by the staff members who taught the PATHS program). Research results show that these programs all have some value in early intervention, yet many have common problems such as student incompatibility, lack of valid research techniques, short-term effects, poor teacher support, and high costs.
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Costs are involved in funding school violence prevention programs, which can influence decisions about affordability when school leaders make program proposals to teachers, staff members, and boards of education. Table 22 is a breakdown of the current estimated costs involved in purchasing programs and training staff to deliver them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICPS</td>
<td>$1,000 per day plus trainer expenses</td>
<td>$40 per student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>$5,000-8,000 per school</td>
<td>$460 per school set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATHS</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$170-699 per curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$15 per student (use staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or $40-50 (use PATHS staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PeaceBuilders</td>
<td>$250-4,250 (depending on which level is purchased)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project ACHIEVE</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$125 per class set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$49.95 per parent video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$15-22.50 per classroom for materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$250 per sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$100 per poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCCP</td>
<td>$4,800 (workshop)</td>
<td>$55 per 25 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1,200 per day (follow-up)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Step</td>
<td>$169 per staff participant</td>
<td>$259 for supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$499 training for trainers</td>
<td>$269 grades 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>per participant</td>
<td>$249 grades 4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$169 per family guide facilitator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: CDP, PATHS, Project ACHIEVE, and Second Step:
http://www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov/matrix_all.cfm
ICPS: www.magei.org/about_se/IICPS.PHA
PeaceBuilders: www.peacebuilders.com/
RCCP: www.promisingpractices.net/
School Violence Prevention Programs

Besides the cost consideration, the researcher also found that the program developers themselves conducted many of the evaluations of school violence prevention programs. There is a need for impartial research. Also, in many cases, the violence prevention curricula were “packaged,” and therefore may not have been suitable to individual students with various needs such as learning disabilities, limited language proficiencies, cultural differences, and ability levels. These factors (costs, impartial evaluations, and programs tailored to particular student populations) should be addressed when school leaders choose violence prevention programs.

The Theoretical Framework Guiding the Present Study Revisited

The research model used at the end of Chapter II of the present study graphically depicted how the present researcher would conduct analyses of school violence and student misbehaviors. Possible factors contributing to antisocial school behavior included preconditions (such as medical conditions, heredity, race/ethnicity, SES, and home environment), outside-of-school factors (including parental status, media, television exposure, and witnessing violent acts), and inside-of-school conditions (like space, lighting, and especially class size). Other influences on school misbehavior that were discovered while doing the research included stress (to succeed, e.g. on standardized tests); whether or not a child felt “connected” or “engaged” in school activities through participation; abuse; frustration over being in a controlled environment; and gang activity.

As a result of legislation, such as the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), it was mandated that schools in New Jersey (and elsewhere) provide safe schools in order to improve student achievement. Students who may feel threatened or unsafe while in schools need to be protected from harm. Parents whose children are victims of certain criminal activities in dangerous schools are entitled to transfer them to safe ones; schools that are deemed dangerous need to have specific action plans in place to improve and eventually remove the stigma of being dangerous.
School Violence Prevention Programs

Through electronic reporting, school violence records are made public annually. The NJDOE also includes recommendations for intervention programs in their report. Programs for students in grades K-2 were studied, with emphasis on *I Can Problem Solve*, since much of the research suggests that cognitive development during ages four through seven transfers to adulthood. In other words, the ways in which youngsters learn to share, control their emotions, have patience and solve problems in their early school days are the same ways in which they will likely respond as adults.

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that any violence prevention curriculum needs administrative support. Teachers require training and class time to teach programs, as well as resources and adequate follow-up procedures. Staff development, administrative support, and clear guidelines are all necessary for intervention programs to work. School leaders and their staff members should decide together whether or not a program is likely to work in a particular school district, considering the unique needs of the student body. Another important factor in the selection process is whether or not there are any data about a given violence prevention curriculum, showing evidence of its effectiveness. Finally, cost issues, including money for time and materials for various violence prevention programs, need to be considered in the selection process.

**Recommendations for Policies and Practices**

Since educational leaders and their school districts are legally accountable for instituting and validating violence prevention and conflict resolution programs under Title IV of the NCLB Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110), it is likely that public schools in New Jersey have policies or codes of conduct regarding assaults, threats, bullying, sexual harassment and the other infractions mentioned in the VVSA definitions (Ch. 1). Likewise, many schools may also have specific punishments for each offense. What may be lacking is a mandated violence prevention program for K-2, selected by scientifically based research, having robust findings. And because leaders can only use the research that is available to them to make improvements for their students, it is imperative that school leaders interpret and select research based upon “validity, credibility, (believability) and utility” (Achilles & Finn, 2002, p. 2).
School Violence Prevention Programs

Although there are no data to confirm the disparity between perceptions and actualities, administrators may be underreporting violent incidents for various reasons: to protect their images as effective leaders (it would appear that they have no control over their students if too many incidents are reported); public confidence (the annual public "Report Card" contains data about discipline); job security (an evaluation of the school leader could possibly indicate that he or she is incapable of maintaining a safe environment for students); ignorance of the laws; media attention; and a backlash when accurate reporting (showing increases in violence) is compared with former inaccurate reporting (showing a more favorable situation). As a result of these and other reasons, student misbehavior and violence often gets underreported, if reported at all (Achilles & Achilles, 2000, pp. 2-7).

In New York City, teachers union President Randi Weingarten asked state department officials to take a closer look at how school violence is being reported by school administrators, who are pressuring teachers to underreport in an effort to carry out Mayor Michael Bloomberg's goal of reducing school violence and disruptive behaviors. Data for the 2004-2005 school year indicated 50 incidents (per 1,000 students) in city schools, compared with 126 incidents in rural schools and 62 incidents in middle-class schools throughout the state of New York. State education department officials promised to audit school records to verify accuracy in the near future (Einhorn, 2006, June 13, p. 39).

Since the exact definition of "persistently dangerous" is different in each state, the standards present a somewhat misleading overall picture. As a result, some states set the standards so high that few schools would meet the criteria (Troppo, 2003, September 19, p. 3A). Better defined principles should be used to explain the exact meaning of what constitutes a PDS (persistently dangerous school). Policies protecting administrators from criticism, sanctions, or loss of employment for accurate reporting need to be in place (so they could concentrate on the issue of violence in their schools instead).

As the research has shown throughout the present study, cognitive development including the ability to reason, make rational decisions, and problem solve occurs during these grade levels (K-2). Recognized (and researched) programs to assist children in
School Violence Prevention Programs

Making these kinds of decisions, therefore, could be implemented by way of school policies. Since research has shown that children were influenced by media violence, most of which they experience before and after school, school policy should also include family counseling and information sessions about limiting TV viewing, monitoring what children watch and listen to, and previewing electronic games before allowing children to use them. Prevention is most effective in changing negative behaviors when implemented early, before problems occur, proactively (not reactively).

Because children who experience aggression at home have a greater chance of being aggressive adults than children who come from non-violent homes, school leaders should reach out to parents and community persons to curb family violence. Whenever possible, parents should be an integral part of their children’s education. This can be effectuated through information sessions, open houses, fund raising, career days, student performances, PTA/PTO programs, and other activities to bring parents, their children, and schools together. School leaders who wish to implement violence prevention programs should seek support and participation from students, their parents, staff members, law enforcement officials, and school administration.

Ongoing programs should be implemented in schools or districts where certain specific student behavioral outcomes are expected: reductions in referrals, suspensions, expulsions, retention, and dropout rates. Therefore, assessment parameters would have to be part of any program design. Since the purpose of some behavior intervention programs is to decrease the frequency of violence, data accuracy is fundamental.

State reports should not only include data about recommended programs, but also more specific information about which school districts are using the programs and at which grade levels. Measures of effectiveness could be standardized to include such data as behavioral ratings, disciplinary referrals, and suspensions and expulsions before and after such programs are conducted. In this way, school leaders could access the information and make informed decisions about whether or not to use them in their schools. Instead of “trial and error,” they could therefore choose from among such programs used by their colleagues in similar schools throughout the state.
School Violence Prevention Programs

It should be noted that in one elementary school where ICPS was implemented, class sizes were high (kindergarten classes averaged 25 students, first grade classes averaged 20 and second grade classes averaged 18). Research has consistently shown reduced misbehaviors in smaller classes (15-18) compared to larger ones, for a number of reasons.

In smaller classes, teachers have more time to spend addressing students’ needs as opposed to crowded classes, where students are forced to wait longer for help (Wang & Finn, 2000, p. 218). Students, especially in primary schools, may become impatient and frustrated while waiting for teachers, leading to misbehavior. Fewer discipline problems occur simply because there are fewer students to misbehave; a “family-like,” relaxed atmosphere develops, which in turn helps to decrease inappropriate behaviors (Wang & Finn, 2000, p. 257). Issues that require intervention or disciplinary action can be addressed quickly in smaller classes (Wang & Finn, 2000, p. 333). Crowding negatively affects behavior, causing students to become lethargic, possessive, and even territorial (Achilles, 1999, p. 39). Improved behaviors, including long-term outcomes, were reported in a number of small class studies: Lindbloom (1970); Olson (1971); Smith & Glass (1979); STAR: Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (1985 +); Cooper (1989); Burke County (1992-2002); Project Success (1994); SSS: Success Starts Small (1994, 1995); SAGE: Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (2000 +); and in teacher “stories” from California, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Wisconsin (Table 6.12, p. 104, Achilles, 1999).

Given the data on class size and student behavior, decision makers should use a portion of the violence prevention budget to reduce class size as one conceivable intervention. The notion of improving the overall school climate in the primary, elementary, and middle schools is continued into secondary education with recommendations to reduce the size of a school and the number of students assigned to each teacher in Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution (1996) and Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform (2004), two publications from the National Association of Secondary School Principals.
School Violence Prevention Programs

“Seven Cornerstone Strategies to Improve Student Performance” include the following (82): “Increase the quantity and improve the quality of interactions between students, teachers, and other school personnel by reducing the number of students for which any adult or group of adults is responsible.” Suggested actions to support this idea include reducing a large school into smaller units (e.g., houses, schools-within-schools, thematic units, or academies); reducing the number of students assigned to a teacher; creating interdisciplinary teams (of both teachers and students) that share responsibility for student learning; and “looping” teachers with students as a team, who remain together for more than one year (Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform, 2004, pp. 6-8). The overall benefits of the connection between small classes and positive student behaviors are evident from preschool through high school.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are undoubtedly other interventions not fully addressed in this study which could possibly improve the overall school environment and reduce incidents of violence, such as more physical space, better lighting, and improved facilities for students. Research is needed that examines the mechanisms, processes, and expressions of anger in school-age children (Graham & Hundley, 1994; Hammond & Yung, 1993). It is likely that within the competitive environment of school, there is a great amount of stress that needs to be addressed according to the emotional needs of the child. More research should be done on the effects of stress on student achievement in primary schools, as well as on ways to reduce it. Pre-K or kindergarten classes provide the first real school “culture” for children, where many learn to socialize and interact with other children for the first time.

Follow-up, in-depth studies that examine the long-term effects of ICPS, Second Step, and RCCP, as well as other violence prevention programs, are warranted. Programs shown to be effective based on SBR should be considered by school administrators, as opposed to others that have not been examined, or have been examined and not found to be successful.
School Violence Prevention Programs

Student perceptions of violence should also be researched. The overall school climate, particularly in the opinions of the children who attend schools, should be given credence. Violence at school affects not only the victims, but also disrupts the educational process and impacts upon bystanders, the school, and the community (Indicators, 2005, p. iii). School violence can result in a threatening environment, physical injury, and emotional stress (Indicators, 2005, p. 74). All of these can be major impediments to student achievement (Edmonds, 1979, pp. 15-24). Interviews should be conducted with students to gain insight about their perceptions of school violence and its impact on them.

Demographic, cultural, and gender-oriented research needs to be conducted in order to find correlations, trends, and comparisons with school violence. The psychological and social aspects of school violence on adolescents also need to be thoroughly examined. Another important area that requires additional investigation is the causes of student expressions of anger and frustration (which lead to school violence). A comprehensive study should be conducted to examine school violence and its affect on students’ emotions, achievement, and health. Collaborative efforts to maintain safe schools involving students, parents and extended families, and the community are beginning to show promising results. The Violence Intervention Program, which combines early intervention, counseling, and education, and includes schools, children, parents, and the police department, is one example (Ososky & Ososky, 2001); DARE (Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education) and SAFE (Safety Awareness for Everyone) are others (Kersten, 2006).

Future research needs to be conducted in order to develop effective intervention programs. Continued research is needed in the area of school violence causation, as well as in ways in which to break the “cycle of violence” beginning with witnessing violence and acting out in school. The goal is to provide for a safe school environment, where every child can learn, without fear.
A Final Note

Regardless of the current level of school violence, the average age of both offenders and victims of violence has been growing younger (U.S. Dept. of Justice, 1990). Research also suggests not only that aggressive children become violent adults, but also that violence is intergenerational, transmitted from one generation to the next (Widom, 1989).

Foege, a public health pioneer who played a significant role in the eradication of smallpox (as cited in Rosenberg, Powell & Hammond, 1997), noted that the most devastating issue of the present time is the plague of fatalism: the paralytic frame of mind which says that we cannot change the way things are, so why even try" (Foege, 1996, Ch. 1). As opposed to accepting the fact that school violence is inevitable, and being satisfied with slight improvements in prevention, every preschool and elementary school leader in New Jersey should have an intervention program, small classes, or some other plan in place for every child in school. The goal is to improve the way young people behave, which in turn will benefit society as a whole.

As Fulghum wrote, “All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten.” Among the list of important things he learned are the following:

- Share everything.
- Play fair.
- Don’t hit people.
- Don’t take things that aren’t yours.
- Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody (Fulghum, 1986, p. 4).

Unfortunately, unlike Fulghum, not enough young people are learning these truths in kindergarten. They are surrounded by violence and aggression as a result of heredity, their home environments, their surroundings, the media, CDs, DVDs, video games, and society in general. They may learn about sharing and playing with others in kindergarten, but they also need violence prevention programs. And since they are too young and inexperienced to know the benefits of one program as compared with another, they are
dependent on their school leaders to make informed decisions about implementing the ones that work.
References
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References


Achilles, C.M., & Finn, J.D. (2006). The education administration (EdAd) professor’s role to assure that preparation programs address validity and critiques skills. Unpublished manuscript.


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Passaic Board of Education (2003). Passaic: A city and a school district with a rich history and a bright future. Passaic, NJ.


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Troppo, G. (2004, June 29). Schools safe but danger lurks. USA Today, p. 6D.
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Appendices
Appendix A

UMDNJ Report, Passaic, 2004
The following memo summarizes our findings from the implementation of the I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) program in the Passaic School District during the 2002-03 (kindergarten) and 2003-04 (first grade) academic years.

The Project Sample

The student sample at the end of the second project year, for which pre and post-test behavior ratings were received, was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: The Project Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in the Control group for two consecutive years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in ICPS Instruction group for two consecutive years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in the ICPS Instruction group in first grade only*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who were in the Instruction group during year 1 (kindergarten), then switched to Control during year 2 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These students were either not in an Instruction classroom and/or school, not in the district at all, or in a Control classroom/school during their kindergarten year.

** These five students were only included with the 213 "any" Instruction students for purposes of comparison with the "pure" Control group. They were excluded from other statistical analyses since they could not properly be included with "pure" Control students who had not received any ICPS training, as inclusion could potentially have obscured the instruction effects of ICPS.
Data on the demographic characteristics of the Control and Two-Year Instruction groups are displayed below in Table 2. Overall, there were no significant differences between the groups in either racial/ethnic composition or socio-economic status as measured by eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch. Specifically, chi-square analyses revealed no statistically significant differences between the various groups (e.g., 2-years vs. 1-year of ICPS; 2-year Control vs. 1-year Instruction) by race/ethnicity or socio-economic status (as measured by qualification for free or reduced-price lunch).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>2-Year Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>2-Year Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any receipt of free or</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reduced lunch, or direct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certification-qualified</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not receiving free or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reduced lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*We are missing data on race/ethnicity and free/reduced price lunch data for some of the students, thus these numbers are slightly lower than the overall sample.

During year two, student behavior was measured at pre- and post-test using a modified and expanded version of the Halbeumann Behavior Rating Scale (HBRS) that was used during year one. In addition to the original 12 items, 16 new items were included from a previously published scale (Crick, Casas and Mosher, 1997) which measures constructs similar to those assessed by the HBRS. This modified and expanded scale (MHBRS) demonstrated very good reliability (Cronbach’s alpha = .91). Higher ratings on the MHBRS reflect more socially appropriate behaviors (e.g., less aggressive behavior).

Data Analyses and Findings

We conducted analyses comparing the two-year Control group with both the two-year Instruction and the one-year Instruction groups. Comparisons were also made between two-year and one-year Instruction groups. Overall, students receiving any ICPS training exhibited more appropriate social behaviors\(^1\), as shown below in Table 3. Students receiving two years of ICPS instruction achieved higher post-test ratings on the MHBRS when compared to Control students.

---

\(^1\) Statistical significance for all analyses was set at the p < .05 level.
Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Mean MHBRS Scores by Instruction Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Two-Year Instruction (n=102)</th>
<th>One-Year Instruction (n=111)</th>
<th>Two-Year Control (n=24)</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>Significance (P-value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean pre-test score</td>
<td>207.72</td>
<td>212.34</td>
<td>207.24</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>.557 (n.s.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean post-test score</td>
<td>220.79</td>
<td>218.84</td>
<td>204.28</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean change score</td>
<td>13.07</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>-2.96</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The non-significance in the mean pre-test score indicates that students in the various groups did not differ significantly in their behavior at pretest (i.e., the Control group students behaved similarly to the Instruction students). As shown above in Table 3, there was an additive effect, with children receiving two years of ICPS improving more than those receiving only one year of training, as indicated by the higher mean change score. This additive effect is also illustrated below in Figure 1. Differences between the change scores were statistically significant (p=.012).

Figure 1: Mean Change Scores by Instruction Status

Conclusions

Overall, we can conclude that children who received ICPS training exhibited significantly improved behavior. Furthermore, there was an additive effect. That is, children who received two years of ICPS instruction showed greater improvement than those receiving only one year of instruction.
Appendix B

UMDNJ Report, Passaic, 2005
To: ____________________________
From: ____________________________
Re: Evaluation Findings from the ICPS implementation in Passaic Public Schools
Date: November 22, 2005
cc: Renna Edwards

The following memo summarizes our findings from the implementation of the I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) program in the Passaic School District during the 2004-05 academic year.

The Project Sample

The student sample at the end of the third project year, for which pre- and post-test behavior ratings were received, was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: The Project Sample</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students in a Control schools for three consecutive years</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in ICPS instruction classrooms for three consecutive years (i.e., Instruction 3 years)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in ICPS instruction classrooms during first and second grades only* (i.e., Instruction 2 years)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who were in Instruction classrooms in second grade only** (i.e., Instruction 1 year)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These students were either not in an Instruction classroom, not in the district at all, or in a Control classroom/school during their kindergarten year.

**These students were in either a control or non-participating school, and/or not in the district at all, during kindergarten and first grade.
Data on the demographic characteristics of the Control and Instruction groups are displayed below in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Control (1, 2 or 3 years)</th>
<th>Instruction (1, 2 or 3 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Control (1, 2 or 3 years)</th>
<th>Instruction (1, 2 or 3 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any receipt of free/reduced lunch; or direct certification-qualified</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not receiving free or reduced lunch</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Control (1, 2 or 3 years)</th>
<th>Instruction (1, 2 or 3 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data are currently missing on race/ethnicity for two Instruction students; and data on gender and receipt of free/reduced price lunch are missing for one Instruction student. These missing data will be obtained from the Passaic school district during December 2005.

All of the Control group students were Hispanic, whereas roughly 18% of the Instruction group was non-Hispanic (see Table 2). Chi-square analyses revealed significant differences ($\chi^2=9.44, p=.00$) in the ethnic composition of the Instruction and Control groups (students in the Instruction group were divided into two groups for purposes of statistical analyses- Hispanic and all others- since the number of students in the other categories was quite small in some instances). However, additional t-tests revealed that the ethnic composition of the Control and Instruction groups was not related to the outcome measures. (The following three comparisons were made: Hispanic Instruction versus Control students; Hispanic Instruction versus non-Hispanic Instruction students; and Control versus non-Hispanic Instruction.) In sum, teacher ratings of Hispanic and non-Hispanic students were not significantly different.

In addition, we examined whether the groups differed on gender and socio-economic status (SES). Chi-square analyses revealed no statistically significant differences between the groups (Instruction groups were combined for these comparisons) on our indicator of socio-economic status (i.e., eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch) or gender.

### Data Analyses and Results

Student behavior was measured at the beginning and end of the school year using the 12-item Hahnemann Behavior Rating Scale (HBRS), as well as the 16-item Preschool Social Behavior Scale (PSBS; Crick, Casas and Mosher, 1997), which measures constructs similar to those assessed by the HBRS. Both scales demonstrated very good statistical reliability, as follows: both scales combined, pre-test alpha = .93; both scales combined, post-test alpha = .94. Because the ratings on the two scales
were highly correlated (r = .80), we present the results of both scales combined. The combined scale is a nine-point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1 = not at all true, 9 = extremely true). Higher ratings on the combined scale reflect more socially appropriate behaviors (e.g., less aggressive behavior).

Initially, we conducted analyses comparing the three-year Control group with the combined Instruction groups. The results of the t-tests for differences in mean change scores (i.e., the difference between pre and post ratings) are presented below in Table 3.

| Table 3: Independent Samples T-Test: Mean Change Scores by Instruction Status |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Instruction     | Three-Year       | F-value| Significance |
| Group           | Control         |        | (P-value) |
| (n=143)         | (n=44)          |        |           |
| Mean change     | 0.95            | 4.15   | .02     | .90 (n.s.) |
| score           |                 |        |          |           |

Overall, there was no significant difference between Instruction and Control group students in terms of mean pre- and post-instruction scores: the Instruction group had mean scores of 210.99 (pre-test) and 211.94 (post-test); the Control group had mean scores of 222.42 (pre-test) and 226.57 (post-test). Additional analyses were run, including an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), which compared the mean post-test scores with mean pre-test score as a covariate, and disaggregated the Instruction group by number of years of ICPS instruction (i.e., three vs. two vs. one year of instruction). The results were similarly non-significant (F=1.93, p=.13). The change scores by Instruction status are presented below in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Mean Change Scores by Instruction Status](image)

Additional t-tests were performed, comparing each level of instruction with the control group, but were found to be similarly non-significant, as follows: three-year Instruction versus control (F=0.1, p=.94); two-year Instruction versus control (F=0.2, p=.88); one-year Instruction versus control (F=0.6, p=.82). In addition, reports from both district representatives, as well as the program developer, indicated that teachers in Instruction School 10 were resistant to training during year three. Therefore,
the same analyses were performed excluding School 10. However, exclusion of school 10 students from the analyses did not change the results (F = .22, p = .64).

Discussion

Overall, there were no differences in teachers' behavior ratings between Control and Instruction students. While the samples differed in terms of ethnic makeup, student ethnicity was not related to outcome. Similarly, there were no significant differences when Instruction students were disaggregated according to the number of years of ICPS instruction they received.

Anecdotal accounts suggest that some teachers, particularly those in School 10, were resistant to the more proactive training and observation approach that was used during year three. (During year two, the evaluator performed two observational visits to each Instruction classroom, early and later on during the implementation period. The observer in year two was specifically instructed to be as unobtrusive as possible. During year three, teacher observations were performed by the ICPS trainer). It is possible that teachers' resistance may have impacted their rating of student behaviors.

There was a significant loss in the number of Instruction students from year two to year three of the present study. During year two, 102 students had been in Instruction classrooms for two consecutive years, whereas during year three, there were 50 students in the Instruction classrooms for three consecutive years. During the same period, the number of Control students increased from 24 to 44. The changing composition of Instruction and Control groups may reflect the challenges of implementing a program, and conducting a research study, in an urban school district with many needs. The evaluator will be obtaining data from the Passaic School District to determine whether those students who left the study differ significantly from those who entered or remained in the study. As of the writing of this report those data were not available for analyses.

The lack of significant outcomes for the Instruction group may be attributable to factors (beyond the ICPS program) happening in the District and within individual schools during the 2004-05 academic year (e.g., No Child Left Behind requirements). It is possible that the tasks required of teachers to implement ICPS competed with too many other imperatives.
Appendix C

Camden Report
HFC/ I Can Problem Solve

This report is based on a study examining a violence prevention program for preschool children called “I Can Problem Solve” (ICPS), developed by Myrna B. Shure, Ph.D., Drexel University. This program teaches youngsters to think through and solve typical interpersonal problems with peers and adults. It places a strong focus on developing the child’s own ability to craft appropriate and effective responses to these situations, with adults guiding the children on “how” but not on “what” to think. This guidance includes helping the child consider “a) solutions and consequences to acts, b) what led up to the problem (its causes), and c) how they and others feel in the situation” (Shure, 1993).

Shure and Spivack found in their research (1982) that teaching ICPS skills significantly reduced negative behaviors such as impulsivity and inhibition in both the preschool and kindergarten years, while positive ones such as sharing, concern for others, and positive peer relationships improved significantly in the kindergarten year.

As part of implementing ICPS in the Camden School system, a formalized process for testing the efficacy of the program was developed, which including bringing ICPS developer Shure and Dr. Ed Gracely (a statistician) into the evaluative process. Collaboration with these two consultants from Drexel University enabled the Hispanic Family Center to design a more rigorous evaluation of the program that might otherwise be possible.

In brief, specific schools were identified as suitable for the ICPS program, then assigned to either ICPS-training or to serving as untrained controls, based primarily on school preference for participation at this time or in the future. All schools were interested in participation – the “guarantee” of training in the future was a significant incentive for the untrained schools to join the study. Teachers in selected classes in the trained schools received training in the methodology from Michelle Montano or from her mentor in this area, Ann-Linn Glaser. During the term of the study, after the initial training Michelle regularly visited the trained classrooms to provide support.

To evaluate the success of the program, teachers in both trained and untrained classes filled out a brief rating instrument for each student at the beginning and end of the relevant school year. In the 03-04 year focused on herein, there were twelve items on the survey. For each item, teachers were asked to rate how well it applied to each child, from 1 = not at all to 9 = very well. The items are:

1. Is Physically Aggressive: (For example): Hits, pushes, ruins others’ things (e.g., art projects, toys); or in other ways hurts or attacks others.
2. Is Liked By Peers: (For example): Peers seek out this child for play or other activities.
3. Causes Psychological Harm: (For example): Puts others down by calling them names, insulting or teasing them; gives mean looks.
4. Shows Concern for Others: (For example): Offers or seeks help for a child in distress; shows interest in others’ feelings.
5. Is Isolated: (For example): Child is rejected when initiates play with others.
6. Has good learning skills: (For example): Is actively and effectively engaged in learning; pays attention in class.
___7. **Has poor emotional control:** (For example): Is easily angered or upset by peers or adults; over-reacts to stress, flies off the handle when things don’t go his/her way.

___8. **Displays positive behaviors:** (For example): Says or does nice things for other kids; is helpful to others; shares and takes turns; doesn’t grab toys; able to wait his/her turn.

___9. **Is inhibited:** (For example): Child withdraws, is timid, shy, avoids jumping into play with others; is afraid to ask for what he/she wants; gives up too easily.

___10. **Is emotionally aggressive:** (For example): When mad at peers, keeps them out of play group, whispers mean things about a child behind his/her back, tells others not to play with, or be the child’s friend.

___11. **Is victimized:** (For example): Is teased, picked on, threatened, or otherwise bullied.

___12. **Is verbally aggressive:** (For example): Verbally threatens to hit, push, ruin others’ things or in other ways threatens to hurt or attack peer.

**Summary of 2003-2004 results**

Three schools were in the training group, with 6 classes and 81 children among them. Four schools were controls with 5 classes and 59 children among them. Nine of the students were three years old, an age at which there is little data on whether ICPS can be successfully performed. Since there were so few, they were retained in the analysis.

A simple idea of the effectiveness of the program can be attained by looking at the mean changes in each of the two groups. The **trained group** improved on all scale items from September 2003 to the end of that school year in 2004. The **untrained group** actually got worse on seven of the twelve scales, and was either unchanged or improved less than the trained group on another four scales. Only on the scale “enrol” did the untrained children improve slightly more than the trained children.

A statistical comparison of the changes between the two groups using a one-tailed t-test (the Mann-Whitney U test) found that on seven of the scale items, the difference in changes between the trained and untrained group was too large to be explainable by chance (p < 0.05, meaning results as good as those obtained, or better, would occur less than 5% of the time by chance alone). On all seven items, the trained group changed in a clearly superior way to the untrained.

Tables 1-3 show the mean changes and p-values from the Mann-Whitney U test, with p-values ≤ 0.05 in bold.

### Table 1 Mean improvements on positive activities and characteristics in each group for all children in 03-04 data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Liked (2)</th>
<th>Shows concern (4)</th>
<th>Learning Skills (6)</th>
<th>Positive behaviors (8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Mean improvements on aggressive activities and characteristics in each group for all children in 03-04 data. Negative values indicate worsening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Physical Aggression (1)</th>
<th>Psych Harm (3)</th>
<th>Emotional Aggression (10)</th>
<th>Verbal Aggression (12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Mean improvements on miscellaneous activities and characteristics in each group for all children in 03-04 data. Negative values indicate worsening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Isolated (5)</th>
<th>Poor emotional control (7)</th>
<th>Inhibited (9)</th>
<th>Victimized (11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The full statistical analysis of data like this involves more complicated approaches than merely subtracting it from post-test (or vice versa), and that attempt to control where appropriate for sex and race as well. Doing this inevitably reduces the number of "greater than chance" results somewhat, but in this data set, six of the above eight items showed greater change in the trained than the untrained, beyond chance, even with all adjustments in place. The final list of six items most clearly affected in a beneficial way by the ICPS program is:

- Psychological Harm
- Concern for Others
- Poor emotional control
- Inhibition
- Emotional Aggression
- Victimization

Thus, this study found substantial evidence for a benefit to the ICPS program in the 2003-2004 data. On every evaluation item, there was change in the desired direction in the trained group, and on 11 out of 12 this change was greater than that in the untrained group, which actually lost ground in a number of areas. Even when statistical criteria for comparison are applied, over half of the scales expected to be affected by ICPS showed "statistically significant" benefits to the ICPS program. That is, the differences in improvement between the trained and untrained children favored the trained group by more than could easily be explained by chance.

Full report on 2004-2005 data

Five schools were in the training group, with nine classes and 126 children among them. Three schools were controls, with five classes and 52 children. Unfortunately, this year there were quite a few 3 year olds (about 25% of the total), many of them in the trained group. Several of the trained classes were dominated by these younger children who may not be able to fully perform the problem-solving components of ICPS. Although we excluded all 3 years olds from many of the analyses, the impact of their large number, especially in certain classes, is difficult to assess. Overall the results are not as good as last year, and the inclusion of 3 years olds in the classrooms may have been a factor.
It is important in this kind of study to see how similar the trained and untrained subjects are before the study begins. Ideally, at pre-test, the two groups will be equivalent. As we hoped, there were indeed very few differences between the groups at pre-test on the 12 scales. Only learning skills differed at all -- the controls had a median of 7 versus a median of 5.89 (interpolated) for the participants.

47% of the trained children (participants in the program) were male, as were 54% of the untrained controls. 70% of the trained children were African-American, with almost all the rest being Latino/Hispanic (except for 1 Asian). In the untrained group, 80% were African-American and 20% Hispanic. These sex and ethnicity differences are small and statistically non-significant.

A simple idea of the effectiveness of the program can be attained by looking at the changes in each of the two groups. The mean and median change is used to summarize the patterns. On eight of the twelve scales, there was a more positive (or less negative) change in the trained group than the controls. On two scales, the mean and median changes disagree. On only two of twelve (liked and poor emotional control) did the changes on both averages favor the untrained group.

In terms of simple improvement, the trained group improved on five of the scale items from September 2004 to the end of that school year in 2005. The untrained group improved on four of the same five scales that the trained group improved on. All of the four in common were "positive" items: Concern for others, learning skills, liked by others, and positive behavior. Inhibited behavior showed a decline in the trained group only.

A statistical comparison of the changes between the two groups using a standard technique (the Mann-Whitney U test) found that on two of the scale items, the difference in changes between the trained and untrained group was statistically significant (p < 0.05). One was the inhibited scale, on which the trained group improved, while the untrained group worsened. The other was the victimized scale, on which the trained group worsened slightly whereas the untrained group worsened considerably.

We also created two combined scales, one utilizing the aggression items, the other using the positive items. Neither one showed a significantly different change between groups by any of several increasingly sophisticated statistical methods.

It may be that some children are already too "good" on these scales to improve much. To see if the effects might be more robust in the children who were rated in a poor performance range, some specific analyses were done on these children. The most striking results were on the "inhibited" scale, noted above as significantly differing between groups. Two untrained controls were initially 5 or more on this scale. Both got worse over the year. By contrast, 67 trained subjects in that range improved over the year, with the remaining one staying unchanged. There was also some evidence that training produced more reduction in emotional aggression. No other differences stood out based on this analysis.

In looking over individual teachers, one stood out as having a large number of changes for the worse (in the trained group). We reid some of the analyses with that teacher's results excluded. With this approach, fully ten of the twelve scale changed in favor of the trained group using both mean and median change. One scale favored the trained group if mean change was used, but not median change. The last scale improved more in the controls.

With the problematic teacher removed, both groups still improved on the four positive items, with little other difference from the results with that teacher included. The same two scales were significantly different between groups using the Mann-Whitney U test.
Still without that teacher, we finally added the 3 year olds back into the analysis to increase the total sample size. In this set of analyses, the trained group improved on five of the twelve items, controls on only three. On 11 of the 12 scale items, the trained group improved more (or worsened less) than the controls. This difference was statistically significant for Isolated, Learning Skills, Inhibited, Emotional Aggression, Victimization, and Verbal Aggression using the Mann-Whitney U test. See tables, below.

Tables 4 through 6 show the mean improvements for all children (excluding one teacher) by group, with p-values for the Mann-Whitney U test. All significant p-values favor the trained group.

Table 4 Mean improvements on positive activities and characteristics in each group for all children with problematic teacher excluded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Liked (2)</th>
<th>Shows concern (4)</th>
<th>Learning Skills (6)</th>
<th>Positive behaviors (8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>-0.075</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Mean improvements on aggressive activities and characteristics in each group for all children with problematic teacher excluded. Negative values indicate worsening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Physical Aggression (1)</th>
<th>Psych Harm (3)</th>
<th>Emotional Aggression (10)</th>
<th>Verbal Aggression (12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>-0.69</td>
<td>-0.92</td>
<td>-1.42</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Mean improvements on miscellaneous activities and characteristics in each group for all children with problematic teacher excluded. Negative values indicate worsening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Isolated (5)</th>
<th>Poor emotional control (7)</th>
<th>Inhibited (9)</th>
<th>Victimized (11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>-0.60</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td>-0.82</td>
<td>-0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary and discussion of two-year’s results

Evidence of benefit for the program emerged in both years, especially in 03-04. Improvements were still found in 04-05 but they were less robust.

Why did the program not show more robust and consistent benefits? Part of the answer may reflect the fact that in both years there were potentially significant problems with the data. These included substantial sex and race differences between the groups in the 03-04 data (not true in 04-05), large numbers of children possibly too young to fully benefit in 04-05, and the use of a limited number of teachers as rats, making the evaluation heavily dependent on the way a few individuals used/interpreted the scales in both years. Also, a substantial number of subjects did not have complete data at both time points. Data in both years was far from normally distributed, and thus difficult to analyze with the most powerful statistical techniques. In both years, we have no direct data on how well the teachers carried out
the program, although our program specialist was very positive about the ones she saw in action. Finally, on many of the scales, there was little room for improvement by many of the children.

It is also possible that the ICPS program is able to affect only a subset of the scale items over the time frame studied in 4 (and 3) year old children. In previous research, children became less inhibited as a result of ICPS, a change seen in both years of the program evaluation here. Victimization, which is probably closely related to inhibition, also showed evidence of benefit by the program in both years. Positive behavior changes were previously found only in the Kindergarten grade in-EL, which is older than the children in the current study. Indeed, only concern for others, and that only in the 03-04 data, showed evidence of benefit in the group of positive behaviors evaluated. Changes in aggressive behaviors may take longer to bring about than the time frame of this study, as found in Shure’s research.

We also do not know how well the teachers utilized the scales. Fewer than 20% of children in this high risk population were classified as a 6 or higher on the physical aggression scale, which seems low, based on Dr. Shure’s experience and prior research. Perhaps some teachers were rating children as “fine” without fully assessing their behaviors. In some cases, there may have been too little time early in the program for teachers to get to know the children before rating them, introducing an element of unreliability.

Despite these difficulties, there is evidence of a pattern of benefits for the ICPS program. Trained groups showed more positive (or less negative changes) on the majority of scales in both years. The differences were more robust in the 03-04 data, but some significant findings emerged in 04-05 as well, always favoring the trained group. See table 7.

Table 7 Scale items with difference in the direction of the trained students doing better than the controls. Statistically significant comparisons are in bold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>03-04 data</th>
<th>04-05 data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern for others</td>
<td>Concern for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning skills</td>
<td>Learning skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive behaviors</td>
<td>Positive behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression</td>
<td>Physical Aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Harm</td>
<td>Psychological Harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional aggression</td>
<td>Emotional aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal aggression</td>
<td>Verbal aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated</td>
<td>Isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Emotional Control</td>
<td>Poor Emotional Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhibited</td>
<td>Inhibited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimized</td>
<td>Victimized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Larger sample sizes (which would have provided more power and allowed for more sophisticated parametric statistics e.g., analysis of variance or covariance), with more careful monitoring of the training of teachers and evaluation of students, limitation to students in homogeneous age classrooms, and ensuring in the assignment process that groups were comparable on baseline factors, would all represent important enhancements to this research.

We believe that ICPS deserves further evaluation. Since classrooms need to be the unit of assignment, it will not be practical to significantly improve the research design, unfortunately. One possible enhancement would be to compare classes run by teachers experienced with ICPS to those run without the
program. Another would be to develop a measure of outcome that more directly reflects what the program seeks to instill in the youngsters. For example, can the teachers rate how well the children respond to actual situations as the year goes on?

References:


Appendix D

Informed Consent Form
Dear Parents/Guardians:

Through a grant from the Juvenile Justice Commission, Passaic Public Schools will be introducing a new program ("I Can Problem Solve") in kindergarten classes beginning this school year that is designed to help children learn nonviolent ways of solving problems. I Can Problem Solve trains children to be sensitive to their own and others' feelings, to think of more than one way to solve a problem, to anticipate the consequences of their actions for themselves and others, and to better cope with frustration when they cannot obtain their wish. It is integrated into a school’s regular academic curriculum. By teaching children to think, rather than what to think, I Can Problem Solve changes children’s thinking styles and, as a result, helps children to think before they act and to get along better with others.

I Can Problem Solve will be introduced in kindergarten in four schools this school year and will continue to be taught in the first grade next school year. Your child’s school may be selected as one of the four participating schools. To learn how well children understand the I Can Problem Solve skills they have been taught, Passaic Public schools, with the help of the Violence Institute of New Jersey at the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey, will be conducting research by observing children’s behaviors before and after learning I Can Problem Solve. They will also assess how well children remember what was learned in I Can Problem Solve once they have completed first grade. Your child’s own teacher will rate such behaviors as compassion, aggression, patience, emotional control, verbal expression, and cooperation. If teachers feel that a child needs additional I Can Problem Solve training, that child will be placed in a small group of 6-10 students to receive additional special instruction. If a child is chosen to be in a small group for special instruction, that group will meet during “story time” or some other regular small group session to avoid stigmatizing them.

Passaic Public Schools with the help of the Violence Institute will also be conducting research to see if being taught I can Problem Solve has an effect on a student’s learning. In order to do so, Passaic Public Schools will protect the privacy of those students who
take part in I Can Problem Solve. All academic records used will not contain your child’s name or anything that can be used to identify him or her.

Passaic Public Schools is asking your permission to allow your child to be a part of this important new program. Your decision will have no effect on your child’s school record. You may also remove your child from the program at any time. I hope you will allow your child to participate in this important activity, however. A copy of the I Can Problem Solve curriculum and the behavior rating form will be made available to you in the principal’s office if you wish to review them.

If you will permit your child to take part in I Can Problem Solve, please sign this form and return it as soon as possible. Students who do not participate will not have their behavior observed and rated by teachers but will still receive I Can Problem Solve training. Those who do not participate will also not have their school academic records reviewed. If you have any questions about your and your child’s rights, feel free call ———— to all.

Sincerely

Deborah Hadzik, Ph.D
Director of Curriculum and Development

I have read and understood this letter requesting my child’s participation in the I Can Problem Solve program, taking place in my child’s school this year. My son/daughter has my permission to participate in this activity. The Passaic Public Schools also has my permission to release my child’s academic readiness scores with my child’s name or anything else that can be used to identify him or her associated with them.

Name of School

Name of Student  Grade

Name of Teacher

Name of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Parent/Guardian
Appendix E

Behavioral Surveys, Passaic
Passaic Public Schools
I Can Problem Solve

Child Behavior Rating Scale
Year Two Pre-Test

DATE: ___/___/____

CHILD'S NAME: ________________________________

CHILD'S AGE: _______

CHILD'S GENDER: ___ F ___ M

SCHOOL: ________________________________

YOUR NAME: ________________________________

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:
IDENTIFIER: ________________________________

PLEASE DO NOT SEPARATE THIS PAGE FROM THE ATTACHED
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>The child is present but not engaged in the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>The child is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>The child is engaged in the activity to some extent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>The child is actively engaged in the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>The child is consistently engaged in the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td>The child is fully immersed in the activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To what extent is each item true of the child?

**Form**

Please do not put the student's name on this Form. Consider each statement separately. Please rate the student on each of the following forms. Use the appropriate scale to indicate the degree to which each statement is true of the child.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little true</th>
<th>Moderately true</th>
<th>Quite a bit true</th>
<th>Extremely true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is overly attached, clingy, or afraid to leave to explore and play on their own.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Seems fearful of new peer situations and jumps into play with other children fearfully.</td>
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<td>Is overly compliant and gives in or gives up too easily with peers and adults.</td>
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<td>Prompts or entices other children when playing.</td>
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<td>Shows concern for others, offers help to children in distress, shows interest in other children's needs.</td>
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<td><em>Pushes or shoves other children.</em></td>
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<td>でもやるが、だからやる。</td>
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<td>光る。</td>
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<td>光る。</td>
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<td>時には、彼がやる。</td>
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</table>
Appendix F

Permission to Use Data
"Boyle, Douglas" <boyledj@cmhc.umdnj.edu> writes:

> Mr. Fiasconaro,
>
> I would be happy to send you the results once we have submitted the
> article
> for publication and peer review has been completed. I will keep your
> address on file and send the manuscript to you when it is complete.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Douglas J. Boyle, J.D., Ph.D.
> Research Administrator
> Violence Institute of New Jersey at the
> University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
> Behavioral Health Sciences Building, Suite 1-D-1400
> 183 South Orange Avenue, PO Box 1709
> Newark, New Jersey 07103-1709
> Phone: 973-972-1717
> Fax: 973-972-1128
> http://www.umdnj.edu/vinjweb/
> Douglas.Boyle@UMDNJ.edu
>
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: James Fiasconaro [mailto:James_Fiasconaro@mcvsd.org]
> Sent: Friday, February 25, 2005 2:59 PM
> To: boyledj@cmhc.umdnj.edu
> Cc: fisherm1@umdnj.edu; wadeev@aol.com
> Subject: Violence Prevention Programs
>
> Dr. Boyle:
>
> I am doing doctoral level research on school violence prevention. In
> particular, I am interested in the "I Can Problem Solve" school violence
> prevention program implemented by the Passaic Public School District.
> Maryallyn Fisher indicated that you would be willing to send me a copy of
> the ICPS results, which may be useful in my study. If this is possible, I
> would appreciate it if you could send them to me at the following address:
>
>
Dr. Robert H. Holster  
Superintendent of Schools  
Passaic School District  
Passaic Board of Education  
101 Passaic Avenue  
Passaic, New Jersey 07055

Dear Dr. Holster:

You may recall that I am a friend of Dr. Lawrence Everett’s conducting research on the “I Can Problem Solve” implementation in the Passaic schools in 2002-2005. I received consent from Dr. Boyle, the UMDNJ research administrator who evaluated the program, to use the results (attached).

I am writing to ask for your written permission to study the “I Can Problem Solve” program and to use the data in my doctoral dissertation at Seton Hall University. Please call if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim Pasquararo

(201) 222-4164: home  
(732) 671-0650: school

attachment