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Peer Facilitators: An Exploratory Study

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PEER FACILITATORS:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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PEER FACILITATORS:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Jeff Haskins
Bowling Green, Kentucky
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Seventh grade males were trained as peer facilitators
for a group of sixth grade males (peers) as part of an ex-
perimental guidance program. Training of peer facilitators
was implemented through a modified short term human re-
lations development model. Measures of personal, social,
and overall adjustment, as assessed by the California Test
of Personality, were obtained for the facilitators and
group members before and after the peer facilitator program.
No significant pre- and post-test differences were obtained
on the select personality variables for either group. A
method for assessing facilitative responsiveness was de-
veloped using written peer stimulus statements. In com-
parison to a control group and to the peers, the peer
facilitators demonstrated continuous increases in level of
facilitative responsiveness. The peers increased in level
of facilitative responsiveness during the time in which
they participated in peer-led groups. Due to the small
sample size, the statistical significance of these increases
was not determined.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The use of nonprofessional or paraprofessional helpers
for mental health service delivery has experienced great
popularity in recent years. The rationale for their usage
is based on the belief that nonprofessional peers are better
able to identify with clients. Training models for adult
paraprofessionals have evolved to provide interpersonal
skills development. Based on research concerning those
dimensions which make adult mental health professionals
effective, paraprofessional training models intend to im-
prove the trainees' ability to relate to others.

Since adults have been successfully trained to
function as paraprofessionals with other adults, it was
inevitable that the concept would be extended to include
the use of children as paraprofessionals trained to help
other children. The prototype for using peers for remedial
treatment of children is found in the student-to-student
tutoring programs. The paraprofessional movement eventually
expanded such that programs utilizing "child paraprofessionals,"
i.e., peer facilitator programs, for facilitating adjust-
ment in other children have developed. These programs apply
the training and concepts developed from adult paraprofessional
programs to children.

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In the area of pupil guidance, peer facilitator programs may be a unique and potentially powerful means of utilizing peer forces to supplement the elementary school student's curriculum by meeting some of the child's affective growth needs. Peer facilitators are trained in listening skills and in the communication of interpersonally helpful (i.e., facilitative) attributes such as empathy, warmth, concreteness, and positive regard. They function in dyads and in groups to help others their own age talk about their ideas and feelings. For many elementary students, interactions with a trained peer could make a significant difference in personal and social adjustment.

Like the tutoring programs, the peer facilitator approach to guidance has three distinct advantages. First, there is efficient use of immediately available resources to extend the outreach of an elementary school guidance unit. The number of students who have access to guidance services is greatly increased. Second, the modeling factor in peer influence is used in a positive way. The effectiveness of peer modeling has been repeatedly demonstrated in the literature. Third, there are potential gains to those trained as peer facilitators in terms of interpersonal skills development. Peer facilitator programs are intended as "multi-modal treatment," (i.e., they may benefit those who give help as well as those who receive it).

Previous research on the effectiveness of peer facilitator programs has relied mainly on subjective evalu-

ations of teachers and participants. More objective

measures of program effectiveness and multi-modal treat-

ment effects are needed. Therefore, the present study is

an exploratory investigation of an experimental guidance

program designed to determine the efficacy of training

elementary students as peer facilitators. Measures of inter-

personal skills and select personality variables were used

to assess multi-modal treatment effects.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The importance of peer facilitator programs was expressed in an editorial by Myrick (1976), "Because counselor-student ratios are high, peer facilitator programs may be the only viable approach for providing guidance services to all children" (p. 3). Although peer facilitator programs are relatively new and have not been extensively investigated, tutoring programs have been investigated for their effects on both the tutor and the tutee.

The evidence regarding the effectiveness of student-to-student tutoring on the tutors is equivocal. Erikson (1971) and Kretuzer (1973) looked specifically at gains to both tutors and tutees, and reported no measurable benefit to either. Milford (1976) and Kane (1976) both found that student tutors were as effective as the adult teachers, but neither assessed gains to the tutor. Both studies demonstrated that the student tutors could perform effectively when trained in a particular helping skill.

Lawson (1976) examined the comparative effectiveness of peer and adult tutors in advancing six- and seven-year olds to higher levels of Piagetian structuring. She found that peer tutors can not only be as effective as adults in inducing cognitive advances in their pupils, but can also

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be expected to advance their own structuring as a function of their tutoring.

There is some evidence that training of children in a particular helping skill is possible. Further, such training may be critical to the successful outcome of the helping interaction. One of the most common approaches to paraprofessional training, including peer facilitator training, is human relations development training.

Systematic Human Relations Development Training

Adhering to a humanistically oriented viewpoint of education, Gazda (1977) has developed a systematic human relations development training model designed to facilitate a healthy student-teacher relationship. The terms human relations training and human relations development refer to skills development in interpersonal relationships. Specifically, these skills include listening and communicating in ways which facilitate problem solving for those seeking help. Gazda believes that a central concept of education is the development of unique personalities by bringing students' ideas and feelings into communication with others.

The belief that all effective interpersonal processes share a common core of conditions conductive to facilitative human experiences is the basis for Gazda's model and was derived from Carkhuff (1969). The facilitative conditions or therapeutic dimensions include empathy, warmth, genuineness, self-disclosure, positive regard, and immediacy of the

relationship.

Effectiveness of the Human Relations Model

Research with pupils at various grade levels supports the effectiveness of the human relations development model. Truax and Tatum (1966) studied the effects of empathy, positive regard, and genuineness communicated to pre-school children by their teachers. They concluded that empathy and positive regard were significantly related to positive changes in the children's adjustment to school, to teachers, and to peers. Stoffer (1970) examined the relationship between levels of empathy and positive regard offered by teacher-counselors and measures of elementary school achievement and classroom behavior. He reported a significant positive relationship between these variables.

Assessment of Training Effectiveness

Two studies applying human relations development training to peer helpers offer alternative methods of assessing training effectiveness. Balzer (1974) utilized the Global Scale to rate psychiatric in-patients' interviews before and after systematic human relations training. Chishom (1976) used ratings of client stimulus statements to evaluate the ability of offenders trained as peer counselors to demonstrate helping skills.

Human Relations Training for Elementary and Secondary Students

Nappa (1975) has traced the historical development

of human relations training and human relations curricula in elementary and secondary education. She argued that newly developed human relations curricula need to be empirically tested for their influence upon educators and students at all grade levels.

In assessing the personal and interpersonal growth needs of high school students through a questionnaire, Farmer (1975) concluded that there is a clear need for human relations training groups. He proposed that the groups would help build relationships and communication skills, and foster personal growth and values clarification.

Glenn (1975) evaluated the effects of one semester of human relations training on the attitudes of middle school students toward study. The training focused on "attitude building." Compared to a control group, the human relations training group scored significantly higher on the study attitude and teacher approval sub-tests of the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes. Although the experimental group tended to be more approving of their teacher's skills, they did not differ from the control in their attitude toward school in general.

Evaluating the effects of four weeks of human relations training on ninth grade students, Casey (1975) reported that students were significantly more empathic than a control group as assessed by the Index of Perception and Index of Responding. However, the groups did not differ significantly on the Self-Concept Scale, the How Others See Me Scale, and

a sociometric questionnaire.

In a study of the effects of systematic human relations training on fourth graders, Deselle (1975) found that students who received training were observed to be more cooperative in class and were rated more positively by their teachers than students in the control group. However, teachers were aware of which group the students were in and their expectations for change may have biased their perceptions.

Rocco (1974) studied the effects of a ten lesson in-class human relations training module on the personal and social adjustment of a group of fourth graders as evaluated by the California Test of Personality. Following training, the experimental group was significantly higher in their levels of overall adjustment.

Although it appears that elementary students can be trained to be more facilitative (i.e., to display improved sensitivity to affect in others), (Casey, 1975) has yet to be shown whether the approach is effective in training a peer facilitator. There is limited information about the generalization of skills acquired through didactic training to a live helping situation.

Short Term Human Relations Development Training

Several studies have investigated the effectiveness of relatively short-term human relations development training. Devincentis (1975) compared the effectiveness of eight hours (four weeks) of human relations training to an equal

amount of transactional analysis. He found that both methods of adult counselor training on a short-term basis were successful in modifying interpersonal orientation from manipulative to altruistic as assessed by the Alcorn Interpersonal Orientation Scale.

Quirk (1976) reported that after four hours of human relations training, college dormitory assistants could accurately identify expressed affect as measured by the Affective Sensitivity Scale. He concluded, however, that the ability to discriminate affect accurately was improved, but not necessarily the ability to communicate empathically.

Luck (1975) studied the effects of five weeks (15-20 hours) of human relations training with practicing rehabilitation counselors. Although trainees' ability to demonstrate gross interpersonal facilitative functioning was raised, these abilities were not raised to a level considered "minimally facilitative." According to Gazda (1977), responses at a level 3.0 on a four-point scale are theorized to be minimally facilitative. However, Luck did report immediate transfer of skills to trainee counselor behavior in a live helping interaction.

Peer Facilitator Programs

Peer counseling has been extensively implemented at the college level (Warner and Scott, 1974) and at the high school level (Wren and Mencke, 1972), Varenhorst, 1975), (Frank, Ferdinand, and Bailey, 1975), (McLaurin and

Harrington, 1977). Gumaer (1973) has pioneered research of peer counseling at the elementary school level. The term "peer facilitator" was first used by Gumaer because he felt it would be less confusing for his students and others involved with the program. Students, teachers, parents, and administrators all understood that pupils in Gumaer's program were assistants to the counselor and teachers in implementing the developmental guidance program.

Although Anderson (1976) noted that little information has been reported at the elementary school level on peers as counselor assistants, there are a few studies dealing with children functioning in that capacity. In three one hour sessions, Kern and Kirby (1971) trained fifth and sixth graders to understand the dynamics of behavior, the techniques for changing behavior, and the role of peer helpers. Counselors then used these peer helpers in small group counseling to model self-disclosure to other children by stating the purpose of their behavior and suggesting alternative ways of behaving. Students in the peer-led groups showed greater improvement on teacher-perceived behavior change than did students involved in either adult-counselor led or controlgroups.

Gumaer (1975) has developed and tested a peer facilitator training program applicable to elementary students. Designed as multi-modal treatment for both the facilitator and the student with whom he/she interacts, Gumaer's program was conducted for twenty-one fifth grade

peer facilitators who were trained in twelve sessions
dealing with basic facilitative skills of interpersonal
communication such as listening, clarifying, reflecting,
and feedback. Following training, peer facilitators met
with seventy-seven third grade students in six peer-led
group discussions.

To assess the students' opinions of the peer facilitator
program, Gumaer used a five point Lickert scale consisting
of seven descriptive statements about experiences as
facilitators or group members. Based on the student self-
reports, Gumaer concluded that programs utilizing peers as
guidance assistants are feasible for the elementary students.
However, Gumaer reported that only fifty percent of the peer
facilitators and sixty-five percent of the group members
agreed that the peer facilitator program helped to know them-
selves better.

In summary, the research suggests that elementary
students can be trained in skills which could be used to
facilitate adjustment in peers. Guidance programs in-
corporating such training have had some impact, but to date
the effectiveness of such programs has been evaluated through
teacher reports and self-reports of student behavior.

Chapter 3

Statement of the Problem

Peer facilitator programs are an innovative multi-modal treatment approach to guidance and are a promising means of introducing human relations training in the elementary school. Although many suggest a need for such programs in the elementary school curricula, (Farmer, 1975), (Nappa, 1975), and (Myrick, 1976), there has been little research to date on the effectiveness of such programs for both the facilitator and those they interact with in guidance groups.

One study, (Gumaer, 1976), reported multi-modal treatment effects, but there have been no studies which employed objective measures of changes in the participants' personal, social, and overall adjustment. Also, studies have not included direct measures of changes in facilitative responsiveness, and appropriate controls for teacher expectancy of change.

The present study intended to design and evaluate a peer facilitator program which included short term human relations training. Further, this study objectively measured changes in interpersonal functioning and changes on select personality variables.

The following hypotheses were tested:

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1) It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between the pre- and post-peer facilitator program levels of personal, social, and overall adjustment for the peer facilitators and the group members.

2) It was hypothesized that short term human relations training would raise the facilitative level of seventh grade male peer facilitators.

3) It was hypothesized that the experience in the peer facilitator groups would raise the facilitative level of sixth grade male group members.

Chapter 4

Method

Limitations of the study

As an exploratory investigation of an experimental guidance program, this study was conducted within limits defined by the cooperating school. In the interest of conducting the study in a supportive, approving atmosphere, the research design does not meet rigorous experimental control standards. Results of the study should be interpreted in light of the following:

1) Teachers used subjective criteria in referring students to the peer facilitator program. Therefore, in place of more objective sampling methods, biased sampling is introduced into the design. One limitation imposed here is that there are no controls for critical academic variables such as reading level of the students. With pencil and paper evaluation instruments which require certain reading skills, lack of control for the reading variable influences the results of this study to an unknown degree.

2) Regarding time spent in the peer facilitator program, students were limited to thirty to forty minutes per week. However, this amount of time per week in a structured guidance program was deemed appropriate for the children's attention span. Total time for the program was limited by the number

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of weeks left in the school year.

3) Availability of students was limited to sixteen male students. It would have been preferable to have a larger sample with both male and female groups.

Subjects

Subjects in the peer facilitator program were sixteen male sixth and seventh grade students at Dishman-McGinnis Elementary School, Bowling Green, Kentucky. Ages ranged from 11-13 years. A control group of eight male sixth and seventh grade students was available to complete the Empathic Responsiveness Test (to be defined). Control group subjects were selected at random by the school guidance counselor.

Peer facilitators were the eight male seventh graders selected by their teachers. Criteria for selection was a) the student was currently having interpersonal difficulties, and b) the student would benefit from learning the kinds of facilitative skills taught in a peer facilitator program. Level of academic ability was not taken into consideration. For the present study, the professional judgement of the two seventh grade teachers involved was sought in the subject selection process.

The sixth grade group members, hereafter labelled "peers," were referred by their teachers for group guidance because of interpersonal difficulties. Teachers were briefed on the dynamics and goals of peer facilitator programs.

Again, the professional judgement of the two sixth grade teachers involved was used to select those students whom they thought might benefit most from working with a peer facilitator.

Assessment Instruments

California Test of Personality (CTP).

The California Test of Personality (Elementary form AA, 1953) (Thorpe, Clark, and Tiegs, 1953), is designed for use with students in grades four through eight. Since it is believed that a student's attitudes within the relatively sensitive personal and social areas included in the CTP may change within a short period of time, the statistical reliability is not as high for the CTP as for instruments which assess more stable student characteristics.

The CTP is organized around the concept that life adjustment consists of personal and social adjustment and is divided into two parts. The items in the Personal Adjustment half of the test are designed to measure specific tendencies to think, feel, and act such as self-reliance, sense of personal freedom, feeling of belonging, freedom from nervous symptoms. The Social Adjustment portion of the test includes measures of social standards, social skills, freedom from anti-social tendencies, family relations, and community relations. An overall adjustment score is also yielded by the CTP.

Empathic Responsiveness Test (ERT).

An Empathic Responsiveness Test (ERT) (Appendix A)
was constructed to assess the facilitative level at which the
subjects responded to hypothetical peer statements. The
test consists of ten stimulus statements presented in written
dialogue form. A pilot study with the ERT found that the
criteria for rating responses based on Gazda's Empathy Scale
(Gazda, 1977) was not extensive enough to evaluate the
variety of responses offered by sixth and seventh graders.
For this reason, Gazda's Scale for Global Ratings of
Responding was also incorporated into the rating criteria
for subject's responses on the ERT. The Global Scale
broadens the sensitivity of the rating criteria to include
levels of overall helpfulness as well as empathy.

Responses on the ERT were rated on a composite scale
derived from the Empathy Scale and the Scale for Global
Ratings of Responding (Appendix B). Responses were rated
by five graduate students in a clinical psychology Master
of Arts program who were familiar with the use of these
scales as part of their course-work. Raters were unaware
of which group of subjects was being rated. Due to the
restricted distribution of ratings on the ERT, alternate
methods of establishing inter-rater reliability were re-
quired. According to Gazda (1977), an average discrepancy
score .50 is acceptable.

Two random samples of 130 ratings were used to
determine average inter-rater discrepancy scores. The
first sample yielded an average discrepancy score of .44,

and the second sample yielded a score of .47. Both are
considered acceptable. In terms of average percent agree-
ment, both samples yielded an average agreement of 77.69%.

Procedure

Pretest. The CTP was given to the peer facilitators
and peers as a pretest of personal, social, and overall
adjustment prior to the peer facilitator program. The ERT
was given to the peer facilitators, and peers, and the
control group as a pretest to peer facilitator training.

Peer facilitator training. The seventh graders
attended five forty minute training sessions led by the
experimenter. (See Appendix C for a detailed outline of
each training session). The peers concurrently attended
general group discussions on neutral topics such as sports,
likes and dislikes, occupations, etc.

Training Posttest. The ERT was given to peer
facilitators, peers, and the control group as a posttest
following peer facilitator training for seventh graders
and neutral group activity for peers.

Peer facilitator led groups. Two groups, each
consisting of four facilitators and four peers, were formed.
These groups met for six weeks and were structured such
that a facilitator was paired with a peer to discuss a
topic selected by the experimenter. Afterwards, the dyads
rejoined as a group to share what they had learned about
each other. (See Appendix D for a detailed outline of the

group topics).

Group Experience Posttest. The CTP was given to the peer facilitators and peers as a posttest to the peer facilitator program. The ERT was given to both experimental groups and the control group as a measure of the effects of peer facilitator led groups on facilitative responsiveness.

Analysis

Standard scores were calculated for the individual subtest scales on both portions of the CTP. T-tests comparing pre- and posttest group standard score means were computed for the peer facilitators and the peers. The .05 level of confidence was used.

For the ERT, average ratings were calculated for the peer facilitators, peers, and the control group. These results were pooled to yield average group ratings. Visual inspection of data is required due to the small sample size.

Chapter 5

Results

Hypothesis one, concerning the pre- and post-peer facilitator program levels of personal, social, and overall adjustment, was not supported. T-test analysis of pre- and post-test means for the CTP scores yielded no significant differences at the $p. > 05$ level for either the peer facilitators or the peers. Tables 1 and 2 present the means for the peers and peer facilitators, respectively.

There are several changes on CTP subtests which approach significance for the peers; increases in self-reliance; increases in personal adjustment; and increases in overall adjustment. For the peer facilitators, a decrease in level of social standards was noted.

Following human relations training, six of the eight peer facilitators increased in level of facilitative responsiveness, one remained stable, and one decreased. This is consistent with hypothesis two. Figure 1 illustrates the average group levels of facilitative responsiveness as assessed by the ERT. The peer facilitators demonstrated a continuous directional increase and finished the school year with average levels of helpful responsiveness which were higher than the peers and the control group. Neither the peers nor the control group demonstrated a continuous

directional increase in levels of responsiveness.

Following peer facilitator-led groups, five of the eight peers increased while three decreased in level of helpful responsiveness. Although consistent with hypothesis three, the peers did not exceed the facilitative level demonstrated prior to participation in the peer facilitator program.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 illustrate the directionality of average ERT ratings for individual peer facilitators, peers, and control group members, respectively. In terms of overall direction of changes, six of the eight peer facilitators demonstrated increases, four of the eight peers demonstrated increases, and four of the eight control group members demonstrated increases.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test CTP Means:

Peers

CTP Sub-Test	Pre-	Post-	t	
Self-Reliance	44.25	48.25	2.16	(.10)
Sense of Personal Worth	43.87	48.12	1.13	(.30)
Sense of Personal Freedom	44.25	45.75	0.42	(.50)
Feeling of Belonging	42.25	44.37	1.77	(.20)
Freedom from Withdrawing Tendencies	40.00	46.00	1.37	(.30)
Freedom from Nervous Symptoms	42.87	45.12	0.88	(.50)
Overall Personal Adjustment	41.50	46.00	2.00	(.10)
Social Standards	45.50	50.25	0.29	(.50)
Social Skills	46.37	42.75	1.42	(.20)
Freedom from Anti-Social Tendencies	34.00	32.25	0.108	(.50)
Family Relations	38.25	43.75	1.37	(.30)
School Relations	38.65	43.25	1.36	(.30)
Community Relations	43.00	42.25	0.256	(.50)
Overall Social Adjustment	39.75	40.50	0.38	(.50)
Overall Adjustment	40.62	44.25	2.023	(.10)

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate significance levels.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test CTP Means:

Peer Facilitators

CTP Sub-Test	Pre-	Post-	t	
Self-Reliance	48.75	47.87	0.212	(.50)
Sense of Personal Worth	49.12	50.00	0.173	(.50)
Sense of Personal Freedom	40.37	45.37	1.315	(.30)
Feeling of Belonging	44.50	46.62	0.595	(.50)
Freedom from Withdrawing Tendencies	43.37	47.87	1.410	(.30)
Freedom from Nervous Symptoms	50.00	53.87	1.037	(.40)
Overall Personal Adjustment	43.87	47.50	0.955	(.40)
Social Skills	42.87	43.75	0.194	(.50)
Social Standards	46.75	37.87	1.98	(.10)
Freedom from Anti-Social Tendencies	32.87	38.25	1.77	(.20)
Family Relations	40.75	42.37	0.318	(.50)
School Relations	39.75	39.62	0.652	(.50)
Community Relations	40.75	44.87	1.35	(.30)
Overall Social Adjustment	40.37	39.37	0.275	(.50)
Overall Adjustment	41.87	44.87	1.213	(.30)

Note. Numbers in parentheses indicate significance levels.

FIGURE 1

X - Control Group

● - Peers

0 - Peer Facilitators
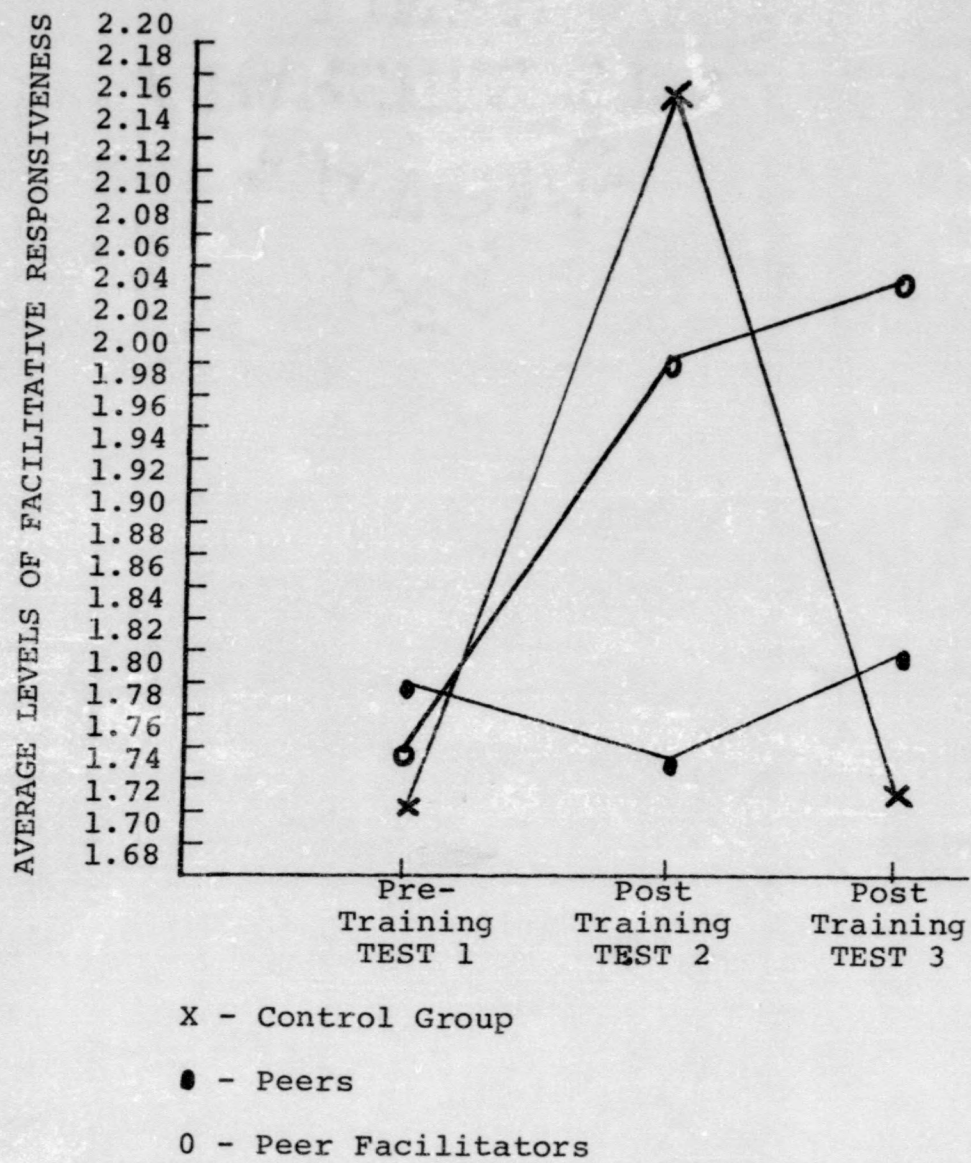
TABLE 3

Directionality of Individual Changes on E.R.T.

Peer Facilitators

Student Number	Pre-Training Average	Post-Training Average	Post-Peer led Groups	Overall Change
1	2.05	2.05 (=)	2.25 (+)	+
2	1.80	2.00 (+)	1.30 (−)	−
3	1.65	1.80 (+)	2.00 (+)	+
4	1.80	2.30 (+)	2.55 (+)	+
5	1.80	1.70 (−)	1.65 (−)	−
6	1.35	1.90 (+)	1.70 (−)	+
7	1.60	2.05 (+)	2.15 (+)	+
8	1.95	2.10 (+)	2.75 (+)	+

Note. Characters in parentheses indicate direction of change.

TABLE 4

Directionality of Individual Changes on E.R.T.

Peers

Student Number	TEST 1	TEST 2	TEST 3	Overall Change
1	1.75	1.75 (=)	1.60 (−)	−
2	1.90	1.70 (−)	1.55 (−)	−
3	1.70	1.70 (=)	1.85 (+)	+
4	2.20	1.65 (−)	1.80 (+)	−
5	1.95	1.30 (−)	1.90 (+)	−
6	1.00	2.05 (+)	1.75 (−)	+
7	2.15	2.10 (−)	2.25 (+)	+
8	1.70	1.65 (−)	1.80 (+)	+

Note.   Characters in parentheses indicate direction of change.

TABLE 5

Directionality of Individual Changes on E.R.T.

CONTROL GROUP

Student Number	TEST 1	TEST 2	TEST 3	Overall Change
Student Number	TEST 1	TEST 2	TEST 3	Overall Change
1	2.20	2.20 (=)	1.75 (-)	-
2	1.50	2.35 (+)	1.70 (-)	+
3	1.60	2.10 (+)	1.25 (-)	-
4	1.85	2.65 (+)	2.00 (-)	+
5	1.80	2.35 (+)	2.25 (-)	+
6	1.70	1.80 (+)	1.15 (-)	-
7	1.90	1.90 (=)	1.85 (-)	-
8	1.40	1.95 (+)	1.85 (+)	+

Note.   Characters in parentheses indicate direction of change.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Three hypotheses were tested concerning the effectiveness of a peer facilitator program. The first hypothesis was not supported, i.e., there were no significant pre- and post-differences for either the peer facilitators or peers on the select personality variables of personal, social, and overall adjustment.

However, some improvement trends were noted for the peers in the areas of self-reliance, personal adjustment, and overall adjustment. Although the increases were not significant, they suggest that there was some change related to participation in the peer facilitator program. However, it is interesting to note that for the peer facilitators, a trend indicating a decrease in social skills was observed. This finding is contrary to the concept of multi-modal treatment effects.

It was hypothesized that the peer facilitators would increase in their level of facilitative responsiveness. Visual inspection of the data suggests that the peer facilitators made continuous directional gains during the program, particularly when compared to the control group. Due to the small sample size, the statistical significance of these changes was not determined.

For the peers, it was hypothesized that they would make gains in level of facilitative responsiveness following peer facilitator led group discussions. Visual inspection of the data suggests that any overall changes in facilitative level are negligible. However, in relation to the control group, the peers demonstrated some increases during the time they were participants in the peer facilitator led group discussions.

The results of this study are consistent with those of Luck (1975), who found that short term human relations training increased the level of facilitative responsiveness, but not to a minimally facilitative level. Assuming that growth toward more facilitative levels of responsiveness is a precursor to significant changes in personal, social, and overall adjustment, it is logical that such changes were not observed in the current study.

In contrast to Quirk (1975), who found short term human relations training effective as assessed by the ability to identify expressed effect, the present study evaluated training effectiveness by using a measure of the ability to communicate empathically and in a globally helpful manner. Both methods of program evaluation might be desirable if valid conclusions are to be drawn regarding the effectiveness of short term human relations training.

The Empathic Responsiveness Test, an adult technique which the present study revised for children, was shown to be a promising way of evaluating peer facilitator training.

Although preliminary indications suggest that the ERT has some sensitivity to changes in facilitative responsiveness over a relatively short period of time, developmental studies would be useful to explore how appropriate the task is for elementary students. Further modifications of the rating criteria, possibly including scoring samples, could help to establish greater reliability in the instrument.

Based on the trends noted on the CTP and on the direction of changes for peer facilitators on the ERT, it seems that a long term approach to peer facilitation might better serve the needs of the students. Many of the techniques for evaluating adult para-professional training such as taped interviews and counseling sessions could be modified for children. Also, objective personality tests would be useful for program evaluation and for examining individual change.

Future studies might extend the peer facilitator program over the span of a school year to get a better understanding of the exact nature of multi-modal treatment effects. The impact of assuming the peer facilitator role with its inherent responsibilities would probably have a greater effect on personality over a longer period of time. Further, extended contact with a trained peer would probably be more effective in providing benefits to recipients of peer facilitator services.

Since the participants in this program were referred for interpersonal difficulties, it might be the case that

effective guidance intervention at the elementary level
might prevent further referrals or make it more likely for
the student to voluntarily seek counseling later on. From
a primary prevention standpoint, peer facilitator programs
offer much to be enthusiastic about in this regard.

Further exploratory research is needed to demonstrate
the effectiveness of peer facilitators as elementary
guidance assistants. Objective measures, rather than sub-
jective reports of student change, appear to be the most
appropriate means of establishing whether peer facilitators
are effective as child para-professionals.

APPENDIX A

EMPATHIC RESPONSIVENESS TEST

INSTRUCTIONS: Imagine that you are talking to a boy our age. If he were to say the things below, what would you say in return? Fill in what you would say on the line after each statement.

1. Dave: "Ted and I never get along. He always picks a fight!"

   Me: _____

2. Dan: "Everyone else is having fun in our class, but I always go home by myself!"

   Me: _____

3. Bill: "I don't know what I'm gonna do when I grow up!"

   Me: _____

4. Don: "The last school play was the best I've ever seen!"

   Me: _____

5. Paul: "I wish Tommy would show me how to play basketball as good as he can!"

   Me: _____

6. Ron: "I Don't want to see my report card!"

Me: _____

7. Greg: "Ithink <u>The Three Stooges</u> is a pretty bad TV
show.   My brother watches it all the time!"

Me: _____

8. Josh: "I'd really like to be a member of the School
Safety Patrol!"

Me: _____

9. Mark: "I can't understand my Uncle. He smokes two
packs of cigarettes a day even though his doctor
told him to quit!"

Me: _____

10. Brad: "I wish I didn't have to go shopping with my
family tomorrow. I hate large crowds!"

Me: _____

EMPATHIC RESPONSIVENESS/GLOBAL HELPFULNESS SCALE

NOTE: Rarely, if ever, would all of the conditions de-
scribed in each level be represented in a single
response. Half-levels of responses (e.g., 1.5, 2.5,
3.5) may be given.

1.0 An irrelevant or hurtful response that does not
appropriately attend to the content or the surface
feelings:

Discredits, devalues, ridicules, or scolds the other
person:

Is vague or deals with the person in general terms:

Shows a lack of caring for or belief in the other
person:

Tries to hide his feelings or uses them to punish the
other person:

Reveals nothing about himself or discloses himself
exclusively to meet his own needs:

Ignores all cues from the other person regarding their
immediate relationship:

1.5

2.0 A response that only partially communicates an aware-

ness of the surface feelings:

Distorts what the other person communicated:

Is specific in his verbal expressions (e.g., gives

advice or opinion) or solicits specificity (e.g.,

asks questions) but does so prematurely.

Withholds himself from involvement by declining to

help, ignoring the other person, responding in a

casual way, or giving cheap advice before really

understanding the situation:

Briefly comments regarding his own feelings, thoughts,

or experiences relevant to the other person's concerns.

Comments superficially on communications from the

other person regarding their relationship.

2.5

3.0   A response conveying that the other person is under-

stood at the level he is expressing himself:

Surface feelings are accurately reflected. Content

is not essential, but, when included, it must be

accurate.

Communicates an openness to entering a helping re-

lationship.

Recognizes the other person as one of worth, capable

of thinking and expressing himself, and acting con-

structively:

Shows that he is open to caring for or believing in

the other person:

Is specific in communicating his understanding, but
does not point out the directionality emerging for
actions to help the other person:

Shows no sign of phoniness but controls his expression
of feeling so as to facilitate the development of the
relationship:

In a general manner reveals his own feelings, thoughts,
or experiences relevant to the other person's concerns.

3.5

4.0   A response in which the respondent goes beyond re-
flection of the essence of the other person's
communication by identifying underlying feelings and
meanings:

Is committed to the other person's welfare:

Models and actively solicits specificity from the
other person:

Freely volunteers specific feelings, thoughts, or
experiences relevant to the other person's concerns
(these may involve a degree of risk taking for the
respondent):

Content is used to complement affect in adding deeper
meaning:

Explicity discusses their relationship in the immediate
moment.

APPENDIX C

HUMAN RELATIONS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

1. Session One

    A. Review rules for groups run at the guidance office.

    1. Only one person may speak at a time.

    2. You must raise your hand to be called upon to speak.

    3. Stress the importance of confidentiality.

    B. Discuss meaning of "Peer Facilitator."

    1. A peer facilitator is trained by a counselor to be
       an effective listener.

    2. They are trained how to help others talk about their
       ideas and feelings.

    3. A peer facilitator learns how to take more responsibility
       for his behavior as he helps someone his own age under-
       stand themself better.

    C. Explain the stages of a short term peer facilitator
       group.

    1. Getting acquainted.

    2. Learning the acceptable behavior of a group. Each
       member is expected to participate in conformity with
       group rules.

    3. The members begin to feel like a group. Each person

gets more comfortable in the presence of others.

4. The members of the group give and receive help.

5. The group ends.

11. Session Two

    A. Explain the five basic communication types

    1. Request for action (RA).

    2. Request for information (RI).

    3. Request for inappropriate interaction (RII).

    4. Request for understanding (RU).

    5. General conversation (G).

    B. Exercise in listening

    1. Break up the group into pairs, but avoid pairing two close friends.

    2. Explain that they are going to take turns talking to one another to discover how well they can listen.

    3. Each person is to talk for three minutes about his parents, telling his partner whatever he thinks is important about them. The listener may not speak, interrupt, or ask questions.

    4. After three minutes are up, have the speaker become the listener.

    5. Tell the other person how he feels about his parents. Specifically, what is the best thing about them, and what upsets that person the most about his parents should be discussed.

    6. Discuss the accuracy of feelings.

C. Discussion of Exercise

1. How did you feel when you were talking for three minutes?

2. Did you learn things about the person even though you knew him before?

3. Do you think it would be good if everyone listened to you as intently as your partner did in this exercise?

4. What are some signs that a person is really listening?

D. Exercise in classifying communication types.

1. Work on seven statements from hand-out. Classify as RA, RI, RII, RU, or G.

2. Assign homework.

a) write down an example of each type that you hear during the week.

111. Session Three

A. review homework; classifying communication types.

1. Discuss their responses to examples on homework.

2. Explain the questions we ask ourselves when communicating with another person.

a) What does this person need?

b) What does this person want from me?

c) What can I do for this person?

B. Discuss the importance of listening.

1. It makes it easier to stay alert and to remember things.

2. It makes the speaker feel good about themselves. This helps to build a good relationship.

3. It makes it worthwhile for the speaker to talk and to explore himself.

4. It demonstrates a useful behavior. It teaches another a very important skill.

C. Exercise in isolating feelings.

1. Explain the difference between a surface statement and a deep down statement of feeling.

2. Go through communication exercises from hand-out.

IV. Session Four

A. Role play being sixth graders to practice listening and reflecting feelings.

B. Continue practice in responding with empathy.

C. Answer questions and resolve difficulties.

V. Session Five

A. Review communication types.

B. Discuss format of combined groups.

C. Complete left-over business.

CLASSIFYING COMMUNICATION TYPES:

INSTRUCTIONS: Label the following statements according to the type of communication it is.

Request for Action - RA

Request for Information - RI

Request for Inappropriate Interaction - RII

Request for Understanding - RU

General Conversation - G

---

1. "We always have to wait for Bill. Could you call him and see what's taking him so long?"

2. "What's tonight's homework assignment?"

3. "Why can't the rest of the kids like me as much as they like John?"

4. "That Bob is one of the clumsiest people I know. He just can't do anything right!!!"

5. "What was the score of last night's game?"

6. "I usually ride my bicycle after school."

7. "I'd like to punch your face!"

PEER FACILITATOR CONVERSATION EXERCISES:

INSTRUCTIONS: What can you say to show the person who says one of the things below that you have heard what he has said and that you know what his feeling is?

1. "I don't like talking in a group!"

2. "Bobby lives on my street, but I don't really know him like I know my friends."

3. "Bryan plays basketball really good. I wish I was as

good as he is!"

4. "My parents are gonna be mad when they find out I flunked
    the Math test. That new material is the hardest stuff
    I ever studied!"

5. "I wish my Dad would re-marry. It's been so different
    since my Mom died."

6. "I keep having nightmares about one of the worst things
    that ever happened to me!"

7. "My vacation last summer was one of the best I ever
    had!"

8. "I like to go camping. I think it's my favorite sport!"

9. "I love to work with my Dad. He tells me the funniest
    jokes I ever heard!"

10. "I wish I could wear the kinds of clothes Rick wears!"

APPENDIX D

Plan for Peer Facilitator Led Groups

1. Session One

    A. Pair off and get acquainted. (Dyads were arranged
        by the school guidance counselor.)

    B. Facilitator communicates to group what he has
        learned about the sixth grader he has been talk-
        ing to.

    C. Experimenter presses facilitators to clarify how
        sixth grader feels about his family.

    D. "Trust Exercise" - sixth grader falls back into
        arms of seventh grader; switch positions.

11. Session Two

    A. Pair off and discuss happiness or things they enjoy
        doing. (Note: Same partners should be used. In
        the event of an absence, experimenter substitutes
        for missing partner.)

    B. Facilitator communicates what he has learned from
        ten minute talk with sixth grader.

    C. Experimenter leads group discussion on happiness

by questioning group members.

    1. What makes you happy?

    2. What makes those around you happy?

    3. Facilitators are encouraged to clarify feelings underlying sixth graders' statements.

D. Discuss feelings regarding talking with each other.

lll. Session Three

A. Repeat format of session two

B. Topic is "feelings toward school."

C. Question and lead discussion on likes and dislikes regarding school.

lV. Session Four

A. Repeat format.

B. Topic is selecting friends.

C. Group discussion on what qualities people value in friends and on decision making with regard to picking friends.

V. Session Five

A. Repeat format

B. Topic is selected by peer facilitator and peer.

C. Repeat general discussion format.

Vl. Session Six

A. Repeat format

B. Topic is selected by peer facilitator and peer.

C. Repeat general discussion format.

D. Have each member of the group summarixe how they feel about the experience.

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