

CAN UNIVERSAL AFFECTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS BE USED TO PROMOTE EMPATHY IN ELEMENTARY AGED CHILDREN?

A Review of Five Curricula

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Empathy is a critical component of social behavior. Here, empathy is viewed as both a cognitive and an affective process—considering others' perspectives along with one's own and responding with similar affect to another. Five classroom curricula in which the teaching of empathy is critically embedded are reviewed. The curricula are analyzed according to how they address essential components of empathy, as well as their practicality, generalizability, and research on efficacy. The article concludes with a discussion of key recommendations for the successful implementation of empathy training in school settings.

Humans have two strong and conflicting desires: to become more autonomous, and to be connected to other humans. Throughout the lifespan, major developmental tasks revolve around the integration of these two motivations. Empathy is the human capacity to remain autonomous but feel connected to others. It is a complex process involving feeling for another without losing one's sense of self. It is one aspect of human connectedness that

plays a critical role in social interactions, as it lays the groundwork for moral development (Hoffman, 2000) and provides the motivation for many prosocial behaviors (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Empathy is the key to promoting caring behaviors. It allows children to act in ways that are sensitive to the feelings of others.

The development of empathy and other social-emotional learning has taken on a more

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important role in education since compelling research emerged that these characteristics are found in young people who succeed academically and in their personal and civic lives (Greenberg, Zins, Elias, & Weissberg, 2003). Elias and Weissberg (2000) contend that a combination of academic and social-emotional learning must become the true standard for effective education. This movement towards teaching the whole child has led to a variety of universal (school-wide) affective education curricula at the elementary level designed to develop the skills necessary to become a productive, contributing member of society (Lickona, 1993).

Empathy has been defined in a variety of ways. It has been viewed as a skill (Committee for Children, 1992), a set of strategies (Goldstein, 1989), and as an ability (Elliott & Gresham, 1991). However, all contemporary definitions of empathy must include both a cognitive component and an affective component (Eisenberg, Wentzel, & Harris, 1999). For example, Eisenberg and Fabes (1990) define empathy as an affective response that arises from the comprehension of another's emotional state, and that is similar or identical to what the other person is feeling. The comprehension of another's emotional state represents the cognitive aspect of empathy and includes the ability to label feelings, recognize that others may have differing viewpoints, understand that feelings and behavior do not always match, and weigh others' feelings and motivations along with one's own. The emotional response reflects the affective component, and includes the ability to respond with similar emotion to the affect displayed by someone who is similar and is close-by, respond to the affect of the group, and respond when the situation is distant and less familiar.

The cognitive and affective components of empathy are intertwined. Hoffman (2000) points out that infants can experience empathic distress even before they can cognitively differentiate themselves from others. An 11 month old was observed reacting to the physical pain of another in the same way she reacts

when she is hurt herself (Hoffman, 1984). Older children, between 6 and 9 years old, develop the cognitive awareness of their own and others' continuing existence, and so can react to the distress of others who are distant (i.e., those living in poverty) and not just to those who are in immediate distress (Hoffman, 1975).

Research attempting to link empathy and prosocial behavior has revealed a stronger link when the affective response, not just the cognitive understanding of another's emotional state, was assessed. In a review of such studies, Eisenberg and Miller (1987) show that the use of short stories to measure empathy has typically not revealed a link with prosocial behavior; however, when empathy was measured by children's observed emotional response, empathy and prosocial behavior did appear related (Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989).

Eisenberg and her colleagues (e.g., Eisenberg & Fabes, 1999; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Eisenberg, et al., 1989) have also clarified sympathy and personal distress, two outcomes frequently associated with empathy. Sympathy involves the desire for the other to feel better, which is more than just feeling what that person feels. Personal distress, on the other hand, is self-focused (Batson, 1997). The underlying motivation for wanting the other person to feel better is different. In personal distress, a person gets upset as they empathize with another's distress, but there is a desire to make the other feel better so that one personally feels better. The motivation is egoistic. The prosocial behavior stemming from each also differs. Sympathy tends to motivate helping, altruistic behavior even when it comes at some cost to the subject. In contrast, personal distress will lead to prosocial behavior when there is no easier way to reduce one's own discomfort. For example, a person may hug another to end crying, but if it seemed easier, the person might also leave the room so the crying was no longer heard and no longer upsetting. By Eisenberg's scheme, the relationship of empathy to prosocial behavior depends on whether it leads to sympathy or personal distress

(Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990). If it leads to sympathy, the chances of it resulting in prosocial behavior are greater than if it leads to self-distress.

People prone to personal distress tend to be lower in self-regulation of emotions and prone to intense and frequent negative emotions, compared to people prone to sympathetic responding, who tend to be highly regulated yet emotionally intense (see Eisenberg, Wentzel, & Harris, 1999 for a review). The sooner self-regulation and empathy skills are taught, the sooner they can become part of a child's repertoire (Shapiro, 1997). Universal affective education programs can be used as one tool to teach self-regulation and empathy.

Currently, there are a multitude of affective education curricula with many aimed at reducing violence and aggression and also facilitating peer relationship skills. Affective education is a broad term that includes a focus on character education and prosocial skills. Curricula that emphasize character education stress key values that encourage students to consider the potential impact of their behavior on the well being of others. The intent is to help children act, think, and feel within personal moral boundaries that adhere to standards of right and wrong. Typically "universal values" are stressed, such as care, respect, trustworthiness, fairness, and citizenship, which are all viewed as characteristics that provide a foundation for a virtuous society (Isaacs, 2000; Kirschenbaum, 1992). Curricula that emphasize prosocial skills would seek to develop processes that contribute to children's understanding of emotional and cognitive reactions to situations, expression of feelings, evaluations of choices and effective selection of prosocial responses. Typically the focus is on reflective emotional regulation that can lead to effective decision-making about how to act in an acceptable manner. Empathy is highlighted in either case. While there are other reviews of affective education programs (i.e., Strein, 1988; Baskin & Hess, 1980) ours is unique in its focus on empathy. Thus, the purpose of this article is to review current,

widely-used, empirically valid classroom curricula, to examine how strongly aspects of empathy are emphasized.

Our goal is not to review the over 200 curricula identified as affective education programs, but rather to select a smaller number of well documented programs that provided a good representation of the programs currently available. First, all curricula were developed as universal social emotional or affective prevention programs that were designed to be offered on a school-wide basis. The curricula were published and had been studied as comprehensive, sequential, and multiage programs for elementary school children. Further, the lessons were designed to be integrated as a regular part of instruction. This review was limited to the elementary school grades, due to the important developmental opportunities of this age. Hoffman's (2000) model of empathy and moral development proposes that, during the elementary years, children move from a simple emotional response to the affect of another without the realization that it is the other's emotions which stirred such feelings, to a rather sophisticated understanding of the connections between one's own and others' feelings. During the elementary years, children typically learn that communicating feelings can help people feel better, that people can have mixed feelings about the same event, and that personal histories can affect people's emotional reactions to events. They understand that someone else's misfortune can stir feelings of sadness within themselves. Thus, they become aware of their own empathic responses. Further, it seems critical to promote empathic development in the early years, to prepare children for the challenging social demands of peer relationships in middle school and beyond.

We selected a range of affective education programs with varying stated goals so that we could examine how empathy was defined and taught across programs that stressed social cognitive skills (I Can Problem Solve, PATHS), key prosocial attitudes and behavior (Positive Action), and the prevention of antiso-

cial or violent behavior (Bully Proofing, Second Step). Even though the stated focus of the programs varied, improved social emotional functioning was viewed as a critical outcome.

Finally, we selected programs that went beyond a simple focus on the child to those that also sought to instill positive ecological changes throughout the school since such combined programs have been identified as more effective in achieving healthy academic and social and emotional outcomes (Weissberg & Greenberg, 1998). We did not include programs that were targeted at older aged students or that had been developed more than 20 years ago. The curriculum had to have established curriculum materials that were widely available.

As we reviewed the programs, we assessed what aspects of empathy were covered. We looked for both cognitive and affective components, because we defined empathy as the ability to recognize and consider others' perspectives along with one's own, while responding with similar emotion to the emotional state of another person. We have further designated four cognitive components of empathy, and three affective components. The cognitive components were borrowed from Robert Selman's (1980) research and developmental theory on social perspective taking. They are:

1. labels own feelings, feelings of others, and multiple feelings;
2. recognizes that other people have viewpoints which may be different from one's own,
3. knows that a person's behavior does not always match how they feel, and
4. weighs others' feelings and motivations in conjunction with one's own.

The three affective components reflect Martin L. Hoffman's (2000) theory of empathy and moral development which describes how a child moves from quasi-egocentric empathic distress, at which time children can come close to feeling what another close to them feels

because they understand that the other has an independent feeling state, to a higher level of development when they can empathize with others outside of the immediate situation. These affective components are:

1. responds similarly to someone close-by, at that time;
2. responds similarly to the affect of the group, and
3. responds with similar emotion when the situation is distant, for example, when they hear about children living in poverty.

In addition, the overview will focus on how each curriculum uses a variety of methods to teach empathy. We also consider practical considerations and how well techniques stress generalization of these skills. Finally, research is reviewed to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the stated goals. In summary, we will evaluate the content of the curriculum as it applies to our definition of empathy, how well generalization is addressed, the practicality of implementing the program, and research on its effectiveness.

REVIEW OF CURRICULA

Five classroom-based affective education curricula were chosen for review. While empathy is explicitly addressed in each, the curricula differ in how empathy is covered. We focus on how the curricula promote empathy because we view empathy as a keystone component of affective education. As Hoffman (2000) wrote, "empathy is the spark of human concern for others, the glue that makes social life possible." (p. 3)

The five elementary curricula reviewed here are: Bully Proofing Your School, I Can Problem Solve, PATHS, Positive Action, and Second Step. An overview of the program is presented, followed by an analysis of the components of empathy included in the curriculum, a review of its practicality, a description of how generalization is addressed, and finally,

a summary of current efficacy research. Table 1 provides publication information and a brief summary of how empathy is addressed in each curriculum.

Bully-Proofing Your School

The Bully-Proofing Your School (Garrity, et al., 1994) curriculum is a program developed to promote a caring and safe environment within schools. The program teaches a common language for students, teachers, and staff to communicate their feelings and needs regarding their safety at school. Further, it teaches skills that students can use to protect themselves both physically and psychologically from bullies.

Components of Empathy in Bully-Proofing Your School

In the Bully-Proofing curriculum, empathy is incorporated throughout the lessons and is defined primarily as the ability to recognize and identify other students' feelings. Students are taught strategies to help themselves and others in bullying situations, and they are encouraged to use empathy with victims of bullies. All students receive basic empathy training, and identified "bullies" receive more intensive empathy training in small groups. While only one lesson of the general student instruction specifically teaches empathy, the skill is reinforced throughout many sessions by way of review, role-plays, and other modalities. Students are taught empathy as one of four strategies they can use to help victims of bullying (CARE; Creative Problem Solving, Addult Help, Relate and Join, Empathy). Specifically, students who want to be "helpers" are taught empathy by learning to state what is occurring in the bullying situation and identifying the feelings of the victim aloud. For example, the student may say that the victim must feel hurt and scared as a result of the bully's teasing.

The Bully-Proofing curriculum addresses most of the major components of empathy.

Through the curriculum, students are taught to label their own feelings as well as others' feelings. Students also are made aware that other people will not always agree with them. Students discuss that people can sometimes look differently than they feel. For example, though bullies look and act tough, they may be sad or scared on the inside. In addition, the affective components of empathy are addressed. Through role-plays and discussion, students are asked to think about how they would feel in certain situations and about how others might feel.

In summary, Bully-Proofing incorporates many of the cognitive and affective components necessary to learn empathy. Although there are very few direct lessons on empathy, it is clearly embedded throughout the curriculum. Further, because the lessons are not scripted, there is the opportunity to supplement empathy training by using materials such as books and videos.

Practicality

The Bully-Proofing curriculum can be delivered by mental health professionals or teachers. Lessons are not scripted, but there are examples and ideas for delivering the material in the manual. There are worksheets and handouts for the students to utilize. Role-plays are also central to curriculum delivery, though the complexity of the role-plays depends on the age of the students. Bully-Proofing is a relatively inexpensive affective education curriculum, as the manual is the only expense. The teacher can copy materials included for future use.

Generalization

When implemented as designed, the Bully Proofing program places a great deal of emphasis on generalization. First, everyone in the school building should be trained in the basic philosophy, language and principles of the program. Caring behaviors are recognized and rewarded, while bullying behavior, wher-

TABLE 1
School-Wide Affective Education Programs Addressing Empathy

<i>Curriculum</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>Definition of Empathy</i>	<i>How Empathy Is Taught</i>
Bully Proofing Your School	C. Garrity, K. Jens, W. Porter, N. Sager, & C. Short-Camilli (1994)	Sopris West, (303) 651-2829	Elementary School (also available for middle school)	Empathy is incorporated as part of the student instruction program and is viewed as a strategy for relating to the feelings of victims.	Empathy is taught as the last CARE step-another way to help a victim. Children practice empathizing during role plays and through discussions.
I Can Problem Solve	Myrna Shure (1992)	Research Press (217) 352-3273	Elementary School	Sensitivity to others. Being able to understand how others think and feel. Considering others' feelings along with one's own.	Practice understanding what makes people feel the way they do and putting themselves in others' situation, by guided dialogue and role-play. Analyzing world events to create affective responding.
Positive Action	Carole Gerber (1998)	Positive Action (800) 345-2974	Elementary School	For younger students: empathy means thinking about how others feel. For older students: Empathy means to feel how someone else feels, to understand what another person thinks.	Defines the term empathy, explains why and how empathy is helpful and desirable. Uses short stories or scripts to elicit empathy from students through teacher directed discussion.
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)	M.T. Greenberg & C. A. Kusche (1993)	University of Washington Press (800) 441-4115	Elementary School (Currently there are adaptations developed for preschool and middle school populations as well.)	Empathy is defined as respect for others and the ability to understand how one's behaviors affect others.	Taught to recognize and label up to 50 different feelings from simple to more complex. Learn how to attend to verbal and nonverbal affective signals. Focus on how one's behavior affects others, respect and perspective taking.
Second Step	Committee for Children (2002)	Committee for Children (800) 634-4449	Elementary School (also available for preschool and middle school)	Empathy is viewed as a critical set that includes abilities to recognize, experience and respond to feelings of others.	Children are taught to read facial and body cues to understand how others feel. They practice labeling the emotion shown in photographs of children. Discussions about how they would feel in similar situations and practice using empathy.

ever it may occur, is consistently confronted. The emphasis on school climate helps to promote generalization.

Research on Bully-Proofing Your School

The impact of Bully-Proofing on bullying behavior was assessed in a suburban, mostly Caucasian elementary school, in the school district where the program was developed (Epstein, Plog, & Porter, 2002). The study was conducted over a four year time period, using students' self reports about their sense of safety and the amount of bullying they experience. While there was no comparison group, the analyses were conducted using time-lagged contrasts between age equivalent groups. Results are impressive, showing improvement (according to student self-report) on each of four safety items: safety in the classroom, on the playground, in the cafeteria, and going to and from school. Similarly, on the three bullying behavior items—physical, verbal, and exclusion—a significant main effect for time was achieved. Thus, students' self-reports indicate that bullying behaviors decreased significantly over the course of four years. Again, empathy itself was not assessed, but given that the program devotes a large percent of its time to empathy development, it is likely that the development of empathy was promoted, and helped to decrease the bullying behaviors. Further research is necessary.

A study currently being conducted by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) in Boulder, Colorado, is using five treatment schools and five matched control schools in order to assess the effectiveness of Bully Proofing on school climate (G. St.Martin, personal communication, May 21, 2003). This three year study, started in the fall of 2002, is promising for several reasons. Unlike much of the research conducted on affective education programs, this study is being conducted by an outside agency, not by those who developed the program. Further, the use of matched control schools will provide

evidence that changes documented probably would not have happened without the intervention. CSPV's study is not assessing individual student changes, such as empathy development, but rather, it is assessing school climate, using student and teacher ratings. The study is also carefully tracking the fidelity of program implementation, by observing lessons and class groups. This is an aspect of program evaluation that is not always carefully monitored.

I Can Problem Solve (ICPS)

The I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) (Shure, 1992) program is a classroom-based curriculum designed to develop a problem solving thinking style for coping with stressful social situations. The goal is to teach children how to think, not what to think, when dealing with typical adult and peer interpersonal dilemmas as a means of reducing and preventing later behavior problems that are clearly related to serious antisocial activity in adolescence (Shure, 2001). The original ICPS program, titled *Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving* (Spivack & Shure, 1974) was rewritten and retitled in 1992 as *I Can Problem Solve* (Shure, 1992 a,b,c). Subsequently, three ICPS programs have been developed for use with preschool children as young as age 4, kindergarten-primary children, and intermediate elementary level children.

Components of Empathy

Empathy skills are covered in a majority of the ICPS lessons with minor changes in how these are addressed at the three different age levels. There is a clear emphasis throughout the curriculum on all four cognitive components of empathy. Initial lessons stress basic vocabulary concepts that play a role in coping during every day situations (e.g., same-different, before-after, some-all, if-then). Subsequent lessons are designed to broaden childrens' understanding of an array of affective labels to describe their own and the feel-

ings of others. For example, in the lesson "How might someone feel?", children are taught to use and recognize a continuum of different feeling words (e.g., angry, disappointed, frustrated). There also are lessons to help children recognize that different people can feel different ways about similar events (e.g., "What makes people feel the way they do?"). These lessons clearly build an awareness that others' viewpoints can differ from one's own. Later lessons are designed to help children recognize that a person's behavior does not always match how they feel and that a person's feelings can change over time. Advanced lessons stress means-ends thinking, sequential planning, and other problem solving thinking processes. Children learn to carefully plan actions to achieve a stated interpersonal goal, to consider potential obstacles, to think of alternative solutions and to assess consequences that may result from specific actions. These lessons are designed to help children decide how others feel and to weigh others' feelings against one's own when identifying choices and assessing resulting reactions.

Many ICPS lessons also emphasize affective empathic responding. For example, in early lessons about how people feel, children learn to become more sensitive to other's thoughts and feelings through listening and observations. In subsequent lessons, mediated dialogues are used to encourage children to determine whether they respond similarly to others when reacting to a specific event. As the curriculum advances, group discussions help compare personal reactions to events within the community and school. Instructors are also encouraged to promote affective empathic responses to more distal events by analyzing stories, historical events and news reviews.

Practicality

The ICPS programs emphasize early language and thinking skills necessary for solving social problems (e.g., sharing a desired toy, entering an ongoing play group, or handling disagreements and disputes) versus impersonal

problems (e.g., solving an abstract puzzle). ICPS is designed as a four to six month curriculum to be delivered on a daily basis by a classroom or preschool teacher. A supplemental program is available for parents who learn to apply ICPS principles with their children at home. Each curriculum contains a structured series of 20-minute lessons, games and dialogues typically delivered in a group format as part of the language arts period. The manuals provide a clear instructional format for each lesson and teachers are encouraged to employ a variety of social learning methods, including direct skills instruction, story telling, group discussions, teacher modeling, behavioral rehearsal and feedback, and peer role-play. All three curricula are broken into three lesson phases and similar language and thinking skills are addressed but at increasingly more sophisticated levels as students get older.

Generalizability

A variety of strategies are employed to promote and enhance transfer of ICPS skills. First, within most lessons, discussions and role-plays are typically focused on real life experiences. Also, during instruction, meta-knowledge is embedded in all lessons so that children not only learn strategies and skills but also learn why a strategy is used and when it can be most helpful. To further enhance transfer, adults at the school learn to use the same vocabulary and are taught how to encourage ICPS principles of empathy, means end thinking, and problem solving behavior throughout the day during naturally occurring events. All adults at the school know how to facilitate ICPS dialogues during actual conflict situations (i.e., when two children are having an argument on the playground over the sharing of an object). Children also are encouraged to mediate successful ICPS problem solving with peers outside of the classroom. Throughout the day adults reinforce ICPS skills by attending to natural consequences (e.g., "Johnny you knew how much Tom wanted to play with that truck and you gave it back to

him. Look what happened. You made Tom happy and now he has asked you to play, so now you can play with the truck together.”). Finally, because the ICPS curriculum is designed to impart a problem solving process it can be easily incorporated into other curriculum content areas (e.g., literacy, language arts, social studies). In fact, teachers are encouraged to creatively integrate these concepts into academic lessons and the curriculum is easily adapted to fit the needs of diverse populations.

Research on ICPS

ICPS has been implemented and evaluated in many published and service outcome studies. An early study reported impressive outcomes with African American inner city children who were assigned to a treatment or control condition and matched on age, gender, IQ and teacher characteristics. Greater behavioral outcomes and higher social adjustment ratings were found in the children who had received ICSP training and these findings were maintained over a one year period (Shure & Spivack, 1988). In a subsequent study, long-term effectiveness was demonstrated (Shure, 1993). Children given ICPS training in kindergarten and first grade evidenced the fewest negative behaviors (i.e., impulsivity or withdrawal) in grade 4, as compared to children who received only one year of ICPS training or no training at all. Other controlled evaluations have demonstrated similar behavioral gains (Weddle & Williams, 1993) and additional academic improvements in older elementary students in grades five and six (Shure, 2001). While few studies of ICPS have directly assessed increases in empathy or empathic responding, the overall conclusion to be drawn is that this curriculum, when delivered with integrity over a long period of time, can promote social competencies and reduce impulsivity, aggression, and behavioral inhibition in children from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

The PATHS Curriculum (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) (Kusche & Greenberg, 1994) is a multi-year teacher administered, classroom prevention program intended to improve social emotional learning in elementary aged children. This universal prevention curriculum combines models of self-control, emotional awareness, and social problem solving. PATHS is founded on the principles that affective communication and awareness is linked to cognitive and social problem-solving and that emotional development is a prerequisite to most forms of cognition (Greenberg & Kusche, 1993). The curriculum content also has been tied to neuroscience work relating frontal lobe development and reflective language skills and to character development models that emphasize prosocial attitudes in addition to the role of social cognitive strategies (Greenberg & Snell, 1997). Created in the early 1980s for use with deaf children, the PATHS curriculum has subsequently gone through multiple field-testing with regular and special education cohorts. Extensive feedback gathered from teachers has been used to expand and improve the curriculum over time (Greenberg & Kusche, 1998a). Specific units in PATHS are designed to promote child-focused skill building and teachers also learn to embed similar social cognitive processes into ongoing classroom academic routines and to employ strategies that foster supportive and respectful interpersonal classroom relationships.

Components of Empathy

There are three major curriculum units that cover the domains of self-control, emotional understanding, positive self-esteem, relationships, and interpersonal problem solving: (1) the Readiness and Self-Control Unit, 12 lessons that focus on teaching a basic procedure for self-control (i.e., the Turtle technique, Robin, Scheider, & Dolnick, 1976); (2) the

Feelings and Relationships Unit, 56 lessons that focus on emotional and interpersonal understanding; and (3) the Interpersonal Cognitive Problem-Solving Unit, 33 lessons that cover an eleven step sequence for interpersonal problem-solving. Relevant lessons to build positive self-esteem and peer relationships and communications are interspersed throughout these three units and a Supplementary Unit containing 30 lessons is available to review and extend concepts covered previously.

Empathy is stressed most directly in the Feelings and Relationship Unit where children learn to identify and label emotional states in themselves and others. There are lessons on recognizing verbal and nonverbal cues, recognizing intensity cues, affective monitoring, and developing an understanding of the perspective of others. Empathic realization of how one's behavior can affect others is stressed. Later lessons in this unit involve more complex links between behaviors and emotions and discussions of internationality, the ability to have simultaneous feelings, to hide feelings, and to change feelings. A simplified affective management and problem-solving model is introduced in the latter lessons to further encourage empathic responding and self-control.

Practicality

The newest PATHS curriculum (2000) includes a series of 50 lessons with separate curriculum materials for grades K-5th. Classroom teachers typically teach a minimum of two 30-minute lessons each week. The ideal goal is for teachers to integrate the PATHS curriculum into ongoing academic curriculum at the school. PATHS is an expansive and flexible program that allows implementation over a 5 year period. Any particular lesson can run from one to five or more sessions, depending on the needs of specific children or classrooms. The PATHS Curriculum consists of an Instructional Manual for teachers, six volumes of multi-aged lessons, pictures, photographs,

posters, Feeling Faces, and additional materials. Most of the materials that are needed are included, but supplementary materials can be added as desired. (See Greenberg & Kusche, 1998a for more detailed information).

Generalizability

A unique feature of PATHS is its focus on ongoing generalization techniques used in the classroom throughout the day. To ensure that children apply the PATHS skills to new contexts specific reminders and visual cues are provided across the curriculum to encourage children to employ these skills during the day in various other contexts. For example, during the Feelings and Relationships Unit, children develop personalized Feeling Faces that fit into a strip attached to their desks so that they can communicate feelings throughout the day. Prompts are also given at key transition times to encourage children to evaluate how they feel. A variety of classroom generalization activities and strategies are provided in the teacher manual for how to link the concepts under study to academic content areas and to activities outside of the classroom. To encourage generalization to the home environment, printed parent letters and information are provided in the curricular lessons as materials to send home. "Home activity assignments" are also included for children to complete with parents and other family members.

Research on PATHS

PATHS has been awarded Blueprint Status (Blueprint, 1998) and has been recognized as a model program by SAMHSA, CDC, and the Department of Education. Most recently, CASEL (2003) cited the PATHS program as the most comprehensive social-emotional learning curriculum researched to date that targets elementary-age children. In an early effectiveness study, elementary deaf children randomly assigned to an initial version of PATHS versus a control intervention, displayed greater improvements in social prob-

lem-solving and emotional recognition skills, and were rated higher by teachers and parents on several indices of social competence (Greenberg & Kusche, 1993). Importantly, the children with the greatest emotional gains also were rated as showing the greatest improvements in classroom behavior. Intervention children also displayed improvement on several cognitive/academic measures (i.e., the Reading Section of the Stanford Achievement Test) and these findings were replicated with a wait-list control group who received the PATHS intervention the next year.

Subsequent well-controlled efficacy studies have validated positive PATHS outcomes with regular and special education students (Greenberg & Kusche, 1998b; Greenberg, Kusche, Cook, & Guamma, 1995). Compared to controls, PATHS children have shown significant post-test improvements in emotional understanding, social problem-solving, cognitive reflectivity, and adult and self-reported internalizing and externalizing problems, with specific reductions in ratings of aggression. The effectiveness of the PATHS as a universal prevention program was most recently validated in a large, multi-site, randomized study of an integrated approach designed to serve all children entering school as well as those who were already showing signs of early behavioral and academic difficulties (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2000).

Thus, PATHS has been found to improve social cognitions and social-emotional competencies and to reduce important risk behaviors such as aggression and depression across a wide variety of elementary school-aged children as reflected in teacher ratings, self-reports, and individual child assessments. Successful, but more limited outcomes have also been found with traditional cognitive or academic measures of school success. These results appear to be mediated by significant social learning improvements including the ability to focus attention, reduce impulsivity, and regulate affect.

Positive Action

Positive Action (Gerber, 1998) is an affective education program that is designed to be used daily in classrooms. It teaches that positive thoughts lead to positive actions, which lead to positive feelings, which in turn lead to positive thoughts. It strongly emphasizes the importance of self-concept. There is a separate curriculum kit for each grade, kindergarten through seventh. Students in each grade learn the same concept of Positive Action at the same time. For example, everyone in the school should be considering "managing yourself using emotional positive actions" at the same time. Thus, Positive Action aims to change the school climate as well as provide daily lessons. Monthly assemblies reinforce the ideas taught in the classroom as well as acknowledge prosocial behaviors. Ideally, the Positive Action program permeates the school, and the cafeteria staff as well as the principal are aware of its focus and mission.

Empathy is defined as "thinking how others feel". It is practiced in the unit on "Getting Along with Others Using Emotional Positive Actions." Empathy is not the most central component of the program, which emphasizes self-concept, but it is embedded in the main idea of using "positive thoughts to make positive actions."

Empathy is practiced by relating to characters in stories and identifying the feelings of characters drawn in pictures. Students are encouraged to treat others the way they would like to be treated.

Components of Empathy

In regards to the cognitive components of empathy, the Positive Action curriculum emphasizes students' ability to identify their own feelings and know themselves. There is some consideration given to labeling others' feelings and to acknowledging mixed feelings. However, with the emphasis on treating others the way you would like to be treated, Positive Action does little to help children realize that

other people may have viewpoints that differ from their own, or that behavior does not always match feelings.

In terms of the affective components of empathy, there is an emphasis on controlling one's own emotions, often a critical prerequisite to empathizing, but there are few exercises likely to evoke a real sense of feeling for another.

Practicality

Daily lessons are taught by the classroom teacher. Lessons take approximately 15 minutes and are simple to follow. They often include a story and discussion, although there are some worksheets. It is important to note that for the Positive Action program to be fully implemented, the entire staff needs to be aware of the various units and able to support the central ideas. Assemblies need to be scheduled on a roughly monthly basis, at the end of each unit.

Generalization

Each grade level at a school studies the same concept at the same time, which encourages generalization. Assemblies rewarding students for their progress in developing the new skills presented also helps with generalization. Positive Action provides some materials to be shared with parents, as well as ideas on how to encourage parents to become involved with Positive Action. When implemented as designed, Positive Action permeates the school climate.

Research on Positive Action

While there have been no studies regarding the development of empathy in Positive Action participants, several related factors have been assessed, such as suspensions for violence, school climate, and self-concept.

The publishers of Positive Action conducted a controlled study within the Clark

County, Nevada School District (Positive Action, Inc., 1999), in which reading levels and suspensions for violence were measured. Schools utilizing the Positive Action program showed significant gains in reading, particularly in schools with low mobility rates, and a significant decrease in suspensions for violence. The reduction in suspensions for violence was maintained even in schools with high mobility and within schools with a large minority population (>40%). Again, it is likely that the reduction in school violence is related to improved empathy among peers.

In summary, Positive Action emphasizes school climate and helping children develop a positive self-concept. While some aspects of empathy are addressed, it does not provide comprehensive empathy training. However, initial research does indicate that the program results in improved school climate, self-concept, and reduced incidences of school violence.

Second Step

Second Step (Committee for Children, 1992; 2002) is a classroom curriculum designed to reduce school violence. The curriculum, developed for preschool through ninth grades, addresses three main skills: empathy, impulse control, and anger management. Skills are taught, modeled, practiced, and reinforced. In the Second Step curriculum, empathy is viewed as a critical set of skills involving the ability to recognize, experience, and respond to the feelings of others. Empathy is emphasized heavily in the curriculum, although the number of lessons specifically designed to teach empathy varies with the age of the student. First graders participate in seven empathy lessons, second and third graders five, fourth graders nine, and fifth graders, six.

The Second Step curriculum is designed to be delivered by classroom teachers and it is scripted and easy to follow. The curriculum relies heavily on photographs, which the teacher uses to guide discussions about feel-

ings. Children learn to label feelings in others, to understand that people may have different feelings about the same event, and to communicate feelings. In Second Step, the teacher also shows a brief video and then uses a study guide to encourage children to think about how it would feel to be lost. Children are prompted to think of a time when they were lost or separated from their group. In order to empathize, children are taught to read the facial and body language of other people, as well as listen to what they say and how they say it. Finally, children are taught to think of how they would feel in that situation, in order to figure out how that person feels.

Components of Empathy

The Second Step curriculum addresses most of the components of empathy, as it is defined above. The curriculum attempts to teach children perspective taking, and addresses three out of four cognitive components of empathy as defined here. Children do practice labeling feelings, both in themselves and in others. They learn that people may have multiple feelings. The curriculum also has lessons about recognizing differences. These lessons help children understand that people may have opinions or feelings about things, which differ from their own. However, the curriculum teaches children to read others' body language, and it does not address how people can sometimes look differently than they feel. The final cognitive component of empathy, weighing others' feelings and motivations in conjunction with one's own, is embedded in several lessons such as that on similarities and differences, and the lesson on fairness. All three of the affective components of empathy are embedded in the Second Step curriculum, as children are encouraged to think about how they would feel in certain situations, and then are expected to generalize that to understand how others, in a distant situation, would feel. However, it is the opinion of these authors that scenarios presented in the curriculum do not tend to evoke strong emotion. The revised edi-

tion (2002) makes some improvement in this area, by replacing the series of still photographs with live action videotape.

Practicality

Second Step should be delivered weekly by the classroom teacher. Lessons are very easy to follow, requiring minimal preparation. While Second Step is more expensive than the other curricula reviewed here, its use of photography and video, which are appealing to students, may make it worth the investment.

Generalization

Generalization is consistently promoted through encouraging the children to relate new concepts they learn to their own lives. Further, new skills are practiced through role-play. A complementary program "Steps to Respect" (Committee for Children, 2002) uses literature to support the violence prevention program. There is also the "Second Step Family Guide" (Committee for Children, 1995; 2000) that provides a six-session workshop series for parents which covers the skills taught in the Second Step curriculum. The Family Guide uses videos, outlines for workshop facilitators, and masters for at-home activities.

Research on Second Step

A controlled, randomized study of Second Step showed a moderate decrease in physically aggressive behavior and an increase in neutral or prosocial behaviors (Grossman et al., 1997). Parent and teacher behavior ratings were analyzed along with observational data. The rating scales only covered externalizing behaviors such as aggression and delinquency. The observational data provided a measure of prosocial and neutral behaviors, verbally negative and physically negative behaviors. Thus, there is no measure of empathy per se, but one might infer that the increase in prosocial behaviors and coinciding decrease of aggres-

sion may be related to improved empathy. Of note, the greatest differences between control and treatment schools were on the playground and in the cafeteria. Rates of physical negative behavior decreased in the intervention group, but increased in the control group. As for neutral/prosocial behavior the treatment group saw an increase in these behaviors on the playground and in the cafeteria, while the control group experienced little change.

One study of Second Step looked specifically at perspective taking, a critical component of the cognitive aspect of empathy. This evaluation of the Second Step curriculum (McMahon, et al., 2000) was conducted on preschool and kindergarten children from low-income urban families. Children demonstrated improved social perspective taking skills. Another study (Frey, et al., 2001), also using randomly assigned treatment and control schools, found improved social competence in second through fifth graders.

In summary, Second Step is a violence prevention curriculum that explicitly commits a large portion of its lessons to empathy training. It teaches empathy through modeling, practice, and reinforcement. The majority of the components of empathy, as defined in this article are covered in the curriculum. There is strong empirical evidence that, when implemented as designed, Second Step is an effective violence prevention curriculum for schools.

DISCUSSION

A wide range of classroom-based affective education curricula are available to today's educators. Most of these curricula consist of psychoeducational, skills-based approaches where the goal is to teach how to think and not just what to think about social situations and behavior. However, not all curricula are equal in facilitating the development of empathy, a critical foundational social skill. Our task was to highlight five programs that represent a range of innovative classroom curricula designed as promising approaches for promot-

ing empathy and other social competencies. These programs have been successful in reducing a variety of behavior problems in children and improving an array of prosocial and behavioral competencies, including coping, problem-solving, conflict-resolution and resiliency.

Teaching techniques and strategies across curriculum, include:

- a. explicit lessons on key affective vocabulary,
- b. a variety of developmentally appropriate multi-sensory activities and practice experiences,
- c. self-control strategies that help children integrate emotional, communication, and cognitive skills; and
- d. specific ideas to promote the generalization of these skills throughout the school day.

The following explains these techniques and strategies further.

Teaching Affective Vocabulary

All include lessons on how to express, label and recognize feelings in self and others. These lessons typically include vocabulary development, then small group discussion of affective reactions, and then application of these labels during situational role-plays.

Multisensory Teaching and Practice

All curricula engage children actively during instruction through the use of modeling, active rehearsal, and behavioral role-play routines. Some recommend that skills under consideration be reinforced explicitly throughout the day during school activities.

Inclusion of Self-Control Strategies

All included lessons on the development of conscious self-control strategies that employed

motor-inhibiting self-verbalizations and problem-solving self-statements.

Generalization of Prosocial Skills

All curricula included ideas for how teachers and staff could embed concepts learned in the curriculum across the school day within real-life school contexts and into content areas, such as reading, language arts, science, and social studies. Unfortunately, none of the curricula provide much guidance for how a teacher might accomplish this goal except to stress that empathy and other prosocial skills need to be tied more directly to the academic curriculum.

While many commonalities exist across program content and delivery, the ways in which empathy was addressed varied. In some cases empathy was a specifically stated goal or skill, at other times empathy was subsumed under broader goals and skills. Also, the components of empathy addressed within the curricula varied.

Goals of Review

In reviewing these five curricula, our first goal was to determine how well specific content domains associated with empathy were covered. This was important because empathic responding is a complex skill, involving several areas of competence. Overall, the curricula reviewed here focus more heavily on the cognitive aspects of empathy versus the affective aspects. There is a strong focus on helping children take on others' perspectives. However, because it is the affective aspects of empathy that motivate one to respond prosocially, more emphasis on these skills is needed. Even if one understands the feelings of another, without some emotional response to the other person, there may be no desire help. While cognitive aspects of empathy, such as understanding others, helps us to know how to be helpful, affective responding creates the impetus to be helpful. Thus, future work must consider how well a curriculum engages stu-

dents in the affective aspects of empathy as well as developing the cognitive processes associated with this important skill.

A second goal of this review was to draw conclusions about the techniques employed across curricula to ensure that these skills were maintained and generalized. All five programs address changes in school climate that, if implemented, would provide many opportunities for generalization. However, school-wide implementation of these programs requires strong support from a large majority of the school staff. Such efforts require ongoing training to ensure that all staff is trained in the underlying principles of the affective education curriculum. Ultimately, the generalization of universal affective education curriculum rests with the adoption of the program philosophy and practices by all core staff. Elias (1987) eloquently suggests that the values, ideas and concepts of any adopted affective education program must be promoted across persons, settings and times. One generalization idea promoted in several curricula is to have a specific time at the beginning and at the end of a day to prompt children to imagine where they might use or to discuss where they did use the specific pro-social skills taught in prior lessons. Another idea to promote generalization is to discuss natural consequences associated with instances of empathic behavior.

Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2003) point to the success of school-based affective education programs that simultaneously focus on educating the child and instilling positive changes in the ecology of the school. There is a great need to create caring and supportive school environments where all adults at the school are committed and involved in affective educational goals (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1989).

Selecting a curriculum is only a small step in a large process of promoting empathy. Children must know that empathic responding is valued. Empathy must be modeled for them. Day to day interactions with children may be more critical than the specifics of curricula designed to teach empathy. Most curricula are

stronger in the area of cognitive perspective taking than in the area of affective responding. It is difficult to teach someone to respond with similar affect if they have not experienced it themselves. So, while we teach children skills in taking on the perspective of another, it is critical that they experience what it is like to be empathized with. As students experience empathy, they will increase their ability to empathize with others.

A third goal of this review was to focus on the empirical evidence for the effectiveness of these programs. Overall, research on effectiveness is scant and when conducted was most typically conducted by those who had originated the program. Exceptions to this are some of the studies on Second Step (Grossman, et al., 1997; McMahon, et al., 2000), and the study on Bully Proofing currently being conducted by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. These studies are also strong because they use randomized controlled trials.

In the future, it will be important to conduct more longitudinal studies, since none of the programs have specifically looked at the effect of the curriculum on the long-term development of empathy by following children into middle and high school. This may be due in part to the difficulty in measuring empathy. However, both teacher (Stetson, 1998) and self-ratings (Bryant, 1982) of empathy can be conducted. Ideally, a multimodal approach to measuring changes in empathy would be used, including observations in the classroom and on the playground, as well as self and adult reports in home, community, and school settings.

Another area in need of research is how much parent training and home-school connections enhance school curricula. While most affective education programs include a component involving parents, it is often overlooked or only partially implemented. Involving parents is challenging and time-consuming. Research that documents how much such involvement improves outcome would help school staff determine how much time and

energy spent on parent involvement would be worthwhile.

In conclusion, each of the five affective curricula reviewed here has its own merits and distinctiveness in helping to promote empathy. While other affective curricula not reviewed here may lead to similar outcomes, the five selected here reflect the broad availability of affective curricula currently in use in our national schools. It is heartening that each of these curricula have stressed important aspects of empathy. Changes recommended across all curricula include greater attention to the affective components of empathy, how empathy skills can be generalized, and how school-wide and home-school connections can be made to improve effectiveness.

Empathy has been defined as one of the most important self-regulatory aspects of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). If we neglect this crucial aspect of human development, we are denying responsibility for a major part of what makes our students who they are, and we hurt our communities by allowing children with no ability to control their anger or work through their conflict to enter our society as angry, violent adults. Goleman (1995) writes:

... as a society we have not bothered to make sure every child is taught the essentials of handling anger or resolving conflict positively—nor have we bothered to teach empathy, impulse control, or any of the other fundamentals of emotional competence. By leaving the emotional lessons children learn to chance, we risk largely wasting the window of opportunity presented by the slow maturation of the brain to help children cultivate a healthy emotional repertoire (p.286).

Can universal affective education programs be used to promote empathy? The five curricula reviewed here suggest that they can. Still, we are wise to remember that children need to experience empathy themselves, and that affective education is most valuable when it is reflected in the school climate.

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