Grace in the Face of Conflict: Can Grace and Courtesy and Peace Curriculum Lessons create a Peaceful Classroom?

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An Action Research Report

By Baer Hanusz-Rajkowski

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Advisor _____   Date _____

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine if consistent and purposeful Grace and

Courtesy lessons would result in a decrease in student conflicts and disruptive behaviors.

The study was conducted in a private Montessori school in Metropolitan NYC. The

subjects were 21 Early Childhood (ages 3 to 6) students. Sources of data included a

checklist of Grace and Courtesy lessons, a Zone Map to document places of

conflicts/disturbances, and a Redirection/Incident journal documenting redirections and

incidents by child, and the lessons given them. The conclusion was that there was not

enough time to fully develop what is now understood to be a lengthy and intensive

research study. The presence of "outlier" students also detracted from the message the

lessons were providing. I will continue to deliver the Grace and Courtesy lessons as

planned, and will reapply the same processes at the commencement of the next school

year.

Children present more challenges today than ever. With ever-increasing rates in autism spectrum diagnosis and other social/emotional/behavioral complications, teachers and parents can be at a loss how to manage or alter their children's behaviors. Because of the spontaneous and unpredictable nature of children, and because children have not yet learned how to filter triggers that may cause outbursts or other negative behaviors, it is the role of the teacher or guide to redirect undesirable behaviors into something positive. When discussing one of the most fundamental elements in a Montessori classroom, it is the freedom of choice. All of life is about choices. How we learn what appropriate choices are and what are poor, or "not as good" choices shapes us for the rest of our lives.

For me as a swim coach in my early years, we had the phrase: "Practice makes permanent." If a child performs a behavior or action one way long enough, then that is likely to become an automatic action/reaction, which will almost assuredly predetermine the outcome of the situation. For example, does the child glide briskly through the water, or does he flop and splash, fumbling through the pool? Being presented with lessons on positive social interactions early on, and then maintaining a positive behavioral repertoire, is essential in laying a child's foundation towards success in life. It is the Montessori guide's responsibility to assist in this adventure.

There is an undying and persistent question among teachers, no matter the age range of their students:

- How can I affect positive change in my students?
- When should I intervene?
- How do I intervene?

These are questions faced every day in my classroom. I have attended countless Montessori conferences and workshops, as well as read ample literature on the subject, all to no avail. Workshop suggestions are open ended and shallow in their offerings, and much of the literature is vague on the actual methods and lessons given. I decided to formulate my study based on the actual behavioral needs of my students, and then selected lessons and documentation tools to suit these needs.

This study was conducted in a private Montessori school (toddler to middle school) in metropolitan New York City. As the school has grown in size, so have the number of students receiving, or in need of, social/emotional/behavioral services. The behavioral interruptions are constant, and finding an emotional balance in any of my school's classrooms is a never-ending and exhausting challenge for teachers. In my Early Childhood classroom of roughly equal numbers of first, second, and third year students (ages 3-6), some students in each level have not fully normalized, or attained the ability to self-regulate their behavior, into the classroom. Maria Montessori described normalization as the achievement of inner-discipline within the child, as "the most important single result of our whole work" (*The Absorbent Mind,* 1949). Flores (2011) stresses that because self-regulation is developed slowly over time and is achievable by a child only in the increments allowed by their normal development and nature, it is up to the adult to understand this process and model desired behaviors repeatedly in a manner adoptable by the child. This includes giving hints and cues to the child and gradually withdrawing adult support. In addition to the Grace and Courtesy lesson, I have provided the children the necessary language to navigate some of their conflicts, and provided role-play scenarios that may help them glide through to their own conflict resolution.

The question I am trying to answer is, will the implementation of daily, varied, and repeated-as-necessary Grace and Courtesy/Peace Curriculum lessons result in increased self-regulation of my Early Childhood (age 3-6) students, and a decrease in teacher interventions?

Review of the Literature

The literature reviewed for the purpose of this research project is focused on the child and the classroom that have not yet attained a peaceful state. A peaceful state may include the ability or in ability of a child to self-regulate appropriate behavior and the ability to remain free of conflicts requiring a teacher intervention. Maria Montessori (1995) described this normalization as the achievement of inner-discipline within the child, as "the most important single result of our whole work." Lillard (2007) triangulates the authors best when she calls the path to normalization as invisible, behaviors to be internalized by the student, but not to be underrated by the teacher.

Cromwell (2012), Espe (2013), Morningstar (2015), Stomfay-Stitz (2006), and Van Fleet (2015) talk about the implementation of "Grace and Courtesy" lessons and the "Peace Curriculum" to affect change in the classroom culture.. They shared a common purpose, being that by teaching a Grace and Courtesy/Peace Curriculum, they hoped to reduce the frequency of conflict in the classroom, with recurring conflicts requiring only minimal teacher intervention. Van Fleet states, "Grace and courtesy lessons have positively impacted the classroom environment and will continue to be presented often." Morningstar reports, "there was a clear reduction in the number of daily conflicts among the children." In the course of Espe's study, she found cognitive changes by teachers to

better model the desired behaviors resulted in improved behavior and concentration of the

students.

Nelson (2014) took the approach to qualifying the use of Grace and Courtesy

lessons through direct interviews of the teachers providing these lessons in her study.

She conducted her study through the Tuft's University early childhood laboratory schools

to see how teachers managed classrooms and conflicts between children. Similarly,

Wheeler (2006) used focus groups of teachers in early childhood and elementary

education to share their concerns and issues about classroom conflict and how conflicts

are resolved. The outcomes of each study resulted in teacher strategies that including

puppet role-play, and best practices such as understanding when a teacher should step in

to resolve a conflict or inappropriate behavior.

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and is achievable by a child only in the increments allowed by their normal development

and nature, it is up to the adult to understand this process and model repeatedly in a

manner adoptable by the child. This includes the adult giving hints and cues to the child

and gradually withdrawing adult support, in addition to normal modeling.

Only two writers, Somerton-Burkhardt and Stomfay-Stitz, applied different

strategies from the Grace and Courtesy/Peace Curriculum to define their work. Somerton-

Burkhardt (2015) in *Creating a Normalized Montessori Classroom* wanted to know if an

Accelerated Reader Program (ARP) when used with five management strategies for her

first- and second-graders would result in a normalized classroom. Stomfray-Stitz cites

the "I Care Rules" from *Peacemaking Skills for Little Kids* (Schmidt & Friedman, 1988)

where providing children with the appropriate words to express themselves is just as

important as listening during conflict resolution. Stomfay-Stitz concluded that by giving children the vocabulary as the primary concept in Peace Education, the children were more successful in navigating conflict. Somerton-Burkhardt's use of ARP was only modestly successful, she states, due to excessive classroom noise, and consequently the inability of the children to concentrate.

The methods implemented in the studies of Grace and Courtesy by Cromwell (2012), Espe (2013), Morningstar (2015), Stomfay-Stitz (2006), and Van Fleet (2015) are consistent. They are comprised primarily of daily lessons intended to redirect inappropriate behavior and channel it into productive use of energy, the use of words not hands, the development of listening skills, and lessons how to correctly perform a work through completion constitute much of the process. Stomfray-Stitz (2006) does note to teachers/guides that the home environment may not always be ideal, that home may be a scene of chaos and disorder, so it is especially important that the teacher provides a safe and stable school environment where the child will be able to learn peace, caring, and kindness. A child's ability to flourish will depend on this.

Somerton-Burkhardt (2015) worked with six to nine year old elementary students. This allowed her to have student interviews and assessment that were not found in the younger ages. Espe (2013) also used student interviews, although her students were only all six years old. Further, Somerton-Burke conducted her study in a Montessori classroom within a public school. Only half of her students were familiar with the basic mechanics of a Montessori environment. She attributes this as an additional factor to the marginal change she achieved in the normalization of her students. Cromwell (2012) provided positive outcomes for students as far along as high school.

Many of the Grace & Courtesy are behavioral social skills. They are intangible, such as how to ask a friend for help, or when to say, "Excuse me." Because of this, the most common data gathering methods in the writings were direct observation. Also common were behavior tally sheets, field notes, attitude scale inquiries, and student artifacts. Student interviews, teacher interviews, and assessments were used, but only when working with older children and teachers as subjects.

Lillard (2007) put it best when she said that the skills developed through Grace & Courtesy lessons "are on par with lessons in math, music, and language." With few exceptions, such as "How to Walk a Line" (using a short stretch of string upon which to walk a straight line), the Grace & Courtesy lessons are invisible. They will not be found on the shelves. Instead, they are largely intangible concepts whose success is only measured in the actions and reactions to which the lessons are given. Because of their absence on the shelves, it is up to the teacher or guide to present these lessons and skills, less the child never be exposed to what should be the lifelong skills that may aid them in becoming productive contributors to the society into which they will grow.

Methodology

Of the four planned sources of data collection, Direct Observation proved to be both the most useful and most practical, thus the source relied upon for regular and consistent measurement throughout the process. Although all four pre-determined data sources were carefully planned and thought out, the speed at which the classroom functions made it clear after the study began that stopping to fill out forms at the moment of incident/intervention was not a viable option. Field observations and interventions were quickly documented by recording in an already-utilized notebook/journal that I was

accustomed to always having on my person at all times, a documentation I have relied on since my early days of training and teaching. It also happened to be the primary data source planned in the initial preparation for the study.

My habit in constant documentation is to keep a journal measuring roughly six inches by eight inches, and less than half an inch thick. This size journal allows me to keep it always in hand, and if I need to set it down, it is not interfering with any of the children's works on shelves or floor mats. I can tuck it into a standard-sized folder, or tuck it conveniently under my arm. It meets the requirement of being quick and easy to manage. Within the notebook, my documentation is always on the right side only. Writing initially only on the right allowed me to supplement the notes with follow-up actions if any is taken on the left-hand page corresponding directly to the original documentation.

The second data source was a zone chart of the classroom. To determine if any one area was more likely to suffer disturbances than the others, incidents and interventions were to be logged based upon a map dividing the classroom into six major sections of the room. Those areas were:

1. Language – This area contained a large table with six chairs, plus a much smaller table with one chair, backed up to the other chairs.

2. Math – This area contained one medium table with three chairs, plus a four-foot by six-foot carpet where one child at a time can work.

3. Culture/Science – This area contained one medium table with two chairs, plus one low table intended for only one child sitting on the floor.

4. Practical Life and Art – This area contained one large table with six chairs.

5. Sensorial – This area contains one medium table with two chairs, plus one four-foot by six-foot carpet where either one or two children can work at a time, depending on the work chosen.

6. Circle Time/Rug Work carpet. This is a large rug; an open area contained a ten foot by fifteen-foot carpet. Many children and many works happened in this area at any given time.

Additionally, there were three minor sections of the classroom:

1. Peace Corner – This area is tucked in a corner off Culture/Science. It contained one rocking chair facing the wall at a small table with a soothing reading light.

2. Library – This area is tucked off Language into a corner. It contained a padded two-person child-sized sofa and a four-tiered book shelf with the books facing out. Books are regularly refreshed.

3. Snack Table – This area is tucked between the carpet and Practical Life. It often drew multiple children either anxious to get a snack, or trying to socialize with peers.

Because the Circle Time/Rug Work carpet is relatively centered in the room, it is a high-traffic area. It is also the largest of the divided spaces in the classroom. One of the tests was to see of this heavy cross-traffic space was more, less, or equal to the other areas in conflicts and interventions.

Another tool I employed was in Intervention/Redirection Log. Initially, this was intended to track in a detailed way, any information directly related to the zone map of conflicts. I realized early on that the "Teacher Intervened or Student Resolved" portion

was not working, as all incidents were brought to the teacher by one of those the children involved, thus all conflicts were teacher-intervention/teacher-resolved deeming the sheet unnecessary and was not used further. The other significant reasoning behind this log not being suitable for the children involved was that the incidents needing to be resolved were of a situational nature and involving constantly different child combinations, resulting that "Follow Up" was a category of this data collection tool that made this form of data collection redundant with other data collection tools.

Provided in the initial implementation of data collecting was a list of 20 Grace and Courtesy lessons, intended to be given each in some consecutive manner. What evolved from the list was that simple lessons occurred naturally although infrequently with the younger children, and regular repetition of the more serious conflict resolution lessons happened with the older children, regardless that the older children should have already internalized these lessons, but have not.

The final form of planned data collection was the Artifact Collection. This was to be concrete "non-academic" works such as those done informally in "spare" moments between lessons, fanciful artwork not associate with Art lessons. This would include the weapon-yielding super-hero and the hearts-and-princess works that dominated the beginning of the year. In actuality, at the commencement of the study, classroom time was dominated by the relentless direct-teaching of the Core Curriculum areas of Math and Language. Even at the four-year-old stage, these children were being heavily direct-taught with reading comprehension and two- and three-digit addition. At the Kindergarten level (ages 5+), the children were drilled with written reading comprehension and three- and four-digit dynamic addition, skills presented in first and

second grade. The children in this study were not left with, at this point in the year, the time to do the fanciful play that is usually associated with this age group.

Although the year began with fanciful princesses wearing hearts and tiaras, drawings of the student on holiday with the family, family pets, light-sabers, wizards, and swords, by the time January and the study came around, the academic expectations of the school culture required measurable advances in academic accomplishment that seemed to exceed the capability of the children in the classroom. Those children, suspected by experienced-although-uncertified teachers of needing specialized social-emotional intervention not normally met in a classroom environment, required an inordinate amount of time and intervention compared to their younger peers. To attempt to meet the academic expectations, all 21 children in the study were almost constantly direct-instructed, leaving little time for the social/creative development formerly known for this age group.

Analysis of Data

At the time the study was being formulated, the classroom functioned with greater fluidity. Children entered the room and would select works of their choice. They were often able to work with a friend or friends of their liking, or form clusters of four to six children drawing artworks, or were otherwise participating in parallel play. By the time the winter holidays passed and the New Year began, the classroom environment changed dramatically. Instead of the more casual atmosphere in which instead of "choice," a core element of Montessori education of which the children are accustomed to, they were now assigned lessons with a heavy emphasis on direct-teaching immediately upon arrival. Works became teacher-selected to meet Common Core preparedness standards for

Kindergarteners moving up to Elementary, and second-year students who will become next year's Kindergarteners. I had not planned for this sharp shift in focus. There were suddenly no preexisting norms against which to compare and contrast the data that was to be collected for the research study.

What did remain the same was the structure and zoning of the classroom. To create some sense of consistency, the groupings of tables and chairs, and carpet work zones remained the same. What differed was the zones' usage based on direct-teaching lessons and work space use. What was measurable and surprising was the frequency of incidents and interventions by classroom zone. There were no incidents recorded in the Library, the Math area, the Peace Corner, and the Sensorial areas of the room. Of possible reasons for this is:

1. The Library is in a remote corner of the room and is used by one to two children at a time only during quiet reading time, after lunch. The volume of direct-teaching does not leave "free" time to relax with a book during "work cycle."

2. The Peace Corner, although usually used as a quiet work/lesson table, is isolated in another corner, with the table and chair tightly encapsulated by three walls.

3. The Math table accommodates two to three children maximum, with one-person math works being the focused use of this space.

4. The Sensorial area, although home to a large work rug and a two-person table, is usually occupied by the Head Teacher, direct teaching Kindergarteners. The Culture table registered one incident. The Language tables measured two incidents, the low table by the Snack area measured two incidents, and Art & Practical Life measured 11 incidents. The heaviest concentrations of incidents and interventions were the highly

congested Circle/Floor Work carpet with 44 incidents/interventions or 32 % of

interventions, and Lunchtime period comprising of all classroom tables, with 76

incidents/interventions or 56% of all incidents/interventions. This mapping proved

valuable, as the non-lunchtime incidents demonstrated that the high traffic, centrally

located carpet was the source of the greatest conflict in the room.

Although there are only six Kindergarteners among the 21 children participating

in the study, it is possible that because the Kindergarteners dominated the use of the Math

and Language tables with their constant direct-teaching curriculum, those areas of the

classroom of limited use by the younger children. Likewise, the lack of incidents in the

Library may be due to the fact that the library is not used/not able to be used outside of

lunchtime "Quiet Reading Time." If these assumptions hold true, it is understandable that

the Art & Practical Life and the large, central Circle Time/Rug Work areas demonstrated

the highest levels of conflict, as those areas are most frequented by the younger children

who, unlike the older children are still in the early stages of normalization. Although the

Lunch Period, which comprises all areas of the classroom and all but one student who

goes home for lunch, scored highest in teacher lesson/intervention/redirection, it will be

seen in subsequent charts and graphs that one particular child dominated the data scoring
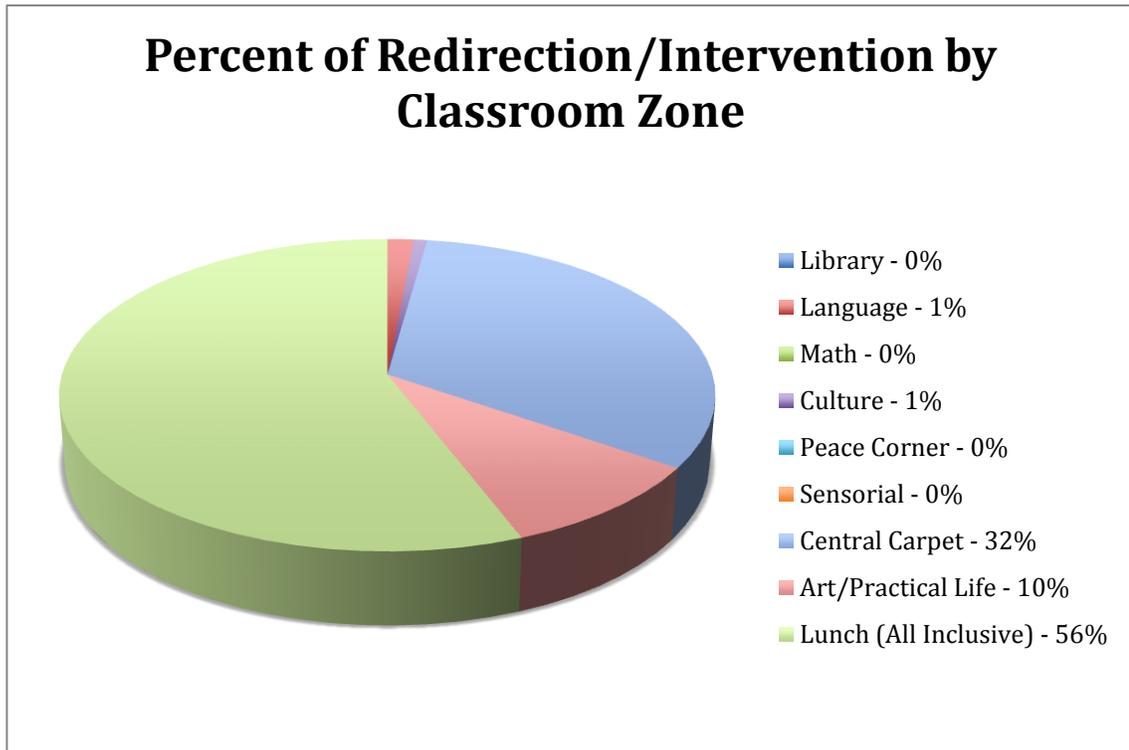
in this area, an outlier student.

Figure 1. Occurrence of Redirections/Interventions broken down by room zone.

Although the initial plan for the study was to deliver a regular stream of 20 different Grace and Courtesy and Peace Curriculum Lessons from a carefully cultivated list, the speed at which the classroom functions and the frequency of repeated interventions on the same issues often with the same children required that redirection and intervention became the norm, rather than the more formal introduction of Grace and Courtesy/Peace Curriculum Lessons. This dramatic shift could not have been foreseen when the study was originally formulated.

Of the original 20 planned lessons intended to instill greater independence from teacher intervention, the lessons on "How to ask help from a teacher," "What to do if someone hurts your body," and "What to do if someone hurts your feelings" were

removed from the study out of logistical necessity. In the case of asking a teacher for

help, there were often four or more children demanding help at the same time. It simply

became impossible to help them and to document every single child needing help,

especially as the teachers were also engaged in giving lessons to other children at the

same time assistance was sought. For a future study, it might be more practical to have in

mind that some data such as help requests might require separate documentation, in this

case checking off on a tally sheet by the type of event rather than by individual student,

as was done in this study. At the end of this study, working on the mental notes of these

abandoned parts of the study, it appeared that the behaviors of "How to ask help from a

teacher," "What to do if someone hurts your body," and "What to do if someone hurts

your feelings," that commenced at the start of the year and should have been internalized

by mid-year and had not, would likely continue to the end of the school year with little if

any improvement up to June. I was no longer optimistic that the undesired behaviors

would end by the end of the school year, and that lengthening this mid-year study would

not have provided much change in results. Of the remaining 17 lessons planned for the

study, only nine were used, and four new lessons were added. These included:

1. How to roll/unroll a rug, a basic skill usually internalized by the children at

the beginning of the year, but clearly needing refreshing.

2. How to listen (to a teacher's message).

3. How to burp politely.

4. How to properly sit at a table for lunch.

What was pleasing to see was that some of the skills and interventions that

seemed to be constantly on the teachers' radar at the first half of the year had faded out or

became non-issues by the second half of the year, the period of this study. These lessons

included:

- How to greet a friend.

- How to greet a visitor.

- How to walk quietly.

- How to tell someone you want to work alone.

- How to watch someone work.

- How to clean up (solids) spills.

- What to do if you are really angry.

- How to set a table for two.

The most likely reason for the vanished need to refresh these skills is that they have been

properly internalized as a part of the normalization process of the children being in the

classroom. Conversely, the excessive need for children to get help from a teacher could

be that they have yet to develop the confidence and understanding of the works (lessons)

they are doing to be able to function independent of the teacher, independence being a

primary goal in a Montessori classroom. I feel that the relentless regimen of direct-

teaching is partially responsible for this lack of independence, and would recommend a

comparison study against either another classroom in my school, or a classroom in

another school which follows more closely the Montessori philosophy of freedom within
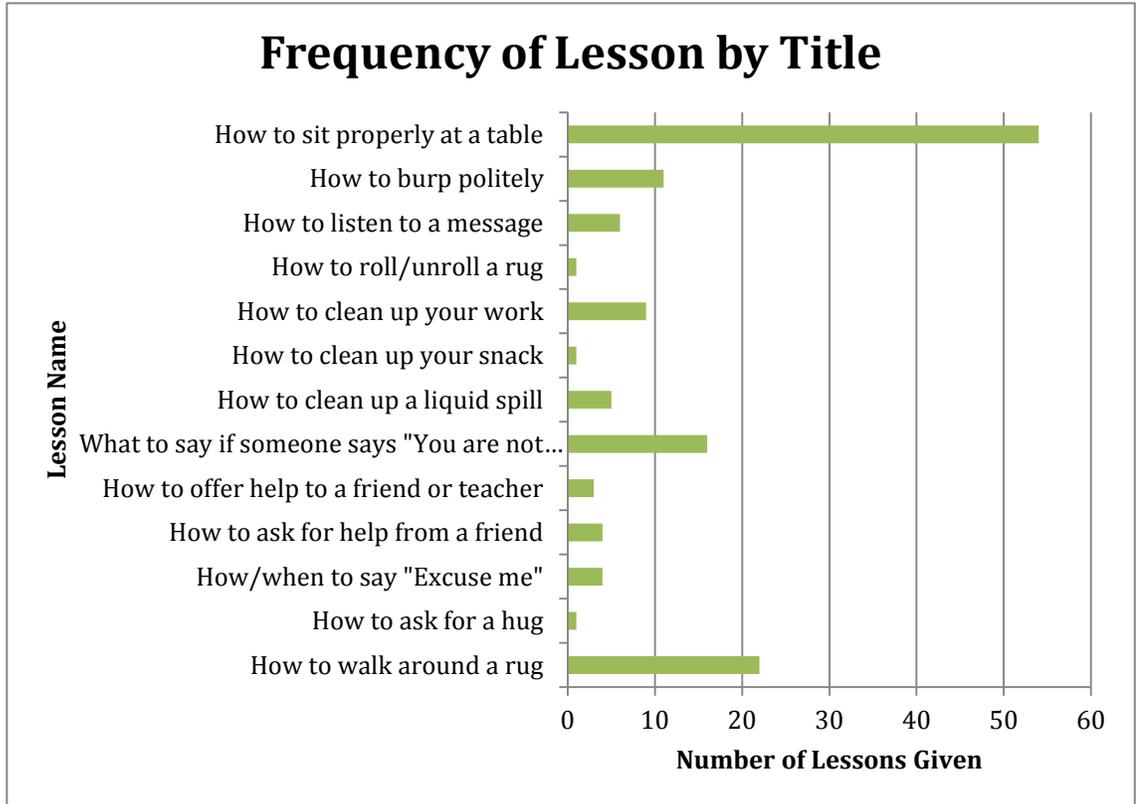
limits, or choice.

Frequency of Lesson by Title

Figure 2. Lessons given according to frequency/repetition for all children.

What I found most interesting was something I subliminally already knew: there were a few particular children always in need of the same lesson or skill development. What surprised me was that I had not been tuned to the sheer volume of some of these interventions until this study. In the case of one particular child, the volume of interventions that I alone noted was staggering. He accounted for 37% of all redirections and interventions. What was not a surprise at the end of the study was that the child who needed the most interventions and behavioral redirections was this second-year student who has historically proven to be slow or stagnant in internalizing some of the most basic social and behavioral skills that have been presented to him for already now a year and a half.
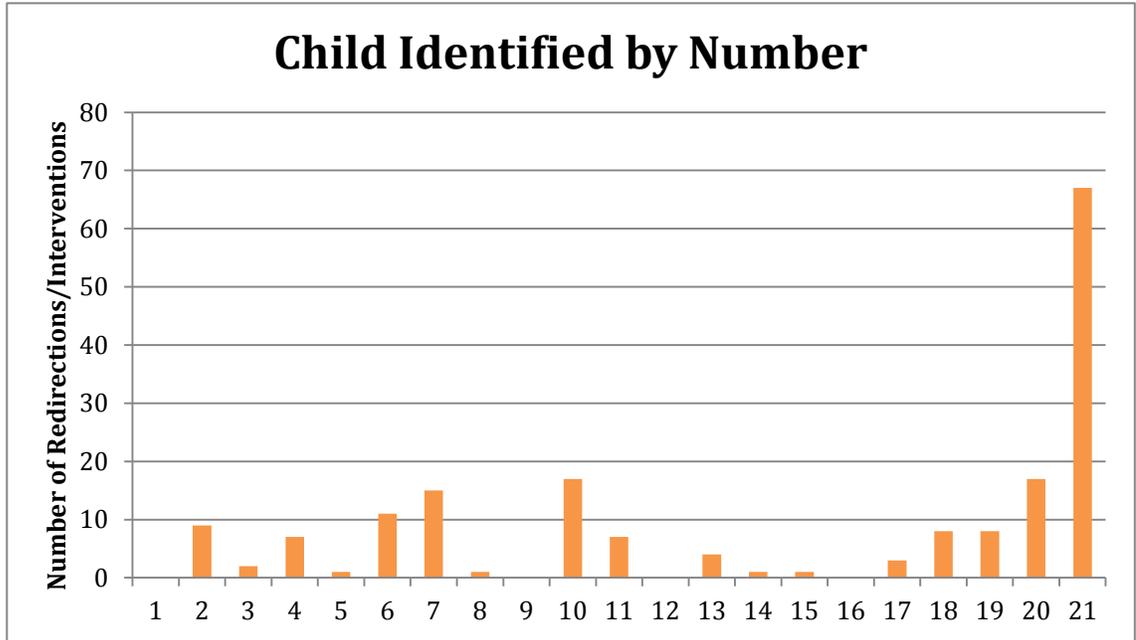
Child Identified by Number

Figure 3. Number of Redirections/Interventions by individual child.

Of the eight first-year students, three did not require any subsequent interventions from skills learned at the beginning of the year. One needed two interventions, and one needed only one. They appear to have normalized well into the Montessori classroom. Surprising was the number of second and third-year students needing interventions, reminders, and redirection because as their experience grows with time in the room, they should have internalized many of these basic lessons in the normalization process. Only one of the six third-year, or Kindergarten, students was free of interventions and redirection. She is a diligent and focused worker, and the only Kindergartener I would call normalized among her peers. One second-year child consumed an inordinate amount of the teachers' time. He is an outlier in the data, so I have included him both with the graph of all children by age/year group, and followed with a comparison graph with this outlier student removed from the data totals.
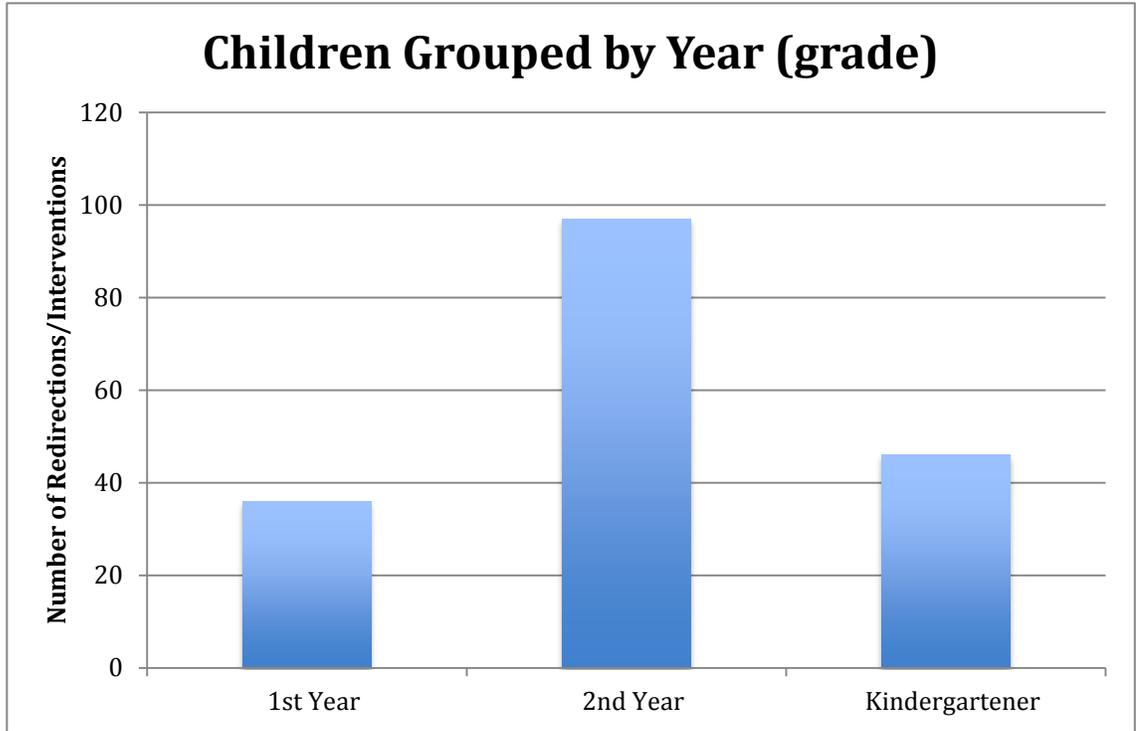
Figure 4. Number of Redirections/Interventions grouped by student level/year.
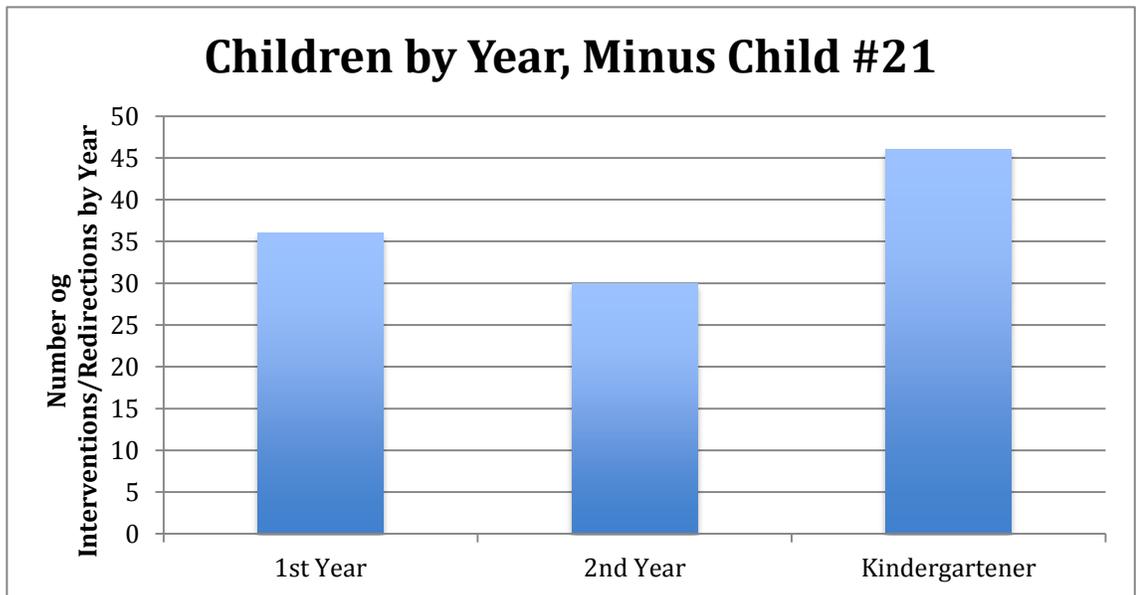

Figure 5. Same representation by age with outlier student (#21) removed from data.

As I would have expected, with the outlier student removed from the data, the number of redirections/interventions tended to go down in the child's second year in the room. The unexpected rise in the Kindergarteners' numbers I will again attribute to the lack of independence/confidence in this year's Kindergarten students.

It needs to be pointed out here that during the course of the study, the question, "Will the implementation of daily and varied Grace and Courtesy lessons result in increased self-regulation of the students, and a decrease in teacher interventions?" does not appear to have cultivated changes in general in the children's behavior. It became apparent that the time limitation of the study was likely not enough to forge the changes I anticipated. This appeared to be confirmed by the number of children already in their second and third year in the classroom whom had still not normalized into independent functioning members of the classroom family. Of the most obvious reasons I see during day-to-day management of the class is that most of the children in my classroom, in all three age groups, are emotionally young for their age, and are highly dependent upon (inseparable from) their closest friends in the classroom and their teachers. In some cases, such as #21, there can be a lot of what we would call "clowning around."

Another underlying issue that was not a part of the focus was the number of children receiving, or in need of receiving, "special services" from sources outside of the teachers' range of training and classroom management. This includes physical, social/emotional, and behavioral remediation. By pointing these instances out, it would put the study in a place or pattern to which as a researcher, I am not qualified to address, understand, or try to answer. I briefly considered pulling these particular children out of the data collection process, but since I have not been given confirmation on some of these

students needs, and since one known student has been making great progress through his

therapy, it did not seem responsible on my part to alter data based on experienced

assumptions. These children account for a large proportion of the data collected, and as

the data is meant to represent the functioning of the classroom as a whole, I considered

all data to be vital to the study.

The obvious rise in the numbers of children in need of some sort of special

services is obvious to my teacher-colleagues, and an ongoing situation in every classroom

in my school. I believe by current literature this is to be the case in most schools in

general. What I have chosen as lessons for the study, what lessons I have deleted, and

what lessons I have added, are skills that should be obtainable, even in part, for all

children participating in this study regardless of special circumstances. The reality is that

due to short time frame allowable by the Action Research schedule, there was insufficient

time allotted for the study to determine any long-term changes in the children. My

recommendation for similar studies in the future would be to begin the study about two

weeks after the fall start date, giving the children some time to settle into their new

environment and with their new peers. I would conduct the data collection up to the

winter holiday recess, with the data collection continuing to the end of the year if

permissible.

Action Plan

The goal of my study was to determine if intensive daily instruction in Grace and

Courtesy (GC) and Peace Curriculum (PC) lessons would result in a more peaceful and

conflict-free classroom. The expectation was that the children would demonstrate

improved self-regulation in their behavior as a result of the GC and PC lessons. This self-

regulation, or normalization, of the children, would be evidenced by a decrease in the

number of interventions and redirections given by the teacher. It was also expected to

show that the second and third year students, those children who traditionally have

already reached normalization, would require the least amount of intervention/redirection

by the teachers than those children coming into the classroom environment for the first

time.

        Before planning the study, a unique variable came in to play at the start of the

school year: teachers and returning students began the new school year with an entirely

brand new classroom which had been built for us over the summer break. During the

planning phase of the study, meaning the first half of the school year, the new children

were still in their developmental period of normalization, and for returning children, a re-

acclimation-normalization to the new classroom environment was taking place. What this

meant was that even the returning students would need refreshers on GC and PC lessons

although the anticipation was that this would be a short process. From my years of

experience in a Montessori classroom, the majority of students normalize sometime

within the first half of the year. To begin my study mid-year as I did with less than half of

the children displaying normalization posed challenges, such as the repetitive redirection

of older children who should not have registered as high as they did in the number of

interventions and redirections. What this suggested was that some outlying force hindered

the normalization process, which I have been unable to identify.

        The data shows that areas higher in use and traffic accounted for the highest

number of incidents and interventions. The results would dictate rearranging the zone

plans of the classroom for future studies, however, due to space constraints dictated by

classroom square footage and the need for the required numbers of shelves, tables, and

chairs in the classroom, it is neither practical nor possible. Areas like the central carpet

where up to 8-10 children might be working at the same time in maximum

space/occupancy registered high in one of the most basic lessons, "How to walk around a

rug." The children took the shortest path across the room, over the work of other children.

A future goal would include optimizing the use of less-traveled classroom zones and

work tables for children known to be in higher need of a teacher's attention.

One of the processes I will likely adjust in my future classroom management

practices will be to begin each new school year with intensive GC and PC lessons for my

Kindergarteners. They are considered to be the role models in the classroom, so they

should be the ones modeling the desired behaviors for their younger peers. If I can

accomplish normalization with them early in the school year, they should be able, in turn,

to give these same lessons to their younger peers. That is the ideal in a true Montessori

classroom, and I believe it is an achievable goal if tackled head-on and hard at the

commencement of the school year. By making Kindergarteners accountable for the basic

and most desired behaviors, it should provide the teachers with more time to give lessons,

rather than always stepping in to intervene in the children's conflicts.

One final area that has only subtly been touched on is the presence of outlier

students such as my Student #21, meaning those students who have for some reason

contributed abnormally high in the recording of interventions and redirections when in

practice the result should have been the reverse. With rising and well-documented rates

of autism, ADHD, and other behavioral issues, the presence of these complications in

today's classrooms is undeniable, even if they are not always formally diagnosed.

Keeping in mind that as teachers, we are not qualified to make a professional diagnosis, we are limited to acknowledging there is something extra we will need to do to assist these children in the normalization process and, in turn, achieving success in the classroom. I would suggest developing a strategy with my teaching team whereby we identify those children we would consider in need of greater support, and then tailor initial lessons to target the behaviors we are most trying to achieve. Another more likely reciprocity move would be to pair that child with another child who has already achieved normalization with the intent that normalized child would model desired behaviors, freeing the teachers to give lessons to other children in the class.

With over 100 years of documented proof, normalization in a Montessori classroom is a proven outcome of Montessori's Grace and Courtesy and Peace Curriculum lessons. It may just be that today's children need a little more support than they have in the 100 years prior.

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Appendix A: Student Count/Population by Zone at Time of Incident/Intervention

Date:

Time: _____

Teacher: _____

Child: _____

Zone/Place: _____

_____

(Windows looking west to Hamilton Park)

Sofa			
Library	**Language**	**Math**	*Teachers' Closet* **Peace Corner**

Table

Table

Table

Table

Math

Table   Table

Table

Art &

Circle Time/Rug Works carpet

Sensorial

Table

Table

Snack Table

Practical Life

Teachers' countertop

Snacks   *Sinks*

Entrance

Wall with three 12"w x 5' transom windows to next classroom
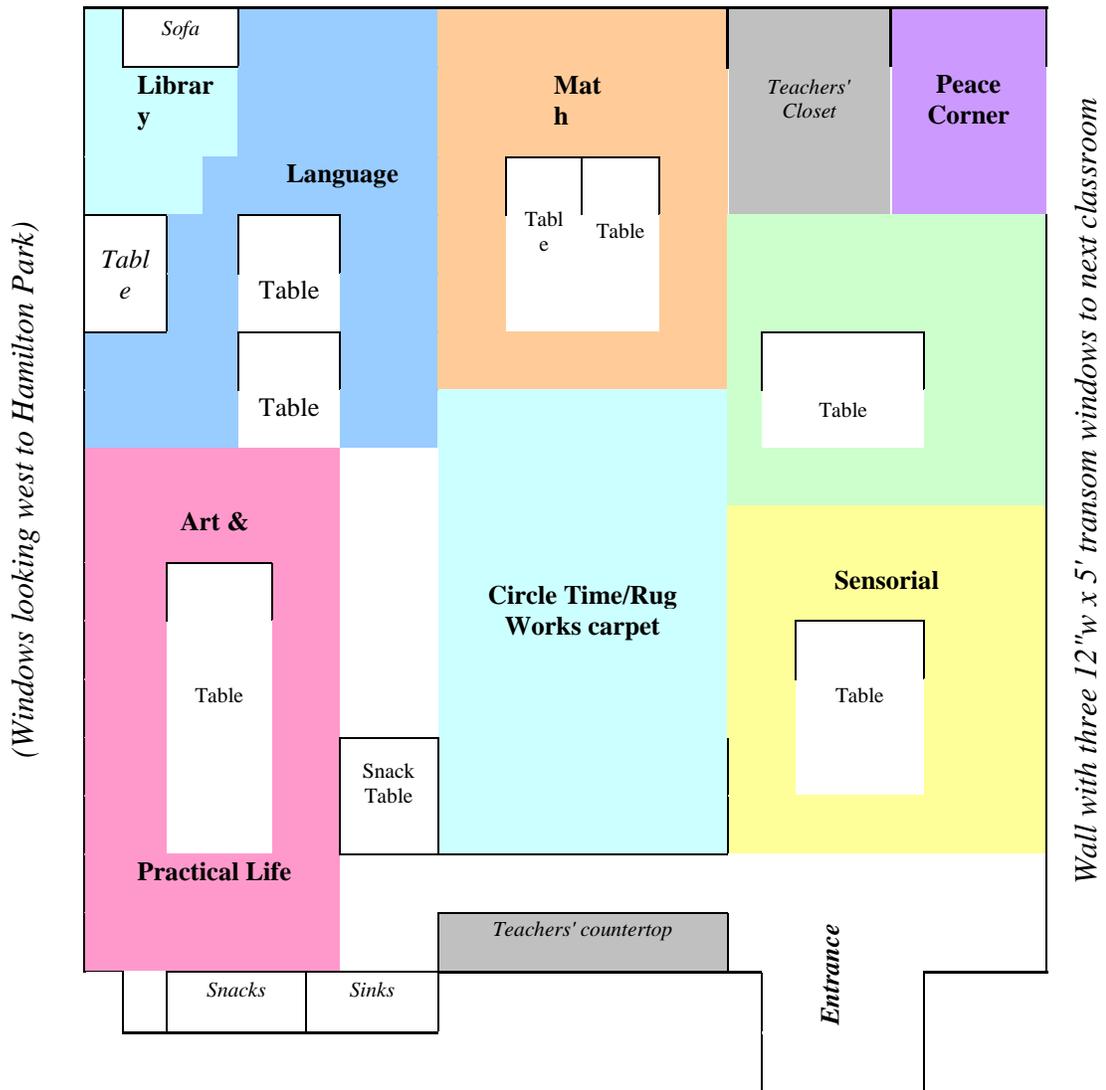
Appendix B: Zone Incident/Intervention/Redirection Log

Date:	
Time:	
Teacher(s:)	
Child/Children involved:	
Possible external influences (Transition, special event, weather, etc.)	
Description of Incident/Intervention:	
Follow-up/Date:	

Appendix C: Grace and Courtesy, Peace Curriculum Lessons

Column	Date	List of Behavior-oriented Lessons		Group or Individual	Date of Lesson Repeated
		Lesson	**Purpose**		
1		How to walk around a rug	Control of Movement		
2		How to ask for a hug	Grace & Courtesy		
3		How to greet a friend	Grace & Courtesy, Community		
4		How to greet a visitor	Grace & Courtesy, Community		
5		How/when to say "excuse me"	Grace & Courtesy, Control of Movement		
6		How to ask for help from a teacher	Grace & Courtesy, Concentration, Control of Self		
7		How to ask for help from a friend	Grace & Courtesy, Concentration, Control of Self, Community		
8		How to offer help to a friend or teacher	Grace & Courtesy, Concentration, Control of Self, Community		
9		What to say if someone says "you are not my friend"	Framework for Peace Education, Vocabulary		
10		How to walk quietly	Grace & Courtesy, Concentration, Control of Self		

11		How to tell someone you want to work alone	Grace & Courtesy, Framework for Peace Education, Vocabulary		
12		How to watch someone work	Concentration, Control of Movement, Respect		
13		How to clean up a liquid spill	Enable Independence, Care of Environment, Control of Movement		
14		How to clean up a solids spill	Enable Independence, Care of Environment, Control of Movement		
15		How to clean up your snack	Enable Independence, Care of Environment, Control of Movement		
16		How to disagree kindly	Grace & Courtesy, Framework for Peace Education, Vocabulary		
17		What to do if you are really angry	Grace & Courtesy, Framework for Peace Education, Vocabulary		
18		What to do if someone hurts your body	Framework for Peace Education, Vocabulary, Enable Independence		
19		What to do if someone hurts your feelings	Framework for Peace Education, Vocabulary, Enable Independence		
20		How to set a table for two	Enable Independence, Care of Environment, Control of Movement		