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The Impact of of Grace and Courtesy Lessons on Independence in Elementary Aged Children

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Abstract

Independence is a skill that everyone needs to possess in order to function in society (Montessori, 1918). The study was designed to see if Grace and Courtesy lessons would help increase independence skills in elementary children. The study took place in a Montessori classroom of 35 children, aged 6-9 years old. The researcher used tally marks to calculate how often the children asked adults for help with tasks that they already knew how to perform. The researcher also tallied how often the children would perform the task after being reminded one time. Observations were done daily and the observation sheets indicated how many children were not focused on a task and when the concepts in the Grace and Courtesy lessons were being used. The study showed that there was a decrease in asking adults for help and an increase in the use of Grace and Courtesy lessons throughout the research period.

Keywords: Montessori, independence, Grace and Courtesy

Walking into the Montessori classroom, you feel the need to immediately quiet your voice, so as not to disturb the concentration of the children around you. You walk over to the empty adult-sized chair and start to observe your surroundings; the children are so independent that they do not even realize you have entered the space. Now imagine a different scenario, you are walking into the classroom, and you barely make it in the door before several children shout your name and approach you, asking questions that they could have easily solved on their own, or asking the same questions multiple times, after being given the answer. You make your way to a seat, but with several children following you the entire way. The first situation is an ideal Montessori classroom, where the children are mostly independent and the latter scenario is a classroom in which the children are still very much dependent. The idea of Grace and Courtesy lessons, or Social Stories as they have also been called, is to help showcase skills or systems that children will need to be successful in the classroom and grow into successful adults. Having a classroom full of dependent children is a strain on not only the adults in the room, but also the children, because they are not functioning at their full capacity.

In Dr. Montessori's findings, she discovered that children learn better in a student-centered environment, meaning they are in charge of developing guidelines and systems within the classroom. She believed that, if the adult were not in class one day, the children would still be able to function as if the adult were there. Kuhn's (2017) research stated that sometimes the children have not experienced what the skills they need look like, for example: the children may constantly ask an adult for help choosing work, because they have never been properly

shown how to choose their own work. This leads to underdeveloped skills of independence. Dr. Montessori's findings verified that this is a big responsibility for the adult, being able to determine which skills the children need to learn in order to be successful (Montessori, 1918).

By providing Grace and Courtesy lessons, the children would learn problem-solving skills (such as how to choose their own work or ask a peer for help instead of asking an adult or waiting for an adult to help them) and it lead them to be more successful in the classroom environment itself, possibly leading them to be more independent. The idea of mixed-age classroom was also beneficial because the younger children could see the older children modeling the behaviors they did not yet possess. For example, a six year old child could see an eight year old child choosing work, and they could start to emulate that behavior. But, in the case of this class, the older children did not model these skills so the younger ones were not developing those skills.

In this public charter lower elementary classroom, there were 35 children, ranging in age from 6-9 years of age (11 first years, 13 second years, and 11 third years). This classroom had the same teacher all three years of their lower elementary years, but they had three different teaching assistants in the last three years. As needs of the children changed, the classroom had 6 adults in the room (the lead guide, the assistant, one group para, and three individual paras).

The change of adults and the influx of adults revealed the drastic lack of independence skills exhibited by the children. The children had become accustomed to the changing dynamic and had gotten used to the constant presence of an adult to get them the things they need or solve

their problems for them. They became so accustomed that the children were not able to properly develop the skills needed to take ownership and develop independence within the classroom.

Due to the constant dependence on adults, the children had not been properly taught or did not fully understand the extent of their capability. The purpose of this research was to expose the children to Grace and Courtesy lessons to help them develop the independence skills. The goal was that these lessons would help the children develop more independent skills and utilize them without prompting from an adult. These lessons would also be used to help the children realize that they could ask each other for help with questions that they may have within the classroom environment, allowing for a more interdependent community and providing the adults with the ability to perform their general classroom tasks.

Once the children had developed the skills they need, they would be able to model these skills to the younger children in the classroom, allowing for a self-sufficient cycle to develop. A self-sufficient cycle in this case means that the older children will naturally teach these skills to younger children, either through modeling or through spontaneous, informal Grace and Courtesy lessons; this cycle would allow the adults in the classroom to focus on other important issues.

This research explored the effects of Grace and Courtesy lessons focused on independent skills. The research questions were what are the effects of giving Grace and Courtesy lessons on the level of independence among the children within the classroom environment? And what are the effects of these Grace and Courtesy lessons on creating a more student-led environment.

Montessori Framework

The idea of these Grace and Courtesy lessons was created by Dr. Maria Montessori as a way to help provide children of all ages with a clear idea of the classroom skills that are new concepts or skills that may need to be refined. These lessons were also used to help demonstrate skills that will eventually become routine. Dr. Montessori (1918) wrote, in *The Advanced Montessori Method Volume I*, about “acts [that] have almost become reflex” (p. 142). She went on to mention that these actions were not reflex actions from the start, but they were taught. She used an analogy of a child who had grown up without a particular set of rules, saying that child would not know what to expect and would be prone to mistakes, because he or she had not internalized the correct procedure yet. Grace and Courtesy lessons are a way to help the children develop these skills and give them a chance to practice and observe the desired behaviors, rather than just expecting them to follow one instruction.

Dr. Montessori talked about the importance of children being able to do things for themselves. Grace and Courtesy lessons are a way for the adult to help the child do for themselves. Montessori (1996) said:

In reaching his full stature and his full physical development, the adult has at the same time actualized the instincts of his species, which will lead him to act in a stable manner on the outer world. Whereas the infant creature more often than not lacks the final instincts of his kind. (p. 168).

The role of the adult is to help prepare the child to become a contributing adult in society, and the adult also needs to remember that the child has not actualized their full potential, the child is still growing and learning.

The book *The Secret of Childhood* (1936), by Maria Montessori has a whole chapter dedicated to the role of the educator in the life of the children, and this role is to help prepare the children for their tasks in life. First, the adult has a responsibility to help the children grow and learn societal rules and expectations; this can be taught through Grace and Courtesy lessons. The way these Grace and Courtesy lessons are taught is also reflective of the adult's task: the adult makes sure the child is in a developmentally appropriate environment, meaning everything is at a level they can comprehend and enjoy, while still challenging their brains.

Dr. Montessori adapted these Grace and Courtesy lessons to reflect the different age groups that she worked with. For example, in young children (those between the ages of 0-6 years old), Grace and Courtesy lessons are only given as examples of the correct behaviors. For example, if the children are having trouble cleaning up a spill in the classroom, the guide will plan a lesson on how to properly clean up a spill and present this to the children to help them develop the skills they need to properly clean up a spill without an adults assistance.

However, the older children, elementary age children (6-12 years old) really enjoy seeing both the inappropriate way to handle a situation and the proper way to handle a situation (Montessori, 1918). These children are often included in the planning process, and they enjoy being the ones to come up with examples of the incorrect way and the correct way to handle a

situation. Often, these lessons can be prompted by children who have noticed a problem in the community and want to rectify it. For example, there may be a scenario in which a small group of five children were interested in giving a presentation about what happens when a plate or cup spills/breaks in the lunchroom. Three of the children were in charge of showing the wrong way to handle it, and then the remaining two children were in charge of acting out the correct way to handle the situation, and these five children presented to the rest of the lower elementary children. They provided a place for discussion about how each situation looks different and why it is important to handle this situation the way that they modeled, in this case it was a safety issue.

Grace and Courtesy lessons are used throughout the entire school community, but most importantly in the classroom environment to help develop systems or skills that the children may not be familiar with or need some help developing. Grace and Courtesy lessons provided a way for children to see how choices and behaviors in the classroom environment are not working or are contributing to making the classroom a success. For them, being able to recognize some of their own behaviors in the skits are helpful in processing their own behaviors and skills. Guides are able to use Grace and Courtesy lessons to help the children develop skills that they will need later in life, such as independence, leadership, and modeling skills.

Review of Literature

When one thinks of independence, the first thing that comes to mind is typically something to do with an individual acting alone. Another misconception about independence is that independence does not develop in humans until they are almost adults, but it actually starts much younger. Beller (1948) wrote about independence being a derivative of a child's own will to succeed, whereas dependency stems from seeking a reward from a parent. Beller believed that children have a secondary drive towards independence and talked about five aspects of their behavior to prove it. Independence does not mean completely alone; independence is also about knowing where to find the information. For example, Cluver, Heyman, and Carver, professors in the Psychology department at the University of California (2013) stated that "even very young children demonstrate some of the cognitive skills that are involved in effective reasoning about people as potential sources of information" (p.571). They said that, from an early age, children are experiencing the best places to find information, starting from their parents.

For an elementary age child, this information gathering starts to shift from adults to other peers in a very normal way. It is stated: "that older children meet their dependency needs in a different fashion than do younger children" (Stith & Connor, 1962, p. 15). Elementary children are becoming more aware of the power of help, and can look to others besides adults they trust for the answers to their questions. Dr. Maria Montessori, an advocate of child psychology and education, the founder of the Montessori method, studied the development of young children and wrote about the importance of developing independence skills. Dr. Montessori said of the child

who is independent: “he knows how to devote himself to an activity for which he will no longer need to ask help of the adult” (1948, p. 33). This is made easier in an environment like a Montessori classroom.

The Montessori classroom is unique to the traditional schooling that the majority of people have experienced. Many people associate Montessori classrooms as being synonymous with independent learning. Montessori pedagogy focuses on three-year cycles, based on the developmental needs of the children in the age group; this creates mixed age classrooms. Some smaller Montessori schools will have all of the elementary children in one classroom (6-12 year olds), whereas many will have separate upper and lower elementary levels (6-9 years and 9-12 years). There are benefits to having mixed age groups, such as the older children modeling for the younger children how to ask for help. Dr. Montessori stated in *From Childhood to Adolescence* (1948): For the child “to progress rapidly, his practical and social lives must be intimately blended with his cultural environment” (p. 42) and that “it is difficult to make social relations real if one uses only the imagination; practical experience is necessary” (p. 42-43).

This led to the idea of social skills presentations, developed by an adult (with help from the children where appropriate) to model the correct behaviors for a certain situation. Dr. Montessori stated that the child needs to have experience with social skills as well as practical skills in order to be successful and grow. A major benefit of having mixed age groups is to create and develop leadership skills within the classroom and to promote child leaders instead of adult

leaders, and from this model the younger children will have leaders to look up to as they aspire to be independent.

Social skills, such as independence and leadership, are important aspects of every human's life, and by strengthening and building those skills in the elementary environment, the goal is that the children will develop a sense of what it means to be independent and learn the skills that they need to be successful as individuals within the classroom environment. To be successful, means the children possess the ability to take ownership of their classroom environment and to assist those younger or newer in the room, with minimal help from adults. Montessori stated that her vision for the future was a vision "of individuals passing from one stage of independence to a higher, by means of their own activity, through their own effort of will, which constitutes the inner evolution of the individual" (Montessori, 1948, p.15).

Having a lack of independence in the classroom makes extra work for the adults and does not prepare the children to be successful adults in the future. When the older children in the room, specifically those in the final years of a lower elementary class, do not demonstrate independence skills successfully, the younger children will emulate their behavior and they, in turn, will rely on adults heavily and/or struggle with basic independence skills.

One way to help solve this problem is to provide social skills lessons to the children to help teach them the skills they need. Specifically, Grace and Courtesy lessons on leadership skills to build independence can help make the classroom a more comfortable and thriving place for everyone. By helping to present and plan Grace and Courtesy lessons, the older children can

develop those leadership skills they need, and practice the skills they are modeling for the younger children.

The following is a review of the literature on the idea of independence versus dependence, the effects of age on independence, classroom expectations and social reciprocity, and interventions to increase independence.

Independence and Dependence

The idea of dependence and independence are often seen as two ends of a spectrum, but they are more complicated than that. Beller's (1948) dissertation, "Dependency and independence in Young Children" described independence as arising "from the secondary reward values of a child's own goal oriented behavior" (p.9) and he described dependency as arising "from the secondary reward values acquired by the parent" (p.7). Beller (1948) believed that the behavior of independent children is based on their own will and desire, but the actions of dependent children are driven towards receiving an award from a trusted adult. Lockhurts, Wubbels, and Van Oers (1996) also stated that in order to be independent, one needs "a clear self-consciousness: the sense of wanting and being able to act and judge as an individual person" (p.100); an independent person needs to have the determination to act on his or her own.

Researchers have different ways of defining independence. In Beller's (1948) dissertation, he asserted that there are five key aspects of children's behavior that indicates they are independent. First, children will take initiative to *solve a problem on their own*, which could include seeking help; second, children will learn to *overcome obstacles* and in doing so they will

achieve their goals on their own, reinforcing the idea of independence. The third aspect is *completing their activities*, meaning being able to finish what they have started, whether or not the outcome is what was expected; fourth, *they will get satisfaction from the work* they do independently. When a work is completed in full, or when a new idea is initiated, the feeling the child receives is a motivator to continue in this manner (Beller, 1948). The last aspect of independence Beller (1948) discussed is children *creating their own activity*; just wanting to do something, the children seek to do it because they are feeling the benefits of being independent.

The researchers Lockhorst et al. (2010) had similar ideas. Firstly, they presented the idea of two aspects of independence: The first aspect was children being able to act and wanting to act on their own, and the second aspect was having higher mental functions, such as the ability to problem solve, make decisions, and cooperate with others (p. 100). These two aspects reflected Beller's assertions, as well as proposed them in a new way and took it further by including cooperation and the higher mental functions. The children wanting to act on their own stems from the children possessing the required mental capacities to perform independently; this is where Lockhorst et al. took it a step further. These two aspects are synonymous with each other, and independence cannot exist without both aspects. Thus, the ability to completely act independently is only possible as the children develop the mental skills they need.

Higher mental functions can develop earlier in certain individuals based on the disciplines and activities an individual participates in, and these can stem from the cultural experiences of each child when they are younger. According to the research done by Raeff

(2006), independence is developed through cultural upbringing. Lockhorst, et. al (2010) also asserted that education is “cultural in nature” and that children will use the experiences they have had to develop new insights, or ideas they previously had are challenged by new experiences; this allows the children to develop the higher mental functions of problem solving and decision making. (Lockhorst, et al. 2010, p. 102).

The idea of independence varies depending on whether the child was brought up in a society that favors independence or a society that favors connectedness, or interdependence. Raeff (2006) researched the idea of independence and interdependence developing out of cultural conceptions; this can shape the experiences of a child’s development. In her research, Raeff (2006) discovered that many researchers find it difficult to decipher how these two skills, independence or interdependence, are linked, but that both skills are necessary to thrive. Raeff (2006) mentioned three different approaches to the relationship between interdependence and independence in her writing: the idea of these two as dichotomous, separate; coexisting, both working together but one is higher; or inseparable, entwined.

One way in which they were previously characterized was that they were dichotomous, meaning that cultures were either individualistic cultures or they were interdependent cultures; this was the more traditional view of the relationship between interdependence and independence. A dichotomous relationship does not account for the multiple dimensions of culture (Raeff, 2006), meaning that no one culture is completely independent or completely interdependent, they all have aspects of each other. This led to the next idea that Raeff (2006)

discovered; that interdependence and independence are synonymous but that one has higher priority than the other, meaning that cultures can value independence but will still need to possess interdependence skills. This idea was then refuted by saying that independence was not a matter of degree, and therefore independence and interdependence were synonymous and that you can not have one without the other (Raeff, 2006).

An even more modern idea is the inseparable idea, where independence and interdependence operate in tandem. Raeff (2006) mentioned that children of different cultural backgrounds participating with other children in cultural practices create multiple interdependence roles because the children are working together, but that each is operating as an individual person; therefore, each child is in charge of his or her own decisions, but they are still able to work together. Montessori classrooms are places where children can foster and build these practices, allowing them to develop the higher functions such as cooperation and problem solving. These higher mental functions do need time to develop, meaning older children should have a better understanding and better able to cooperate with other children.

Asking for Help and Age

One of the higher mental functions that children will need to develop in order to become independent is the skill of being able to ask for help. As this is not a skill that children are born with, it develops as the children age. Children need to develop this idea that asking for help is acceptable, and they need to understand who to ask for help. An experiment published in the *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* focused on the ability of young children, under the

age of 4, to distinguish between helpers who were beneficial and those who were not helpful (Cluver, Heyman, & Caver, 2013). In this experiment, Cluver et al. invited parents and their children into a room to solve a series of problems in which the child would require help and they observed whether the children were able to discern which helper to ask in order to obtain the results they wanted (Cluver et al. 2013). The children were presented with four props that they had to manipulate to retrieve an attractive toy; in the room were two females who portrayed the “good” helper (performing the task successfully, showing the child how to do it), and the “bad” helper (unsuccessful, spoke with a monotonous voice and did not make eye contact.) Cluver et al. (2013) concluded that every child asked for help on at least one trial but that almost all of them either asked the “good” helper from the beginning or, upon asking the “bad” helper and being unsuccessful, asked the “good” helper or their parent. The results demonstrated that the children learned from the choices they had made and were able to adapt and learn (Cluver, et al., 2013).

The age of the children is a significant factor in knowing not only who to ask for help, but for what reasons to ask for help. In their experiment, Cluver et al. (2013) also discovered that the older the children they observed were, the more likely they were to approach the “good” helper from the start. The younger children did not have a consistent enough response between the “good” helper, the “bad” helper, and their parent to produce a consistent result. Cluver et al. discovered that by the time the children reached their second birthday they were already exhibiting selectivity where the children could decide themselves “if, when, and how to engage

in help seeking” (p. 575). The younger children, under two, also exhibited more dependent behaviors, such as asking the adults to confirm that they were performing the task correctly, or asking for help even though they knew how to perform the task.

Another factor of independence is being able to know when to ask for help. Stith and Connor (1962) researched the correlation between dependent contact versus helpful contact with adults. They discovered that, as they hypothesized, the interactions with adults as the children aged did not necessarily decrease, but the reasons they were asking for help changed, and the contact was less about gaining adult approval than it was about seeking help (Stith & Connor, 1962). Younger children were coming to the adults for help to seek approval from the adults, but the older children were coming to the adults only when they needed it. This confirmed that, while the older children still sought out adults, their reasons were less about needing to be near an adult or seek an adult’s approval, but more about asking for help when they were unable to solve the problem on their own. This is a testament to the growing independence of older children, because the children could distinguish when it was important to ask for help versus always asking for help.

Older children who experience independence skills are also able to discern which problems to seek help for. In their experiment about recognizing helper cues, Cluver et al. (2013) focused specifically on the children being able to solve problems by using factual information they already knew, rather than obtaining new factual information. Cluver et al. (2013) deduced that “there are at least three distinct ways in which children might respond to problems” (p.572).

The three ways they described were that children might seek help more often for familiar problems, they might seek help at similar rates for familiar problems and new problems, or they will seek out help only for new problems. Their research suggested that the majority of older children sought help on unfamiliar toys or situations but not the familiar toys, whereas the younger children did not display a preference towards either area, they asked for help at about the same rate for both familiar and unfamiliar toys (Cluver et al., 2013). These results demonstrate the ability of the older children to solve a familiar problem on their own, whereas the younger children asked for help no matter the circumstances, proving they did not have fully developed independence skills. This confirms the suggestion that age does make a difference in children knowing when to appropriately ask for help, and that the younger children are still developing those higher-level thinking skills.

Classroom Expectations/Social Reciprocity

As children grow and develop those higher-level thinking skills and start asking for adult assistance as a means of help, therefore becoming more independent, the importance of classroom expectations and the teacher's role is significant. Dr. Montessori said, "Let the teacher not lose sight of the fact that the goal sought is not the immediate one, but rather to make the spiritual being which she is educating capable of finding his way by himself" (Montessori, 1948, p. 42). The teacher has a responsibility to help the children develop the skills they need in order to be independent, creating a need for consistent expectations. Kuhn (2017) touched on the main role of the adult in Montessori environment as being one who "supports the social and academic

aspects of a child's growth" (p. 8). This demonstrates the responsibility the adult has for making sure that the children in their care are developing the social skills they need and allowing those skills to manifest, not just the responsibility to teach the academics. Montessori also said,

It is the teacher who forms the child's mind. How he teaches- the same conception governs the school: it is the teacher who must form the pupil; the development of the child's intelligence and culture are in his hands. He has a truly formidable task and a tremendous responsibility (Montessori, 1918, p. 25).

The teachers have a responsibility to create and model the expectations they have for the children in their care.

Both Dr. Montessori (1918) and Kuhn (2017) mentioned that the adult has the ability to help the child grow and develop many skills, and how the teacher nurtures and cultivates these skills influences the child's future. Cooper (2006) also touched on different theoretical propositions from Vygotsky and Erikson. She mentioned Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" in which the adult provides goals, or expectations, to help the child move from their "actual level of knowledge to his or her proximal level" (as cited in Cooper, 2006, p. 316); helping the children to reach their full potential through a series of small stages at a time. The adult helps the children to reach a goal, such as achieving independence, that they otherwise would not have mastered on their own. Lockhurst, et al. (2010) claimed that the zone is not a fixed quality but that it is an ever-developing circle depending on the interaction between the teacher and the pupil, which can be developed based on the consistency of the expectations.

Another responsibility that adults have is to create consistent expectations, meaning that not only are all of the adults in agreement about what skills the children need to possess, but also the children are aware of these skills as well. In their research, Lane, Pierson, Stang, and Carter (2010) described the importance of having consistent expectations between the adults and children. If the children are expected to be independent, they would need to know exactly what was expected of them, then they could carry out the tasks without assistance. If the children do not know what to expect, then they will not be able to be independent, no matter how strong their motivation (Lane et al., 2010). Lane, et al. (2010) believed that if the expectations are clear and consistent the “students are (a) more likely to receive reinforcement from teachers for meeting these expectations and (b) less likely to display other behaviors that previously yielded higher rates or reinforcement” (2010, p. 163).

Consistency should not just be between children and adults, it should also be between teachers of all grade levels, and not just in Montessori schools. Lane et al. (2010) believed that the expectations should be developed by looking at what skills the younger children entering the school are expected to exhibit, as well as the skills the teachers of older children were expecting those coming up to have. Throughout their survey of 1,303 teachers of varying teaching levels, they discovered that “cooperation and self-control skills were of primary importance to teachers” (Lane et al., 2010, p. 171). They discovered that there were four things that all teachers viewed as critical “controls temper in conflict situations with peers, controls temper in conflict situation

with adults, follows/complies with directions, and attends to your instructions” (Lane et al, 2010, p.171).

These results reflect the definition of social reciprocity. Social reciprocity, as defined by Leach and LaRocque (2011), is when a child “is aware of the emotional and interpersonal cues of others, appropriately interprets those cues, responds appropriately to what he or she interprets, and is motivated to engage in social interactions with others” (2011, p. 151). The children who are able to process and interpret the cues and respond appropriately will be able to follow the instructions, control their temper, and also comprehend why these skills are important. Although Leach and LaRocque (2011) focused their experiment on children with autism; some of the same steps they implemented can be reciprocated with all children. An intervention they implemented was Model and Request Imitation. This intervention involved the parent modeling a situation and how to appropriately respond, and then invoking a reciprocation from the child (Leach and LaRocque, 2011). While working within this particular set of children, the parent would perform the same behavior until a reciprocation was performed (Leach and LeRocque, 2011). In a general classroom experience the adult would allow the children to show their understanding of the need to improve social reciprocity.

Social reciprocity is easier to convey in a child-centered situation rather than in a didactic setting. In traditional classroom settings, or didactic classrooms, the children are typically shown or described an experience and then expected to emulate it without being able to properly internalize it; this is not the case in child-centered classrooms. Stipek, Feiler, Daniels, and

Milburn (1995) researched the effects of didactic instruction versus child-centered instruction on the achievement and motivation of young children and they defined didactic instruction as being “presumed by many experts to inhibit intellectual development directly-by fostering superficial learning of simple responses rather than real understanding and problem-solving ability” (Stipek, et al., 1995, p. 209).

In a didactic classroom the adult would describe that the ability to clean up after oneself is lacking, and then ask the children to fix this remedy; the children may not be fully able to comprehend what they are doing wrong when they are cleaning up without seeing it put into place. Stipek et al. (1995) also claimed that didactic instruction increased dependency and could cause anxiety for the children because adults were defining tasks and expressing outcomes, when in real life those situations might be different.

In a child centered classroom, the adult allows the children to reach a level of self-sufficiency by providing consistent expectations and allowing the children the space to thrive and develop the higher-level thinking skills. For example, in a child-centered classroom, the adult models the process it takes to completely clean up after finishing a project, and the materials are in front of the children. Because Montessori classrooms are child-centered as opposed to the majority of traditional classrooms, which are didactic, this also allows the idea of children being able to have a say in their own learning.

Lockhurst et al. (2010) also described the importance of individuals being involved in their own learning process allows them to build personal knowledge bases based on activities

they participate in and what they have learned from these activities (Lockhurst et al., 2010). The idea that the children are involved in their own planning and modeling is a skill that can only be employed in a child-centered classroom approach, and the adult has the decision on which environment to create. One way to increase the interaction between adults and children and develop consistent expectations is through interventions.

Interventions to Increase Independence

Many researchers have discussed the idea of using interventions to promote positive social interactions and develop the skills the children need to be independent. Kalkman (2018) discussed the Responsive Classroom teaching method. Responsive Classroom “is an intervention...which creates a tighter bond between academic and social learning. In this approach, the teacher creates a caring environment for their students and manages their classroom with engaging lessons and promoting positive social interaction” (p. 6). Responsive Classroom focuses on increasing relationships between the adult and the children so that the children will have a say in the way that it feels to be a part of the community. Some of the specific interventions Kalkman (2018) took to promote Responsive Classroom were morning meeting, creating classroom rules with student inputs, and logical consequences. Morning meeting was a chance to “allow community building, greeting, sharing, and for students to develop a sense of scheduling for that school day” (Kalkman, 2018, p. 7). Allowing the children to have a voice in the creation of the classroom rules is another way to increase the relationship

with the children and gives a sense of security and safety in the classroom, allowing the children to be more independent.

Another way to reinforce the rules and expectations is to find books to read in the classroom that represent the expectations the adult wishes to focus on as a theme. Some of these expectations could be as such: listening to adults, cleaning up after oneself, and speaking kindly to each other. Cooper (2006) focused on teaching self-regulation through books. Self-regulation “in this sense helps young children manage the transition to middle childhood, where they will be expected to act independently as thinkers and playmates” (2006, p.316). Cooper (2006) targeted two specific books and assessed the importance of analyzing messages sent through books read in the classroom, and what the intent of these messages are. Cooper (2006) also focused on the differences between why adults may like the stories, versus why the children may or may not respond to those books in a similar way.

Reading stories that reflect these ideals is only one idea to promote independence, and could be paired with other interventions. For example: More (2012), from Arizona State University, wrote about using social stories to help young children with autism. Social stories are “stories teachers write to help children successfully negotiate specific social situations that are frequently encountered by children” (More, 2012, p. 168). Social stories help to identify the different perspectives of a situation; these social stories are similar to the idea of Grace and Courtesy lessons in Montessori classrooms, and another connecting factor between these two ideas is the idea of involving children in the drafting. More (2012) stated that, “Children work

better when they have ownership in the activities that occur in their environment” (More, 2012, p. 169). The children are likely to respond better to a situation if they have a hand in creating the story or skit, they will feel a sense of pride and ownership over the creation of this story.

Conclusion

The research supports the idea that independence is an important skill to have in order to be successful. Independence is about more than being able to work and function completely alone; there are other important aspects such as being able to ask for help and knowing who to ask and what are appropriate things to ask for. These skills develop as a person gets older, and they can develop earlier, depending on the experiences of individuals.

Independence requires skills that will have to be taught and reinforced by adults and it is important for the adults to be consistent and clear in the expectations and the behaviors they wish the children to exhibit and work on. Being able to work in collaboratively with the children to determine the needed skills and the desired results will increase relationships between adults and children and the competency of the children.

Independence can be developed through a multitude of different ways. Many researchers have discussed the idea of building independence through modeling or similar interventions but none have connected the idea of Grace and Courtesy lessons with the lower elementary classroom specifically. In Montessori classrooms, modeling occurs through Grace and Courtesy lessons, these are lessons in which an adult, or trusted peer, models a behavior that they wish to change or improve as a way of teaching the skill to others. The following research will determine

the effects of giving Grace and Courtesy lesson on the level of independence among the children within the lower elementary classroom and whether it will contribute to a more student-led and interdependent environment.

Methodology

I planned to give Grace and Courtesy lessons at least once a day and read books about the skills that I wanted the children to learn. The books were to reinforce the work that I was doing and could substitute for a Grace and Courtesy lesson. There were many unforeseen circumstances such as sick teachers, snow days, a project fair, and changes in classroom procedures (the children were all required to sit on one side of the room and raise their hands to get up) that prevented me from giving the Grace and Courtesy lessons daily, but I managed to give at least two a week, sometimes three. Some of these Grace and Courtesy lessons were planned and performed by the children, but most were planned and performed by myself, with assistance from the lead teacher.

The lessons I taught were Grace and Courtesy lessons on key skills the children need to function and gain independence within the classroom. I chose the lessons based on the observed needs in the classroom, and adjusted them as new needs arose. Some of these lessons were: how to choose their own work, how to collect all of the materials needed for a task, how to get up and move responsibly and purposefully in the classroom, and how to complete a work cycle. There were also some Grace and Courtesy lessons about following adults around the room, and one lesson on why it is important not to interrupt the adult who is preparing snack. These lessons

were not originally on my list of lessons to give, but they became necessary in order to continue with more specific lessons. All of the lessons that the children helped plan and demonstrate were how to ask a classmate for help, how to find a material in the room, how to take care of the materials in the environment and how to give friendly reminders to each other. These specific lessons were planned and performed by children because these were skills that the children already possessed but were not using regularly; by giving the Grace and Courtesy lessons it reminded the children that they can use these skills on their own.

Normally, elementary level Grace and Courtesy lessons are primarily student led and ideally student initiated. However, based on classroom observation throughout the whole year, in this instance the children in the elementary classroom were not aware of the lessons they needed, so the majority were adult initiated and adult demonstrated, to ensure that we were showing the children exactly what they needed to see.

Originally the Grace and Courtesy lessons were going to be a mix of small group lessons and whole group lessons, but most of them ended up being whole group lessons because these were skills that every child either needed to learn or needed a reminder about and it allowed me to give the Grace and Courtesy once, rather than having to give it multiple times. Giving the lesson only one time ensured that all of the children heard the same language, and that they all got the lesson needed. It also allowed me to keep track of which children were comprehending the lessons (which children were following the expectations and using the language); therefore, I was able to distinguish which children could be good leaders to help reinforce the behaviors with

the younger children. I also tried to vary the times at which I gave these grace and courtesy lessons, depending on which skill was being isolated or when it was necessary. For example, I gave a Grace and Courtesy lesson regarding the use of our glue sticks and how to take care of materials. This was spontaneous because we were out of glue sticks but many in the class needed them and I had seen a large mistreatment of them.

The Grace and Courtesy lesson involved gathering all of the children together, and I modeled the wrong way to take care of our glue sticks, such as rolling the glue up all the way and putting the cap back on. Then I modeled the correct way to take care of glue sticks, how to roll it properly down and how to make sure that they only used the glue that they needed. The Grace and Courtesy was given in the classroom and was given when I was about to restock the glue sticks. There was no immediate mistreatment of the glue sticks when I gave the presentation, but I mentioned that I had made the observation and the children admitted that they had also been observing this behavior.

I planned to observe twice daily, for approximately 20 minutes per observation. I observed to see if the children were using the skills they learned in the grace and courtesy lessons and I took notes on when these skills were used, how often, in what ways, and what language the children used (whether they were using the same language as the adults), as well as the age of the child using those skills. I was only able to observe once per day, due to balancing the needs of the classroom and the responsibility of being the assistant, and I would record the notes to the observation sheet I created for the research (see Appendix A) at the end of the day,

after all the children were gone for the day. These observations helped me to see what the effects of the Grace and Courtesy lessons were, and gave me insight into changes that needed to be made, such as additional lessons to give or lessons to repeat. The observations also showed if the children themselves were choosing not to exhibit the behaviors modeled by the Grace and Courtesy lessons on their own.

From the beginning of the work cycle I would start tallying how many times the children asked an adult for help, this was easier when the lead guide was out sick a few times as well, because there was only one adult for the children to ask for help. Then I would give a grace and courtesy lesson to either the whole group or a smaller group of children who needed to learn the skill. Sometime after this lesson, for approximately ten minutes, I would stop to observe for the use of the new skill that they learned. I would then start tallying how many times this new skill was utilized throughout the rest of the day.

In the afternoon I would continue to tally when the children asked for adult assistance and also when they utilized the skills taught by the grace and courtesy lessons. At the end of the day I would complete my end of day reflection, where I marked down all the outliers throughout the day and any other relevant observations to the research. The next day I would repeat the process, except I would start the tallying of when the skills were used right from the beginning of the day as well.

I also took a tally of the times the children sought adult help. For example, how often the children asked an adult for help even if they were capable of independently solving the problem

and had all the tools necessary to solve the problem without an adult. I got better at actually keeping track of these the second half of the research, because we had a more consistent time in the classroom environment. The first few weeks of the research had a lot of days off and several days where the lead teacher was sick, so the tally marks were inconsistent at best. The only exception to this rule was the three children who had individual paraprofessionals assigned to them, I did not tally when they asked their paraprofessional for assistance, but if they asked me for help, and had the knowledge and the tools to handle the situation themselves, then they were counted. I also did not count when children asked me for supplies that only an adult could access, or if it was an academic related question that another student could not answer.

I also kept tallies of the times I heard the language from the Grace and Courtesy lessons used, for example, when a child reminded another child to roll down the glue stick before putting the cap back on it. This went hand in hand with the observation journal, but it was a way to have an all-day information collection, rather than just during the observation time. This provided a more accurate description of whether the language and skills from the grace and courtesy lessons were being adopted. It was also a good indicator of when the skill was used. For example, right after giving the grace and courtesy lessons the children were more likely to utilize the language, or right after a prompt from another child or an adult, but they were not as likely to remember after a few days, or without a reminder from an adult. These things were tracked in the following data collection tool.

Another data tool I used in the investigation was a reflection journal. This was a place where, at the end of each day, I took notes about the general atmosphere of the room and any outliers that may have come up throughout the day. This self-created form (see Appendix B) was a simple form in which I would could write information that impacted the effectiveness of the lessons. For example, when our small group Grace and Courtesy was interrupted by several children asking me for things, therefore breaking the cycle, making the lesson not as effective. Or when two of our higher needs students were both in dealing with an emotional crisis and were destroying some materials, this took the attention of the classroom adults and prevented the children from feeling safe, causing an influx in dependent behaviors while they tried to regulate themselves again. This helped connect all the previous data collection tools and put the data into perspective.

Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of giving Grace and Courtesy lessons on the level of independence among the children within the classroom environment and to provide a more student-led environment. Data was collected for a total of 28 days. The Grace and Courtesy lessons, which are lessons done in either in a whole class setting or a small group setting, focus on building appropriate social skills and life lessons. These Grace and Courtesy lessons were given daily by me, at varying times each day, and were used to teach independence skills. The data collection tools used were observation sheets to determine how often children were focused on one task, not wandering around the classroom or distracting other children, and

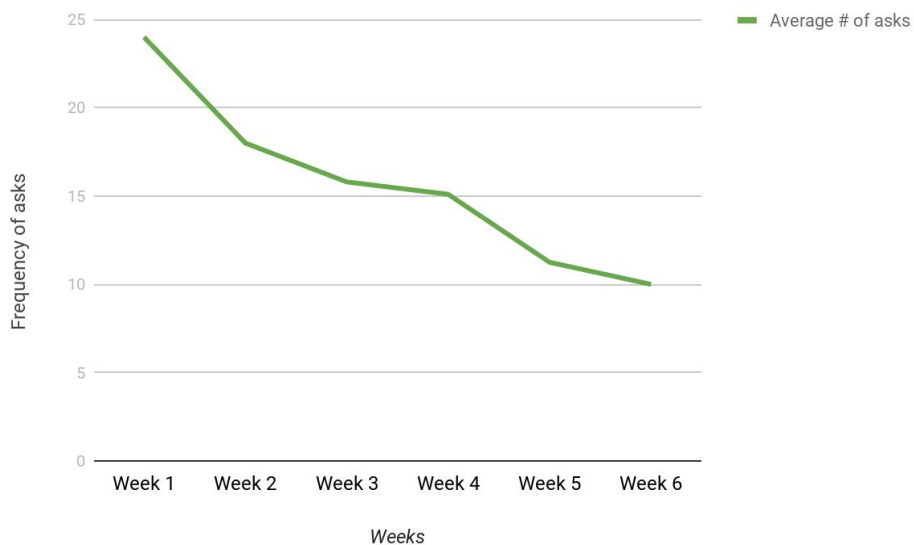
whether the children exhibited behavior demonstrated in a Grace and Courtesy lesson such as how to treat materials appropriately, how to ask a friend for help, and when it is appropriate to ask an adult for help. Other data tools used were tally sheets to collect how often the children asked for unnecessary assistance and daily reflection sheets, completed once a day at the end of each day, to determine any outstanding circumstances that might affect a particular result.

The data collection tool used before starting the interventions, i.e. Grace and Courtesy lessons, was the tally sheet to keep track of how often the children in the classroom asked for assistance from an adult on tasks that they already knew how to perform. Whenever a child asked an adult for help on a known task, a tally mark was noted. The known tasks were determined as tasks that the children had already been instructed on how to perform, and had previously performed on their own. The Grace and Courtesy lessons started on the fourth day of the research, but the tally sheets continued throughout the remainder of the research as well. This data collected on the tally sheets, combined with the information collected in the observation sheets, helped determine the appropriate Grace and Courtesy lessons to give and the next steps were to develop Grace and Courtesy lessons around the needs of the children, which would then be given as interventions and the behaviors of the students based on these interventions would be tracked.

For example, when the children asked an adult whether they could walk across the room to collect a pencil from their cubby, or collect paper from the paper cabinet, in the Montessori environment, these are both freedoms that the children are able to complete on their own. In

instances such as these, I was able to determine that a Grace and Courtesy lesson about when it is appropriate to ask for help was needed. I also tallied this instance, but when a child asked an adult for help with a task that they were unable to do without an adult, for example to collect an item from a high cupboard, these were not tallied.

The average number of times that the children asked for help with known tasks each week are represented in the following figure. I added up the number of tally marks each day, and then divided it by the number of days in each week to collect the average number of unnecessary



asks per week.

Figure 1. Average frequency of children’s unnecessary asks by week.

Figure 1 shows that the average number of asks did decrease as the weeks progressed, with some of the weeks staying the same. This lack of change during some weeks could be attributed to the increased number of snow days during these few weeks, resulting in shortened school weeks. When comparing the information in *Figure 1* with the information in the

reflection sheets, the information supports this being the cause. This decrease shows that they were not asking the adult for help as many times.

Another data point that was collected on the tally sheets was the number of times the children would complete the task without asking again after asking for help once and being reminded of the skills taught. When a child asked an adult for help with a task that he or she possessed the means to achieve without adult assistance how often the child was reminded by an adult or fellow classmate, and then performed the task was tallied. *Figure 2* shows the weekly averages of how many instances occurred in which the children had to be reminded once that they knew how to complete the task, and then performed the task.

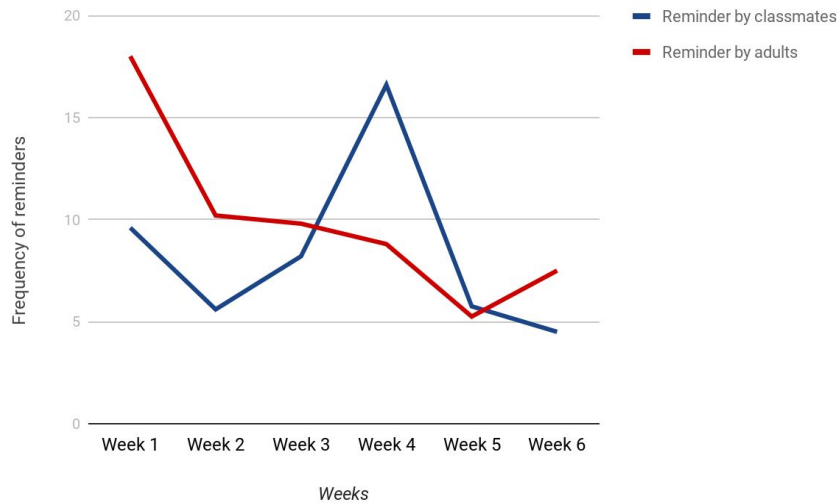


Figure 2. Number of times children were reminded once by adult or other child before completing task.

The blue line shows how often other students in the classroom reminded each other what was talked about in a Grace and Courtesy lesson or what our classroom agreements are, after the

student had asked for unnecessary help. The red line shows the number of times that an adult reminded the children. *Figure 2* provides two interesting data points. The graph reflects that, at the beginning of the research period, the most reminders came from the adult, and the number coming from other students was significantly lower, but as the research period progressed, the numbers got closer together. Week 4 shows that the average number of times a child was reminded by a fellow student was significantly higher than the number of times they were reminded by an adult. According to the daily reflection sheets, this increase could be due to week 4 being the first full week of school since the research started, and they had the first 5 full days of school since the research started. This means that the children were more confident and comfortable in their learning, and they were able to more consistently remember the Grace and Courtesy lessons given.

Another aspect impacted by having a full week of school was that having the full week of school was beneficial in allowing the children to really envelop and demonstrate the Grace and Courtesy lessons used. I noted that the largest spike in asking for adult help and not focusing on work occurred on the days after a day off or on a Monday, having a full five days of school allows the children to process and internalize the lessons given, and provides the opportunities for the children to put the new skills to use.

Figure 2 also shows a general decline in the number of reminders given towards the end of the research period. Week 5 shows that the average reminders given by both adults and students was around 5 times (specifically 5.75 times by classmates and 5.25 times by adults.)

There was a slight spike in adult reminders given in Week 6 however, and it was compared to daily reflection notes. Week 6 was the week after the children finished their very large research projects and the children were readjusting to the regular classroom expectations after spending all day Monday focusing on finishing the projects to present to parents that night, so this could explain the spike.

When comparing *Figure 1* and *Figure 2*, the results reflect each other. In *Figure 1* the graph indicates that the average number of times that the children asked an adult for unnecessary help decreased towards the end of the research period, and the graph in *Figure 2* reflects this trend as well.

Another data collection tool used was the observation sheets. In my observation sheets I observed for how many children were focused on a task, how many were not focused, and what Grace and Courtesy skills were being used by the children during the observation time. I observed throughout different times of the day, once a day for up to 30 minutes, usually in the morning, and determined when the children were most on task on average.

The research shows that the most common time for the researcher to observe was 10:00 to 10:30. This time was the most commonly observed and was also the time of the day when the children were, on average, concentrating more. There is no data to prove why this was the most successful time but this was the time of the day when all of the children had been in school for at least an hour and should have been able to settle into their work. I only observed during the time frame between 2:00-2:30 three times throughout the twenty-eight days. There was more structure

during that time of the afternoon that kept the students direct, so there was not as much opportunity for them to get off task, therefore observing at that time did not benefit the research. I observed in the remaining three time frames at least once each week.

The following *figure 3* shows the maximum, minimum, and average number of children not working at each observed time of day over all of the weeks (since the the 2:00 time did not produce conclusive results it will not be listed).

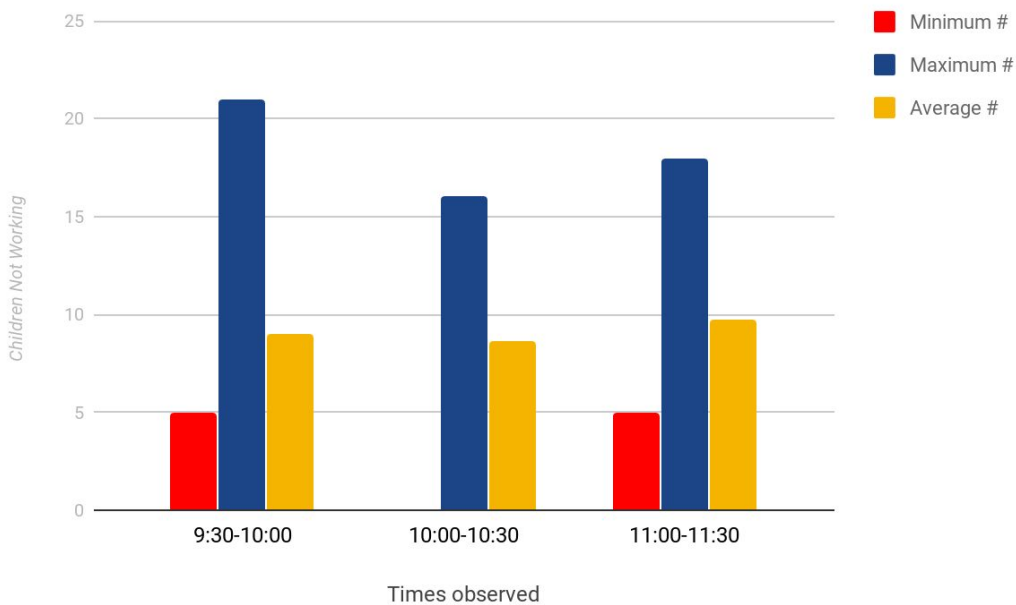


Figure 3. Averages of children not working during observation times.

The graph shows that the largest number of children not working was collected during the 9:30-10:00 observation time and the time with the least number of children not working was collected during the 10:00-10:30 observation time. *Figure 3* does not reflect that the larger numbers were collected within the first three days of the study, as the interventions had not yet

been put in place. Part of the observation process was to know if the skills taught in the Grace and Courtesy lessons were being picked up and used by the the children and one thing I discovered using my tools was that it was.

The other data collected in the observation sheets was the unprompted use of the Grace and Courtesy skills by the children in the classroom. This data was collected in the observation sheets and also mentioned in the daily reflections. During the observation period, the Grace and Courtesy skills used by the children varied, depending on which time of the day the children were being observed. When observing during the 9:30-10:00 time frame, the skills observed were skills involving choosing work and asking for help, such as how/when to interrupt another classmates work, waiting your turn to talk to an adult, asking another classmate for help when stuck before going to an adult, and how to respect materials.

When the observation was happening during the 10:00-10:30 time frame the same skills were often observed as well as the skills how to wait for a material to become available, what to do when the material you want to use or the person you want to work with is not available, what are appropriate things to ask an adult for help with (no need to ask to collect own pencil or to get a drink from water bottles but appropriate to ask to use bathroom or get a material that is kept in a high cupboard).

However, when the observations were done during the 11:00-11:30 time frame the skills exhibited were different, simply because of the time of day. Between 11:20-11:30, the children will start cleaning up for lunch and this was when the skills on how to completely put away all

materials, how to care for materials, how to move safely and appropriately in the classroom were more frequently observed rather than the previous skills.

These findings were more varied depending on when the children were observed. The observed skills also varied depending on which Grace and Courtesy skills had been most recently given. For example, the Grace and Courtesy lesson on Tuesday was focused on how to properly treat materials and one child dropped a box of number tickets on the ground. When stopping to pick them up, she proceeded to throw the tickets back in the box without organizing them. Another child approached and reminded her how to properly put the materials away, using the exact language I had used in the lesson: “Excuse me, let me show you the proper way to put those tickets away so that we don’t mistreat our materials, if you need help you can ask someone else” and invited another child to help them clean it up.

As the week progressed, the children would perform the tasks in different ways. For example, the following week, on Wednesday, another child dropped the Stamp Game box, a box of colored wooden squares used for group division. The same child from my previous observation approached to help, but instead of using the same language, said, “That’s not how you put that away! We have to put all the pieces in the box according to the color before putting the cover on”. The speaking child was still reminding the classmate that materials need to be returned properly and still stopped to help pick up the tickets off the floor. This time, three other children also came from across the room to help, without prompting and without saying anything to each other.

All of the Grace and Courtesy lessons given were lessons to help develop independence skills and all of the Grace and Courtesy lessons fall into four major categories: how to wait your turn, how to treat materials, appropriate things to ask an adult for help with, and how to ask a peer for help. Two of these categories are directly linked to the development of independence skills: when it is appropriate to ask an adult for help, and how to ask a peer for help. Of the 28 lessons given, 13 of them fall into these two categories. When I looked at my data, these 13 lessons were used by children at least three times a week.

I wrote down when I saw the behavior used but I did not keep track of the number of children who used these Grace and Courtesy lessons each day. The number of days each week that I saw these behaviors exhibited by the students at least one time is displayed in the following figure.

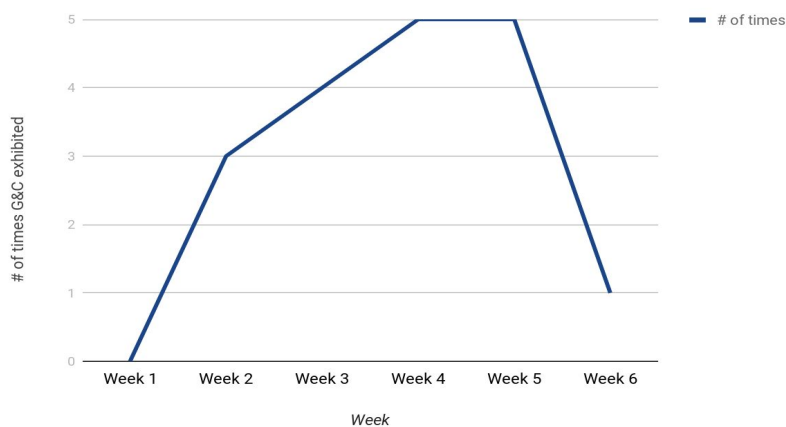


Figure 4. The number of times the Grace and Courtesy lessons for independence were exhibited.

The blue line in this graph shows the number of days in each week that the students demonstrated the appropriate behaviors for how to ask a peer for help or to appropriately ask an adult help. *Figure 4*, when compared to *Figure 1* and *Figure 2*, shows that, while the number of children asking for adult help decreased, the number of children asking peers for help increased. This shows that the dependent behaviors were decreasing (asking for help from adults unnecessarily) and the independent behaviors (asking each other for help, solving problems on their own) increased. When comparing *Figure 4* to *Figure 2*, the number of children asking each other for help increased between week 3 and 4, which was attributed to this being the first full week of school and more consistent for the children. Both *Figure 4* and *Figure 2* show a decrease during week 6, which was attributed to the finishing of the group projects and the readjustment to the regular work cycle expected in the classroom, instead being more self-oriented and not focused on helping others. Despite this drop, the rest of the data shows an increase in independent behavior.

The results of comparing *Figure 1*, *Figure 2*, and *Figure 4* showed that, in response to the interventions of using Grace and Courtesy lessons to demonstrate independent behaviors, the number of times the children asked adults for help with tasks they already knew how to accomplish decreased as the research went on and that the number of children asking their peers for help increased in response. More than one data collection tool indicated that this was the pattern therefore, the research shows the increase in positive independent behaviors and decrease in negative behaviors was a result of the specific behaviors taught in the lessons.

Action Plan

Grace and Courtesy lessons are lessons used to demonstrate social skills that children will need throughout the rest of their lives. These skills will help children be more independent and develop skills to help them take control of their own classroom environment.

The research showed that the Grace and Courtesy lessons did increase the amount of independent behaviors that the children exhibited, with slight variations due to different environmental circumstances. The number of times the children asked an adult for assistance with something they were able to accomplish on their own decreased.

The results will only improve my practice, because they will require me to follow through with a practice that should be used but is often ignored. Grace and Courtesy lessons are an integral part of the Montessori classroom but they were typically not used as often or as intentionally in the classroom as they were during the course of my research. Having more Grace and Courtesy lessons will provide the children more chances to develop and practice the skills that they are learning and provide them chance a to practice building these skills on their own.

Observation is also an integral part of the classroom environment because it allows the adult to see where the children may have gaps in learning and skill development. Observing children to identify what skills should be introduced through Grace and Courtesy lessons is a good habit to get into. It allows the child to focus on developing just one or two skills at a time.

Another way that my practice will improve is that I will be observing more often in the classroom. Observation also provides the adult with time to sit back and let the children act as

they are, rather than intervening, and can allow for the children to use the skills they have learned. This will help improve my practice because it will force me to sit back and let the children handle the situations on their own; being unavailable to the children unless it is an emergency will help me to see whether the children are using the skills taught in the Grace and Courtesy lessons or if they need more lessons.

This will have a few impacts on children's learning. The children will be able to act more independently when solving their own problems, and increase the amount of time that the children are actually spending working and engaged in learning. My hope is that this will boost confidence and the children will be more focused and they will be able to focus on learning and growing as individuals.

Building the skills with the Grace and Courtesy lessons will also allow the children to rely on each other for solving problems or helping each other with work; as the children's independence skills develop then they will be able to focus on learning different skills that they will need later in life. My hope is that the children will build stronger relationships with each other and the sense of community will grow, creating a more comfortable work environment.

By adults modeling these behaviors, the children will learn how to develop and perform their own Grace and Courtesy lessons for the classroom community, which adds to the acts of independence but also allows the children to take ownership of which skills they feel they need to know, or skills they want to teach to the younger children. It will allow the older, more

experienced children to determine which skills they believe are the most important, and to create ways to develop those skills.

There are several different options for future action research based on this investigation. A longer, more consistent period of time for observation would be beneficial to gather more data and hopefully produce more determinate patterns. I think that having a longer amount of time to accumulate the research would provide more insight for the adults into which particular skills the children need to practice. For example, one child was unable to settle into work every day and, upon observing, I was able to determine that the reason this child was unable to settle was because the child did not know how to choose a different work when the one the child wanted was in use by another child. This was a skill that I had not anticipated giving a lesson on but once this skill was addressed, the child's behavior changed.

When considering a longer period of study, it might be insightful to track the changes of one or two particular children at a time, and see how they develop the skills and increase their independence. This will also be beneficial because the research of tallying how many times children asked an adult for help did not show how many times the same children asked for help more than once. This information is also beneficial to the adult and the research itself and, for future researchers, can provide different results or even skew the results in different ways.

Another option for further study is to focus on one specific skill and calculate how long it takes the children to pick up on the skill by modeling it in different ways. For example, the children were struggling with how to treat materials and I have multiple lessons on this. One

lesson given reflected two adults modeling both the wrong way to put a material away, and the proper way to put the material away; this particular lesson resonated with the majority of children but others still struggled. On a different day, I gave a Grace and Courtesy lesson in which we talked through the proper way to use one specific material and we verbalized the ways to put each material away. After this lesson, I observed multiple children using this idea of verbalizing the steps aloud, until they were able to put materials away without this crutch. This might produce interesting data and provide some insight into the more effective interventions; including some sort of visual cue to reinforce the habits might be a good idea to research as well, instead of a verbal reminder.

The outcomes of the research did produce the result that I hoped to see, just on a smaller scale than originally hypothesized. The change in the behavior in the classroom was made apparent based on the research, but the degree of change was not as large as I had initially hypothesized. I am interested to see if continuing the work in future years will provide different results. Overall, the amount of independent work by students did increase and the need for adult support decreased as well. The research showed that the interventions did have an impact on the children and their level of independence.

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Appendix A

Observation Sheet

Date:

Time Start:

Time End:

of Students:

Number of Students Working Independently:

Number of Students Working with another student:

Number of Students Working with adult (lesson):

Number of Students not working:

Ask adults for help:

Reminders given:

By other students:

By adults:

Grace and Courtesy skills observed:

Notes:

Appendix B

Reflection Sheet

Date:

Reflection: