

THE SOCIAL SKILLS EXPECTATIONS OF  
GENERAL EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION  
TEACHERS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

by

Jennifer A. L. Hintz

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements of the Master of Science Degree  
With a Major in

School Guidance and Counseling

Approved: 2 Semester Credits

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Investigator Advisor

The Graduate School  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
August, 2002

The Graduate School  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Menomonie, WI 54751

**ABSTRACT**

(Writer)	Hintz (Last Name)	Jennifer (First)	A. L. (Initial)
(Title)	The Social Skills Expectations of General Education and Special Education Teachers at the Secondary Level		
(Graduate Major)	School Guidance and Counseling Jacalyn Weissenburger (Research Advisor)	11/2002 (Month/Year)	48 (No. of Pages)
	American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual (Name of Style Manual used in this Study)		

Research has indicated that many students with learning disabilities exhibit social skills deficits; and, as a result, do not have the social competence necessary to experience positive connections with their peers and adults. Many students with learning disabilities are rejected or treated poorly by their peers and are perceived by teachers in a negative manner. Although the successful inclusion of students with learning disabilities into the general education environment must involve addressing appropriate social skills, there is little research regarding the specific social skills necessary for success. In addition, little is known about the differences, if any, between general education and special education teachers in their social skills expectations at the secondary level. Because many students with learning disabilities may need to be directly taught how to use social skills in various situations and settings, collaboration and understanding between special education and general education teachers is vital.

The purpose of this study was to identify significant differences in the social skills expectations of general education teachers compared to special education teachers at the secondary level. The identification of specific social skills necessary for success in the special education environment and general education environment also was examined. A modified version of the Social Skills Rating System Teacher Form (SSRS) was distributed to 200 high school general education and special education teachers at two high schools in the Wausau School District in Wisconsin. Results indicated statistically significant differences between the social skills expectations of general education and special education teachers. In addition, differences were found between the social skills expectations of male and female teachers.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jacalyn Weissenburger, Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Her expert advise and willingness to make this process extremely convenient for me is greatly appreciated. I would also like to express my gratitude to the teachers who took time out of their busy schedules to voluntarily participate in this study. A special thank you is also extended my husband, parents, and friends who continued to ask about my progress and offered support and encouragement.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Social skill deficits appear to be a component of learning disabilities that can impede students from forming positive relationships with others (Kavale & Forness, 1996). Some research has indicated that students with learning disabilities are more likely to demonstrate social skill deficits than their non-learning disabled peers (Bryan & Bryan, 1990, and Lagreca & Vaughn, 1992, cited in Kavale & Forness, 1996). This can present difficulties as educators make attempts to include learning disabled students in the general education environment. Trapani (1990) asserts that "since many students with learning disabilities are now mainstreamed for the majority of the school day, their behavior and social acceptance have become important issues" (p. 40). According to teacher and peer evaluations, it is estimated that three out of four students with learning disabilities lack the essential social skills necessary to be competent and accepted in the general education classroom (Kavale & Forness, 1996).

The social skill deficits of students with learning disabilities also may impede their performance on the job. Research has indicated, "... young adults who are lacking in social skills and who have minimal social supports are far more at risk for job loss than are those lacking in basic academic and production skills (Chadsey-Rusch, 1992, cited in Snell & Janney, 2000, p. 4). White's research confirms that the lack of social skills is one of the primary reasons for job termination (cited in Roffman, 2000). Trapini (1990) also points out that early "problems in peer group status can affect psychosocial development in later life ... such as 'delinquency,' 'dropping out of school,' 'bad conduct,' 'discharges from military service,' and 'mental health problems' ... " (p. 41).

Early research has determined that high “social status in childhood ... has been related to academic achievement ... and interpersonal adjustment in later life (Cobb, 1972; Barclay, 1966; cited in Trapani, 1990, p. 41).

With an increased emphasis on the inclusion of students with learning disabilities in general education settings, special education teachers have traditionally focused on improving academic deficiencies and self-advocacy skills. However, social skills instruction is beginning to be an important component in the individualized educational and transitional planning (Trapani, 1990). Haagar and Vaughn (1995) point out that the perspective of general education teachers is significant in understanding social competence in the school environment. Studies suggest that students with learning disabilities may receive conflicting feedback from the special education, the general education and the home environments because of “ ... low to moderate correlations between ratings in the special education setting and between ratings in the general education classroom and home” (Haagar & Vaughn, 1995, Discussion Section, ¶5).

Students with learning disabilities may need direct instruction in social skills to become socially competent in the classroom and to generalize these skills to other settings and situations. This type of instruction is best delivered through the collaboration of general education teachers and special education teachers. However, there is little research addressing the specific skills necessary for social competence in the classroom. Therefore, it is imperative to identify the social skills expectations of general and special education teachers. Further, it is important to identify any differences that may exist between these teacher groups. This study will examine the perceptions of special and general education teachers at the secondary level regarding their social skills

expectations. It will also examine the differences and identify the most critical skills needed by students in the general education environment.

Information obtained from this research may benefit students with learning disabilities as efforts are made to improve inclusionary practices as well as to improve educational and transition planning for secondary students with learning disabilities.

### *Statement of Problem*

The purpose of this study is to identify differences in the social skills expectations of general education teachers and special education teachers as measured by a modified version of the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) – Teacher Form Secondary Level.

### *Research Questions*

1. What statistically significant differences exist in social skills expectations of general education teachers compared to special education teachers?
2. What statistically significant differences exist in social skills expectations of male and female teachers?
3. What are the five most important social skills as perceived by general education teachers?
4. What are the five most important social skills as perceived by special education teachers?

### *Definition of Terms*

For clarity of understanding, then following terms must be defined.

**Direct Instruction:** A teaching method which includes teaching a skills or strategy, practicing the skill or strategy, and applying the skill or strategy to various situations (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1994).

**Inclusion:** The participation of a student with a disability in general education classrooms.

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** A required written legal document for every child with a disability. The document includes statements of present levels of performance, annual goals, short-term objectives, specific educational services needed and related services, general education participation, and evaluation procedures.

**Learning Disability:** A severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and actual achievement of individuals with average or above average intelligence.

**Self-Contained Special Education Classroom:** A special classroom, usually located within a regular public school building, that includes only students with disabilities.

**Special Education:** Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

**Transition Services:** The services, goals, and objectives that are needed to assist the child to successfully move from school to work, post-secondary education, etc. At 14 years old, a student with a disability must have a component in the IEP that addresses the student's goals for vocational training, community living, self-care skills, etc.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

This chapter will define social skills and social competence. It will also discuss the prevalence of social skills deficits and social incompetence in the learning disabled population. The perceptions of teachers and non-learning disabled students have of students with learning disabilities also will be addressed, as well as how students with learning disabilities view themselves.

#### *Social Skills*

Gresham and Elliot (1984) define social skills as “... acceptable behaviors that enable a person to interact effectively with others and to avoid socially unacceptable responses (cited in Gresham and Elliot, 1990, p.1). Kavale and Forness (1996) point out that “social skills are actions exhibited in specific social situations requiring competent performance” (Definition and Measurement of Social Skills and Social Competence section, ¶1). Schumaker and Deschler (1995) offer another definition; they define social skills as “... cognitive and overt behaviors a person uses in interpersonal interactions that can range from simple nonverbal behaviors such as eye contact and head nods to the complex verbal behavior of offering a compromise that will meet everyone’s needs” (Introduction section, ¶1). Although there are many definitions, all definitions incorporate observable behaviors and actions (Kavale and Forness, 1996). Gresham and Elliot point out that if an individual does not exhibit the appropriate behaviors and actions for a given situation, most would agree that a social skill deficit exists (cited in Smith, 1995).

Developing and using social skills allows individuals to develop relationships with others. Gresham and Elliot (1990) point out that developing and maintaining positive and supportive relationships with others is a crucial component of childhood. However, many children do not attain the social skills necessary to experience positive and healthy connections with other children and adults.

### *Social Competence*

Students can be taught specific social skills, but they must demonstrate the ability to generalize and adapt these skills to various settings and situations in order to create positive outcomes (Schumaker & Deschler, 1995). This ability is necessary for individuals to be considered socially competent. Haagar and Vaughn (1995) describe social competence as “a broad term often used to describe social behavior, understanding and use of social skills and social acceptance” (¶1). Social skills are the observable behaviors, whereas social competence is the evaluation of those appropriate social behaviors given the setting, context, and culture (Gresham, 1983, cited in Kavale & Forness, 1996; Kavale & Forness, 1996; and Odom, McConnell, & McEnvoy, 1992, cited in Snell & Janney, 2000).

Kavale and Forness (1996) caution that social skills may be perceived in different ways by different individuals or by individuals in different settings. Therefore, differences in the evaluation of social competence must be analyzed and addressed before instruction takes place (Kavale & Forness, 1996). Researchers have outlined various components of social competence to consider. Kavale and Forness (1996) point out that “... Dodge and colleagues ... viewed social competence as consisting of three components: (a) perceiving, decoding, and interpreting social cues; (b) selecting an

appropriate response; and (c) appropriately enacting the social response” (Definition and Measurement of Social Skills and Social Competence section, ¶2). Based on Vaughn’s and Hogan’s research, “positive relations with others,” “accurate and age-appropriate social cognition,” “absence of maladaptive behaviors,” and “effective social behaviors” are areas of focus (cited in Kavale & Forness, 1996, Definition and Measurement of Social Skills and Social Competence section, ¶2). Vaughn and Hogan assert a model of social competence must include: the “effective use of social skills,” an “absence of maladaptive behaviors,” “accurate and age-appropriate social cognition (e.g. self-perceptions),” and “positive relations with others” (cited in Haagar & Vaughn, 1995, Introduction section, ¶2).

When examining an individual’s social incompetence, Gresham (1981) and Gresham and Elliot (1990) stress that three types of social deficits must be considered: skill deficits, performance deficits, and self-control deficits. A skills deficit is one in which an individual has not learned the necessary skills required to be socially competent. If the necessary skill is in the individual’s repertoire, but is not used in specific social situations or settings, the individual has a performance deficit. A self-control deficit is one in which an individual demonstrates negative behaviors which in turn interfere with learning and demonstrating appropriate social skills (Gresham & Elliot, 1990, cited in Kavale & Forness, 1996).

### *Learning Disabilities*

Although many children with learning disabilities are socially accepted by their peers and teachers, research suggests a significant prevalence of social skills deficits and social incompetence in the learning disabled population (Kavale & Forness, 1996; Tur-

Kaspa & Bryan, 1995). Kavale and Forness (1996) state that social skills deficits appear to be an element of learning disabilities. Studies have shown that children with learning disabilities were more likely to demonstrate social skill deficits than their peers without learning disabilities (Bryan & Bryan, 1990, and Lagreca & Vaughn, 1992, cited in Kavale & Forness, 1996). In a comprehensive review of the existing research, Haagar and Vaughn (1995) estimate that 35 to 75 percent of the learning disabilities population exhibits social and behavioral difficulties. According to Kavale and Forness (1996) in a meta-analysis of the literature, 74 percent of the students with learning disabilities receive a significantly larger number of negative ratings of their social skills compared to their non-disabled peers.

The severity of social skill deficits for students with learning disabilities also has been investigated. In Kavale's and Forness's (1996) meta-analysis of existing research, students with learning disabilities are at the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile when their social competence was compared to students without learning disabilities. According to studies conducted by Gresham and Reschly, and Gresham, Elliot, and Black, the social competence of students with learning disabilities was rated approximately two standard deviations below students without learning disabilities (cited in Gresham & Elliot, 1990). However, Kavale and Forness (1996) assert that students with learning disabilities are rated only two-thirds of a standard deviation below students without learning disabilities in this area. The research of Gresham, Hazel and Schumaker also supports the view that many individuals with learning disabilities exhibit obvious social skills deficits (cited in Mercer, 1991). However, the relationship between learning disabilities and social skills

deficits has not been established conclusively (Kavale & Forness, 1996; Gresham & Elliot, 1990).

Although not all children with learning disabilities exhibit social skills deficits, children who demonstrate significant deficits share common traits (Cramer & Ellis, 1996), and they seem to be related to the severity of the learning disabilities and the sex of the student. The severity of the learning disability was found to be positively related to the severity and number of social skills deficits in students with learning disabilities (Bruck, 1986, cited in Cramer & Ellis, 1996). Cramer and Ellis (1996) also found that female students with learning disabilities are more likely than males with learning disabilities to exhibit social skills deficits and social incompetence. This finding was supported by Ritter's study, which found that teenage girls with learning disabilities are less socially competent than girls without learning disabilities (cited in Mercer, 1991).

Psychologists and educators have attempted to identify why social skill deficits and learning disabilities tend to co-occur. Gresham and Elliot (1990) simply state "poor academic performance and social behavior problems frequently occur together" (p. 2). Gresham, Hazel and Schumaker also suggest that students with learning disabilities have a tendency to display more depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and lower self-esteem when compared to their peers without learning disabilities, and these factors may contribute to social incompetence (cited in Cramer & Ellis, 1996).

Kavale and Forness (1996) address the contribution of deficient communication skills and problem solving abilities of many students with learning disabilities. According to Kavale and Forness (1996), one specific and significant deficit exhibited by students with learning disabilities is interpreting nonverbal communication. The existing

research reveals that approximately 8 out of 10 students with learning disabilities are less able to understand nonverbal communication than their peers without learning disabilities. Students with learning disabilities rank in the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile in areas which “assessed their ability to interpret the situation, messages, and feelings surrounding communication” (Kavale & Forness, 1996, The Nature of Social Skill Deficits section, ¶9). In addition, more than 80 percent of students with learning disabilities perform significantly lower than their peers without disabilities when given a social conflict to solve by role playing. Kavale and Forness (1996) found that students with learning disabilities rank in the 18<sup>th</sup> percentile in this area, and they demonstrate an overall inability to resolve conflicts in social situations. The prevailing literature and research suggests that a significant number of students with learning disabilities are deficient in comprehending social situations and responding appropriately in those situations (Kavale and Forness, 1996). Snell and Janney (2000) analyzed the research of Farmer, Pearl, and VanAcker and further point out that “students with disabilities often are vulnerable to social networks that support or maintain their problematic social behaviors” (p. 4).

Gresham and Elliot (1990) assert that although “social skills deficits are characteristic of a sizable portion of the learning disabled population, there is currently little research to suggest unique social skills deficits in this population (p. 8). However, research has indicated that there are a disproportionate number of students with learning disabilities who are not accepted by their non-disabled peers (Tur-Kaspa & Bryan, 1995). Tur-Kaspa and Bryan (1995) state that students with learning disabilities “...can be considered a population at heightened risk for the development of social-relationship problems” (Introduction section, ¶3).

*Perceptions of Peers*

There is evidence indicating that students without disabilities may be less likely to accept their peers with learning disabilities. Kavale and Forness (1996) found that approximately 80 percent of students with learning disabilities are rejected by their peers without learning disabilities. According to Sale's and Carey's study, students with learning disabilities who participated in the general education environment 100 percent of the time, were "perceived negatively by their peers" (cited in Snell & Janney, 2000, p. 4). Schumaker and Deschler (1995) highlight a study conducted at the University of Kansas Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities (KU-IRLD) that revealed that student with learning disabilities were more likely to be treated poorly by their peers without learning disabilities in cooperative group situations. They are "ignored, baited, complained about to teachers, and targets of negative remarks" (Schumaker & Deschler, 1995, Results section, ¶9). In addition, Haagar and Vaughn (1995) found that students with learning disabilities typically are not as well known by their peers. Approximately 70 percent of students with learning disabilities are not considered friends by their non-disabled peers (Kavale & Forness, 1996, The Nature of Social Skill Deficits section, ¶6).

Kavale and Forness (1996) also found that students without learning disabilities perceived students with learning disabilities as being less popular because of poor communication skills and uncooperative behavior (Kavale & Forness, 1996). Although students with learning disabilities may be negatively perceived by peers because of social skills deficits, Haagar and Vaughn (1995) suggest that another "possible explanation for the lower peer acceptance rating of these students is that teachers' negative perceptions ... may influence peers' evaluations" (Discussion section, ¶4).

*Perceptions of General Education Teachers*

Research indicates that academic difficulties and a lack of social interaction are the two most prominent deficits for students with learning disabilities in the general education environment, according to general education teachers (Kavale & Forness, 1996). In general, general education teachers rank poor school performance as the most challenging issue faced by children with learning disabilities in their classrooms (Kavale & Forness, 1996). However, these teachers also point out that students with learning disabilities have fewer social exchanges than students without learning disabilities. Turkaspa and Bryan (1995) found that teachers rated children with learning disabilities, who were rejected by their non-disabled peers, as having lower levels of social competence and more behavioral difficulties than children who were accepted by their peers. In addition, a “lack of goal-directed and attending behaviors” are social skill deficits frequently demonstrated by students with learning disabilities, according to general education teachers (Kavale & Forness, 1996, The Nature of Social Skills Deficits section, ¶3).

Another study found that general education teachers perceived that 70 percent of students with learning disabilities have anxiety issues, and 60 percent of students with learning disabilities possess a "lack of tact," "personality problems," and "withdrawn behavior" (Kavale & Forness, 1996, The Nature of Social Skills Deficits section, ¶4). Withdrawn behavior by students with learning disabilities also has been noted by general education teachers in previous studies (Haagar & Vaughn, 1995; McIntosh, Vaughn, Schuman, Haagar, & Lee, 1993, cited in Haagar & Vaughn, 1995).

According to Kavale and Forness (1996), general education teachers also view students with learning disabilities as having adjustment problems, ranking these students at approximately the 21<sup>st</sup> percentile in this deficit area. One explanation for this is that students with learning disabilities may have a higher level of hyperactivity and distractibility. These characteristics may give general education teachers the impression that they have adjustment problems (Kavale & Forness, 1996).

A study conducted by McIntyre (1988) suggests that the gender of the general education teachers may influence their perceptions of learning disabled students. According to McIntyre (1988), teacher gender was an important factor contributing errors in the identification of students with learning disabilities at the elementary level. Female teachers were much more likely to refer a student for learning disabilities who exhibited problem behaviors. (McIntyre, 1988). However, male teachers had a tendency to not refer students with significant behavior problems, but had specific learning disabilities (McIntyre, 1988). Furthermore, the number of male and female teachers' referral rates did not differ when the students did not exhibit problematic behaviors (McIntyre, 1988).

#### *Perceptions of Special Education Teachers*

In a survey of learning disabilities teachers at all grade levels, most believed that approximately 40 percent of the students had social skill deficits (Baum, Duffelmeyer, Geelan, 1988, cited in Mercer, 1991). In another study conducted by Lamorey and Leigh (1996), special education teachers believed it was critical to address contemporary issues with students with disabilities. According to these teachers, students with disabilities “experience significantly higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse, physical and sexual abuse, unwanted pregnancy, and involvement in the juvenile correction system than the

general population of students” (Lamorey & Leigh, 1996, Practical Implications section The Nature of Social Skills Deficits section, ¶4). Teachers expressed concern that these students “possessed neither an adequate knowledge base in terms of understanding various contemporary issues nor an appropriate experiential background in terms of their awareness of their own or others’ social, moral, sexual, or civic behaviors” (Lamorey & Leigh, 1996, Discussion section, ¶2). Lamorey and Leigh (1996) explain that a “lack of necessary information, coupled with a lack of personal awareness, created a significant risk factor for those adolescents who also had to cope with a variety of cognitive, behavioral, and learning challenges” (Discussion section, ¶2).

### *Perceptions of Self*

Research has shown that many students with learning disabilities are aware of their social skills deficits and lack of social competence. Kavale and Forness (1996) found that over 70 percent of students with learning disabilities rated themselves as having social skill deficits compared to their non-learning disabled peers. Pavri and Luftig (2000) found that students with learning disabilities, who were fully included in the general education environment, “... reported more feelings of loneliness than their classroom peers who did not have disabilities” (Discussion section, ¶1). In addition, approximately 80 percent of students with learning disabilities perceived their academic competence as deficient (Kavale & Forness, 1996). Furthermore, students with learning disabilities held a slightly more negative view of their own social and academic abilities than did their teachers or peers (Kavale & Forness, 1996).

*Summary*

Social competency, the ability to be accepted and valued in various situations and settings, is dependent on an individual's knowledge and consistent use of appropriate social skills or behaviors. Many students with learning disabilities do not exhibit the necessary social skills in the school setting; and, therefore, are viewed negatively or even rejected by many of their teachers and non-disabled peers in the general education environment. Most learning disabled students are aware of their social incompetence, particularly at the secondary level. Many special education teachers believe students with learning disabilities do not have the self awareness to make healthy and positive decisions. As a consequence, many of these students are at risk for being exploited and mistreated while in school and in their adult life.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

#### *Participants*

Two hundred general and special education teachers at the high school level in two high schools in the Wausau School District in Wausau, Wisconsin were invited to participate in the study. Eighty-four general education teachers and 23 special education teachers voluntarily participated. The response rate for the questionnaire was 54 percent with 108 out of 200 teachers returning the questionnaires. One teacher omitted the demographic information.

The participants were comprised of 41 males (38 %) and 66 females (61 %). The ethnicity of the participants was primarily Caucasian (94 %). Years of teaching experience were categorized as follows: 1-5 years (25 %); 6-10 years (21 %); 11-25 years (28 %); 26+ years (20 %). Six participants (5.6 %) did not indicate years of teaching experience. (See Table 1 for more complete information about the research sample.)

#### *Procedures*

Two hundred general and special education teachers at the secondary level were given a letter containing a voluntary agreement/permission statement, an informed consent statement, instructions, and a modified version of the Social Skills Rating System Teacher Form (SSRS). The informed consent statement indicated that their participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time during the study. They also were informed that the demographic information would be confidential, and the results only would be reported on a group basis. The participants were asked to complete the modified SSRS pertaining to classroom social skills expectations and return the

questionnaires in the provided sealed envelope to the researcher's personal school mailbox or the designated survey drawer depending on the home school of the participants.

### *Instrumentation*

A modified version of the Social Skills Rating System-Teacher Form (SSRS) was used to determine the social skills expectations of the general and special educators (Gresham & Elliot, 1990). Frank Gresham and Stephen Elliot developed the instrument, and it was published by the American Guidance Service (AGS) in 1990. Gresham and Elliot (1990) explain that the SSRS "provides a broad, multirater assessment of student social behaviors that can affect teacher-student relations, peer acceptance, and academic performance" (p. 1). The SSRS is comprised of teacher, parent, and student rating forms at three developmental levels (preschool, K-6, and 7-12). The teacher and parent forms are available at all three levels, whereas the student forms are only available for grades 3 through 6, and from 7 through 12.

The complete SSRS addresses social skills, problem behaviors, and academic competence. The standard version of the Social Skills Rating Scale contains 30 items which include statements categorized into Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control subscales. The SSRS assesses the frequency and importance of specific skills from the respondents' perspectives. Raters are asked to consider "How Often" (Never, Sometimes, or Very Often) a social skill is observed. The raters also are to determine the social value of each social skill by determining "How Important" a social skill is for success (Not Important, Important, or Critical).

According to the publisher, internal consistency reliability of Total Score from the SSRS yields coefficient alpha reliability coefficients of .83 to .95 across the teacher, parent, and student forms, K-12. The Social Skills Scale for the Secondary Teacher Form has good to excellent internal consistency, with subscale coefficient reliabilities ranging from .89 to .92. The internal consistency reliability coefficients did not appear to be influenced by student gender. Total score test-retest correlation ranged from .84 to .93 for teachers, .65 to .87 for parents, and .68 for students. Social Skills Subscale coefficients ranged from .75 to .88 for teachers, .77 to .84 for parents, and .52 to .66 for students. These Social Skills Scale and Subscale coefficients indicate the SSRS has good to excellent test-retest reliability.

Extensive analyses of the previous literature on social skills, as well as the authors' own research, establishes the content validity of the SSRS. Social validity is confirmed through the use of the "importance" rating for each skill. The criterion-related validity is demonstrated by the significant correlation between the SSRS and other social skills assessments, which include the Social Behavior Assessment (Stephens, 1978, cited in Gresham & Elliot, 1990), the Harter Teacher Rating Scale (Harter, 1978, cited in Gresham & Elliot, 1990), the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984, cited in Gresham & Elliot, 1990), and the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983, 1986, 1987, cited in Gresham & Elliot, 1990). Studies addressing "developmental changes, sex differences, internal consistency, correlations with other tests, factor analyses, convergent and discriminant correlation analyses, and comparisons of contrasted groups" also strongly supported construct validity, according to the authors (Gresham & Elliot, 1990, p. 142).

For the purposes of this study, a modified version of the SSRS was used. The modified version contained the original 30 items of the Social Skill Scale. However, the frequency component was eliminated. Only the importance of the social skills from the teacher's perspective was assessed. Further, the rating scale was changed to 0 (Not Important) to 4 (Critical) to allow for parametric comparisons. Participants also were asked to provide demographic information (i.e., grade levels taught, teaching area, gender, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, and highest degree held).

#### *Data Analysis*

A total of 108 questionnaires were returned. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent *t*-test comparisons. The responses of the general education and special education teacher groups, as well as teacher gender, were compared item by item. Due to the large number of comparisons, a conservative *p* value of .01 was adopted to determine statistical significance.

## CHAPTER IV

### Results

This chapter presents the results of the study in relation to the research questions. A discussion of the outcomes is included in Chapter V.

To find whether statistically significant differences exist between social skills expectations of general education teachers and special education teachers, a statistical comparison of the SSRS results was conducted using independent *t*-test analyses between the two teacher groups. The findings indicate significant differences between the two teacher groups on 4 of the 30 items. On three items, the special education teachers were more likely to rate that it is more important or critically important that students respond appropriately to teasing ( $t = 2.810, p < .01$ ), control temper in conflict situations with peers ( $t = 2.699, p < .01$ ), and respond appropriately to peer pressure ( $t = 3.243, p < .01$ ). On one item, the general education teachers were more likely to rate that it is significantly more important for students to produce correct homework ( $t = 2.798, p < .01$ ). A complete comparison of the general and special education results are included in Table 2.

To answer the second research question regarding whether significant differences exist according to gender, a statistical comparison of the SSRS items was conducted using independent *t*-test analyses between the male and female teachers' scores. According to these findings, significant differences between male and female teachers occurred on 11 of the 30 items. On all 11 items, female teachers were more likely to rate the following

social skills as more important or critically important: uses time appropriately while waiting for help ( $t = 3.367, p < .001$ ), ignores peer distractions when doing class work ( $t = 3.639, p < .001$ ), complies with your directions ( $t = 4.640, p < .001$ ), responds appropriately to peer pressure ( $t = 3.317, p < .001$ ), appropriately questions rules ( $t = 2.781, p < .01$ ), responds appropriately to teasing ( $t = 3.097, p < .01$ ), easily makes transition from one classroom activity to another ( $t = 2.805, p < .01$ ), controls temper in conflict situations with peers ( $t = 2.634, p < .01$ ), listens to classmates when they present their work or ideas ( $t = 2.739, p < .01$ ), controls temper in conflict situations with adults ( $t = 2.755, p < .01$ ), and stands up for peers when they have been unfairly criticized ( $t = 2.629, p < .01$ ). Male teachers did not identify any social skills as more important than the female teachers. Table 3 depicts the results addressing the gender differences of the study.

To answer the third and fourth research questions, regarding the most important social skills expected by general education teachers and special education teachers, the mean scores of the SSRS items were compared. As indicated by general education teachers, the following five social skills are viewed as most important in their classrooms: attends to your instructions ( $n = 84, M = 3.58$ ); complies with your directions ( $n = 84, M = 3.42$ ); listens to classmates when they present their work or ideas ( $n = 84, M = 3.32$ ); produces correct work ( $n = 84, M = 3.20$ ); and controls temper in conflict situations with adults ( $n = 84, M = 3.17$ ). Results of all items are included in Table 4.

The special education teachers' mean scores on each item also were compared. The five most important social skills expected in their classrooms included in order of importance: controls temper in conflict situations with peers ( $n = 23, M = 3.65$ ); controls

temper in conflict situations with adults ( $n = 23, M = 3.61$ ); complies with your directions ( $n = 23, M = 3.52$ ); responds appropriately to peer pressure ( $n = 23, M = 3.48$ ); and attends to your instructions ( $n = 23, M = 3.39$ ). Table 4 includes the results of these comparisons.

## CHAPTER V

### Discussion

The intention of this study was to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between the social skills expectations of general education teachers and special education teachers at the high school level, as assessed by a modified Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) Teacher Questionnaire. The most important social skills of general and special education teachers also were identified. In addition, statistical differences between male and female participants were examined.

Responses by the general and special education teachers indicated significant differences on four of the 30 items. Results indicated that the special education teachers placed a higher importance on three of those items. Those items primarily addressed positive interaction with others, such as responding appropriately to teasing, controlling one's temper in conflict situations with peers, and responding appropriately to peer pressure. Compared to special education teachers, general education teachers indicated it is significantly more important for students to produce correct work in their classrooms.

The most important social skills expectations of general education and special education teachers also were identified through comparing their mean scores. The special education teachers also indicated that it is most important for students to control their temper in conflict situations with peers, control their temper in conflict situations with adults, comply with directions, respond appropriately to peer pressure, and attend to instructions. General education teachers also ranked attending to instructions and controlling temper in conflict situations with adults as highly important in their classrooms. However, complying with directions, listening to classmates when they

present their work or ideas, and producing correct work were also viewed as extremely important by general education teachers.

Comparing the ratings of general education and special education indicates that, in general, the special education teachers place a higher value on student behavior that fosters positive and healthy relationships with others. This finding may be explained by the research of Lamorey and Leigh (1996), which indicated that special education teachers were most concerned about the victimization of students with disabilities by their peers and society as a whole. These teachers believed that students' personal awareness and the awareness of others' behaviors resulted in positive, mutual relationships both in and out of the classroom. These teachers did not believe that most students with learning disabilities possessed this type of knowledge and understanding, and thus were often mistreated by their non-disabled peers and adults (Lamorey & Leigh, 1996).

With an emphasis on transition planning as a component of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), many special education teachers are concerned with the future performance of students in the workplace. Because, according to White's research, a lack of social skills has been found to be one of the primary reasons for job termination (cited in Roffman, 2000), many special education teachers may believe that employers view adults with learning disabilities more negatively than non-disabled workers (Kavale & Forness, 1996). Special educators may feel it is their responsibility to focus on this area of need. One learning disabilities teacher who participated in this study stated:

“Kindness, respect to others are of the utmost importance in an employee, spouse, student, etc. Lack of work skills may be corrected, but unless certain social skills

are intact, the individual will struggle with work relationships, etc. This will soon affect other aspects of the individual's world. Building these skills and self-confidence are important objectives for educators.”

Another learning disabilities teacher in the study further emphasized this concern:

“It is critical that so many LD high school students have such poor social skills, and there doesn't seem to be a way to teach them before that problem occurs.

Why this is important is that if the students don't learn them, at home or at school, they carry the lack of social skills into their jobs, often losing them until they finally figure out why.”

While special education teachers expect students to demonstrate behaviors that promote positive interactions with peers and adults, general education teachers appear to place more importance on academic-related behaviors, such as the completion of work and complying with directions. This finding is supported by Kavale and Forness (1996) who stated that general education teachers often believe that poor academic performance is the most challenging issue faced by learning disabled students in their classrooms.

One interpretation of these results is that special education and general education teachers may have different views of the overall purpose of education. Special education teachers may be more likely to view their classrooms as a place where essential life skills must be taught and practiced. Further, special education teachers may believe that students will be more likely to be successful in their adult lives and in the community if they can apply these lessons in forming and maintaining relationships. If general education teachers believe success in life depends on demonstrating a strong work ethic and mastering content, skills that promote task completion will be of primary concern to

these teachers. It is possible that general education teachers view relationship development as the responsibility of the special education teacher or of parents in the home. Although no current research supports this interpretation, one general education teacher in this study stated:

“I found myself answering ‘0’ to many items that I have not had the opportunity to witness, or are not a part of the usual activities in my class. It’s not that these items would not necessarily be unimportant; they aren’t in *my* classroom.”

The significant differences in the social skills expectation ratings between general and special education teachers also may suggest that special education teacher attitudes may impede the effective inclusion of students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms. The special education teachers in this study indicated that social skills related to building relationships with peers are critically important to the success of students. It is possible that special education teachers may believe that students with disabilities should not participate in general education classrooms if they exhibit social skill deficits in this area. Perhaps they fear that these students will not experience success due to an inability to communicate and relate to their non-disabled peers in the general education classroom. In contrast, general education teachers indicated that classroom success depends more on academic behaviors. Therefore, many students who spend most of their time in special education classrooms due to their lack of relationship skills may be successful in general education classrooms if given instructional support and academic accommodations from special education professionals.

The differences between the male and female teachers’ ratings were another interesting finding. Statistically significant differences were present on 11 of the 30

items. Female participants considered all 11 social skills as being more important or critically important for classroom success than their male counterparts. These items included social skills addressing academic behaviors as well as behaviors which promote positive relationships with others. These findings, however, must be interpreted with caution because 20 of the 66 female respondents were also special education teachers, and only three special education teachers were male. Thus, being a special education teacher may have had a greater effect on the ratings than the gender of the teachers.

The higher social skills expectation ratings of female teachers may explain McIntyre's (1988) finding that female teachers tend to refer students for learning disabilities programs who exhibit problem behaviors. Female teachers may believe that behavioral problems and social skills deficits are symptomatic of learning difficulties in the classroom. Therefore, when students do not meet female teachers' social skills expectations, this may be interpreted as a signal that their learning needs are not being met. Male teachers may view social behavior and academic performance as two unrelated issues.

Differences in the expectations of male and female teachers also may be related to the differences in teaching styles and classroom activities. An early study conducted by Harris, et al. (1984), for example, found that male teachers were more likely to have a teacher-centered, "authoritarian" approach than did female teachers (Abstract). Social skills may not be as important for success in a classroom where desks are in rows, instruction is delivered by the teacher in a lecture format, students work independently on assignments or projects, and students are assessed in a written test format.

A variety of social skills may be necessary for success in classrooms that incorporate various activities involving student interaction with peers and teachers. In this type of classroom, students may be assessed based on small group activities, presentations, discussions, etc. Students may be given more opportunities to work with others, and teachers are more easily able to observe and evaluate students' social skills. If more female teachers structure their classrooms in this manner, this may explain the reason female teachers in this study indicated that approximately one-third of the listed social skills were more important or critically important in their classrooms compared to the male teachers. Thus, if male teachers use a more teacher-directed approach to learning, non-academic social skills may not be as critical for classroom success. Current research must be devoted to further examine the effect of gender on the social skills expectations of teachers.

### *Limitations*

There are limitations to this study of social skills expectations. The study was conducted in only one school district in central Wisconsin. More generalizable findings would have been obtained if teachers from various locations, different size schools, and more diverse backgrounds would have participated. In addition, if the questionnaire was distributed to more than one school district, a larger sample of special education teachers may have been included. A larger sample would have allowed a more valid and comprehensive examination into the effects of gender and years of teaching experience, for example.

Further, there was some confusion regarding the definition of *success*. One respondent suggested, "Success could have been better or more clearly defined." One

participant noted, “The phrase ‘in my classroom’ makes answering some questions difficult. What do you consider success? Grades? Feeling safe? Ability to work together? All of the above?”

In addition, a few participants indicated that their definition of *social skills* was different than the definition represented by the SSRS items. Thus, some respondents questioned the validity of the modified SSRS. Items such as “produces correct homework,” “finishes class assignments within time limits,” and “puts work material or school property away” were questioned by a few of the participants as not being related to their concept of *social skills*.

#### *Implications for Further Research*

Findings from this study indicate that future research is necessary in the area of social skills. Determining which social skills high school students believe to be important for classroom success would be useful. Differences in the responses of learning disabled students compared to their non-disabled peers, general education teachers, and special education teachers also would provide crucial information .

Parents are critical components in the educational process. Therefore, knowledge of their expectations also is vital. Examining the differences in the social skills expectations of parents of learning disabled students and parents of non-learning disabled students would provide needed information for educational planning.

An additional area of research also should include the social skills expectations of employers. Because of the increased emphasis on transition planning for students with disabilities at the secondary level, knowledge of employers’ social skills expectations is

critical. Teachers, as well as guidance counselors, would profit from this type of information in order to effectively prepare students for the workforce.

Further investigation of the differences between general and special education teachers would shed more light on the topic of classroom social skills. A study comparing general education and special education teachers' ratings of the importance of each social skill for success *in life* rather than *in the classroom* would also be useful. In addition, an assessment and comparison of general and special education teachers' attitudes regarding the incorporation of social skills instruction into the general education curriculum would provide important information. Further investigations into the effects of gender may also provide instructionally relevant information.

#### *Implications for Practice*

This study poses implications for the instruction of students with learning disabilities. Existing literature provides evidence that when social skills are taught in a special education self-contained environment, few students are able to transfer the skills to the general education classroom (Forness & Kavale, 1996; Krauter, McLaughlin, & Williams, 1986; Lewis, 1994; cited in Korinek and Popp, 1997). Because of the curricular demands of secondary level general education teachers, many are unwilling to spend time on nonacademic areas (Forness & Kavale, 1996; Krauter, McLaughlin, & Williams, 1986; Lewis, 1994; cited in Korinek and Popp, 1997).

However, most students with learning disabilities receive an extensive amount of their educational services in the general education environment. Therefore, instructional strategies may need to be developed that combine the teaching of academic and social skills in this setting. According to Korinek and Popp (1997), this integration can assist

not only students with learning disabilities, but also those students at risk of not being successful in the classroom as well as in the community due to their social skill deficits. It is essential for special and general education teachers to work together to merge social skills into the general education curriculum without compromising the emphasis on content material.

Previous research indicates that many students with learning disabilities do not have the social competence necessary to develop appropriate and supportive relationships with others. Peers and teachers frequently have negative views about students with learning disabilities. An increased emphasis on teaching appropriate classroom social skills will likely increase the success of students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms.

### *Summary*

This study examined the differences between the social skills expectations of general and special education teachers at the secondary level. Gender differences also were studied. The most critical social skills expectations of the general education teachers and special education teachers also were identified.

This study revealed that success in the general education environment, according to general education teachers, depends on a student's demonstration of academically related social behaviors. Special education teachers rated those social skills that are connected to building positive relationships with others as most important for success. Furthermore, differences in the expectations of female and male teachers revealed that female teachers viewed approximately one-third of the social skills as more important for classroom success than their male counterparts.

The direct instruction of specific social skills appears to be necessary for many students with learning disabilities. The information obtained from this study will be useful for educators who design and implement social skills training programs in their schools. This information also will assist those who make efforts to improve the communication, understanding, and collaboration between general education and special education teachers in the school setting.

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Table 1

*General Education and Special Education Teachers' Demographics*

Characteristics	General Education		Special Education	
	n	%	n	%
Teaching Area	84	78.5	23	21.5
Gender				
Male	38	45.2	3	13.0
Female	46	54.8	20	87.0
Ethnicity				
White/Caucasian	78	92.9	23	100.0
Asian American	0	0.0	0	0.0
Native American	0	0.0	0	0.0
Black/African American	0	0.0	0	0.0
Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0	0.0
Hispanic/Latino	1	1.2	0	0.0
Multi-Racial	2	2.4	0	0.0
Other	2	2.4	0	0.0
Highest Degree Held				
B.A./B.S.	20	23.8	4	17.4
M.A./M.S.	62	73.8	19	82.6
Ed.S	0	0.0	0	0.0
Ph.D	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	1	1.2	0	0.0
Years of Experience				
1-5	18	21.4	9	39.1
6-10	22	26.2	3	13.0
11-25	20	23.8	9	39.1
26+	20	23.8	2	8.7

*Note.* One participant omitted demographic information.

Table 2

*General Education and Special Education Teacher Differences*

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1. Produces correct homework.	104	2.798	.006
2. Keeps his or her work area clean.	105	.079	.937
3. Responds appropriately to physical aggression.	104	-2.371	.020
4. Initiates conversations with peers.	105	-1.639	.104
5. Volunteers to help peers with classroom tasks.	105	.727	.469
6. Politely refuses unreasonable requests.	104	-1.107	.271
7. Appropriately questions rules.	105	.062	.951
8. Responds appropriately to teasing.	105	-2.810	.006
9. Accepts peers ideas for group activities.	104	-.041	.967
10. Appropriately expresses feelings.	105	-.605	.547
11. Receives criticism well.	105	-1.499	.137
12. Attends to your instructions.	105	1.396	.166
13. Uses time appropriately while waiting for help.	105	-.153	.879
14. Introduces himself or herself to new people.	105	-.416	.678
15. Compromises in conflict situations.	105	-.976	.331
16. Acknowledges compliments to praise from peers.	105	-.167	.867
17. Easily makes transition from one classroom activity to another.	105	-.203	.840
18. Controls temper in conflict situations with peers.	105	-2.699	.008
19. Finishes class assignments within time limits.	104	1.506	.135
20. Listens to classmates when they present their work or ideas.	105	.574	.567
21. Appears confident in social interactions with opposite-sex peers.	105	.641	.523
22. Invites others to join in activities.	105	.900	.370
23. Controls temper in conflict situations with adults.	105	-2.191	.031
24. Ignores peer distractions when doing class work.	105	-.431	.667
25. Stands up for peers when they have been unfairly criticized.	105	-.225	.822
26. Puts work materials or school property away.	102	-.298	.766
27. Appropriately tells you when he or she thinks you have treated him or her unfairly.	105	.194	.847
28. Gives compliments to members of the opposite sex.	105	-.171	.865
29. Complies with your directions.	105	-.633	.528
30. Responds appropriately to peer pressure.	105	-3.243	.002

Table 3

*Male and Female Teacher Differences*

Variable	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1. Produces correct homework.	104	.638	.525
2. Keeps his or her work area clean.	95	.303	.763
3. Responds appropriately to physical aggression.	67	-2.363	.021
4. Initiates conversations with peers.	105	-2.346	.021
5. Volunteers to help peers with classroom tasks.	105	-1.171	.244
6. Politely refuses unreasonable requests.	71	-2.398	.019
7. Appropriately questions rules.	105	-2.781	.006
8. Responds appropriately to teasing.	105	-3.097	.003
9. Accepts peers ideas for group activities.	104	-1.488	.140
10. Appropriately expresses feelings.	105	-2.416	.017
11. Receives criticism well.	105	-1.612	.110
12. Attends to your instructions.	105	-2.506	.014
13. Uses time appropriately while waiting for help.	105	-3.367	.001
14. Introduces himself or herself to new people.	70	-.961	.340
15. Compromises in conflict situations.	105	-2.539	.013
16. Acknowledges compliments to praise from peers.	69	-1.169	.246
17. Easily makes transition from one classroom activity to another.	105	-2.805	.006
18. Controls temper in conflict situations with peers.	92	-2.634	.010
19. Finishes class assignments within time limits.	104	-1.922	.057
20. Listens to classmates when they present their work or ideas.	105	-2.739	.007
21. Appears confident in social interactions with opposite-sex peers.	105	-1.128	.262
22. Invites others to join in activities.	105	-2.042	.044
23. Controls temper in conflict situations with adults.	105	-2.755	.007
24. Ignores peer distractions when doing class work.	105	-3.639	.000
25. Stands up for peers when they have been unfairly criticized.	105	-2.629	.010
26. Puts work materials or school property away.	102	-1.469	.145
27. Appropriately tells you when he or she thinks you have treated him or her unfairly.	105	-2.482	.015
28. Gives compliments to members of the opposite sex.	105	.013	.990
29. Complies with your directions.	105	-4.640	.000
30. Responds appropriately to peer pressure.	105	-3.317	.001

Table 4

*Mean Scores of General Education and Special Education Teachers*

Variable	General Education		Special Education	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>
1. Produces correct homework.	83	3.20	23	2.61
2. Keeps his or her work area clean.	84	1.85	23	1.83
3. Responds appropriately to physical aggression.	83	2.83	23	3.35
4. Initiates conversations with peers.	84	2.43	23	2.78
5. Volunteers to help peers with classroom tasks.	84	2.30	23	2.13
6. Politely refuses unreasonable requests.	84	2.63	22	2.86
7. Appropriately questions rules.	84	2.4	23	2.39
8. Responds appropriately to teasing.	84	2.77	23	3.30
9. Accepts peers ideas for group activities.	83	2.90	23	2.91
10. Appropriately expresses feelings.	84	2.83	23	2.96
11. Receives criticism well.	84	2.98	23	3.26
12. Attends to your instructions.	84	3.58	23	3.39
13. Uses time appropriately while waiting for help.	84	3.19	23	3.22
14. Introduces himself or herself to new people.	84	1.90	23	2.00
15. Compromises in conflict situations.	84	2.29	23	2.52
16. Acknowledges compliments to praise from peers.	84	2.31	23	2.35
17. Easily makes transition from one classroom activity to another.	84	3.00	23	3.04
18. Controls temper in conflict situations with peers.	84	3.14	23	3.65
19. Finishes class assignments within time limits.	83	3.06	23	2.74
20. Listens to classmates when they present their work or ideas.	84	3.32	23	3.22
21. Appears confident in social interactions with opposite-sex peers.	84	2.39	23	2.26
22. Invites others to join in activities.	84	2.40	23	2.22
23. Controls temper in conflict situations with adults.	84	3.17	23	3.61
24. Ignores peer distractions when doing class work.	84	3.06	23	3.13
25. Stands up for peers when they have been unfairly criticized.		2.43	23	2.48
26. Puts work materials or school property away.	81	2.63	23	2.70
27. Appropriately tells you when he or she thinks you have treated him or her unfairly.	84	2.82	23	2.78
28. Gives compliments to members of the opposite sex.	84	1.92	23	1.96
29. Complies with your directions.	84	3.42	23	3.52
30. Responds appropriately to peer pressure.	84	2.89	23	3.48

Appendix I

**AGS**

**PERMISSION REQUEST**

*A separate form must be submitted for each publication title.*

**REQUEST FROM:**

Name Jennifer Hintz Title Graduate Student  
 : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
 School/Busine University of Wisconsin-Stout  
 SS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address School Guidance and Counseling Program  
 : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department of Education; School Counseling; School Psychology  
 City: Menomonie State WI Zip 54751  
 : Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone 715-843-5794 Fax  
 Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail: sj\_hintz@msn.com Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**PERMISSION REQUESTED FOR THE FOLLOWING COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL:**

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 Component Secondary Level Questionnaire, Teacher Form  
 Title(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Author(s) Frank Gresham and Stephen Elliott Copyright Year 1990  
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 Materials to be Request permission to create a shortened form of the SSRS form  
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 completed summer of \_\_\_\_\_  
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**PERMISSIONS** No Charge

**FEE:**

AGS Federal ID # 41-0802162

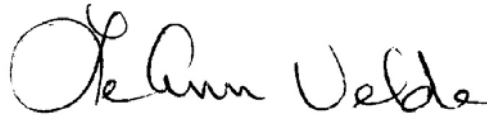
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AGS

Details/Restrictions: Permission is granted with the understanding that the shortened SSRS form will be used for this research project only. The SSRS items can appear in the copy of the dissertation presented to the committee for evaluation, but the SSRS items cannot appear in any way that would be available to the public (e.g., bound copies, microfilming, library copies, etc.)

**Credit line required:**

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**APPROVAL:**

**Date:** April 9, 2002

LeAnn Velde  
 Permissions Manager  
 American Guidance Service, Inc.  
 4201 Woodland Road  
 Circle Pines, MN 55014-1796

Phone: 651-287-7242  
 Fax: 651-287-7227  
 E-Mail: leannv@agsnet.com

## Appendix II

May 20, 2002

Dear Teacher:

In addition to being an LD teacher at East High School, I am a graduate student at UW-Stout in the School Guidance and Counseling Program. I am conducting a survey for my thesis which addresses teachers' perceptions of the importance of certain social skills for students at the high school level. I would greatly appreciate your participation in this research project.

With your participation, valuable information will be gained on the social skills expectations of general education and special education teachers in the Wausau School District. It is hoped that this information will assist us as continuing efforts are made toward the successful inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings.

I am asking you to complete a revised form of the Social Skills Rating System – Teacher Questionnaire (SSRS) on your classroom expectations. The questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Although the questionnaire will not solicit names of the participants, specific demographic information is requested. Therefore, you will be asked to return your questionnaire in a sealed envelope to protect your confidentiality. The demographic information and the responses to the questionnaire will be reported on a group basis only. After the statistical data is analyzed, the questionnaires will be shredded.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research project, please complete the survey by **Friday, May 24th**.

**East Teachers:** Please return the survey to **my school mailbox** at East.

**West Teachers:** Please return the survey to the **plastic drawer by the mailboxes labeled "Jenny Hintz's Social Skills Questionnaire."**

Thank you for your time!

---

Jenny Hintz  
East High School, LD Teacher  
UW–Stout, Graduate Student

### **Informed Consent:**

I understand that by completing this questionnaire, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be achieved from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that demographic information related to a particular individual is confidential and results of the study will only be reported on a group basis. Furthermore, I realize that I have the right to refuse participation at any time during the study.

Questions or concerns about participation in the study should be addressed to the research advisor, Jacalyn W. Weissenburger, or Dr. Janice Coker, Chairperson, UW – Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751.

Jacalyn Weissenburger

UW – Stout, Assistant Professor  
Department of Education, School Counseling, School Psychology  
College of Human Development  
Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751  
(715) 232-1326

## Appendix III

## Social Skills Questionnaire

**Directions:** This questionnaire is designed to measure the importance of social skills demonstrated by students in order for them to be successful in **your classroom**. Read each item below (items 1-30). On a scale of 0 (*Not Important*) to 4 (*Critical*), rate **how important** each of the behaviors is for success in **your classroom**.

**Please do not skip any items.**

	How Important				
	Not Important	1	2	3	4
1. Produces correct homework.	0	1	2	3	4
2. Keeps his or her work area clean without being reminded.	0	1	2	3	4
3. Responds appropriately to physical aggression from peers.	0	1	2	3	4
4. Initiates conversations with peers.	0	1	2	3	4
5. Volunteers to help peers on classroom tasks.	0	1	2	3	4
6. Politely refuses unreasonable requests from others.	0	1	2	3	4
7. Appropriately questions rules that may be unfair.	0	1	2	3	4
8. Responds appropriately to teasing by peers.	0	1	2	3	4
9. Accepts peers' ideas for group activities.	0	1	2	3	4
10. Appropriately expresses feelings when wronged.	0	1	2	3	4
11. Receives criticism well.	0	1	2	3	4
12. Attends to your instructions.	0	1	2	3	4
13. Uses time appropriately while waiting for your help.	0	1	2	3	4
14. Introduces himself or herself to new people without being told to.	0	1	2	3	4
15. Compromises in conflict situations by changing own ideas to reach agreement.	0	1	2	3	4
16. Acknowledges compliments to praise from peers.	0	1	2	3	4
17. Easily makes transition from one classroom activity to another.	0	1	2	3	4
18. Controls temper in conflict situations with peers.	0	1	2	3	4
19. Finishes class assignments within time limits.	0	1	2	3	4

<u>20. Listens to classmates when they present their work or ideas.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>21. Appears confident in social interactions with opposite-sex peers.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>22. Invites others to join in activities.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>23. Controls temper in conflict situations with adults.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>24. Ignores peer distractions when doing class work.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>25. Stands up for peers when they have been unfairly criticized.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>26. Puts work materials or school property away.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>27. Appropriately tells you when he or she thinks you have treated him or her unfairly.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>28. Gives compliments to members of the opposite sex.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>29. Complies with your directions.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>30. Responds appropriately to peer pressure.</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>

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**STOP. Please make sure all items have been marked.**

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:**

What grade levels do you teach? \_\_\_\_\_ 9<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 10<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 11<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 12<sup>th</sup>

What is your teaching area? \_\_\_\_\_ General Education  
 Subject Area \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Special Education  
 \_\_\_\_\_ LD  
 \_\_\_\_\_ CD, EBD, other

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

Ethnicity:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ White/Caucasian \_\_\_\_\_ Black/African American  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Asian American \_\_\_\_\_ Pacific Islander  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Native American \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in current position: \_\_\_\_\_ years

Highest degree held: \_\_\_\_\_ B.A./B.S.  
\_\_\_\_\_ M.A./M.S.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ed.S.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ph.D.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your participation!**

