

Yu, A. (2003). *Results of the effects of the second step curriculum* [white paper, electronic version]. Retrieved (month, date, year) from Georgia State University Center for School Safety, School Climate and Classroom Management website: <http://education.gsu.edu/schoolsafety/>

**Center for Research on School Safety, School Climate
and Classroom Management**

Georgia State University

Results of the effects of the Second Step Curriculum
Andrew Yu

Currently research for violence prevention in schools has recommended that programs improve school climate and safety by developing interpersonal relationships amongst students and educators (Dahlberg & Potter, 2001). Acting on this recommendation, The Second step curriculum has been chosen as the mode of intervention of the Project DOVE program for the curriculum's demonstrated effectiveness in other settings that increased the levels of social competency in students.

What is the Second Step Curriculum?

Second Step is a violence prevention curriculum created by the Committee for Children in Seattle, Washington. (Lundstrum, 1999). By means of observation, self-reflection, and reinforcement, *Second Step* emphasizes the development of social-emotional skills in three units:

I. Empathy

II. Social problem solving

III. Anger management

I. The first unit, **Empathy** focuses on three components:

(a) Recognizing one's own feelings and feelings in others

(b) Considering other people's views

(c) Responding emotionally to others

II. In the second unit, **Social problem solving**, students are taught a five step process in which

1. Identifies the problem

2. Brainstorms solutions

3. Evaluates the solutions

4. Select, plan, and try the solutions

5. Then evaluate if the solutions worked.

III. In the third unit, **Anger management**, students learn to:

(a) Recognize anger cues

(b) Use positive self-statements

(c) Use other stress-reducing techniques to control angry behavior (Frey et al., 2000)

Current research of the Second Step Curriculum

Evaluating the Second step curriculum in other school settings has shown promising results:

1. In the Pacific Northwest *Second Step* was implemented in twelve public schools and two private schools located in urban and suburban areas. Interviews before and after the curriculum was implemented demonstrated that the children who participated in the Second step program **improved their empathy skills and social problem-solving abilities** when compared with children who were not taught the curriculum (Moore & Beland, 1992).

2. Researchers at the University of Washington, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also have used the *Second Step* program in schools in urban and suburban areas of Washington State. The results were **reductions in physical aggression with increased friendly, prosocial behaviors** (Grossman, Neckerman, Koepsell, Liu, Asher, Beland et al., 1997)

3. A year-long evaluation of the program in a rural elementary school with students with low socioeconomic statuses had shown significant **increases in social competence** and significant **decreases in antisocial behavior** when compared to students not taught the curriculum (Taub, 2002).

4. Sixth through eight graders in a middle school having been taught the curriculum showed **decreased levels of approval for aggression** and **increased abilities in performing prosocial skills** (Van Schoiack-Edstrom, Frey & Beland, 2002).

Project DOVE's implimentation of Second Step

In Project DOVE, the data collected durring 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years in Fairstreet Elementary have shown similiar results in *Second Step's* effectiveness in other schools

➤ For grades four and five in Fairstreet Elementary for the years 1999-2000 there has been significant increases scores in all three of the units (*empathy, problem-solving, anger management*) from before and after evaluations.

➤ The 2000-2001 data emulates the 1999-2000 data with increased scores in social competency for grades four and five again for all three units.

For more information about Project DOVE or the Second Step Curriculum, contact Project DOVE at 404-413-8192 or ProjectDove@gsu.edu.

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