Skills training with antisocial youth: A meta-analysis

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is that previously unclassified languages do not fit into any of the above categories. We also applied the PVI to compare the rhythm of Singaporean teachers with that of their pupils and found them to be statistically similar. Based on our findings, we recommend that a realistic pronunciation teaching model has to be endonormative (home-based).

(iv) To collaborate with world-class universities So far, publications arising from this project have involved academics from Cambridge, Oxford and City University, Hong Kong.

Future Developments We intend to widen our scope of research in the following areas:

i) Adding to the existing corpus More subjects are being recorded, including Singaporean toddlers and their mothers so that we can extend our inquiry into language acquisition processes, in relation to speech rhythm and intonation. More recordings are being made of read passages by English speakers of different nationalities.

(ii) Developing an interactive CD-Rom for the teaching of pronunciation in schools With the launch of the Speak Good English Movement (SGEM)2000, the new English Language syllabus 2001 and the completion of the grammar re-training project in 2002-2003, it seems timely that a comprehensive package for the systematic teaching of pronunciation at the school and tertiary levels be developed within the next 3 years.

(iii) Extending rhythmic investigation to Child Language Acquisition We will be applying the PVI as a means of investigating the acquisition of rhythm by children whose native language is Singapore English (syllable-timed) and those whose parents speak British English (stress-timed). We will compare the PVIs of Singaporean toddlers with their mothers against those of British toddlers with their mothers and in the process, find out whether it is relatively easier to acquire the rhythm of a syllable-timed language (SingaporeEnglish) or that of a stress-timed one (British English).

(iv) Using spectrography for speech remediation The use of spectrograms for speech therapy was designed to help the severely hearing impaired so that they are able to picture on screen what is wrong with their pronunciation. We intend to make use of this technique to help the less proficient speakers amongst our students to acquire the desired pronunciation targets by allowing them to be able to practise their pronunciations against the target spectrograms.

A list of publications associated with this project is available from Low Ee Ling (ellow@nie.edu.sg).

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Skills Training with Antisocial Youth: A Meta-Analysis

Rebecca P. Ang

This article provides a summary of findings documented in a recently published meta-analytic investigation on the differential benefits of skills training with antisocial youth based on group composition (Ang & Hughes, 2002). One of the most popular treatments for youth with conduct problems in schools and the community is group-based skills training, in which antisocial youth are taught a set of problem-solving social skills to help them better negotiate conflict situations without using aggressive means (Kazdin, 1997). While some group-based interventions have documented positive outcomes, others have failed to do so (e.g., Catterall, 1987; Dishion & Andrews, 1995). In fact, several developmental studies support the view that affiliation with deviant peers contributes to antisocial developmental trajectories (e.g., Curran, Stice, & Chassin, 1997; Dishion, Andrews, & Crosby, 1995; Dishion, Spracklen, Andrews, & Patterson, 1996). The purpose of this meta-analytic investigation was to study systematically the differential benefits of skills training with antisocial youth based on group composition. Specifically, we tested the hypothesis that the mean effect size for skills training interventions that occur in the context of homogeneous groups of antisocial youth is smaller than the mean effect size for skills training interventions delivered in the context of individual treatment or mixed groups (i.e., prosocial and deviant youth).

Meta-analysis allows pooling of results from individual studies so that statistical power is increased and the accuracy of conclusions can be improved. This study used meta-analytic techniques to summarize treatment outcomes associated with skills training interventions with antisocial youth from 38 studies. A total of 41 studies were identified using selection criteria outlined in Ang and Hughes (2002). Three of these studies reported follow-up data only. Of the 38 studies reporting post treatment effects, 5 involved individual treatments, 4 mixed-group treatments, and 29 deviant-group treatments. Across all 38 studies and measures of outcomes, the average effect size at post treatment was .62, suggesting a moderate effect (Cohen, 1992).

As predicted, skills training interventions delivered in the context of groups consisting of only antisocial peers
produced smaller benefits than did skills training interventions that avoided aggregating antisocial peers (e.g., groups that comprised prosocial and antisocial peers, or individual treatment). There was a statistically significant effect for group composition for the measure of behaviour observations, favouring nonaggregated treatments. It can be argued that this measure is one of the most rigorous and socially valid assessments of the benefits of skills training. At follow-up, nonaggregated treatments continued to yield larger benefits. For the studies that reported follow-up data, treatments provided in the context of either mixed or individual treatment also produced larger effect sizes than did deviant-only group interventions.

While empirical evidence has shown greater treatment gains when skills training is delivered in the context of mixed groups compared to homogeneous deviant-only groups, it is also important to consider the issues and concerns associated with the recruitment of prosocial peers to participate in skills training. Ang and Hughes (2002) highlighted the practical and ethical issues concerning participation of prosocial peers. For example, in some settings such as correctional facilities or clinics, prosocial peers may not be available to participate. In school settings, the relative costs and benefits of participation for the prosocial child must be carefully considered and communicated to the relevant parties concerned. A discussion of this dilemma and alternative suggestions are presented in the paper.

References


Collaborative Word Problem Solving in a Cognitive-apprenticeship-computer-based Environment

Teong Su Kwang

Introduction
Over the past decade, attempts have been made to examine the role of metacognition within computer environments (Mevarech, 1999; Kramarski & Rittikof, 2002). In these studies, the students would either be working or discussing their tasks in small groups or in pairs. The researchers consistently indicated the importance of training students to monitor, control and regulate their learning as they were using computers, and allowing students to work in small groups or in pairs appeared to maximise that potential (Artzt & Armour-Thomas, 1992). For example, in Artzt and Armour-Thomas's (1992) study, the researchers examined the role of metacognition in group problem solving and found that personalities and attitudes of the participants rather than the ability level predicted whether children would share metacognitive insights. This study reports on one strand of a larger investigation to explore the extent to which metacognition plays a part in primary students' word problem solving in a computer environment. Specifically, the study adopted a case study design where analysis of students' collaborative talk during word problem solving of four pairs of students was used to examine the factors that might contribute to successful word problem solving in a cognitive-apprenticeship-computer-based environment called WordMath (Looi & Tan, 1998).

Methods
Four pairs of students (11-12 years old) from a Singapore school were involved in the study. The pairs of students were chosen based on two factors: having similar academic profiles and being able to work together. The students and their mathematics teachers underwent the following four