



Fall 2010

U OF A PEERS LAB

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES PROJECT

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Welcome

Welcome back to school! Thank you all for your tremendous support for our *Classroom Experiences* research project last year. With your help we were able to gather some really important information on children's experiences and relationships at school.



Ten schools are participating in this two-year project, including 6 Edmonton Public and 4 Edmonton Catholic schools. Overall, 460 children in grades kindergarten to 3 participated last year.

Last year we asked children, teachers, and parents about children's experiences and relationships at school on three occasions between January and June.

This year we will visit grades 1 to 4 classrooms to follow these same children and collect the same information. We will do this in October 2010, February 2011, and again in May 2011. We will contact teachers soon to arrange the best time to visit your classrooms this fall.

Understanding how children's experiences and relationships change within the school year and across school years will help us to identify the best strategies to support children's healthy social, emotional, and academic development during elementary school.

Summary of Project

On the following pages we share some of our preliminary findings from the information we gathered last year.

We examined how children's relationships with classmates and teachers, engagement in school, and academic skills changed from January to June. We were also interested in whether these changes differed between children in grades K to 3 or between girls and boys.

We are currently analyzing all the information we gathered last year. We will share more of our findings with you at the end of the school year.



*PEERS Research Team:
September 2010*

From Left: Shayla Richards, Ayanda Chakawa, Kirsten Klinge, Naheed Hosan, Lindsey Bannard, Alyssa Jantz, Wendy Salvisberg, Cecilia Mah, Meghan Walker, Courtney Chisholm, Selina Wong, Wendy Hoglund, Harriet Halse, Lindsay Hoban.

Missing: Alex Graf-Dunseith, Brittany Crow, Sabrina Brady, Phillip Hau, Carina Glerud, Naomi Sheh, Jeff Sawalha.

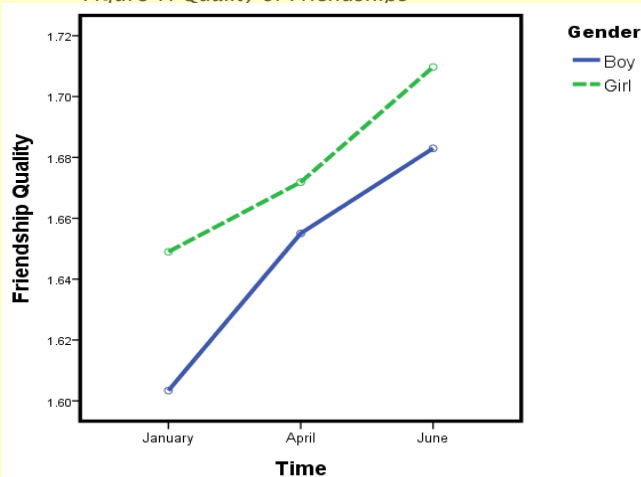
Children's Relationships with Classmates

We asked children about their positive and negative relationships with their classmates.

To assess children's positive relationships with classmates, we asked children about the quality of their relationship with their best friend (e.g., "my friend cares about my feelings"). Children answered on a scale of 0 (not true), 1 (a little true), and 2 (really true).

On average, children reported very high levels of friendship quality. Importantly, these levels increased significantly from January to June and did not differ based on children's grade or between girls and boys (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Quality of Friendships*



To assess children's negative relationships with classmates, we asked children how often other children had mistreated them relationally (e.g., "left them out of activities") or physically (e.g., "hit them") during the past month. Children answered on a scale of 0 (never), 1 (sometimes), and 2 (all the time).

On average, children reported very low levels of both relational and physical victimization. Importantly, these levels decreased significantly from January to June and did not differ based on children's grade. On average, girls reported significantly higher levels of relational but not physical victimization than boys (see Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2: *Relational Victimization*

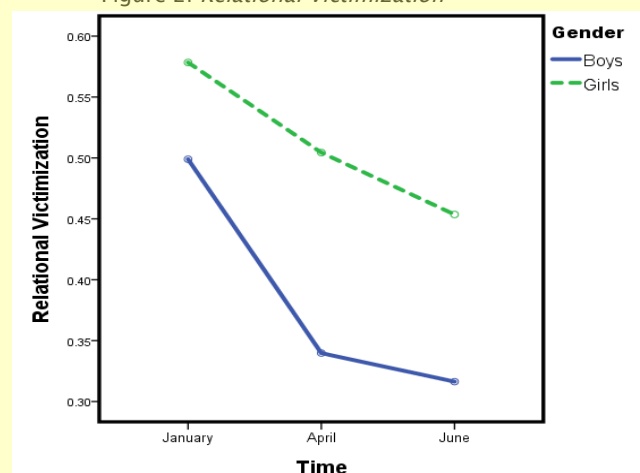
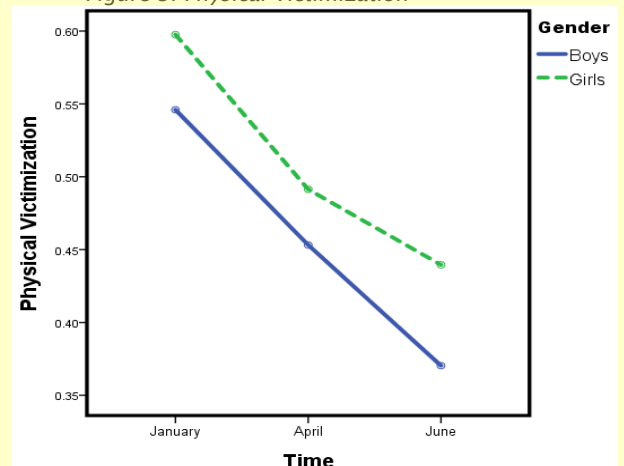


Figure 3: *Physical Victimization*



To thank you for your support, classrooms that participate receive a storybook at the end of each data collection period.

Recommendations regarding books that your classroom would enjoy are welcome.

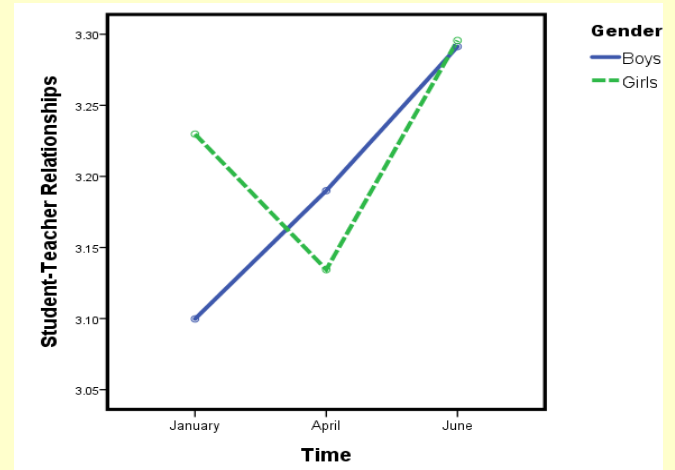


Children's Relationships with Teachers

We asked teachers about the quality of their relationships with their students (e.g., "I share a warm relationship with this child"). Teachers answered on a scale of 0 (definitely does not apply) to 4 (definitely applies). As only 30% of the children have teacher-reported information across January to June this data may not accurately describe teachers' perceptions.

On average, teachers reported very high quality relationships with children. Importantly, the quality of these relationships improved significantly from January to June, particularly for children in kindergarten and grade 1 and boys relative to girls (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: *Student-Teacher Relationships*

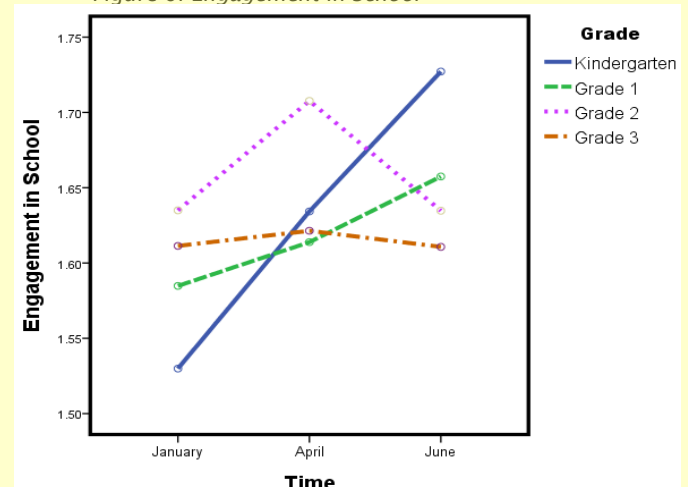


Children's Engagement in School

Children also told us about how much they like school and participate in class activities on a scale of 0 (not true), 1 (a little true), and 2 (really true).

On average, children reported very high levels of school liking and participation. These levels increased significantly from January to June, particularly for kindergarten children (see Figure 6). Girls and boys reported comparable levels of school liking and participation.

Figure 6: *Engagement in School*

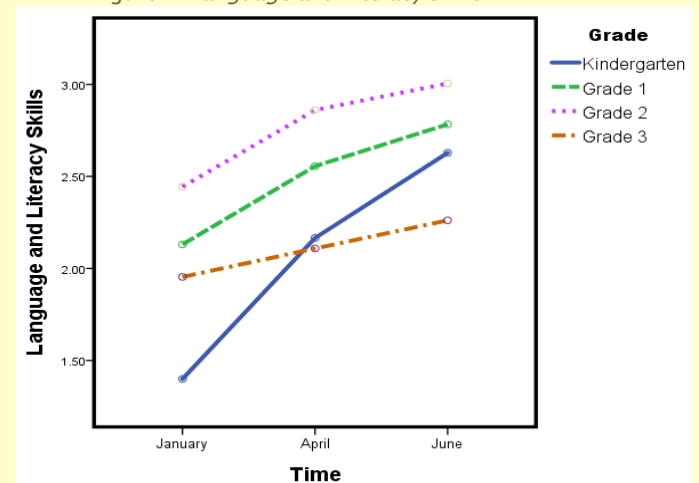


Children's Literacy Skills

Teachers also rated children's language and literacy skills on a scale of 0 (not yet) to 4 (proficient).

On average, children's literacy skills increased significantly from January to June, particularly for children in kindergarten (see Figure 7). Levels of literacy skills were comparable across girls and boys.

Figure 7: *Language and Literacy Skills*



Children's Academic Skills

We also assessed children's academic skills in reading recognition, reading comprehension, writing, and math in January and in June. Reading comprehension was not assessed for kindergarten children. Academic skills were assessed on a scale of 0 (not yet) and 1 (proficient).

On average, children's academic skills increased significantly from January to June and were comparable across girls and boys, with the exception that girls showed significantly better writing skills than boys.

Children showed very high reading recognition skills that increased significantly from January to June, particularly for kindergarten children (see Figure 8).

Reading comprehension increased significantly over time for grade 1 children (see Figure 9).

Writing skills increased significantly from January to June, particularly for grade 1 children (see Figure 10).

Children showed very high levels of math skills and these skills increased significantly from January to June, particularly for kindergarten children (see Figure 11).

Figure 8: Reading Recognition

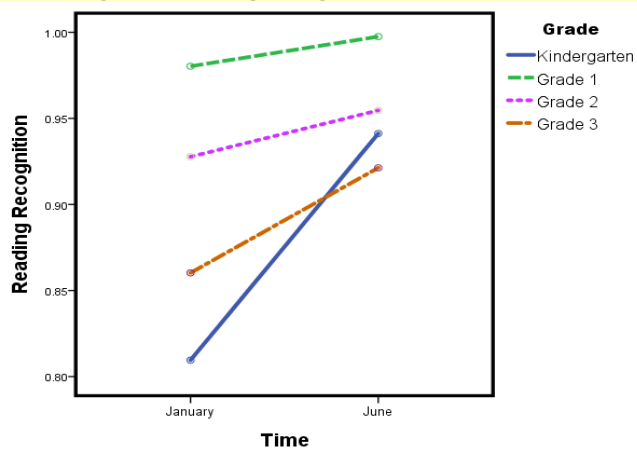


Figure 10: Writing Skills

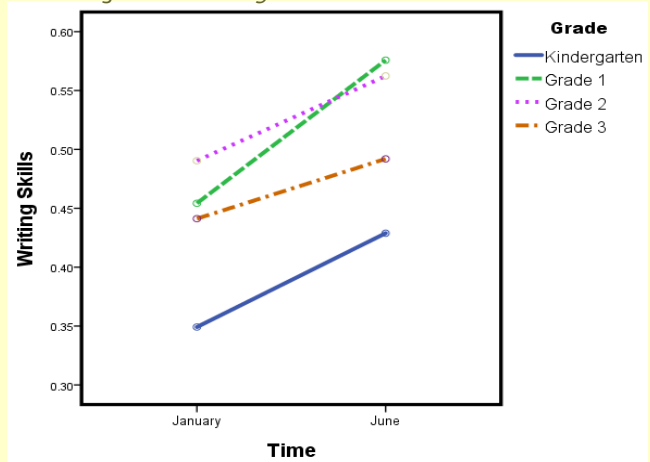


Figure 9: Reading Comprehension

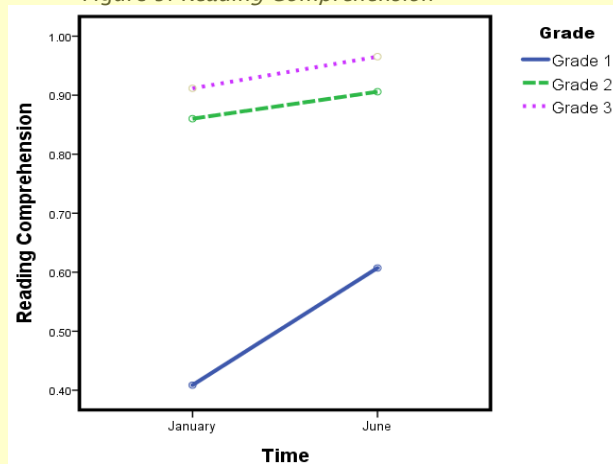
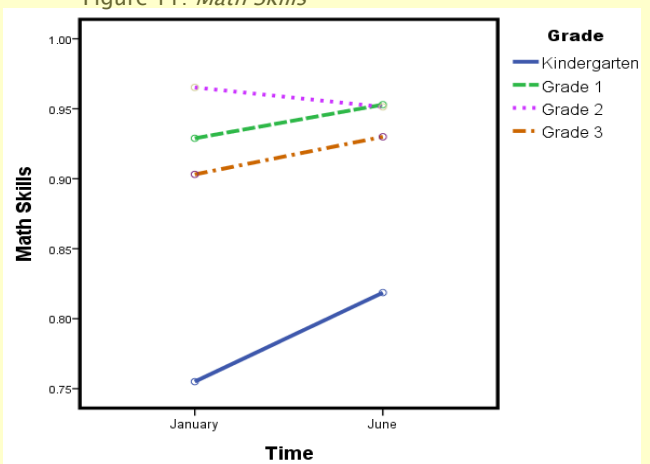


Figure 11: Math Skills



Thank you for your support for this project! We look forward to seeing everyone again this fall and to continuing our collaboration with you. If you have any questions about this project please call us at 780-492-7147 or email us at peerslab@ualberta.ca.

We are always happy to answer any questions.

