

Research in Brief
**Waging Peace through Forgiveness in Belfast, Northern Ireland III:
Correcting a Production Error and a Case Study**

Robert D. Enright
Jeanette A. Knutson Enright
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Anthony C. Holter
University of Notre Dame

Thomas Baskin
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Casey Knutson
Ohio State University

Introductory Note

In the fall, 2007 issue of this journal, we presented a three-study article on our forgiveness education programs for peace in Belfast, Northern Ireland (Enright, Knutson Enright, Holter, Baskin, & Knutson, 2007). After the article was submitted and then accepted for publication, production errors occurred in both data tables just prior to printing. The purpose of this brief article is to explain the two tables, which should be substituted for the erroneous tables in the original 2007 article and to take the opportunity to present a case study of a seven-year-old boy who was considered by his teachers to be at risk because of his intense anger in the school setting. How the forgiveness education program impacted his level of anger is discussed.

Since 2002, our research group has been involved in evaluating forgiveness education programs in the primary grades of Belfast, Northern Ireland. This entails a long-range peace plan in which the children learn concepts of forgiveness with increasing developmental complexity as they advance in the grades. The plan is to have a curriculum at each grade level from Primary 3 (first-grade in the United States) through the end of secondary school. To date, teacher curriculum guides are available for Primary 3 through the first year of secondary school (Enright, Knutson Enright, Holter, Baskin, & Knutson, 2007). Our intent here is to correct production errors in the two tables from the previously published research report (Enright et al.,

2007) and to present a case study of a seven-year-old boy who was impacted by the forgiveness curriculum.

Summary of the Forgiveness Research

We have now evaluated the effectiveness of the classroom teacher-led programs, which occur for about one hour per week for one academic semester, in Primary 3 and 5. For Primary 3, we had three classrooms, randomly assigned, in the experimental group (in which the teacher delivered forgiveness education; N=36 students) and four control group classrooms (N=57). For Primary 5, we again had three classrooms, randomly assigned, in the experimental group (N=35) and three control group classrooms (N=49). Catholic and state (with primarily Protestant students) schools are involved on both grade levels. The dependent measures are anger (assessed with the Beck Anger Inventory Youth) for the Primary 3 students, and anger (same instrument as in Primary 3), depression (Beck Depression Inventory Youth), and level of forgiveness (Enright Forgiveness Inventory for Children) for the Primary 5 students.

Corrected Tables

Table 1 presents the findings from Study 1 (Enright et al., 2007), in which we compared the level of anger for both male and female students in Primary 3 classrooms in three communities: Madison and central-city Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Belfast,

Northern Ireland. The data for Belfast did not appear in the original article. As can be seen, the children in Belfast are close to the "mildly elevated" level of anger by Beck, Beck, and Jolly's criteria (2001). This finding, along with the statistically significant finding of no difference between the Belfast and central-city Milwaukee samples, formed the rationale for forgiveness education in Belfast (Studies 2 and 3).

Table 2 details the pretest and follow-up (one month after intervention) data for Primary 3 (Study 2) and Primary 5 (Study 3) children. The corrected tables should now be self-explanatory in light of the existing descriptions in the original article. To summarize, the Primary 3 children in the experimental group classrooms, which had forgiveness education from their own teachers, reduced statistically significantly more in anger than did the children in the control group classrooms. The Primary 5 children in the experimental group classrooms, also which had forgiveness education from their own teachers, reduced statistically significantly more in anger and depression and increased more in forgiveness than did the children in the control group classrooms.

Case Study

Timothy (name changed), a seven-year-old child in Primary 3, attended a school located in an interface area of Belfast, Northern Ireland where Protestants and Catholics live in close, yet segregated, proximity. The environment is more prone to violence and crime and experiences more riots than non-interface areas of Belfast (see Enright et al., 2007 for details).

When Timothy began to learn about forgiveness, he had experienced much turbulence in his young life. At the age of seven, he was struggling academically, and was in frequent conflict with his peers and teachers. At the time of pre-testing, according to the Beck Anger Inventory—Youth mentioned above, Timothy's level of anger was at a clinical level (borderline extreme anger). At the one-month follow-up, upon completion of the forgiveness curriculum, Timothy's anger had been substantially reduced to a level of "no anger." Timothy reported that before the forgiveness lessons: 1) when angry, he stayed that way; 2) he always felt controlled by other people; 3) always felt put down; and 4) always felt people were against him. After the forgiveness lessons, Timothy reported that he rarely experienced any of the above. Before the forgiveness lessons, he reported that he always got mad at other people.

After the forgiveness lessons, Timothy reported that he now only sometimes got mad at other people.

In addition to the important changes in Timothy's level of anger, his teacher reported visibly apparent changes in his attitudes about himself and others. His introduction to the concept of inherent worth through the Dr. Seuss' book, *Horton Hears a Who*, is particularly noteworthy. Inherent worth is the concept that people do not have to earn the value that they possess as persons; it is unconditional. The book, *Horton Hears a Who*, teaches this lesson with the frequently repeated refrain, "A person's a person, no matter how small." After learning that all people have worth, regardless of their positions in life, the places they live, their appearance, and/or their abilities, Timothy approached his teacher and asked, "Does this mean that I am as good as Conrad (a boy who excelled in sports)?" The teacher said, "Yes, you are as good as Conrad." Timothy then said, "Does this mean that I am as good as Pamela (a girl who came from a family with a mother and a father who were quite involved with their children)?" The teacher said, "Yes, you are as good as Pamela." Finally, Timothy asked, "Does this mean that I have as much worth as Richard (a boy who did very well in academics)?" The teacher said, "Yes Timothy, you have as much worth as Richard." Timothy smiled and returned to his seat (for the study, all names were changed).

The environmental circumstances of Timothy's life have not improved, but Timothy now has a tool, forgiveness, to help him deal with the injustices of life. His teacher has noticed a change in his social behavior in the classroom toward greater respect for others and for himself.

Inquiries should be sent to the first author at rd.enright@yahoo.com; Department of Educational Psychology, 1025 West Johnson Street, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI 53706.

References

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- Enright, R.D., Knutson Enright, J.A., Holter, A.C., Baskin, T., & Knutson, C. (2007). Waging peace through forgiveness in Belfast, Northern Ireland II: Educational programs for mental health improvement of children. *Journal of Research in Education*, Fall, 63-78.

Table 1.
Means, Standard Deviations, and Post-Hoc Comparisons for Significant Two-Way ANOVA Results

	<u>Beck Anger T-Scores</u>		<u>ANOVA</u>	<u>Post hoc</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	F (2, 306)	
(1) Madison 1 st (N = 66)	50.53	10.04	7.64**	1 < 2 ** 1 < 3 *
(2) Milwaukee 1 st (N = 150)	57.33	12.59		2 > 1 ** 2 = 3
(3) Belfast P3 (N = 93)	54.44	11.87		3 > 1 * 3 = 2

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

Beck T-Scores and Clinical Ranges

<u>Score</u>	<u>Severity Level</u>
T = 70 +	Extremely Elevated
T = 60-69	Moderately Elevated
T = 55-59	Mildly Elevated
T < 55	Average

Table 2.
Means, Standard Deviations, t-tests, and Effect Size for Dependent Variables

	<u>Pretest</u>		<u>Delayed Posttest</u>		<u>Gain Score</u>		<u>Gain Score t-test</u>	<u>Cohen's d</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>		
<u>Belfast 1st Grade (Primary 3)</u>								
Experimental								
Anger (n=36)	56.19	10.35	50.50	10.27	-5.69	9.99	1.90*	.41
Control								
Anger (n=57)	53.33	11.28	52.23	13.04	-1.11	12.16		
<u>Belfast 3rd Grade (Primary 5)</u>								
Experimental								
Anger (n = 34)	55.53	11.78	50.03	11.15	-5.50	10.57	3.12*	.70
Depression (n = 34)	53.59	11.59	50.12	13.58	-3.47	8.67	1.67*	.38
Forgiveness (n = 35)	68.22	20.43	86.51	18.85	18.29	23.99	2.56*	.57
Control								
Anger (n = 49)	47.42	9.93	49.24	8.68	1.82	10.47		
Depression (n = 49)	50.49	8.35	50.35	10.26	-0.14	9.05		
Forgiveness (n = 47)	77.28	23.91	83.19	22.60	5.91	19.70		

* $p < .05$

Note. The T-Score clinical ranges for depression are the same as those for anger.