

**THE RECIPROCITY OF SELF-DISCLOSURE  
IN SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN**

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**Masters thesis submitted to the department  
of psychology in partial fulfillment for  
the requirements of Master of Arts**

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**ABSTRACT**

Researchers (i.e., Altman & Taylor, 1973) have found that a principle of reciprocity guides self-disclosures in adults. The present study explored the question of whether, and if so, at what age the principle of reciprocity guides children's self-disclosures. In the study, children from kindergarten, grades 2, 4 and 6 were shown three videotapes of child initiators disclosing information about themselves that varied in intimacy level. After viewing each tape, the child was asked to send a message to the stimulus children on topics varying in intimacy. It was found that children in sixth grade engaged in reciprocity of self-disclosure. They responded with more high intimacy level disclosures to the child initiators who provided high intimacy disclosures, than to the child initiators who made low intimacy level disclosures. They also made more high intimacy disclosures to the child initiator who provided medium stimuli, than to the ones who provided low intimacy disclosures. The latter finding was interpreted as indicating that a fully differentiated reciprocity of self-disclosure was acquired later in development.

## RECIPROCITY OF SELF-DISCLOSURE IN SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN

A number of authors (i.e., Altman & Taylor, 1973; Worthy, Gary & Kahn, 1969) have proposed that self-disclosure is critical to social interaction. They have argued, for example, that self-disclosure is necessary and intrinsic to the formation of intimate relationships. Researchers have defined self-disclosure as "that which occurs when A knowingly communicates to B information about A which is not generally known and is not otherwise available to B", (Worthy, Gary & Kahn, 1969).

Central to the research is the notion that the principle of reciprocity guides self-disclosure, at least in adults. According to this principle, the intimacy of the self-disclosure by one individual is met by a self-disclosure of equal intimacy of another. Several authors, (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Chaiken & Derlega, 1974; Levinger & Snoek, 1972) believe that without the reciprocity of self-disclosures, intimate relationships could not develop.

The primary concern of the present study is with the relatively unexplored area of the reciprocity of self-disclosure in children. Extensive research has, however been conducted in the reciprocity of self-disclosure in adults. This research and the resulting theories will be reviewed and will serve as a guide to the present investigation.

## RESEARCH ON THE RECIPROCITY OF SELF-DISCLOSURE IN ADULTS

There is considerable evidence which supports the hypothesis that the reciprocity principle guides self-disclosure in adults. One line of research conducted by Jourard (1959) is based on correlational analyses. In this research, the subject's self-disclosure to various target individuals is assessed by self-report and is referred to as disclosure output. Also, disclosures made by the various targets to the subjects were assessed and referred to as disclosure inputs. Reciprocity of self-disclosure is inferred from positive correlations between disclosure output and disclosure input. Jourard (1959) found a positive correlation between self-disclosure outputs and inputs, with a group of female nursing colleagues. There was a correspondence between the individuals' intimacy of self-disclosure sent to others, and the intimacy of self-disclosure that the individuals received from others. Jourard and Landsman (1960), replicated this same pattern with male graduate students.

Further evidence was found by Jourard and Richman (1963), who assessed the correlation between disclosure outputs and inputs. The target persons were peers, mother, father and best friend. In this study, subjects were asked to rate their own and the target person's responses. Results indicated that if subjects reported to the target that they



had disclosed a great deal of personal information to their close friends and parents, the targets would admit to having done the same. Evidence for the reciprocity of self-disclosure was found in this study.

In another line of research, such as that conducted by Worthy, Gary and Kahn (1969) more experimental control over the disclosure process and hence more firm conclusions about the reciprocity of self-disclosure were provided. In this research, experimenters elicited varying levels of self-disclosure in the experimental setting and observed the exchange of self-disclosures. Evidence for the reciprocity of self-disclosure was shown by a correlation between the intimacy of disclosures sent to others and those received from others. Since the experimenters directly observed the disclosure exchange process, it was possible to draw more definitive conclusions about the reciprocity of self-disclosure. In the Worthy et al (1969) study, subjects chose questions (prescaled for intimacy level) to send to the other three subjects. After answering the questions they had received, they chose questions to send in return. This was carried out for ten trials. Strong correlations were found in the intimacy of disclosures being sent and the intimacy level of disclosures received, thus supporting the principle of reciprocity of self-disclosure. This pattern has been replicated in other research (see Altman & Taylor, 1973).

## THEORIES OF RECIPROCITY OF SELF-DISCLOSURE IN ADULTS

The reciprocity of self-disclosure has been discussed or accounted for by three theories.

### 1) Social Penetration Theory:

The Social Penetration Theory proposed by Altman & Taylor, 1973, suggests that as a relationship progresses, rate and amount of self-disclosure increases. These authors theorize that interpersonal relationships are developed in a continuously widening and deepening wedge shaped formation. According to this formulation, not only does the level of intimacy increase, but development also continues in previously established levels of intimacy. These authors also suggest that cost/reward factors of the past and future are also taken into consideration. Disclosures of high intimacy level have both greater costs and rewards when compared with lower level or more superficial disclosures. Therefore, since higher level disclosures involve a greater risk, there is a greater tendency to adopt a more conservative approach to relationship development. Accordingly then, both parties must perceive conditions to be positive, before the reciprocal exchange of self-disclosures is likely to occur. If the outcome is perceived to be a positive event, the level of intimacy may be increased,

allowing the relationship to develop further. Without the self-disclosure increasing, the relationship would remain at that level or stage of development.

## **2) Social Attraction Theory:**

The Social Attraction position postulates that being entrusted with another's self-disclosure is considered to be a social reward by the listener (Worthy, Gary & Kahn, 1969). In response, having perceived this as a sign of trust and liking since intimacies are usually only shared among close friends, the listener often then reciprocates in kind to reward the discloser. On the basis of this theory liking is the basis for the reciprocity of the self-disclosure.

## **3) Norm of Reciprocity:**

Gouldner (1960) theorizes that a norm of reciprocity governs much of our social behavior. According to this theory, people often feel obligated to return favours, money, etc., in order to re-establish equity in the relationship. Without this need, the discloser and receiver are placed in an inequitable position, the relationship unbalanced and unlikely to proceed. As support of Gouldner (1960), Chaiken and Derlega (1974), found that there is a tendency for individuals to like others who reciprocated intimacy of disclosure of another person, more than others who did not reciprocate the intimacy of disclosure.

## THEORY AND RESEARCH ON SELF-DISCLOSURE IN CHILDREN

Youniss (1981) provides a theory that is relevant to the theory of reciprocity of self-disclosure in children. He suggests that while young children (age 6-8) engage in "tit-for-tat" or same subject exchanges, older children (age 9-14) have a more reciprocal and co-operative relationship which closely resembles that found in adult relationships. That is, the older children do not necessarily restrict their disclosures to same subject exchange. According to Youniss, then, reciprocity of self-disclosure would be more likely in children in middle childhood (ages 9 and older). In partial support of Youniss, Selman (1981) suggested that by early adolescence individuals have the perspective taking skills that enable them to co-ordinate perspectives, and therefore, engage in genuine reciprocity.

A few studies have, however, been concerned with self-disclosure in children. For example, Rivenbark (1971) investigated the process of self-disclosure with children in grades, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12. Target receivers included same and opposite sex peers, mothers and fathers. The results indicated that intimacy levels of the self-disclosures increased with age. It was also found that females appear to be more willing to self-disclose at higher levels of intimacy than males. This difference seems to increase with age when self-disclosures are made to parents. Both sexes were found to disclose more to mothers than to fathers.

Rotenberg, Pasemko, Quinlan, and Tidwell (1984) conducted a study with fourth graders regarding the number of intimate disclosures (secrets) they told to best friends and peers. The researchers found a significant correlation between the number of secrets the children told friends and peers and the number of secrets best friends and peers told the children. This provided evidence for the reciprocity of self-disclosure.

Cohn and Strassberg (1983) also investigated reciprocity of self-disclosure in children. In their study, children from grades three and six heard either a high or low intimacy disclosure by another child. The children were required to respond by disclosing on topics varying in intimacy. It was found that children spent more time providing intimate disclosures to the child who provided high as opposed to low intimate disclosures. Also, although the grade differences were not significant, there was a significant sex difference. It was found that the girls spent more time disclosing and provided more high intimacy disclosures, than did the boys.

There were some limitations with the Cohn and Strassberg (1983) study. First they used a very limited age span. This poses two problems: (a) the differences between the grades may have been masked by individual differences (error term); (b) it is unclear at what age reciprocity of self-disclosure emerges. With respect to the latter, it

should be asked whether the reciprocity of self-disclosure is evident in children younger than eight years of age. This issue may be assessed by utilizing a wider age span and assessing the presence of reciprocity of self-disclosure individually for each age group. The second limitation of the study, was that the authors used intimacy scales that were derived for adults by Strassberg and Anchor (1975). These adult-based intimacy scales were used to: (a) establish the intimacy level of the stimulus child's disclosures; and (b) to categorize the children's (subjects') disclosures. In such an investigation, it is necessary to apply intimacy scales that are based on children's perceptions of disclosure intimacy levels. This would ensure that the stimulus child's disclosures are those that the children view as varying in intimacy and that the disclosures provided in response, also vary in intimacy from their perspective. Otherwise, it would be difficult to conclude that the children demonstrated reciprocity of self-disclosure.

The present study examined the presence of reciprocity of self-disclosure in the communications between children of different age groups. It explored the question of whether, and if so, at what age the principle of reciprocity guides children's self-disclosures. In the study, children from kindergarten, grades 2, 4 and 6 were shown three videotapes of child initiators disclosing information about themselves

that varied in intimacy value. After viewing each tape, the child (subject) was asked to respond. Based on the theories of both Youniss (1981) and Selman (1981) it was expected that reciprocity would be shown by the fourth and sixth grade subjects. Specifically, it was expected that in comparison to the low intimacy child initiators, they would; (a) make more medium intimacy disclosures in response to the child initiators who made medium intimacy disclosures and, (b) make more high intimacy level disclosures to the child initiators who made high intimacy disclosures, in comparison to the low intimacy child initiators.

#### PILOT RESEARCH

In the primary study, the subjects were presented videotapes of child initiators who provided disclosures differing in intimacy. The subjects were asked to respond to each of the child initiators by providing disclosures about themselves. In preparation for this procedure, two pilot studies were carried out and these were designed to: (a) establish the intimacy level of the child initiators' disclosures; and, (b) provide a means to categorize the subjects' disclosures about themselves. Statements chosen were those judged by children to be low, medium and high in intimacy values, to ensure that their perceived intimacy level was the same.

## Pilot Study 1

A sample of sixteen children (eight boys and eight girls) were obtained from each of three grade levels, kindergarten, second and fourth grades. The kindergarten children were tested individually, while the older children were led through the exercise in small groups, although they judged statements individually. The children were verbally presented with twenty-two statements, representing a sample of children's disclosures. These statements were derived from research on children's descriptions of themselves and others (Mohr, 1978; Montemayer & Eisen, 1977; Peevers & Secord, 1973; Rotenberg, 1982). After each statement, the children were required to provide intimacy judgements. They were asked, "if you said these things (statements), to whom would you say them?" Subjects were asked to indicate their answers by circling: (1) only a couple of good friends, (2) a couple of good friends and a few other children, (3) anyone. This three point scale was illustrated by line drawings of two children, of two children and three additional outlines, and a group of outlines. This three-point rating scale reflects high to low intimacy levels, respectively. This method of evaluating intimacy was chosen for two reasons. First, it was anticipated that the youngest children would be unable to rate intimacy per se, because they would be unable to under-



stand the term. Second, this procedure was consistent with the treatment of intimate information in the research on adolescents (Berndt, 1982) and adults (Altman & Taylor, 1973) as that which is restricted to friends.

Selection of Stimuli Disclosure Statements.

Based on the children's judgements, three pairs of statements were chosen to represent low, medium and high intimacy values (targeted intimacy values) and are as follows:

<u>INTIMACY LEVEL</u>	<u>STATEMENT</u>	<u>MEAN</u>
Low	1) I have a brother/sister	2.27
Low	2) I have my own bedroom	2.17
Mean		2.22
Medium	1) I do not like liver	1.73
Medium	2) My teacher is a woman/man	2.04
Mean		1.89
High	1) Yesterday I broke my mother's lamp	1.57
High (Gr. 2 Males)	1) I do not like to swim	2.00
High	2) I am too fat	1.38
Mean		1.65

In order to establish whether the statements correspond to their targeted levels of intimacy, the statement ratings were subjected to a three (Grade) X two (Sex) X three (Targeted Intimacy Value) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last variable. This yielded a main effect of targeted intimacy value  $F(1.42) = 87.05, p < .001$ . As is shown in the table above, children from each of the three grade levels provided higher ratings of intimacy to the high than to the medium, and medium to the low intimacy statements ( $p < .05$ ).

#### Disclosure Categorization

The other purpose of the data obtained in the pilot study was to provide a means for categorizing disclosures made by subjects in the primary study. On the basis of the data collected, it was found that twenty of the above social statements could be divided into five general topics or categories. These categories included: positive personal, negative personal, personal preferences, descriptions of people and activities and description of the environment. Positive personal statements included those that offer favourable information about oneself (eg.: I am as smart as most people). Negative personal statements included those that reflect potentially unfavourable information (eg.: I am too fat). The personal preferences category included those

statements referring to personal likes and dislikes about food, games or school, as well as organized group preferences (eg.: I do not like liver, or, I am a boy scout). The fourth category included descriptions of people and activities. This refers to general information about people, possibly friends or family and the kinds of activities they participate in together (eg.: I have one brother and one sister). The final category included information which describes one's usual environment in a non-evaluative manner (eg.: I have a white house).

This resulted in five categories, with each containing four statements. The statement scores were then averaged within each category and subjected to a three (Grade) X Two (Sex) X Five (Category) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last variable. The analysis yielded an effect of category,  $F(4,168) = 29.17, p < .001$  that was qualified by an interaction between grade and category,  $F(8,168) = 2.13, p < .05$ .

The purpose of the pilot study was to identify three categories of disclosure that consistently were high, medium and low in intimacy across grade. The only categories that approximated this were Description of Environment (low), Personal Preferences (medium) and Negative Personal (high). The one deviation to the pattern was that there were minimal differences between the judgements that the kindergarten children assigned to the low category (2.13) and medium category (2.04). The children's judgements were

subject to Three (Grade) X Two (Sex) X Three (Category) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last variable. This yielded a main effect of category where  $F(2,36) = 40.52$ ,  $p < .001$ , which was not qualified by grade Three (Grade) X Three (Category). As intended, the children assigned higher judgements to the high category (2.56), than to the medium category (1.98) which was higher than the low category (1.76).

### **Pilot Study 2**

Since the primary study included grade six subjects, it was necessary to extend the Pilot Study data to include this age group. Therefore, the same procedure that was followed in the previous study was used to test the grade six students. In this second study, subjects included sixteen grade six students (eight boys and eight girls) from a different public school.

### **Selection of Stimuli Disclosure Statements**

The Two (Sex) X Three (Targeted Levels of Intimacy) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last variable, replicated the main effects of the previous study with a significant effect of Targeted Level of Intimacy,  $F(2,28) = 98.24$ ,  $p < .001$ . The subjects assigned lower ratings to the

information of low intimacy level (2.22), than the medium (2.31), followed by the statements targeted for high intimacy level (3.69). It should be noted that in this case, the lower the number, the lower the intimacy level.

### Disclosure Categorization

Although there were five categories, the three identified earlier as low, medium and high in intimacy level in the lower grades, was consistent with the judgements provided by the grade six children. A Two (Sex) X Three (Category) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last variable, yielded the same main effect of category that was found in the lower grades, where  $F(2,28) = 62.45, p < .001$ . The Description of the Environment category ( $X=1.27$ ) was rated as low intimacy, the Personal Preferences ( $X=2.23$ ) as medium, and the Negative Personal as high intimacy ratings ( $X=2.50$ ).

## PRIMARY STUDY

### Method

#### Subjects

Subjects for this study were twelve girls and twelve boys from kindergarten, second and sixth grades; and eleven girls and twelve boys from fourth grade.

#### Stimuli and Apparatus

The low, medium and high intimacy statements derived from the pilot studies were used in the construction of a master videotape. Six child initiators (three boys and three girls) were videotaped and each child made three separate presentations. In each presentation, the child first said, "Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am in grade 2." In the first presentation this was followed by the child saying the low intimacy statements. In the second, it was followed by the medium intimacy statements and in the third, by the high intimacy statements. The same procedure was followed by all six child initiators. Each presentation lasted approximately two minutes. The videotapes were later edited, and re-organized into sections, with each containing one child making low intimacy level self-disclosures, another child

making medium disclosures, and the third child making high self-disclosures. Each section of tape contained only girls or boys. Also, the order of their appearance and intimacy level of the self-disclosures were counter balanced. A tape recorder was used to record the subjects' responses.

### Procedure

The subjects were tested individually, with each requiring approximately twenty minutes to complete their tape recording. The experimenter (myself) introduced the subjects to the study in the following manner:

"I am trying to find out about the kinds of things that children say to one another. For example: the things that you would talk about when you are playing together in the play ground. I am going to be asking you to record messages about five different things to another boy/girls. I am going to be asking you to talk about things such as: where you live and what your house looks like. I will ask you to say something about a friend and what you like to do together or things like that. I will ask you to talk about things that you like or do not like about different foods, games or subjects in school. Next I will ask you to talk about the things that you like about yourself, maybe the colour of your hair, your clothes or things like that. Then, I will ask you to talk about something that you may not like about yourself."

The subject was then shown how to operate the tape recorder and assisted in making a practice tape to ensure

auditory clarity. The videotapes were then introduced to the subject.

"I am going to show you some videotapes of some other boys/girls and they are going to tell you something about themselves. When they have finished, I would like you to record a message that may be sent to him/her."

Following each video presentation, the five categories were then repeated, allowing time in between for the child to respond. Subjects were instructed to talk as little or as much as they wished about each of the five categories. If the child expressed a wish not to respond, the category was skipped and he/she would then move on to the next. This procedure was followed for each of the three videotape presentations. Once all three had been completed, the subjects were assured that their messages would be kept confidential between them, myself and the recipient child.

## Results

Gottman's (1983) format of scoring utterances was utilized to score the subjects' disclosures. Accordingly, an utterance was scored at the end of a phrase, pause or statement. Each utterance was counted as one disclosure, which ultimately gave rise to the number of disclosures that were made by the subject to the target or child



initiator for each category. The number of disclosures were calculated for each subject, for each of the three intimacy categories (low = Description of the Environment; medium = Personal Preferences; high = Negative Personal). These totals were subjected to a Two (Sex) X Four (Grade) X Three (Initiator's Intimacy Level) X Three (Subjects' Intimacy Level) analysis of variance with repeated measures of the last two variables. Since the analysis of the raw data yielded considerable heterogeneity of variance (all Bartlett Fs were significant at  $p < .001$ ), the data was subjected to a  $\log 10 + 1$  transformation. This increased the homogeneity of variance to where approximately half of the Fs was significant at  $p < .05$ . Some heterogeneity of variance was, however, dictated by the substantial differences in disclosure rate of the various age groups and by the intimacy levels of the categories. The source of variance table for this analysis is shown in Appendix A.

The analysis of the transformed data yielded a main effect of grade,  $F(3,87) = 11.6, p < .001$ . The number of disclosures increased significantly with age, the means for kindergarten, second, fourth and sixth were .32, .32, .44, and .60. There was a main effect of category,  $F(6,174) = 81.63, p < .001$ . This was qualified by a grade X respondent's intimacy level,  $F(6,174) = 2.66, p < .05$ . The difference between the number of high and low intimacy disclosures increases with age (see Table 1 for the means). The above

main effects and interactions were further qualified by a grade X initiator's intimacy level X respondent's intimacy level interaction,  $F(12,348) = 1.77$ ,  $p < .06$  (see Table 2 for the means). Tests of simple main effects yielded a significant initiator's intimacy level X respondent's intimacy disclosures to the high intimacy initiator than to the low intimacy initiator  $t(364) = 1.75$ ,  $p < .05$  (one-tailed). Unexpectedly, however, the sixth grade subjects made more high intimacy disclosures to the medium initiator than to the low intimacy initiator (Tukey a posteriori comparison,  $p < .05$ ).

TABLE 1

---

Subject Means as a Function of Grade by  
Intimacy of Response Category

Intimacy of Response Category

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
Kd	.38 (.12)	.34 (.14)	.24 (.13)
2nd	.42 (.21)	.32 (.18)	.22 (.20)
4th	.56 (.21)	.47 (.21)	.28 (.19)
6th	.71 (.27)	.65 (.33)	.42 (.28)

---

**TABLE 2**

Transformed Mean Number of Disclosures as a Function of Grade  
Initiator's Intimacy Level and Respondents' (Subjects')  
Intimacy Level

Grade	Initiators' Intimacy Level	Respondent's Intimacy Level		
		<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
Kd	Low	.38 (.18)	.34 (.23)	.22 (.18)
	Medium	.40 (.16)	.34 (.17)	.30 (.19)
	High	.35 (.14)	.35 (.16)	.20 (.17)
2nd	Low	.43 (.22)	.33 (.21)	.22 (.18)
	Medium	.42 (.22)	.31 (.25)	.25 (.23)
	High	.42 (.22)	.33 (.18)	.18 (.21)

Table 2 continued ...

4th	Low	.55 (.26)	.43 (.26)	.35 (.31)
	Medium	.55 (.24)	.50 (.21)	.25 (.22)
	High	.59 (.25)	.47 (.22)	.26 (.22)
6th	Low	.74 (.35)	.64 (.34)	.35 (.30)
	Medium	.72 (.28)	.65 (.39)	.47 (.36)
	High	.69 (.33)	.66 (.30)	.45 (.25)

---

Although the focus of the present study was on the intimacy level of self-disclosures made by children, it was of value to also ascertain the agreement of the intimacy level of those disclosures with adults. For this purpose, two adult raters, who were naive to the purpose of the study, coded a randomly selected 25% of the children's

disclosures, according to the three relevant categories. Inter-rater reliabilities (agreement/total) were 94%, 92%, and 100%, for the low, medium and high intimacy categories, respectively. The total agreement was 93%. The raters then coded the remaining disclosures, both according to grade and intimacy level. The results indicated agreement with the kindergarten children to be 82% for the low intimacy level, 87% for the medium and 91% for the high. Agreement for the second grade was 82%, 79% and 85%, for the low medium and high intimacy disclosures, respectively. Agreement with the fourth grade was assessed at 96% for the low, 94% for the medium and 86% for the high. Sixth grade agreements were: 92% for the low, 87% for the medium, and 85% for the high. Overall agreement between the raters and the subjects was 88%.

## DISCUSSION

According to the principle of reciprocity, the intimacy level of the self-disclosure by one individual is matched by a self-disclosure of equal intimacy by another individual. Research has demonstrated that the principle of reciprocity guides self-disclosure in adults (i.e., Altman & Taylor, 1973). The primacy concern of the present study was, however, the relatively unexplored area of the reciprocity of self-disclosure in children. More specifically, the

present study was designed to investigate the question of whether, and if so, at what age does the principle of reciprocity guide children's self-disclosures.

It was expected that reciprocity would be shown by the fourth and sixth grade subjects. More specifically, it was hypothesized that in comparison to the low intimacy initiator, they would (a) make more medium intimacy self-disclosures in response to the child initiators who made medium intimacy disclosures and (b) more high intimacy self-disclosures to the high intimacy child initiators.

The results only partially supported this hypothesis. Sixth grade children showed part of the reciprocity pattern by making more high intimacy self-disclosures in response to the high intimacy initiator, than to the low intimacy initiator. Inconsistent with the hypothesis was the finding that the sixth grade children disclosed more high intimacy self-disclosures to medium intimacy initiators. This suggests that the children did not demonstrate a fully differentiated reciprocity of self-disclosure. Instead, they showed a pattern of "gross" reciprocity in which they responded to medium intimacy disclosures by increased high intimacy. The adult form of reciprocity, where there is equal matching may occur later in development.

Contrary to the hypothesis, reciprocity was not shown by the fourth grade children. Cohn and Strassberg (1983) however, found that the reciprocity of self-disclosure was

evident in the third grade children. As was suggested in the introduction, the limited age span utilized in their study may have contributed to the conclusion that reciprocity of self-disclosure was evident as early as third grade children.

Results of the present study show some support for Gouldner's (1960) theory, norm of reciprocity. According to this theory, people feel obligated to re-establish equity in a relationship. In keeping with this, it may be surmised that reciprocity of self-disclosure is not dependent on the development of a friendship and therefore will occur between strangers as were child initiators in the present study. The degree of reciprocity may of course differ, but the basic premise is followed. Self-disclosures of varying intimacy levels were made to strangers (child initiators).

There are several issues that should be addressed in future research. Researchers should examine the effects of (a) familiarity of the child initiator and (b) the length of the child initiator's self-disclosure. The present study examines the development of children's responses to child initiators who are strangers. Also, they provided a relatively short self-disclosure. This is in keeping with the majority of studies on the reciprocity of self-disclosure in adults (e.g. Worthy et al., 1969).

In the future, researchers may want to examine the effects of the acquisition of reciprocity of self-disclosure



in early adolescence (sixth grade). The development of this ability to co-ordinate perspectives should enhance the quality of their peer relationships.

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## APPENDIX A

2(Sex) X 4(Grade) X 3(Initiator's Intimacy level) X  
3(Subject's Intimacy Level) ANOVA Source Table of Disclosures

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig of F
Between Subjects	27.61	87	.32		
Grade	11.02	3	3.67	11.58	.000
Sex	.71	1	.71	2.24	.138
Grade by Sex	.23	3	.08	.24	.87
Within Subjects	19.46	696	35.77		
IntimR	7.70	2	3.85	81.63	.000
Grade by IntimR	.75	6	.13	2.66	.017
Sex by IntimR	.05	2	.02	.48	.61
Grade by Sex by IntimR	.49	6	.08	1.72	.119
IntimR by Within Cells	8.21	174	.05		
IntimI	.05	2	.02	.93	.397
Grade by IntimI	.09	6	.02	.63	.707
Sex by IntimI	.01	2	.00	.13	.879
Grade by Sex by IntimI	.16	6	.03	1.09	.372
IntimI by Within Subjects	4.35	174	.02		
IntimI by IntimR	.09	4	.02	1.07	.37
Grade by IntimI by IntimR	.42	12	.04	1.77	.052
Sex by IntimI by IntimR	.04	4	.01	.44	.77
Grade by Sex by IntimI by IntimR	.33	12	.03	1.39	.166
IntimI by IntimR by Within Subjects	6.90	348	.02		

**RAW MEANS OF THE GRADE X INTIMACY LEVEL X CATEGORY INTRODUCTION ON  
THE NUMBER OF UTTERANCES**

Grade	Sex	Intimacy Level Of Initiator	Low	L-M	M	M-H	H
			Description of Environment	Description of People and Activi Raw Means	Personal Preferences 1.67	Negative Personal	Positive Personal
Kd	F	Low	2.17 (1.11)	1.67 (1.16)	1.67 (1.23)	.92 (.90)	.92 (1.08)
		Medium	2.17 (1.11)	1.50 (1.08)	1.33 (1.07)	1.00 (.85)	1.17 (.94)
		High	1.75 (1.06)	2.08 (1.68)	1.42 (.90)	.83 (.72)	.67 (.49)
	M	Low	1.00 (.43)	.83 (.72)	1.33 (1.44)	1.00 (1.13)	.92 (1.08)
		Medium	1.17 (.58)	1.25 (.75)	1.33 (.78)	1.17 (1.03)	1.17 (.84)
		High	1.00 (.43)	1.58 (1.32)	1.33 (.78)	1.33 (1.37)	.75 (.75)
	Across	Low	1.38 (1.02)	1.25 (1.03)	1.30 (1.32)	.96 (1.00)	.79 (.83)
		Medium	1.67 (1.00)	1.38 (.92)	1.33 (.92)	1.08 (.93)	1.17 (.87)
		High	1.38 (.88)	1.83 (1.49)	1.38 (.82)	1.08 (1.10)	.71 (.63)
2nd	F	Low	2.25 (1.29)	1.75 (1.36)	1.50 (1.17)	1.08 (1.08)	1.00 (.95)
		Medium	2.42 (1.44)	1.50 (1.31)	2.00 (1.76)	1.17 (.94)	1.17 (1.40)
		High	2.33 (1.16)	2.00 (1.48)	1.42 (.79)	1.17 (1.59)	1.00 (1.13)
	M	Low	1.83 (1.90)	2.17 (1.80)	1.25 (.97)	1.17 (.94)	.92 (1.08)
		Medium	1.42 (1.08)	1.83 (1.99)	.75 (.75)	.75 (.75)	.92 (.79)

continued ...

		High	1.50 (1.38)	1.83 (1.27)	1.42 (.79)	.83 (.94)	.42 (.67)
	Across	Low	2.04 (1.60)	1.96 (1.57)	1.38 (1.06)	1.13 (.99)	.96 (.99)
		Medium	1.92 (1.35)	1.67 (1.66)	1.38 (1.47)	.96 (.86)	1.04 (1.12)
		High	1.92 (1.32)	1.92 (1.35)	1.29 (.81)	1.00 (1.29)	.71 (.96)
4th	F	Low	3.00 (1.10)	2.82 (1.72)	2.55 (1.75)	1.36 (1.12)	1.64 (1.21)
		Medium	2.45 (1.21)	2.91 (1.97)	2.55 (1.51)	1.36 (.92)	1.27 (1.01)
		High	3.36 (1.96)	2.91 (1.45)	2.27 (1.79)	1.45 (1.04)	1.46 (1.04)
	M	Low	3.17 (2.69)	2.42 (1.83)	1.92 (2.35)	1.92 (2.39)	1.17 (1.19)
		Medium	3.50 (2.28)	2.67 (1.62)	2.50 (1.68)	1.58 (1.44)	.75 (.87)
		High	3.50 (2.94)	2.41 (1.73)	2.42 (2.11)	1.75 (1.96)	.67 (.89)
	Across	Low	3.09 (2.04)	2.61 (1.75)	2.22 (2.07)	1.65 (1.87)	1.39 (1.20)
		Medium	3.00 (1.88)	2.78 (1.76)	2.52 (1.56)	1.48 (1.20)	1.00 (.95)
		High	3.43 (2.46)	2.65 (1.58)	2.35 (1.92)	1.61 (1.56)	1.04 (1.02)
6th	F	Low	5.17 (3.04)	3.83 (2.62)	3.92 (2.75)	3.08 (3.23)	1.67 (1.44)
		Medium	5.75 (5.71)	4.00 (2.05)	4.08 (3.42)	2.25 (2.05)	3.92 (4.83)
		High	4.50 (3.48)	5.05 (4.64)	4.17 (2.33)	2.42 (2.02)	2.50 (2.43)
	M	Low	8.50 (13.47)	5.75 (6.27)	6.00 (9.07)	2.42 (2.23)	2.50 (4.20)

continued ...

	Medium	5.17 (3.76)	4.42 (3.94)	9.42 (20.23)	3.83 (4.75)	2.42 (3.48)	
	High	6.50 (8.80)	3.08 (4.64)	6.33 (10.83)	2.33 (2.64)	2.42 (2.35)	
Across	Low	6.83 (9.70)	4.79 (4.80)	4.96 (6.64)	2.75 (2.74)	1.96 (3.09)	
	Medium	5.46 (4.74)	4.21 (3.08)	6.75 (14.45)	3.04 (3.67)	3.17 (4.19)	
	High	5.50 (6.62)	4.67 (3.62)	5.25 (7.74)	2.38 (2.30)	2.46 (2.34)	
Across	Across	Low	3.39 (5.41)	2.65 (3.00)	2.52 (3.82)	1.62 (1.91)	1.27 (1.81)
	Medium	3.01 (3.05)	2.51 (2.28)	3.00 (7.58)	1.64 (2.17)	1.60 (2.42)	
	High	3.05 (3.92)	2.77 (2.47)	2.57 (4.30)	1.52 (1.69)	1.23 (1.56)	



