

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 147

CS 509 240

AUTHOR Yuhas, Patricia
TITLE The Effect of Classroom Techniques on the Self-Esteem of Secondary Learning Disabled Students.
PUB DATE May 96
NOTE 43p.; M.A. Project, Kean College of New Jersey.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Environment; Classroom Research; *Classroom Techniques; High Schools; *Learning Disabilities; Learning Strategies; *Secondary School Students; Self Efficacy; *Self Esteem; Special Education; Teacher Attitudes; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Learning Environment; Self Esteem Inventory

ABSTRACT

A study examined the effects of positive teaching techniques, non-confrontational teacher attitudes, and a pleasant classroom environment on the self-esteem of special education students. The study examined 15 special needs high school students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The hypothesis was that the self-esteem of these students would not be raised by the positive measures. The students were given the Self-Esteem Inventories (SEI) as a pretest and posttest to determine their levels of self-esteem. Results revealed that no significant difference in the subject students' positive self-esteem existed after the 12-week period of instruction. However, findings suggest, with the mean score difference of 9.06, that a more significant difference might result from a prolonged period of exposure. (Contains 1 table of data, 36 references, and related studies. Test scores are appended.) (Author/CR)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED 393 147

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. Yuhas

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to
improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this
document do not necessarily represent
official OERI position or policy

THE EFFECT OF CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES ON THE
SELF-ESTEEM OF SECONDARY LEARNING DISABLED
STUDENTS

by

PATRICIA YUHAS

*Accepted
4/10/96
Albert S. Hagerman*

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree

Kean College of New Jersey

May 1996

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CS509240

Abstract

This study included fifteen special needs high school students from a low socio-economic background. It was hypothesized that the self-esteem of a sample of heterogeneous special education students would not be raised by positive teaching techniques, non - confrontational teacher attitudes, and a pleasant classroom environment. The students were given the Self-Esteem Inventories (SEI) as a pre and post test to determine their level of self-esteem.

An analysis of the results showed that no significant difference existed after the twelve week period of instruction. However, the mean score difference of 9.06 indicated that over a prolonged period of exposure a more significant difference may result.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Dr. Joan Kastner taught me that school didn't have to be a cruel and intimidating place and that I could learn even if the instructor was kind and gentle. I didn't realize how much information I could learn and retain until I took two of Dr. Richard Walter's classes. I thank you both. And thanks to Dr. Albert J. Mazurkiewicz for his direction and assistance in writing my thesis.

I would like to express my appreciation and love to my husband Paul and my daughters, Jaime and Jill, for their support and encouragement. Without their help I would never have been able to be a working wife/mother and a successful student.

Last but not least, to my friend Joanne Piotrowski, thank you for keeping me going when I thought there was just too much to do and not enough time.

LIST OF TABLES

| | Page Number |
|---|-------------|
| I. Means, Standard Deviation, and t Test Results Between the Samples of Pre and Post Test | 6 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page Number |
|--|-------------|
| I. Abstract | ii |
| II. Acknowledgment | iii |
| III. List of Tables | iv |
| IV. Effects of Positive Classroom Techniques on Self-Esteem: | |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Hypothesis | 3 |
| Procedures | 3 |
| Results | 5 |
| Conclusions and Implications | 6 |
| IV. Effects of Positive Classroom Techniques on Self-Esteem : | |
| Related Literature | 8 |
| V. References | 31 |
| VI. Appendices | 36 |
| Appendix A: Raw Scores | 37 |

Teachers realize that they have the present and future lives of many people in their hands. The way a teacher interacts with a student everyday can have a positive or negative effect on that person's life. Most students in the adolescent years arrive at high school "dazed and confused". They want to be like everyone else but be special and unique at the same time. Hormones are rising and independence is bursting to break out of its parental cocoon. This is not an easy time for any young adult. The responsibilities for oneself and one's future is rearing its ugly head. The most frightening part of all this is that the young adult feels he/she has little control over the situation. Human beings need to feel in control of their lives. When control seems out of reach defiance, rebellion, impulsive decision making, hostility, and apathy are but a few of the self defense mechanisms that are used. People with an "internal" locus of control accept responsibility for the consequences of their behavior. Those with an "external " locus of control, in contrast blame fate, chance, other individuals, or task difficulty for their successes and failure (Chandler, 1975). The concept of locus of control is a promising diagnostic tool for affective teaching because it helps teachers

understand and predict affective behaviors in the classroom
(Richardson and Morgan , 1994).

"Hearing it the way it is can be so painful. I had always hoped it was not really that bad for my students. That they were just experiencing normal adolescence. The reality is that being different is the worst thing that can happen to an adolescent. They do not understand why they are having problems and it takes a lot to convince them that they are not freaks. They need to understand that much of what they experienced is also experienced by their non learning-disabled peers. A little compassion and understanding from others can go a long way in promoting a positive sense of worth. Extra time and energy can provide the fortitude these students need later to overcome their fear of failure. Everything a teacher does has some effect, and it is important to remember that we do make a difference"
(Brobeck,1990)

Children with Learning Disabilities feel that they have no control over their lives. The LD student uses all of the negative self-defense mechanisms to mask his/her feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy. As adults the LD student has "felt stupid and were

treated in school as though they were. They felt defeated , worthless and "dumb". Over the years these adults learned to mask their hurts (Smith, 1989).

It doesn't take much for a student to perceive negative feedback from a teacher. Students are looking for any sign of acceptance and validation from the teacher. The spoken word, implied meanings, body language are a few of the ways teachers communicate with students. A parent or teacher should be very conscious of the messages they are sending to a student.

Hypothesis

To provide evidence on this topic, the following study was undertaken. It was hypothesized that the self-esteem of a sample of heterogeneous special education students would not be raised by positive teaching techniques, non-confrontational teacher attitudes, and a pleasant classroom environment.

Procedures

The children in this study were given the Self-Esteem Inventories (SEI) as a pre test to determine their level of self-esteem. Upon completion of the test, this researcher utilized specific

intervention techniques to create a stress free non-confrontational classroom environment. The researcher encouraged the students to use self-management techniques enabling them to make good judgments concerning behavior and academic achievement. These techniques will allow the students to take power over their own decision making capabilities. This enabled the teacher to become a compliment to the classroom as opposed to an "absolute power."

The following academic teaching strategies suggested by motivation research (Stone 1984) were used:

- ♦ Have students set goals for their achievement and purposes for their assignments. Help them plan how they will meet those goals.
- ♦ Break down the tasks of each assignment and make sure students can do the tasks before they begin the assignment.
- ♦ Make criteria for grading and completing assignments crystal clear before students start the assignments.
- ♦ Have students keep records of their progress.
- ♦ Discuss student successes and failures; get students to attribute more to their own efforts.

- ♦ Give students some choices in assigned materials, methods, and rewards.
- ♦ Use mastery learning techniques in skill building situations, contract grading in other situations.
- ♦ Give encouragement rather than praise or blame, be specific in telling students what they accomplished and what they need to improve, and give as much feedback as possible while students are working.

The researcher also used techniques as suggested in the Educators for Social Responsibility- Conflict Resolution Strategies Manual (1993).

Upon completion of this study the students were given the SEI as a post test. The scores were compared and analyzed using student's t test.

Results

The results of this experiment indicate that there was no significant mean difference in positive self-esteem in the pre and post testing of students who were exposed to positive teaching techniques. This is seen in the raw results (Appendix A) and shown in Table I below.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviation and t between Pre and Post Test Results
on Self-Esteem

| | M | SD | t | Sig |
|-----------|-------|-------|------|-----|
| Pre Test | 60.00 | 15.57 | 1.41 | NS |
| Post Test | 69.07 | 19.45 | | |

The t of 1.41 indicates there is some variation in the pre and post test results but the mean difference was not large enough to provide a significant

The sample did have a higher average of self-esteem post test mean score with a difference of 9.06.

Implications and Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that over a period of twelve weeks the self-esteem of secondary education students was not significantly raised by the use of positive teaching techniques. This

result did support the hypothesis of this study. This study does indicate that the average self-esteem mean score was in some measure elevated at the conclusion of the research. Therefore, it is recommended that further research continues for a more prolonged time frame.

Long-term applied research programs are needed to clearly recognize the specifics that influence self-esteem, academic achievement, adaptive performance, and maladaptive behaviors. Such programs should provide for specific interventions targeting the broadening of positive associations among self-esteem, scholarly achievement, and productive behavior.

In conclusion it is recommended that this measure of research be conducted as a long-term study.

THE EFFECT OF CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES ON THE
SELF-ESTEEM OF SECONDARY LEARNING DISABLED
STUDENTS:

RELATED LITERATURE

Many of today's students view life in a negative light.

Television and movies portray violence as an acceptable way of attaining material goods, respect, and attention among other things.

The music our children listen to and maybe more sadly accept, depict rape, police killing, promiscuous behavior, and the idealization of drugs as just the way things are. Children are inundated with these violent realities of life. For some of our young people the only safe haven they can go to is school. The school should and must in today's society be a safe haven for students. The teacher is there to teach academics but the teacher should also be there as a model of what adulthood can and should be like.

One possible way of introducing positive role models to the school population is the "mentor program". J. Abi-Nader (1991) states that although inner-city minority students may be intellectually capable of pursuing academic studies, life on a college campus is completely foreign to them. These students need role models- first, to show them that it is possible for someone from their background to go to college, and second to give them some understanding of what college is about. In the mentor program Ms. Abi-Nader observed,

Hispanic college students serve that function, visiting classes to talk about budgeting time and money, choosing courses, taking notes, and being accepted by Anglo professors and classmates. Besides warning the high school students against cutting classes and becoming too involved in social life, the mentors told of personal successes.

Today's educator should strive to make his/her classroom a Peaceable Classroom according to the authors of Educators for Social Responsibility (1993). They define the Peaceable Classroom as a caring classroom community that has five qualities. These qualities are:

Cooperation

Communication

Emotional Expression

Appreciation for Diversity

Conflict Resolution

These are the qualities that will help us create classrooms --- and schools --- that are safe, caring environments where our students are able to learn and be more productive.

Young people come to school feeling the they have nothing to give and cannot learn. They lack self-esteem. The term self-esteem as defined by Coopersmith (1975) is as follows:

The term "self-esteem" refers to the evaluation a person makes and customarily maintains with regard to him/herself. "Self-Esteem" expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which a person believes him/herself capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, a person's self-esteem is a judgment of worthiness that is expressed by the attitudes he or she holds toward the self. It is a subjective experience conveyed to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior.

The achievement of a favorable attitude toward oneself has been regarded as important by a number of personality theorists- Roger, Murphy, Horney, and Adler (Coopersmith, p.4). Ruth Wylie's insightful. "The Self-Concept" (1961), reveals that persons who seek

psychological help frequently acknowledge that they suffer from feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness. These people see themselves as helpless and inferior, as incapable of improving their situations, and as lacking the inner resources to tolerate or to reduce the anxiety readily aroused by everyday events and stress (Rogers and Dymond, 1954).

Brusuck 's 1989 study found students with learning disabilities (5 boys, 3 girls) to be less accepted by peers than other low achievers. This study improved upon previous work by using standardized ratings of peer acceptance, so that more accurate cross-class comparisons could be made. However, the small number of subjects limited the generalized ability of the findings (La Greca and Stone, 1990).

The purpose of a study presented by La Greca and Stone (1990) was to examine the role of achievement in explaining the poor social and behavioral functioning associated with LD status, and to evaluate potential gender differences in patterns of interpersonal functioning among youth with learning disabilities (LD) and nondisabled (NLD) youth. Thirty-two students with learning

disabilities (21 boys, 11 girls) were matched with same-sex, same-race classmates whose reading achievement was low (LA) or average (AA), and these groups were compared on peer ratings of liking and disliking, perceptions of self-worth and social acceptance, and teacher ratings of conduct problems, anxiety-withdrawal, and attention problems. Their study found that students with learning disabilities were less accepted and less well-liked than children in the LA or AA groups and also perceived their self-worth and social acceptance to be lower than LA or AA students.

Learning Disabled young people are very aware that they have a learning problem. Most of the time they are never really told what their disability is and if they are told they are rarely told the implications of the disability. Heyman's (1990) study suggests that in the case of children with learning disabilities, self-perception of the learning disability may have an effect on academic self-concept and self-esteem, which in turn may influence achievement.

In a study done by A. Clever, G. Bear, and J. Juvonen (1992), results showed that children with LD and LA held lower self-perceptions of scholastic competence than children with NA, and

children with LD had lower self-perceptions of behavioral conduct than children with LA and NA. The study was conducted in a suburban school district in which the majority of children with LD are placed into full-time integrated classes, called Team Approach to Mastery (TAM) classes. The results of this study showed that children with poor scholastic achievement, both those with and those without LD, held lower self-perceptions of scholastic competence than their normally achieving classmates. Children with LD also held lower self-perceptions of behavioral conduct. However, contrary to their expectations they found no difference in feelings of global self-worth. Children in all three groups viewed their overall self-worth favorably. Clever, Bear, and Juvonen (1992) found no evidence that children with LD view scholastic competence, or any other domain, to be less important than do other children. Moreover, regardless of achievement group or gender, very few children discounted the importance of scholastic competence and behavioral conduct. Children with scholastic difficulties recognized their academic difficulties. Despite their lower reading achievement, children with LD held self-perceptions of scholastic competence similar to those of

children with LA. Consistent with differences in actual achievement, children with LD clearly perceived themselves to be less scholastically competent than did children with NA.

According to Rosenberg and Gaier (1977), the adolescent with a learning disability has established a pattern of academic failure: He is a child forced to realize his differentness in academic areas, coupled with a sense of impotence to eradicate his learning handicap leading to feelings of inadequacy, lack of self-esteem and helplessness in the learning setting. An educator can make it very clear to a student what his/her problem in learning is and strategies to circumvent the disabilities. The teacher's attitude toward the child can either help or hinder a student's motivation to learn.

Rosenberg and Gaier (1977) go on to state that at a particularly vulnerable phase of life when ego-ideal alliances are eagerly sought, the adolescent with learning disabilities has been set aside and labeled as different because of his academic history, often with no visible handicap to provide a basis for performance differences. This adolescent, especially the one who has been placed in a special class, is separated from the larger population of his age and grade peers both

psychologically and physically and heir to all the ramifications associated with being segregated and stigmatized in his social interaction. Another source of self-esteem, acceptance of significant others, is again denied the individual.

Wintre and Crowley (1993) conducted a study to examine the effects of self-worth, locus of control, age, sex, and problem domain on consultant preference. This study utilized three self-report pencil and paper questionnaires administered in group settings. All students in Grades 9 and 12 present in school on the day of testing participated. Standardized conditions and instructions were followed. The study reveals that individuals of negative self-worth and an external locus of control tend to prefer the adult expert. This finding supports Coppersmith's (1967) assumption that individuals' estimates of success or failure (self-concept) reflect their ideas of their ability to deal with previously encountered, familiar situations. Individuals exhibiting positive self-worth and an internal locus of control will seek out a peer for advise and reinforcement. Subsequently, the individual of a negative self-concept with little sense of personal control may be inclined to seek out expertise in the decision-making process

regarding a problem of minimal personal significance. The findings of this study support those of others that an adolescent's consultant preference is influenced by age and sex. The findings in this study also suggest that self-worth, locus of control, and the perceived characteristics of the problem (the situation) influence adolescent help-seeking behavior.

It is generally the case that I.D children have at some point experienced considerable failure and negative competence feedback at school. These experiences would likely be internalized and represented in a more negative view of self (Groinick and Ryan, 1990). Many investigators have suggested that the very fact of being labeled may negatively affect self-concept directly, as well as indirectly affecting it through the mechanism of the self-fulfilling prophecy (Good, 1982). Coopersmith (1975) states that persons with high self-esteem are also more likely to assume an active role in social groups and to express their views frequently and effectively. Less troubled by fears and ambivalence, less burdened by self-doubt and minor personality disturbances, the person with high self-esteem

apparently moves more directly and realistically toward his or her personal goals.

The American College Testing program's booklet "Serving Academically Underprepared Students" indicates that remedial students must be helped to "alter previously established attitudes about their own potential and their sense of self-worth." The publication goes on to recognize the "importance of self-concept development in student learning" and cites studies which suggest that courses "emphasizing self-concept development have greater high-risk student success".

Matthew Ignoffo in his article "Improve reading by overcoming the 'inner critic' (1988) feels that any remedial training that deals solely with content and not with self-confidence improvement is doomed to fail because the student's own inner critic sabotages any possible improvements in content study. Ignoffo uses an analogy to express his idea. "The work will fail because the content will be poured into a broken cup, the cracks being the inner critic's negative attitudes and beliefs; the cup must be sealed and improved before it can hold anything."

Research on school culture and climate suggests that schools emphasize different goals and motivation (Maehr & Buck 1989). They use as an example a school that places an extremely high value on grades and performance is likely to create an environment that encourages students to focus on grades as the primary focus of learning. Maehr (1991) found that various dimensions of a school's psychological environment (school-wide stress on accomplishment, power, recognition, affiliation) have an increasingly powerful effect on student motivation as students get into higher grades.

The study conducted by Hayes, Ryan and Zsella (1994) presents sixth-grade students' perceptions of teacher behaviors they interpret as caring. An ethnographic technique of open-ended written responses was used with students from ethnically diverse schools in the New York City area. Student's perceptions of caring differ by ethnicity and sex. Teacher awareness of such differences is important to develop and maintain mutual receptivity within the classroom and to maximize student social and emotional growth. Research conducted by Baldwin and Hopkins (1990) examined African-American and European-American culture values.

cooperation, interdependence, and "groupness". In contrast, they found that the European-American culture values competition, independence, and "individualism". The top-ranked concept groups of African-Americans involved interdependence and interpersonal relationship. Teachers may consider adjusting classroom strategies for cultural differences. Baldwin and Hopkins suggest that individualistically oriented students may do less well in cooperative activities, while the cultural groups who value "groupness" may do less well in individual and competitive classroom activities. In the study done by Hayes, et. al. (1994) it is also suggested that teachers may consider adjusting classroom strategies for cultural differences.

According to Glenn Nimnicht, Oralie MacAfee, and John Meier (1969), who developed the responsive environment as a means of building self-esteem, such an environment helps children perceive that what they want is important. An environment that provides feedback and helps children learn how to seek and use feedback encourages autonomy and initiative. The basic conditions for this information-giving, responsive environment are as follows:

- ♦ Allow children free exploration among several activities

- ♦ Give the learners immediate information about the consequences of their actions
- ♦ Institute self-pacing (the rate of activity and progress is determined by the learner)

In a responsive environment, children learn to listen to themselves, to use sense judgment, and to evaluate progress rather than to seek confirmation from other people. This "autotelic" environment provides feedback that children learn to use to determine how they are doing and whether they are satisfied. The feed back comes from their own actions and not from external sources.

Amalya Nattiv (1994) conducted a study to ascertain if helping behaviors used in cooperative learning contributed to math achievement gains of students. Helping behaviors were taught to students for three weeks before the math unit and continued to be reinforced during the ensuing three weeks. Cooperative learning is the name given to a method of instruction, which included over eighty strategies, in which students work together in small teams toward a common goal. Each member is individually accountable for learning

the material. Interdependence of reward, task, materials, and/or role is part of the method. Teams are usually heterogeneous in achievement, gender, and ethnicity, where such differences exist in the classroom population. Methods of instruction and reinforcement of helping behaviors included: direct instruction, role play, modeling, calling attention to students and teams engaged in helping behaviors, giving points to teams engaged in helping behaviors, periodic review of what these behaviors entailed, and teacher feedback to students regarding the effectiveness of their use of helping behaviors. This study clearly supports the hypothesis that helping behaviors are related to achievement.

Results of the study done by Nattiv also showed that "giving explanations," "receiving explanations," as well as "giving and receiving other help" positively correlated with achievement gains. There was a negative correlation between "receiving no help after requesting it" and achievement. High achievers gave more explanations and other help more than middle or low achievers. Low achievers asked for and received explanations and other help more often. The results of this study confirm the usefulness of teaching

students to use helping behaviors in cooperative learning. To summarize, the findings of this study indicate that there is a strong relationship between giving or receiving meaningful help and achievement gain. Students of all ability levels who engaged in these behaviors seemed to benefit. This outcome suggests that it would be beneficial to teach students in cooperative learning groups how to help one another and how to ask for and receive help from one another.

Learning Disabled students often start their secondary education with the belief that they cannot learn. The school setting for them has not always been a positive experience. They arrive at school with the apathetic idea that they attend school because the law says they must but they really can't learn anything while they are there. According to Coopersmith (1975), since students tend to act consistently with the attitudes and beliefs they hold about the self, classroom practices that foster positive and constructive beliefs are likely to have favorable consequences for achievement. There is clear-cut evidence that teachers who expect children to learn and who believe they are capable of succeeding produce marked increases in

student performance (Good, 1970).

Expectations evoke behaviors by setting up goals and possibilities that previously may have appeared impossible or unlikely. A child who previously believed he or she could not learn how to read and decided not to put much effort into reading may make a marked change in this belief once he or she has reason to believe that reading is within reach and that learning efforts will "pay off".

Another way in which expectations may affect actions is in students' perceptions of what is considered desirable and valuable in the classroom. For goals and behaviors that are regarded as desirable by the teacher. If the goal is not valued, the limited rewards that children obtain (grades) may not be sufficient to lead to sustained effort and involvement (Coopersmith, 1975).

The most important task facing the teacher is to instruct students in ways that keep a growing preoccupation with ability from interfering with students' willingness to learn. Although this goal is far easier expressed than accomplished, several broad recommendations may facilitate this objective.

1. Teachers should use noncompetitive learning structures whenever possible. Such structures increase the number of rewards available to students, thereby promoting the pursuit of success rather than forcing an avoidance of failure.

2. Equal importance to how one learns to what one learns. This point is especially critical for encouraging a continuing belief among students that the ability to learn is an ever-improving capacity.

Although the acquisition of facts is an indispensable element of the educational process, it is what the learner does with factual knowledge that promotes the intrinsic motivation to learn more; and when one wants to learn, concerns about ability recede in importance (Covington, 1984).

Fuchs, Fuchs, and Philips (1994) conducted a study to examine the relation between teachers' beliefs about the importance of good student work habits. Analyses indicated that teachers with strong beliefs reported that they planned with greater responsiveness to student performance. Fuchs, et al., (1994) state that much of the literature on self-fulfilling prophecy and teacher expectancy effects focuses on differential achievement when a teacher formulates early

expectations concerning the learning potential of individual students in a class. The purpose of the study was to extend research on classroom expectations, teacher standards, and differential treatment of intact classes in several directions. The authors estimated the effects of these beliefs on (a) teachers' reported responsiveness during planning to student academic performance and (b) the achievement of the lowest-performing student with an identified learning disability in the class and an average-achieving student in the same class. Results indicate that teachers with high standards and strong beliefs about the importance of good student work habits and classroom behavior reported planning more responsively to individual student performance and effected greater student achievement. This finding echoes the school effectiveness research (Brookover et al., 1979; Edmonds, 1979), in which teachers' high classroom expectations for students' academic growth have been identified as one of five characteristics of effective schools.

In a study done by Smith, Nelson, Young, and West (1992), the effect of a self-management procedure on the off-task behavior and the academic work of students classified as mildly handicapped

was examined. Results suggested that the self-management procedures reduced off-task behavior and increased the quality and quantity of academic work in the special education classroom. The purpose of this study was to study the effect of self-management procedures on the disruptive classroom behavior and academic work of high school-aged students with mild handicaps. The findings of this study suggest the self-management procedure can reduce the disruptive behavior of high school-aged students with mild handicaps. Further, they indicate that the self-management procedure can positively impact both the quality and quantity of students' academic work. When students learn to manage their classroom behavior and academic assignments they are more likely to be successful in regular education. The self-management procedures appear to have wide application in the education of students with and without handicaps. Most importantly, the procedures can help students learn to evaluate and monitor their classroom behavior and academic work in a variety of settings.

Covington and Beery (1976) draw a psychological profile of typical underachievers as those who unrealistically demand perfect

grades they cannot achieve, yet are critical of school and proud of success without study. Parents and teachers have pressured them with high expectations and little guidance for achieving success.

Underachievers want success but are trying to avoid failure. Underachievers believe failure is due to lack of ability regardless of effort, while success is due to luck or ease of the task. They may even reject success, believing it is uncomfortable and cannot be repeated at will (Stone, 1984).

In conclusion, research has shown that the teacher concerned with students' sense of worth knows that pressuring students for success without showing them how to achieve it leads to problem behaviors which influence self-esteem as well as school success. We need to concentrate less on grading and more on student comprehension, less on punishment and more on feedback (Stone, 1984).

There are many possible interventions that can be initiated for children or adults with low self-esteem. Ideally, though, schools will institute and integrate self-esteem programs into all classes, the goal

being to raise self-esteem in some students, to maintain high self-esteem in others.

Alfie Kohn (1991) in his article "Caring Kids-- The Role of the Schools" states that a belief persists in this culture that our darker side is more pervasive, more persistent, and somehow more real than our capacity for what psychologists call "prosocial behavior." We seem to assume that people are naturally and primarily selfish and will act otherwise only if they are coerced into doing so and carefully monitored.

The media enhances this type of thinking by portraying today's youth as irresponsible, drug abusing, goalless and violent. The majority of inner city students that this researcher has worked with have actually been exactly the opposite. Most young people want to succeed. They want to be decent and productive members of society. Peer pressure can make these goals very hard to achieve even though the negative personalities are actually in the minority.

The schools need to provide what some children will not otherwise get. It is sometimes said that moral concerns and social skills ought to be taught at home. The problem is that such

instruction -- along with nurturance and warmth, someone to model altruism, opportunities to practice caring for others, and so forth -- is not to be found in all homes. Encouragement from more than one source to develop empathic relationships is a highly desirable form of redundancy (A. Kohn, 1991). Young people who care about the feelings of others will ultimately have a greater estimation of themselves.

It seems possible that as teachers obtain positive student outcomes as a result of their own more equitable, effective instructional interactions with low achievers, they may develop higher expectations and higher standards for student work habits for those difficult-to-teach pupils and for their classrooms as a whole. These higher expectations and standards may, in turn, produce better achievement for a range of pupils in those classrooms, establishing a constructive cycle of teacher-student interaction. Additional research exploring this possibility appears warranted (Fuchs, Fuchs, and Phillips, 1994).

References

Abi-Nader, J. "Creating a Vision Of the Future." Phi Delta Kappan , (March 1991) 546-549

Adelman, Howard., Taylor, Linda. "Intrinsic Motivation and School Misbehavior: Some Intervention Implications." Journal of Learning Disabilities 23 (9) (November 1990), 541 - 553

American College Testing Program. Serving Academically Underprepared Students. Iowa City, IA. ACT, 1982

Baldwin, J. and Hopkins, R. "African-American and European American Cultural Differences as Assessed by the Worldviews Paradigm: An Empirical Analysis." The Western Journal of Black Studies 14, no. 1 (1990), 38-52

Brobeck, Joyce. "Teachers Do Make a Difference." Journal of Learning Disabilities 23 (1) (January 1990), 11

Brook, W., Beady, C., Flood, P., Schweitzer, J., & Weisenbaker, J. (1979). School social systems and student achievement: Schools can make a difference. New York: Bergin.

Bursuck, W. "Sociometric status, behavior ratings, and social knowledge of LD and low achieving students." Journal of Learning Disabilities, 22, (1989), 188-194

Chandler, T. A., "Locus of Control: A proposal for change." Psychology in Schools ,12, (1975), 334-339

Clever, A., Bear, G., and Juvonen, J. "Discrepancies Between Competence and importance in Self-Perceptions of Children in Integrated Classes." The Journal of Special Education, Vol. 26, (2), (1992), 125-137

Coopersmith, S. The Antecedents of Self-Esteem. W. H. Freeman, San Francisco. 1967.

Coopersmith, S. "Building Self-Esteem in the Classroom," Developing Motivation in Young Children , (1975), 95-132

Covington, M. "The Self-Worth Theory of Achievement Motivation: Findings and Implications." The Elementary School Journal 85 (1) (September, 1984), 17-26

Covington, M., and Beery, R., Self-Worth and School Learning. New York, N.Y. : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976

Edmonds, R., "Effective schools for the urban poor." Educational Leadership, 37, (1979) 15-18.

Educators for Social Responsibility, Conflict Resolution Workshop and Implementation Manual, 1993, Cambridge, MA

Fuchs, L., Fuchs, D., and Phillips, N. "The Relation between Teachers' Beliefs about the Importance of Good Student Work Habits, Teacher Planning, and Student Achievement." The Elementary School Journal, 94 (3) (January 1994), 229-245

Good, T. L., and Brophy, J. E. "Teachers' communication of differential expectations for children's classroom performance: Some behavioral data". Journal of Educational Psychology, 61 (1970), 354-374

Good, T. L. "How teachers' expectations affect results." American Education, 18, (1982), 25-32

Groinick, W., Ryan, R. "Self-Perception, Motivation, and Adjustment in Children with Learning Disabilities: A Multiple Group Comparison Study." Journal of Learning Disabilities, 23 (3) (March 1990), 177-174

Hammill, D.D., Leigh, J. E., McNutt, G., & Larsen, S.C. New definition of learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities 20 (2), (1987), 109-113

Hayes, C. Ryan, A. and Zsellar, E. "The Middle School Child's Perceptions of Caring Teachers." American Journal of Education, (November 1994), 1-19

Heyman, Wendy. "The Self-Perception of a Learning Disability and Its Relationship to Academic Self-Concept and Self-Esteem." Journal of Learning Disabilities 23 (8) (October 1990), 472 - 475

Ignoffo, M., "Improve reading by overcoming the "inner critic" Journal of Reading, (May 1988), 704-709

LaGreca, Annette. and Stone, Wendy. "LD Status and Achievements: Confounding Variables in the Study of Children's Social Status, Self-Esteem, And Behavioral Functioning." Journal of Learning Disabilities, 23 (8) (October 1990), 483-490

Kohn, A., "Caring Kids: The Role of the Schools," Phi Delta Kappan. (March 1991), 496-506

Maehr, M. L. "The "psychological environment" of the school: A focus for school leadership. Advances in educational administration pp. 51-81). Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Maehr, M. L. & Buck, R., "Transforming school culture." Educational leadership and school culture pp. 40-57. Berkeley: McCutchan.

Nattiv, A., "Helping Behaviors and Math Achievement Gain of Students Using Cooperative Learning." The Elementary School Journal 94 (3) (January 1994) 285-297

Nimnicht, G., MacAfee, O., and Meier, J. The New Nursery School. New York: General Learning Corp., 1969.

Richardson, Judy., Morgan, Raymond. Reading to Learn in the Content Areas (1994), 55

Rogers, C. R., and Dymond, R. F. (Eds.). *Psychotherapy and Personality Change: Coordinated Studies in the Client-Centered Approach*. Chicago: University Press, 1954.

Rosenberg, B., Gaier, E. "The Self-Concept of the Adolescent With Learning Disabilities" Adolescence, Vol. XII No 48, (Winter 1977), 389-497

Smith, Deborah., Nelson, J. Ron., et al. "The Effect of a Self-Management Procedure on the Classroom And Academic Behavior of Students With Mild Handicaps." School Psychology Review. 21 (1) (1992), 59 - 72

Smith, Sally. "the MASKS students wear." Instructor (April 1989), 27-31

Stone, N., "Accentuate the positive: Motivation and reading for secondary students." Journal of Reading, (May 1994), 684-690

Wintre, Maxine., Crowely, Jeannine. "The Adolescent Self-Concept: A Functional Determinant of Consultant Preference." Journal of Youth and Adolescence 22 (4) (1993), 469-483

Appendices

Appendix A

Pre Test Post Test Raw Scores for the Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI)

| Sample | pre test | post test |
|--------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | 48 | 60 |
| 2 | 48 | 80 |
| 3 | 60 | 72 |
| 4 | 60 | 76 |
| 5 | 68 | 88 |
| 6 | 92 | 92 |
| 7 | 56 | 54 |
| 8 | 64 | 64 |
| 9 | 88 | 96 |
| 10 | 40 | 52 |
| 11 | 60 | 72 |
| 12 | 60 | 60 |
| 13 | 40 | 36 |
| 14 | 72 | 92 |
| 15 | 44 | 32 |