

EXPECTATIONS AND
ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between expectations for academic achievement and academic self-concept.

Research has shown that attitudes of significant others influence a child's affective and cognitive development. Children tend to view themselves as others see them, and although self-concept is quite resilient to change, research shows that children will make adjustments to their view of self when contrary information is received from someone they deem significant and whose opinion they value. Literature shows that compared to normal achievers, parents and teachers of learning disabled children have lower perceptions of ability, and lower expectations for the child's present and future academic performance. This, coupled with the effects of repeated failure, communicates expectancy cues which can affect the child's goals and performance, as well as his own perceptions of himself and his abilities.

In this study, the self-perceptions of thirty-six children were compared to those of their parents, teachers and summer school teacher-aides. The children were participants in an Association for Children with Learning Disabilities six week summer school program that was designed to prevent academic regression during the summer months for children deemed "most

at risk" by their school district. The children, as well as the significant adults, were tested on the Student's Perception of Ability Scale. The adults were asked to complete the scale the way they thought the child would. The following questions were investigated: Whose perception, parent, teacher, or teacher-aide, was closest to that of the child; were there age and sex differences; did the summer school program have an effect on the child's academic self-concept?

The results, which were compared using mean scores and t-tests, showed a significant difference between the child's, parent's and teacher's expectations but showed no difference between the perceptions of the child and teacher-aides. There were no age or sex differences. There was a significant improvement on the children's pre to post-inventory of self-esteem.

Discussion stressed the need for early intervention for self-esteem building and for teachers and parents to be aware of the effect of their opinions, expectations, encouragement and support on future academic success for learning disabled children.

DEDICATION

To My Parents,
Joyce and Mike Bodner.

To My Mother, because her faith in me
made me believe in myself.

To My Father, because his high expectations
made me strive for excellence.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Why am I afraid to tell you who I am? I am afraid to tell you who I am because you may not like who I am and it is all that I have (Powell, 1969).

Society dictates various norms, expectations, goals, values and behaviours for its members. Each new member is taught to conform to certain standards, to meet certain expectations and to honor certain values and traditions. They are also expected to model certain social behaviours and pass through various rites of passage (eg. schooling). Children are taught to incorporate and internalize societies' expectations from their parents and families (Fitts et al., 1971; Purkey, 1970). As these values become part of their self-perceptions; they receive approval, reinforcement and praise from the significant others in their lives. This contributes to their developing self-esteem in that "esteem is earned, as one achieves certain goals, operates by certain values or measures up to certain standards" (Fitts et al., 1971, p. 19).

Life experiences are not always positive for all children and their many successes and failures affect their self-concept, raise or lower their expectations, influence the way they feel about themselves, and color their perception of the world (Fitts et al., 1971; Entwisle & Hayduck, 1978). Purkey (1970) states that, "each of us is constantly striving to maintain, protect and enhance the self of which he is aware"

(p. 10) and as society places a high importance on success, many of our children arrive at school on the defensive, afraid, anxious, insecure and unwilling to expose who they are.

In this introduction, research findings showing the effects of expectations on self-concept and on academic achievement will be discussed briefly. Suggestions will be given for new directions in academic self-concept research, the problem addressed in this study shall be explicated, and important terms will be defined. It should be noted that although there were more males than females in this study, the masculine pronouns used throughout this thesis do in fact refer to both male and female children.

Context of Problem

Children are constantly being evaluated by themselves, by their parents and by the significant others in their environment. Parents continually mark the progress that their children make to self-sufficiency. The intense growth and change that are so evident during a child's early years place a high value on performance (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1978).

Once the child goes to school, expectations change and as he "emerges from the protective circle of the family he finds himself rated according to how well he does compared to others of his age, not, as he was before, in terms only of how well he does with respect to his own past record" (Entwisle &

Hayduk, 1978, p. 3). These new perceptions of self become part of the child's academic self-concept.

School oftentimes becomes the first place where children learn they are not all that they should be and report card marks force many to deal with the threat of failure (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1978; Purkey, 1970; Prock, 1980; Bryan & Bryan, 1981). For some children, such as those diagnosed as learning disabled, school then becomes a long series of repeated failures. These children are constantly exposed to and reminded of their shortcomings to the point that protection of self-esteem becomes a survival strategy. As a result the self-concept of learning disabled children may become a greater handicap than their more visible disabilities in that they "are motivated to enhance, or at least to protect, a belief in their possession of a subjectively satisfying level of intellectual ability" (Covington & Beery, 1976, p.v; Fitts, 1972a, p. 10).

The student attempts at all cost to avoid negative ability attributes as there appears to be an "implicit link between ability and a sense of personal worth" where the avoidance of ability threatening experiences becomes a powerful motivation for classroom behaviour (Covington & Beery, 1976, p. v). Students become reluctant to take risks because the risk may involve "error, judgement, disapproval, censure, rejection, and in extreme cases, even punishment" (Canfield & Wells, 1976, p. 7; Covington & Beery, 1976, p. 6), all of which may devalue self-worth. The child's lack of confidence and

feelings of inadequacy often manifests itself in defensive and anxious behaviour as well as an unwillingness to try new activities (Samuels, 1977).

According to Wells and Maxwell, the way that a child perceives and defines himself has an effect on his behaviour and will influence "how he will relate to other people, what tasks he will attempt, what state of tensions he will experience, and how he subsequently will perceive himself" (1976, p. 45). It has also been stated that "an individual will steadfastly protect the image he has of himself even though it may interfere with achieving goals to which he and the society in which he lives aspire (Glock, 1972, p. 406; Clemes & Bean, 1980; Purkey, 1980; Sears & Sherman, 1964).

In view of this, it becomes obvious that learning disabled children need to receive early habilitation of their self-concept before a remediation program is put into effect because:

...for the individual to invest himself in an enterprise that may change his whole life requires that he have some desire to change, some hope and confidence that he can succeed and a feeling that he is worthy of the assistance being offered" (Fitts, 1972a, p. 10).

It was with learning disabled children in mind that the current literature was reviewed for this thesis.

Summary of Current Hypotheses

Research shows that self-concept acts as a frame of reference which influences human behaviour and operates as a perimeter or boundary to define the limits of a child's actions (Fitts et al., 1971; Boersma & Chapman, 1979; Glock, 1972). The more optimal and positive a child's self-concept is the more effectively he will function (Fitts, 1972a, p. 4). He will also be more motivated to learn and to achieve. A relationship exists between adequacy of self-concept and high levels of academic achievement; inadequacy of self-concept and low academic achievement (Fink, 1962; Chapman, Boersma & Maguire, 1979; Davidson & Lang, 1960).

Children tend to view their worth on the basis of the adequacy of their school performance (Black, 1974; Covington & Beery, 1976). Learning disabled children were found to have negative self-concepts and low expectations for successful academic achievements as well as low expectations for future academic success (Boersma & Chapman, 1979; Chapman & Boersma 1979a; Chapman, Boersma & Maguire, 1979).

Achievement expectations of significant others has a significant influence on children's achievement levels. Parents and teachers of learning disabled children also had low expectations for successful academic achievements as well as lowered expectations for future successes (Chapman & Boersma, 1979b; Bryan & Bryan, 1981; Hiebert, Wong & Hunter, 1982). These lowered expectations held by significant others have a

serious effect on learning disabled students because a child's self-concept is significantly and positively correlated with the evaluations and assessments held by significant others (Brookover, Thomas & Paterson, 1964, p. 477; Davidson & Lang, 1960; Samuels, 1977). The child in fact views himself as others see him (Gergen, 1971).

New Directions in Research

It has become clear that more research on the effects of expectations of significant others is a necessity. Attempts to define ways in which self-concept develops and ways in which it is related to achievement continue to be topics for research. The need to study self-perceptions and how they interact with and affect school learning has been mentioned by Boersma & Chapman (1979).

Research which investigates "how academic self-concept interacts with personality variables such as school performance, expectations, achievement motivation, casual attributions, and learned helplessness" would also be of value (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 7). The recent research showing that parent and teacher expectations are lower for learning disabled students than for normally achieving students needs to be examined to see if the effects of those lowered expectations are in fact part of the learning disabled child's problem. Also, before it becomes a matter of survival for the learning disabled student, can the parent and teacher

expectations be changed and, would the change result in positive academic and social growth and development for the child.

The Problem

This study was an attempt to look at the discrepancy between the child's perception of his ability and the perceptions of significant adults in his life, namely parent, teacher and summer school teacher-aide. The hypothesis that the self-concept of the learning disabled child was affected by the perceptions of significant others motivated this attempt to ascertain if there were in fact significant differences between the perceptions held by each set of the participants in the study. The Student's Perception of Ability Scale (SPAS) was used to assess each evaluator's perceptions.

Limitations of the Study

This study consisted of an exploratory investigation of a very small sample of learning disabled summer school students that had predominantly more males than females enrolled. Several of the children were below the recommended age norms for the SPAS (late grade 2). There was no control group of normally achieving students and there were unavoidable gaps in the data for Child-Post and Teacher comparisons. An attempt was made to see if the perceptions held by the child and significant others in his life warranted further investigation with broader, more comparative studies.

This study followed the suggestions of Boersma & Chapman to use the SPAS, an instrument designed by them, with parents of low achieving children. They felt that parents could be asked to predict the academic self-concept of their child by rating the SPAS "the way they thought their child might". This study's population is much too small to prove conclusive results outside of this group of children and therefore should be replicated using a much larger sample of older children (grade three and up). There should be an equal number of boys to girls, learning disabled to normally achieving students. Parents and teachers should still be asked to respond to the children's form of the SPAS the way they think their child or student would. Pre to Post achievement testing would be useful for comparing academic gains to those of self-concept. Results would then provide more conclusive evidence on possible discrepancies between learning disabled children's, parents' and teachers' perceptions.

Definition of Terms

Learning Disabilities

Learning Disabilities as defined by the Canadian Association for Learning Disabilities is as follows:

Learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders due to identifiable or inferred central nervous system dysfunction. Such disorders may be manifested by delays in early development and/or difficulties in any of the following areas: attention, memory, reasoning, coordination, communicating, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence, and emotional maturation.

Learning disabilities are intrinsic to the individual, and may affect learning and behaviour in any individual including those with potentially average, average, or above average intelligence.

Learning disabilities are not due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage; although they may occur concurrently with any of these.

Learning disabilities may arise from genetic variations, bio-chemical factors, events in the pre to peri-natal period, or any other subsequent events resulting in neurological impairment (Vancouver A.C.A.L.D., 1984).

Self-Concept

Fitts et al. (1971) describe self-concept as being something which is "learned by each person through his lifetime of experiences with himself, with other people, and with the realities of the external world" (p. 3). They also state that self-concept becomes relatively fixed and stable and "is the frame of reference through which the individual interacts with his world" (p. 3). They also feel that an individual's concept of himself condenses or captures the essence of many variables such as motives, needs, attitudes, values and personality.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is defined as the belief in one's self or one's own self-respect. It is the favourable opinion one holds of self. Self-esteem has further been described as:

the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the indivi-

dual holds toward himself. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and overt behaviour (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 4-5).

Self-Evaluation

Coopersmith (1967) describes the term of self-evaluation as:

a judgmental process in which the individual examines his performance, capacities, and attributes according to his personal standards and values, and arrives at a decision of his own worthiness (p. 7).

Self-Worth

Self-worth then refers to the individual's evaluative appraisal of his qualities, abilities and performance (Covington & Beery, 1976; Wells & Marshall, 1976).

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory applies to achievement behaviour and:

is the study of the kinds of explanations people give for their successes and failures and the consequences of their doing so ... attribution theory proposes that four different kinds of explanations are used by individuals to account for their performances in achievement situations. These ... are: (1) ability, (2) effort, (3) task difficulty and (4) chance or luck. This last category includes ... factors such as fatigue, temporary mood and teacher bias (Covington & Beery, 1976, p. 67).

Locus of Control

Locus of Control:

refers to whether a person's achievements are seen as being under his own control (determined by forces within himself, such as ability and effort) or seen as being caused by forces external to the person (task difficulty and luck) ...[and]...to the degree of stability of factors contributing to achievement, either stable or unstable (Covington & Berry, 1976, p. 68).

Learned Helplessness

Learned helplessness refers to a method of response used by a child when dealing with an adverse situation. It also refers to:

the belief that achievement outcomes are outside the control of the individual and that, for this reason, exerting effort to succeed is pointless. The L.D. student who believes that academic success or failure is unrelated to personal effort will not be motivated to attempt an academic task or to persist once the task becomes difficult (Tollefson et al. 1982, p. 19).

Expectation

Expectation refers to something expected or looked forward to. Academic expectations are those results a child looks forward to based on evaluation of previous happenings (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1978).

Significant Other

Significant other refers to a person deemed as important and influential to a child by the child, (eg. parents, teachers and peers).

Teacher-Aide

For the purpose of this study teacher-aide refers to university and high school students hired to assist the teacher-in-charge of the summer school to implement the overall as well as the individual programs designed for tutoring the children in attendance.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Part 1: Effects of Children's Expectations
on Academic Self Concept

Introduction

In order to study the effects of a child's expectations on his academic self-concept, the general development of self-concept must be examined. To understand a child fully and to accurately predict his behaviour, we must look at his personal frame of reference and his private preceptions of himself and his worth (Fitts, 1972b, p. 5). It appears that:

The individual's self-concept consists not of a single perception of self; it consists of the persisting ways he sees himself in many life situations that he faces or might face. It includes not only his bodily features and characteristics, but also his identifications with people, cultures, ideas, and values. His perceptions of himself in many situations together with the objects, people, ideas and values which he views as part or characteristic of himself constitute his self-concept. This self-concept emerged through the process of taking over the responses of others toward himself and incorporating these into his perceptions of himself. People with whom the child interacts - parents, siblings, teachers and peers - exert a pervasive influence on formation and change of self-concept (Perkins, 1957 in Hamachek 1965 p. 450).

Self-concept and academic self-concept theories shall be examined closer in this chapter. They will be related to current research in learning disabilities as well as to research in causal attributions, locus of control and learned helplessness.

Development of Self Concept

A child's first source of self-esteem comes from the esteem given by others (Fitts et al., 1971). Initially the child incorporates the values, goals and standards of his family and uses these as well as the family context to judge his own worth (Fitts et al., 1971; Coopersmith, 1967). As the child develops cognitively, his awareness of the attitudes of those around him affects his knowledge of and attitude toward himself (Samuels, 1977). The child internalizes the perceptions of significant others as well as their expectations for his behaviour. His confidence increases as he meets their expectations and he becomes more competent. As the child learns to function effectively his various achievements promote personal satisfaction and allow for more growth and development. (Purkey, 1980; Coopersmith, 1967; Covington & Beery, 1976). He feels adequate and capable of meeting the daily challenges of life and his self-concept has a positive effect on his goals, aspirations, academic achievements and future endeavors (Coopersmith, 1967, Covington & Beery, 1976; Sears & Sherman, 1964; Boersma & Chapman, 1979).

It appears then that sometime before middle childhood the child arrives at a general appraisal of his self-worth and this remains relatively fixed and stable over time (Fitts et al., 1971; Coopersmith, 1967).

Glock (1972) gives an excellent description of the qualities possessed by someone who has a healthy and positive self-concept. Such a person:

- is able to accept himself as a person of worth
- can realistically appraise his abilities and limitations
- recognizes both his good and bad points
- realizes he must be open to change both externally and internally
- can accept his shortcomings without endlessly blaming himself
- does not expect himself to be infallible
- has a certain pride in his own thoughts and inclinations
- feels he has a right to his individuality (p. 406).

Academic Self-Concept

Academic self-concept refers to the child's perception of himself as a learner. It can set the limits on what a child believes he is capable of achieving (Hiebert, Wong & Hunter, 1982; Boersma & Chapman, 1979). It is believed that it forms before the end of grade three and that it becomes fixed and stable as success and failure patterns are established (Chapman & Boersma, 1979a). Academic self-concept is related to many factors which affect school performance such as "attitudes towards school and teachers, assumption of responsibility for learning, motivation and goals, morale and satisfaction with school, class participation, discipline problems, school failures, dropout rates, and various criteria of personal and social adjustment" (Fitts, 1972a, p. 43). A positive academic self-concept significantly relates to high achievement in school. Students who feel good about themselves and their abilities are the ones most likely to succeed in

academic tasks possibly because a child who is confident in his academic abilities will invest more effort in completing the tasks (Purkey, 1970; Boersma & Chapman, 1979; Chapman, Cullen, Boersma & Maquire, 1981). The experience of success will then heighten the child's self-esteem and inspire more learning (Wells & Maxwell, 1976). The relationship between academic achievement and positive self-concept has been described by Prock (1984) as having:

a reciprocal, upward spiralling effect: the experience of success in learning improves self-esteem, heightened self-esteem becomes the platform for more adventurous involvement in learning, and the resulting freedom to learn creates its own enhancing environment for positive improvement in both achievement and in feelings about self-worth (p. 2).

Effects of Failure on Academic Self-Concept. For those children who have inadequate academic self-concepts failures can cause them to have a more pessimistic view of themselves as a learner. Their poor conceptions of their capabilities will influence their performances and when faced with difficult academic tasks they show very little motivation, persistence or perseverance (Barislow, 1962; Boersma & Chapman, 1979; Pidgeon, 1970). Children often blame lack of ability for their failures and as ability is often associated with self-worth, i.e. "to be able is to be worthy", failure often promotes feelings of worthlessness (Covington & Beery, 1976, p.7).

In order to maintain self-respect the child develops various avoidance strategies. Covington & Beery (1976) give an excellent description of how this avoidance of failure can

escalate. In order to protect self-worth the student uses strategies such as: not participating at all; putting forth minimal effort - where he can feel that he would have succeeded if he tried harder; and procrastination - where he puts off the task until it is too late and sets up his own failure but avoids the implication that he didn't have the ability in the first place. Covington and Beery call this 'failure with honor' in that he can blame his failure on other things and argue "that his poor performance is not representative of what he can really do and therefore not a fair measure of his ability and even less of his worth" (1976, p. 9).

The problem is the student sets up overt failures in his attempts to avoid the threatening feelings that arise from failure. He becomes his own worst enemy and ends up performing far below his ability level. He also sets up doubts about his own ability because he has become too afraid "to test his own limits by trying his hardest. He fears he might be inadequate, but what he fears even more is finding out" (Covington & Beery, 1976, p. 9). These self-deceptions become habit and the expending of effort towards a task is avoided. The child then faces another threat namely that of one day actually expending effort or studying hard for some task and still failing. He places his entire network of academic self-concept and self-worth in jeopardy and sets up a cycle where a feeling of failure leads to further failure - the self-fulfilling prophecy (Samuels, 1977).

This scenario is most often the case with learning disabled students and the self-fulfilling prophecy reflects the lack of hope the L.D. children have for success and their lack of trust in the future. Covington and Beery (1976) state that "hope is both a prerequisite to successful action and a consequence of it" (p. 8). Children who are success oriented feel themselves equal to, and can focus on, the challenge of academic tasks. They do not view failure as a threat but as a necessary part of learning. These children are prepared to take reasonable risks and can "alter their levels of aspiration so as to maintain a reasonable balance between the incidence of success and failure...This is achieved by lowering one's self-imposed standard after failure [and]...raising expectation after success" (Covington & Beery, 1976, p. 20).

Children who are failure prone on the other hand tend to view failure as a threat and attribute the cause of their failures to lack of ability rather than lack of effort and/or to external circumstances beyond their control (Covington & Beery, 1976; Dweck & Reppucci, 1973; Bryan & Bryan, 1981; Chapman & Boersma, 1979b). This leads us to studies of causal attribution, locus of control and learned helplessness.

Causal Attribution. The amount of effort a child puts forth on academic tasks relates to a child's affective characteristics, such as self-concept, his attitudes and beliefs about his abilities, the chances of a successful outcome and whether he attributes the results or outcome to

ability, effort, task difficulty or luck (Tollefson et al., 1982; Grimes, 1981; Hiebert, Wong & Hunter, 1982). L.D. children tend to attribute responsibility for successful outcome to external sources. This reduces their motivation to persist, so that they usually give up or withdraw following failure, even if the events are set up so that with more persistence they could succeed (Bryan & Bryan, 1981; Dweck & Reppucci, 1973; Grimes, 1981; Chapman & Boersma, 1979b). They rarely see a relation between success and effort (i.e. what they do and what happens) and usually attribute success to chance, luck, ease of the task, teacher whim or teacher assistance (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973). Chapman & Boersma, (1979b) state that "L.D. children indicated that they saw themselves as being comparatively less influential in bringing about successful school related task outcomes [and] this external orientation was well established at Grade 3 and remained consistent through to Grade 6" (p. 255). A study by Rosenberg and Gaier (1977) of grade 7 and 8 L.D. and normally achieving students found that L.D. students scored themselves more negatively in the self-concept areas of general self, social self and peers, and academic school abilities. The authors state that the negative views on the part of the L.D. student appears:

to be a logical outcome when one considers the predictable reactions of parents, teachers and peers which the child must endure in the face of academic failure. That these differences were not greater may be due to the ego's attempt to avoid pain (Rosenberg & Gaier, 1977, p. 496).

Locus of Control. Children who feel they have little control of or responsibility for their achievement outcomes are said to have external reinforcement responsibility or external locus of control. Those students who feel their own actions influence the outcome have internal reinforcement responsibility or internal locus of control (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973; Boersma & Chapman, 1979).

Grimes (1981) describes internal and external locus of control as:

Internal locus of control refers to potential factors which the individual has power to change. Generally, effort or attitude attributions toward the task are factors which the individual can change. On the other hand, external locus of control relates to factors which the individual cannot change. Ability level, IQ, luck and task difficulty are types of the external locus of control factors (p. 91).

Students with an internal locus of control attribute academic outcomes "to the presence or absence of effort as opposed to ability. This posture would lead to escalation of effort in the belief that obstacles are surmountable and that this is the means of surmounting them" (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973, p. 110). These students show more persistence in the face of failure (i.e. they rise to the challenge, rethink their strategies and keep trying harder) and, they take equal credit for their successes and failures (Grimes, 1981).

Students who have external locus of control took less personal responsibility for successes and failures and when outcomes were attributed internally saw them "as due to the

presence or absence of ability as opposed to effort" (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973, p. 110; Brvan & Bryan, 1981). Tollefson et al. (1982) found that these students could report that effort was necessary for success but would explain their successes with external reasons that they felt helpless to control.

Learned Helplessness. Children who feel that failure and success are beyond their control display a sense of "powerlessness to control the outcomes of events" (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973, p. 115) and decide that they cannot change the consequences no matter how hard they try. They view themselves as helpless and unable to influence the outcome by what they do (Dweck & Reppucci, 1983; Dweck, 1975; Grimes, 1981). Tollefson et al. (1982) feels that although L.D. students can verbalize the desire to do well in school, they fail to expend the effort needed to achieve success. Dweck and Reppucci (1973) describe a teaching strategy called 'attribution retraining' to help teach these children to deal with failure. The children were given tasks where failure trials were interspersed between success trials. They were taught to deal with the failure, to attribute it to lack of effort, and to persist regardless of the task outcome. Errors were used to teach the children how to handle failure and the anxiety it creates (Dweck, 1975). The findings of Dweck suggest that:

a small dose of failure experiences coupled with adult urgings to keep trying along with successful experiences may serve to inoculate [sic] the child against future failure. The child who faces a failure experience and gets

past it is more likely to persist in the face of future failure (Grimes, 1981, p. 94).

By learning to cope with failure the anxiety level experienced by the L.D. child would be reduced and the result would be higher achievement and increased self-esteem (Patten, 1983).

Learning Disabled Children and Academic Self-Concept

Research has shown that learning disabled children have low self and academic self-concepts and express less confidence in themselves than normally achieving students (Chapman & Boersma, 1979a; Chapman, Boersma & Maguire, 1979; Boersma & Chapman, 1979; Hiebert, Wong & Hunter, 1982; Rosenberg & Gaier, 1977; Black, 1974; Beare, 1975). They show negative self-perceptions in reading, spelling and arithmetic as well as lower perceptions of ability in general. They have more negative attitudes towards school (Chapman & Boersma, 1979a; Chapman, Boersma & Maguire, 1979; Boersma & Chapman, 1979). They also display lower expectations for current as well as future academic success (Chapman, Boersma & Maguire, 1979; Hiebert, Wong & Hunter, 1982). Self-concept scores appear to decrease with age in that the older learning disabled students have a poorer concept of self, possibly due to their longer exposure to failure (Black, 1974). However if an L.D. student is experiencing success in his learning, it has been found that there is no difference in his self-concept from a normal achiever (Prock, 1984).

Learning Disabled Children and Social Skills

A child's self-concept has an impact on his social conduct and it may influence his interactions with others (Gergen, 1971; Samuels, 1977). Fitts et al (1971) feel that social behaviour can in turn affect self-concept. They state that self concept can be affected by:

1. Experiences, especially interpersonal experiences, which generate positive feelings and a sense of value and worth.
2. Competence in areas that are valued by the individual and others.
3. Self-actualization, or the implementation and realization one's true personal potentialities - whatever they may be (p. 38).

Learning disabled children have low appraisals of their personal and academic abilities and this low self-esteem can be translated into feelings such as inferiority, timidity, self-hatred, anxiety, lack of personal acceptance and submissiveness as well as actions such as withdrawing from other people and constantly displaying signs of distress (Coopersmith, 1967).

Selman and Jaquette (1976) found the learning disabled children who were enrolled in a school designed to meet academic and interpersonal adjustment problems were:

- (a) extremely afraid of failing in that the "children tended to be overly anxious about getting the right answers, or they defend against feelings of intellectual inadequacy by rejecting any evaluation of their work by either themselves or teachers" (p. 47);

- (b) constantly expecting critical and hostile feedback because "a family context where verbal and sometimes physical abuse is frequently directed toward the child leads to a generalized expectation of criticism where children are sometimes afraid to express their points of view for fear of severe derogation" (p. 47); and
- (c) concerned with egocentric rather than social values in that "many of the children's difficulties are associated with an egocentric or over-reactive concern with the self, in low self-esteem, fear of bodily injury, or undue concern about the acquisition of personal goods" (p. 47).

They did not know how to make friends and were unaware of what trust meant to a friendship.

Other research shows that learning disabled children are perceived to be less socially desirable as playmates and are more likely to be rejected by their peers (Bryan & Bryan, 1981). Learning disabled females were the least accepted of all. Several reasons for the rejections were advanced with the lack of academic performance on the part of the learning disabled child seeming to be a major priority. Academic performance is highly valued by teachers and as children take on the values of significant others it is possible the rejection from classmates stems from learning disabled students not measuring up to teacher and peer academic expectations.

Learning disabled students are often unaware of their negative attitudes towards themselves and the fact that these attitudes can be expressed subconsciously through actions and behaviours such as voice, posture, gestures, and performance (Coopersmith, 1967; Clemes & Bean, 1980). Further to this Wylie (1961) states that there is a tendency for children to overestimate their standings on socially desirable characteristics such as leadership ability and academic standing in relation to the class (p. 313). Sears and Sherman (1964) also state that children can distort their self-concept to a better level than is accurate and that this lack of objectivity may be a defensive maneuver to protect the ego. They feel that "anxiety over achievement in any valued area tends to reduce accuracy of self perception" (p. 11). It appears that L.D. children avoid dealing with their social inadequacies just as they do their academic shortcomings. This further adds to their list of self-doubts. They lose sight of who or what they are as wishful thinking and reality combine. Fitts, (1972a) describes the effects of unrealistic self-enhancement where the child "has little self-awareness, distorts his perceptions of self and others, may be rigid and inflexible in his approach to life and has difficulty accepting the responsibility for, and consequences of, his own behavior" (p. 67).

The problem then is, inasmuch as the child assesses himself according to the assessments made of him by significant others - significant others including peers assess him

according to the way he sees himself (Hamacheck, 1965; Gergen, 1971; Sears & Sherman, 1964). Children frequently use the significant others as a reference group for comparing themselves as a basis for self-evaluation. Consequently a child who is not viewed positively by others will learn to view himself in non-positive ways.

Learning Disabled Children and Effect of Significant Others

Glock (1972) states that a negative self-concept "is its own best defender" (p.406). The task of changing a child's opinion of himself is made difficult because he will tend to act to maintain the image he has of himself regardless of changing circumstances (Clemes & Bean, 1980). However, the opinions of significant others can affect the image a child has of himself just as "a child with a strong self-concept may influence the ideas of the significant others, so they will perceive him as he perceives himself" (Sears & Sherman, 1964, p. 11; Davidson & Lang, 1960; Brookover et al, 1964; Gergen, 1971).

A child with a low self-concept is more accepting of or open to being influenced by others and is less capable of resisting the pressures to conform (Coopersmith, 1967; Clemes & Bean, 1980; Gergen, 1971). The more credible or trusted a significant other is, the greater the chance the evaluation by that person can affect a child's self-concept. This is one reason that families are extremely influential in determining the conception of self held by their children (Gergen, 1971).

Any discrepancies between self-view and those held by significant others will cause a reflection and revision in one's estimate of self. Gergen (1971) describes these revisions by saying:

If the communicator appears to be a highly credible source, we are less likely to question his accuracy and thus more likely to reappraise ourselves as his views become more discrepant from our own. But if the communicator seems to lack knowledge or expertise, the greater the discrepancy between his view and our own, the less likely we are to take his view seriously (p. 45).

Teachers must be aware of the effects of praise on L.D. students. Teachers can lose their credibility if they praise the student and the student does not feel he is worthy of the praise. Covington and Beery (1976) state that a student who is merely satisfied with just keeping up with his peers does not want to be praised for his effort and "teachers must pay more attention to what the student expects of himself before teacher praise can be an effective device for encouraging personal excellence" (p. 35).

Comparing Self to Others. Several authors state that a child's self-concept is also influenced by the view the parent or teacher has of himself, i.e. their own personal concepts of self (Samuels, 1977; Shaw & Dutton, 1962; Purkey, 1970). Purkey (1970) states that each teacher needs to see himself with respect, liking and acceptance. Teachers' expressions and behaviors relate to or are associated with how they feel about themselves (Fitts, 1972a). "When teachers have essentially favourable attitudes towards themselves, [they are

much more accepting of others and] they are in a much better position to build positive and realistic self-concepts in their students" (Purkey, 1970, p. 46). The same is true for parents.

Parents can strongly influence their child's self-concept because children tend to copy or assume their parent's self-concept views and see themselves to be exactly like their parents. Wylie states "the children's self-concepts are similar to the view of themselves which they attribute to their parents...[and they]...see the like-sex parent's self-concept...as being somewhat more like their own self-concept" (1961, p. 135-136). Their parents are in fact role models (Clemes & Bean, 1980; Samuels, 1977). This modeling has often been called 'the looking glass theory' in that the reflection children see when they look at their parents is themselves.

Children make social comparisons between themselves and their classmates or peers as a basis of forming estimates of self-worth (Smith, Dokecki & Davis, 1977). With L.D. students it is usually to link themselves to students of similar ability who are also failing. This can reinforce negative and defensive attitudes among the group (Beare, 1975). Many educators use this reason to insist on full integration in regular classes and participation with non-L.D. children in extra-curricular activities. However recent research in learning disabilities shows that short-term full-time placement in a special class can enhance a child's self-worth (Battle & Blowers, 1982). Placement in an L.D. class provides a

comparison reference group which is more homogeneous and closer in academic performance and abilities. The child has a higher estimation of his capabilities when compared to children of similar academic backgrounds (Smith, Dokecki & Davis, 1977; Boersma, Chapman & Battle, 1979). Research by Smith, Dokecki and Davis (1977) showed that when asked to compare themselves to regular class children, L.D. children showed a decrease in self-concept scores. This could possibly be due to the fact that learning disabled children have fewer opportunities to evaluate themselves positively when compared to normal achievers in regular classrooms (Battle & Blowers, 1982; Bingham, 1980).

Mainstreaming might not be the preferred option for many L.D. children. A half day integration into a regular class may be a better method as it could result in the "availability of multiple comparison reference groups [which] may facilitate augmentation of self regard" (Smith, Dokecki & Davis, 1977, p. 191; Boersma, Chapman & Battle, 1979). It is possible that the part-time integration would also be viewed by the child as a success experience and would build self-esteem.

Learning Disabled Children and Studies of Student Academic Expectations

There are very few studies on the expectations children have and this area warrants further research by educators. Results from three separate groups of researchers have been mentioned. Chapman, Boersma and Maguire (1979) state that expectations held by individuals with respect to academic

performance outcomes would seem "a crucial motivational variable complimenting the role played by ability perceptions and causal attributions in learning" (p. 2). They found however that learning disabled children had low expectations for academic achievement and for future academic successes (Boersma & Chapman, 1979; Chapman and Boersma, 1979a; Chapman, Boersma & Maguire, 1979).

Pidgeon, (1970) feels that student aspirations and expectations are directly related to teacher aspirations. He stated that "if little is expected from pupils in a particular class or school, then the pupils will develop a similar low expectation of their own ability" (p. 16). He also felt that a student's perception of his own ability would influence his performance and his expectations of his performance in that "if he is led to believe that he is capable of little, that is, has low expectations for himself, he will have little self-motivation and will, in fact, achieve little" (p. 99). Pidgeon's (1970) research also states "there is a strong association between success in school and having high expectation" (p. 104) and that those expectations will lead the students to have increased aspirations for a high status job upon completing school.

The third study was by Entwisle and Hayduk (1978) where they had middle class and working class children estimate the marks they thought they would receive on each term's report card. They found that most first grade children, whether they

were middle or working class, were very optimistic and tended to rate themselves overly high for the first report card. The children failed to predict first report card marks with any accuracy. The accuracy of their predictions became closer to reality as time passed with most of the children gaining realistic views by the end of grade two. They found that children whose marks were better than they expected raised their hopes and expectations. Children who received poorer marks than expected, however, retained their high expectations and in some cases worked harder so as to raise their marks. It appears that the discrepancy between expectations and marks had an impact on the behavior and actions of the children (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1978, p. 36).

Entwisle and Hayduk (1978) state that a major finding of their study was that "children's marks and children's expectations shifted over time to minimize the differences between them" (p. 160). It appears that children "pull their expectations in line with their performance if given a reasonable opportunity to do so" (p. 166). Parents were asked to predict the report card marks and middle class parents were more accurate and perceptive to what actually took place. They appeared to use cues related to IQ to make their predictions. Working class parents saw their children's marks as being lower than the children of middle class parents. The perceptions of working class parents were lower than the expectations that their children held for their own performance. Based on the discrepancy between the actual marks and perceptions held by

these parents it would seem that socio-economic class is a factor that can influence academic expectations.

Entwisle and Hayduk (1978) feel they demonstrated the causal impact of discrepancies between the child's early marks and the parents' initial expectations. They stated:

In the middle-class school, children's marks in first grade tended to change so as to reduce the preceding parental discrepance [sic]. Apparently children worked harder when their parents expected more, and relaxed when their parents expected less. The causal impact of parents' expectations was considerably reduced in second grade, after parents' expectations themselves had moved substantially toward consistency (minimization of the earlier discrepance) between first and second grades. That is, the parents' discrepance had less impact after parents had an opportunity to modify their expectations in light of their children's mark history (p. 160).

It appears that "eventually parents' and children's expectations will tend to converge, even if parental expectations do not directly influence their children's expectations, because both sets of expectations move toward agreement with the children's marks" (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1978, p. 192). The most exciting part of Entwisle and Hayduk's research was that parents' expectations can have an influence on their child because:

middle-class children whose marks changed were apt to be those whose parents' predictions disagreed with their child's initial mark. Children whose parents thought they could do better did do better, and vice versa (1978, p. 182).

They found that parent expectations had a greater effect on middle-class children and that this influence was felt more in

grade one than grade two. This brings us to the second section of the literature review, namely the effects of parents and their expectations on the academic self-concept of their child.

Part 2: Effects of Parent Expectations on Academic Self-Concept

Introduction

To study the effects of parent expectations on the child's academic self-concept the various parent-child interactions and their effects on the child's developing self-concept must be examined. Wylie (1961) summed up these interactions as follows:

(a) The self concept is a learned constellation of perceptions, cognitions, and values. (b) An important part of this learning comes from observing the reactions one gets from other persons. (c) The parents are the persons who are present earliest and most consistently. For this reason, and because of the child's dependence on them and his affection for them, the parents have a unique opportunity to reinforce selectively the child's learning. Presumably, then, the parent can influence the development of such aspects of the self concept as the following: (a) the generalized level of self-regard (e.g., by being loved and accepted the child comes to love himself, and through acquisition of accepted [reinforced] behaviors he comes to respect his own functioning); (b) the subjective standards of conduct which are associated with his role and individual status (i.e., the development of the ideal self); (c) the realism of his view of his abilities and limitations, and the acceptance of them; (d) the degree of acceptance in the phenomenal self concept of inevitable characteristics (e.g., hostility, jealousy, sex); (e) the adequacy of his means of appraising accurately his effect on others (p. 121-122).

The impact of a child's home life as well as studies involving parents' expectations shall be examined in this section.

Impact of Home Environment

The effect of parents on the development of a child's self-concept has been previously discussed as well as the facts that children are affected by their parents' values, attitudes and expectations, and they develop their ideas and feelings about themselves from identifying with their parents (Wylie, 1961, 1979). Children are vulnerable and dependent upon their parents and are affected by their responses and actions (Coopersmith, 1967; Canfield & Wells, 1976; Hilgard, 1949). Because children accommodate themselves to their parents' values and standards, parental judgments and evaluations are often reflected in the child's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Coopersmith, 1967; Boersma & Chapman, 1979).

Children tend to regard themselves the way they are regarded by their parents (Wylie, 1961). This regard or warmth, interest and liking that is shown, imparts a feeling of self-worth and importance. A child's self-regard is enhanced by accepting parents, especially: if support and encouragement are given during times of need and crisis; if interest is shown in the child's activities and ideas; if affection and friendship are part of the relationship; and if discipline allows for a more indulgent attitude towards a child's development of assertiveness and self-sufficiency (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 40).

Once a child begins to attend school the parents' daily contact of showing interest in school activities, and giving encouragement by helping with homework, can greatly influence the child's self-regard. This in turn can motivate the child to higher academic performance (Pidgeon, 1970). In regard to the effects of a child's home life "it is the motivational factors of the home - the interest the parents take in their children's education and the aspirations they have for their future that are more important than material circumstances" (Pidgeon, 1970, p. 15).

However, if parental regard is lacking for the child and there is no interest, affection or support, the child's academic endeavors and achievements are greatly reduced. Purkey (1970) sums this up by saying:

...any behavior of significant people that causes a young child to think ill of himself, to feel inadequate, incapable, unworthy, unwanted, unloved, or unable, is crippling to the self. Where respect and warmth are missing, where the child's questions go unanswered, where his offers to help are rejected, where his discipline is based on failure and punishment, where he is excluded from his parents' emotional life, and where his basic rights are abused, then his self is undermined. It is vital for parents to remember the simple rule that they must have respect for and confidence in their children before their children can have self-respect or self-confidence (p. 33-34).

What is of critical importance to emotional and academic growth is how the child interprets his parents' views and attitudes concerning himself and concerning the value of school and achievement (Purkey, 1970; Christopher, 1967). Parental values are carried with us right through adolescence (Christopher,

1967). Quite possibly these values are carried through our lifetime.

Studies of Parental Expectations

The following is a brief summarization of the points mentioned earlier in this paper on parental expectations and their effects on academic self-concept.

- . Parents of learning disabled students have lower academic expectations for their children than parents of normal achievers (Boersma & Chapman, 1982; Hiebert, Wong & Hunter, 1982).
- . Parents of learning disabled students have lower expectations for their children's future academic success than parents of normal achievers (Chapman & Boersma, 1979b; Hiebert, Wong & Hunter, 1982). This expectation virtually sets up a failure prophecy (Chapman & Boersma, 1979b).
- . Mothers of learning disabled children respond more negatively and less positively to their children's achievement behavior indicating that they have almost given up expecting academic achievement (Chapman & Boersma, 1979b).
- . Mothers of learning disabled children report they have more negative and fewer positive interactions with their children (Boersma & Chapman, 1979; Chapman & Boersma, 1979b; Wylie, 1979).

It appears then that the frustrations and disappointments that parents of L.D. children feel with regard to their children's

progress in school influence the attitudes they hold towards their children's academic performances. These parents get fewer chances to give positive responses and the interactions between them and their children are less encouraging and more critical (Chapman & Boersma, 1979b). Bryan and Bryan, (1971) report that parents of learning disabled children are more ambivalent or hostile towards their children than parents of non-disabled children.

Parents can react to academic performance with praise, punishment or indifference and parents of L.D. children are more likely to punish failure than praise achievement (Peck, 1981; Bryan & Bryan, 1981).

Parents of normally achieving children tend to overestimate their children's self-concept whereas parents of children with learning disabilities tend to underrate (Wylie, 1979). It is possible, however, that parents of L.D. children are merely adjusting their perceptions of their children's self-concept in the same manner that they adjust their achievement expectations to match the children's actual school performance (Chapman & Boersma, 1979b).

Abramson et al. (1983) found that parents of learning disabled students were not actively involved in the planning of their child's educational program and were often unaware of the philosophy and purpose of the current class placement. However they did show a desire "to help facilitate their child's

educational growth" (p. 185). Chapman and Boersma give an excellent outline on how parents can help as a conclusion to one of their articles. To summarize the article, they mention that they feel the negative interactions as well as lowered expectations on the part of the mothers contribute to lower achievement levels in the L.D. children. They conclude that:

Parents of children receiving remedial services in school may need more information on how they can best assist with the remediation of their child's learning problem. An important part of this knowledge would seem to be instruction in how expectations and parent-child interactions affect learning. The need for realistic expectations that provide challenging yet clearly attainable goals for children to follow seems crucial. Expectations that merely reflect current levels of achievement in children whose potential indicates the ability to perform better are not considered realistic. Rather, parental expectations should indicate to the child, in a supportive and encouraging manner, a genuine belief that the child can do better and that they (the parents) will help in the attainment of those goals (Chapman & Boersma, 1979b, p. 257).

Part 3: Effects of Teacher Expectations on Academic Self-Concept

Introduction

To study the effects of teacher expectations on academic self-concept one must recognize that the research by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1966) acts as a base from which much of the current studies stem. Their research involved the random picking of several students in each particular class in their study and telling the teacher that the students had unusual

potential for intellectual gains. The late bloomers did in fact bloom and Rosenthal and Jacobsen felt it was because the teachers treated the students in a different way than they would have had they not received the information about intellectual ability. Their results showed that younger children showed a greater gain in IQ score than older students, possibly because they saw younger students as more malleable and open to change. They stated:

...Younger children are more sensitive to and more affected by the particular processes whereby teachers communicate their expectations to children....perhaps it is only the younger children whose performance is affected by the special things the teacher says to them, the special ways in which she says them, the way she looks, postures, and touches the children from whom she expects greater intellectual growth (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968, p. 83).

The effect of "how one person's expectations for another person's behavior can quite unwittingly become a more accurate prediction simply for its having been made" (Pidgeon, 1970, p. 36) is called the self-fulfilling prophecy. It appears that the teacher for whatever reasons "perceives competencies and potentialities of children differently and that these expectancies are reflected in his interactions with children to produce differential performance among learners, thus fulfilling his prophecy" (Braun, 1976, p. 185). In other words there is a tendency on the part of the teacher "to create a reality commensurate with his perceptions [and] the learner, while creating his own reality, shadows substantially the reality forming in the teacher's mind" (Braun, 1976, p. 185).

Cooper (1979) states that teachers do have differential patterns of behavior for high and low expectation students that can lead to differences in actual achievement. An example of this is seen in the study by Brophy & Good (1970) who stated:

The teachers demanded better performance from those children for whom they had higher expectations and were more likely to praise such performance when it was elicited. In contrast they were more likely to accept poor performance from students for whom they held low expectations and were less likely to praise good performance from these students when it occurred, even though it occurred less frequently (p. 65).

A good deal of time and research has been spent trying to repeat Jacobsen's original study. There are several variations on his original method with most failing to replicate his results. His study has received both good and bad reviews (Elashoff & Snow, 1971). However one point can be made. Self-fulfilling prophecy has become a common and often used term by both educators and lay people to the point that the concept is believed by most lay people to be a reality. One such study which tried to repeat the Rosenthal and Jacobsen experience was by Claiborn (1969). This study lacks the depth and breadth of the original experiment in that Claiborn began his study after the school year had started and tried to change the teacher opinions which had developed naturally from the start of the year. The length of time his study lasted was shorter and he was convinced that because no expectancy effects were noted in two months that the original study could not be concluded to be valid. He felt that Rosenthal and Jacobsen

capitalized on the teachers' unformed opinions of their new students and were only able to influence the teachers because their perceptions were unstable. He does admit however "that as a result of biased expectations, some teachers changed their behavior but that these behavior changes cannot be accurately or adequately assessed by analysis in terms of identical changes for all variables for all Ss" (Claiborn, 1969, p. 382). He then concludes that his study shows "that teacher behavior is moderately resistant to the kinds of bias or expectancy statements which make up much of our standardized testing programs" (Claiborn, 1969, p. 382).

It appears that the need is to move away from research paradigms that try and replicate Rosenthal and Jacobsen's findings into studies on the effects of teacher behaviors, expectations and interactions on students (Dusek, 1975; Baker & Crist, 1971; Crano & Mellon, 1978). The following section will look at several studies which have attended to the effects that teacher have on students.

Teacher Expectancies Research

Baker and Crist (1971) reviewed the literature on teacher expectancies and produced a comprehensive summary and theoretical overview from which key statements have been selected:

- . Teacher expectancy probably does not affect pupil IQ....It is possible that strong, naturally occurring teacher expectancies could influence intellectual growth over an extended period of time.

- . Teacher expectancy may affect pupil achievement. Significant effects are likely if a strong teacher expectancy exists naturally.
- . Teacher expectancy probably affects observable teacher and pupil behavior....The teacher behavior most likely to be affected involved eliciting and reinforcing of children responses, the kind of attention given to pupils, the amount of teaching actually attempted, subjective scoring or grading of pupil work, and judgments or ratings of pupil ability and probably success. The pupil behavior most likely to be affected involves the kind of response given to the teacher, the child's initiation of activity, his class-appropriate behavior, and his feelings about school, self, and teacher.
- . The dependent variables most worthy of study ...will probably be measures of teacher-pupil interaction processes and teacher-controlled achievement.
- . In pursuing research on expectancies in interpersonal interaction it should be advantageous to work within the theoretical frameworks provided by the person perception literature in social psychology. Five general guidelines are available from this literature.
 - . People view others according to their own personality...teachers view pupils in terms of their own values and needs.
 - . People form stable impressions on limited information....impressions based on a day's or a week's experience may produce expectations about pupil behavior and future achievement.
 - . People form impressions in global terms.... The tendency for these global classifications to affect other judgments is called a halo effect.
 - . Information conflicting with current impressions may be rearranged to resolve contradictions....Global impressions once formed are not readily altered by contradictory information.
 - . The human teacher's tendency to make new information consistent with existing impressions has its counterpart in the

pupil's tendency to conform to expectations. The pupil may begin to act in a manner consistent with previous interactions with the teacher. It is this aspect of person perception theory that may represent the primary mechanism of self-fulfilling prophecy.

- . [It is also possible that]...the perceiver is also the perceived, and the pupils are forming impressions and expectancies of teachers at the same time that teachers are coming to know the pupils. Perhaps the teacher also comes to conform to pupil expectations....The question for future research is not whether there are expectancy effects, but how they operate in school situations" (p. 61-64).

Brophy & Good (1970) give a possible sequence of behaviors that transfer teacher expectations to learners:

(a) The teacher forms differential expectations for student performance; (b) He then begins to treat children differently in accordance with his differential expectations; (c) The children respond differently to the teacher because they are being treated differently by him; (d) In responding to the teacher each child tends to exhibit behavior which complements and reinforces the teacher's particular expectations for him; (e) As a result, the general academic performance of some children will be enhanced while that of others will be depressed, with changes being in the direction of teacher expectations; (f) These effects will show up in the achievement tests given at the end of the year, providing support for the "self-fulfilling prophecy" notion (p. 365-366).

Cooper (1979) gave a slightly different sequence of behaviors to explain performance expectation communication and its influence on behavior. The steps of his model were:

- (1) Variations in student ability and background lead teachers to form differential expectations for student performance.
- (2) These expectations, in conjunction with the interaction context, influence teacher perceptions of control over student performance.

Interactions initiated by low-expectation students, especially in public, are found least controllable and least likely to succeed.

- (3) Teacher perceptions of personal control influence classroom climate and choice of feedback contingencies. Teachers may be increasing personal control by creating a negative climate and feedback pattern for lows, and thus inhibiting low initiations. This means that lows are more often praised and criticized for control purposes (external to student performance) and highs are more often evaluated with effort as the criterion (a personal cause).
- (4) Negative climate and feedback patterns may decrease student initiations. The negative patterns employed with low-expectation students then result in increased teacher control over interaction content, timing and duration.
- (5) Feedback contingencies also may influence student effort-outcome covariation beliefs. A stronger belief on the part of lows than highs that reinforcements are controlled by external factors was proposed as a consequence of using a control feedback contingency. It was pointed out that a belief in personal efficacy is a prerequisite for achievement motivation.
- (6) Finally, effort-outcome covariation beliefs may influence student performance. Noncontingent reinforcement was seen as causing negative affect and attitudes, less persistence at tasks, and more frequent failure (p. 406).

Coles (1969) gives another view on how teacher expectancies are transferred to students and feels:

Another research project is needed if we are to discover how teachers go about letting children know they have a special destiny. No doubt dozens of signals are made: gestures, postures, facial expressions, a manner of approach, a choice of words and the way they are spoken, a look in the eyes, a touch of the hand. Soon the child gets the message - perhaps in the best way - unselfconsciously. He begins to feel the teacher's feelings, the pleasure of approval, and begins to learn more. There comes a time when the issue is not only emotional but intellectual, when a teacher's expectations become a child's sense of prideful achievements,

which in turn enables him to expect more - of himself (p. 87).

It is quite obvious that teacher perceptions can reflect certain attitudes toward the child. These basic attitudes are often translated during the school day into different behaviors towards the child. It would then appear that attitudes can actually influence teacher and student behavior (Sears & Sherman, 1964). In view of this Sears and Sherman (1964) infer that "the reputation the child holds in the teacher's eyes provides an indirect measure of some of the environmental conditions which the child meets at school" (p. 14).

Rist (1970) gives a cautionary note to all of this with his concerns that a teacher could use a child's social status rather than achievement levels and academic skills to form expectations. The fear is that these expectations once formed can then be passed on year by year through successive teachers and can have a profound shaping effect on the child (Crano & Mellon, 1978). Rist states:

When a teacher bases her expectations of performance on the social status of the student and assumes that the higher the social status, the higher the potential of the child, those children of low social status suffer a stigmatization outside of their own choice or will.... The differential amounts of control-oriented behavior, the lack of interaction with the teacher, the ridicule from one's peers, and the caste aspects of being placed in lower reading groups all have implications for the future life style and value of education of the child (1970, p. 448).

It appears that teachers can have an extremely influential effect on a child's future academic success just by channelling the child into various reading levels. If he is put into a low group in the early grades he will remain there throughout school simply because he hasn't learned the skills or completed the prerequisites for anything higher.

Teacher expectations can have far reaching effects. Not only can they influence a child's daily performance, academic self-concept, and yearly standards, but they can prejudice the opinions of teachers in the years to come which can affect future academic success and eventually the child's career possibilities. Teachers can also influence parent expectations. Report cards as well as casual comments can: give an unrealistic perspective to both children and parents concerning the child's academic skills; and can lower parent expectations which could possibly undermine the child's only other support system when it comes to maintaining a positive academic self-concept.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Subjects

Thirty-six children from the ages of five to thirteen years (nine girls, twenty-seven boys) were included in this study, along with their parents and classroom teachers. The children ranged from kindergarten to grade seven, and were enrolled in the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (A.C.L.D.) "Let's Learn" 1981 Summer Program, which involved daily attendance for three hours a day, five days a week. The program took place over a six week period giving a total of ninety instructional hours. The children were chosen from the group of learning disabled children within the district who were deemed most "at risk", where learning disabled was defined by the district as:

"A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations" (Vincente, 1979, p. 119).

It was felt by school personnel that these students would most likely display signs of academic regression over the summer months. The children were from a mixed socio-economic and racial background. They lived in a small city or in the surrounding rural areas. The school district is located 60 kilometres from a major metropolis.

Entry To The Program

Children were referred by their classroom teacher, school counsellor and/or psychologist, who received consent from the parents for the child's attendance in the summer program. School personnel were responsible for completing a detailed referral form (see Appendix A) for each child. The referral form contained information on previous assessments, past academic performance levels and achievements, work habits, social skill development, current areas of academic need, speech and language development, and notes about the student's perceptions of self. Parents were asked to read and sign the referral form before it was submitted for A.C.L.D. consideration.

Strengths and weaknesses portrayed in the referral description were used by the summer school teacher to rank the children on the basis of seriousness of their disabilities. Children who showed documented weaknesses and/or were assessed low in two or more areas were ranked first. The areas given the most consideration were: low academic skills; speech and language deficits or delays; lack of social skills or development; poor work habits; weak motor coordination; and low self concept. District counsellors were invited to make any adjustments to the ranking based on their experiences and perception of the children. Through this consultative process forty-five names were agreed upon and a rank order was established with children having multiple deficits placed first.

The names of children who were chosen were given to the A.C.L.D. persons responsible for the summer school program. They, in turn, telephoned or contacted each set of parents to receive a commitment on the part of the family to:

1. ensure punctual, daily attendance;
2. ensure summer vacations would not interfere with attendance;
3. agree to pay a small entrance fee to cover some of the costs for paper and consumable goods.

Arrangements were thus made for thirty-six students to attend the summer program.

Instrumentation

The Student's Perception of Ability Scale (SPAS) designed by Frederick J. Boersma and James W. Chapman from the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta (See Appendix B) was selected as the instrument for this study. It was used to test the academic self-concept and perceived abilities of the thirty-six students. The parents, teachers and teacher-aides also completed the SPAS but were instructed to respond to the scale the way they thought their child or student would answer. The Student's Perception of Ability Scale Manual (Boersma & Chapman, 1979) is the exclusive reference used in the next section.

Developmental History of SPAS

The Student's Perception of Ability Scale was developed over a three-year period, from 1976 to 1978, to aid in investigations of the role of academic self-concept in school achievement, particularly at the elementary school level (Boersma & Chapman, 1979). The individual items which make up the scale deal "specifically with self-perceptions of ability in the main academic subject areas, along with feeling and attitudes about school in general" (Boersma & Chapman, 1979 p. 9).

The items originated from a list of two hundred items that related to academic performance and school attitudes collected from suggestions given by teachers as well as items from other self-concept inventories. Of these, one hundred forty-three items were picked to cover the academic areas of reading, language arts, spelling, penmanship, arithmetic and school in general. The items were force-choice 'Yes-No' in nature, with an attempt to have equal numbers of positive and negative statements randomly ordered for each area (Boersma & Chapman, 1979).

After administering the scale to 310 Grade three students, a study of the item characteristics in conjunction with factor analysis led to the selection of the seventy items presently on the scale. The components accounted for 58.86% of the total variance, and were used to identify (after four varimax rotations) six subscales. The subscales tapped

specific aspects of academic self-concept. The subscales or factors accounted for 31.6% of the total variance with only items having the highest loading being used in each section (Boersma & Chapman, 1979).

These six areas were titled: Perception of General Ability, Perception of Arithmetic Ability, General School Satisfaction, Perception of Reading and Spelling Ability, Perception of Penmanship and Neatness, and, Confidence in Academic Abilities. The first five factors had twelve items each, with the last factor having only ten.

Subscales of the Student's Perception of Ability Scale

The Perception of General Ability section was made up of 12 negative statements which reflected the child's perception of his or her general ability. If a child's self-evaluations were poor, he or she scored low. Questions included in this factor were:

4. I find it hard to understand what I have to do.
6. I usually have problems understanding what I read.
14. I make many mistakes in school.
22. Working with my hands is hard.
24. I have trouble drawing pictures.
48. I have difficulty thinking up good stories.
50. Saying new words is hard for me.
53. I have difficulty doing what my teacher says.

61. In school I find new things difficult to learn.
64. All new words are hard for me to understand.
65. I have trouble telling others what I mean.
68. I feel I often say the wrong things.

The Perception of Arithmetic Ability focused mainly on the child's perceptions of his mathematical ability and included the following questions:

5. I think my school work is really good.
9. I usually finish my schoolwork.
20. I am poor at subtraction.
27. I am good at my times tables.
34. I have difficulty getting my arithmetic finished on time.
35. I have difficulty working with numbers.
37. I like arithmetic.
45. My teacher thinks I am dumb in arithmetic.
51. I am unhappy with how I do arithmetic.
55. I usually get my arithmetic right.
66. I am good at arithmetic.
69. I find multiplication fun.

General School Satisfaction focused on a child's satisfaction or enjoyment with various school subjects and school-related actions and activities. Items from this factor consisted of:

11. I like reading.
16. I like to read to my parents.

18. I like making up endings to stories.
21. I like to answer questions.
23. I like doing printing.
30. I like to do story problems.
36. I like spelling.
40. I like to sound out words.
44. I like telling my friends about school work.
46. I like going to school.
47. I like playing spelling games.
67. I like to tell stories in class.

The questions for Perception of Reading and Spelling Ability focused on the child's self-evaluation of his or her reading and spelling ability. The 12 items were:

10. I am unhappy with how I read.
13. I am good at spelling.
15. I have problems in spelling.
17. I am happy with the way I spell.
25. I am poor at silent reading.
31. My friends read better than I do.
54. I find spelling hard.
56. I find reading hard.
58. I am a good reader.
59. I am slow at spelling.
60. I am a slow reader.
62. I usually spell words right.

The items for the Perception of Penmanship and Neatness factor focused on the child's perception of his or her neatness and tidiness with written work and their proficiency in fine motor skills. The questions included:

2. My school work is usually untidy.
8. I have neat printing.
12. My printing is perfect.
26. I have problems printing neatly.
28. I am good at drawing.
29. When school gets tough I give up.
32. I am good at printing.
33. I always do neat work.
38. I am a messy writer.
41. My teacher often makes me write my work again.
57. I am unhappy with my printing.
63. My teacher thinks I am good at printing.

The last factor of the scale was Confidence in Academic Abilities. It focused on the child's willingness to judge his or her own skills and abilities, and express his or her own smartness. A high score would indicate the child has confidence in his or her academic abilities. Questions included:

1. I always understand everything I read.
3. All new words are easy for me to spell.
7. I am one of the smartest kids in the class.
9. I usually finish my school work.
39. Tests are easy for me to take.

42. I have difficulty looking up words in the dictionary.
43. I like to use big words when I talk.
49. My spelling is always right.
52. I am a smart kid.
70. I always get everything in arithmetic right.

Development of SPAS Operating Characteristics

In order to establish the operating characteristics in the SPAS an item analysis was carried out on a second study of 642 grade three to six students' responses. This study confirmed the factor structure or structural validity of the first study as there was a high degree of congruence between the two. Interscale correlations showed that each subscale was quite independent of each other yet correlated relatively highly with the Full Scale suggesting "that each subscale appears to be tapping a common domain of academic self-concept." (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 18).

To test the reliability of the SPAS the authors cited estimates of internal consistency as determined by Cronbach's alpha. Full Scale alpha was .92 and on the subscales General Ability and School Satisfaction had alpha estimates of .79 and .74 respectively; Arithmetic was .84, Reading/Spelling was .86, Penmanship/Neatness was .82, and Confidence .69. The authors felt "these coefficients suggest that items within individual subscales are relatively homogeneous, and that all

items polled together appear to be tapping a common domain." (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 31).

Test - retest reliability data gave a stability coefficient for the Full Scale SPAS as .83 with the subscales ranging in value from .71 to .82. The Reading/Spelling subscale was the most stable and internally consistent with a coefficient of .82. Overall, the test - retest data indicates "that academic self-concept, at least measured by the SPAS, is a relatively stable construct over time" (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 31).

External Validity Studies

In an attempt to measure external validity the SPAS was compared and related to other empirical phenomena.

The SPAS was compared to the Piers-Harris childrens' self-concept scale. The correlation coefficients on the Full and Subscale scores ranged from -.03 to .08 with none of them being significant at the .05 level. The data were taken by Boersma & Chapman to indicate that the two scales measured two distinct domains supporting the idea that academic self-concept is a distinct entity from general self-concept.

In comparing SPAS scores with school achievement i.e. end of the year report card marks, the SPAS shows a moderate relationship to school success and relates to current as well as subsequent school achievement. Full Scale SPAS scores

correlated the highest with Averaged Report Card scores ($r = .49$) in the study of 642 students. Of the academic subscales the Reading/Spelling had the highest correlation with Averaged Report Card scores ($r = .50$) and also correlated the highest with year end marks in Spelling ($r = .52$), Reading ($r = .47$) and Language ($r = .40$). Arithmetic correlated the most highly with end of the year marks in Arithmetic ($r = .40$) and the Penmanship/Neatness subscale correlated with the report card penmanship ($r = .40$). General Ability and Confidence's subscales correlated with Averaged Report Card scores at .41 and .40 respectively. The School Satisfaction subscale gave the weakest correlations suggesting that the scores "are not necessarily related to success or failure in school, but probably reflect more pervasive overall likingness for school" (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 37). It should be noted that the "SPAS scores and report card grades reciprocally interact with each other ... [and] ... the SPAS makes a significant additional contribution, in conjunction with cognitive variables in predicting report grades" (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 42).

The SPAS was compared with standardized achievement tests, such as the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (C.T.B.S.) and Wide Range Achievement Test (W.R.A.T.). The SPAS Full Scale score correlated with the composite C.T.B.S. score at .37 and to the W.R.A.T. reading at .26, spelling at .30, showing a moderate relationship. The correlations for achievement scores in reading, spelling and language arts tended to be higher.

The SPAS subscale of General Ability displayed the strongest relationship of predicting future report card grades and had the strongest association with the scores on the C.T.B.S. The authors stated "that academic self-concept, as measured by the SPAS, is predictive of future achievement" (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 45).

The SPAS had low to negligible correlations with I.Q. scores on various intelligence tests, i.e. Otis-Lennon, Canadian Lorge-Thorndike, Canadian Cognitive Abilities, "suggesting the perceptions of academic ability are relatively independent of intelligence [implying] that perceptions of ability are more a function of success levels in school than of intelligence per se" (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 47).

Several studies cited by Boersma and Chapman on learning disabled children (children experiencing problems or failures in school) gave further support to the SPAS's external validity in that it is able "to discriminate between groups of children who are achieving normally and those who are experiencing problems in learning" (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 47). In all four studies cited, learning disabled children's Full Scale SPAS scores were significantly lower than normally achieving children. The L.D. children had considerably lower self-perceptions of their own ability. The studies showed the Total Mean Scores for the learning problems group fell between 37.11 and 39.55. There was a point spread of 11.84, 9.80, 11.08 and 11.31 (a 10- to 12-point

suppression), when compared to normally-achieving students whose overall normative mean score was 46.24. The SPAS also proved to be sensitive to changes in perceived ability over time, such as after a remedial intervention program. It was also "sensitive to increases in academic self-concept as a function of special class placement" (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 55).

Other school-related variables that were used to give indications of external validity were Full Scale SPAS scores correlated with:

1. measures of self-expectations for future academic success;
2. measures of academic locus of control;
3. mothers' and teachers' performance expectations for children; and
4. mothers' ratings of the SPAS as they thought their child would rate it.

The SPAS Total Scores showed moderate to high relationships to these variables showing that the "SPAS scores are related to self-expectations for future performance, and also with attributions of responsibility for successful school outcomes" (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p. 64). The results of some of these studies have been mentioned in the literature review and shall be referred to again in the discussion section.

Procedure

The information on the referral forms filled in by the schools was used to divide the thirty-six students equally among the six teacher-aides hired to help teach the summer school program. Students with similar deficits were grouped together. The six groups were each then separated into two sub-groups of three students; a morning group coming from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and an afternoon class from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The sub-groups alternated schedules halfway through the program.

Before the summer program started, each of the six teacher-aides was required to interview the parent and child, as well as review and discuss with the classroom teacher the referral forms written on each of their six assigned students. It was during these interviews that both the parent and teacher were asked to complete the Student's Perception of Ability Scale forms the way they thought that their child or student might.

The students completed their copy of the SPAS the second day of summer school. The questions were read to them by the teacher-in-charge, and the teacher-aides circulated among the students to help them follow along and keep their place. The students were told to answer the questions as honestly and as best they could. A few of the questions were not appropriate for younger children, such as "I am a messy writer, Yes/No"; "I always understand everything I read,

Yes/No". These questions were qualified and re-phrased for the youngest ones to - "If you could read/write, how would you see yourself?" It appeared that most younger students interpreted the questions at their ability level, and were not aware in most cases that they could not write and answered for printing, could not read (i.e. words) and answered as for looking at pictures in books.

Students were re-tested on the SPAS at the end of the six-week program by their teacher-aides individually or in their small groups. The tests were collected immediately after completion by the teacher-in-charge, to prevent the teacher-aides from looking over the students' responses. The aides were then asked a few days later to complete a copy of the SPAS for each of their students - the way they thought their student might respond.

Thus, each student had five separate perceptions recorded on them: three pre-program scales (child, parent, teacher) and two post program scales (child, teacher-aide).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Analysis was conducted using total, mean and subscale SPAS scores. Comparisons between these scores as well as t-test results were examined. The major area of review was the analysis of the child's scores in relation to himself and to significant others. As an introductory overview, the total Full Scale SPAS scores and the means for the total scores are discussed. The various relationships between the five testings - namely Child-Pre, Child-Post, Parent, Teacher and Teacher-Aide scores were also examined. The other areas analyzed are:

1. the Child-Pre and Post SPAS results (to view the child's perceptions in relation to himself at the start and end of the program;
2. the Child-Pre and Post results compared to Parent, Teacher and Teacher-Aide perspectives;
3. interrelationships between Parent, Teacher and Teacher-Aide data;
4. age and sex differences; and
5. the confidence subscale.

Overview of Student's Perception of Ability Scale
- Full Scale and Mean Scores

Table 1 shows the total SPAS scores for each of the thirty-six students. The table shows how the students were grouped in sets of six with each set of students having the same teacher-aide. The younger children are in the first three

and a half groups. Each student has five sets of SPAS scores, one written by himself at the start of the program (Pre) and one written at the finish (Post) as well as one each from his Parent, Teacher and Teacher-Aide. There were 70 items on the scale giving a total possible score of 70.

TABLE 1
Total SPAS Scores for Each Child
- As Reported by Each Evaluator

Child	Sex	Age (in months)	Child-Pre	Child-Post	Parent	Teacher	Teacher -Aide
1	M	70	29	37	11	11	32
2	M	71	28	44	19	11	40
3	M	68	26	37	39	9	25
4	M	69	21	46	5	1	15
5	M	81	50	51	16	31	35
6	M	85	29	45	25	--	32
7	M	74	28	15	21	29	34
8	M	71	42	54	14	11	21
9	F	89	43	32	--	15	20
10	F	--	46	48	15	--	41
11	F	80	47	57	50	49	54
12	F	102	35	46	53	--	52
13	M	74	40	--	24	17	54
14	F	71	37	53	37	32	58
15	M	88	40	44	26	12	59
16	M	83	43	52	8	5	48
17	M	80	59	--	--	17	--
18	M	102	46	39	29	--	37
19	M	86	38	39	19	--	56
20	M	83	38	38	10	--	58
21	M	92	59	--	39	--	60
22	F	107	34	--	15	--	54
23	M	120	60	--	35	--	54
24	M	--	53	--	54	--	65
25	M	99	29	--	35	48	--
26	M	107	29	35	26	11	47
27	M	122	66	53	60	57	56
28	M	123	34	46	16	31	24
29	M	134	37	36	40	19	24
30	M	152	56	69	37	--	48
31	F	107	36	50	31	--	42
32	F	123	20	22	9	33	33
33	M	144	37	48	30	9	25
34	F	147	52	29	43	19	40
35	M	155	25	24	19	--	35
36	M	155	37	34	43	16	27

The sample of thirty-six students was quite small and Table 1 shows that some comparison samples were even smaller because of missing data such as that for students in the fourth group (Children 19-24) where Teacher data and final Post scores are missing due to an oversight on the part of the teacher-aide. The raw data for Table 1 is given in Appendix "C". Although the SPAS was designed for older students, normative data on the SPAS show it being appropriate to administer to late grade two students (age norms were not given). Table 1 shows several of the students writing the SPAS were quite young (youngest 5.6 years) and not necessarily age appropriate or subject proficient to be subjects. This did not seem to pose a problem for the students as most of them interpreted the questions from their perspective (as explained in Chapter 4). However, their parents and teachers qualified the questions and answered only questions that they felt applied to their child's level or skill contributing, as a result, to very low scores. This possibly affected the accuracy of several of the comparisons. The teacher-aides had much higher scores, with one of the reasons being that they answered the questions the way they thought the student would without any qualifiers.

Seven students did not write the Post-test due to three factors; two dropped out of the program, one left early for holidays, and four through teacher-aide oversight. Of those children who wrote both Pre and Post, nine students showed a decrease in their final score (from 1 to 23 points),

twenty showed an increase (from 1 to 25 points), and one remained the same.

Table 2 is a summary of the mean scores for each of the five tests showing the number of total scores included for each mean total as well as the standard deviations. The

TABLE 2
SPAS SUMMARY STATISTICS

	No.	Mean	Std.Dev.	Std. Error
Child-Pre	36	39.7	11.6	1.93
Child-Post	29	42.2	11.5	2.13
Parent	34	28.0	14.5	2.48
Teacher	23	21.4	14.9	3.10
Teacher-Aide	34	41.3	13.9	2.39

children's mean score showed an improvement of 2.5 points from Pre (39.7) to Post (42.2) with the standard deviation being very consistent for both sets of scores (Pre SD = 11.6, Post SD = 11.5). The children's scores showed a smaller range of scores or less variability in comparison to those of the Parent, Teacher and Teacher-Aide. The teachers had the largest range of scores (SD = 14.9) and they had the lowest expectations for the children with a mean score of 21.4. The parents also showed low perceptions of their child's academic self-concept yet were closer to the child's mean score than the class room teachers. The parents, whose mean score was 28.0, had a fairly high range of scores (SD = 14.5). The Teacher-

Aide observations were closer to those of the Child both on the Pre and the Post tests showing higher expectations than those of the Parent and Teacher.

Table 3 shows the statistical significance of various comparisons between the mean scores on the five separate tests.

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF TOTAL MEANS
ON FULL-SCALE SPAS SCORES

Comparison	No.	Mean	St.Dev.	t-Value	Two-Tailed Probability
Child-Pre Child-Post	29	37.8 42.2	10.5 11.5	-2.20	.036
Child-Pre Parent	34	39.1 28.0	11.4 14.5	4.96	.000
Child-Pre Teacher	23	38.0 21.4	11.6 14.9	5.15	.000
Child-Pre Teacher-Aide	34	39.5 41.3	11.3 13.9	-0.84	.409
Child-Post Teacher-Aide	29	42.2 38.6	11.5 13.1	-1.32	.196
Parent Teacher	21	27.2 22.0	15.1 15.5	1.64	.117
Parent Teacher-Aide	33	27.8 42.0	14.7 13.6	-5.09	.000
Teacher Teacher-Aide	21	20.4 36.7	14.3 14.0	-4.93	.000

The children's Pre mean scores were compared to their final mean scores and to the mean scores of the Parent, Teacher and Teacher-Aide. Comparisons were made only between cases where there were two sets of complete data for each child.

In comparing the child's perception of himself at the start and finish of the summer program there was a significant difference between the Child-Pre to Post test ($p = .036$) showing a possible positive effect of the intervention program. The means for the 29 children compared improved 4.4 points from 37.8 to 42.5. These means were quite comparable with Boersma and Chapman's normative range of scores for learning disabled students which was from 37.1 to 39.5.

In looking at the Child scores compared to those for the Parent, Teacher, and Teacher-Aide there is a significant difference between the Child-Pre mean scores and the Parent expectations ($p = .000$) for the thirty-four students examined. The Parent mean of 28.0 points was lower than the Child 39.1 mean by 11.1 points. For the comparison between the means of the Child Pre SPAS (38.0) and the Teacher perceptions, the sample was small (23 children) and showed a large degree of variance, yet there was a significant relationship ($p = .000$). The teachers' expectations for the students' self-perceptions were very low compared with the Child-Pre showing a 16.6 point difference. The teacher-aides on the other hand did not differ significantly from the children on either the Pre or Post tests. The teacher-aides rated the students 1.9 points higher on the Pre test, 3.62 points lower on the Post test. Their marks were so close to those of the Child that the difference was negligible.

The last comparisons shown in Table 3 are between Parent and Teacher, Parent and Teacher-Aide, and Teacher and Teacher-Aide. The comparison for 21 children between the Parent total mean score and that of the Teacher was not statistically significant. There was a similar wide range of scores ($SD = 15.1$) between the Parent total mean score of 27.2 and the Teacher total mean score of 21.95. The teacher-aides showed a better understanding of how the students felt than their parents did giving them 14.18 more points than the parents. The difference between the total mean score for the Parent of 27.8 and the total mean score for the Teacher-Aide of 41.97 was significant ($p = .000$). The last comparison, that of the Teacher to Teacher-Aide, was for a small sample of 21 students but showed a significant difference between the scores ($p = .000$). The teacher-aides (36.7) rated the students 16.3 points higher than the teachers (20.4).

To summarize the total mean scores, the Teacher-Aide mean scores were closest to those of the Child. They were not significantly different when compared to the Child-Pre and Post, but were different from Teacher and Parent mean scores. The Parent and Teacher mean scores were significantly lower than those of the Child, showing a wider degree of variance. They were significantly different from Child-Pre and Post and Teacher-Aide mean scores but were not different from each other.

The correlations among scores are shown in Table 4. The Child total scores on the Pre test showed a significant correlation with the Post test scores ($p = .003$) as well as with the Parent scores ($p = .002$) and the Teacher-Aide scores ($p = .003$). They were not significant when compared to the Teacher scores, ($p = .112$) possibly due to the small sample.

TABLE 4

CORRELATIONS OF TOTAL SCORES

	<u>CHILD-PRE</u>	<u>CHILD-POST</u>	<u>PARENT</u>	<u>TEACHER</u>	<u>TEACHER -AIDE</u>
Child-Pre	-	-	-	-	-
Child-Post	.528 (.003) ^a	-	-	-	-
Parent	.518 (.002)	-	-	-	-
Teacher	.340 (.112)	-	.534 (.013)	-	-
Teacher-Aide	.489 (.003)	.284 (.135)	.359 (.040)	.425 (.055)	-

^a Figures in parentheses are two-tailed probability.

The correlation between the Child-Post scores and the Teacher-Aide scores was not significant ($p = .135$). The Parent scores were significantly related to the Teacher scores, ($p = .013$) and to those of the Teacher-Aide ($p = .040$). Lastly, the correlation between the Teacher and Teacher-Aide total scores was not significant ($p = .055$).

Comparison of Child Perceptions to:
Self and Significant Others

This section takes a closer look at the child's academic perceptions of himself as well as his perceptions compared to the significant others in his life. Childrens' self-esteem is affected positively and negatively by the perceptions held by themselves as well as those held by significant others. The previous section summarized the comparisons for the total and mean scores while this section analyses the various component subscales that make up the SPAS. The raw data for the SPAS subscale scores are given in Appendix D.

The SPAS was divided into six subscales with twelve questions in each except for the last scale (Confidence) which

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF SPAS SUBSCALE SCORES
FOR CHILD, PRE AND POST (N=29)^a

Subscale	No. of Items	CHILD-PRE		CHILD-POST		Two-tailed Probability
		Mean	Std.Dev.	Mean	Std.Dev.	
General Ability	12	5.35	3.27	5.86	3.24	.395
Arithmetic	12	6.83	2.98	7.55	2.53	.208
Student Satisfaction	12	7.59	3.90	8.44	3.41	.214
Reading /Spelling	12	6.10	3.24	6.69	3.24	.251
Penmanship /Neatness	12	7.00	1.73	7.76	2.42	.139
Confidence	10	4.93	2.48	5.86	2.91	.029

^a multivariate $F = 0.92$; $df = 6,23$; $p = 0.500$

had ten items. Table 5 compares the Child-Pre to Post subscales for twenty-nine children. The multivariate F-test shows that the various subscale means taken into account simultaneously or as a whole are not significantly different. As a result, none of the comparisons can be construed as significant. Thus, the confidence subscale which shows as significant ($p = .029$) cannot be counted and must be concluded to be due to chance. It must be noted that the scores show a slight tendency to increase but statistically there is no significant difference from the Child-Pre to Post subscale scores as there was for the total mean scores.

There is a significant difference between the Child Pre and Parent subscale scores (see Table 6) when taken as a

TABLE 6
COMPARISON OF SPAS SUBSCALE SCORES^a
FOR CHILD-PRE AND PARENT (N=29)

Subscales	No. of Items	<u>CHILD-PRE</u>		<u>PARENT</u>		Two-tailed Probability
		Mean	Std.Dev.	Mean	Std.Dev.	
General Ability	12	5.41	2.96	5.17	3.24	.661
Arithmetic	12	7.59	3.08	5.00	3.86	.002
Student Satisfaction	12	8.48	3.43	6.62	2.97	.004
Reading /Spelling	12	6.45	3.31	4.79	4.40	.039
Penmanship /Neatness	12	7.51	1.92	5.69	4.12	.013
Confidence	10	4.93	2.62	2.59	2.15	.0003

^a multivariate $F = 3.55$; $df = 6,23$; $p = 0.012$

whole ($p = .012$) and individually for all the subscales except for General Ability. The comparison was for twenty-one children, and the parents rated the children significantly lower on the five sub-scales as they did on the total mean scores.

The Child-Pre subscale scores showed no significant difference when compared to those of the Teacher (see Table 7). Since the multivariate F-test shows that the subscales taken into account as a whole are not significant the five subscales which indicate significant differences (excluding General Ability) cannot be given credit. It must be noted that problems with the analysis possibly occurred because the sample of matching data was very small, making the comparison between only fifteen children and teachers.

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF SPAS SUBSCALE SCORES
FOR CHILD-PRE AND TEACHER (N=15)^a

Subscales	No. of Items	<u>CHILD-PRE</u>		<u>TEACHER</u>		Two-Tailed Probability
		Mean	Std.Dev.	Mean	Std.Dev.	
General Ability	12	6.80	3.14	5.60	3.64	.345
Arithmetic	12	7.13	3.04	4.80	4.13	.035
Student Satisfaction	12	7.47	3.46	4.00	2.70	.001
Reading /Spelling	12	7.33	3.04	4.40	4.24	.037
Penmanship /Spelling	12	7.80	2.07	5.07	3.63	.015
Confidence	10	4.00	2.88	1.87	1.92	.011

^a multivariate $F = 2.34$; $df = 6,9$; $p = 0.121$

The last comparison between the Child data and significant other was between the Child-Pre and Post subscales with those of the Teacher-Aide (see Table 8). Table 3 showed that the total means showed no significant difference for this comparison but Table 8 shows that when the parts are analyzed there is a significant difference for the subscales taken as a whole. The multivariate F-tests show a significant difference at the .001 level for the comparison between the Child-Pre subscales to those of the Teacher-Aide. However, the only subscales which ranked as significant were General Ability ($p = .004$) and Confidence ($p = .004$). The teacher-aides rated the students higher on all but two subscales, Arithmetic and Confidence. On the Post subscale scores, the multivariate F-test indicated a

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF SPAS SUBSCALE SCORES
FOR CHILD-PRE AND TEACHER-AIDE (N=34)^a, CHILD-POST AND TEACHER-AIDE (N=29)^b

Subscale	<u>CHILD-PRE</u>		<u>TEACHER-AIDE</u>		Two Tailed Prob.	<u>CHILD-POST</u>		<u>TEACHER-AIDE</u>		Two Tailed Prob.
	Mean	St.Dev	Mean	St.Dev		Mean	St.Dev	Mean	St.Dev	
General Ability	5.44	3.09	7.68	3.20	.004	5.86	3.24	7.10	3.10	.154
Arithmetic	7.21	3.07	7.09	3.04	.842	7.55	2.53	6.59	2.98	.067
Student Satisfaction	7.97	3.77	8.18	2.98	.727	8.45	3.41	7.90	2.97	.351
Reading /Spelling	6.38	3.31	6.82	4.69	.529	6.69	3.24	6.24	4.75	.614
Penmanship /Neatness	7.35	1.89	7.71	3.72	.582	7.76	2.42	7.17	3.75	.457
Confidence	5.12	2.45	3.85	2.18	.004	5.86	2.91	3.55	2.05	.001

^a multivariate $F=5.00$; $df=6,28$; $p=0.001$

^b multivariate $F=4.76$; $df=6,23$; $p=0.003$

significant difference at the .003 level with the subscale of Confidence showing the only significant difference ($p = .001$).

In assessing the relationships shown one must keep in mind that the sample groups varied greatly in size. To summarize Tables 3 to 8: there was a significant difference between Child-Pre and Post total mean scores, but there were no significant improvements for the various subscales even though they showed a trend to increase; there were significant differences for both the total mean scores and subscale scores between Child-Pre and Parent; there was a significant difference for the total mean scores between Child-Pre and Teacher but not for subscale scores; and lastly, there were no significant differences between Child-Pre or Post total mean scores and Teacher-Aide but there was for the subscale comparisons.

Relationships Between Perceptions of Significant Adults

The expectations of significant others may have an effect on children. It is important to examine and compare the perceptions held by the significant adults in their lives. In comparing the perceptions of the parents, teachers and teacher-aides to each other one must again keep in mind that due to missing data, the number of cases compared varied considerably. There were fourteen cases compared between Parent and Teacher, twenty-eight for Parent and Teacher-Aide, and thirteen cases for Teacher and Teacher-Aide.

Table 9 shows the comparison of the various subscale mean scores for the Parent and Teacher. There were no significant differences either for the Total Mean Scores or for the Subscale mean scores. The multivariate F-test level of .058

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF SPAS SUBSCALE SCORES
AND MEANS FOR PARENT AND TEACHER^a

Subscale	No.of Items	PARENT (N=14)	TEACHER (N=14)	Two-tailed Probability
General Ability	12	6.07	5.64	.753
Arithmetic	12	4.64	4.79	.849
Student Satisfaction	12	6.29	4.14	.010
Reading /Spelling	12	5.14	4.64	.692
Penmanship /Neatness	12	5.43	5.29	.907
Confidence	10	2.64	1.86	.258
TOTAL SPAS	70	(27.23)	(21.95)	.117

^a multivariate $F = 3.36$; $df = 6,8$; $p = 0.058$

prevents the Student Satisfaction subscale score from being classed as significant. There is a tendency for parents to be closer to their child's perspective than the classroom teachers.

The comparison between Parent and Teacher-Aide was significant for the subscales when taken as a whole as well as for each individual scale (see Table 10). The teacher-aides

rated the students higher on all subscales. Their perceptions were closer than the parents' to those of the children.

TABLE 10

COMPARISON OF SPAS SUBSCALE SCORES
FOR PARENT AND TEACHER-AIDE (N=28)^a

Subscale	No. of Items	PARENT		TEACHER-AIDE		Two-tailed Probability
		Mean	St.Dev	Mean	St.Dev	
General Ability	12	5.25	3.27	8.21	2.73	.0007
Arithmetic	12	4.82	3.81	7.57	2.90	.0002
Student Satisfaction	12	6.57	3.01	8.11	2.95	.037
Reading /Spelling	12	4.86	4.46	7.64	4.47	.003
Penmanship /Neatness	12	5.57	4.15	7.93	3.86	.027
Confidence	10	2.61	2.18	4.07	2.09	.002

^a multivariate $F = 3.66$; $df = 6,22$; $p = 0.011$

The final comparison was between the Teacher and Teacher-Aide (see Table 11). There was no significance on the multivariate F-test ($p = .272$) making the four subscale differences which show as significant (General Ability, Student Satisfaction, Reading/Spelling and Confidence) invalid. The teacher-aides' perceptions were higher than the teachers' and were closer to the perceptions held by the children.

TABLE 11

COMPARISON OF SPAS SUBSCALE SCORES
FOR TEACHER AND TEACHER-AIDES (N=13)^a

Subscale	No. of Items	<u>TEACHER</u>		<u>TEACHER-AIDE</u>		Two-tailed Probability
		Mean	St.Dev.	Mean	St.Dev.	
General Ability	12	5.39	3.80	7.92	1.98	.032
Arithmetic	12	4.46	4.27	6.54	3.36	.072
Student Satisfaction	12	3.92	2.72	7.08	3.10	.015
Reading /Spelling	12	4.73	4.17	7.69	4.35	.015
Penmanship /Neatness	12	5.00	3.65	6.08	4.68	.453
Confidence	10	1.69	1.97	3.62	1.98	.006

^a multivariate $F = 1.61$; $df = 6,7$; $p = 0.072$

To summarize, the differences between Parent and Teacher, Teacher and Teacher-Aide were not significant, but the differences between the Parent and Teacher-Aide were. The teacher-aides' perceptions were the highest and closest to the childrens' scores, whereas the classroom teachers had the lowest perceptions.

Age and Gender Difference

There were no significant age or gender differences in this study. Tables 12 and 13 have been included for interest only as they show possible trends for future research. Table 12 shows the comparison between the younger and older

TABLE 12

COMPARISON OF FULL SCALE SPAS TOTAL MEAN SCORES
FOR AGE AND SEX (N=29)

	Total Mean	MALE		FEMALE	
		Younger ¹ (N=12)	Older ² (N=9)	Younger ¹ (N=4)	Older ² (N=4)
Pre	37.79	34.33	40.89	43.25	35.75
Post	42.17	41.83	42.67	47.50	36.75

¹ younger - below 99 months

² older - above 99 months

boys and girls in the program for the Total Mean Scores on the basis of gender and age. Ninety-nine months (8.2 years) and below was the cut-off age for younger children. The comparison is not statistically significant but shows a trend for all children to gain on Pre to Post scores. The subscale scores show a slight but insignificant trend to increase from Pre to

TABLE 13

COMPARISON OF SPAS SUBSCALE SCORES
ON BASIS OF SEX (N=29)

Subscale	MALE (N=21)		FEMALE (N=8)	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
General Ability	5.54	5.62	5.25	6.50
Arithmetic	6.57	7.94	8.00	6.75
Student Satisfaction	7.03	8.10	9.00	9.13
Reading /Spelling	6.10	6.42	6.50	7.63
Penmanship /Neatness	7.32	8.11	6.38	6.75
Confidence	5.06	5.89	4.38	5.38

Post regardless of sex (see Table 13) except for girls on the Post Arithmetic subscale. The girls had higher Pre subscale scores for Arithmetic, Student Satisfaction, and Reading/Spelling as well as higher Post subscale scores for the General Ability, School Satisfaction and Reading/Spelling scales.

Confidence Subscale

One of the basic aims of the summer program was to build the level of confidence in the student. Table 14 shows mean scores on the confidence subscale by age and gender for the Child-Pre and Post scores. All groups showed an

TABLE 14

COMPARISON OF CONFIDENCE SUBSCALE
ON BASIS OF SEX AND AGE (N=29)

	MALES		FEMALES	
	Younger (N=12)	Older (N=9)	Younger (N=12)	Older (N=9)
Pre	5.67	4.44	5.50	3.25
Post	7.00	4.78	6.50	4.25

increase regardless of age or sex. The teachers rated the children's confidence the lowest (see Table 7) with the parents second lowest (see Table 6). The teacher-aides were closest in their perceptions (see Table 8) of the children's view of confidence and these trends shall be examined in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

Results from this study are only valid for this group of students and can not be transferred to the larger group of learning disabled children per se. This study shows several trends which would be worthwhile to pursue in future research, and raises several questions that warrant future investigation.

This discussion will examine the data by giving some of the relevant summer school background information that applies to the tables, the data will be related to Boersma and Chapman's results contained in the SPAS manual, an analysis of the relationships between child, parent, teacher and teacher-aide expectations will be examined and summaries of current research will be cited as support for the recommendations generated.

Summer Program Background Information

The summer program had two major instructional components aimed at affecting self-concept. The first was the use of a 'Magic Circle' Human Development Program designed to develop social skills and sensitivities by sharing feelings and emotions (Palomares & Ball, 1974). The students had a group time where each child had a chance to share his thoughts and feelings on a certain topic. The basic rules of respecting

another's thoughts, listening with empathy, and reflecting back with awareness and understanding were taught. The group became quite warm and supportive to one another and gave total attention and respect to each person as they shared. The second component was a Daily Exercise Program designed to improve coordination skills and create a sense of accomplishment from the mastering of several basic skills. The child repeated several basic tasks each day for a one minute period and his results were charted. Tasks such as the number of situps in one minute, number of times a ball was bounced by right hand in one minute, were recorded. All students improved in all areas and needless to say were most proud and excited with their results.

The two program components were designed to allow the child some measure of success in front of his peers. Magic Circle helped the children develop verbal and listening skills giving them greater confidence in social situations. The Exercise Program gave immediate success in that daily practice increased their skills and "since, in the human developmental hierarchy, motor development occurs first to form the foundation, then, any program which seeks to strengthen a child's self-concept should have as its basis an awareness of the child's motor development" (Twenter, 1977, p. 9). Each child participated in these programs once a day along with their own individualized remediation program that addressed academic needs.

In looking at the overall scores on the SPAS tests, students showed the trend to improve from Pre to Post results. Both Magic Circle and the Daily Exercise Program were designed to build self-esteem by the process of mastery of social and physical skills. It is possible that the slight increase in the Child's Pre to Post scores reflect this. Eight students did not improve from Pre to Post and it is possible that the Magic Circle Program which promotes sharing, honesty and openness, caused the results to become lower or more realistic in that egos and feelings of self worth were no longer at stake. The element of trust that developed made it okay to have more negative responses on the scale.

The teacher-aides were given an intense one week workshop as well as weekly meetings on how to teach learning disabled students. They were taught educational theories, philosophies and practices, especially those which developed an understanding of and respect for learning disabled students. They were given training on the nature of the L.D. child and the need for understanding, compassion, support, strict guidelines, and firm limits. They were also given training on the influence that positive behavior and high expectations can have on L.D. children. The aides were able to meet and discover the child and his personality under non-threatening conditions outside of the stresses of regular classes.

The aides were instructed to report positive gains and developments to the parents whenever possible. It was

hoped that the positive feed back would increase the parents' awareness of their child's skills, nurture a sense of hope for future successes, give the parents a chance to share positive interactions with their children and help alleviate some of the worry, concern and stress that parents of L.D. students can have. The aides became quite good at building daily successes into the program and were quite proud to be bearers of good news to the parents.

It appears from the present data that there was not sufficient time to allow for the positive effects of a summer intervention program to occur. Leviton and Kiraly (1975) found that self-concept improved after a summer compensatory education program but "this improvement is not detectible immediately after the treatment because it takes time to manifest itself" (p. 49). Endler and Minden (1972) also found that it takes time for initial consolidation to occur after a summer program. Had the interval of time between Pre and Post testing in the current study been greater, the impact of the program on self-esteem might have been more dramatic.

In looking at the SPAS Total Mean Scores the Teacher-aides had higher scores than the Parent and Teacher. Aside from the fact that they were trained to be sympathetic to L.D. students, it is possible that their positive views and high expectations for the children influenced their scoring. It is possible that their expectations for a successful summer school caused them to mark the students in a positive manner.

They knew the child for a shorter time and possibly had less time to become disenchanted or frustrated with the L.D. student. In looking at the low scores given by the parents and teachers it is possible that the frustrations of the past school year affected the parents' and teachers' views. Also the fact that the children had such weak skills and needed to attend summer school in the first place caused the parents and teachers to see the children as having poor self-concepts. It is possible that parents and teachers equate the two domains of academic achievement and academic self-concept as one and the same. The teachers had lower scores than the parents, possibly due to their more intimate knowledge of the children's academic deficiencies or because of a differential response rate to the items.

The fact that the teacher-aides, who had no past history perceptions or knowledge to cloud their opinion of the children, were able to perceive more accurately the children's view of themselves shows that expectations or personal estimates for a child can be affected by tangential knowledge. In other words, personal perceptions and knowledge of the child can affect or bias one's view, opinion or expectations for that child. Is it possible that familiarity with academic deficit lowers or reduces positive expectation? Do the role differences of the significant others interfere with their perspective of the child? Are teachers more negative towards L.D. students only or would they have scored regular students' views of themselves low also?

In taking a final look at the total scores and total mean scores it is obvious that there is a definite discrepancy between the scores of Child, Parent, Teacher and Teacher-Aide. This discrepancy, in my opinion, is the most significant result from this study. Why would parents and teachers have such discrepant scores on how they think the child sees himself? Even taking into account that parents and teachers qualified several questions and answered from their own point of view, the gap between child scores and those of close and significant others was surprisingly large. Another study which compares the perceptions of older children (grade three and up, with an equal number of girls and boys, learning disabled and normal achievers) to those of their parents and teachers needs to be carried out to see if the trend for widely discrepant scores persists between significant others. And further research is needed to see if this discrepancy is in fact one of the causes of learning disabilities in that significant others have lowered expectations for the child so he in turn lowers his expectations for himself and thus sets into motion the effects of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Summary of Results in Relation to SPAS Normative Data

In comparing the results of this study to the normative data from the SPAS, four areas can be discussed.

The normative range of SPAS scores for learning disabled students ranged from 37.1 to 39.5. For this study

they ranged from 37.8 to 42.5, which is reasonably close to the normative scores.

The SPAS normative data stated that the mothers' SPAS scores correlated with the child's scores $r = .518$ and:

Thus, children's self-perceptions of ability seem to be somewhat related to the perceptions that mothers have of their children's academic self-concepts, and also to the performance expectations held by mothers. This suggests, indirectly, that mothers tend to perceive their children's academic self-concepts fairly accurately, and that mothers' expectations regarding future achievement for these children is in line with their perceptions (Boersma & Chapman, 1979, p.63-64).

However, results from this study show that there was a significant difference of 11.7 points between the child and parent scores and there was a large degree of variance with the parents scores. The correlation $r = .518$ between how the parent and child ranked the scores was also significant ($p = .002$) but the interpretation of that correlation differs from the interpretation offered by Boersma and Chapman. The difference between the children and parents was sufficiently large to suggest that in spite of the significance of the correlation, the parents were not very perceptive of the children's self-concept.

Another area that can be compared relates age and sex differences. The normative data on the SPAS shows that there were differences based on sex in that girls had higher scores in Student Satisfaction and Penmanship/

Neatness. Results from this study do not support this as there were no age or sex differences.

The last area regarding normative data to be looked at is subscale intercorrelations which were quite low. Chapman & Boersma state that "these low median correlations indicate that each sub-scale is quite independent of each other, whereas the relatively high correlations with the Full Scale suggest that each subscale appears to be tapping a common domain of academic self-concept" (1979, p. 18). This appears to be the reason that the comparison of the Child-Pre to Child-Post, where there is a trend for all the scores to increase, the multivariate F-tests (which looks at these scales as a whole) are not significant.

Child, Parent, Teacher and Teacher-Aide Expectations

For this study results show that parents and teachers had low expectations for the child's perception of his ability while expectations of the Teacher Aide were higher. In rating the Child's confidence subscale score all three significant others saw the child much lower than the child saw himself. It is possible their views of his confidence are inaccurate because they personalize his difficulties and feel that these problems as an adult would affect their confidence and should therefore affect his. The child on the other hand feels confident because his view does not involve the years of experience and

knowledge of what a learning disability can mean. In other words, the significant adults were quite judgmental in their view of the child and possibly see him as inferior because of his learning disability. This aspect warrants future research.

Also it seems quite shocking that teachers had such low expectations of the children's view because they hold such powerful positions as significant others to both the child and parent. The teacher's low view of the child can influence the parents' perception and (a) cause parents to lose hope in their child's future successes, (b) cause parents to lower their expectations for their child, and (c) cause the cycle of lowered self-concept to be activated in the child because of the effect of negative teacher-parent interactions. It is important that the effects of teacher views be examined more closely. "At present, further research aimed at determining the bases upon which teachers form their expectancies for students' performance and the relationship of these bases to students' achievement in the academic situation are needed" (Dusek, 1975, p. 680). It is imperative that we clarify the effects teachers can have on students' learning and academic self-concept.

Summary of Review of the Literature - Key Quotes

In summing up the literature on the development of self-concept it becomes apparent that self-concept appears to be an organic process that is learned by doing and accomplishing tasks; by taking charge and becoming responsible for one's own learning.

Through meeting tasks that are challenging to them, children learn to cope with the real world. Self-concepts of competence in work emerge gradually, enabling the children to meet subsequent challenges with a calm confidence. Children who do not acquire a sense of competence become dissatisfied with themselves, unfriendly to those around them, resistant to authority, and perhaps rebellious against society. Studies of delinquents have shown that in almost every case the school was unable to give the individual a sense of competence; he then tried to maintain a sort of self-esteem by antisocial means (Sears & Sherman, 1964 p. 3).

It is important that the significant adults structure the child's environment and provide support and encouragement that will empower the child to control his own life because:

the person who has a clear, consistent, positive, and realistic self-concept will generally have a healthy, confident, constructive and effective ways. Such persons are more secure, confident and self respecting; they have less to prove to others; they are less threatened by difficult tasks, people and situations; they relate to and work with others more comfortably and effectively, and their perceptions of the world of reality are less likely to be distorted. . . . the more optimal the individual's self concept the more effectively he will function (Fitts, 1972a, p. 4).

"Teachers, in their capacity of significant others, need to view students in essentially positive ways and hold favourable expectations" (Purkey, 1970, p. 47). "The remedial teacher should work systematically towards building positive affect and hopeful expectation, utilizing self-instruction or some other procedure for promoting positive affect, and afford these variables an equal focus in the remedial program" (Hiebert, Wong & Hunter, 1982 p. 342). The feelings of being less good, less worthy and devalued must be diffused and dissipated before a learning disabled child can rebuild a healthy self-concept (Rosenberg & Gaier, 1977, p. 497). Teachers need to set up realistic standards of excellence, eliminate excessive failure experiences and create conditions that maximize success.

Academic competence can be fostered by teachers who personalize instruction to meet each child's developmental level so that goals are attainable, success is experienced, and expectations are based on each child's academic potential, rather than on preconceived ideas about children's abilities based on misconceptions relating to race, sex, or social class (Samuels, 1977).

A teacher can inspire confidence. But "unless the teacher is confident that his pupil will be successful, the child will probably not change his self-image of being a failure in reading or in any other school subject ... it is the teacher and the teacher's belief in the pupil's success that can inspire such a transformation" (Glock, 1972, 407-408). The school and the academic curriculum:

must provide opportunities for experiences which enable people to develop self-concepts for effective living. The plea is for education to focus on facilitating changes in ways the

learner sees and feels about himself in relation to his life experience (Perkins, 1957).

School must also foster a will to learn and to relearn; in effect, they must develop a capacity for life-long self-renewal. Students must be encouraged to believe in themselves and in the validity of their own thought processes. In addition, they must develop a sense of personal effectiveness, that is, the conviction that they control their own destiny and cause their own achievements (Covington & Beery, 1976, p. 4).

Significant others must be taught to expect more of children so that children will expect more of themselves as:

Children who have good abilities and high teacher and parent expectations have good probability for increased success in school. The consequence of low adult expectations for these children may lie in the perpetuation of underachievement. In these circumstances, the prospects of LD students overcoming a developmental lag, or of remedying specific cognitive disabilities, seem considerably reduced. In line with this, there is a definite need to explore more explicitly procedures for educating parents and teachers regarding the influence that the attitudes of significant others can have on children's affective and cognitive development (Boersma & Chapman, 1982, p. 220).

It is imperative that teachers learn to become 'promoters' of children. They must provide ample and positive feedback because:

"Convincing or reassuring the parents of the normal intelligence of their child, while giving them a realistic appraisal of his difficulties and potentialities, may improve a home situation that will, in turn, enhance the self-concept of the student. The parents, as well as the student, will require more than a casual test interpretation to alter their ideas of their child's level of ability" (Beare, 1975, p. 32).

We need to educate parents and teachers regarding the influence of their attitudes and expectations on the affective and cognitive development of their child as early on in the

child's academic career as possible. A teacher's belief in success can inspire a child's negative self-concept to change. A parent's encouragement and support can help the child attain his achievement goals. Children need to feel they are loved, respected and valued. Only by involving significant others to effect a change in the child's self-concept and having them develop more accepting, encouraging and supportive attitudes will we have children who are not afraid to tell us who they are.

APPENDIX A

A.C.L.D. Summer School Referral Form

1981 Summer Program Referral

A.C.L.D.

"Let's Learn"

Age Range: Elementary

Dates: July 6, 1981 to August 14, 1981.

Referrals must be in hands of District Counsellors by May 1,
1981.For information call:

The information requested below is desired solely for the purpose of gaining a full understanding of the child. Please answer all questions as fully as possible.

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Parent or Guardian _____ Age _____

Address _____ Phone No. Home _____
_____ Work _____

Family Doctor _____ Phone No. _____

Office Address _____

Person to contact in case of Emergency
other than parent _____

Phone No. _____

Relationship to child _____

School _____ Teacher _____

Phone _____ School Counsellor _____

Grade _____

Person Referring _____

Records of Previous Testing - Academic Achievement, etc.

Reading _____

Language _____
(Spelling) _____

Arithmetic _____

- Others:

What do you think are the student's main problem(s)?

As you see it, what way could the A.C.L.D. Summer program be of Assistance?

What area do you feel needs the most work?

What are some of the student's strong points?

Describe the student's behaviour in school:

How does this child react to a difficult task?

Describe the student's relationship to other students:

How many students are in the classroom:

How much individual instruction does the child receive? -
i.e., does the child see a remedial teacher? How often?

What type of program?

What is the current and post-school attendance record of the student?

Reading

What series of readers is being used in the student's classroom for the reading program. State specific text and last completed story:

What are the student's reactions to reading (interests, attitudes, etc.)?

How is this student grouped for other subjects and what is provided for any special reading problems he/she may have?

Math

What arithmetic processes are being studied by the student currently? In what series, level and text?

What arithmetic processes cause problems for the child?

Are there any other areas in which the student is experiencing difficulties?

Does the student have difficulties expressing himself/herself on paper? How?

Does this child have any specific diagnosed conditions: (Cerebral Palsey, Epilepsy, Allergies, etc.)

Additional comments or instructions: (speech, hearing, sight problems. Specific educational approaches or programs used.)

Other persons, if any, consulted or who might be consulted in preparing this referral.

Discuss this referral with parents and obtain parents' signatures.

This referral will be discussed with the teacher in the last week of school by the aide who will work with the child.

APPENDIX B

Student's Perception of Ability Scale.
Frederic J. Boersma and James W. Chapman, 1977

STUDENT'S PERCEPTION OF ABILITY SCALE

Frederic J. Boersma and James W. Chapman

Name _____ Birth Date _____

Boy _____ Girl _____ Grade _____ School _____

IMPORTANT DIRECTIONS FOR MARKING ANSWERS

Use black soft lead pencil only.
 Circle each answer completely.
 Erase clearly any answer you wish to change.
 Make no stray marks on this answer sheet.
 Answer each item Yes or No.

DO NOT MARK BELOW THIS LINE

STUDENT I.D.

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Col 1 2 3 4

SEX

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5

GRADE

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6

AGE IN MONTHS

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7 8 9

DIRECTIONS

This booklet has a list of statements about how you feel about school. Some of these are true and some are not. Circle the YES if the statement is usually true of you. Circle the NO if the statement is not usually true of you. Read each question carefully and answer every item, even if it is hard to decide which answer is most like you. Do not circle both YES and NO. Just circle one answer for each statement. This is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers. Please mark exactly how you really feel inside about school.

1. I always understand everything I read	YES	NO
2. My school work is usually untidy	YES	NO
3. All new words are easy for me to spell	YES	NO
4. I find it hard to understand what I have to do	YES	NO
5. I think my school work is really good	YES	NO
6. I usually have problems understanding what I read	YES	NO
7. I am one of the smartest kids in the class	YES	NO
8. I have neat printing	YES	NO
9. I usually finish my schoolwork	YES	NO
10. I am unhappy with how I read	YES	NO
11. I like reading	YES	NO
12. My printing is perfect	YES	NO
13. I am good at spelling	YES	NO
14. I make many mistakes in school	YES	NO
15. I have problems in spelling	YES	NO
16. I like to read to my parents	YES	NO
17. I am happy with the way I spell	YES	NO
18. I like making up endings to stories	YES	NO
19. My teacher thinks I write poor stories	YES	NO
20. I am poor at subtraction	YES	NO

21. I like to answer questions	YES	NO
22. Working with my hands is hard	YES	NO
23. I like doing printing	YES	NO
24. I have trouble drawing pictures	YES	NO
25. I am poor at silent reading	YES	NO
26. I have problems printing neatly	YES	NO
27. I am good with my times tables	YES	NO
28. I am good at drawing	YES	NO
29. When school gets tough I give up	YES	NO
30. I like to do story problems	YES	NO
31. My friends read better than I do	YES	NO
32. I am good at printing	YES	NO
33. I always do neat work	YES	NO
34. I have difficulty getting my arithmetic finished on time	YES	NO
35. I have difficulty working with numbers	YES	NO
36. I like spelling	YES	NO
37. I like arithmetic	YES	NO
38. I am a messy writer	YES	NO
39. Tests are easy for me to take	YES	NO
40. I like to sound out words	YES	NO
41. My teacher often makes me write my work again	YES	NO
42. I have difficulty looking up words in the dictionary	YES	NO
43. I like to use big words when I talk	YES	NO
44. I like telling my friends about school work	YES	NO
45. My teacher thinks I am dumb in arithmetic	YES	NO

46. I like going to school	YES	NO
47. I like playing spelling games	YES	NO
48. I have difficulty thinking up good stories	YES	NO
49. My spelling is always right	YES	NO
50. Saying new words is hard for me	YES	NO
51. I am unhappy with how I do arithmetic	YES	NO
52. I am a smart kid	YES	NO
53. I have difficulty doing what my teacher says	YES	NO
54. I find spelling hard	YES	NO
55. I usually get my arithmetic right	YES	NO
56. I find reading hard	YES	NO
57. I am unhappy with my printing	YES	NO
58. I am a good reader	YES	NO
59. I am slow at spelling	YES	NO
60. I am a slow reader	YES	NO
61. In school I find new things difficult to learn	YES	NO
62. I usually spell words right	YES	NO
63. My teacher thinks I am good at printing	YES	NO
64. All new words are hard for me to understand	YES	NO
65. I have trouble telling others what I mean	YES	NO
66. I am good at arithmetic	YES	NO
67. I like to tell stories in class	YES	NO
68. I feel I often say the wrong things	YES	NO
69. I find multiplication fun	YES	NO
70. I always get everything in arithmetic right	YES	NO

APPENDIX C

Student's Perception of Ability Scale

Raw Data

APPENDIX D

Student's Perception of Ability Scale
Sub Scale Scores Raw Data

59	8.00	9.00	9.00	12.00	9.00	5.00	52.00
60	4.00	10.00	12.00	9.00	7.00	4.00	46.00
61	4.00	8.00	7.00	7.00	9.00	5.00	40.00
62	8.00	3.00	6.00	.00	6.00	1.00	24.00
63	5.00	2.00	4.00	.00	6.00	.00	17.00
64	10.00	11.00	10.00	9.00	11.00	3.00	54.00
65	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
66	1.00	7.00	10.00	6.00	5.00	8.00	37.00
67	10.00	3.00	9.00	.00	12.00	3.00	37.00
68	5.00	9.00	8.00	.00	7.00	3.00	32.00
69	12.00	10.00	10.00	11.00	8.00	7.00	58.00
70	5.00	9.00	12.00	7.00	11.00	9.00	53.00
71	2.00	4.00	10.00	8.00	9.00	7.00	40.00
72	5.00	3.00	7.00	7.00	3.00	1.00	26.00
73	1.00	2.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	12.00
74	9.00	10.00	12.00	12.00	11.00	5.00	59.00
75	1.00	8.00	11.00	7.00	8.00	9.00	44.00
76	7.00	6.00	10.00	6.00	8.00	6.00	43.00
77	1.00	2.00	5.00	.00	.00	.00	8.00
78	1.00	1.00	2.00	.00	.00	1.00	5.00
79	9.00	10.00	10.00	6.00	10.00	3.00	48.00
80	5.00	9.00	11.00	9.00	8.00	10.00	52.00
81	9.00	10.00	10.00	11.00	11.00	8.00	59.00
82	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
83	5.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	17.00
84	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
85	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
86	4.00	7.00	12.00	8.00	8.00	7.00	46.00
87	4.00	9.00	9.00	1.00	4.00	2.00	29.00
88	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
89	9.00	9.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	2.00	37.00
90	2.00	6.00	11.00	4.00	8.00	8.00	39.00
91	3.00	9.00	9.00	4.00	6.00	7.00	38.00
92	2.00	3.00	8.00	.00	5.00	1.00	19.00
93	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
94	11.00	9.00	5.00	12.00	11.00	8.00	56.00
95	4.00	8.00	9.00	4.00	7.00	7.00	39.00
96	.00	7.00	12.00	5.00	6.00	8.00	38.00
97	.00	1.00	8.00	.00	1.00	.00	10.00
98	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
99	10.00	10.00	12.00	12.00	10.00	4.00	58.00
100	1.00	10.00	8.00	4.00	10.00	5.00	38.00
101	6.00	12.00	12.00	11.00	10.00	8.00	59.00
102	6.00	10.00	6.00	8.00	5.00	4.00	39.00
103	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
104	12.00	8.00	11.00	12.00	9.00	8.00	60.00
105	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
106	5.00	5.00	10.00	3.00	7.00	4.00	34.00
107	.00	3.00	7.00	4.00	.00	1.00	15.00
108	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
109	11.00	11.00	12.00	6.00	10.00	4.00	54.00
110	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
111	9.00	12.00	11.00	12.00	11.00	5.00	60.00
112	6.00	4.00	9.00	7.00	7.00	2.00	35.00
113	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
114	10.00	10.00	5.00	12.00	12.00	5.00	54.00
115	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
116	6.00	10.00	11.00	7.00	10.00	9.00	53.00

117	10.00	9.00	6.00	11.00	12.00	6.00	54.00
118	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
119	12.00	10.00	11.00	12.00	12.00	8.00	65.00
120	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
121	2.00	6.00	7.00	4.00	9.00	1.00	29.00
122	3.00	10.00	8.00	3.00	9.00	2.00	35.00
123	9.00	9.00	7.00	10.00	9.00	4.00	48.00
124	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
125	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
126	5.00	3.00	8.00	3.00	8.00	2.00	29.00
127	4.00	10.00	8.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	26.00
128	1.00	4.00	2.00	.00	4.00	.00	11.00
129	8.00	8.00	9.00	12.00	4.00	6.00	47.00
130	8.00	6.00	11.00	6.00	2.00	2.00	35.00
131	11.00	12.00	11.00	11.00	11.00	10.00	66.00
132	11.00	10.00	7.00	12.00	12.00	8.00	60.00
133	10.00	10.00	7.00	12.00	11.00	7.00	57.00
134	10.00	8.00	6.00	12.00	12.00	8.00	56.00
135	10.00	11.00	4.00	12.00	8.00	8.00	53.00
136	6.00	5.00	4.00	8.00	7.00	4.00	34.00
137	7.00	.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	16.00
138	8.00	.00	6.00	7.00	6.00	4.00	31.00
139	9.00	5.00	2.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	24.00
140	7.00	6.00	9.00	10.00	10.00	4.00	46.00
141	4.00	6.00	9.00	9.00	8.00	1.00	37.00
142	7.00	2.00	9.00	10.00	8.00	4.00	40.00
143	4.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	9.00	1.00	19.00
144	7.00	3.00	6.00	5.00	1.00	2.00	24.00
145	4.00	5.00	10.00	5.00	9.00	3.00	36.00
146	5.00	11.00	12.00	10.00	9.00	9.00	56.00
147	4.00	3.00	3.00	11.00	11.00	5.00	37.00
148	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
149	7.00	5.00	8.00	11.00	11.00	6.00	48.00
150	12.00	12.00	12.00	11.00	12.00	10.00	69.00
151	3.00	5.00	9.00	6.00	8.00	5.00	36.00
152	4.00	3.00	3.00	9.00	9.00	3.00	31.00
153	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
154	6.00	6.00	11.00	6.00	10.00	3.00	42.00
155	7.00	7.00	10.00	9.00	7.00	10.00	50.00
156	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	2.00	20.00
157	2.00	.00	3.00	4.00	.00	.00	9.00
158	12.00	5.00	.00	8.00	6.00	2.00	33.00
159	6.00	1.00	7.00	10.00	7.00	2.00	33.00
160	2.00	5.00	6.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	22.00
161	10.00	5.00	2.00	10.00	9.00	1.00	37.00
162	5.00	1.00	4.00	7.00	11.00	2.00	30.00
163	2.00	.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	9.00
164	4.00	3.00	4.00	10.00	.00	4.00	25.00
165	10.00	9.00	6.00	11.00	10.00	2.00	48.00
166	10.00	12.00	10.00	12.00	5.00	3.00	52.00
167	12.00	1.00	11.00	12.00	2.00	5.00	43.00
168	6.00	.00	5.00	6.00	2.00	.00	19.00
169	9.00	3.00	9.00	12.00	3.00	4.00	40.00
170	5.00	1.00	7.00	12.00	2.00	2.00	29.00
171	6.00	11.00	1.00	.00	5.00	3.00	26.00
172	2.00	10.00	.00	.00	7.00	.00	19.00
173	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
174	6.00	11.00	5.00	1.00	10.00	2.00	35.00
175	4.00	10.00	1.00	.00	6.00	3.00	24.00
176	9.00	11.00	3.00	5.00	6.00	3.00	37.00
177	11.00	11.00	1.00	6.00	9.00	5.00	43.00
178	2.00	11.00	.00	1.00	2.00	.00	16.00
179	5.00	11.00	5.00	3.00	.00	3.00	27.00
180	6.00	12.00	3.00	4.00	6.00	3.00	34.00

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