

THE EFFECTS OF TREATMENTS BY
PARENTS AND TEACHERS ON THE
SELF-CONCEPT OF ABILITY HELD
BY UNDERACHIEVING EARLY
ADOLESCENT PUPILS

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DONALD JAMES BIRR

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This is to certify that the

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DONALD JAMES BIRR

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Fred Pescofari
Major professor

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF TREATMENTS BY PARENTS AND TEACHERS ON THE SELF-CONCEPT OF ABILITY HELD BY UNDERACHIEVING EARLY ADOLESCENT PUPILS

By

Donald James Birr

A democratic society must give full allegiance to the educational development of all of the children of all of the people. There must be no exceptions. With the need of every member of society to participate to the fullest of his ability in the societal framework comes the need of everyone to work toward the development and use of his fullest potential. It has long been the concern of education and educators to help the members of our society to the fullest attainment of their capabilities.

It is the purpose of this study to investigate and compare two methods designed to increase the self-concept of ability held by a random sample of ninety underachieving seventh and eighth grade students. Using various procedures, parents were helped to find ways to increase the self-concept of ability of their children. Teachers were also encouraged to use their expertise on a second group of students to effect an increase in the students' self-concept of academic ability.

The experimental and control groups were drawn from the total number of approximately 1300 students from two

junior high schools in a wealthy, midwestern suburban community. The population was refined to include only the 120 students who achieved below a "c" level grade point average at the end of the first grading period in mathematics, language arts and social studies and whose I.Q.'s ranged from 88 to 137.

The treatments were designed to increase the self-concept of ability of underachieving early adolescent students and thereby increase their school achievement. The ninety students were randomly assigned to the following three groups:

1. Seven monthly meetings with parents of thirty pupils were held to help parents find ways to increase the self-concept of ability of their children.
2. Fifty expert junior high school teachers were acquainted with another group of thirty pupils and urged to do their utmost to effect an increase in the self-concept of ability held by these students.
3. A control group of thirty pupils was selected and identified only to the researcher.

The hypotheses to be tested and findings included:

1. Increases in the self-concept of ability results in increases in the students' level of school achievement.

A X^2 analysis on a 2 x 2 contingency table indicated that there was no statistically significant association between self-concept of ability and grade point average by the students in the parent, teacher or control groups.

2. The parent group has a higher mean self-concept of ability than the teachers' group and/or the control group.

An analysis of covariance indicated no significant differences at the .05 level.

3. The parent group has a higher mean grade point average than the teacher group and/or the control group.

An analysis of covariance also indicated a lack of significant differences at the .05 level.

4. Increases in the concept of ability which parents hold of their underachieving children results in increases in the students' self-concept of ability.

The Spearman Rank Difference Method of Correlation was used to test this hypothesis. A statistically significant correlation was found between the child's self-concept of ability and the parent's perception of the child's abilities.

Several similar studies found significant differences in the experimental means at the end of a three year period. This experiment was carried out during a seven month period. Parents had begun to assume their rightful place as significant others near the close of the experimental period. If the study could have been continued for another school year, significant results would probably have been attained.

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By

Donald James Birr

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PREFACE

This research was undertaken to provide a method of improving the academic behavior of students of average to above average ability as measured by group standardized tests. Many children in our schools today are not using their potential to a very high degree. The researcher has always felt that something could and should be done to increase the demonstrated academic behavior of under-achieving early adolescent pupils.

A special class had been organized that attempted to reach some of these students but the work was limited to only a few individuals. This special class had a warm, understanding, sympathetic teacher who had rather marked success with a few of the members. In spite of the encouraging results, greater numbers needed to become involved.

The present study came into being as a result of some special work in the sociology of education taken under Dr. Wilbur B. Brookover at Michigan State University. An introduction was gained to background and research based on the theoretical framework commonly identified as the symbolic interactional theory of behavior. The basic postulate is that academic behavior or school learning is limited by the students' self-concept of his ability in these areas.

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Significant others also play an important role in developing a self-concept of ability that is valid for each individual in our society. The significant others in the present study will be confined to parents and teachers.

It is an impossibility to identify and give full credit to everyone who assisted in this research. Included in this group are the parents of the experimental group of pupils, the teachers of the second experimental group of pupils, the pupils of the two junior high schools involved, the school administrators who gave permission to proceed with the research and who cooperated to the fullest degree.

Special thanks must be given to the staff members of Michigan State University, including Dr. Wilbur B. Brookover for opening a new vista to the author and encouraging him to seek further enlightenment on the theory of the self-concept of ability. Mrs. Natalie Sproull also deserves much credit for her help in designing the research used.

The members of the author's doctoral committee were very helpful in giving assistance throughout this study. Included were:

Dr. Fred J. Vescolani, Chairman
Dr. Jean LePere
Dr. Floyd G. Parker
Dr. James B. McKee

Special credit must be given to Dr. Fred Vescolani for his encouragement throughout the author's tenure as a student at Michigan State University and especially during the writing of the research. Special thanks and appreciation

must be given Dr. Jean LePere who gave direct assistance and guidance throughout the entire study. Without her willing advice and editorial work, this study would not have been completed.

One additional person who deserves much praise is the wife of the author. Her encouragement and willingness to shoulder alone the responsibilities of the home enabled the work to proceed.

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CHAPTER I

DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

A democratic society must give full allegiance to the educational development of all of the children of all of the people. There must be no exceptions. With the need of every member of this society to participate to the fullest of his ability in the societal framework comes the need of everyone to work toward the development and use of his fullest potential. It has long been the concern of education and educators to help the members of our society to the fullest attainment of their capabilities.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study to investigate and compare two methods designed to increase the self-concept of ability held by a random sample of underachieving seventh and eighth grade students. Using various procedures, parents were helped to find ways to increase the self-concept of ability of their children. Teachers were also encouraged to use their expertise on a second group of students to effect an increase in the students' self-concept of academic ability.

Background of the study. All educators who place high emphasis on the welfare of their students are deeply concerned with the ones who have the ability to do academic

work in school but who do not reach out toward the limit of their potential. Many students just strive to "get by" in school because they do not have a realistic assessment of their potential and how to develop it and they have probably received little encouragement in the past from parents and teachers. With the need of technological advancement in our country has come the need for a greater use of manpower. It is disheartening indeed, to see the wasted potential in our schools today.

Educational programs have been designed to help students increase the use of their ability. One such program was developed by the author which achieved some moderate success of a subjective nature. A self-contained class was organized in a junior high school in northern Illinois where the author was the school principal during the school year of 1963-1964. The state department of education evaluated the special class with the future possibility of allowing state aid for its development. In a letter received from the Illinois State Department of Public Instruction dated June 12, 1963, the following definitions were stated:

Rule 101. Maladjusted children means children between the ages of 5 and 21 years who, because of social or emotional problems, are unable to make constructive use of their school experience and require the provisions of special services designed to promote their educational growth and development.

- a. Social problems—This is interpreted to mean children with poor social adjustment associated with such factors as cultural deprivation, educational retardation, population mobility, socioeconomic considerations, and inadequate school opportunities.

- b. Social problems—This also refers to maladjusted children with a wide discrepancy between ability and achievement and is interpreted to mean children with serious educational maladjustment resulting from extreme discrepancy between ability and school achievement, associated with such factors as perceptual impairment, severe learning disorders, and neurological involvement.
- c. Emotional problems—Maladjusted children who are emotionally disturbed is interpreted to mean persistent and intense personality deviations or ¹ aberrations associated with poor mental health.

The curriculum of the class was a complex one but the principle of individual differences was of utmost importance since an individual program was developed for each student. The program of studies was strongly directed toward vocational training since the students needed to see greater practicality and to become more highly motivated. However, the development of the necessary skills in both reading and arithmetic were kept in mind. The school social worker was involved in the curriculum planning and later in conducting group counseling sessions. It was anticipated that most, if not all, of the students in this program would have experienced a number of past years of unsuccessful academic experience, the end result being that they would probably see themselves as inadequate and inferior individuals when compared with their peer group. This was especially true since the community placed a high premium on academic success and potential college attendance. Pupils remained in the class

¹Illinois State Department of Public Instruction, The School Code of Illinois: 1968, (Springfield, Illinois), . Section 14-1.03.

for instruction in language arts, social studies, science and mathematics. They were scheduled to participate in regular classes in the following subjects according to their individual needs: home arts, industrial arts, music, art and physical education.

No formal objective evaluation was made but subjectively it was a success. Several of the class members continued their education in the senior high school and met average to above average success. However, this class was composed of only ten or twelve of the most severe cases in the school. No attention was given by means of this class to the great numbers of pupils who also needed special help and who were not receiving it.

A further attempt to reach additional students with a low self-concept of ability was conducted by Marie L. Brooker, School Social Worker, in a group counseling study of a class of boys in the same school:

The purpose of this research paper is to investigate, and compare the positive movement in attitude, and academic achievement of (1) children receiving group counseling with (2) those receiving individual counseling, and (3) both of these groups shall be compared with children who have been referred for counseling, but have not received it.

The hypotheses shall be that those students receiving social work services through group counseling will show as much positive movement in attitude, and academic achievement as those who are receiving individual counseling, and that both of these groups will show more

positive movement than those who were referred to the social worker, but received no counseling.²

Statistical proof was established that this was one method that could be used to increase the self-concept of ability with a resultant increase in school achievement. However there was again the limiting factor of numbers reached. The group being counseled only numbered eight boys from a school population of 568.

Special work taken with Dr. Wilbur B. Brookover in the sociology of education led to the development of the present study as a means to reach even greater numbers of students who could and should increase the level of their self-concept of ability with an anticipated increase in academic achievement.

II. RESEARCH

Purpose of the research. It is the purpose of this study to investigate and compare the effects of two treatments on a group of randomly selected seventh and eighth grade underachieving pupils. They attended two junior high schools in a wealthy suburban community. The school on the south side was in a newer section of the community with a slightly higher socio-economic status and more

²Marie L. Brooker, "A Study of Comparative Results of Group and Individual Counseling of Junior High School Boys in a School Social Work Setting" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, 1964), pp. 14,15.

mobile population. The occupations of heads of families would be classified mainly as executives or junior executives of firms with headquarters in Chicago. The firms bring the young executives to the parent organization for a few years before sending them out to direct operations in branch offices. These men are considered more liberal in political, social and religious outlook than the inhabitants of the north junior high school area.

The north junior high school is located in the center of the old established section of the community where many of the residents are oriented toward a conservative philosophy in social, political and religious areas. This is due, in part, to the influence of a liberal arts college which adheres to the basic tenet of Christianity called "Fundamentalism."

It has long been a concern of the author to help students who have the ability to do well in school but who are not living up to expectations. Several methods have been used as enumerated previously to help meet the needs of this great number of underachieving students. Practices used in the past gained desired results but only to a limited degree. The present study was designed to help a greater number of students and to a greater degree.

The treatments were designed to increase the self-concept of ability of underachieving early adolescent students and thereby increase their school achievement.

These students were randomly assigned to the following three groups:

1. Seven monthly meetings with parents of thirty pupils were held to help parents find ways to increase the self-concept of ability of their children.
2. Fifty expert junior high school teachers were acquainted with another group of thirty pupils and urged to do their utmost to effect an increase in the self-concept of ability held by these students.
3. A control group of thirty pupils was selected and identified only to the researcher.

There may be some bias on the part of the fifty different teachers involved from both of the junior high schools. It is the researcher's opinion that this bias will not be great enough to affect the outcome of the study. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that grades given by these teachers were used to measure the achievement of the pupils in all three groups. However, the teachers did not know the identity of the parent or the control groups.

Hypotheses to be tested.

- I. Increases in the self-concept of ability results in increases in the students' level of school achievement.
- II. Students in the parent group have a higher mean self-concept of ability than the students in the teacher group and/or the control group.
- III. Students in the parent group have a higher mean grade point average than the students in the teacher group and/or the control group.
- IV. Increases in the concept of ability which parents hold of their underachieving children results in increases in the students' self-concept of ability.

Methods used to test the hypotheses:

- I. A x^2 analysis was used to see if any significant increase was effected in the grade point average of

students in all three groups between the first and the last grading periods in the school year. A χ^2 analysis on a 2 x 2 contingency table with increase and decrease in self-concept vs. increase and decrease in grade point average was used to test the null hypothesis: Self-concept and grade point average are independent characteristics.

- II. An analysis of covariance was used on the self-concept of ability to test whether the students in the parent group had a higher mean than the students in the teacher group or the control group.
- III. An analysis of covariance was used on the grade point average to test whether the students in the parent group had a higher mean than the students in the teacher group or the control group.
- IV. A correlation coefficient between the parent and child concept of ability was determined to show the extent of the correlation and whether it was positive or negative.

<u>Self-concept Pre-test</u>		<u>Self-concept Post-test</u>	
Parent	Child	Parent	Child

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Self-concept of ability

That which we call the self comes into being as the child, with all that is inherent in his make-up, comes to grips with the experiences of life. The self, as it finally evolves, is made up of all that goes into a person's experiences of his individual existence. It is a person's 'inner world.' It is a composite of a person's thoughts and feelings, strivings and hopes, fears and fantasies, his view of what he is, what he has been, what he might become, and his attitudes pertaining to his worth. As James puts it, a person's self is the 'sum total of all that he can call his.'

The self includes among other things:

1. Perceptual component:
The way a person perceives himself-the image he has of the appearance of his body, the picture he has of the impressions he makes on others.
2. Conceptual component:
His conception of his distinctive characteristics, his abilities, resources, assets, lacks, and limitations, his conception of his background and origins, and of his future.

3. Attitudinal component:

The feelings a person has about himself, his attitudes concerning his present status and future prospects, his tendency to view himself with pride or shame, his convictions concerning his worthiness or unworthiness and his attitudes (which may be mixed) of self-esteem and self-reproach.³

Significant Others

The self-concept is acquired and developed as we come in contact with other people who are significant in our lives.

In this context, the self is the intervening variable between the normative patterns of the social group or the role expectations held by significant others, on one hand, and the learning of the individual, on the other. We hypothesize that, for the expectations of others to be functional in a particular individual's behavior, they must be internalized and become a part of the person's conception of himself. Although we recognize the relevance of self in all aspects of human behavior, our interest at this point is in a particular aspect of self as it functions in the school learning situation. We postulate that the child acquires, by taking the role of the other, a perception of his own ability as a learner of the various types of skills and subjects which constitute the school curriculum. If the child perceives that he is unable to learn mathematics or some other area of behavior, this self-concept of his ability becomes the functionally limiting factor of his school achievement. 'Functional limit' is the term used to emphasize that we are speaking not of genetic organic limits on learning but rather of those perceptions of what is appropriate, desirable, and possible for the individual to learn. We postulate the latter as the limits that actually operate, within broader organic limits, in determining the nature or extent of the particular behavior learned.⁴

³Arthur T. Jersild, Child Psychology (fifth edition; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1960), pp. 116-117.

⁴Wilbur B. Brookover, et al, "Self-Concept of Ability and School Achievement, II," Final Report of Cooperative Research Project Number 1636, United States Office of Education, (East Lansing: Bureau of Research and Publications, College of Education, Michigan State University, 1965), pp. 3-4.

IV. DELIMITATIONS

1. The present experiment was confined to the academic school year of 1965-66. It should have been conducted over a span of several years. The self-concept of academic ability cannot be expected to change very much in a period of only one school year.
2. Ninety seventh and eighth grade students were selected from a junior high school population of approximately 1300. In this manner only a small segment of the population was exposed to the research treatments. Perhaps different results would have been found if more students had been included.
3. School grades in mathematics, language arts and social studies were used to measure school achievement. The natural sciences, fine and applied arts were not used. There may have been a decided increase in achievement in the areas of a more practical nature.
4. Achievement was measured only by using the grades from the first and last grading periods of the school year. The first grading period reflects, in many instances, a grade given for a review of the previous year's work and teachers may be more lenient with this evaluation of the students' work. The last grading period may reflect a more rigorous evaluation as teachers seek to establish an average grade for the school year. Therefore, there may have been greater changes effected if the average of the two middle grading periods also had been used with a corresponding average of the measure of self-concept of ability.
5. The present research was conducted in a community with a high socio-economic level of suburban life. The findings may be applicable to such communities but may not be representative of communities of average levels of affluence. The self-concept of academic ability level of students from suburban communities may be very high and a great increase may not be possible.
6. A two-year junior high school, such as the one used in this study, is not the best organization that can be used. Students in the seventh grade spend much of their earlier experiences becoming oriented to the new and different program. Students in the eighth grade spend much of the second semester in becoming oriented to the senior high school. They are either coming or going with not much time to get their feet on the ground in the junior high school itself. A three year junior high school would give a student more opportunity

to become a junior high student in reality. In our present study with a two-year junior high school, eighth grade students will give more attention to their studies as they prepare to move along to the senior high school. The eighth grade students involved may, therefore, have a high self-concept because of their anticipation of promotion to the senior high school.

7. Too little—too late: A greater gain may have been effected if the program had been designed to extend over several years as noted in number 1, and if it had been begun at a much earlier time, perhaps even as early as first or second grade when the self-concept as well as achievement was initially found to be low.
8. The researcher moved from the community at the end of the school year, thereby terminating the treatments. If the treatment period could have been continued, greater increases in the self-concept of ability and grade point average probably would have occurred.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

The manpower needs of our society are such that we must use to the ultimate degree the capabilities of everyone. Therefore, the traditional search in schools has been for talented individuals. Since life in a democracy has developed the necessity that all of its members must be educated to the fullest of their potential, the concept of self is of utmost importance to the full development of individual members of our society.

I. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

The importance of a healthy self-concept is closely allied with the functional relationship of two important significant others, parents and school teachers. However important the classroom may be to the development of the fully functioning, adequate child, the home is of more importance. Before we can intelligently discuss the effect of the school and the home on the self-concept of children, we must look further into the meaning of the self, the self-concept and the role played by significant others.

Man is a physical organism, a complex arrangement of electrons and protons, atoms and molecules, protoplasm and cells, organs and systems, all functioning interrelatedly and as a whole. He can be visualized also as part of a larger complex of forces, the socio-physical environment which surrounds him and is affected by him. From the interaction of organism and environment, a third set of forces evolves, the

psychological. To this, as it emerges within one individual, some people assign the term personality. Others prefer the term self.¹

In attempting to understand the self then, one must be aware of the underlying variables that act, react, and interact to produce it; one must be aware of the interdependency and together-existence of the biological and social-psychological processes. These make man what he is. "The self he becomes is the result of experiences he has, and they in turn are an outgrowth of both his physical make-up and the culture that surrounds him."²

It should be clear, up to this point, that the self is an extremely valuable construct in explaining human behavior. It would seem that any theory of behavior which doesn't take into account the self processes (Total Complex) will not be able to provide an adequate explanation of behavior.

If the self is truly a useful construct, then implications drawn from a knowledge of self-characteristics and self-functioning should be important in indicating ways in which changes can be effected in the self-organization of people. This would be especially valuable for use by the teacher in the classroom. For example, knowing that a person is self-propelled and has an active mind; that he

¹Richard M. Brandt, "Self: Missing Link for Understanding Behavior," Mental Hygiene, January, 1957, p. 27.

²Ibid., p. 30.

manipulates and arranges data according to his own internal organization; that he actively seeks out experiences that are in line with his self-concept; that he strives to maintain and enhance the self he is; that he interprets experiences according to the self-meaning that they have for him; that the urge to learn seems to be inherent in the self; that acceptance helps the person to grow and change; that changes in the self are dependent upon changes in self-perception; and that significant change in behavior occurs only as a result of change of self. All of these, and more, have implications concerning the methods teachers use in a classroom, the role that the teachers play in effecting self-reorganization, and the role parents play as "significant others" in the lives of their children.

✓ The self is certainly an important construct as we consider significant others and the manner in which they affect a person's perceptual viewpoint: the way a person perceives himself—the image he has of the appearance of his body and the picture he has of the impressions he makes on others. It also includes a conceptual component: his conception of his distinctive characteristics, his abilities, resources, assets, and limitations. The attitudinal component of self can include the feelings he has about himself with shame or pride, his attitudes of self-esteem and self-reproach. As a person reaches maturity, these attitudes relating to self also include the beliefs, convictions,

ideals, values, aspirations and commitments that comprise a person's philosophy of life.

Not all of the beliefs which comprise the self-concept are grounded in the individual's direct observation of his own conduct. Most of a person's beliefs about himself and his personality have been acquired from other people—his reaction to them and their reaction to him. These people have observed the behavior of the individual, have formulated beliefs concerning his personality and have conveyed these beliefs as they have reacted to the other individual. Camilla M. Anderson conveys the importance of other people by this statement, "By significant people is meant those persons who are important or who have significance to the child by reason of his sensing their ability to allay insecurity or to intensify it—to increase or to decrease his sense of helplessness, to promote or to diminish his sense of well-being."³

Perceptual psychologists have long held to this theory of the self and the importance of other people. George Herbert Mead says,

When a self does appear it always (author's note: underlining is mine) involves an experience of another; there could not be an experience of a self simply by itself. The plant or the lower animal reacts to its environment, but there is no experience of a self. When a self does appear in experience it appears over

³Camilla M. Anderson, "The Self-Image: A Theory of the Dynamics of Behavior," Mental Hygiene, 36:231, 1952.

against the other, and we have been delineating the condition under which this other does appear in the experiences of the human animal, namely in the presence of that sort of stimulation in the co-operative activity which arouses in the individual himself the same response it arouses in the other. When the response of the other becomes an essential part in the experience or conduct of the individual; when taking the attitude of the other becomes an essential part in his behavior—then the individual appears in his own experience as a self; and until this happens he does not appear as a self.⁴

Other perceptual psychologists also agree with the theory of self-concept and its relationship with significant others. Combs and Snygg also have said,

Since the purpose of an individual's behavior is the satisfaction of his own need, the perceptual field is usually organized with reference to the behavior's own phenomenal self. The meaning of an object or event is thus his definition of the relationship between the object and himself. We have already seen in an earlier chapter that perceptions have a bearing upon the individual's behavior in the degree to which they seem to him to be related to the self. We are much more concerned about our own children than about others, about our school, our country, or our front lawn than we are about those relating to other people. The self is the individual's basic frame of reference, the central core, around which the remainder of the perceptual field is organized. In this sense, the phenomenal self is both product of the individual's experience and producer of whatever new experience he is capable of. Even when we are concerned with matters that have to do with other people, the degree of this concern will be roughly proportional to the degree to which we are able to identify with others. This is another way of saying the degree to which we feel they are also ourselves. When we feel identified with other people, it becomes possible for us to empathize with them and we can also experience the situation from their point of view.⁵

⁴George H. Mead, Mind Self and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 195.

⁵Arthur W. Combs and Donald Snygg, Individual Behavior: A Perceptual Approach to Behavior. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 146.

This perceptual approach to psychology was first enhanced by the work of Snygg and Combs in their joint endeavor called, Individual Behavior: A New Frame of Reference for Psychology.⁶ This scholarly and readily accepted work was revised by Arthur W. Combs in a later volume called: Individual Behavior: A Perceptual Approach to Behavior.⁷ In this volume Combs states,

To deal with the problems of individual behavior another frame of reference has emerged more recently, called the 'personal,' or the 'perceptual,' or the 'phenomenological' approach to psychology. This approach seeks to understand the behavior of the individual from his own point of view. It attempts to observe people, not as they seem to outsiders, but as they seem to themselves. People do not behave solely because of the external forces to which they are exposed. People behave as they do in consequence of how things seem to them. We run very hard from danger we think is there and ignore the danger we do not know exists. Behavior in this frame of reference is seen as a problem of human perception. This perceptual view of behavior is the frame of reference of this book.⁸

Prior to the publication of this material by Snygg and Combs, George Herbert Mead was lecturing at the University of Chicago in a course known as, "Social Psychology." Mead had published no record of his ideas in book form. However, several of his former pupils, after Mead's death, saw the necessity to systematize his position and results

⁶Donald Snygg and Arthur W. Combs, Individual Behavior: A New Frame of Reference for Psychology (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949).

⁷Combs and Snygg, op. cit.

⁸Ibid., p. 11.

into several volumes. Mind, Self and Society by George Herbert Mead was edited by Charles W. Morris who used Mead's lecture notes.

The self must be developed since it is not initially present at birth. This development takes place as a result of our reaction and interaction with our environment and the living things included therein. "The self, as that which can be an object to itself, is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience."⁹ Mead continues, "One inevitably seeks an audience, has to pour himself out to somebody. In reflective intelligence one thinks to act, and to act solely so that his action remains a part of a social process."¹⁰

An important phase of the self is embodied in what Mead called the "generalized other."

The organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called 'the generalized other.' The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community. This, for example, in the case of such a social group as a ball team, the team is the generalized other in so far as it enters—as an organized process or social activity—into the experience of any one of the individual members of it.

If the given human individual is to develop a self in the fullest sense, it is not sufficient for him merely to take the attitudes of other human individuals toward himself and toward one another within the human social process, and to bring that social process as a whole into his individual experience merely in these

⁹Mead, op. cit., p. 140.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 141.

terms: he must also, in the same way that he takes the attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another, take their attitudes toward the various phases or aspects of the common social activity or set of social undertakings in which, as members of an organized society or social group, they are all engaged; and he must then, by generalizing these individual attitudes of that organized society or social group itself, as a whole, act toward different social projects which at any given time it is carrying out, or toward the various larger phases of the general social process which constitutes its life and of which these projects are specific manifestations. This getting of the broad activities of any given social whole or organized society as such within the experiential field of any one of the individuals involved or included in that whole is, in other words, the essential basis and prerequisite of the fullest development of that individual's self: only in so far as he takes the attitudes of the organized social group to which he belongs toward the organized, co-operative social activity or set of such activities in which that group as such is engaged, does he develop a complete self or¹¹ possess the sort of complete self he has developed.

The "generalized other" that Mead has developed above is similar to the mirror image in the 1962 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

"Much of what a child knows and feels about himself is learned through the reflected appraisals of others, a kind of mirror image."¹²

We tend to behave in the manner that significant others want us to behave and we see the desires of others mirrored in their reaction to our actions. If we behave in an acceptable manner toward others we see their acceptance

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 154-155.

¹² Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming. 1962 Yearbook (Washington, D. C.), p. 131.

in their reaction to our behavior. If we behave in an unacceptable manner toward others, we see their distaste as a result of our actions. Therefore, we modify our behavior in such a manner as to become more acceptable to others.

The mirrors in which we read reactions must be people who are important to us. Brookover, et al, concluded according to Table I that "(1) self-concept of ability was significantly related to school achievement for seventh grade boys and girls, ($r = .57$ for each sex); and (2) parents were almost always universally named as being both 'important in their lives' and as 'concerned about how well they do in school,' at each grade level, 7th through 10th grades."¹³ The second in importance as a significant other, according to the work of Brookover, et al, was the classroom teacher. A further look at both parents and teachers and at their relationship in the development of the self-concept of early adolescents is necessary at this point.

Parents contribute much to the development of the self-concept as a child matures and becomes an adequate, fully-functioning mature adult. Kelley, Maslow, and Rogers state, "People become adequate; they are not born that way."¹⁴

Supporting this contention also is a study by Frieda and Ralph Merry when they found that:

¹³ Brookover, et al, (1965), op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁴ A.S.C.D. Yearbook 1962, op. cit., p. 97.

The extent to which an adult is accepted socially depends greatly upon the kind of atmosphere that prevailed in his home during his growing years. . . . In a longitudinal study conducted on 150 children, a trained observer visited each house for a two-hour period twice a year, during which she talked with the mothers and noted the children's behavior in relation to their parents. . . . Certain patterns of behavior were found to depend largely upon the emotional attitudes of parents toward their children and also upon the parents' general philosophy of child care. . . . Of the various types of acceptance behavior exhibited by parents, that which most nearly approached the ideal was thought to be a democratic home where each child is respected as an individual, and the parents show that they are fond of him.¹⁵

A look at delinquent adolescents will show the importance of parents in their lives. Although this present study did not involve the delinquent student, several members of the population were involved in minor difficulties with the school authorities.

A recent study of 2000 white teenagers by Nye and Short showed that delinquency was not as closely related to income, religion, or to broken homes, as to the feeling, 'My parents hate me.' We may conclude that living in the slum or in a broken home, belonging to a different racial or ethnic group, and being neurotic and poor are factors associated with crime, but they are not the causes.¹⁶

There are many ways a child may react to the fears and loneliness resulting from parental neglect. He can become a dreamer; he can become sick or develop an inferiority complex; or he can become a fighter, and demand attention, stating in effect, 'Love me or fear

¹⁵ Frieda K. Merry and Ralph V. Merry, The First Two Decades of Life (New York: Harper and Bros., 1958), pp. 462-463.

¹⁶ M. L. Haimowitz and N. R. Haimowitz, Human Development, Selected Readings (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, Co., 1960), p. 361.

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me.' The self-conception he forms is determined by the way he perceives some crucial experiences.¹⁷

The above studies point out the important role played by parents in the development of their children. Of course, parents aren't the only people responsible for the personality development of children, even though they are the most important. Another study corroborated this idea but also concluded that there were other important people who were responsible for the personality development of children. Brookover, et al, developed the thesis that people behave as significant others expect them to behave and that parents are the most significant others that the student will encounter. We can see just how important parents are to adolescents (see Table I). According to Table I of Brookover's study, teachers are also important significant others in the lives of their students. Much of what the school does will be done as a result of the type of emotional climate or atmosphere that is provided or developed within the classroom, in the counselor's office, and in other areas where groups of students or individuals are brought together under the supervision of people charged with the responsibility for their growth. Since it is in the classroom that students spend most of their school life, it is the classroom which bears the major responsibility for creating the environment where healthy emotional growth and

¹⁷
Ibid., p. 312.

TABLE I¹⁸

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SEVENTH, EIGHTH, NINTH AND TENTH
GRADE STUDENTS NAMING AT LEAST ONE PERSON FROM CATEGORIES
OF SIGNIFICANT OTHERS AS BEING CONCERNED ABOUT "HOW WELL
YOU DO IN SCHOOL"

Significant Others	7th N=130		8th N=1751		9th N=1769		10th N=1755	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Parents	128	98	1669	95	1688	95	1660	95
Teachers	109	84	1020	58	883	50	621	35
Adult Relatives	43	33	673	38	838	47	620	35
Other Academic Per- sons (Including Counselors)	27	21	597	34	506	29	518	30
Age Level Relatives	36	28	392	22	519	29	409	23
Peers, Opposite Sex	1	1	212	12	221	12	248	14
Peers, Same Sex	21	16	187	11	247	14	206	12
Local Adults	5	4	117	7	169	10	153	9
Unclassifiable (e.g. God, dogs, famous people, me)	11	8	573	33	444	25	431	25

¹⁸ Brookover, et al, (1965), op. cit., p. 72.

maximum learning flourish. The teacher who genuinely cares for students as individuals, whose influence is constructive, and whose effect is to discover and realize intellectual, social and emotional potentialities, is the teacher most likely to produce a warm emotional climate for learning.

The teaching act has been studied as attempts have been made to apply current psychological knowledge to the solution of problems existing in the schools with pupils who are underachievers. Thus, the culturally disadvantaged student has been in the educational spotlight during the past few years. Many studies have been conducted and some new insights have been developed. One such project is introduced here:

The Early Training Project is a field research study which has its roots in attempts to apply current psychological knowledge to the solution of certain problems existing in the public schools. The particular problem with which it has been concerned is that of progressive retardation, which tends to characterize the school progress of children reared in deprived circumstances and attending schools with children like themselves. As is well recognized today, such children enter school at an initial disadvantage and, without special intervention, fall further behind as they go through the years of schooling. . . .

The research design was a conventional one of experimental and control groups randomized from a sample of children of the appropriate age whose homes and parents met our criteria for cultural deprivation. The experimental group participated in a carefully planned pre-school that was centered around efforts to develop attitudes conducive to school achievement (achievement motivation, persistence, delay of gratification, and interest in school-like activities and to enhance certain intellectual abilities, particularly concept acquisition and the development of language. Children were tested before and after the summer experience on the Binet, on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), and on a few

homemade tests quickly assembled in an attempt to assess the attitudes with which we were concerned. . . .

Even though first-grade achievement tests can hardly be taken as the last word on school performance over the years, the pilot study certainly failed to demonstrate any positive results at the end of the first year of school. This is not an unusual finding in studies of this kind. . . .

Because of this widespread interest, it seems appropriate at this time to publish a detailed account of the Early Training Project, although the data are available only through the second year of public schooling for the children in question. More follow-up is needed before a definite answer can be given—if it ever can be—about whether such a program can offset progressive retardation. Data across 5 years may have value, however, in adding some information to that knowledge sorely needed to plan effective programs to enhance the intellectual development and to promote those attitudes conducive to school achievement in children growing up in deprived circumstances. The report may also serve to highlight some of the problems in attempts to assess the worth of such programs and to measure the progress of children involved in them.¹⁹

Brandt says,

People strive toward feeling comfortable. . . . A youngster who is made to feel uncomfortable in reading classes time after time, possibly because he lacks the skills to read as successfully as others, may continue to resist reading even after he develops these skills. He may require numerous personally satisfying experiences to overcome this resistance. Many teachers are therefore concentrating on eliminating threat and making children feel psychologically comfortable in the classroom. Threat produces defensiveness and inhibits self-reorganization. Successful teachers are becoming increasingly alert to the way children feel about the experiences they are having.²⁰

¹⁹Rupert A. Klaus and Susan W. Gray, *The Early Training Project for Disadvantaged Children: A Report After Five Years. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, Vol. 33, Number 4: (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 1-2.

²⁰Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

The successful teacher is, therefore, the teacher who has good rapport with students. This rapport depends upon how well a teacher understands his pupils. It is important for a teacher to exhibit expertise in the knowledge and teaching of subject matter but the teaching act in the classroom can only be performed well when there is a common goal established between teacher and student. The key to greater growth in the self concept lies in the manner in which the teacher conducts himself in the classroom.

Greatest growth of self occurs in an atmosphere in which the student feels he is respected. . . . The words that a teacher uses, the way he looks at children, becomes important. A word, a look, a bit of sarcasm or ridicule can be very humiliating, a crushing experience for a child, and although such tactics may subdue the child or the group, it may have a traumatic, negative effect on the feelings that students have for themselves. . . .

The atmosphere of acceptance can be created under the guidance of an accepting teacher. As students are accepted by the teacher as persons of dignity and worth, the individual moves toward acceptance of self, which is requisite to acceptance of others. . . . To accept a student, the teacher must accept his values and standards as a part of him, i.e., the teacher must be willing for him to hold these values. It does not mean that the teacher accepts the student's values and standards as his own.²¹

When such a student and teacher find themselves in a position where the student's values are not condemned, they can allow each other's values to be explored and judged by themselves and others. Out of this exploration then can come change and the development of new values based upon facts and new ways of seeing and perceiving.

²¹A.S.C.D., op. cit., p. 96.

The adequate classroom, then, must be a facilitating environment. It is an environment in which the student finds himself accepted with warmth and friendliness and in which he is helped through planned experiences to satisfy his need to know about himself and his world. It is a safe fortress from which he may venture into unknown and hitherto dangerous (to him) areas. It is an environment in which vigorous and healthy growth toward adequacy can be achieved.²²

How can the teacher teach in order to effect changes in the self-concept? Do teachers teach in different manners as they affect the self-concept?

1. A theoretical analysis of the concept of the self shows it to be a learned structure, growing mainly from comments made by other people and from inferences drawn by children out of their experience in home, school, and other social groups. Amongst the people likely to be most influential in determining the self-picture are teachers. Two hypotheses were formulated: that it is possible to distinguish reliably between teachers in normal classrooms in respect to the frequency and kind of comments they make with reference to the self; and that it is possible to teach so that, while aiming at the normal results of teaching, specific changes can be made in the self-picture.
2. The results of the investigation indicated that:
 - a) The first hypothesis was supported. Marked differences occurred between teachers in the frequency of self-reference in their comments, particularly in their positive or negative comments on the child's performance, status, and self-confidence or potency.
 - b) The second hypothesis was also supported. One teacher studied the self-ratings of his class and tried to teach so that certain self-ratings were changed.
 - c) A control class taught by a teacher regarded as typically "sound" and having no awareness of the self-picture as an outcome of education showed significant decreases in certainty about the self and in differentiation.

²²Ibid., p. 97.

- d) Standardized tests showed that both classes made about the same gains in some aspects of English and arithmetic over the experimental period.
- e) The analysis of the self into categories and dimensions and the use of a self-rating scale appear to provide a useful method of discriminating between teachers according to the self-reference of their words and of their methods of managing situations in the classroom.²³

II. SUMMARY

The above literature on the self-concept and the relation of significant others has shown a direct correlation. Also shown has been the importance of two significant others in the lives of adolescents and the development of a healthy self-concept. Since parents and teachers were highly significant in the lives of early adolescents, the present study sought to use this relationship as the basis for effecting an increase in the self-concept of ability and a resultant increase in school achievement.

²³J. W. Staines, "The Self-Picture as a Factor in the Classroom," British Journal of Educational Psychology, 28:97-98.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF RESEARCH

Teachers focus much attention upon changes that should take place in the educational program. There is much attention given to what should be done to improve educational programs and much disagreement stated about which procedures should be used for improvement.

There is one thing upon which a majority of teachers agree. There are certain students in each class who do not work up to their potential and hence disturb other students who want to work. This lack of a highly developed self-concept may be attributed to the low opinion students have of their worth as individuals. Many students fall into this category of low achievement according to ability. How can they be helped to raise their aspirations toward higher goals and increased achievement in school?

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION

The experimental and control groups were drawn from the total number of approximately 1300 students from the two junior high schools of a wealthy suburban community. The median family income in 1960 according to the United State's Census was approximately \$9,300. Most of the parents in the community (68%) were of the managerial, self-employed and professional groups. See Tables II and III of a 1963

community study. Education has always been important to the residents and prompted their move to the suburbs.

TABLE II
OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS OF FATHERS IN 1957
IN THE CITY OF THE STUDY¹

Not known	Skilled	Clerical & Sales	Managerial & Self-employed	Professional
5%	7%	19%	34%	33%
2% Unskilled				

¹Stanley Bristol, "Status of Teachers in the School System" (unpublished doctoral thesis, Northwestern University, Evanston, 1959), p. 48.

TABLE III

FAMILY INCOME IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE COMMUNITY
INVOLVED IN THE PRESENT STUDY, 1957²

Annual Income	Per cent of families, U.S.	Per cent of families, study
Under \$5,000	45.0	3.7
\$5,000 - \$9,999	47.0	49.5
\$10,000 and over	8.0	46.8
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Source of figures for U.S.: National Industrial Conference Board, Family Incomes By Occupation, 1947, (Road Maps of Industry, Number 1192, New York: National Industrial Conference Board, Oct. 31, 1958).

The California Achievement Tests in reading, mathematics, spelling, and mechanics of English were used to refine the population. The California Testing-Bureau declared that a plus or minus score of .4 between the anticipated achieved grade placement and the obtained grade placement was a significant amount. Anticipated Achieved Grade Placement is defined as "The grade placement value of a student obtained from the Anticipated Achievement Grade Placement norms, reflecting the school grade classification and performance on the CTMM series. This A.A.G.P. value is interpreted as

²Donald J. Birr and Glenn Heck, "A Contemporary Suburban Community," (unpublished research paper, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 1963), p. 20.

the achievement performance typical of a nationwide sample of students who have the same grade classification (actual grade placement) and CTMM performance. Thus, it is possible through the use of the A.A.G.P. to establish a performance standard for an individual student."³

The refined population included only the 204 students who received a -.4 or less between the anticipated achieved grade placement and the obtained grade placement on at least four out of the six areas tested. It was interesting to note that the 204 pupils selected for this study were 15.7% of the total school population. The population was further reduced by selecting from this group of 204 only the 120 who achieved below a "c" level grade point average at the end of the first grading period in mathematics, language arts, and social studies. The grade point average in science was omitted from this study because of the inequity of time allotted between the seventh and eighth grades. Science was taught for a full year at the seventh grade level but for only one semester at the eighth grade level.

Three randomly selected groups of thirty pupils were used from the refined population of 120 pupils who were under-achievers. All of these pupils had average to above average I.Q.'s when the California Test of Mental Maturity was administered on a group basis. The I.Q.'s ranged from 88 to 137

³California Test Bureau, A Glossary of Measurement Terms, (Monterey, California, 1963), p. 4.

with the median being 109. The median I.Q. of the research population for the junior high from the slightly higher socio-economic status was 111 and the median I.Q. for the other school was 108.

There were 56 boys and 21 girls included in the final study (See Table IV). The loss of 13 pupils from the original random sample of 90 was due to some pupils who moved out of the school district and parents who did not fully cooperate in the parent group. The number of girls in the parent group was six; in the teacher group, seven and in the control group, eight. The parent group had a slightly higher percentage than did the other two groups, since there were fewer members involved. However, it is assumed that this small difference had no great effect on the outcome of the experiment. The great difference in the number of boys over girls can be explained according to the societal mores of our country. According to the culture of the United States, girls are expected to do better in school work, while boys are expected to be more aggressive and excel in sports.

School A had 34 student participants in the study, while school B had 43. This would normally be expected since school B had a slightly higher enrollment than school A. It would seem that neither school nor experimental group had a disproportionate number of members.

TABLE IV

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS BY GRADES AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

<u>PARENT GROUP</u>				
<u>Subjects</u>	<u>7th Grade</u>	<u>8th Grade</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Boys	7	5	12	
Girls	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	
Total	11	7	18 Grand Total	
<u>TEACHER GROUP</u>				
Boys	10	12	22	
Girls	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	
Total	15	14	29 Grand Total	
<u>CONTROL GROUP</u>				
Boys	8	14	22	
Girls	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	
Total	11	19	30 Grand Total	
<u>SUMMARY BY SEX</u>				
	<u>Parent Group</u>	<u>Teacher Group</u>	<u>Control Group</u>	<u>Total</u>
Boys	12	22	22	56
Girls	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>21</u>
Total	18	29	30	77 Grand Total
<u>SUMMARY BY GRADE</u>				
	<u>7th Grade</u>	<u>8th Grade</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Boys	25	31	56	
Girls	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>21</u>	
Total	37	40	77 Grand Total	

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE TREATMENTS EMPLOYED

The group of 30 students assigned to the fifty junior high school teachers were identified to them during a special faculty meeting. They were urged to use their expertise on the 30 students to see if they could increase the students' self-concept with a resulting increase in school achievement. The teachers were given the following information about the study:

TO: Faculty Members of Schools A & B:

A magic wand cannot solve all of the problems of education, but a way must be found to help underachievers to do better work in school.

Sociologists have said:

1. Persons generally behave in ways that each considers appropriate to himself.
2. Appropriateness of behavior is defined by each person through the expectations of significant others.
3. The limits of a person's ability to learn are determined by his self-concept of his abilities as acquired in social interaction.
4. A person learns what he believes significant others expect him to learn in the classroom or in any other situation.

These sociologists have concluded that the self-concept of ability affects school grades to a great degree.

The object of this study is to change the self-concept of the 30 pupils who are part of the school group.

WHO ARE SIGNIFICANT OTHERS?

Junior high school pupils in Michigan listed significant others as people who were "important in their lives," i.e., who are most concerned about "how well you do in school." Here is the result of this study:

	<u>7th Grade</u>	<u>8th Grade</u>	<u>9th Grade</u>
Parents	98% of the time	95%	95%
Teachers	84%	58%	50%
Adult Relatives	33%	38%	47%

In our work together the rest of this year, I hope that each of these 30 pupils will have a more positive image of himself as an individual who is important. Therefore, I want to try:

1. To help these pupils have a more positive acceptance of their own abilities.
2. To help these pupils to realize that any weaknesses they may have could be improved.
3. To give them greater confidence in themselves and a feeling of responsibility to do the best possible work in school.

How can you help?

I want you to give as much attention as possible to what these pupils do in school, in the classroom, in the halls, in the cafeteria and in extra-curricula activities. As a "significant other" in the lives of these pupils, I want you to help them achieve to the limit of their abilities.

I want you to praise them for anything and everything that they do well. Even if they don't excel, praise them for trying. Every avenue of help from school personnel should be used. Perhaps the guidance director could counsel some or all of these pupils. The social worker may contact some of the more difficult cases. The core teacher may sit down with the pupils in the core class and discuss with the pupils in that class, their individual strengths on the California tests and encourage them to work on their weaknesses.

In the final analysis, just keep the pupils uppermost in your mind and do anything and everything you can to help him to have a better self-concept and to achieve better in school.

At the end of the school year I want to give a post-test for the self-concept and I want to check the achievement of all 90 pupils in the three groups. I want to see the effects of the treatments on changing the self-concept and achievement. I want to see if an increased self-concept really means increased achievement.

I also want to see which treatment changes the self-concept and achievement to the greatest degree. Below is a list of the students involved:⁴

SCHOOL A		SCHOOL B	
<u>Group</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Student</u>
1	a) James	1	a) Hal
2	b) Tom	2	b) Ruth
6	c) Gregg	5	c) Edward
7	d) Kay	8	d) Charles
8	e) Patricia	10	e) Jeff
9	f) James	10	f) Linda
10	g) Barbara	10	g) Tim
10	h) Scott	11	h) Patrick
14	i) Richard	15	i) Bob
16	j) Linda	16	j) Tim
16	k) Carolyn	16	k) Tom
19	l) Edward	17	l) John
19	m) Roy	19	m) Jim
21	n) Ronald	19	n) Ron
		21	o) Louis
		21	p) Richard

The parents of the group of 30 students assigned to the parent group were contacted by the researcher by telephone during the month of December, 1965. One hundred per cent of the parents agreed to come to an introductory meeting at 8:00 p.m., January 13, 1966. All were present at the meeting and the first Thursday of each month was chosen as the meeting time. Because of personal conflicts with Thursday evenings, the parents of two of the students could not attend. Thus, the parent group was reduced to 28 students. Parents of an additional 10 students were eliminated because

⁴Donald J. Birr, "To Teachers of Schools A & B" (unpublished paper distributed and discussed with the teachers of the two schools involved in the study), January, 1966.

of disinterest and/or failure to attend 66-2/3% of the meetings which was a requisite of the study.

The parent group participated in a series of monthly meetings of two-hour duration. A schedule of what transpired at each of those meetings follows:

January 13, 1966

The initial meeting of the parent group was held in the school auditorium with the researcher giving an introduction, outlining the sessions and giving the self-concept pre-test. Following is the message as it was delivered:

I am Donald Birr, the principal at Franklin Junior High School.

You are probably wondering why I've chosen to carry out this program with you. I have been attending Michigan State University for several summers. This program is part of the requirements set down by one of my professors. He encouraged me to select some phase of school work that is near and dear to my heart.

I could think of nothing better than to try to help pupils who have the ability to do well in school but who are not living up to expectations.

I have, therefore, selected a group of pupils who have average or above average ability but who are doing below average work. Your children have been selected but your children are not alone in this category. There are many, many similar students but I've selected a random sample of only 30 to work with. I want them to do better in school and I know you do too. I don't have a magic wand that will solve all problems but I have high hopes that your children will be doing better schoolwork at the end of this year than they have done so far.

I'll give you a chance to ask questions later so let me just plunge right in with my remarks.

Please write any questions you may have on the paper that I gave you.

Sociologists have said that:

1. Persons generally behave in ways that each considers appropriate to himself.
2. Appropriateness of behavior is defined by each person through the expectations of significant others.
3. The limits of a person's ability to learn are determined by what a pupil thinks of himself and his abilities as acquired in social interaction.
4. A person learns what he believes significant others expect him to learn in the classroom or in any other situation.

These sociologists have proven that self-concept of ability affects school grades to a great degree.

I hope to change, with your help, the self-concept of your son or daughter and by so doing change his or her level of achievement. In other words, as we work together, to attempt to raise your child's self-concept, I hope we'll see a gradual improvement in the grades he brings home from school.

WHO ARE SIGNIFICANT OTHERS?

Junior high school pupils in Michigan listed significant others or people who were "important in their lives." In other words when a pupil is in need of some help from someone, to whom will he turn? Here is the result of this study.

	<u>7th Grade</u>	<u>8th Grade</u>	<u>9th Grade</u>
Parents	98% of the time	95%	95%
Teachers	84%	58%	50%
Adult Relatives	33%	38%	47%

You see, pupils hold parents in very high esteem. They probably don't say this to you, but their actions in the Michigan study bear it out. In the same way, pupils hold teachers not quite as high in their eyes.

Let me give you an example of this:

Suppose you as a parent would tell your child to come straight home from school and a teacher said your child should stay after school to make up a test. The child must disappoint either the parent or the teacher. Who gets disappointed most of the time? The teacher!

Or suppose something troubles your child. He is groping or looking for an answer to a very difficult problem. To

whom will he turn? Most of the time he will seek the answer from his parents.

So far, I've shown you how important it is for a child to think well of himself and what an important role parents play in his life.

In our work together the rest of this year, I hope you can help your child to have a more positive image of himself as an individual who is important. Here are several aspects of our work together. We will try:

1. To help your child to have a more positive acceptance of his own abilities.
2. To help him realize that any weaknesses he might have could be improved.
3. To have a greater confidence in himself and a feeling of responsibility to do the best possible work in school.

In order to accomplish the above three things, we must understand more clearly some other aspects of learning.

1. Limits of ability are not fixed.

We look at IQ scores at school that have been determined from tests given over several years of school. Do you think they are always the same score? Well, they are not. Most test scores vary or are different from other tests by many points, sometimes 15 or 20. The difference may be a result of how a pupil feels when he takes the test. If he is disturbed over what happened at the breakfast table that morning, he may not do well on the test. For instance, here is something that could have easily happened at our house:

Suppose I had returned home late at night, had trouble getting to sleep and was feeling a little irritable at the breakfast table. One of my children then spilled a glass of milk and it cascaded down on me and got my trousers all wet. Of course, I probably would be in a hurry to get to school and now would have to change clothes and be late.

I guess I'd blow my top! I'm human, you know. Most times pupils don't think so, but I am!

Of course, this may be the very day that my seventh grade daughter at Edison was scheduled to take an IQ test. She probably wouldn't do very well.

2nd example:

Also, if a pupil doesn't think he can do well on a test, he probably won't achieve very highly. I can think of a 9th grade boy in the school where I was the principal my very first year. I also taught math to the 9th grade pupils. John was a nice pupil in my school who was never involved in any difficulties, who did the assignments each day and received average "C" grades. I also had to give the California Achievement tests in that school. When I graded them, I found that John had the highest score of anyone in the 9th grade class. It was a higher score than those pupils who received "A"s and "B"s in algebra. I spent some time together with John counselling with him. He wouldn't believe that he had scored the highest mark on the achievement test. I encouraged him always to do his best on his homework and tests. I am very happy to report that John immediately raised his own self-concept, his self-confidence and received a "B" on his next report card.

Now I'm not saying your child will receive nothing but "B"s on his next report card but I do say this: If your child has a more positive feeling that he can do better than he is doing, then his work will improve and he will do better in school.

2. Achievement is important and desirable for each student.

All people like to do a job well. They must, of course, be encouraged to do well. If you expect them to do the best they can, they will do it. But please don't give them an excuse to do poor work. I can think of a parent who said to me, in the presence of the child, "I can understand why John doesn't do well in arithmetic. I always had trouble getting good grades in arithmetic when I was in school." John thought, "Well, like father, like son. I guess if Dad had trouble with math, I'm bound to have trouble too." Encourage your child to do well and praise him sincerely for a job well done. Don't give him an excuse to do a poor job.

3. Models of achievement are necessary for pupils; they should see pupils who do well in many areas and we should help them to see the rewards that are received for achieving well. Perhaps tell them the good things about your own school experiences.

Rewards in earning more money are received by doing well in school. There are many studies of earning power of high school graduates as related to those who have not finished high school. People with one or two years of college earn more money generally than people who do not go on to college after high school.

I could go on and on but I'm afraid we've reached the limit for our first night together. Do you have any questions?

The question, "What do you expect of us?" was asked and the parents were told to attend the meetings, actively participate in the discussions and to think about what had transpired in the meetings as they dealt with their child during the month.⁵

The parents filled out a pre-test of their concept of their child's ability. They seemed to be willing to continue the study. Several remained after the meeting was dismissed to discuss personal problems concerning their children.

As an example of how insecure some of the children were, one set of parents told me that their son cried and pleaded with them not to attend the meetings. Apparently, the boy thought the parents would find out how he misbehaved at school. At any rate, these parents attended the meetings faithfully and their son did much better work in school. His beginning average in school was a "D" (2.000) and he raised it to a "C" (3.000) average at the end of the experiment. At one of the intervening reporting periods, he had a "B" (4.000) average in the subjects included in the present study.

February 10, 1966

The second meeting of the parent group was held on February 10 with forty-one parents in attendance representing

⁵Donald J. Birr, "Introductory Remarks and Address to the Parent Group," January, 1966.

twenty-six of the twenty-eight students involved in the study.

The entire group viewed the film, "The Development of Individual Differences" (Young-America Films, Inc.). They were divided into four small discussion groups to discuss the following items:

- a. The limits of achievement are not fixed. They vary with many different factors.
- b. Children behave as their parents want them to behave. What are some ways in which the ideals and expectations of parents are communicated to children? Remember, communication or notion of expectation may not always be expressed in words.
- c. How does the position of the child in the family influence the values and ideals the child sets for himself?
- d. How is the self-image of the child affected by other factors of the home environment? What are some of those factors?

The school guidance director, two school social workers and the researcher led the discussion in the four small groups. Included here is a summary of what transpired in three of the four groups.

Group One:

Each person in the group participated spontaneously at least twice. There was much interaction between group members and the leader.

Some of the parents criticized the film saying it dealt with children much younger than the child about which they were presently concerned. They felt that peer relationships are much more influential on children than parents (during Jr. High & High School years). Several parents agreed that they felt the children did derive attitudes, values, etc. from parents. Although some parents could not accept the idea of their being responsible for the role of the "significant other," some were able to and two mothers verbalized this quite adequately.

One mother conceded, "There was something to all of this" by saying she had made conscious efforts to avoid "brow-beating" her son and to stress the positive aspects in the things he did. As a result she noticed increased motivation on his part.

Another set of parents told how they had done much thinking about the first meeting and had tried an experiment. Rather than trying to coerce their son to do a science project they told him it was up to him and they would be glad to help if they could. His science assignment was completed on time for the first time this year. They were very pleased with this.

The parents discussed the fact that in our group the children about which they were concerned included both oldest and middle children.

One father who was a bit hostile said, "If parents are so important and have so much influence, then how do you account for a boy I know who was the son of a no-good drunken bum and a prostitute? He worked all through school and is now a medical doctor. If all this is true, then why did he turn out well?"

Considerable scapegoating did occur (T.V., peers, neighbors, past teachers, modern world).

The same parents who reported success in the science project later said, "When do we find out how to help these kids?"

Upon conclusion of the discussion of the group, one mother said she knew how important parents were and gave both positive and negative ideas now held by her children about school, that had been derived from her attitudes about various subjects, etc.

This group's discussion was difficult to summarize or high-light because it was a lively, spontaneous group that was vitally concerned with the issues at hand.⁶

Group Two: Summary of Group Meeting with Parents

The parents were in complete agreement that boys and girls were products of their individual environment; that their child's individual and unique patterns of

⁶ Lenore Zaeske, "Report of Parent Group Discussion," (Part of the Parent Study, February, 1966).

behavior were determined by the ideals and expectations that were communicated to them by the parents; that a change in parent behavior was necessary to induce a change in the student's behavior.

One of the parents commented that he was still looking for answers to such questions as: how can we motivate our boy to the point where he wants to read, wants to do his homework, and wants to tackle and successfully conclude his assigned responsibilities?

In my opinion, the meeting was helpful in that a majority of the parents began to understand that pupil behavior and parent behavior are interdependent.⁷

Group Three:

In this group there were four couples and three mothers—a total of eleven people. Superficially one might observe that when husband and wife were both present there seemed to be a correlation with more active participation. One mother who came alone said nothing. One father of a husband and wife team said nothing. All others were quite active.

One mother started the discussion off by challenging the statement, "Children behave as their parents want them to behave." She, supported by the group, maintained that the statement is far too general, and that if a child is in rebellion, he relates directly against parental values, expectations, etc., to some degree. Discussant leader threw out the question, 'Is it fair to judge a child's pattern of behavior during a stage or age when emancipation, rebellion, independent striving is a natural part of growth and does not in itself signify maladjustment?' The group felt that the important thing was for all parents to keep some perspective of the youngster's struggle, how it is threatening to the parent, the necessity for the parent to examine the impact of the youngster's behavior on the parent, and the parent's behavior on the child. The discussant leader supported this and suggested that the self-image of the parent or any adult dealing with youngsters in the throes of emancipation is a most important factor in how successfully a youngster produces, takes responsibility, etc., during these troubled years. We attempted to look at ways in which parents might meet the struggle they're in, with

⁷ John Murdock, "Report of Parent Group Discussion," (part of the Parent Study, February, 1966).

the bombardment from all forms of media giving advice (TV ads, magazine ads, Ann Landers, etc.), to maintain consistency and stability in the way they reflect values, etc., to their children. We really tried to say "Let's decide what we stand for and try to think positively since children's security declines as parents feel unsure, etc. Reiterated was the necessity for all parents to re-think their role and consider the possibility that they are much more important to their children than their children often make them feel. Discussed also was the area of a child's conscience being the internalized values, standards, etc., of the parents and that of necessity, therefore, one has to expect some testing of and rebelling against the parents as the urge for emancipation comes, because otherwise submission to parent would indicate a denial of growing up, a willingness to remain infantile, etc.

One father suggested that first children are more responsible than the fourth, for example, because parents have worked harder at this area with first, and older siblings of the fourth child make it more difficult to be consistent, etc. We didn't get very far with this because of time.⁸

It can be seen from the three discussion groups that parents were beginning to be somewhat hostile and not willing to accept the fact that they were the most significant person in the lives of their children. Some scapegoating could be seen as they said peer relationship was more important than parents actions. Other things were also brought out as spheres of influence such as T.V., neighbors, past teachers, the modern world and magazine ads.

Interesting to note was the number of parents who were now asking, "What can we do now to help our children"? One mother criticized the study for not offering objective means to provide this help and then turned right around and

⁸Marion C. Hathaway, "Report of Parent Group Discussion," (part of the Parent Study, February, 1966).

gave an excellent illustration of what had transpired when the pressure was taken off their son to produce a science project. The boy completed the science project on time for the first time that school year. The parents were very pleased with their son and communicated this feeling to him. Yet they asked, "What can we do now to help our children"?

It appeared that parents were moving toward accepting the fact that people did behave as significant others expected them to behave and that parents were, indeed, the most influential significant other in their children's lives.

March 3, 1966

The researcher asked at the beginning of the group session, "What has happened since the last meeting? Do you have any questions"? One father stood to his feet and asked pointblank, "When are we going to find some answers? You've had us meet as a group for three times and you've wasted our time. I can't point to one thing you've told us that has helped me and my relationship to my son. The only thing I've really heard is that my son isn't doing well in school and you've told me that it is my fault. Now I want some answers or I'm through." Another father quickly followed suit with a similar tirade.

Brookover's study reported the same reaction by the parents during the early phases of the treatment. According to psychological principles, this was a necessary step in order to effect change in behavior. However, several other parents rose to the defense of the situation and told some

of the incidents in their families that supported the thesis of the dissertation.

This was the last overt disagreement with the study and its proceedings. The parents finally appeared ready to realize their role as significant others in the lives of their children.

Following is the text of the message to the parents by Evan Harer, the school psychologist:

SELF-CONCEPT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting tonight is to develop some constructs about the self. To present, if possible, some helpful insights into the growth and development of your child, and to provide some suggestions which I hope will be workable for your household.

Psychiatrists have indicated that approximately 70 - 80% of the adult population is in need of some psychotherapy to improve their self-concept and effectiveness of interaction. This figure sounds high and it may well be. They, however, are not alone in their spirit of concern in that psychologists and social workers have also sent up the clarion cry. Dr. Donald Dinkmeyer recently stated that approximately 40% of all children in classes today will be sufficiently maladjusted at adulthood to contribute to: 1) petty crime, 2) vocational failure, 3) chronic unemployment, 4) emotional instability, and 5) marital unhappiness. (1)

These figures are appalling and should stir everyone of us to action in an effort to prevent such prospects for our children. Do we care? Are we apathetic to the problem? Are we concerned enough to seek ways of making change within our own lives that might assist in bringing about healthy self-concepts for our children? Obviously I'm not talking about you because you are here. You are here trying to learn something new about yourselves and your children. But are you willing to make painful change to accomplish this fact?

How a child is taught affects his self image, his teachability, and his courage to learn. (1) This process

is ontogenetic—that is, it begins at birth and continues until maturity. While parents may be quite distressed during various periods, they must remain objective and understanding. To be other than this may bring about maladjustment and poor achievement.

It is not my intent to make parents feel extremely guilty, but it is my intent to make you introspect and evaluate your own parental attitudes and family relationships.

As an earlier exercise you were requested to list your son or daughter's assets and liabilities. I trust, as a result, you have already begun to develop a new concept of your child. I hope a negative concept has begun to turn to a more positive feeling toward what she or he is.

Self Concept DEFINED

Without wishing to be too academic I would like to mention a few theories of the SELF. This may provide a point of reference for our later discussion.

James calls the SELF the Empirical me or the sum total of all that a man can call his—his body, traits, capabilities; his material possessions; his family; his friends and enemies; his vocations and avocations, etc.⁽²⁾ It might be restated by placing the concept of Self under three headings:

1. Its constituents
2. Self feelings
3. Self seeking and self preservation

Symonds speaks of the ego as a group of processes and the SELF as ways in which the individual reacts to himself or

1. how a person perceives himself
2. what he thinks of himself
3. how he values himself
4. how he attempts to enhance or defend himself. ⁽²⁾

Jung describes the SELF as the mid point of personality around which all other systems are constellated. It holds these systems together and provides personality with unity and equilibrium and stability. ⁽²⁾

While theorists seem to disagree there are similarities in their concepts of the SELF. For the purpose of this discussion let's try to crystalize some of these

thoughts. All three of these men seem to say that the self is the focal point of one's life. All seem to feel that self is a reflection of the manner in which one interacts with one's environment. Depending upon which theorist one wishes to follow one would be hard put to find major differences in their definitions of the self-concept.

While it is not our wish to worship at the throne of great psychologists we do need a basic frame of reference. Let us accept, then, as our frame of reference the following tenants. The self concept is:

1. the focal point of one's life—all other parts of the Gestalt move around it. It is the hub of the wheel.
2. the manner in which one views himself. It is the manner in which he values himself.
3. the way in which one interacts with people and objects of one's environment.
4. the manner in which one perceives how others perceive him. It is the WHAT of others thinking about him.
5. the degree of self esteem.

Now that we have established a few basic tenants of the self-concept let us consider some of the basic principles which help to mold it and which assist in explaining one's behavior.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The idea of good mental health is primary. How it develops, what affects it, how an inadequate self-concept interferes with adjustment, mental health, and school achievement become keys to parent-child relationships.

The first variable contributing to the self-concept is general intelligence. (3) This particular concept is basically unexplained by psychologists, however, hypothesized explanations consider social class, less need to cheat, and greater cleverness in avoiding detection.

The second variable contributing to the self-concept suggests a tendency to anticipate future events and to choose the greater remote outcome over the lesser immediate outcome. (3)

A third variable contributing to the self-concept reflects a capacity to maintain stable, focused attention. One's ability to define and establish goals and

then to relentlessly pursue them is evident in this variable. It suggests confidence.

A fourth variable indicates a capacity to control unsocialized fantasies. (3) It is the individual's ability to differentiate between fantasy and reality—fact and fiction—and to accept the real things in life while over powering more basic impulses and wishes.

A fifth contribution variable is the individual's self esteem or one's satisfaction with self and the environment. (3) This does not imply apathy or behaving like a parasite, but rather suggests accepting life for what it is and taking action to change that which is disliked. This might be considered the process of self actualizing.

Through the popular study of psychology and our intense curiosity to know what makes the mind tick, most of us have become aware of the defense mechanisms. These mechanisms are the sly devices one employs when trying to circumvent anxiety. (4) While each of us employ them to some degree these mechanisms become of concern only when they assist one in avoiding the realities of life or give one the means of escaping into a world of fantasy. If one continually meets with frustrating and tension building experiences it becomes more necessary to defend against tension by the employment of the defense mechanisms.

It is possible to see, then, how a student who continually meets with classroom defeat, whose parents are continually on his back for higher achievement, whose peers call him dumb or stupid might need to use such a mechanism.

We all, at times, move toward people; away from people; or against people. (3) The difference between the neurotic and the normal is one of degree. When parents feel an adolescent crossing their authority it is simply a part of his struggle for independence. When it becomes frequent and impulsively blustering it's probably a sign of help needed. "All of these conflicts are avoidable or resolvable if the child is raised in a home where there is security, trust, love, respect, tolerance, and warmth."

As a part of the principles of developing a self-concept we must consider the child's drive to establish his identity. By establishing the identity I simply mean the child is trying to answer basic questions such as, Who Am I?, What Am I?, What Am I doing Here?, How Did I Arrive?, How Do People Feel About Me?, etc.

Randura suggests a child is more likely to imitate behavior of a nurturant adult model rather than a non-nurturant adult. (3) Parents, as we shall see shortly, who use a more democratic process in the home, express more understanding and empathy are more likely to raise better adjusted children. By this process the child tends to answer the question, Who am I?

To establish an answer to the question What am I? a child needs a strong model of one's own sex to facilitate the sex role identification. (3) By the presence of a good model a child is able to gain a better perception of his own role. This is one of the basic reasons a boy in a home without a father is likely to have many problems. Thus a father substitute becomes important.

Research has tended to show that over or high achieving children come from families

1. Whose parents tend to make their children feel more family belongingness.
2. Whose parents allow more freedom and adequacy of emotional expression to parents.
3. Who have a greater feeling of belongingness in relation to parents.
4. Whose parents are more coercive.
5. Whose parents encourage autonomy. (4)

To the contrary, under or low achieving children come from families

1. Whose home environment is authoritarian.
2. Whose parents are dominant and autocratic.
3. Whose parents set no goals or impossible goals.
4. Whose parents are neutral or uninterested toward the child's education.
5. Who have little exchange of affection between parent and child.
6. Whose parents show little pride in their children.
7. Whose children do not care about pleasing parents. (4)

One might generalize thusly. High achieving children have parents and families who are emotionally mature, more flexible and tolerant, and families who encourage child independence, exploration and interpersonal interaction, and generally have very positive outlooks on life.

It seems that Dr. Paul Mussen has succinctly stated some of the important concepts which I wish to bring to your attention. I am, therefore, going to quote directly from his writings.

Child-rearing Techniques during the Second Year

During the second year, a child acquires many new and important skills and improves on old ones. He learns to walk, his language abilities increase, and his manual skills and motor coordination progress rapidly. The two-year old enjoys exploring—trying out his new abilities, investigating his surroundings, and testing his capacities. Parental attitudes toward the child's growing independence and their reactions to his curiosity and explorations may strongly influence the development of important motives—for example, curiosity, and the drives for autonomy, independence, mastery, competence, and achievement.

Permissive, easygoing parents will allow their child to explore and investigate freely, encouraging and regarding his curiosity and independent behavior. As a result, their offspring are apt to continue to explore and to attempt to manipulate their environment actively, thereby developing self-confidence, spontaneity, and the desires for competence and mastery of their surroundings. Exploration means encountering new situations, trying out new responses and experimenting with new ways of doing things; in short, it brings a multiplicity of learning opportunities. A child who has tried to ride a tricycle and achieved success at it is more likely to attempt to ride a bicycle.

Parents who severely restrict their child's freedom of movement may suppress his tendencies to explore and to investigate, and thus inhibit the development of motivations for autonomy and independence. Some mothers find it difficult to deal with active, running, jumping, climbing children who seem to be into everything; hence, they discourage the child's exploration and his attempts to experiment. Other mothers are overprotective, tending to baby their children, discouraging independence and attempting to keep them close and clinging—perhaps because they regard independence as a threat to their own domination, control, and possession of the children. Many over-protected children become submissive and compliant; unable or unafraid to make spontaneous responses; inhibited in investigating, exploring, and experimenting; shy and withdrawn in social situations. These children lack persistence; they give up readily when faced with difficult tasks or problems, probably as a result of lack of rewards for early problem-solving efforts and of their parents' tendency to solve problems for them. Since persistence is often necessary for learning academic subjects, an overprotected child may be at a disadvantage when he goes to school.

On the other hand, parental stimulation and encouragement of the child's independent achievements, exploration, and attempts at mastery may affect his later behavior in positive ways. For example, among nursery school children, those with mothers who encourage early independence and achievement tend to be more interested than others, participating in challenging and creative activities such as painting, making clay models, and reading books. When they reach school age, they are, according to personality tests, more highly motivated for achievement, and their grades are better than those of children who were not rewarded for early strivings for independence. Apparently, strong motivation to learn and to perform well in school is fostered by parental encouragement of competence and exploration early in life. Moreover, motivation for achievement appears to be a stable aspect of personality. If it develops early, it is likely to be maintained over a long span of years.

The Effects of Different Types of Home Atmosphere

The early mother-child relationships that are most important in molding a child's personality and adjustment are centered about specific needs and activities—for instance, feeding, toilet-training, curiosity, and exploration. Later on, broad, general features of the home environment and parental attitudes—rather than specific child-rearing techniques—assume greater importance and exert more influence.

The impacts of various types of home atmosphere on the personality characteristics and behavior of pre-school children have been studied systematically, and longitudinally, at the Fels Institute in Yellow Springs, Ohio. To evaluate the home atmosphere in which each subject lived, a "home visitor," a highly trained and perceptive woman, visited each home and observed the interactions among the family members. On the basis of her observations, she rated each home on 30 carefully defined qualities that provide an objective, well-rounded description of its atmosphere. Examples of these qualities are warmth, possessiveness, democracy, intellectuality, restrictiveness, severity, interference, adjustment, and activity of the home. The children's personality characteristics were rated independently from systematic observations of their behavior in nursery school.

Children from "democratic" homes—which are characterized by general permissiveness, frequent conversations between parents and child, consultations about

decisions—got high ratings in leadership, activity, outgoingness, assertiveness, and playfulness. Most democratic homes were also judged to be high in warmth, and they provided strong emotional support for a child. Children from these warm, democratic homes showed more creativity, originality, constructiveness, and curiosity than others, and they were more nonconforming and disobedient. In brief, they were highly energetic, socially active children, relatively uninhibited in expressing feelings and emotions, including protests against authorities such as teachers.

By contrast, children brought up in "controlled" homes—homes with many clearcut rules, prohibitions, and restrictions—tended to be quiet, well-behaved, shy, socially unassertive, inhibited, highly conforming, and lacking in curiosity and creativity. Those from highly "indulgent" homes, where they were babied and protected, also displayed these characteristics and, in addition, had poor motor development and strong fears of physical activity.

We can interpret these findings in terms of social learning and generalization. Permissive, democratic homes encourage and reward curiosity, exploration, experimentation, attempts to cope with new problems, and the expression of ideas and feelings. Apparently, these activities—learned and strengthened at home—generalize to the nursery school. Analogously, the child who is highly controlled or overprotected by his parents does not learn these kinds of responses, because he is discouraged from acting independently, exploring, and experimenting. He acquires timid, awkward, apprehensive, and generally conforming responses, and these become generalized from the home to the nursery school.

Maladaptive Behavior

Clinical studies show that home atmosphere is also related to general emotional adjustment. Children between the ages of four and six from democratic homes are most stable, less argumentative, more sensitive to praise and blame, more socially successful, and more considerate than children from authoritarian homes. Overattention or overindulgence at home also leads to many kinds of maladaptive, infantile behavior—for instance, crying easily, dawdling, lack of independence and persistence, withdrawal, and high dependence on adults.

Negligent mothers, who fail to supply adequate nurturance, rear children who are emotionally tense and insecure and exhibit strong attention-getting mechanisms—they show off a great deal and have many temper tantrums and aggressive outbursts. Children from calm and happy homes appear to be more secure emotionally—they are less negativistic, less jealous, less fearful, less nervous, less sulky, and less demanding of attention.

Friction between parents is probably the most common antecedent of emotional maladjustment in children. Parental tensions involving sex difficulties, lack of consideration or of cooperation, extramarital relations, poor health, conflicts about friends or relatives—any of these may inhibit the establishment of relaxed, happy parent-child relationships and the absence of such relationships makes it difficult for the child to learn emotionally mature, adaptive responses. (5)

Summary

A. Restructure Definition of S - C.

1. The focal of one's life.
2. The manner in which one views himself.
3. The way in which one interacts with people and objects.
4. The way one thinks others see him.
5. The degree of self esteem.

B. Parent Involvement.

1. It is a painful experience.
2. There is need for change.
3. The democratic idea.
 1. Establishing goals and limits together.
 2. Warm, secure, understanding interaction.
 3. Not throw one on defensive.
 4. Being more tolerant of differences and maturational process.
4. Helping the child establish his identity.

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April Meetings

Individual conferences were held with each set of parents. The cumulative record with its contents of achievement tests, I.Q. tests, teachers comments and grades were discussed. Parents, whose children received low scores, were told that group standardized test results were notoriously inaccurate. It was also pointed out that each child had the capability of doing much better work in school.

Parents asked many questions and it was here that much insight was gained as to the reasons for the low self-concept. The parents were generally in agreement by now that the key to the whole matter lay in their hands. They had the power to make changes in the lives of their children and they were already making headway.

The conferences all lasted at least one hour and in some cases they were not terminated until two hours had passed. They were eager to discuss privately their problems as they sought advice on the proper procedures.

⁹G. Evan Harer, "Self-Concept," (unpublished address given to the parent group), March, 1966.

May 12, 1966

Two films were viewed, "Parents Are People Too" and "Family Circle." The summaries of these two films can be expressed thusly:

- a. We cannot expect new privileges until we are ready for them.
- b. Children will change their behavior if they can see good reasons for change.
- c. Children and parents can't change over night.
- d. Parents sometimes feel that children are growing away from them.
- e. In the image of his parents and their circle, the child studies the image of his hopes.

The parents had many comments and questions during the discussion period but all of the hostility had passed from the scene.

June 2, 1966

The final meeting was used as a summary of the year together. Some excerpts were used from a tape recording of a speech given by Dr. Donald Dinkmeyer to a group at a teachers' institute, October, 1964. The text of this message was on the self-concept and the role played by teachers and parents. Reinforcement was given for our year's study.

The parents filled out the post-test of their perception of the child's self-concept.

Summary statements by the parents followed and the meetings were finalized by thanking everyone for their participation.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The experimental design included three initially equivalent groups. An analysis of variance was used to test the equivalency of the three groups before the experiment began. The null hypothesis was tested namely: The means are significantly different at the .05 level of significance. The tabled F for 2 and 74 degrees of freedom at the .05 level was 3.12. Therefore, if the calculated F was above 3.12, it could be concluded that the means were different. However, as can be seen in Table V the calculated F was 1.876 which was not significant at the .05 level. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected and the conclusion was that the means were not significantly different for all three groups.

Ninety students were randomly selected for the three groups: parent, teacher and control. A pre-test and post-test of self-concept was given to all students in both junior high schools to eliminate testing bias and the Hawthorne effect. This instrument, used for measuring the academic self-concept of the students, was developed under the Cooperative Research Project #845 by Brookover, et al, and used here with their permission (see Appendix A and B).

Treatments for the parent group included seven meetings, already discussed, during the school year to hear experts speak, view films and listen to tape recordings all pointing toward methods the parents could use to increase

TABLE V

TEST TO DETERMINE THE INITIAL EQUIVALENCY
OF THE THREE GROUPS

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	M.S. ($ss/d.f.$)	F
Between groups	1.15338	2	.57669	1.876*
Within groups	22.81242	74	.30828	
Corrected Total	23.96580	76		
Mean	737.98732			
Total	761.953125			

* not significant at the .05 level

their children's self-concept. They were to practice with these methods as they worked with their children. No special contact was made by the school with the pupils involved in this group. In fact, the researcher was the only member of the school system who was aware of the pupils' identities.

Treatments for the teacher group included background information on the self-concept. The teachers were then urged to use their expertise as outstanding professional teachers to see if they could increase the pupils' self-concept with a resultant increase in school achievement.

The control group was unidentified except to the researcher to control the effects of "history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, biases

in selection, mortality in groups and participation in an experiment."¹⁰

Achievement was measured by using school grades in mathematics, language arts and social studies. Science was not used in the study as previously stated because the subject was taught for a full year at the seventh grade level but for only one semester at the eighth grade level.

The goals of the treatment were seen as four-fold. First, a more positive self-conception and an acceptance of one's abilities on the part of low-achieving students; second, a recognition of academic weaknesses, but also a recognition that these weaknesses were not fixed and that they could be remediated; third, a feeling of responsibility in attaining higher achievement; fourth, an improvement of school achievement as manifested in academic grades.

The variables in the study included: grade point average from the first grading period during the first week of November; intelligence test scores; self-concept of ability by students; and self-concept of child's ability by parents. One way analysis of variance was used.

¹⁰ Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, "Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Design for Research on Teaching," Gage edition, Handbook of Research on Teaching (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1963), pp. 175-176.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate and compare the effects of two treatments on the self-concept of ability and on the achievement of early adolescents in grades seven and eight of two junior high schools in a relatively wealthy suburban community in mid-western United States. The treatments were applied to the parents and teachers of a random sample of students with average to above average I.Q. and with average to below average school achievement. A pre-test and post-test of self-concept of ability were given to the parents of the parent group and to the students in all three groups.

Treatments included a seven month working arrangement with the parents of a random sample of thirty students.* The purpose was to induce an increase in the self-concept of ability and in academic achievement. The fifty teachers from both junior high schools were also assigned a random sample of thirty students** in a similar effort. The experiment was controlled with a random sample of thirty students who received no treatments and who were not identified to anyone except to the researcher.

* reduced to eighteen by the end of the study by disinterest or moving away.

** reduced to twenty-nine by the end of the study by moving away.

The hypotheses to be tested were:

1. Increases in the self-concept of ability result in increases in the students' level of school achievement.
2. The students in the parent group have a higher mean self-concept of ability than the students in the teacher group and/or the control group at the end of the experiment.
3. The students in the parent group have a higher mean grade point average than the students in the teacher group and/or the control group at the end of the experiment.
4. Increases in the concept of ability which parents hold of their underachieving children result in increases in the students' self-concept of ability.

I. ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES AND FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1

A χ^2 analysis on a 2 x 2 contingency table with increase and decrease in self-concept vs. increase and decrease in grade point average showing the difference from pre-test to post-test scores was used to test the null hypothesis, which states that self-concept of ability and grade point average are independent characteristics.

Significant association between self-concept and grade point average was not shown in the parent, teacher or control groups. The null hypothesis, that there is no relationship between the two characteristics, was not rejected (see Table VI). This is not an unusual finding, however. Brookover, et al, stated,

Significant association is not evident in the one-year or two-year period. Analysis of change over a three-year period, seventh to tenth grades, however, indicates that change in self-concept is associated with a similar change in grade point average. In effect, significant associations in changes in self-concept and academic achievement do not occur over a relatively short time. It would appear

TABLE VI

χ^2 ANALYSIS ON A 2 X 2 CONTINGENCY TABLE SHOWING INCREASES
DECREASE IN SELF-CONCEPT OF ABILITY AND GRADE
POINT AVERAGE

STUDENTS IN THE PARENT GROUP				
		Self-Concept		total
		decrease	increase	
Grade Point Average	decrease	4	1	5
	increase	2	4	6
total		6	5	11

$\chi^2 = 2.395$, not significant at the .05 level

STUDENTS IN THE TEACHER GROUP				
		Self-Concept		total
		decrease	increase	
Grade Point Average	decrease	7	3	10
	increase	4	3	7
total		11	6	17

$\chi^2 = .298$, not significant at the .05 level

STUDENTS IN THE CONTROL GROUP				
		Self-Concept		total
		decrease	increase	
Grade Point Average	decrease	9	3	12
	increase	7	4	11
total		16	7	23

$\chi^2 = .350$, not significant at the .05 level

TOTAL OF THE THREE GROUPS				
		Self-Concept		total
		decrease	increase	
Grade Point Average	decrease	20	7	27
	increase	13	11	24
total		33	18	51

$\chi^2 = 1.972$, not significant at the .05 level

that change in self-concept is followed by change in academic achievement, but can only be observed over relatively longer periods of time.¹

Furthermore, Klaus and Gray state:

Still, even though first-grade achievement tests can hardly be taken as the last word on school performance over the years, the pilot study certainly failed to demonstrate any positive results at the end of the first year of school. This is not an unusual finding in studies of this kind.²

Hypothesis 2

An analysis of covariance was used on the self-concept of ability to test whether the students in the parent group had a higher mean than the students in the teacher group or the control group. The results, shown in Table VII, at the end of the experiment indicated that there were no significant differences at the .05 level in the self-concept of ability means among the students in the parent, teacher and control groups.

However, an interesting fact was brought to light as shown in Table VIII. The sum of the changes in the pre-post difference scores among the three groups during the treatment period indicated that the students in the parent group changed their grade point average in the positive direction and the parents' perception of the students' self-concept of ability also changed in the positive direction. The students in the teacher and control groups changed both their self-concept of ability and grade point average in the negative

¹Brookover, et al, op. cit., pp. 178-179.

²Klaus and Gray, op. cit., p. 2.

TABLE VII
ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF PRE-POST DIFFERENCES
ON THE SELF-CONCEPT

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F
S ₅ Treatments	.17308	2	.08654	.590595*
S ₂ Error	<u>10.69683</u>	<u>73</u>	.14653	
S ₄ Total	10.86991	75		

* not significant at the .05 level

TABLE VIII
CHANGE OF PRE-POST DIFFERENCE SCORES AMONG THE
THREE GROUPS DURING THE TREATMENT PERIOD

Variables (12/65-6/66)	Parent Group N=18	Teacher Group N=29	Control Group N=30
General S.C.	- .500	-2.625	-1.875
Mothers' Perceived S.C.	+1.250		
Fathers' Perceived S.C.	+4.000		
G.P.A.	+2.335	-2.335	-2.000

direction. The significance of these changes cannot be determined, however, since this is not a statistical measure.

Hypothesis 3

An analysis of covariance was used on the grade point average to test whether the students in the parent group had a higher mean than the students in the teacher group or the control group. The results, shown in Table IX, at the end of the experiment indicated that there were no significant differences at the .05 level in the self-concept means among the students in the parent, teacher and control groups.

TABLE IX
ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE OF PRE-POST DIFFERENCES
ON THE GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F
S_5 Treatments	.309980	2	.154990	.474*
S_2 Error	23.822346	73	.3263335	
S_4 Total	24.132326	75		

* not significant at the .05 level

The sign test was also used to analyze the proportion of individuals who changed their self-concept of ability and grade point average during the treatment period. Table X indicates that some positive changes were made by the students in the parent group and that negative changes were made by the students in the teacher and control groups. However, these changes were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE X
PROPORTION OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS WHO CHANGED DURING
THE TREATMENT PERIOD (sign test)*

<u>Parent Group</u>					
Variables	Direction of change			Number of Larger Changes	Proportion
	-	0	+		
Self-concept	8	3	7	15	-
Perceived Mother Evaluation (S.C.)	4	3	8	12	+
Perceived Father Evaluation (S.C.)	3	4	8	11	+
G.P.A.	5	5	8	13	+
<u>Teacher Group</u>					
Self-concept	16	6	7	23	-
Grade Point Average	13	6	10	23	-
<u>Control Group</u>					
Self-concept	18	1	11	29	-
Grade Point Average	14	6	10	24	-

* none of the changes are significant at the .05 level

Hypothesis 4

A correlation coefficient between the parents' perception of the child's self-concept of ability and the child's own self-concept of ability was determined to show the extent of the correlation and whether it was positive or negative.

Using the Spearman Rank Difference Method, the correlation coefficients were determined, with the following results:

Mother	-	Student Pre-test	=	.57*
Father	-	Student Pre-test	=	.70*
Mother	-	Student Post-test	=	.53*
Father	-	Student Post-test	=	.47**

* Significant at the .05 level

** Significant at the .10 level

There did exist a substantial positive correlation between the child's self-concept of ability and the parent's perception of the child's self-concept of ability.

II. SELECTED CASE STUDIES

A study of some individual students from the parent group was included where they revealed some interesting developments.

Case I—Mary—Self-concept With a Positive Change But No Change in Academic Achievement

At the time of the study, Mary had an older sister and a younger brother in a family which was dominated by the father. During the individual conference, the father said

that he never worked up to his ability but only did enough work to get by. He thought that perhaps that was the reason his children did not excel in school. Mary evidently had admitted that that was true.

The father threatened the children and yelled at them when they were younger and was surprised that these tactics no longer worked. He was at a loss and did not know what to do.

As a result of the study, he had begun to look at himself in a new light. He saw himself as a significant other who would have to change if he expected his daughter to change.

Mary's father was one of the participants who was very irritated during the early phases of the study because the researcher didn't give him enough explicit directions. He made his feelings known very forcefully in front of the parent group at the third general meeting.

This father had five years of college work before earning a bachelor's degree because he had no firm goals to attain. He majored in math and minored in law, accounting, and other fields. He finally earned a degree in civil engineering. He now is self-employed as a general contractor.

Mary's mother said very little during the conferences but let her husband do most of the talking. She classified herself as a homemaker who had graduated from high school but had no college training.

Mary worked with the speech correction teacher during the 1959-60 school year and apparently overcame her difficulty. She plays bass in the school orchestra and has lately become interested in a guitar. She is a hyperactive girl who is very athletic and easily loses her temper and resorts to hitting.

Her sixth grade teacher said she was a great talker in class but was conscientious about doing her work. She classified Mary as alert, self-confident, dependable, coordinated, showing initiative but lacking in self-control. Other teachers in the past classified Mary as a satisfactory student except in following directions, in relating to others, and in lack of respect for the property and rights of others.

Subject	Year in School and Grades			1st & 4th quarters
	5	6	7	
Language Arts	B	B	B - B	
Social Studies	C	C+	D - D	
Science	C+	C+	D - C	
Math	B	B	C - C	
I.Q.	118	126	137	
Self Concept			4.000	—— 4.500

STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Reading</u>		<u>Math</u>			
<u>Seven</u>	<u>Vocabu-</u> <u>lary</u>	<u>Compre-</u> <u>hension</u>	<u>Reason-</u> <u>ing</u>	<u>Funda-</u> <u>mentals</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Spell-</u> <u>ing</u>
O.G.P.*	8.6	8.3	7.0	8.1	7.9	10.1
A.A.G.P.**	10.0	10.2	8.9	8.6	10.1	9.5
Difference	-1.4	-1.9	-1.9	-.5	-2.2	+.6
<u>Six</u>						
O.G.P.	6.9	7.9	6.9	6.9	7.0	9.2
A.A.G.P.	7.5	7.7	7.0	6.9	7.4	6.9
Difference	-.6	+.2	-.1	0.0	-.4	+2.3

*O.G.P.—Obtained Grade Placement

**A.A.G.P.—Anticipated Achieved Grade Placement

Mary already had a record of negative marks in A.A.G.P. in the sixth grade even though her standardized achievement scores were above grade point average. Her high I.Q. indicated that she was not working up to her potential.

Mary slipped to a new low in the seventh grade where the difference between O.G.P. and A.A.G.P. increased sharply and her grade point average also decreased. She was a prime candidate for membership in the study.

The study shows that Mary's self-concept increased and that Mary's self-concept perceived by her parents increased. Even though there has been no increase in her grade point average, the prognosis for the future is bright. It is expected that Mary will do well in high school.

Case 2—John—Self-Concept With a Negative Change But
a High Positive Change in Academic Achievement

John had three older sisters and a younger brother. The younger brother excels in school. However, the parents were quick to add that they did not hold up the younger brother as a good example for John to emulate. They did not ask, "Why don't you do well in school like your younger brother does?"

John was rather insecure in his relationship with his parents and teachers. When his parents first said that they were planning to become members of a study group at school, John cried and begged them not to cooperate. They attended the first meeting to see what it was all about, and when they arrived home, John was waiting to hear what had transpired. When the parents explained what had gone on at the meeting and that everything was being done to help him achieve better work at school, he accepted their decision to participate. John later admitted that he was happy that he had been chosen as part of the group. He knew that something was wrong, that he could do better work in school, and that maybe this was the right answer to his needs.

The parents had both been graduated from high school, but neither one had attended college. The father was self-employed as a carpenter-contractor and was somewhat apologetic that he did not have a "professional" vocation.

John's mother worked very closely with him on his homework but thought that he sometimes hurried through it in

order to get to other activities. He had been having a great deal of difficulty with mathematics, and John's mathematics teacher had suggested a tutor to help him with math. The tutor was hired. John's mathematics grade remained at the "D" level until the final grading period, when he received a "C" grade. However, it is interesting to note that his other grades steadily increased until the third quarter, when he received a "B" in Language Arts and Social Studies, but the usual "D" in mathematics.

John's sixth grade teacher rated him as a high average student who was alert, dependable, neat, self-controlled, industrious, obedient, sociable, and polite. His fourth grade teacher said he was average in most of the above attributes, but that he did not do neat work and that he failed to follow directions.

Subject	<u>Year in School and Grades</u>			
	4	5	6	7 1st & 4th quarters
Language Arts	B	C+	B-	D - C
Social Studies	C	C	D	D - C
Mathematics	B	C	C-	D - C
Science	C	C	D	D - D
I.Q.		120	122	115
Self-Concept				3.500 ——— 3.250

STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

Grades	<u>Reading</u>		<u>Math</u>	<u>Funda- mentals</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Spell- ing</u>
<u>Seven</u>	<u>Vocabu- lary</u>	<u>Compre- hension</u>	<u>Reason- ing</u>			
O.G.P.	8.5	7.9	7.4	7.2	7.8	8.7
A.A.G.P.	8.6	8.6	8.0	7.9	8.6	8.3
Difference	-.1	-.7	-.6	-.7	-.8	+.4
<u>Six</u>	5.8			5.8		

O.G.P.

(scores were not available)

A.A.G.P.

A trend can be noted in John's grades from grade four through seven; he went from a B+ to C to C- to D. He began in seventh grade to reverse this trend, and it is hoped that he will continue to have better school achievement.

Case 3—Mike—Self-Concept Remained the Same With a Positive Change In Academic Achievement

Mike has an older brother who was in the Navy at the time of the study. His father was graduated from high school, and his mother finished grade nine. Because of their failure to attend college, both parents said that they have always impressed upon the boys the importance of an education. The older boy had entered college as a freshman but had dropped out of school in the middle of first semester to enter the United States Navy.

The father rose to the defense of the study at the third session when the program was criticized for not providing specific directions. He related this episode: The

father and the older son enjoyed doing things together such as going on fishing trips. Mike never went along because he always did things the wrong way. While the older son was in the Navy, the father took Mike on a fishing trip to a neighboring state. They were catching many nice fish until Mike let the minnow bucket sink in thirty feet of water. The father was about to blow his top, but then he thought, "What would our study director want me to do in such a situation?" After a few moments of reflection, he said, "Son, I guess we've caught enough fish for today, anyway. We should save some for our next fishing trip. Mother will be glad to see some of these beauties that you caught."

The mother came alone to the individual conference because the father caught a cold on the above weekend fishing trip. She was quick to point out (when I asked about Mike's reading habits) that one whole wall in the den was nothing but book shelves flanked on either side with smaller bookcases loaded with books. She said Jim reads, but she never did say how extensively, or whether other members of the family ever did any reading. She did say that Mike reads when he is pushed and that he read more than the older son.

The father owns a small plant and prides himself on the fact that with only his high school education, he is a success. He didn't realize that he was discrediting the importance of an education.

The mother talked at some length about the older boy during the conference, but she assured me that Mike was

learning to take his place as a member of the family since he had regular chores to do.

Mike's sixth grade teacher classified him as an average to low average student who had poor leadership ability and poor work habits. She said that he was undependable, lazy, obedient, considerate, polite, self-controlled, and that he lacked initiative. His fifth grade teacher said that Mike was average in all of the listed traits except that he did not do very neat work.

Subject	Year in School and Grades				1st & 4th quarters
	5	6	7	8	
Language Arts	C	D	C	D - C	
Social Studies	B	D+	C	C - C	
Mathematics	D	D-	F	D - D	
Science	B	B	D	C	
I.Q.		128		111	
Self-Concept				3.125	——— 3.125

STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

Grades	<u>Reading</u>		<u>Math</u>	<u>Funda- mentals</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Spell- ing</u>
<u>Seven</u>	<u>Vocabu- lary</u>	<u>Compre- hension</u>	<u>Reason- ing</u>			
O.G.P.	9.8	7.6	7.2	8.0	9.3	8.7
A.A.G.P.	8.7	8.7	8.0	7.9	8.7	8.4
Difference	+1.1	-1.1	-.8	+.1	+.6	+.3
<u>Eight</u>						
O.G.P.	9.0	8.8	8.4	8.3	9.1	8.3
A.A.G.P.	9.6	9.9	9.1	8.9	9.6	9.3
Difference	-.6	-1.1	-.7	-.6	-.5	-1.0

No trends for Mike can be seen from the above data. As to the family relationship, perhaps he could take his place as a deserving member of the family while the older son is in the Navy.

Case 4—Ruth—Self-Concept With a Positive Change and
With a Positive Change in Academic Achievement

Ruth has one older sister, two older brothers, and one younger brother. Her mother was graduated from high school, and her father had seven years of college training and is a practicing attorney.

Ruth's father was another participant who was critical of the program. He and his wife attended the first four meetings through the individual conference, and then, only his wife attended the last two meetings. He did not fill out a self-concept post-test. I personally took one out to his home, but he still didn't return it. His wife was very

apologetic because he hadn't filled out the original form and said she would certainly give the second one to him.

There was not much interaction during the individual conference. They listened to what I had to say about Ruth's cumulative folder from school, and then the father gave some suggestions as to ways the study could have been improved. The mother did say that Ruth learned to read voluntarily before attending school and that she had taken over many of the household duties in addition to helping her younger brother with his homework. Her mother said that Ruth got much assurance from home and that she is a worthy family member.

Ruth attended summer school in reading in 1963 and her teacher said that she understood phonetic rules, increased her study habits and skills and made a sincere attempt to improve academically, but that she needed more continuity of thought in sentence structure and writing. Her summer school teacher in 1965 said Ruth made very satisfactory progress, was very cooperative, and had a good phonetic background.

Her sixth grade teacher said Ruth was alert, hesitant, dependable, neat, mature, obedient, considerate, sociable, and polite.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Year in School and Grades</u>		
	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1st and 4th 7 Quarters</u>
Language Arts	C	C-	D - C
Social Studies	C-	C	D - C
Mathematics	C	C	B - C
Science	C	C+	D - F
I.Q.		108	123
Self-Concept			3.250 ——— 3.375

STANDARDIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Reading</u>		<u>Math</u>		<u>English</u>	<u>Spell- ing</u>
<u>Seven</u>	<u>Vocabu- lary</u>	<u>Compre- hension</u>	<u>Reason- ing</u>	<u>Funda- mentals</u>		
O.G.P.	8.3	7.8	7.2	7.8	7.9	7.8
A.A.G.P.	8.9	9.0	8.2	8.0	9.0	8.6
Difference	-.6	-1.2	-1.1	-.2	-1.1	-.8
<u>Six</u>						
O.G.P.	5.7	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.5	5.2
A.A.G.P.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.3
Difference	.7	0.0	0.0	-.1	+.1	-1.1

At the next to the last meeting of the parent group, her mother said Ruth had brought home a math test paper with only one wrong problem. Ruth was highly elated, and so were her parents. Perhaps with a few more successes such as this, she may progress toward becoming a student who works up to her potential.

Case 5—Dave—Self-Concept With a Positive Change But
No Change In Academic Achievement

Information on Dave was incomplete, but he was included in the case study because of his father's defense of the program during the third meeting. His father said that Dave brought home an arithmetic test paper with only 1-1/2 wrong out of 12 (author's note: The researcher would have said 10-1/2 right out of 12). He very proudly showed it to his father, who looked at the paper, looked at Dave, and praised him highly saying that it should have given Dave a great deal of inner satisfaction to have achieved this well. Dave said it did give him a good feeling inside and that he was going to keep up the good work.

The father said that before the study began, if the same incident had happened, he would have asked Dave who he copied from to get such a good score! The father had now progressed to the point where he realized that as a significant other he should share in the successes of his son and complement those successes.

The father said that Dave is well-motivated to do good work but that he has a problem with reading. The motivation mentioned by the father was probably prompted by fear. Dave was involved in difficulty at school and was suspended for one day. His parents were to come to school with Dave the next day to discuss the matter. Dave's mother brought him back to school to help find a solution to the difficulty.

She didn't tell her husband about the incident because she was afraid of what he would do to Dave.

The parents were very proud of the accomplishments of their younger daughter, who would be attending the junior high school the year after Dave was promoted to the high school.

Dave had a self-concept of 2.875, which increased to 3.500 at the end of the year. His I.Q. ranged from 106 in grade six to 112 in grade eight.

TABLE XI

DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS IN SELF-CONCEPT AND GRADE POINT AVERAGE
FOR STUDENTS IN THE PARENT EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Student	Self-Concept			Grade Point Average		
	Oct. 1965	June 1966	Change	Change	Nov. 1965	June 1966
A	3.000	3.125	+.125	+.667	2.000	2.667
B	4.000	3.125	-.125	-.334	1.667	1.333
C	3.250	3.125	-.125		2.333	2.333
D	2.750	2.875	+.125	-.667	2.000	1.333
E	3.250	3.250			2.000	2.000
F	2.500	2.375	-.125	-.334	1.667	1.333
G	3.000	2.875	-.125	+.667	1.667	2.333
H	2.875	3.000	+.125	+.667	2.667	3.333
Dave*	2.875	3.500	+.625		1.667	1.667
Ruth*	3.250	3.375	+.125	+.334	2.667	3.000
John*	3.500	3.250	-.250	+1.000	2.000	3.000
L	3.500	2.875	-.625		2.667	2.667
M	3.875	3.250	-.625	-.334	1.667	1.333
Mary*	4.000	4.500	+.500		3.000	3.000
O	2.875	2.875		+.334	1.667	2.000
P	3.125	3.250	+.125	+.667	2.333	3.000
Mike	3.125	3.125		+.334	2.333	2.667
R	3.125	2.875	-.250	-.667	2.667	2.000

*These students were part of the case study report

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A great waste of manpower and reduced productivity are inherent in all people who do not attain to their fullest potential. This lack of using their abilities to the greatest degree must be eliminated as people are helped to greater achievement. Patterns have usually been set in the home environment where parents have been a great influence on the self-concept of ability and resultant achievement on the part of their children. Teachers have been considered by many studies as being a significant person in the lives of students second only to the parents.

This present study has sought an answer to this problem by helping early adolescents increase their self-concept and thereby increase their school achievement. Two experimental groups of students and one control group were formed. It was hypothesized that if parents could be induced to raise their perceived concept of their child's ability that the child's self-concept of ability would be increased with a resultant increase in school achievement. The fifty teachers of two junior high schools were assigned a random sample of students who had average to above average ability but average to below average school achievement. It was hypothesized that if professional teachers would use their expertise to increase the students' self-concept of ability that such an increase would be effected with a resultant increase in

school achievement. A third group, known only to the researcher, provided a control for the experiment. The .05 level of significance was used in all statistical measures used in this study.

I. SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES, METHOD AND FINDINGS

Hypothesis number one stated that a student's increased self-concept of ability would result in an increased level of school achievement. This hypothesis was tested by a X^2 analysis on a 2 X 2 contingency table with increase and decrease in self-concept vs. increase and decrease in grade point average to show the difference from pre-test to post-test. The null hypothesis, self-concept and grade point average are independent characteristics, was not rejected.

As has been pointed out in the study by Brookover, and also Klaus and Gray, a significant increase in self-concept of ability may not be expected at the end of such a short time. The present experiment was carried out during a seven month period. Parents had begun to assume their rightful place as significant others near the close of the experimental period. If the study could have been continued for another school year, it is possible that significant results would have been attained. In the Brookover study, significant differences in experimental means were found at the end of a three-year study that showed a definite

statistically significant relationship between self-concept of ability and school achievement.

A further look at Table VI shows that there was a much higher value for the X^2 for the parent group than for either the teacher or control groups. A further look at the number of increases vs. decreases in self-concept of ability in the three groups shows the students in the parent group remained stable but the decreases in the students' self-concept of ability in the other two groups, teacher and control, were about twice as great as the increases. However, since these variations in the parent, teacher and control groups were not significantly different, no statistically significant conclusions could be drawn. The data indicated that more progress was made in the parent group than in the other two groups.

It was further hypothesized that the students in the parent group would have a higher mean self-concept of ability than the students in the teacher group and/or the control group at the end of the experiment. An analysis of covariance indicated that there were no significant differences at the .05 level in the self-concept means among the parent, teacher and control groups. The same results were found from the analysis of covariance used on the grade point average.

Further evidence was brought to light by using the sign test. Table X indicated that the parent group had a larger proportion of positive changes in the categories of

grade point average and the parents' perception of their child's ability. The students' own self-concept of ability, however, remained stable. Even in this one negative area there was only one more negative than positive change. The students in the teacher group showed sixteen negative changes to seven positive changes, while the students in the control group showed eighteen negative changes to eleven positive changes. There were no significant changes at the .05 level. However, there was one change in the self-concept of ability for the students in the teacher group which was significant at the .10 level. This change was in the negative direction (See Table X). There were twenty-three changes with sixteen of them in the negative direction. One more change in the negative direction would have made this a significant change at the .05 level.

The sign test, shown in Table IX, also indicated that the grade point average of the students in the parent group changed in a positive direction with five negative and eight positive changes. The students in the teacher and control groups both had a larger proportion of negative changes, although the magnitude was not as great as in the test of self-concept of ability. It must be noted, however, that these changes were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Students in school who have experienced academic difficulty have also shown a tendency to experience greater difficulty as each year goes by unless some remedial measures

are taken. There seem to be trends for both self-concept of ability and grade point average to increase with the students in the parent group and to decrease with the students in the teacher and control groups. If the data, in fact, represent a trend toward increased achievement on the part of students in the parent group, then these students should gain in self-concept of ability and grade point average in the future, based on what happened in the Brookover, et al, study. This study found no significant differences at the end of one or two years but did find significant differences in the longitudinal study at the end of three years.

Hypothesis number four stated that increases in the concept of ability which parents hold of their underachieving children result in increases in the students' self-concept of ability. This hypothesis was tested by using the Spearman Rank Difference Method of Correlation.

At the beginning of the experiment the correlation between the mother and student assessment of the self-concept of ability was $+.57$.^{*} This correlation coefficient indicates that there was a substantial positive correlation between the mother's and child's assessment that was greater than chance.

The correlation between the father and student assessment of the self-concept of ability was $+.70$.^{*} This correlation coefficient indicates an even greater positive correlation than between that of the mother and child. At the

^{*} significant at the .05 level

beginning of the experiment, then, there did exist a substantial positive correlation between the parents and students. If this hypothesis is to be substantiated, a similar positive correlation must be found at the end of the experimental period.

At the end of the experiment the correlation between the mother and student was $+.53^*$ and between the father and student it was $+.47^{**}$. There was a decrease in the correlation between the father and student assessment of the self-concept of ability from $+.70$ to $+.47$. The researcher concluded that this great decrease was due to the fact that at the end of the experiment the fathers probably answered the questionnaire on the basis of what the child ought to think and not what the child actually did think of his self-concept of ability. It can be concluded, however, that increases in the self-concept of ability which parents hold of their underachieving children result in increases in the students' self-concept of ability.

II. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR CONCLUSIONS

There were no statistically significant findings that supported the thesis that a change in self-concept in underachieving adolescents resulted in a corresponding increase in grade point average. However, there were some trends that must be noted.

*significant at the .05 level

**significant at the .10 level

While the prognosis for underachieving students without special help is that they will fall further behind, eight students out of the eighteen in the parent group increased their grade point average. Even though that does not constitute a significant increase, it gives an indication of a trend that may develop. In further support of this trend, Table X shows the sum of the change of pre-post difference scores among the three groups during the treatment period. The parents' perception of the child's self-concept of ability went up, with a considerable increase on the part of the fathers in the study. Even though the self-concept of ability of the students went down, it certainly was a much smaller reduction than that recorded for the other two groups. The grade point average also increased for the students in the parent group and decreased for the other two.

It was interesting to note in the Brookover study, and in the present research, that some parents became extremely hostile when confronted with the fact that they were the significant other named first by adolescents.¹ They found it difficult to face up to their responsibility with reference to their child's low self-concept of ability and academic difficulty. In both studies the parents sought and found many of the following scapegoats: past school training, teachers, subject-matter content, reading instruction, T.V.,

¹Brookover, et al, 1965, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

peers, neighbors, and the modern world. One father said that he had known of a boy whose mother was a prostitute and whose father was a drunken bum. This boy put himself through college and became a medical doctor. The father pointed out that there certainly was some deviation from the research findings concerning significant others. This father erroneously thought that this one example refuted all past research on the subject.

Parents continued to be defensive for the first few meetings, constantly maintaining that they were not at fault and that the researcher should not accuse them of raising their children improperly. The researcher patiently sought to reassure them that they were not being blamed, per se, but that the remedy for the situation now rested in their hands, and what they did would make a great difference in the lives of their children. In both studies the parents accepted this responsibility after the second or third meeting and moved ahead realistically toward a solution.

One reason for this lack of role acceptance may have been a neurotic (nonself-accepting) tendency on the part of the parents. Camilla M. Anderson states:

The child develops those traits which satisfy the needs of his significant people Neurotic parents bring insatiable pressures to bear on their children, since they are dependent on their children to make up their own deficiencies. Structuralization of traits may take place out of such feelings as love or gratified dependency, out of fear, out of hope,

out of a sense of futility, out of simple fear of being overlooked or out of rebellion.²

The parents in this study were made aware of their role as significant others as they discovered that they would make an impact on the achievement level of their children. With this newly found power, the parents in the present study can be expected to inspire their children to grow in their self-concept of ability with a resultant growth in academic achievement.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL SYSTEMS

School systems have made false assumptions in the past that a low I.Q. and achievement points up the need to provide a watered-down or sub-standard curriculum. We have seen that there may be other causes for low test scores and low academic achievement. A person's self-concept of ability may need some improvement. School systems should be aware of their misplaced trust in standardized test scores and seek to implement the findings of this study, knowing that all weaknesses may be improved.

School systems, knowing of the relationship between self-concept of ability and grade point average, could begin to work with parent groups similar to those used in this study to help the students to an earlier gain in self-concept of ability and grade point average.

²Anderson, op. cit., p. 232.

This study expected the expertise of teachers to make an impact on the change in self-concept of ability, with the result that no significant differences were found in this group. Perhaps, if teachers were acquainted with methods of enhancing the self-concept of ability, they would be able to help their students achieve at a higher level. In-service programs could be used to acquaint teachers with the proper procedures to use in their classroom operations.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- A. Continue a longitudinal study of the present groups to see if the trend toward improvement of the self-concept of ability coupled with academic achievement will continue. These students could be studied throughout their high school years.
- B. A study could be made to categorize teachers on how well they improved the self-concept of ability of their pupils by their teaching methods. These methods could then be communicated to teachers in general.
- C. The present study could have been expanded in several ways.
 - 1. The increase or decrease in academic achievement could have been used in conjunction with the self-concept of ability in various subject offerings.
 - 2. Further attention could have been given to the teachers to make them more aware of the possibilities of group work, of increased self-concept of ability, and of ways to achieve increases.
 - 3. All school subjects should have been used. Perhaps greater increases in achievement would have been effected if the non-academic subjects had been used in the study.
- D. This study was conducted in a junior high school. Perhaps greater results could have been achieved if

the study had been used earlier, perhaps in the third or fourth grades of the elementary school.

- E. The treatment in the present study was applied over one school year. Perhaps greater results could have been effected if the treatments had been applied over a longer period of time.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
CONCEPT OF CHILD'S ABILITY

(NAME)

(SCHOOL)

(DATE)

Circle the letter in front of the statement which best answers each question.

1. How do you rate your child in school ability compared with his/her close friends?
 - a. the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. the poorest
2. How do you rate your child in school ability compared with those in his/her class in school?
 - a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
3. Where do you think your child would rank in his/her class in high school?
 - a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
4. Do you think your child has the ability to complete college?
 - a. yes, definitely
 - b. yes, probably
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. probably not
 - e. no

5. Where do you think your child would rank in his/her class in college?
- a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
6. In order to become a doctor, lawyer, or university professor, work beyond four years of college is necessary. How likely do you think it is that your child could complete such advanced work?
- a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. unlikely
 - e. most unlikely
7. Forget for a moment how others grade your child's work. In your own opinion how good do you think his/her work is?
- a. work is excellent
 - b. work is good
 - c. work is average
 - d. work is below average
 - e. work is much below average
8. What kind of grades do you think your child is capable of getting?
- a. mostly A's
 - b. mostly B's
 - c. mostly C's
 - d. mostly D's
 - e. mostly E's

APPENDIX B

SELF-CONCEPT OF ABILITY - GENERAL (FORM A.)

(NAME)

(SCHOOL)

(DATE)

Circle the letter in front of the statement which best answers each question.

1. How do you rate yourself in school ability compared with your close friends?
 - a. I am the best
 - b. I am above average
 - c. I am average
 - d. I am below average
 - e. I am the poorest
2. How do you rate yourself in school ability compared with those in your class at school?
 - a. I am among the best
 - b. I am above average
 - c. I am average
 - d. I am below average
 - e. I am among the poorest
3. Where do you think you would rank in your class in junior high school?
 - a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest
4. Do you think you have the ability to complete college?
 - a. yes, definitely
 - b. yes, probably
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. probably not
 - e. no

5. Where do you think you would rank in your class in college?
 - a. among the best
 - b. above average
 - c. average
 - d. below average
 - e. among the poorest

6. In order to become a doctor, lawyer, or university professor, work beyond four years of college is necessary. How likely do you think it is that you could complete such advanced work?
 - a. very likely
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. not sure either way
 - d. unlikely
 - e. most unlikely

7. Forget for a moment how others grade your work. In your own opinion, how good do you think your work is?
 - a. my work is excellent
 - b. my work is good
 - c. my work is average
 - d. my work is below average
 - e. my work is much below average

8. What kind of grades do you think you are capable of getting?
 - a. mostly A's
 - b. mostly B's
 - c. mostly C's
 - d. mostly D's
 - e. mostly E's

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