The Effects of a Child Development Nursery Laboratory Classroom on Adolescent Self-Esteem

by

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Chapter 1

Statement of Problem

Much of an individual's perception of reality is determined by the way he sees himself in relation to the world in which he lives. Everything we do or say, everything we hear, feel or otherwise perceive is filtered to us by how we see ourselves (Bills, 1981). The adolescent, particularly, is seeking a place for himself amongst friends and in a suitable vocation. He is yearning for the comfort of knowing where he is going and what his future holds. The importance of self-esteem for his subsequent educational and occupational success is well documented in the literature, since positive, adequate self-feelings are fundamental to achievement, acceptance of self and acceptance of others. This proposed research will measure the relationship between student self-esteem and enrollment in a child development/nursery laboratory program.

The nursery laboratory program as it exists in the high school setting is a relatively new program. Little research exists that evaluates the benefits derived by students enrolled in this kind of program. Most of the documentation in this curriculum area tends to focus on general strengths and benefits to young children of such a program rather than on specific behavioral changes in individual high school students. In the nursery laboratory setting the adolescent is provided with an opportunity to interact with young children and with peers in the role of a teacher. During the teen
years, adolescents reevaluate many of the adjustments they confronted earlier in life. This reevaluation means refocusing on autonomy, initiative, attachment, and personal and social mastery (Briggs, 1975). As they learn about the children with whom they are working, they learn much about themselves, including their past as a child and their future as an adult (Brisbane, 1971). They are also afforded a continuing opportunity for increased responsibility and decision making, both important components of adolescent self-esteem. Since adolescence is a time in our lives when we find ourselves, it would logically be a time when change in self-perceptions would be most noticeable. Additionally, there is considerable evidence for the contention that it is not until adolescence that the human organism is capable of constructing a self-concept (Okun & Sasfy, 1977).

Definition of terms

Nursery laboratory - a pre-school/day care center located within the high school whose primary function is the training of high school students for child related careers

Child development/nursery laboratory program - a two hour/two credit occupational course designed for high school students which provides field experience in the nursery laboratory, coupled with a seminar for the planning of early childhood learning activities and the introduction of child development concepts
Self - the "real" self; the actor, the doer, or the agent; the sum total of all one can call his
Self-concept - the information or cognition an individual has about himself, and the ways in which he is both like and unlike others
Self-esteem - the judgment and feelings an individual has about the self; one's satisfaction with his self-concept

Pre- and post-testing of the subjects will be made with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory - Form B (Appendix B). Results of the tests will be analyzed using paired t-tests. Significant positive results might warrant identification of adolescents within a school system who would particularly benefit from enrollment in this type of program. Expansion of other high school programs to include a nursery laboratory experience might also be warranted.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

a. Study the relationship between enrollment in a child development/nursery laboratory program and the self-esteem of high school students

b. Investigate whether the results justify the expansion of the child development/nursery laboratory program

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the self-esteem of
a high school student before and after participation in a child
development/nursery laboratory program.

Summary

As an individual moves into adolescence, he must reevaluate his
perception of the world and his place in it. As a participant in a
nursery laboratory program, he has an opportunity to interact with
young children who are facing many of the adjustments that he made
during that earlier stage of development. This study is designed to
measure the effect of that interaction as it occurs within the child
development/nursery laboratory.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Of all aspects of ourselves, the most important to us is our self-image. Positive, adequate self-feelings are essential to achievement, acceptance of self, and acceptance of others. Individuals who view themselves as likeable and worthy of others' respect have a valuable inner resource that can offer sustenance during times of emotional stress and strain. The most cherished perceptions we hold are those which pertain to what we are like and what we aspire to be (Bills, 1981). According to Combs (1958), the most important ideas which affect people's behavior are those ideas they have about themselves. Purkey (1970) identifies six factors that are important in creating an atmosphere supportive of favorable self-images. These are: challenges, freedom, respect, warmth, control and success. High self-esteem is assumed to be related to "healthy" behavior and "good adjustment". The high self-esteem presumption is basic to self-acceptance perspectives (Wells & Marwell, 1976). Coopersmith (1967) indicates that persons high in self-esteem are happier and more effective in meeting environmental demands than are people low in self-esteem.

The past two decades have provided a growing number of research studies in the area of self-perception (Beane & Lipka, 1980). Few have focused specifically on normal adolescent growth; indications are that studies of self-concept have identified primarily young
children, school children without special attention to adolescents, or children in clinical settings (Shavelson, Burnstein, & Keesling, 1977). They have also been concerned with late adolescent college samples (Protinsky & Farrier, 1980).

School counselors frequently encounter self-concept problems in adolescents, who are typically experiencing a multitude of changes and challenges, any of which can damage a fragile self-concept (Cangelosi, Gressard, & Mines, 1980). The adolescent is undergoing rapid physical changes in height, weight and secondary sexual characteristics. He is faced with the social pressures presented by peers, society and family. Additionally, he must resolve the conflicts inherent in moving from childhood into adulthood. He is reaching for physical, social, sexual and work competence that will satisfy his need to feel unique, worthy and capable of achieving adulthood (Solnit, 1979). Erikson (1968) states that questions of self take on major importance as the adolescent confronts the classic identity crisis. Each adolescent is coming to terms with the unfinished business of his childhood as preparation for the wider social stage of adulthood.

Some data indicate that the major transformations in the adolescent's perception of himself occur after the age of fifteen. This is congruent with theories that the formal operations stage of development allows the adolescent the ability to think beyond the concrete present and in terms relative to the possible (Bernstein, 1980).

Although various theorists have viewed adolescence as a time of
discontinuity in psychological development, results of research conducted by Monge (1973) found little evidence for restructuring of the self-concept around and after pubescence. Most theories regarding stability of the self-image through the life cycle indicate that it tends not to change appreciably. Handel (1980) suggests that the portrayal of the typical adolescent as continually altering his perception of himself and evading the search for connections between his past, present and future selves is not predominant; the response pattern that recalls a sense of sameness and continuity as reported by Erikson (1968) is much more prevalent. Engel (1959) in a study of students who were between the tenth and twelfth grade years, indicated that the self-concept was relatively stable over a two year period. Subjects whose self-concept was negative at the first testing demonstrated significantly less stable self-concepts than subjects whose self-concepts were positive; positive self-concept scores increased significantly between the two testings. Beane, Lipka and Ludewig (1980) contend that general perceptions of self are quite stable. At some time preceding middle childhood the individual arrives at a general appraisal of his worth, which remains relatively stable and enduring over a period of several years. Although the idea of the self is open to change and alteration, it appears relatively resistant to such change (Coopersmith, 1967). There is some indication that change in the self can occur only as a consequence of some new experience of self. The more vivid and meaningful the experience, the more likely it will result in a change in self-perception (Combs, Richards, & Richards, 1976). The
success of an important and highly rated ability tends to raise the self-evaluation of other abilities (Purkey, 1970). McCandless (1961) postulates that the self-concept is something that is empirically learned; however, most psychologists are willing to allow for levels of complexity and abstractness in the process of its acquisition. An additional perspective is provided by Calhoun and Morse (1977) who state that some authors believe the self-concept to be developed before the age of five and to remain basically constant, while self-esteem is developed later and oscillates according to the success or failure the individual encounters daily.

Outside the child's own family no institution in our society is in a better position to affect the growth and development of an individual's self-concept than our public schools (Combs, 1958). However, this is frequently not a positive, rewarding experience. Bills (1981) concludes that the longer students remain in school, the less positive are their self-concepts and their concepts of other people. He further states that as a school year progresses, children feel less positively about their worth as people. This is congruent with Thompson's findings that there is a tendency for older pupils to have less positive self-concepts than younger ones (Thompson, 1974).

Students carry images of the self in several areas as well as the potential for developing many more. Brookover, Paterson and Thomas (1965), in studies conducted through Michigan State University, found the self-concept of ability functions independent of measured intelligence in predicting school achievement, and a
student's self-concept of ability is positively related to the image he perceives significant others such as parents, teachers and peers hold of him. These self-images might include the self as person, as learner, as academic achiever, as peer, and others. Each experience in school can affect self-concept, personally held values, and the subsequent self-esteem of the learner (Beane, Lipka & Ludewig, 1980). Glasser (1969) stressed the need for helping students realize their potential by giving them opportunities to reach self-made goals. The teacher is in a potent position to exert influence on the learners' developing awareness of who they are and who they are becoming (Penticuff, 1976). A teacher who accepts each child as a unique person and helps him in his growth toward self-realization is basic to the acquisition of adequate and accurate self-concepts in the learner (Bledsoe, 1967). Teachers as significant others must consistently signal learners that they can successfully pursue the academic, social, and personal goals of school experience (Beane & Lipka, 1980). This is supported by Thompson's (1974) suggestion that identification with an adult figure may be important for perceived success in school.

The importance of a person's self-concept for subsequent educational and occupational success is well documented in the literature. As we become increasingly aware that learning based upon experience is usually more vivid and permanent than learning that begins in a text, we are seeing career education and work study programs gaining accelerated support in high schools and colleges (Ingoldsby & Adams, 1977). It is almost taken for granted that understanding and
implementing the self-concept lies at the heart of vocational development. This concept is particularly significant for the vocational education student, who appears to have a more negative self-image than does his non-vocational counterpart (Egginton, 1978).

At the time the adolescent is least sure of himself, he has to make basic decisions about his future. Broad educational and job experiences will help him assess his own capabilities; however, how a student sees himself has profound implications for influencing his choices. The ultimate aim of career education is to prepare learners for more satisfactory human existence through work experience. Super (1953) states that the implementation or actualization of self-concepts results from the training and education that enables one to move into a place in the world of work. Results of a study conducted by Otte and Sharpe (1977) indicate that given an outstanding teacher and a well designed, well executed career exploration program, dramatic gains can be made in both cognitive and affective variables with inner-city junior high school students. Experience-based career education laboratories have case history evidence as to the impact of experiential learning on the self-concept. Data seem to indicate that the students enrolled in this type of program develop a more positive self-concept and assume greater responsibility for themselves (Henderson & Shively, 1980). Career exploration allows the student to study personally important problems and to create or construct related projects which will allow him an opportunity to develop a sense of self as an ongoing and capable learner. Having a profession or skill provides students with tools to make their way in
the world. Working at a task and being successful also helps to improve the self-concept (Thompson, 1978). A report presented by the Committee for the Study of National Service, a panel of distinguished American leaders, identified three perspectives as national policy needs in our rapidly changing society: the social and psychological development of young people, including consideration of an enhanced sense of altruism for the common good and more positive self-esteem, characteristics associated with work that develop competence, and the capacity to feel realistically responsible for others (Solnit, 1979).

Adolescents who tutor young children have an opportunity to be responsible for others as they learn by teaching. One of the purposes of cross-age teaching is to encourage the growth of individuals to their full potential. As "teachers become learners" and "learners become teachers" the personalities of both adolescent and child unfold. Participants in a nursery laboratory program have a unique situation where they can gain insight into their own and the children's learning (Larson, 1971). Social and emotional benefits to the students who teach include building of self-respect and ego strength. Cross-age teaching is a crucial combination of adolescents' interaction with children simultaneous to the stimulation of their capacity for historical insight into their own development into adulthood (Paolitto, 1976). Schools can contribute to student self-esteem by providing the interaction with younger and older people made possible by cross-age tutoring (Beane, Lipka, & Ludewig, 1980). As older children help those who are younger, they are provided with an
opportunity to feel appreciated, influential, and needed. Research shows that when children feel accepted and liked by other children they can use their abilities more fully; for the older child, or adolescent, teaching younger children also provides an opportunity to give to society as well as take from it. By putting a student in a position of trust and responsibility we evoke a change in behavior that also includes love, caring and compassion (Lippitt, 1975). Paolitto (1976) adds, however, that although there has been some carefully conducted research regarding the effects of cross-age tutoring on the ego development of adolescents, a one-semester course in cross-age teaching may not be enough time to affect that complex aspect of human development.

The student in a nursery laboratory program not only interacts with young children and adults; he also has an opportunity to work cooperatively with members of his own peer group. This setting provides an added dimension to his interaction with those members of his own age group, who tend to define success and happiness as popularity and acceptance. This relationship with others of his own age is of particular importance, since of all pressures impacting on the adolescent, none is more pronounced than that of the peer group (Maxon & Malone, 1977).

Peer relations are a major factor contributing to a child's self-image and self-esteem. The better accepted he is by his peers, the better adjusted he becomes (Dinkmeyer, Carlson, & Koval, 1975). As adolescents grow older, peers take on even greater importance; this influence does not decline until they are well past the
adolescent period in their lives (O'Donnell, 1979). Group impact and influence on its members can be a powerful force. Students who receive negative feedback from peers are put in a threatening environment for many hours each day, thereby reducing their self-esteem and feelings of self worth. Conversely, peers can provide emotional support and greatly influence one another's attitudes toward success. Energies and strengths of the peer group can be made to flow in constructive directions. Through positive interactions with peers, inferiority feelings can be reformed into a raised self-esteem (Schmuck, 1977).

Comprehensive courses specifically designed for teaching occupations with children exist at both the high school and college level. The success of such programs lies in the employment of teacher coordinators capable of working with all groups that will be involved in the program--business persons, parents, school officials, community agencies and students (Lynch & Harris, 1975). A three year demonstration project was conducted in three high schools to involve adolescents in child training through the classroom and actual field experience. Results of this study indicated that changes in self-esteem were too small to attribute definitely to the program (Harris & Puryear, 1973). A demonstration project identified as the Day Care Youth Helper Program (DCYHP) was developed at demonstration sites across the country. Programs were located in 14 public high schools, one privately funded alternative school, and one junior high school. This program provided students with an opportunity to work with preschool children through field experience in day care centers coupled
with a seminar for the planning of early childhood learning activities and the introduction of child development concepts. This research indicated that students gained insight into younger children and how they learn and grow, gained critically needed job related skills, information on which to base a career decision and, probably even more importantly, an increased understanding of themselves. Particularly successful was the participation of special students with problem histories.

Summary

A review of the literature provides considerable agreement on the importance of the self-image, particularly during the time when an individual is making the changes inherent in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Generally, it is agreed that the self-image remains somewhat constant through the life cycle with school settings having a very definite, frequently negative effect on the individual's view of himself. Career exploration is seen as an opportunity to provide the student with another view of himself as a capable learner. It also provides him with an opportunity to view himself as a participant in the world of work. The experience of interacting with learners of other ages also appears to have a positive effect; the results of working with members of the peer group appear to be less clearly defined. Courses for learning child care skills exist at both high school and college levels. There is some research that focuses on benefits of such programs to the younger children they serve; most of the literature relative to existing child care programs emphasizes characteristics of such programs rather than research
data regarding specific benefits to adolescent participants. Generally, the available research regarding these programs appears to be both limited and non-conclusive.
Chapter 3
Procedures

Subjects

The subjects (N = 14) for this study were drawn from the child development/nursery laboratory class of a large metropolitan high school. The purpose of the study was to determine whether enrollment in this program had an effect on their self-esteem. The major objectives of this child development/nursery laboratory program were to increase the adolescents' awareness of the developing child, to broaden his understanding of the child's needs and potentials for learning, to increase his pleasure in nurturing and motivating the child, and to encourage him to consider the potential of a career in a child-related field.

The subjects were enrolled in the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grades. Most of the students enrolled in this program were vocational students who had no plans for continuing their education beyond high school. Some had no real occupational objectives, and this program provided an opportunity for career exploration.

Subjects attended class for two hours each day, five days each week. Class time was equally divided between lecture, observation, evaluation, and nursery laboratory planning (1 week) and laboratory participation (1 week). The nursery laboratory experience consisted of pre-planned interaction with approximately 45 children of ages 3, 4, and 5 years of age in a licensed day care center. The day
care center exists within the high school; therefore, students are able to interact with the children at other times during the day if they choose to do so.

Instrumentation

Student self-esteem was measured early in the combination lecture/laboratory program using Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory - Form B. A retest was conducted approximately five months later. A total score, as well as scores on social self-esteem, total self-esteem and self-certainty were computed.

The long form of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory - Form A reportedly has a test-retest reliability of .88 over five weeks and .70 over three years (Coopersmith, 1967). Results obtained with the short form are not significantly different. A correlation of .59 and .60 was made between the Form B and the Rosenberg scale for college students (N = 300). This is comparable to validity coefficients for the longer Coopersmith scale.

Results

Analysis of results was accomplished by the use of paired t-tests. The results provided information concerning the difference in self-esteem before and after participation in the child development/nursery laboratory for each of the areas tested as well as the total self-esteem score. Results were also computed for a number of demographic variables. The level of significance for the study was 0.05.
Chapter 4

Results

Students enrolled in a child development/nursery laboratory program in a large, metropolitan high school were measured to determine whether enrollment in this vocational program had an effect on their self-esteem. Self-esteem was measured with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory - Form B. The Coopersmith was administered to 18 students early in the nursery/laboratory portion of the program. Of this number, 14 students remained in school and in the child development program. They were retested five months later, and the results of the tests were examined.

Questions on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory were subdivided into four categories: Social Self-Esteem, Total Self-Esteem, Self-Certainty, and Self-Esteem Total. Social Self-Esteem involved questions related to the success or failure of the social self. Information relative to general self-esteem was used to measure Total Self-Esteem. Self-Certainty questions measured the perceived adequacy of the self, and the Self-Esteem Total was a measurement of responses to all questions on the Self-Esteem Inventory. Criteria were set forth by Ketcham and Morse (1965). Table 1 represents the correlations between pre- and post-test scores for each of the four areas evaluated. Increases were registered in all areas except Self-Certainty, which showed a decrease from pre- to post-testing. A t-value was computed for each of the
Table 1
Test Score Correlations
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Self-Esteem</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.64$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.86$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = 1.82$</td>
<td>$SD = 1.96$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SE = 0.49$</td>
<td>$SE = 0.52$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Self-Esteem</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 2.57$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 3.14$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = 1.60$</td>
<td>$SD = 1.75$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SE = 0.43$</td>
<td>$SE = 0.47$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Certainty</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 1.21$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 0.86$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = 0.70$</td>
<td>$SD = 0.77$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SE = 0.19$</td>
<td>$SE = 0.21$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Self-Esteem</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 51.71$</td>
<td>$\bar{x} = 54.57$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SD = 21.19$</td>
<td>$SD = 24.34$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SE = 5.66$</td>
<td>$SE = 6.04$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
four categories and their significance was determined. See Table 2.

Findings indicated that there was no significant difference in social self-esteem from pre- to post-test \((T(14) = 0.90, p<0.05)\). Total self-esteem results were also not significant \((T(14) = 1.75, p<0.05)\). Self-certainty results were negative \((T(14) = -1.59, p<0.05)\). Similar results were computed for all questions; the self-esteem total results were also not significant \((T(14) = 0.73, p<0.05)\). An evaluation of the gain score for each participant was made. Scores for 14 students fell along a normal curve and ranged from -36 to +28 (Appendix C). Since one negative score (-36) was 28 points less than the next nearest score (-8), a t-value was also computed without the inclusion of that score. Results were not significant at the .05 level; however, results approached significance for total self-esteem \((T(13) = 2.11, p<0.05)\) and the self-esteem total \((T(13) = 2.16, p<0.05)\). See Table 3.

An examination of gain scores in relation to a number of demographic variables was also conducted. These included age, sex, position in the family, and grade level. The greatest mean gain by age (14.00) was registered by those students who were in the center of the age range at 17 years of age. No gain was registered for either 15 or 18 year old students. See Table 4.

When evaluated by sex, girls had a mean gain of 3.67 and boys a loss of -2.00. There were, however, only two boys in the class, so further studies involving a larger number of male students would provide more conclusive results. See Table 5.

A comparison of students by position in the family showed the
Table 2

Summary of Pre- and Post-test Scores
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (N = 14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>2-Tail Probability</th>
<th>T-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Self-Esteem</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Self-Esteem</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Certainty</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Self-Esteem</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>14.59</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* With 13 degrees of freedom, no contrasts are significant at the .05 level. $p < .05$, $T = 2.16$. 
**Table 3**

Summary of Pre- and Post-test Scores
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (N = 13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Difference Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>2-Tail Probability</th>
<th>T-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Self-Esteem</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Self-Esteem</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Certainty</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Self-Esteem</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* With 12 degrees of freedom, no contrasts are significant at the .05 level. $p < .05$, $T = 2.18$. 
Table 4
Mean Gain Score, Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (by age)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Gain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>72.00</td>
<td>72.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54.50</td>
<td>55.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>62.00</td>
<td>14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>51.71</td>
<td>54.57</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5
Mean Gain Score, Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (by sex)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48.67</td>
<td>52.33</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51.71</td>
<td>54.57</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
greatest gain for the oldest child (7.00). Gains for the only child and the youngest child were the same (4.00); the middle child score was a mean loss (-1.60). See Table 6.

An examination of scores by grade level showed the greatest gain registered by students in the eleventh grade (7.20). Twelfth grade students also showed a gain (6.00); however, students in the tenth grade showed a loss (-4.00) of self-esteem. See Table 7.

Summary

Self-esteem of students enrolled in a child development/nursery laboratory program was measured early in the nursery laboratory portion of the course. It was measured again five months later. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory - Form B was the measuring instrument. Results of the study were compared using paired t-tests. Gains in self-esteem were too slight to be considered significant.
Table 6
Mean Gain Score, Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory
(by position in the family)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>47.20</td>
<td>45.60</td>
<td>-1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>67.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51.71</td>
<td>54.57</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7
Mean Gain Score, Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (by grade level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>-4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>55.20</td>
<td>7.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51.71</td>
<td>54.57</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5
Discussion

An examination of results of the testing shows a small increase in self-esteem among the students tested; however, these results are not great enough to be statistically significant. A review of the literature indicated that most theorists feel that the self-concept remains relatively stable throughout the life cycle. Although it is open to change, it is relatively resistant (Coopersmith, 1967). There is some indication that a change in the self can occur if an experience is vivid for the individual (Combs, Richard, & Richards, 1976). This experience must, however, be perceived as meaningful for the individual. Tenth grade students experienced a drop in self-esteem; those in the eleventh and twelfth grades both showed increases. Since they are nearing the stage in their life-cycle where an occupation is a necessary part of their lives, this program may be more meaningful to them.

The literature also indicates that for many students school is not a rewarding, positive experience, and as the school year progresses they would tend to feel less positively about themselves. This could also have specific implications for the vocational student, who tends to have a negative self-image of his abilities (Egginton, 1975). Students with negative self-concepts tend to demonstrate significantly less stable self-concepts than those whose feelings about self are positive (Engel, 1959). A further study using a control group of
comparable students not enrolled in a child development course might provide more conclusive results.

Paolitto (1976) indicated that one course in child development may not be enough to significantly affect the self-esteem of adolescents. Since research findings indicate that self-esteem is determined over an extended period of time with influences derived from many sources, an increased time frame in the actual work situation might also influence self-esteem. This could be examined after students have continued into a succeeding year in a work-study program where their experiences more closely simulate those actually found on the job. This would provide additional data to measure whether working at a task actually helps improve the self-concept as indicated by Thompson (1974).

Results of this study were similar to those experienced by Harris & Puryear (1973) who found that changes in self-esteem were too small to attribute definitely to the program. Testing of a larger group of students could yield results that are more conclusive. In view of the fact that this is a unique program, since the day care center exists within the high school setting, tests would need to be conducted on succeeding classes in order to increase sample size.

Studies of demographic variables related to age, sex, and grade in school appeared to be inconclusive; however, gain scores related to position in the family indicated that positive effects of working with young children were greatest for oldest children within a family. It would be logical to assume that the oldest child would have had the greatest amount of experience working with younger children; however,
the mean gain for the oldest child in this study was greater than that of any other group. It was considerably more than that registered by the middle group which had a net loss. In many ways, an only child is very similar to the oldest child. For this study, pre-test scores for the oldest and the only child were the highest in the group. Since greatest gains were also registered by the oldest child, this provides similar findings to those of Engel (1959) who suggested that under ideal conditions self-esteem gains would be greatest for those individuals already possessing a high self-esteem. Further study of these variables might contribute additional insight into the factors that affect the self-esteem of adolescents within the school setting.

Other avenues to consider include testing of subsequent classes to provide a larger sample size for more reliable test results and inclusion of a control group in subsequent testing. At the present time, test results do not justify expansion of the child development/nursery laboratory program.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Age ______
2. Sex ______
3. Position in family (circle one) Oldest child  
   Middle child  
   Youngest child  
   Only child
4. Living with Mother & Father ______
   Father ______
   Mother ______
   Other ______  Describe ________
5. Grade level ______
6. Number of days absent from class ______
APPENDIX B
Like Me  Unlike Me

☐  ☐  1. Things usually don’t bother me.
☐  ☐  2. I find it very hard to talk in front of a group.
☐  ☐  3. There are lots of things about myself I’d change if I could.
☐  ☐  4. I can make up my mind without too much trouble.
☐  ☐  5. I’m a lot of fun to be with.
☐  ☐  6. I get upset easily at home.
☐  ☐  7. It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.
☐  ☐  8. I’m popular with persons my own age.
☐  ☐  9. My family usually considers my feelings.
☐  ☐  10. I give in very easily.
☐  ☐  11. My family expects too much of me.
☐  ☐  12. It’s pretty tough to be me.
☐  ☐  13. Things are all mixed up in my life.
☐  ☐  14. People usually follow my ideas.
☐  ☐  15. I have a low opinion of myself.
☐  ☐  16. There are many times when I would like to leave home.
☐  ☐  17. I often feel upset with my work.
☐  ☐  18. I’m not as nice looking as most people.
☐  ☐  19. If I have something to say, I usually say it.
☐  ☐  20. My family understands me.
☐  ☐  21. Most people are better liked than I am.
☐  ☐  22. I usually feel as if my family is pushing me.
☐  ☐  23. I often get discouraged with what I am doing.
☐  ☐  24. I often wish I were someone else.
☐  ☐  25. I can’t be depended on.

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Total Gain Score

SELF-ESTEEM  TOTAL GAIN SCORE
The vita has been removed from the scanned document
THE EFFECTS OF A CHILD DEVELOPMENT NURSERY LABORATORY CLASSROOM ON ADOLESCENT SELF-ESTEEM

by
Joan Hartman

(ABSTRACT)

In order to examine the change in self-esteem of adolescents enrolled in a child development/nursery laboratory program, the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory - Form B was administered early in the nursery laboratory portion of the course. It was readministered five months later. Results were analyzed using paired t-tests. Gains in self-esteem were too slight to be significant. The findings are discussed in terms of their implications for future studies.