DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM
IN
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

MASTER'S PROJECT

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Dr. James Dobson (1974) claimed that there is an epidemic of inferiority raging through our society. Children are subjected to an unjust value system which reserves respect and esteem for only a select few—primarily in the areas of beauty, intelligence, and athletics. In his book, *Hide and Seek*, Dobson exposed false values and presented strategies through which teachers can cultivate self-esteem in every child.

Kugle and Clements (1981) presented a paper at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association. The paper, entitled "Self-esteem and Academic Behavior Among Elementary Children," indicated that the level and stability of self-esteem can provide information about the aspects of behavior. Both level and stability were positively related to academic achievement.

After completing his research, Padwell (1984) also came to the conclusion that self-concept and academic achievement had a significant positive correlation—both with and without the intelligence factor.

Also reporting on the correlation of self-concept and achievement was Wlodkowski (1982) in his book on motivation.
However, he did point out the fact that most evidence bearing on this subject is derived from correlation studies from which no causal inferences can be made. In addition to this, Woolfolk (1980) noted that the older the child (or student), the stronger the relationship between positive self-concept and achievement.

Seligman (1975) stated the converse of the previously mentioned correlation. He called this the concept of learned helplessness. There is a relationship between negative student self-esteem and low achievement and poor motivation.

Guiton and Zachary (1984) hypothesized in their document that lowered self-concept would be associated with children exhibiting problems such as delinquency or childhood depression. Results indicated that a clinical sample of such children had significantly lower self-concept scores on the total scale.

Berne (1985) in her article on self-esteem, stated that the most important thing that a person can give his or her child (or student in case of teachers) is a sense of self-confidence, is as important as the air they breathe.

Wlodkowski (1982) states that teachers do have the potential to provide psychological experiences from which each student can derive a positive sense of self-esteem.
Justification of the Problem

The researchers were aware that classroom achievement and behavior are directly correlated with self-esteem. The researchers also realized that middle school students are at a critical time in their lives as they enter adolescence. Evidence indicated that there is a decline in self-concept with each additional year of schooling. Therefore, the researchers contended that teachers at the middle school level need to develop positive self-esteem in their students.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this project was to compile a handbook with guidelines and activities for developing self-esteem in early adolescent students.

PROCEDURES

Subjects

The subjects for this research were three middle grade teachers. Approximately forty students were involved in the study ranging in grades six through eight.

Setting

The setting for this research was two rural schools in Brown County, Ohio. The sixth grade students were in a self-contained classroom (approximately thirty students).
The second class was a self-contained class consisting of developmentally handicapped seventh and eighth graders.

Data Collection

The Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories for Children and Adults was used as a pretest and a posttest to identify students with low self-esteem.

Definition of Terms

Self-esteem: pride on one's self; perception the individual possesses of his own worth; the extent to which one admires or values one's self; the affective portion of the self.

Self-concept: the beliefs and attitudes one has about one's self; the cognitive part of the self.

Culture Free (SEI) Self-Esteem Inventories for Children and Adults: self-report scales which are intended to measure an individual's perception of self providing greater insights into the client's subjective feelings. The instrument contains sixty items and following five subscales:

1. General self-esteem items
2. Social/peer-related self-esteem items
3. Academics/school-related self-esteem items
4. Parents/home-related self-esteem items
5. Lie items (items which indicate defensiveness)
Design

The researchers pretested their students during the second semester of school. For a nine week period, self-esteem activities were presented to the students. This occurred once a week for a forty minute period. At the end of the nine week period, a posttest was given to see if improvement in self-esteem occurred. The Culture Free SEI was used to determine this.

RESULTS

The results of this research was a handbook containing the following:

1. Communications skills for the teacher which enhances self-esteem in students
2. A checklist showing characteristics and attitudes of teachers who enhance/hinder self-concept
3. A chart: Levels of Self-esteem as Predictors for Behavior
4. Classroom activities for developing self-esteem in students
5. A list of available films
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Distinction Between Self-esteem and Self-concept

According to Silvernail (1985), self-concept is defined as the way we perceive ourselves and our actions, and our opinions regarding how others perceive us. We perceive ourselves in different roles—child, student, parent. We have different physical and mental abilities and different limitations. All of these combine to form the general self-concept. Researchers believe the key divisions of general self-concept are the sense of (1) body self, (2) cognitive self, (3) social self, and (4) self-esteem.

Self-esteem is the evaluative aspect of the self-concept. Self-concepts describe our perceptions while self-esteem evaluates the perceptions. Hamachek (1985) concludes by stating that his research suggests that the self-concept develops first and then one develops an evaluation (self-esteem) of the self-images.

Juhasz (1985) agrees with Hamachek and Silvernail that self-esteem is not synonymous with self-concept. While both include one’s ideal of self, esteem has a valuative
component which is not included in self-concept measures. Self-concept measures do allow to describe the self but do not require the evaluation of the impact of specific personal attributes on self-esteem includes two basic psychological processes—the process of self-evaluation and the process of self-worth. Self-worth incorporates a view of one's self as being master of one's actions with sense of intrinsic rather than extrinsic determinants.

Having made a distinction between the two terms, self-esteem and self-concept, the researchers continued reviewing literature which cited factors that influence self esteem in early adolescents.

**Areas of Change Effecting Self-esteem**

According to Blyth and Traeger (1983), adolescents are effected by four changes that occur during this time period. The first area of change is the transforming of the body form that of a child to one of adult stature and proportion. These changes must become incorporated in the early adolescent's view of himself. Although Freudian theory states that changes associated with pubertal development are disruptive, Blyth indicates that there is no significant relationship between self-esteem and the onset of puberty.

The second area of change has to do with the individual's relationship with his significant others such as parents or peers. This involves the process of detaching
from parents and getting established among peers. This change may determine how that person comes to see himself based on what the new significant others expect. This change influences one’s self-esteem—how satisfied one is with one’s self. Even though parents are still critically important, peers are also significant. Blyth also interjects that teachers must recognize this change in significant others.

The third area of change has to do with the development of cognitive abilities of early adolescence. Blyth states the attitudes about the self do not remain the same over the life-course. Evidence suggests that as individuals become adolescents there is an increase in the degree of abstraction used to refer to one’s self as well as an increase in the use of psychological descriptions rather than the physical.

The fourth area of change for many adolescents is the transition from a protective elementary environment to the complex secondary school environment. A major shift could have disturbing effects on one’s self-concept and self-esteem. The middle school teachers may be perceived as harsh compared to the warm and supportive elementary school teachers. Therefore, middle level educators may be asked to be both warm and supportive, yet subject matter-competent. This balance is critical to early adolescents as they shape their identity.
After reviewing research trends regarding self-esteem in early adolescence, Blyth and Traeger conclude that there is little support for the view that self-esteem is disrupted or devalued during early adolescence. Because of the changes taking place during adolescence, it may be important to maintain some basic continuity and stability in one's own self-esteem.

From the above research it was obvious that many things influence adolescent self-esteem. The researchers therefore, decided to review literature concerning the "significant others" and their influence on adolescent self-esteem.

Influence of Significant Others on Self-esteem

Parents

Research indicates that a child begins to see himself as separate from other people and within a few months after birth begins to form perceptions of himself. Just as important as the child's perceptions of himself, is the value he places on the perceptions others have of him. A supportive environment with many stimuli and visible love and care on the part of parents will strengthen the development of sound and stable self-esteem (Smirnoff, 1971). Studies show that a child's level of safe regard is related to his parents' level of regard for the child. Another research found that children not only rank parents
as "significant others" during early childhood, but also throughout the adolescent years.

Coopersmith (1967) researched the experiences and conditions associated with the development of high self-esteem by parents and found these conditions present: (1) total or nearly total acceptance of the children by their parents; (2) clearly defined and enforced limits; and (3) respect and latitude for individual action. If the opposite environment existed, it is likely that the self-images of the children would be psychologically damaged. Consequently the care the child receives prior to attending school sets the stage for future development of his self-esteem.

Researchers have also discovered that parental self-esteem (particularly maternal) is related to child-rearing practices and self-esteem tended to show greater affection and warmth toward her children, more approval and acceptance of the child (Silvernail, 1985).

A research was conducted by Openshaw, et. al., (1983) assuming symbolic interaction and social learning process have an effect on adolescent self-esteem. Symbolic interaction is defined as "the child's self-esteem is a function of the parents' reflected appraisal of the child's inherent worth which occurs during the course of parent/child interactions." The social learning theory emphasized "observational learning" and suggests that the
child's self-esteem is positively related to the parent's self-esteem.

Under the heading of symbolic interaction there are two types of parental behavior—support and control attempts. These two factors are important in accounting for the socialization influence parents have on their children. Parental support behavior is characterized by nurturance, warmth, and approval from the parent to the child. This confirms in the adolescent's mind that he is competent, effective, and worthwhile.

Parental control is of two types—induction and coercion. Induction is defined as "control attempts of the parent to point out to the adolescent the consequences that a given behavior will have either for himself or some other person." A child will be able to make decisions based on the evaluation of the consequences and feel confident in his choices he makes and in his ability to make choices. Thus, as Openshaw suggests, there should be a positive relationship between parental induction and self-esteem.

Coercive parental behavior is defined as "parental control attempts utilizing physical strength differences or social status to obtain the desired behavior." Coercive behavior does not refer to parental firmness but punishment which probably lessens self-esteem. This type of control reflects inadequacy to the child making him feel incompetent and ineffective with his environment.
Concerning social learning Openshaw makes this assumption: assuming that an adolescent adopts his parents' standards, evaluates himself as his parents evaluate themselves and models his parents' self-esteem when his performances are similar to his parents, then it logically follows that there is a positive correlation between parents' self-esteem and the adolescent's self-esteem.

Openshaw concludes his research study by stating that self-esteem is more a function of social interaction and the reflected appraisal of significant others than as a modeling of the parents' self-esteem. Such research, even if pertaining to parental effect on self-esteem, is applicable to educators who are substitutes for the parental figures. Therefore, the next section researched the influences of teacher interaction and behavior on the self-esteem of the adolescent.

**Teachers**

An assumption was made by Staines (1958) that since teachers are an important aspect of the students' emotional world, it is likely that they (teachers) can have an important influence on the students' self-esteem. His research involved a teacher "A" and a teacher "B". Teacher A was to deliberately assist the students to view themselves as planning, purposing, choosing, responsible, and accountable individuals. Teacher A made it a point to get to know the students. The teacher was likely to make
comments designed to help the students develop a more positive view of themselves, while also assisting them to be realistic about their abilities.

Teacher B's techniques were traditional—content oriented, telling and testing. Teacher B did not use strategies for developing self-esteem. The results showed that the high pressure teaching exhibited by Teacher B lead to greater student insecurity.

Rosenthal (1968) and Palardy (1969) also support Staines' findings: teacher expectations can be powerful force in shaping students' behavior and influencing achievement outcomes. This aspect will be discussed later.

According to Davidson (1960) the students' perception of their teacher's feeling toward them are highly correlated with self-perception. Some evidence suggests that the students' perceptions may be a reflection of teachers' self-perceptions. Lowering of the students' self-esteem is positively related to the teacher's self-esteem.

Silvernail (1985), reviews several studies conducted to show a clear relationship between teacher characteristics and student self-esteem. A significant correlation was found between self-esteem and the "socially intergrative" and "learner and supportive" teacher behaviors. This type of behavior was characterized by a high degree of private and semiprivate communication with the children, concern for divergent responses, attentiveness to pupils' needs, the use
of control techniques involving humor and a low degree of negative evaluation. Other characteristics of the teacher leading to a positive self-esteem were: (1) friendly, understanding, sympathetic behavior vs. aloof, egocentric behavior; (2) systematic/organized, being responsible, businesslike vs. unplanned behavior; (3) stimulating/inventive being imaginative vs. dull, routine behavior (Ryans, 1960).

Another research conducted by Poris (1977) shows that if teachers develop or improve upon affective teacher behavior, they can anticipate improvement in student self-esteem. The teacher's affective behaviors were: (1) involvement in student goal setting; (2) use of positive statements regarding students and the avoidance of threat; (3) facilitation of values clarification; and providing experiences whereby students can (4) experiment and evaluate; and (5) give and receive helpful feedback to and from each other.

The level of self-esteem of the student also affects the motivational level of the student. A study conducted by Maracek and Mattee (1972), reveals that a person with high self-esteem, and certain of it, was inclined to accept his successes not matter whether the successes were self-determined or obtained by luck. Persons with high self-esteem, and uncertain of it, were positively affected by success whether by luck or self-determined efforts.
Persons with low self-esteem, and certain of it, tended to reject their success experiences but were inclined to be positively affected and motivated by successes determined by luck. Persons of low self-esteem, and uncertain of it, tended to accept success not matter what forms it came in. Therefore, three teaching practices may be of value in enhancing student motivation: (1) high esteem students need to be challenged in order for them to test the upper limits of their abilities and capacities to perform; (2) offer a variety of ways to achieve success with varying degrees of difficulty; and (3) short-circuit the "I can't" cycle with simple praise overtime, being careful not to overdo it and, thereby, reduce credibility (Hamachek, 1985).

Bennett (1976), also tried to discover whether formal and informal teaching styles affected pupils' progress. His findings indicate that children taught by formal methods tended not only to achieve higher levels in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, but also creative writing. Bennett found no evidence to suggest that there was a change in self-esteem following a change in teaching styles. He did find evidence for the view that informal classrooms appeared to have an adverse effect on insecure or anxious students who were not able to cope with the responsibility of self-directed activities. These students fail to live up to the teacher's ideals and their self-esteem, together with their motivation, gradually becomes depressed.
Teachers can reinforce the poor opinion a child has of himself. Fortunately, they can also reverse this opinion to create in the child a more positive view of himself and his capacity. Downey (1979) cites an example of this. In a streamed school, teachers frequently judge their pupils according to the ability of the group in which they are placed. Low streamed students who were judged unfavorably are expected by their teachers to achieve little and very often that is just the result. Teacher's expectations thus affect pupils' motivation negatively. Therefore, the shared task of the teacher and the student is helping the student to find effective ways of using the aptitudes and abilities that the student has. Without this the student may be a victim of the "self-fulfilling prophecy."
Peers

Hamachek (1985), states that our feelings of self-worth and self-esteem grow in part from our perceptions of where we see ourselves in comparison to others whose skills, abilities, and aptitudes are similar to our own. High self-esteem usually comes from being able to do one or two things as well, if not better, than most other people with whom one associates. If a student chooses to compare himself with a person of obviously superior, he would be fighting a losing battle.

Juhasz (1985), states that developmental age-stage will shift the focus from parent to teacher, to peer, and/or sports, television and other role models especially during adolescence.

A conclusion to a study by Eskilson, et. al., (1986) states that peer acceptance is crucial for the maintainance of positive self-esteem. And furthermore there is a connection between peer pressure and deviant behavior.

Influence of Self-esteem on Student Behavior Achievement

Most educators would like to believe that everything they do relates in a positive way to self-esteem development. According to a study by Bills (1978) the self-esteem of some students becomes more positive during the schooling years and for others it becomes more negative.
The trend is toward acquiring more negative self-images with each additional year of schooling—leading to doubt about self-worth and the worth of other people, increased defensiveness, and the rejection of values which are basic to the feeling of worth and dignity.

Silvernail (1985) concludes that schooling affects children's self-esteem differently. He asks the question, "What determines the direction the effect will take?" He then begins to examine the relationships known to exist between certain school characteristics and student self-esteem.

Research has determined that there is a significant and positive relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem. High self-esteem is associated with high achievement and low self-esteem with low achievement (Farris, 1967).

Hamachek (1985), states that self-esteem and school achievement are most highly related between the years of seven to fifteen. The relationship increases in strength over this time span. Two themes develop as research studies the relationship of self-esteem and achievement: (1) how students will perform in school is linked to how well they think they can perform, and (2) the direction of their thinking--positive or negative--begins early in their school years.
Silvernall (1985), and Hamachek (1985), examine the question, "What comes first--positive self-esteem or achievement?" There are two views on this. One group of theorist believes that self-esteem explains achievement. The second school of thought believes the opposite to be the case. Hamachek states that there is evidence for both sides of the discussion. Two studies by Kifer and Weikhart (1973), found evidence to suggest positive self-esteem was the result of successful academic experiences. However, other researchers show that once a student's self-esteem was established, it can influence achievement. One research study showed that self-esteem scores for kindergarten children were better indicators of reading achievement than intelligence tests.

Silvernall cites that recent research (referring to Kifer) gives greater credence to the skill development school of thought--achievement explains self-esteem. This, and other studies, indicate that educators need to identify more effective ways of improving the academic achievement of students.

Lerner (1986) states that the modern dogma that self-esteem is the critical variable for intellectual development is rarely challenged today. According to this view children with high self-esteem forge ahead academically, easily and naturally; children of low self-esteem fall behind, unable to achieve excellence or
competence until their self-esteem level is raised. Lerner also assumes that many children are in this "boat" because low self-esteem was common in early childhood, preventing children from learning and achieving excellence.

Because of this assumption, two implications became prevalent during the 1960's and 1970's and developed into what Lerner refers to as the "feel-good-now" self-esteem theory. This theory states that the child must be accepted as he is, he must be provided with constant praise and encouragement, experience feelings of success in school, and be protected from injury to his self-esteem.

Paradoxical to this, American students fared very badly in the 1960's and 1970's. Few achieved excellence and many did not achieve competence. However, while the self-esteem of American students to a marked degree. Before the self-esteem "now" theory was implemented, the 1950's showed American students' competence and excellence to be equal to those of any other nation.

Lerner asserts that the "feel-good-now" theory does not guarantee happiness nor is it the key to intellectual development. This type of theory produces restlessness and dissatisfaction, a constant hunger to get more for less, and a life organized in search of it. Excessive self-esteem can cause as much trouble as inadequate self-esteem for the individual and society.
Lerner, therefore, advocates "earned" self-esteem which is based on the success of meeting the tests of reality—measuring up to standards at home and at school. It is hard won and develops slowly; but it is stable and long lasting and provides a secure foundation for further growth and development. Standards and demands on students to keep working until they meet them, is a critical step to "earned" self-esteem.

Failure

Glasser (1969), demonstrates his theory of Reality Therapy to an audience of social workers who were involved in helping delinquents. While interviewing adolescent girls who had been in trouble with the law, a distressing attitude became evident: they (the girls) believed they would have very little chance to succeed or to be happy in the world as they saw it. Of the seven girls interviewed, five believed that they were failures in life and they could not reverse these failures. The primary explanation of the almost total lack of confidence in themselves and in their ability to improve themselves lies in school failure.

Glasser states the basic needs of people are the need for the giving and receiving of love and the need for self-worth. One thinks the need for love will be fulfilled at home, however, teachers are faced each year with students who need affection. The schools are more directly concerned
with the child's need to feel worthwhile. According to Glasser (1969), knowledge and ability are needed to achieve this. If a child learns to solve problems and think, he may gain self-confidence to give and receive love.

Love and self-worth together form the child's identity. The following are two pathways that mankind has discovered that lead to identity. In the school environment love can be described as social responsibility—to be responsible for each other; to care and help each other. Many children who do not find a "success" identity end up with a "failure" identity—possibly becoming a behavioral problem in the classroom. The school's responsibility, therefore, is to show students that open to them are the alternative pathways of love and self-worth that can lead to a success identity regardless of past failure.

Glasser concludes by stating that the irresponsible child needs an example to follow—teacher, administrator, counselor, and so on. A person is needed who will teach responsibility for behavior, good decision making skills, and keeping commitments. The main message is this: the lack of love and self-worth (self-esteem) often leads to "failure" identity. The person with the failure identity will probably be a behavioral problem in the classroom. Teachers are needed who know how to help this child find a "success: identity—to develop the child's self-esteem.
Hamachek (1985) states that the relationship between level of aspiration and self-esteem is a "tricky" one. When self-esteem is low, students tend to set their sights either too high or too low. Low esteem students have difficulty when it comes to setting goals. Teachers are needed to work harder with these students to help them develop realistic levels of aspirations. The levels of aspiration determine to a large extent what we interpret as failure or success. To fail at something is more tolerable and less apt to threaten self-esteem if there is a history of success prior to the failure. Self-esteem is reduced when failures are greater than personal gains (successes). Self-esteem is elevated when one feels the successes outweigh the failures. Unfortunately, not all students encounter success and are so dominated by the idea of failure that their whole lives are changed by their fear of failure and its consequences.

The great majority of students, according to Hamachek (1985) who drop out of school do so simply to seek refuge from failure and the feeling of low self-worth and self-esteem. Those who do not drop out struggle through with minimal grades, low self-concepts, and depressed self-esteem. According to Battle (1981) as depression rises, self-esteem tends to decline. Thus, depression is related to low self-esteem in high school students. Depression is a mood disturbance which typically includes feelings of apprehension, gloom, helplessness, and
worthlessness. This finding by Battle supports Coopersmith's (1967) results which state that low self-esteem tends to be associated with feelings of distress, self-hatred, psychosomatic symptoms, and feelings of depression.

Hamachek states repeatedly that this problem goes back to the elementary school years. These are the years that the cornerstone of a child's concept is established in experiences of success, accomplishment, and pride in themselves; or based on self-doubt, failure, and the feeling of worthlessness. Three reasons are cited for this: (1) elementary age children's self-esteem is incomplete and impressionable; (2) elementary age children have immature defenses--they are vulnerable; and (3) elementary age children are still in the "industry versus inferiority" stage.

With failure defined as "nonpromotion" several studies by Briggs (1967) and other researchers, report that both single and multiple nonpromotions have a negative effect on the self-esteem of students. However, according to Silvernail (1985, p. 23) these investigations contained a flaw. Data on self-esteem levels were not collected prior to nonpromotion. Two researchers who collected the pretest information found that nonpromotion did not adversely affect self-esteem development (Finlayson, 1977).
Intelligence Factor

A question arose as to the effect of the intelligence factor on the self-esteem level of achievers and underachievers. Studies by Bookover (1965) and Battle (1981) revealed no significant correlations between intelligence and self-esteem. However, intelligence is generally associated with feelings of personal worth; but it cannot be assumed that intelligence is a major and overwhelming influence in the development of self-esteem. Coopersmith (1967) found a weak but significant correlation but concluded that his study did not indicate that there is a strong relationship between self-esteem and intelligence.

Cheating

Lobel and Levanon (1988) in the report on "Cheating Behavior of Children" discussed two kinds of high self-esteem: "true" high self-esteem and "defensive" high self-esteem. True self-esteem was possessed by those who truly believed that they possessed positive characteristics and are not motivated to gain approval. A study was conducted which predicted that high self-esteem (HSE)/low need for approval (LNA) children would cheat significantly less than high self-esteem (HSE)/high need for approval (HNA) children. Having tested the subjects in various situations, the study showed that boys tended to cheat more than girls (age 11-12 years of age). Children cheated most
when they believed they would receive a tangible prize for good performance regardless of self-esteem or need for approval. A tangible prize has a greater motivational power than knowledge that the students' performance would be made public. A significant difference was that the HSE/LNA children cheated less than the other groups. The HSE/HNA children cheated the most.

This study implies that cheating behavior provides a tool for differentiating between the two types of high self-esteem. In situations involving a threat of failure HSE/HNA children resort to whatever behavior preserves a positive public image. The HSE/LNA children were probably less concerned about their public image. Children should be encouraged to rely on internal reinforcement and to believe in their positive characteristics, thus reducing the incidence of cheating in the classroom.

**Characteristics of Low Self-esteem Students**

Having researched the various aspects of the self-esteem of the adolescent, it is apparent that these students should be identified in the classroom. Children with low self-esteem are often those who find it difficult to make friends. They do not feel confident that others will accept them, are doubtful about their own opinions and judgements. They are unlikely to engage in activities with others. They prefer to remain listeners or onlookers.
Contrary to this, some insecure children try to buy friendly or even act the fool in class (Downey and Kelly, 1979). These students may range from passive low self-esteem to active low self-esteem. The following is a chart showing various behavior patterns of low self-esteem students:

**Low Self-Esteem/Passive:**

1. Own rights less important than others' rights.
2. Unsure, defensive.
3. Self-deprecating, flatters others.
4. Unhappy, depressed.
5. Lonely, shy.
6. Overwhelmed by problems.
7. Bogged down with guilt.
8. Doormat.
9. Dependent.
10. Overly concerned about what others think, reactive.
11. Afraid of change.

**Low Self-Esteem/Aggressive**

3. Own rights more important than others' rights.
2. Outwardly over-confident.
3. Boastful, puts others down.
4. Unhappy, cynical.
5. Mistrusts others.
6. Ignores.
7. Rarely admits error.
8. Manipulative, selfish.
9. Seeks power, or irresponsible.
10. Insensitive towards others.
11. Closed-minded.
12. Self- or socially-destructive.

The writers of this paper used the *Culture Free Self-esteem Inventories for Children and Adults* to identify the low self-esteem students. Once these students were identified, their behaviors were observed and were consistent with the previously described behaviors.

**Measuring Self-esteem**

Having concluded that it is imperative for teachers to identify students with low self-esteem, the researchers were concerned about the validity of the various test instruments available. There are numerous self-esteem measures. However, Juhasz (1985) states that examination of available measures of self-esteem has revealed that there is no measure which determines those characteristics, attributes, skills and abilities on which the individual's self-esteem is based. She further states that researchers have provided set lists of items which are assumed to be most "salient" for all subjects. Global esteem measures have yielded little conclusive information and specific measures (usually
tied to academic achievement, family, socialization, and physical appearance) have not been much better.

Rosenburg's concept (1979) of social identity provides a partial framework for measuring self-esteem. Ascribed and attained statuses are included in his concept of social identity. Some aspects, such as gender are permanent, and self-esteem is based on acceptance or rejection. Some aspects change automatically, such as age. Others are dependent on achievements. At any period the base on which self-esteem rests will consist of a variety of interacting determinants from which a person selects those most valued. At various times biological, familial, societal or individual aspects of one's social identity may contribute to either a positive or negative self-esteem. A person may accept, ignore or try to change any of these aspects. In appraising self-worth, realistic evaluations and expectations are the keys to acceptance or rejection.

Juhasz (1985) found that self-esteem measures do not take into consideration individual factors such as developmental, cultural, religious and situational differences. Rosenberg (1979) also found environmental, sociopsychological, and significant others were also factors influencing self-esteem. Juhasz further states developmental, sociopsychological, and cognitive theories suggest that factors influencing self-esteem should vary for
each individual and should in degrees of importance through time and place, and especially during adolescence.

A questionnaire presented to 219 seventh and eighth grade students revealed the complexity of the self-esteem construct. It supports Juhasz's assumption that there are age and gender differences in the factors which adolescents see as important aspect of the self. Juhasz concludes by stating that programs for the enhancement of positive self-esteem could be developed with specific attention paid to those factors which are most important to various age groups.

Conclusion

This review of literature has affirmed the beliefs of the writers of this paper that developing high self-esteem is just as important to the growth of the student as intellectual development. It has become apparent that many factors influence the development of self-esteem: parents, peers and, of relevant importance to the researchers, the impact of the school in general and the teachers in particular. Thus it was the purpose of this research to identify strategies for developing and enhancing the self-esteem of our students.
CHAPTER III

DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM IN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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For the School of Education
The activities in this handout are designed to assist the student in developing a greater level of self-esteem through the development of skills in self awareness, relationships and decision making.

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is our sense of self worth. It comes from all of the thoughts, feelings, and sensations and experiences collected about ourselves through our life.

Characteristics of high self-esteem:

1. Act independently.
2. Assumes responsibility.
4. Approaches new challenges with enthusiasm.
5. Exhibits a broad range of emotions and feelings.
6. Tolerates frustrations well.
7. Feels capable of influencing others.

Characteristics of low self-esteem:

1. Demeans one’s own talents.
2. Feels that others don’t value him.
3. Feels powerless.
4. Easily influenced by others.
5. Expresses a narrow range of emotions.
6. Avoids situations that provoke anxiety.
7. Becomes defensive and is easily frustrated.
8. Blames others for his/her own weaknesses.

A sense of self-esteem affects how one:

*Feels about oneself
*Thinks, learns, and creates
*Evaluates himself
*Relates to others
*Behaves
How can you determine whether your students have healthy self-esteem? The chart below may prove helpful to the leader. Examine the characteristics listed for people with high and low self-esteem and assess the incidence of these behaviors in your classroom. We believe that these behaviors tend to occur in conjunction with the quality of a person's self-esteem; people with low self-esteem may act compulsively while those with a healthy self-esteem generally act appropriately to a given situation. This insight may help leaders respond with greater awareness of students' needs when students behave in ways that are bothersome.

LEVELS OF SELF-ESTEEM AS PREDICTORS OF BEHAVIORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Self-esteem/Passive:</th>
<th>High Self-esteem/Assertive:</th>
<th>Low Self-esteem/Aggressive:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own rights less important than others</td>
<td>Rights of self and others in balance</td>
<td>Own rights more important than others' rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure, defensive</td>
<td>Trusts own judgements, values</td>
<td>Outwardly over-confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-deprecating, flatters</td>
<td>Receives and gives compliments comfortably</td>
<td>Boastful, puts others down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappy, depressed</td>
<td>Energetic, enjoys life</td>
<td>Unhappy, cynical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonely, shy</td>
<td>Comfortable with intimacy</td>
<td>Mistrusts others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelmed by problems</td>
<td>Recognizes and handles feelings</td>
<td>Ignores feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogged down with guilt</td>
<td>Grows from mistakes</td>
<td>Rarely admits error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doormat</td>
<td>Balances needs of self, others</td>
<td>Manipulative, selfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Handles responsibility</td>
<td>Seeks power, or irresponsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overly concerned about what others think, reactive</td>
<td>Sensitive towards others and self, cooperative</td>
<td>Insensitive towards others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid of change</td>
<td>Welcomes learning, growth</td>
<td>Closed-minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-destructive</td>
<td>Takes care of self</td>
<td>Self- or socially-destructive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Handout from Brown County Board of Education*
TOPICS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND/OR WRITINGS

Complete the following sentence(s):

1. My school work...
2. In the morning...
3. I like...
4. After school...
5. If I were a bird...
6. I get bored...
7. I get nervous when...
8. I am...
9. Teachers...
10. I don’t like...
11. Usually I’m...
12. My friends...
13. If I were a fish I’d...
14. I can please my parents by...
15. My favorite sport is...
16. When I’m 20 years old I expect to be...
17. At home...
18. Next year...
19. When I read...
20. I wish...
21. If I were a color...
22. I get a headache when...
23. My worst habit is...
24. People think...
25. I can’t wait...
26. If I could be...
27. I have always wanted to be...
28. The nicest thing about school is...
29. I get mad when...
30. Staying out of school means...
31. What do you like best about your family?
32. Tell us about something you did recently that made you feel proud?
33. Do you think most of the time you are a winner or a loser? Why do you feel this way?
34. Name two things you are good at and tell why.
35. What’s the best age to be and why?
36. Tell us one good thing that happened to you yesterday.
37. What is your favorite sport and why do you like it?
38. Tell us about your favorite place.
39. What is it that you like the best about yourself?
40. If you were going to do something nice for someone what would you do?
41. Say something the way your mother or father would say it.
42. Who is your best friend and what is it you like about him/her?
43. If you could be anyone at all, who would you be?
44. If you could have two wishes, what would they be?
45. Tell us your favorite thing about school.
SHARING

Purpose: Getting to know others.

Activity: Pair students together with a classmate they do not know very well. Have them discuss these questions with each other. After the conversation, have each student tell the class something they discussed they didn’t know before about that person.

A) How many brothers and sisters do you have?
B) Do you have any pets? What kind?
C) What is your favorite color?
D) What is your favorite movie?
E) What is your favorite T.V. show?
F) What do you like most about school?
G) Do you have a hobby?
H) What are some things you enjoy doing?
I) What is the most exciting thing you have ever done?
J) What would you like to be able to do someday?
K) What is a wish that you hope comes true?

SELF-PORTRAIT COLLAGE

Purpose: Students will describe themselves to others.

Activity: Have students find pictures from magazines that describe themselves. They can be clothing, food, games, or sport pictures. Create a collage by pasting pictures on construction paper. Display for the class. Leave off names and have students guess which collage goes with each student.

COMPOSITE

Purpose: To show students everyone has something good about themselves.

Activity: Have students form groups of four or five students. Make sure each group has one large sheet of white paper. Working together, the students are to draw an imaginary person. The person must be a composite of the best features of each group member. Label parts used such as, "Mary’s hair". Have students tell why they choose that feature and what good feature was picked for each person.
POSITIVE ATTITUDE CIRCLE

**Purpose**: Strengthen self-esteem and confidence

**Activity**: Have students form a circle with their desks. Have each student start one piece of notebook paper with their name at the top of the page. Have each student pass their paper to the person on their left. This person is to write one positive feeling about the person whose name is on the paper. Trade papers around the circle until everyone has put something positive on each paper. Return paper to owner for a list of positive feelings.

STICKERS

**Purpose**: Label positive attitudes.

**Activity**: The teacher will need to purchase blank white stickers such as "hello" tags. Label stickers: Friendly, helpful, trusting, good humor, responsible, leader, caring, etc. Have enough stickers for each person in the class to have one of each. Have students form a circle and place stickers on the back of the student the sticker describes. They must get rid of all stickers. Everyone should get one. Let students take stickers off backs. Discuss activity.

KNOW WHAT YOU DO WELL

**Purpose**: Students will know what they do well.

**Activity**: The teacher will draw a 5-pointed star on paper. Have students use the spaces within the five points to list something they do well. They could also list things they would like to do better. Stress to students that everyone makes mistakes sometimes and they should learn from their mistakes. Try not to let mistakes get you down.
I FEEL GOOD WHEN...

**Purpose**: Students will feel good about themselves.

**Activity**: The teacher will have students form a circle with their chairs. The teacher will start by saying, "I feel good when...". Going around the room, each student will respond to the question. Discuss answers. The teacher will take note of students having trouble expressing themselves.

JOURNALS

**Purpose**: Explore feelings and ideas.

**Activity**: Have students keep a journal of feelings and ideas. It is a place where they may talk freely to themselves. Give students time to write in the journal daily. Assure students others will not read these, so use their true feelings.

**YOU NEED A FRIEND**

**Purpose**: Explore friendship.

**Activity**: Have student imagine they will soon be leaving on the first space shuttle for Mars. They can bring three people with them. Name these three people and tell why they would want each person on this journey.
TAKE A BOW!

**Purpose:** Show students people can be proud of success in many areas.

**Activity:** The teacher will have students finish the sentences below. More sentences may be added.

1. I'm really good at:
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 

2. I was proud when I:
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 

3. Three things I like about myself are:
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 

FITTING IN

**Purpose:** Show a feeling of encouragement

**Activity:** Have students form two parallel lines. As one person walks between the lines, all other students will give pats on back, handshakes and words of encouragement. Discuss experience. Have student tell how they felt.

CRYSTAL BALL

**Purpose:** Show students they can make wishes come true by setting goals.

**Activity:** The teacher will have students draw a 3 or 4 inch circle on their paper. Inside this circle students will set goals.

By next week, I ____________________________________
In one month, I ____________________________________
In one year, I ____________________________________
In five years, I ____________________________________
SUCCESS DIARY

**Purpose**: Show success by completing a project on being successful.

**Activity**: Have students record in a notebook anything they have been successful at during the day. It can be big or small, but must be recorded and preferably at the end of the day. Keep diary for one week. Students will show pride in a completion of the project and have a large number of successes to show.

FAMILY TREE

**Purpose**: Students recognize who they are and that they are a part of a family.

**Activity**: The teacher will have the students draw a tree adding branches for each member of their immediate family. They should list parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters names on the branches. Color and frame to be displayed.

FINGER FEELINGS

**Purpose**: Express feeling of happiness and sadness.

**Activity**: Have students make two finger paintings expressing how they feel when they are happy and sad. Display work.

SAVING HAPPINESS

**Purpose**: Show many different things that make people happy.

**Activity**: Teacher will draw a large piggy bank. Each student will cut out a circle and color it to represent a coin that will be added to the bank. On each of these coins the student will list one thing that makes them happy.
RECORD OF BIRTH

Purpose: Recognize you are an individual.

Activity: Have students complete the following questions about themselves when they were born.

Weight: _______________ Hair color: _______________
Length: _______________ Eye color: _______________

Full name at birth: _______________________________________
Date of birth: ___________________________________________
Place of birth: ___________________________________________
Day of week of birth: _____________________________________
Time of day of birth: _____________________________________

BABY FACE

Purpose: Feel pride in yourself and who you are.

Activity: Have students bring in a baby picture of themself. Number all pictures and display in the classroom. Have students guess which picture goes with each student in their class. Have students vote on cutest baby.

TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Purpose: Explore thoughts and feelings.

Activity: Have students answer these questions. Discuss.

I make friends by...
I appreciate people when...
I like people who...
I wish people would...
TAKING A POLL

**Purpose:** Understand why we have feelings.

**Activity:** Have students take the role of an interviewer. Have them ask five people what they allow to make them sad. Ask the same five people what they allow to make them happy. Record answers, compare and discuss.

DRESS UP

**Purpose:** Feel good about your appearance.

**Activity:** Choose one day of a week and let students wear the clothes to school that day that make them feel good about themselves. Let them wear the clothes that represent their style and personality. Give praise to students. Have them explain why they choose the outfits.

DESCRIBING ME

**Purpose:** Let students see how they describe themselves and how others describe them.

**Activity:** Have students think of five words that describe themselves. After they have the list they must go to five other students asking the student to describe them in one word. Make a list of these five words. Compare the two lists. Do others describe you as you describe yourself? Have a classroom discussion.

FUTURE MIRROR

**Purpose:** Goal setting for the future.

**Activity:** Have students draw a frame at the border of a sheet of white paper. Inside the frame they should draw a picture of how they would like others to see them ten years from now. Have students color pictures with silver crayons or colored pencils to make a mirror image.
KNOWING MY FEELINGS

Purpose: Become aware of feelings.

Activity: The teacher will write these incomplete sentences on the board for the students to complete. Explain there are no right or wrong answers, but should be answered honestly about themselves.

1. I feel happy when...
2. I feel sad when...
3. I feel important when...
4. I feel angry when...
5. I feel worried when...
6. I feel secure when...
7. I get nervous when...
8. I get bored when...
9. I get scared when...
10. Today I feel...

TAPED

Purpose: Show positive feelings.

Activity: Divide the class into groups of five students. Have each student pin a blank piece of paper on the back of their shirt or blouse. On small pieces of paper have students write positive statements about each group member. Have the students tape the positive statements to their shirts. Students then unpin their sheets and read statements silently.

TALENT ADS

Purpose: Share talents.

Activity: As an individual activity, have student think of two or three things about themselves that they could advertise. Have students think of these as commercial ads. Students may use magazine or illustrations to create a billboard using these ads. Display students billboards and have students discuss their advertisements.
AUTHORS

Purpose: To stress that you are special.

Activity: Pass out packets of cut paper stapled together to resemble a small book. Have students write or draw things about themselves on each page. Things such as hobbies, pets, likes or dislikes. Ask them not to put their names on the books. After books are completed gather books and read or show books to class and have them guess the author. Explain to the class everyone has different interests and it's o.k. to be different.

ROLE PLAY

Purpose: To express feelings.

Activity: Write the words mad, sad, glad, afraid, and ashamed on index cards. Pass out cards and have students role play in front of the classroom. Using gestures only, students must express the words on the cards. Other students will guess. Discuss. Have students tell when they have had these feelings.
WHAT DO I VALUE?

**Purpose:** Students will make discussions on values.

**Activity:** Write these ten values on the blackboard and have the students rank them #1 (most important) to #10 (least important). Discuss results.

1. ____ being a good son or daughter
2. ____ being dependable
3. ____ being popular
4. ____ being a successful student
5. ____ following rules/laws
6. ____ being concerned about others
7. ____ being a best friend to everyone
8. ____ being a best friend to a few
9. ____ being "my own style of person"
10. ____ honesty

I have learned this about myself from this activity:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
ROLES AND DECISIONS

**Purpose:** Discover likes and dislikes

**Activity:** Have students complete list. Discuss.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One I like</th>
<th>One I dislike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A kind of food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>A sport to watch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>A school subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>A chore at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>A way to spend Saturday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do these lists tell me about myself?

**WHO INFLUENCES YOU?**

**Purpose:** To show students they are influenced by others.

**Activity:** Have students complete list and discuss.

Who influences you? (check): Parents Friends T.V. Teachers Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>T.V.</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>How you dress?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>How you wear your hair?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>What you do after school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Who your friends are?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What you eat for dinner?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>What movies you see?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>What time you go to bed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>What T.V. show you watch?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Where you sit for lunch?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>What you do at recess?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>What you plan to do for a career?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who is the biggest influence in your life?

What have you learned from this activity?
HOW WOULD YOU FEEL

**Purpose:** Express strong feelings

**Activity:** Have students complete sentences about their feelings. Discuss in small groups.

How would you feel if...

1. Your teacher asks you a question and you don’t know the answer?
2. Your best friend told you why he/she likes you best?
3. Your laughed quietly at someone behind his back and he heard you?
4. Your favorite pet was sick and had to stay overnight at the vet?
5. Your parents just told you that you were going to Disneyland for two weeks?
6. You lost the ten dollar bill you received for your birthday?
7. You’re carrying your food tray and you trip and spill it on the floor.
8. You were moving to a new school?
9. You put somebody down and you know that you had really hurt her feelings by the way she acted?
10. You were watching your favorite T.V. program and the electricity went out in your home?
**COMPETITION OR COOPERATION**

**Purpose:** Explore the difference between cooperation and competition.

**Activity:** Discuss meanings of cooperation and competition. Write meanings on the board. Have students complete this list about themselves. Discuss what was learned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When I play, I am...</th>
<th>usually</th>
<th>not usually</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. the competitor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. the one who likes to win</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. the best player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. the worst player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. the one who helps others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. always picked first</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. the one who has to win</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. the one who is playing for fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. afraid of making mistakes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. the one who only plays at games I am good at</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. content to do my best</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. playing because my mom and dad want me to play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. playing to get to know others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. always wishing others would ask me to play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you more of a competitor or a cooperator?

What have you learned about yourself?
ADD A PICTURE

Purpose: To help students accept the differences in others.

Activity: Give each student a piece of drawing paper. Students will be seated in a group, at tables or in a row. Without talking, each student will begin a picture about a specific topic. After 2 or 3 minutes, students will stop and pass the paper to the student on the left. Have the student study the picture and add to it. Continue switching every 2 or 3 minutes, until everyone in the group has added to the picture. Have the group discuss the feelings they had when they first looked at the picture. How do they feel about the finished picture?

TREASURE HUNT

Purpose: Explore what is important and what makes us happy.

Activity: Students are to list things in their bedroom that have value to them. List these things and why these things make them feel happy. Have students discuss if they could keep their happiness if they were to lose these possessions.
LABELING

Purpose: To explore the effects a label has on a person's self-esteem.

Activity: Have students complete the following statements. Discuss labels and how you feel when someone puts one on you.

1. I think people see me as

2. I would like people to see me as

3. Three things I can do so people will see me in this way:
   a)
   b)
   c)
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION USING "DECISION STEPS"

**Purpose:** To learn some definite steps to use in making decisions. To experience the decision-making process in real life situations.

**Discussion:** Introduce decision-making steps:
- a. Understand the problem or decision (state the problem).
- b. Consider all the choices.
- c. Consider all the consequences of each choice (I wonder what would happen).
- d. Consider your values.
- e. Decide!

**Activity:** Divide class into groups of four or five. Each group will receive a situation card and a worksheet. Each group should choose a recorder who will fill out the worksheet. Assign each group a situation and have them discuss what they would do if they were involved. Encourage students to pretend they are actually in the situations.

Return to the large group. Each small group reports to the rest of the class about their situation and the solutions and consequences.
WHAT COULD YOU DO?

(cut apart situations into strips and put into bag)

1. **Copy Cat**
   You are having an important test. Everybody is busy completing the test. You see the person sitting behind you peeking at the answers of the person sitting beside you. This person is copying. What do you do?

2. **Picked On**
   One of the boys in an upper grade has been picking on you, teasing you, calling you names, and pushing you around. This happens every morning before school. What could you do? What choices do you have?

3. **Friends**
   Dave is a quiet person who does not have a lot of friends. Mike has been a leader in almost all activities at school. Bob and Bill are twins who live next door to Dave, and they have invited Mike to come over on a Saturday afternoon. Mike suggests that on Saturday they all walk to the park and hide in the bushes and smoke. Since Dave’s parents own a grocery store, Mike suggests that Dave can bring some cigarettes from his parent’s store. Dave said, "I don’t smoke." Mike said, "It’s handy for you to get them. We’ll be counting on you to get them for us." What are Dave’s choices? What are the consequences?

4. **Test**
   You will be taking a very important test in school at the end of the week, but find you will be out of town. You arrange to take the test early, before you go. A group of your friends want you to tell them the questions and answers. What are your choices? What are the consequences?

5. **The Shoplifter**
   You go shopping with your mother. While you are in the store, you see someone take something off a store shelf, slip it into her pocket and look around to see if anyone is looking. You see that person shoplift. But the shoplifter did not know you had seen him/her. Your mother sees nothing. What would you do?

6. **The Lost Ring**
   Your older sister has a beautiful ring that you are dying to wear. You have asked her several times if you could wear it to school just once but she always says...
no. One day you decide to just take it from her jewelry box and wear it. She will never know you borrowed it. When you come home from school that day, you look down at you finger, the ring is gone! What would you do?

7. Temptation
You are visiting a neighbor friend’s house and the parents are not at home. You friend opens the refrigerator and takes out a can of beer and says, "Do you want some?" What do you do? Do you have choices? What are the consequences?

8. Hitch Hike
It is a Saturday afternoon. You are with a group of friends at the shopping center. They decide to hitchhike a ride home. You are the only one who hesitates and says maybe. What can you do? What are the consequences?

9. Cigarettes
You are with a group of friends in your bedroom and they start smoking cigarettes. They want you to join them. What are your choices? What are the consequences?

10. The Dope
The girl next door is in high school. She is rather quiet and doesn't seem to have many friends, but she talks to you a lot. Today, she says to you, "Hey, I've got some marijuana here. Want to try some of it?" What do you do? What are the consequences?

11. The Kitten
Coming home from school, Pam and Cindy find a kitten. Both girls want to take it home with them. What are their feelings? What could they do?

12. A Headache
You have a headache. Your mother went next door for a few minutes to visit the neighbor. You know where the aspirin is kept because you've seen your mother and father take them. You can't read the label, but you know what the aspirin bottle looks like. What could you do?

13. Swimming
Jan asks Carol to go swimming with her. Carol agrees to go, then calls her cousin and invites her to go along, without discussing it with Jan. What feelings would Jan have? What could she do?
14. **The Stranger**
   You are walking home from school alone and a car stops beside you. You do not know the man who is driving the car but he smiles and asks you if you want a ride. He says he knows where you live because he has seen you playing in the neighborhood. He says, "Get in, I'll give you a ride." What could you do?

15. **Money**
   You are playing on the playground during recess and you find a $5 bill. You pick it up and put it into your pocket. When you return to your classroom, one of your classmates is crying because she lost a $5 bill. The teacher asks the class if anyone has found it. What would you do?

**DECISION-MAKING WORKSHEET**

1. State the conflict or Problem:

2. Possible choices or alternatives: Consequences: (What may happen)

3. Rank order your choices from worst to best:
FILMS AND FILMSTRIPS

1. AM I NORMAL?/DEAR DIARY
   Investigates the physiological and emotional changes boys and girls experience during puberty. Full-color drawings teach male and female anatomy and physiology. Suitable for same-sex or co-ed viewing.

2. DEVELOPING SELF-CONFIDENCE
   The purpose of this four-strip set is to define self-confidence within the viewer's world. While providing concrete suggestions the viewers can use to improve their self-esteem and their self-confidence.

3. DEVELOPING SELF-RESPECT
   The purpose of this four-strip set is to demonstrate a simple methodology children can use to shape and improve their self-images. At the same time this set demonstrates how this self-image is used as a basis for the development of self-respect.

4. FRIENDS: How they help...How they hurt
   Program examines the meaning of friendship during the difficult transition from childhood to adolescence.

5. THE GENTLE ART OF SAYING NO: PRINCIPLES OF ASSERTIVENESS
   Equips students with effective techniques for saying no in a positive, nonaggressive manner. Encourages young people to reject ideas and actions contrary to their own personal values.

6. HOW TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS
   Helps teens develop the decision-making skills that enable them to take control of—rather than be controlled—events in their lives.

7. LEARNING TO SAY NO
   Teaches students the assertiveness techniques that help them stand up for their own rights without stepping on the rights of others. Emphasizes the sense of accomplishment, the increased self-respect and the admiration of others that result when young people are able to say "no" to something they don't want to do, and make that "no" stick.

8. LIKING ME: Building Self-esteem
   Examines the concept of self-esteem and its importance in school performance, in resisting peer pressure, and in coping with life.
9. **MAKING DECISIONS: You Can Learn How**
Provides preteens and young teens with skills to use in making decisions. Points out that the decisions they make now can affect the direction of their lives.

10. **SELF-CONCEPT: How I Know Who I Am**
Explores the nature of self-concept to give teenagers penetrating insights into the many ways self-concept influences their behavior. Outlines ways to change a negative self-image into a positive one.

11. **THE GROUP AND YOU: Handling Pressures**
Helps students understand the various ways groups exert pressure on their members. Raises key issues for discussion to help young people question their own relationship to groups.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

It has become apparent that many educators have been basically ineffective in their attempt to assist children with learning problems to develop their potentials. Educational procedures and programs of remediation have been developed over the years, but many of these programs have not significantly changed the achievement patterns of children. The writers of this paper feel that emphasizing cognitive development is not enough. In order to assist pupils in developing their potential to the fullest, educators must nurture both the cognitive and affective domains of their students. Developing positive self-esteem in the student enriches the affective domain of the child thus having a direct affect on the cognitive domain.

The handbook presented in this paper is to be used to help develop a positive self-esteem in middle grade students. These activities will cause the student to view himself/herself as a worthwhile human being. It also emphasizes positive teacher behaviors which will enhance, rather than depress, positive self-esteem. This handbook is to be used as an aid to develop decision making skills which the child will find necessary throughout life.
Many students enter the middle grades with either a positive or negative self-esteem well intact. It is the hope of these writers that both teachers in the lower levels, as well as parents, realize the positive or negative influence they will have upon our future generations.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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