Self-concept enhancement for the gifted

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Self-concept enhancement for the gifted

Abstract
The field of gifted education is still a new one. The main concerns in the research literature and curricula in gifted education have been the academic and intellectual accomplishments of gifted individuals. But little investigation or program development has evolved with respect to the affective factors and their influences for the gifted. The self-concepts of such individuals have often been neglected or overlooked.
SELF-CONCEPT ENHANCEMENT
FOR THE GIFTED

A Research Paper
Submitted to
The Department of Curriculum and Instruction
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Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The field of gifted education is still a new one. The main concerns in the research literature and curricula in gifted education have been the academic and intellectual accomplishments of gifted individuals. But little investigation or program development has evolved with respect to the affective factors and their influences for the gifted. The self-concepts of such individuals have often been neglected or overlooked.

The purpose of this research project was twofold; a) to review what has been written in the research literature concerning the self-concepts of gifted individuals and how they can be enhanced, and b) to develop curricula to provide this type of enhancement for gifted high school students, in particular. Although the project was especially suited for high school age students, much of the information and many of the ideas could be applied to younger and/or older gifted individuals.

Need for the Study

Few studies have been conducted which have included the specific investigation of the relationship between self-concept and giftedness. Much of the need for this type of study has arisen from the mistaken belief that gifted individuals are so capable and so proficient in
everything they do that such individuals require no guidance or assistance of any kind. This common belief has overlooked or excluded the self-concept of a gifted person. In addition, the effects of negative or positive feelings on an individual's creativity and productivity have often been disregarded.

There has been an emphasis placed on whether or not gifted students are actually producing and/or showing "creative products" or measurable evidence of contributions for the betterment of society or mankind. If gifted students apparently have not met these expectations in the eyes of others, they may come to feel that they are a disappointment. They may have also become highly critical of themselves and what they have perceived to be their own abilities.

Many professionals in the field of gifted education have believed that the self-concept of gifted children is the most important issue in working with them (Webb, 1982, 1983). Maker (1977) revealed that gifted individuals, who are also handicapped, view the development of a realistic self-concept as their most crucial problem in life.

As a group, the gifted are rather prone to certain types of depression, alienation, and suicide. According to Taylor (1983), the gifted have the highest suicide rate of anyone under 30 years of age. Taylor also stated that 19% of school dropouts are gifted and that 63% of drug and alcohol problems happen among the gifted.

Before World War II it was believed that the only kind of guidance that was needed in society was vocational guidance. Therefore, the
idea of differentiated guidance for the gifted in order to make them more creative and better adjusted has been a new idea (Cowan, 1979).

Sometimes gifted children have felt that their self-concepts have come only through their giftedness. "For all too many gifted children, self-concept rests heavily, if not entirely, upon being gifted and on accomplishments. It is precarious for any person to hang her self-concept on only one hook, particularly if that hook happens to be the impossible one of achieving perfection!" (Webb, Meckroth, and Tolan, 1982; p. 20).

The gifted have needed to realize what they accomplish and what they are, as persons, are totally different. They must learn to accept their limitations and difficulties as well as their potentials and successes.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem in this research project was to attempt to answer and to give specific examples for the following questions: a) Is there a relationship between self-concept and giftedness? If so, what type of relationship does exist between the two? and b) Can educational experiences be developed and provided that will enhance the self-concepts of gifted high school students?

**Definitions of Terms**

The following are definitions of terms, which are particularly
significant for this study:

**Giftedness** -- This term according to the United States Office of Education definition (Marland, 1972) means as follows:

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs in order to realize their contributions to self and society.

Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:

a. General intellectual ability;
b. Specific academic aptitude;
c. Creative or productive thinking;
d. Leadership ability;
e. Visual and performing arts;
f. Psychomotor ability.

(Marland, 1972, in Clark, 1979, p. 5.)

This definition encompasses both the gifted and talented.

**Self-concept or self-esteem** -- This concept is what results after the process of "self evaluation" takes place. "Self evaluation" is a judgmental process wherein the individual examines and considers his performance, abilities, and attributes, using his personal standards and values as a basis. Through this process, the individual arrives at a decision of his/her own worthiness (Coppersmith, 1967).
Creativity -- This term may refer to what an individual has produced in comparison with previous products of the same person or in a social way, it may also refer to the comparisons of products of different individuals (Stahl, 1976). Creativity may be considered to be the same as creative potential, or the degree of ability one has to produce original or unique ideas and/or products. Taylor (1959) has recognized five different levels of creativity. These five levels are: a) expressive; b) productive; c) inventive; d) innovative, and e) emergentative.

Underachievement -- This term refers to when an individual does not operate on a level that is even near to that which corresponds with his potential. Whitmore (1980) identified some common characteristics of underachievement as: very low self-esteem, producing difficulties in coping emotionally; a lack of self confidence, and feelings of inferiority. Sellin and Birch (1981) recognized three types of underachievement in the gifted. These types are: natural, the difference between the rapid rate of cognitive development and the slower rate of acquiring life experiences; covert, wherein the high capabilities are not realized; and overt, wherein the child does not seem to be gifted and shows poor performance despite the capabilities reflected through assessment.

Self-Acutalization -- In Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of motivational needs this concept is the desire to fulfill one's potentiality. Self-actualization includes the realization that one comes to understand
about where his potentials lie within the 'scheme of things' and about how he can realistically approach and follow through the fulfillment of his goals and abilities.

Organization of the Study

This research study was organized into five chapters. Chapter I was composed of the introduction. Chapter II was divided into two categories; Self-concept and giftedness and Educational experiences that enhance self-concept. The subcategories of academic skills, creativity, aesthetic giftedness, and gifted program placement were included in self-concept and giftedness. Self-concept educational theories and the descriptions of existing educational curricula for enhancing the self-concepts of the gifted were included in Educational experiences that enhance self-concept. An explanation of the curricula, included as part of this project and its philosophical base comprise Chapter III. Actual curricula for enhancing the self-concept of the gifted, including specific goals and objectives and lesson plan activities and strategies were explained in Chapter IV. Chapter V was a summary of what was attempted through the development of this research project. Recommendations for further research and curricular development for enhancing the self-concepts of the gifted were also included in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The two main topics of this review of literature were: a) Self-concept and giftedness; and b) Educational experiences that enhance self-concept. The topic, self-concept and giftedness included the relationship of self-concept to academic skills, creativity, aesthetic giftedness, and gifted program placement. Educational experiences that enhance self-concept included the subtopics of self-concept; theories, explanation, and importance of it, and educational experiences related to self-concept; indicating the need for and the descriptions of self-concept related curricula of authors.

Self-Concept and Giftedness

In general researchers have believed that gifted individuals do have positive self-concepts. Often such positive feelings of self have led to high levels of academic achievement. Much of the research literature has reflected this relationship between self-concept and academic skills for the gifted. Some research literature has also included studies of relationships between self-concept and creativity, gifted program placement, and gifted students with special needs and their academic and social performance. The research literature has contained some studies which indicate that certain gifted individuals do not necessarily have positive self-concepts or high academic
achievement. Under-achievers, for instance, have been part of this group.

**Self-Concept and Academic Ability**

A study of twenty-five underachieving high school boys compared to twenty-five achieving high school boys was conducted by Combs (1964) to learn the differences in how the two groups of boys perceived themselves and their relationships with others. All the boys in the study were academically capable and comparable with respect to sex, race, nationality, age, grade, socio-economic status, and intelligence. The boys were designated as achievers or under-achievers according to how they scored on the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) and according to grade point average. An under-achiever was one whose average fell below the first quartile in scholastic achievement for his grade. An achiever held a grade point average above the median for his grade.

Once identified as achievers and under-achievers, the boys were administered an apperceptive instrument composed of four cards from the Thematic Apperception Test and four from the Combs School Apperception Test. The students' responses were tape-recorded. The protocols were individually judged according to the following six continua:

a) Sees self as adequate to inadequate;
b) Sees self as acceptable to unacceptable;
c) Sees peers as acceptable to unacceptable;
d) Sees adults as acceptable to unacceptable;
e) Approach to problems is positive to negative;  
f) Freedom of emotional expression is positive to negative. (Combs, 1964, p. 48)

The t-test results for various continua ratings for achievers versus under-achievers were as follows: +\(12.94\), \(6.25\), \(5.35\), \(6.82\), \(5.89\), and \(8.54\), \(p < .001\) for self-adequacy, self-acceptance, acceptance of peers, acceptance of adults, approach to problems, and freedom of expression, respectively. Achievers scored significantly higher than under-achievers.

Bailey (1971) conducted a study of the variations in self-concept in low and high achieving college students. Each under-achiever was matched with an achiever on the three variables of: sex, class rank, and scores on a test of college ability. There were thirty-five males and fifteen females in each of the two groups. The instruments used in the study were The Self Scale, The Ideal Self Scale, and The Henmon Nelson Tests of Mental Ability. Those involved in the study were asked to mark the Self Scale in two ways. First, they marked it according to how they felt compared to an average student of their class rank in the ability to do college work. Later, they marked the Self Scale according to how they would ideally like to be in their ability to do college work as compared to an average student of their own ability.

The two groups were compared according to: a) Self Scale, b) Ideal Self, c) Self-Ideal Discrepancy, and d) Reality Discrepancy. The results were: +\(2.32\), \(p < .025\); \(3.28\), \(p < .012\); \(2.51\), \(p < .05\).
p < .025, and 3.00, p < .005, respectively. The group of achievers earned the highest scores. The direction was revealed for how the students rated themselves on objective scores for college ability. The results were $X^2 (4 \ N = 100) = 3.53, p < .01$.

Twenty-four male and twenty female seventh and eighth grade students were studied by Dean (1977). He attempted to examine more fully the influence of feelings of self-worth on a free recall and non-verbal paired associate learning task with gifted children. These variables included free recall tasks and paired associate learning tasks. The (SEI) Self Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967) was also used in this study.

The scores indicated that subjects in the High Self-Concept (HSC) group were able to recall like category members more often than those in the low self-concept group (LSC), $F=(1,40)=5.90, \ p < .05$. Sex was also significant for recalling like category members, $F=(1,40)=6.49, \ p < .05$ in favor of females. It was also found that those in the HSC group used recency ordering more than those in the low LSC group, $F=(1,40)=10.04, \ p < .01$. The relationship between SEI scores and chronological age was significant for boys, but not for girls, $r=-.53, p < .05$ for boys. The relationship between school GPA and SEI scores; however, was not significant for either sex.

Klein and Cantor (1976) reported a survey comparing the self-esteem of gifted and normal children. The survey was part of a larger study conducted by the Educational Clinic of Queens College (CUNY) to
study the effects of an affective education program on the self-esteem of gifted versus normal children. The survey by Klein and Cantor was conducted at a local school as part of the larger study.

Of the particular school population, 38 of 92 (K-4) children were found to be gifted. Their giftedness was determined by an IQ score of 130 or above on the Wechsler or Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales. The Coopersmith Scale and the Piers-Harris Scale were used to measure self-esteem. The High Esteem Group was composed of the top 27% in self-esteem scores, while the Low Esteem Group was the bottom 27% in such scores. The study findings were as follows: a) 41.4% of the gifted were in the Low Self-Esteem Group, whereas 37.6% of the non-gifted were in this group, b) 33.3% of the gifted were part of the High Esteem Group, as were 32.9% of non-gifted children and c) with respect to kindergarten students only, 22.2% of the gifted were in the High Esteem Group as opposed to 33.3% of the non-gifted in this group.

Colangelo and Pfleger (1979) investigated the relationship of academic self-concept with academic achievement in a group of high school students. The instrument used in this study was the Brookover (1962) Self-Concept of Ability Scale (SCAS). It was administered to 151 gifted 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students who participated in a special research and guidance laboratory program for the very best performers in academic activities in their respective schools.
A t-test comparison and a one-way analysis of variance resulted in no significant differences in sex or grade levels for the responses on the SCAS. The percentages of responses which reflected the highest and the second highest levels of self-concept were forty-eight and forty-two respectively.

In 1982, Winne, Woodlands, and Wong compared representations of self-concept with groups of fourth to seventh grade learning disabled, normal, and gifted students. These students were identified based on the following: general ability as reflected by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, differences between actual grade placement and grade equivalent score from the reading comprehension subtest of the Canadian Test of Basic Skills, and teachers' identification. The gifted students were those with a score of 120 or higher on the vocabulary scale and those who were 1.6 or more grade equivalents above grade placement in reading comprehension. In addition, the gifted students were those called "superior" by their regular classroom teacher.

The Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967) and the revised Sears Self-Concept Scale (Sears, 1969) were used to interpret the students' self-concepts. The most consistent results showed the learning disabled students to have self-concepts which were lower than those of the normal and gifted students. But the difference in relationships of self-concept to vocabulary and reading measures among the three groups of students were not statistically significant. With
respect to self-concepts in the social and physical domains there was evidence at the $p < 0.10$ level that gifted students may have lower self-concepts than learning disabled students.

The influence of academic stress may have effected anxiety and depression levels in individuals. These levels have been viewed as factors associated with the development of self-concept. Gifted high school students were studied in terms of how the stress related to academic endeavors influences their anxiety and depression levels by Yadusky-Holahan and Holahan (1983). Two groups of students in residential boarding schools were studied. One group was composed of 30 students in single rooms. The other group was 30 students living with chosen roommates. No pairs of roommates were included in the study.

The main goal of this study was to compare the effects of living alone or with a roommate upon anxiety and depression in the achievement-oriented gifted student. Three instruments were utilized in the study. They were the Depression Adjective Check Lists (Lupin, 1981), the IPAT Anxiety Scale (Krug, Scheier, and Cattell, 1976) and the Mooney Problem Check List (Mooney and Gordon, 1950, rev.). The first two instruments were originally administered two days before classes started in the fall and also twice more; two months after the first testing and again, two days before semester exams began.

The depression scores at the times of the second testing were higher for three groups. Those groups were: males with roommates,
+(34) = 4.30, \ p < .01, \ males \ without \ roommates, \ +(36) = 1.85, \ p < .05, \ and \ females \ without \ roommates, \ +(20) = 1.86, \ p < .05. \ At \ the \ time \ of \ the \ third \ testing, \ there \ were \ significant \ scores \ when \ compared \ to \ testing \ one \ in \ two \ groups: \ males \ with \ roommates, \ +(34) = 2.47, \ \ p < .05 \ and \ in \ females \ without \ roommates, \ +(20) = 2.34, \ p < .05. \ With \ the \ comparison \ of \ the \ second \ and \ third \ testings, \ two \ groups \ had \ significantly \ lower \ depression \ scores \ during \ the \ third \ testing. \ These \ groups \ were: \ males \ without \ roommates, \ +(36) = 1.69, \ p < .05 \ and \ females \ without \ roommates, \ +(22) = 2.06, \ p < .05. \ Also, \ at \ the \ time \ of \ the \ third \ testing, \ females \ without \ roommates \ earned \ higher \ depression \ scores \ than \ females \ with \ roommates, \ +(21) = 2.49, \ p < .05 \ and \ than \ males \ without \ roommates, \ +(28) = 1.70, \ p < .05.

Self-Concept and Creativity

A study of architects and their personality as well as creativity types was conducted by MacKinnon (1965). His subjects were divided into three groups: a) Architects I (a group of 40 highly creative architects who were invited and nominated by 5 professors of architecture to participate in the study, b) Architects II (a group of 43 creative architects who had had at least two years of work experience and were associated with one of the original nominated and invited architects), c) Architects III (a group of 41 creative architects, none of whom had ever associated with the original nominated architects.)

The personality types of the three groups of architects were correlated with the theories of Otto Rank. His basic theories have
explained the opposing behavioral drives of individuals. On one hand, a person fears the possibility of losing his identity. On the other hand, he fears being an individual and being assertive. Rank's theories also have emphasized the concepts of will and guilt. These concepts are initiated in childhood and continue throughout life.

In his study, MacKinnon equated his three groups of architects with three personality types described by Rank. MacKinnon called Architects I (the creative type, the artist or man of will and deed), Architects II (the conflicted or neurotic type), and Architect III (the adapted or normal or average man type). He sought to use Rank's theories in comparing the three groups of architects according to the following: "a) the nature of the individual's socialization and his interpersonal behavior, b) the level of richness or complexity of his psychological development, and c) the degree of personal soundness or psychological health which he manifests." (MacKinnon, 1965, p. 277).

Many scales were used to measure these characteristics of the three groups of architects. They were: the Heilbrun keys (Gough and Heilbrun, 1965) of the Adjective Check List (Gough, 1961), the California Psychological Inventory (CPI, 1957), and Institute of Personality Assessment and Research (IPAR) scale to measure independence (Barron, 1953), the Vassar scale of social integration (Webster, Freedman, and Heist, 1962), the IPAR Scale of Personality Soundness, the Taylor (1953) Anxiety Scale, the Binodal Ego Control Scale and the scale designed to measure psychoneurotic tendencies, Block (BN),
the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Barron, 1953) known as the MMPI, and the IPAR Scale of Self-Assertiveness (Gough, 1965). No mean scores for the comparisons of the three groups were given in the study, as it was the written form of an oral presentation. But there were a variety of differences in the personalities of the three groups which met or exceeded \( p < .05 \). The statistics for this study; however, were not reported. Architects III were found to be the least creative overall of the three groups. Ninety-eight percent of them used the adjective "conscientious" to describe themselves. At the same time, 95% of Architects II labeled themselves as being "civilized" and 98% of Architects I (found to be the most creative group) called themselves "imaginative" on the Gough Adjective Check List known as (ACL) and developed by (Gough, 1961).

A study similar to that of MacKinnon (1965) was that conducted by Schaefer (1969). Schaefer's study; however, involved high school students, who were recognized as being creative, rather than architects. The subjects for the study were 800 academically superior male and female students from 10 high schools, known for creative achievement, in New York City. Most of the boys in the study were creative in art-writing or scientific fields and most of the girls were creative in either art or writing. The creativity of the students was assessed through a combination of teachers' evaluations and creativity test scores. This included creative products such as drawings, writings, and science projects, and scores above a certain cutoff point on Guilford Alternate Uses and Consequences Tests. A control group of
students, who were nominated by teachers as having shown no concrete
evidence of creativity were also part of the study. These in the
creative and in the control groups were matched in the schools they
attended, class in which enrolled, grade level, and grade point average.

The subjects were first assigned to eight groups of 100 students
each, based on the following classifications: a) achievement (creative
or control), b) field of achievement, and c) sex. Next the Gough
Adjective Check List (ACL) was given as part of a larger test, after
regular school hours to make comparisons among the eight groups. A
one-tailed test of significance was used with the results of many of
the ACL Scales as significant for creative adolescents at the $p < .05 -
p < .001$ level.

How to increase the creativity of low creatives was investigated
in a study by Sisk (1972). A group of 65 low-creative students was
selected randomly from gifted students who had been administered
individual Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales (Form L-M). Their scores
were in the IQ range of 132-148. The low-creatives also showed at
least three of the following behaviors: "a) Needs urging, b) Waits
to be told, c) Withdraws, d) Seeks to terminate, e) Shy, f) Difficult
to establish rapport, and g) Praise needed." (Sisk, 1972, p. 231).

Once identified, the low-creative were administered a Franck
Drawing Completion Test and they participated in various oral and
written informal exercise activities to discover if they truly were
low-creatives. From the original group of 65, 45 students were found
to actually be low in creativity. They became involved in a special
educational setting. Graduate students taught the low-creatives in groups of 15 by the use of discussion and/or active involvement teaching techniques. A conscious effort was made by the instructor to praise, to listen to the children, and to allow them to become more creative. This was evidenced in the content of the written themes of the participants, in the interactions of oral discussing, and in the way the students expressed themselves through role-playing. These activities were also a means of self-expression to aid in self-concept enhancement.

A study of personality correlates in relation to the creative personality with respect to academic ability was conducted by Payne, Halpin, Ellett, and Dale (1975). After the administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT), 312 high school students, who participated in the Georgia Governor's Honors Program, became involved in this study. The Georgia Governor's Honors Program was an intense 8-week summer program for academically and artistically gifted and talented students. Those in the academically talented group achieved a percentile rank of at least 94 on the CAT. This group was composed of students who were gifted in the areas of mathematics, science, English, foreign language, and social science.

Other instruments used in this study were Form C of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (Cattell and Eber, 1962), of self-concept measure known as (16PE) and a creativity personality measure called (WKPAY) The What Kind of Person Are You? (Torrance and Khatena, 1970a, 1970b). The multiple correlations of (16PF) and
(WKPAY) were significant for academically, (r = .58), artistically, (r = .72), and combined academically and artistically talented, (r = .61) at p < .01 level.

Finch (1977) used four groups of children to compare creativity. She explored the relationship between emotional and mental health and the development of creative potential in disturbed, delinquent, accelerated, and normal children.

Ninety-eight subjects (49 males and 49 females) were included in the study. They were between nine and sixteen years old. Instruments used in the study were Torrance's "Thinking Creatively with Words" (Verbal Form A, 1966) and a questionnaire developed by the experimenter to assess the present attainment of creative achievement. The questionnaire involved all aspects of creations, which could be observed externally.

No exact statistical data was given, but through a one-way analysis of variance and Scheffe's post hoc multiple-contrast tests differences between the groups were determined. The differences were at the p < .05 level for all group comparisons.

Low achieving and high achieving gifted students in grades four, five, and six were studied by Sauernman and Michael (1980) according to how they scored on measures of field dependence, field independence, creativity, and self-concept. The sample for the study consisted of 96 4th, 5th, and 6th graders, who were mentally gifted, from nine elementary schools. They were divided into 3 subsamples, which in turn, were divided into subgroups of 16 high-achievers and 16
low achievers. Their achievement was determined according to percentile rankings of the total test score on the California Test of Basic Skills (CTSK). The high-achievers earned rankings on the test of 90 percent or above and the low-achievers earned 75 percent or below rankings.

The instrument used in the study were all administered during one session during the last month of school. The instrument used to study field dependence - field independence was the (GEFT) Group Embedded Figures Test (Wilken, Oltman, Raskin, and Karp, 1971). To test creativity (DFC) Divergent Production of Symbolic Units (Favero, Dombrower, Michael, and Richards, 1975; Guilford, 1967) were employed. Self-concept was assessed through 5 scales on the Dimensions of Self-Concept (DOSC). The ES Form for grades 4-6 was used (Michael and Smith, 1976; Michael, Smith, and Michael, 1978). Also during the last month of school, a Sauernman designed questionnaire was administered to teachers to learn the teacher opinion of the subjects in the study with respect to competency in basic skills, creative thinking, positive self-concept, and leadership.

The results indicated that the mean scores were higher for the high achieving students on the DFC in both the total samples and the subsample. The scores were $\bar{x} = 5.83$, high-achievers and $\bar{x} = 5.10$, low-achievers; $\bar{x} = 5.37$, high-achievers and $\bar{x} = 4.50$, low-achievers for the total sample and subsamples, respectively.

Jacquish and Ripple (1981) studied the relationship between divergent thinking and self-esteem in age groups across the adult
life-span. There were 218 subjects included in the study. They ranged in age from 18-84 years. The subjects were mostly middle class, Caucasian, in good health, and most of them belonged to some form of organized group. They were divided into categories as follows: (18-25 yrs., n = 70), b) adults (26-34 yrs., n = 58), c) middle adults (40-60 yrs., n = 51), and d) older adults (61-84 yrs., n = 39). The age groups were compared with respect to occupation and level of education.

The divergent thinking abilities of fluency, flexibility, and originality were measured with the subjects' responses to a free-response exercise in divergent thinking. The participants responded in writing to a presentation of 4 groups of auditory stimuli recorded on cassette tape, composed of familiar and abstract sounds. The participants were encouraged to be imaginative in their responses.

Adults and middle adults were significantly higher in self-esteem than the elderly: + (218) = 4.49, p < .01. There were no significant correlations between self-esteem and divergent thinking within young adult and adult age groups. But self-esteem did correlate significantly with all three divergent abilities for middle adults: fluency; \( r = .29, p < .05 \), flexibility; \( r = .30, p < .01 \), originality; \( r = .31, p < .01 \). In the elderly age group, self-esteem correlated significantly with fluency and flexibility at \( r = .41, p < .001 \) and \( r = .43, p < .01 \), respectively. Other significant correlations were between self-esteem and divergent thinking for middle aged adults with age
as a constant: fluency; \( r = .29, p < .05 \), flexibility; \( r = .29, p < .05 \), and between self-esteem and fluency and self-esteem and flexibility for the elderly with age as a constant: \( r = .33, p < .05 \) and \( r = .32, p < .05 \), respectively.

Three groups of creative individuals were studied by Weiss (1981). They included: a) 124 male architects at three levels of creative accomplishment, who were originally studied by MacKinnon and Hall (1969, 1964, 1962); b) 45 male research scientists, engaged mostly in applied research in electronics and physics (Gough, 1961; Gough, Woodworth, 1960), and c) 56 male mathematicians, divided by two levels of creative accomplishments (Helson and Crutchfield, 1970). Wiess (1981) compared subjects who had been previously studied.

Each subject was given a standardized creativity rating according to judges who based it on a composite score of standard creativity scales, an empathy scale (Hogan, 1969), and on a scale measuring autonomy (Kurtines, 1973). Peers and supervisors gave ratings for architects and research scientists and a tally of professional publications reflected a creativity index for the mathematicians.

After the subjects had been given creativity ratings, the 20 scale scores of the California Psychological Inventory became predictors for each subject. The reliabilities and validities were as follows: \( r = .375 \) for the 225 cases and \( V = .424 \) (124 architects), \( V = .310 \) (56 mathematicians), and \( V = .310 \) (45 research scientists).
Aesthetic Giftedness and Self-Concept

Adolescent girls who were creative in art and in writing were studied according to their biographical traits by Anatasi and Schaefer (1969). This technique of biographical inventories was thought to predict subsequent creative achievement in individuals and to identify environmental variables which help to develop creative behavior.

The subjects in the study were 400 female students from public schools in New York. As a whole, the subjects were superior with regard to the educational level of parents and one-third of the subjects' parents were foreign born.

The subject sample was divided into four groups of 100 students each. The groups were: Creative-Art (CrA), Control-Art (CoA), Creative Writing (CrW), and Control-Writing (CoW). Those in the two creative groups were nominated by a) teacher(s) based on one or more creative products of a visual art or creative writing nature and they had earned a score above a minimum cutoff on Guilford Alternate Uses and Consequences tests. Those in the control groups were in the same classes as the creatives and were nominated by the same instructors as having provided no evidence of creative achievement. Additionally, these students scored below a maximum cutoff on the two Guilford screening tests. The scores on the Guilford tests were used only to exclude subjects, not to include them.

After this creativity identification, a biographical inventory
was given to the subjects of the study. This inventory was essentially the same one used in a previous study of high school boys conducted by Schaefer and Anatasi (1968). The 166 questions of the inventory were grouped into five sections: physical characteristics, family history, educational history, leisure-time activities, and miscellaneous. A total of 3,962 "scorable items" or alternatives could result with these 166 questions. The results were $r = .55, p < .001$ in writing with the creative group scoring over the control group according to inventory scores and dichotomous criterion.

Disadvantaged young people between the ages of six and thirteen were challenged in a creative problem-solving, creative expression activities workshop conducted by Torrance, E. P. and P. (1972). Ninety-one young people (59 boys and 32 girls; 51 Black and 40 White) were enrolled in the workshop. It was led by 47 mature students who were in the course called "Learning Difficulties of Disadvantaged Children" taught by E. P. Torrance.

The workshop took place in a city park in order to accommodate both individual learning, small-moderate, and also large group learning activities. The workshop lasted for three weeks with four hour sessions each day. Deliberate efforts were made to encourage the use of creative problem-solving during all the workshop activities and also at home. Contests among four person teams were held at the end of the activity sessions and prizes were given.

Creative movement (Aesthetics) was also encouraged at the workshop sessions. Inventive dances and creative movements of different
body parts were developed and combined by the participants.

The results of what the children gained by participating in the workshops were indicative of positive strides in creativity and in overall self understanding. The actual time spent in the workshop activities seemed to be far more beneficial to the participants than the time spent taking Torrance Creativity tests at the beginning and end of the workshop.

With particular attention given to his superior artwork, a so-called idiot savant was investigated by Morishima (1974). Although the IQ of Yoshihiko Yamamoto was reported at 40, he came to be a famous Japanese artist with superior graphic skills. In addition to reported mental retardation, this young man also suffered from hearing and speech difficulties. Due to a very understanding special education teacher, a special curriculum emphasizing artwork was instituted to help Yoshihiko. His self-concept and overall performance improved greatly through his involvement in his artwork. As his artwork improved, so did other school subjects. In the beginning, he showed strong aptitude only for pictures, which were related to his own life experience and his environment. But through encouragement and guidance on the part of his teacher, Yamamoto became more outer-directed and showed initiative and creativity in his artwork.

Self-Concept and Gifted Program Placement

An open-ended questionnaire was designed by Wittek (1973) to use
with gifted students in grades five, six, and seven. It was administered to students in those grades in gifted program classes in the state of New York. The questionnaire was composed of twenty open-ended statements. The intent for using it was to encourage from the gifted child the maximum input about his views of himself, his peers, his teachers, and his parents.

Of the twenty statements in the questionnaire the one stated "When the teacher smiles I feel" elicited responses, which were the most curious to the author. The minority of the children were wary or suspicious of a smiling teacher. Most of the children felt that a teacher's smile was something positive, evoking such feelings as the teacher is happy, the teacher likes me, or that the students' own good work is reflected by the smile.

Other responses, which seem to be directly related to the students' self-concept were those given to the following statements: "When I get a high grade I" and "When I get a low grade I," and "My parents are proud of me when." The statement about parent pride and the statement about achieving high grades were similar in the responses they received. The responses for these two showed evidence of concern both on the part of parents and students for demonstrated high achievement in grades or honors of the children. At the seventh grade level, there was also sensitivity, self-control, and concern for other grades on the part of the gifted students. The responses to the statement about earning low grades showed a combination of fear, hostility, and rational self-assessment. Some students were angry at themselves
for low grades. Others were worried about parental displeasure, especially from their mothers. Some students were able to assess their mistakes and they felt confident that they would correct them in the near future.

O'Such, Havertape, and Pierce (1979) studied age and class placement as variables that may effect self-concept in educable mentally retarded (EMR), educationally handicapped (EH), normal, and gifted children. The sample in the study consisted of 128 children; 32 in each ability group. Half were between 8 and 9 years of age and half were between 11 and 12. The instrument used in the study was the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale or The Way I Feel About Myself (1969). It was administered orally to avoid reading difficulties for some participants.

School placement or student grouping did prove to be a significant factor in the comparison of these groups of children, $F (3,120) = 7.89$, $p < .001$, in favor of the self-concepts of normal and gifted as opposed to mentally retarded and educationally handicapped groups. Age; however, did not prove to be a significant factor in this comparison.

A study of self-concept and sociometric variables was conducted by Maddux, Schieber, and Bass (1982). Fifty-five fifth and sixth grader gifted students participated in totally segregated, partially segregated, and regular school programs. The problem investigated in this study was to determine whether a gifted program in general, and especially a totally segregated gifted program might cause lower
self-concept and peer acceptance scores for gifted students.

The study took place during the second year of an experimental gifted program at an intermediate school. The participating students were placed in one of two groups: a) Major Works Integrated (MWI) or b) Major Works Segregated (MWS). Those in MWI had achieved 40 percent or above scores on the total mathematics portion of the CAT, and they were "pulled out" daily for a three hour section of advanced instruction in mathematics/science. The members of the MWS group had achieved 90 percent or above scores in both the total reading and mathematics portions of the CAT. These students spent the entire school day in gifted program instruction with gifted peers. The sixth grade students were in their second year of participation in the gifted program; fifth grade students were in their first year.

The instruments used in the study were the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Test and a researcher-devised instrument called (SD) Social Distance. (SD) was an instrument, on which each student indicated how he felt about sitting next to other students in a particular class. (SD) was based upon a 5-point likert scale. MWI students were rated twice with the use of the (SD); once in the gifted classroom and once in the heterogeneously grouped homerooms. This gave a comparison between gifted children and their gifted peers and between gifted children and non-gifted peers according to (SD).

The analysis of self-concept scores revealed that fifth and sixth graders in a gifted program have scores very similar to those of
children who have not been identified or placed. Self-concept scores in the sixth grade actually favored students in segregated gifted programs, but this was not statistically significant. The (SD) scores for sixth graders were also similar in the gifted segregated, integrated, and non-identified. But at the fifth grade level, the (SD) scores were less favorable for the segregated gifted students than for the other groups. The results from the Nemenyi multiple comparison procedure indicated the lower scores for this segregated group (MWS) as opposed to the integrated group (MWI) and the control group, (MWS) versus (MWI), $d = 14.40$, $dkw = 12.20$: (MWS) versus control, $d = 19.97$, $dkw = 12.20$.

Another study, which compared gifted children who were segregated from the regular classroom and those who were not, was that conducted by Coleman and Fults (1982). These researchers used social comparison theory to find the effects on gifted children who participated at times in a segregated gifted program with regard to their self-concepts. They also wanted to learn what changes in self-concept would occur when these segregated students returned to the regular classroom.

Ninety gifted students were involved in the study. They were selected from a pool of approximately 3,000 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students, who were nominated to participate in a one-day-per-week segregated school program for the intellectually and academically gifted. Their minimum IQ score was 126. The gifted students were compared with a group of 90 high achieving, normal students in terms of self-concept.
The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was administered to both groups at three different intervals over an 18 month duration. The three factors of program, grade, and time were analyzed. The most significant effects were those of program and time, which both resulted in favor of the self-concepts of regular classroom students as opposed to those in the gifted sample. The results were program, $F = (1,28) = 14.37, p < .001$, and time, $F = (2,256) = 6.72, p < .002$.

Tomlinson-Keasey and Smith-Wineberry (1983) used a volunteer method for university students to participate in a study, comparing gifted and non-gifted students and males and females within each group. Of the 207 volunteers, 124 had been identified as gifted during elementary and secondary school. Sixty-eight non-gifted volunteers served as the control group. Data was incomplete for 15 of the original volunteers so they were not included in the actual study.

The instruments used in the study were the California Psychological Inventory (CPI), which measured 18 separate personality traits developed by Gough (1969) and a student answered questionnaire, which was completed before the (CPI) was administered.

On the questionnaire, students were asked to give information about when they were identified as gifted and about what types of intervention or programming they had been in for each school year preceding college. Based on the students' responses, the gifted students were grouped into three categories: a) those with "high GATE" experience, which meant that students had been involved in an all day
class for the gifted at any age level, b) those with "average GATE" experience, not including all day gifted classes, but rather students had been involved in enrichment programs, honorary courses, and field trip activities, and c) students with "low GATE" experience, which excluded all other types of special involvement or programming except for occasional field trips or participation in honors classes. Of the group of volunteers, 33 were "high GATE," 40 were "average GATE," and 51 were "low GATE."

In this study comparisons were made between the gifted and the non-gifted and between males and females with respect to self-acceptance, self-esteem and career aspirations and goals. These were compared according to what effects particular types of gifted programming may have had on the individual student's SAT scores were referred to for intellectual progress and a demographic data sheet about each student's family was utilized.

The results for males who had participated in GATE classes and those who had no intervention for giftedness was significant $F (1,56) = 5.81, p < .01$ for self-acceptance. High scores on self-acceptance were evidenced by all three categories of gifted females. For the females in the study the "GATE" experiences in general was the most significant variable $F (1,115) = 5.34, p < .03$. Those females who had the most intensive experiences in gifted programs had higher educational career goals. There proved to be a significant difference in the scores of gifted and non-gifted students in the Verbal and Mathematics SAT sections, $F (2,133) = 15.29, p < .01$. There were
no significant differences when only the gifted students were compared on the sections of the SAT.

In general, women proved to be better adjusted than men in this study. With the use of the (CPI), sex was significant in the comparisons made, and giftedness was not. It was found; however, that gifted women were better adjusted than non-gifted women while non-gifted men were better adjusted than gifted men.

Educational Experiences That Enhance Self-Concept for the Gifted

The self-concept has been recognized as being significantly associated with personal satisfaction and effective functioning in living, but few studies have pursued its actual effects. Also, most information which has been known and reported about the self-concept has been rather general in nature. It has been a rarity to learn the specific behaviors to which the self-concept has been related or in what way it has been a contributing factor to one's personality (Coopersmith, 1967). This has been especially true with respect to gifted populations.
Theoretical Explanations and Importance of Self-Concept

Bloom (1977) has analyzed self-concept with respect to academic achievement during the elementary and secondary school years, and its effect on the adult years. The self-concept of a student has been found to be related to what Bloom has referred to as "latent" curriculum. This type of curriculum has not been well documented, nor has it been highly visible. "Latent" curriculum has been uniquely taught and differently learned by each student. Through this type of curriculum, each student has learned who he is with respect to others and where his place is with respect to the happenings in the world.

Students have been judged continuously in comparison to others and rarely for independent accomplishments. If the judgments given to the student have been positive and reflect at least adequate performance, then the student will develop confidence, as he approaches future endeavors. If the judgments have often been negative, the student will expect the worst and will be reluctant to proceed in the future. Over a period of time, these positive or negative feelings toward school success become internalized and become viewed as part of the self.
According to Karamessinis (1980), gifted students have had higher self-esteem overall when compared with the non-gifted. Gifted students have also been more popular with peers, but in high school this peer popularity may have lessened, if it was not joined with other qualities. Nevertheless, Karamessinis has believed that the gifted, who have been identified as such during their childhood, have seemed to maintain professional success and personal contentment throughout their lifetime.

Whitmore (1980) has stated that very little research was done on self-concept and under-achievement until after 1966. Among the characteristics of under-achievers, she has included those which have reflected low self-esteem and an unhealthy self-concept, those which have shown a lack of self-confidence and feelings of inferiority, and those which have projected self-hate. In comparing self-concept and self-esteem Whitmore has believed that "more influential than self-concept is the overall self-esteem the individual possesses as a result of experiences shaping his self-perceptions" (Whitmore, 1980, p. 177). An individual with a healthy self-concept has had more successes than failures and can set personal goals that will be sufficiently realistic with respect to difficulties or limitations as well as strengths and abilities. Whitmore has felt that the most
difficult type of individual to help to deal with his feelings is one who has been withdrawn.

She has mentioned three types of motivation to alter self-perception and to build self-esteem. The types were supportive, intrinsic, and remedial. The instructor can also change the environment to make it more enhancing for the self-esteem of students. These changes can be made in the general classroom climate, in the teacher, in peer interaction, and in the curriculum, which is planned for use in the classroom. Whitmore has also suggested four kinds of intrinsic teaching strategies for altering self-concepts. These strategies have included: experiences for self-discovery and self-development, self-direction and independent functioning, a motivating curriculum, and suitable ways of teaching and learning. Whitmore has believed that the best strategy for enhancing the self-esteem of the under-achieving gifted has been for those students to make decisions and to share responsibilities in their learning, providing these students have been generally successful.

Self-concept has been defined as one's opinion about one's own ability, according to Sellin and Birch (1981). These authors have believed that the gifted and talented have needed helpful intervention from informed adults in order that they may have strong foundations for self-esteem. Sellin and Birch have emphasized that performance and self-concept have been positive in association and that although it has not been known which causes the other, it has been possible to assume that self-confidence has been a positive attribute when persisting
in a given endeavor. Yet, the self-concept has been susceptible to the environment and attention has been required to create a self-concept, which is refined to complete difficult tasks and to produce unique results.

At a state conference for gifted education in Iowa City, Iowa on October 9, 1983, Dr. James T. Webb referred to self-concept as the "most single related issue" in working with the gifted. A gifted person may even come to interpret his/her outstanding achievement as failure, if he/she has been too perfectionistic about his/her abilities. Such children may come to view themselves only in terms of the value of giftedness, rather than with respect to personal merit. Webb (1982) has believed that positive experiences with one very supportive adult can help a child to withstand the negative experiences from several other adults. This has seemed to be true not only in the classroom setting, but also, outside the classroom. "The positive self-regard acquired from one person allows him to mentally discount the stresses of destructive criticism, blame or even ridicule that he may encounter elsewhere" (Webb, 1982, p. 37).

Self-concepts have seemed to be perhaps even more significant for the gifted population of special groups such as the institutionalized or the handicapped. Dabrowski (1972) has regarded what have often been referred to as symptoms of "psychoneurosis" in the psychiatric community as signs of developmental progress in creativity toward higher levels of functioning. This has also seemed to include the enhancement or development of one's self-concept. Dabrowski has also viewed
"overexcitabilities," which have sometimes been believed to be traits of mental illness, as heightened sensitivities to various kinds of stimuli with respect to oneself and the environment.

The development of self-concept for gifted handicapped individuals has been emphasized by Maker (1977). The significance of developing a realistic self-concept for a person who is both gifted and handicapped has been even greater than for an individual who is one or the other because these two conditions have conflicted with each other.

Of all the handicapped persons interviews, for this study only one did not mention the development of a realistic self-concept as being a crucial aspect in his or her life. Most felt that both schools and families has been seriously lacking in their attention to and efforts in developing self-perceptions. The majority felt also that the development of a realistic self-concept is the most important problem which is unique to those who are both gifted and handicapped (Maker, 1977, p. 32).

Curricular Theory for Self-Concept Enhancement

Most of the curricula, developed thus far, for the purpose of enhancing the self-concept of the gifted, has been general in nature. Evidently, few actual curricula, with specific strategies and activities with respect to the self-concept, have existed to date.

Clendening and Davies (1980 and 1983) have developed various lesson plan objectives, curricula, and activity ideas to be used with students of different age groups for various purposes in education.
Apparently, these two authors have not chosen to specify "Self-Concept Enhancement" as a lesson plan category. Several of their plans; however, have seemed to be closely related to the area of self-concept.

Among their self-concept related ideas have been the following:

a) Invite such individuals as artists, writers, and composers to talk to the class concerning why and how man creates. Write an essay, make a film, or give a multimedia presentation about what is learned from the talks; b) Imagine that each student in a class is a member of a different ethnic group than what he actually is. Have each student write a poem, short story, or essay about how he would feel in this situation; c) Involve the use of graphics in the classroom for each student to attempt to "sell something" to his classmates such as a product he has invented, an idea, or a value. Evaluate this activity for effectiveness; d) Examine characters from contemporary American literature by involving students in self-revealing monologues. Emphasize the impact of the psychological environment on the individual characters.

Certain literary selections, which may be associated with self-concept enhancement have also been mentioned in Clendening and Davies. These have included short stories, poetry, and books, i.e., "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" by Katherine Anne Porter, The Pearl by John Steinbeck, and "Richard Cory" by Edwin Arlington Robinson.

The DPE (Deliberate Psychological Education) model has been used by Exum (1979) to develop curricular ideas for the psychological identity development of Black secondary age students. This type of
curriculum has involved peer tutoring, peer counseling, and lab activities. From two-thirds to three-fourths of the DPE program time has been spent in labs with teaching and counseling as intricate aspects of the lab. The DPE model has been coupled with the Black Identity Formation model (BIF) to meet the needs of Black gifted young people.

Subjects such as: The African world view, Slavery as a human condition, Black Reconstruction, the influence of various organizations and their influence on Black Americans, stereotypes and images of Blacks in television, film, music, and advertising, and new directions for Blacks have been considered as appropriate for analyzing self-concepts. Students have kept a journal of thoughts and reactions, as they have progressed through the DPE program related course. Interviews have also been conducted for individual students, following each segment of the course to analyze the impact of the experience.

Whitmore (1980) has described a special under-achieving gifted class (UAG) and curriculum. Individualization and personalization have been emphasized in this curriculum. Each student has competed only with himself, but teacher-student and peer group relations have been very important. "Most powerful, perhaps has been the use of informal social contacts between students or between and individual and a group, whereby caring classmates help each other reach goals of improved behavior" (Whitmore, 1980, p. 216). Parent involvement in the UAG program has taken the form of parent-teacher-child conferences and a parents' meeting with the teacher, both held on a monthly basis.
Whitmore has stressed that the first step in modifying classroom behavior is to remove those stimuli, which are aversive to the children because the negative stimuli can create fear, stress, and anxiety, and can reduce readiness for learning. Students who have participated in the UAG program have considered grades and other standard forms of evaluation and traditional forms of assigned mathematics assignments as being aversive stimuli.

What seems to have been one of the most rewarding things for the under-achieving gifted students has been free time for them to use in the pursuit of interests and for enjoyable independent activities. This type of reward has been associated with the Premack Principle (Premack, 1965), which has stated that the teacher should use activities, which happen spontaneously at a frequent rate as rewards for the purpose of increasing the amount of behaviors which occur less often than desired.

A balance between graded and value-free work has been recommended by Arent (1979) for use in a regular classroom, which includes gifted students. This type of arrangement has provided an opportunity for the gifted to experiment in creating new ideas and for the others in a regular classroom to be able to progress at their own rates without feeling threatened by the gifted students. Peer relationships and attitudes toward peer tutoring may have also become more positive with this type of balanced grading system.

According to Elkind (1973) in order to meet the special needs of a learning disabled gifted child, an educational program should be so
constructed to emphasize the child's strong modalities of learning while strengthening the child's weak modalities. Difficulties in various perceptual areas could be alleviated through the use of such materials as visual aids, records, films, and through drawing and spatial relation exercises.

Adaptations in a classroom environment can also effect how a learning disabled child will feel about himself, and therefore, how he will perform. If a child is distracted easily, a "sheltered" learning place in the classroom can make a difference in his learning.

The manner in which a classroom is managed also can make a difference for a learning disabled gifted child. For example, assignments and exams can be read to a child who has visual perception problems and projects could be substituted for written reports for students who have experienced severe writing difficulties. Directions could be given separately and more slowly to students with auditory problems to avoid confusion with rapid directions.

Meeker (1967) has developed teaching ideas for stimulating self-concepts and creativity in gifted students who are neurologically handicapped. One suggestion of Meeker's has been for the teacher to develop a chart for each student to assist in the identification of problem areas including those associated with self-concept. This type of chart has indicated if the students were experiencing unusual sensitivities to people, to problems, and to perceptual stimuli. Also self-concept related to various areas of creativity such as fluency and flexibility has been reflected on this chart.
Another suggestion given by Meeker has been for an instructor to develop a creativity unit for self-concept development in neurologically handicapped gifted students. This type of creativity unit has included discussion groups with student leaders for the discussion of children's opinions of difficult situations. The types of questions in these discussion groups have concerned sensitive situations in which the students may find themselves. Perceptions, alternatives, and solutions determined in the groups have been guided by the instructor.

Such materials as movies, pictures, and cartoons have been incorporated to illustrate social problems or situations. Appropriate musical selections have been used to remediate kinesthetic or tactile problems in self-concept development. Feelings and reactions to the music have been discussed. The self-concept has also been enhanced by having students act out sensitive and insensitive situations.

"Facial and body gestures can be observed, discussed, and the underlying implications for meanings in peer and adult relationships can be pointed out" (Meeker, 1967, p. 163).

Types of behavior such as jealousy have also been discussed as far as in what situations the behavior could occur and what the consequences could be. The use of motor skills has helped in the development of body concepts through clay constructions and other similar activities. Observers have also assisted in the feelings and sensitivities, which the students have.
An affective intervention educational program with younger students has been explored by Cantor, Klein, and Helfat (1979). They have used an adaptation of the Human Development Program by Bessell and Palomores (1969) as their learning model. This program has been popularly known as the "Magic Circle." The subjects for the present study were 111 white children from kindergarten through fourth grade in a traditional academically-oriented private school. Thirty-one of the students were considered to be gifted with IQ scores of 130 or over on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children or on the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale. Teachers were trained to lead students by the "Magic Circle" program procedures.

The instruments employed in this study were the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Scale, the Pears-Harris Scale, the Torrance Test of Creative Ability, and the Osgood Semantic Differential Technique. In addition, four questions were used to measure sociometric status in the classroom with respect to how well the children perceived that they and their peers were liked.

The students were asked the following types of information:

a. Which children would you most like to accompany?
b. Which children would most like to go with you?
c. Which children would you least like to accompany?
d. Which children would least like to go with you?

No statistical analysis was conducted for conclusions from this study. Primarily affective responses were analyzed to learn the feelings of the students.
CHAPTER III

RATIONALE FOR SELF-CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

It has been evident in the review of the literature that there is a relationship between self-concept and giftedness. Some authors, i.e., Webb, Meckstroth, and Tolan (1982) and Whitmore (1980) have stressed the particular significance of the self-concept for the gifted individual. On October 9, 1983 at the Iowa State Gifted Conference at the University of Iowa, Dr. James Webb referred to "self-concept" as the most single related issue in working with the gifted. Many under-achieving gifted students, in particular, have been found to have poor self-concepts. Whitmore (1980) has strongly supported the need for program and curriculum development to help to enhance the self-concepts of these students.

Although very few actual curricular plans have been developed and written to meet the self-concept needs of the gifted, it has been apparent in the research literature that such plans are urgently needed. Gifted programming and facilitation is still relatively new to the field of education. Therefore, educational experiences for enhancing the self-concept of the gifted should be flexible and balanced enough to be used in various educational settings and programs. Some researchers and educators have suggested possible strategies, activities, and experiences for improving the self-concepts of the gifted, but few have actually developed precise lesson plan curricula for this purpose.
The reasons for developing such curricula for this project are associated with the self-concept theories of Rogers (1951) and Maslow (1954). Both of these individuals have perceived the self-concept from a humanistic point of view. They have worked to help others to attain a state of self-actualization, as a gradual process toward personal growth and fulfillment. With respect to gifted individuals, the steps to self-actualization may be advanced or hindered because of giftedness, and the individual's and society's perceptions of giftedness. Thusly, the self-concepts of such individuals may be effected.

Theoretical Bases for Self-Concept Development

The curricular plans developed for this project to enhance the self-concepts of gifted individuals have been especially designed for secondary level gifted students. They could also be adaptable and usable with younger and older age groups. The secondary level was chosen as the focus level for this project because most existing curricular materials have been developed for elementary students.

These curricular plans have not been made suitable for the identification of gifted students. They have, however, been meant for the purpose of enhancing the self-concepts of gifted secondary students, who have been identified as such. Although it has been important to develop the self-concepts of all students, those who are gifted and those who are not, the plans in this project have been especially directed toward educating the gifted. Their self-concepts needs have often not been met in the regular curriculum of a school.
Both Rogers and Maslow (1951 and 1954) have agreed that what has been experienced in early childhood will probably be more character-forming than what will be experienced during the adult years. For that reason, psychological and social difficulties have tended to occur when adulthood experiences have differed greatly from what was expected by the developing personality.

Rogers has stressed the importance of helping students to be free. Part of this type of freedom occurs with self-initiated, responsible learning. In order for this type of learning to take place, it is necessary for students to be confronted with issues, which are relevant and meaningful to them. Rogers has believed that students should not be insulated from problems, but rather they should be encouraged to confront life and life's problems.

Self-initiated learning has placed responsibility on the instructor to use a student-centered approach to teaching. This has required for the instructor to have a profound trust in the human organism to permit each individual to choose his own way in learning. This has led to the development of one's own potential.

During self-initiated learning exercises, students have become more aware of themselves and of others. Shy persons have tended to become less shy. Those who have been aggressive have become more sensitive and moderate. Self-initiated learning has allowed students to rely on their own values rather than on the values of others. They also have learned to trust themselves and their feelings and to become less fearful of change.
Rogers has found that personal psychological maturity has greatly improved in students in self-centered classes. This maturity has exceeded that which has taken place in conventional classrooms. Also, a greater evidence of creativity and self-responsibility has been noted with self-initiated learning.

Maslow's philosophy has reflected a hierarchy of needs with the needs of economic want at the bottom and the need for self-fulfillment at the top. He also has developed a theory of motivation. This theory has emphasized inner motivation as being more powerful than external factors. Maslow has believed that the needs of an individual are all interrelated and therefore, a person is motivated as a whole, not only in part. He also has felt that for fully human potential to be reached, social, psychological, and spiritual needs must be met. And the highest level needs have given the greatest satisfaction. Included among the highest level needs have been those of creativity, self-esteem, human dignity, and self-fulfillment.
CHAPTER IV

CURRICULA FOR ENHANCING THE
SELF-CONCEPT OF GIFTED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

This chapter has included specific goals and objectives for self-concept enhancement in secondary gifted programs and for secondary students within these programs. In addition, activities, strategies, and evaluation procedures to be used for such purposes have been developed as part of this chapter.

School and Program Goals and Objectives

A. Specific programming and/or educational experiences will be provided for the purpose of enhancing the self-concepts of gifted secondary students.

1. Schools that do not emphasize and include self-concept related activities will do so.

2. Self-concept enhancement will be considered in the planning of school curriculum.

B. The school, the community, and the parents will be informed and aware of the self-concept needs of gifted students in order to accommodate these needs.

1. Public relations will expand in the communication regarding self-concept through the various types of school and public media.

2. Conferences will be held with parents and presentations will be given to school and community groups about self-concept.
C. Necessary adjustments and adaptations will be made to meet the self-concept needs of secondary students.

1. Class curricula will become more individualized to meet these needs.

2. Class atmospheres will become more "accepting" of individual differences.

3. Students will have more opportunities to relate with their peers regarding situations and feelings.

D. Gifted secondary students will be helped to feel positive and good about themselves in every possible way.

1. Teachers and Counselors will become more involved in assisting students to deal with their feelings.

2. These students will be helped to communicate better with peers, parents, and the public.

Pupil Goals and Objectives

Upon completion of the program, the student will have:

A. Gained a better understanding of his own self-concept, including what his values, morals, and feelings of alienation are; why and how these were developed, and what he can do to change them, if they need to be changed.

1. Become involved through materials, books, and activities to develop his self-concept.

2. Learned more about himself and his feelings through interacting with others in regard to self-concept.

B. Come to the realization of the importance of self-concept for a successful and fruitful life.

1. Developed an appreciation and recognition of the self-concept development of his peers and other members of society.
2. Developed a desire to continue his own self-concept enhancement and to assist others in theirs.

Lesson Plans/Activities/Programming and School Arrangements

Types of Activities

Individual Activities

A. Each student keeps a journal of thoughts, feelings, and changes he is making with respect to his own self-concept. Each student evaluates his own journal in terms of self-concept improvements. The book entitled Notes to Myself by Hugh Prather serves as an example of a journal. Questions such as the following serve as guidelines for journal selections and responses. (These questions have been developed from those that appeared in 100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom: A Handbook for Teachers and Parents, Sec. 78 by Canfield and Wells.)

- What is the main thing you want to do with your life?
- What would you like most to occur?
- Which of your skills would you like to improve?
- If you had more time and/or money, how would you use them?
- What do you hope to gain from living?
- What do you still want to accomplish, but have not yet?
- What has been upsetting to you recently?
- What bothers you the most in your life?
- What disagreements have you experienced recently?
- With whom do you need to be on better terms?
- How do you perceive the attitudes of your peers?
- What would you like to persuade others to accomplish?
- What changes do you need to instigate?
- What is too time consuming?
- How could you be more efficient and more effective?
- What is too complex or too difficult?
- What obstacles do you need to overcome in your life?
How could you use your time more wisely?  
What makes you feel the most exhausted?  
What needs to be reorganized?

B. Each student develops a personal philosophy of life. This may be an ongoing exercise which the student works on for an extended period of time. This development may begin with the establishment of student self-directed goals, developed by the student with the aid of an instructor and/or counselor. A written assignment to aid the student in the development of a personal philosophy would be for the student to interpret a famous quotation (such as those in Bartlett's Familiar Quotations by John Bartlett) and to apply the ideas in the quotation of his own life.

Here are other suggested essay topics, related to the development of a personal philosophy of life (these are related to those topics listed in 1000 Theme Topics for Student Writers by Charles Wheeler, p. 13).

My quest for identity.  
How do I compare with others?  
How important am I to the world?  
My inner feelings and how I deal with them.  
What directions am I taking in my life?  
I can only be myself.  
How strong are my values and convictions?  
Do I differ from the crowd?  
My philosophy of life and how I arrived at it.  
What is my outlook on life?  
What is the purpose for my life?  
What roadblocks are standing in my way?  
How practical dare I be?  
My life then and now.  
What is the most precious to me in my life?  
How I shape my own life.  
What my life means to me.  
Personal goals for my life.
C. Each student becomes involved in a mentor program whereby he can have contact with a "supportive" adult who has interests similar to the student's. The supportive adult can serve both as a resource person and as a friend and/or companion.

D. Informal surveys are conducted or administered by a teacher and/or counselor to students on an individual basis to learn what the perceptions of individual students are with respect to their own self-concept related needs.

E. Students are involved in individual projects such as making a collage to reflect their own self-concepts, or creating a film, videotape, or photo essay about themselves or about the self-concepts of others. Once such projects are completed and evaluated, they become the focus of presentations to various local organization meetings and functions. These types of project related presentations can aid in the promotion of better self-concepts and better mental health.

F. Each student serves as a mentor for another individual who needs self-concept enhancement. For example, a student may be in the role of a "big brother" or "big sister" or may serve as a mentor for someone in a children's home or in a nursing home type of setting.

Group Activities

Role-playing Activities

A. Students imagine they are members of an ethnic group different
than their own. They role play various types of situations, feelings and reactions in relation to ethnic differences. In addition, students read and discuss various books related to the topic of ethnic differences such as *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin.

B. Students discuss and role play various difficult situations. Sensitive and unsensitive roles are included. The home, school, and peer environments are evidenced in this role-playing.

C. In relation to literature dealing with self-concept, students become involved in self-revealing monologues pertaining to individual characters in the literary works. The monologues are utilized to illustrate how each character is effected by his own psychological and/or physical environment. Suggested works of literature to be used in this type of activity are: *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers, "Richard Cory" by Edwin Arlington Robinson, *Run Softly, Go Fast* by Barbara Wersba, "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" by Katherine Ann Porter, "A Hunger Artist" by Franz Kalka, "The Glass Menagerie" by Tennessee Williams, *I'm Dancing as Fast as I Can* by Barbara Gordon, and "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by James Thurber.

**Other Group Activities**

A. Students become peer counselors and peer tutors for each other. This involves students helping each other with academic
assignments, to sort out negative feelings, and with behavior difficulties. How to deal with such traits as "jealousy" and "rudeness" are also considered.

B. Individuals such as artists, writers, composers or other famous and successful people visit class to inform students about how the self-concepts of famous and successful individuals are effected by creativeness and inventiveness.

C. Students discuss and write essays on the topic of how people will deal with self-concept development as the computer age becomes more advanced.

D. Students view and discuss television programs, videotapes, and educational films related to the topic of self-concept and become involved in additional activities related to these types of self-concept media. Some such films, tapes, and programs are: movies for television, depicting individuals who are dealing with self-concept adjustment after personal tragedies have occurred including "Tell Me You Still Love Me Juni Moon," a story of Marjorie Kellogg and "Why Me," a teleplay written by Dalene Young and directed by Fielder Cook. This teleplay has been based on the true life of Lola Mae Harmon. A related activity to coincide with the viewing and discussion of these television movies is for a guest speaker, who has been through an intense personal tragedy to relate his experiences to the class.
In addition to television movies, educational films concerning various topics related to self-concept have been produced. The following educational films are from CRM/McGraw-Hill Films of Del Mar, California:

"But Jack Was a Good Driver" -- The topic of this film is suicide. Two high school students are depicted in the film. They question whether or not their friend's death in an automobile accident truly was an "accident." Before or after the viewing of this film, students may visit and learn more about a local suicide, crisis line center or someone who works at this type of prevention facility may visit the class and inform students regarding the function of the facility.

"Dieting: The Danger Point" -- This film concerns anorexia nervosa. It focuses upon the physical and psychological dangers of anorexia nervosa. The film illustrates the effects the disorder has on the individual and on the family. Students may want to help to form a support group for individuals and families effected personally by such disorders as anorexia nervosa and bulimia.

"It's Not Fair" -- The topic of this film is frustration/aggression. A boyfriend-girlfriend relationship is depicted. Both parties have experienced a day full of disappointments and anger and they take their frustrations out on each other.

"Adolescence: A Case Study" -- This film concerns the time of adolescence. The psycho-social development of a seventeen year old girl is explored. She changes from a self-absorbed adolescent to an individual who uses more sophisticated thought processes. In relation to this film, a psychologist or psychiatrist may speak to the class about psycho-social development during adolescence.

Additional topics such as drug and alcohol use and teenage pregnancy may be addressed in class discussions. Reading materials
that may enhance adolescent self-concept and psychological development are the types as follows:

How to be Your Own Best Friend by Mildred Newman, Bernard Berkowitz, and Jean Owen.

I Ain't Much, Baby - But I'm All I've Got by Jess Lair.

Feeling Good (The New Mood Therapy) by David D. Burns.

Pulling Your Own Strings by Dr. Wayne W. Dyer.

Program and School Arrangements

The following are recommended implementations for educational environments to promote self-concept enhancement for gifted students:

A. Parent/instructor/counselor conferences should be held on a regular basis; for instance, approximately once a month. This should be an opportunity for all parties to learn more regarding how self-concepts are being enhanced in a gifted program. It should also be considered as an opportunity to express concerns, ask questions, and to give suggestions.

B. Necessary arrangements should be made in order that gifted students can be able to work together in groups at least 2-3 times per week as well as on individual activities and projects. These types of arrangements can be made in actual gifted classes or through pull-out arrangements, whereby students are pulled from regular classes to participate in gifted programming.
C. The enhancement of self-concept should be prioritized in a school's overall policies and goals.

D. Gifted program arrangements, policies, and activities should be expressed and explained at faculty and school board meetings.

E. Local workshops and seminars should be conducted to promote self-concept awareness and teachers, administrators, parents, and school board members should be encouraged to attend these as well as other regional activities, which support concern for self-concept development.

Types of Arrangements

The following are suggested arrangements for school situations and environments to make them more conducive to self-concept enhancement:

A. Sheltered, isolated learning and studying areas should be made available in the classroom setting to meet special needs of students.

B. There should be a balance between graded and value free work in courses.

C. Students may be rewarded through the availability of free time for them to pursue their interests and to enjoy independent activities.
How Would Self-Concept Related Activities be Evaluated?

A. The Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scales may be used as a pre and post measure for a unit or time period used for self-concept development.

B. Informal surveys of students own perceptions of their needs will serve as an indicator of what the needs were. Therefore, whether these needs were met or not can be assessed.

C. Personal interviews should be conducted between each student and his instructor or counselor prior to and following self-concept enhancement activities to see how students feel about themselves.

D. Students may help to evaluate their own self-concept progress by giving a presentation to the class concerning their self development.

E. Peers may evaluate how each student seems to have been effected by participating in self-concept enhancing activities.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Answers to two main questions were pursued through this research project. The first question was: Is there a relationship between self-concept and giftedness and if so, what type of relationship does exist between the two? To answer this question, a review of research literature was conducted.

The parts of the project which pertained to this question were organized according to self-concept and giftedness related categories. The categories have included the relationship of self-concept to academic skills, creativity, aesthetic giftedness, and gifted program placement.

With respect to academic skills, the research literature indicated that often gifted individuals did show evidence of high self-concepts. Dean (1977) and Combs (1964) found that achievers scored higher than non-achievers on measures related to self-concept. Stress was also considered as an influencing factor on the self-concept of academically gifted individuals. Yadusky-Holahan and Holahan (1983) found that academic stress had a strong negative effect. Individuals who scored high on creativity measures were found to have high self-esteem, as evidenced by researchers such as MacKinnon (1965). In 1972, Sisk learned that low creatives could become more creative through conscious efforts on the part of instructors. Involvement and interaction with aesthetically related materials and activities
proved to be beneficial in the improvement of self-concept in gifted individuals. As was evidenced in research studies conducted by Morishima (1974) and Torrance, E. P. and Torrance, P. (1972), particularly disadvantaged and mentally retarded individuals have emerged as those who were aesthetically gifted. Maddux, Scheiber, and Bass (1982) researched the self-concept scores of gifted program placement. Results indicated that individuals placed in a gifted program had similar self-concept scores to those not placed in a program and to those not identified as gifted. On the contrary, Coleman and Fults (1982) concluded that regular classroom students had higher self-concepts than those placed in gifted program settings.

The second question to be answered in this research project was: Can educational experiences be developed and provided that will enhance the self-concepts of gifted high school students? To answer this question, curricula was developed based upon the review of literature concerning self-concept needs and similar already existing curricula. The actual curricula for the enhancement of self-concept portion of this project included the following: School/program and pupil goals and objectives for this purpose and self-concept related experiences and activities. Among these were journal writing suggestions, role playing strategies, film and literary recommendations, and gifted program, school, and classroom arrangement alternatives.
As a result of this research project, the following recommendations were made to further curricula development in the area of self-concept and giftedness:

A. "Accepting" classroom environments should be created.
B. More opportunities should be made available to gifted students for them to share feelings and concerns with peers in small groups.
C. Educators should encourage and develop more individualized learning experiences and activities such as independent studies and independent projects to meet individual student needs.
D. Educators need to be concerned with such personal characteristics as those connected with the "humanistic" movement.
E. Special programming needs to be developed and implemented to meet the self-concept needs of the gifted in order that they may develop feelings of self-worth and social competence.
F. Counselors should become more involved with how gifted students feel about themselves.
G. Educators should avoid the use of pressure or stress techniques, particularly with under-achieving gifted students. These types of techniques can effect a student's self-concept.
H. Educators need to remain conscientious regarding how their teaching styles, methods, and strategies can effect self-concept development.
In addition, these recommendations were determined to further research on self-concept and giftedness:

A. More research is necessary to conclude whether segregated or integrated gifted programs are strong factors in influencing the self-concept.

B. More research is necessary to analyze the transitive nature of the influence of gifted program placement on the individual's self-concept.

C. The differences between self-concept factors in girls and boys need to be more fully researched.

D. More research needs to be conducted with respect to the benefits of involvement in self-concept/creativity workshops and similar experiences as opposed to taking self-concept/creativity tests.
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