

**The Effects of a Scrapbooking Project
on Student Self-Concept in an Inclusive Setting**

by

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Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract.....	1
Chapter One: Introduction.....	2
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature.....	8
What is Self-Concept? How do Experts and Researchers Measure it.....	8
Alternative Assessments and Self-Concept.....	10
Academic Achievement and Self-Concept.....	13
Summary.....	14
Chapter Three: Methods.....	16
Subjects.....	16
Instruments.....	16
Procedures.....	17
Chapter Four: Results.....	20
Descriptive Statistics.....	20
Inferential Statistics.....	21
Chapter Five: Conclusions.....	23
Limitations.....	23
Discussion.....	24
Future Research.....	26
References.....	29
Appendices	
A. Scrapbook Project Scoring Rubric.....	32
B. Outline for Scrapbook Project.....	33
Vita.....	36

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. SSCS Results and Project Timeline.....	34
2. Scrapbook Project Scores	35

Abstract

Self-concept is a construct that builds the foundation of an individual. With all of the time that children spend in school, it is critical that opportunities are available for those children to develop a strong and positive self-concept. This research attempted to seek out what effects a scrapbooking project on self-concept had on students' actual self-concept in an inclusive setting? In order to answer this question, an individually designed scrapbooking project on self-concept was implemented to a sample of nine fifth grade students, two of which had a disability. The researcher implemented this research by using a pre-experimental, one-group pretest-posttest research design. The subjects were selected by means of convenience sampling from an already intact group. The Student Self-Concept Scale (SSCS) was the instrument used to measure student self-concept. Significant correlations were found between the first and second, and second and third, administrations of the SSCS. The average gain of standard scores on the SSCS by the end of the study was 10.1. Both students with a disability experienced gains in self-concept, and one of those students had the largest gain of 79. In conclusion, this study suggests that individually tailored instruction and assessment materials can in fact have a positive impact of students' self-concept.

Introduction

The Education for all Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) and then the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) mandated that all children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (Kochlar, West, & Taymans, 2003). This meant that all children with disabilities could be placed in a wide variety of school settings, the least restrictive being that of an inclusive setting, where the students with disabilities are educated along side of their peers without disabilities.

Who is to decide what the appropriate placement of a child may be? If it is decided that the inclusive setting is appropriate, how will that setting affect the students, with and without disabilities, within that classroom? Think of the amount of time children spend in school. In my experiences, I approximate that children are in schools one hundred eighty-two days a year, for about six and a half hours a day. That equates to quite a sum of interaction time between children and many peers, teachers, and other school staff members. With this length of exposure, one must realize the tremendous impact that school has on a student's self-concept; the mental image or perception that one has of oneself (Pickett, 2000).

Self-concept is a construct that builds the foundation of an individual (Franken, 1994). Franken (1994) goes as far as to say that self-concept might be the basis for all motivated behavior. If students have positive self-concept, will they be more likely to take chances? To speculate on Franken's thought, what if self-concept does motivate behavior? For example, if a student has positive self-concept and

believes that he or she can succeed, may he or she be more likely to take chances?

Students might possibly even become better problem solvers in life. They might take chances, and possibly be confident enough to sit back, think about problems when they arise, and come up with the most-effective steps to solve the problem.

Self-concept is critical in the mental health development of children.

Difficulties in self-concept are components of the diagnostic associated features for disorders such as Major Depressive Disorder, Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Learning Disorders, and Dysthymic Disorders (DSM-IV: American Psychiatric Association, 1994). There is no doubt that self-concept is an extremely important construct that needs proper attention.

As if impacting self-concept isn't enough, add in the factor of a multi-level classroom. In inclusive classrooms, all learning levels vary across the students. Therefore, instruction, the curriculum, and assessments must to be individualized to meet the learning levels and needs of all the individual students within the classroom. When a teacher uses a differentiated approach to teach and assess all of the learning levels, who knows whether or not the chosen curriculum and assessment materials are effective.

Effective, meaningful assessment is a critical component to all students' success, including those students with disabilities. It is also important that students be assessed using an appropriate manner that matches their individual needs (Peterson and Hittie, 2003). In the researcher's experiences, the typical assessment materials used in schools today include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and standardized

tests. These types of assessments focus only on information that a select number of individuals find important and/or relevant (Bigelow, B., Harvey, B., Karp, S., & Miller, L., 2001). The result is a standardized curriculum with high-stakes consequences. The researcher believes that teachers need to give students opportunities to construct their own knowledge by offering students meaningful ways to represent their learning.

One type of alternative assessment that allows students to represent their learning in a manner that is meaningful is scrapbooking; a hobby relating to pasting newspaper clippings, magazine articles, photos (usually personal), and/or other memorabilia into custom-decorated albums, or scrapbooks (Learn to Scrapbook, 1999). Scrapbooking serves as one more assessment approach for students to choose from and utilize. The researcher believes scrapbooking to be a more visual and tactile version of portfolio building. Both portfolio building and scrapbook creating are forms of reflective assessment that require students to think deeply about what they have learned, and how they can demonstrate that knowledge. Through reflective assessments like portfolios, learning can become more meaningful.

Many theorists agree that students should be allowed to represent their learning in a way that is meaningful to them. Howard Gardner is a theorist that named nine multiple intelligences that a student can have, and he says that each and every student has individual strengths and weaknesses in the various intelligence areas (Peterson & Hittie, 2003). In the researcher's experiences, school trends tend to emphasize, or utilize, the logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences in

assessments more than the other seven intelligence areas. This can cause students whose strengths lie in other intelligence areas, such as intrapersonal or bodily-kinesthetic, to suffer academically because they are not allowed a form of assessment that is meaningful to them.

Theorist and Psychologist Jean Piaget believes that students should be able to construct their own meaning (Peterson & Hittie, 2003). Piaget states that students must move through four stages of cognitive development at a pace that is appropriate for them (Peterson & Hittie, 2003). Throughout these four stages, a student's thinking is different. Therefore, students need multiple forms of assessment options to assure that they have a meaningful option attainable at each of the four stages.

Lev Vygotsky also believes in meaningful modes of assessment for students (Peterson & Hittie, 2003). He termed the concept of a student's zone of proximal development. This is the learning level directly above a student's present level of development, where some assistance is needed in order to master a certain concept (Peterson & Hittie, 2003). By combining alternative forms of assessment along with a student's zone of proximal development, learning becomes a meaningful adventure where students construct their own knowledge.

What is the link then between meaningful assessment and positive self-concept? The answer may lie in the definition of self-concept itself. Self-concept is developed through the process of acting, and reflecting on the action, comparing what we thought we could do, to what we did and what others can do (Franken, 1994). Basically, individuals look inward, as well as outward, when it comes to self-concept.

Adding to that, some researchers' believe that self-concept is not an innate construct, but rather a learned one (Franken, 1994). This sheds light on the fact that it may be possible to change the self-concept of an individual. The researcher considers whether alternative assessments such as scrapbooking can offer opportunities for students to develop a meaningful product that they feel successful completing.

The researcher expects to find a significant positive relationship between a scrapbooking project on self-concept, evaluated by a predetermined rubric, and actual self-concept in students with and without disabilities.

There are some delimitations to this study. First, this study will not attempt to change current school curriculum or policy. Secondly, this study will simply look at the scope of the variables affecting student self-concept and the effectiveness of the current curriculum written. In order to effectively explain all variables and concepts, some clear definitions are needed. For the purposes of this study, a score on a rubric for the scrapbooking project will define academic achievement. The researcher defines scrapbooking as creating visual images using various craft supplies to display knowledge or a concept. Self-concept is a difficult construct to define. For purposes of this study, the researcher defines self-concept as a mental image or perception that one has of oneself (Pickett, 2000).

The researcher has made a few assumptions in regards to this study. First, the researcher assumes that the Student Self-Concept Scale (SSCS) (Grisham, Elliot, & Evans-Fernandez, 1993), when given correctly, will measure actual student self-concept. The researcher also assumes that the students are capable of completing the

scrapbooking project on self-concept. Third, the researcher assumes that participation in the self-concept project will increase students' actual self-concept. Finally, the researcher assumes that she can effectively teach the scrapbooking project.

This study can contribute significant implications when completed. With self-concept being such an important piece to the development of a strong individual, it is vitally important that all teachers know how to build self-concept in their students. They have to make the students feel challenged, but comfortable in class and with themselves. If students' self-concept becomes more positive, they will be empowered and self-determined and will take control of their learning because they believe in themselves. They will also have the confidence to work through problems that they may encounter in life.

Review of the Literature

Self-concept is a construct that has been studied frequently. There is no question why this is the case because research has shown self-concept to be a strong contributor to success in life (Skaalvik & Hagtvet, 1990). This is especially true in regards to students with disabilities (Heymen, 2001), and also elementary students (Helmke & van Aken, 1995). Unfortunately, there has been little research conducted focusing specifically on curriculum assessment materials and their effects on student self-concept. It is for these reasons that the researcher decided to study what impact a scrapbooking project on self-concept has on actual self-concept in children with and without disabilities in an inclusive setting. The focus of this review of the literature is to synthesize the little known research regarding meaningful curriculum assessment as it correlates with self-concept. This review of the literature will also discuss the definition of self-concept and the means to measure it, synthesize the present research regarding self-concept and academic achievement (Hoppe, 1995), and elaborate on how alternative forms of assessment (as an alternative to drill and practice assessments) impact self-concept (Neisworth & Bagnato, 2004).

What is Self-Concept? How do Experts and Researchers Measure it?

Self-concept is a construct that is frequently studied, and one that is not easily defined. No universal definition for self-concept exists, therefore many different definitions can be found. One definition defines self-concept as the ideas, attitudes, and perceptions people have about themselves (Pickett, 2000). Although self-esteem is a factor that contributes to self-concept, the terms do not share the same definition.

Self-esteem is a person's feeling of self-worth, or the way they feel about themselves. The value that an individual places on oneself (self-esteem), contributes to the overall perception of how that individual sees oneself (self-concept).

Self-concept is a vital part of a child's social, academic, and personal success. Children, especially those with disabilities, are at risk for negative outcomes in many different domains including social, academic, and affective, which can cause them to have a hard time in educational settings (Gresham, 1995). They may have developed poor or ineffective social skills, difficulties with behaviors, and negative peer interactions, which can lead to problems with self-concept (Dr. Fallon, 2004).

Looking at social comparisons theory, students will judge their abilities by their perceptions of their peers. They may even do damage to their self-concept if they see their abilities as inferior to that of the group they are comparing themselves to (Blanton, Buunk, Gibbons, & Kuyper, 1999). This is one of the reasons why self-concept enhancement is such a major focus in diverse settings and why many schools have taken this on as a central goal (Marsh, 2003). Educators and administrators are trying to find effective ways for students to build positive self-concept in order to minimize the difficulties that they may have.

Labeling theory plays an important role in a student's self-concept, and development of self-concept. Take for example students with disabilities, they are often labeled as deviant without any hesitation for verification (Persaud, 2000). Fitch (2002) talked about how having a disability has almost "functioned for all such groups as a sign of and for justification for inferiority" (pg. 475). By being caught

and labeled deviant, students can suffer the consequences of lower self-image and poor social participation (Kelly, 1977). It is because of this that students with disabilities must be allowed opportunities for positive self-concept development.

Alternative Assessments and Self-Concept

When studying self-concept, the researcher must take into account many influential external factors. A student's gender, culture, or family background may even have a significant impact on what contributes to that student's positive self-concept (Cokley, 2002). Cokley used a cross-sectional design to study the differences between African Americans and European Americans in regards to academic achievement and self-concept. The researcher found gender and cultural differences to be influential in self-concept and academic achievement. Another researcher used a similar design to study the relationship between gender and sex stereotypes, and how they influence success expectations and academic self-concept (Skaalvik & Hagtvet, 1990). This researcher found gender and sex stereotypes to be uncorrelated with expectations and self-concept. Skaalvik and Hagtvet (1990) and also Cokley (2002) believe gender, culture, and family backgrounds to be influential in an individual's perception on what is a meaningful way for that individual to express their knowledge.

One way for students to express their knowledge in a meaningful way is through alternative assessments such as portfolio building and the new related idea of scrapbooking. Alternative assessments like portfolio building and scrapbooking serve as a more authentic assessment. Reid (2000) used an experimental design to research

strength-based approaches such as authentic assessment and found that students, especially those students with learning disabilities and emotional and behavior disorders, benefited from strength-based assessments.

Howard Gardner teaches us that all students learn differently (Peterson & Hittie, 2003). Our job as teachers is to find any way we can to help each and every student find successful learning strategies, and to utilize meaningful forms of assessment. Boerum (2000) discusses how performance-based assessments and alternative assessments are vital because they allow students to actively engage in constructing and synthesizing what they value, and want to communicate. Both performance and strength-based assessments are a more dynamic alternative to the concerning high-stakes testing used in schools today (Washburn-Moses, 2003). They can bolster motivation and help students express their feelings and ideas effectively.

Using portfolios as an alternative form of assessment has shown great promise, especially for students with disabilities (Boerum, 2000). Boerum (2000) believes that students benefit from portfolios because they are performance-based and tailored to each individual, which is especially convenient for students with disabilities such as a learning disability. Portfolios are a relatively new type of assessment used by teachers all over. Students can develop all different varieties of portfolios. Depending on the type on the type of portfolio, a student can choose to house their best work, ongoing pieces, and/or favorite artifacts. In developing portfolios, a student can use his or her creativity, wherever it may lie, to express oneself.

Portfolios go against the current trend of identifying deficits in children, especially those children who have disabilities, by focusing on a more strengths-based approach (Reid, 2000). Alternative and authentic assessments, as well as strength-based assessments, allow students to use methods that they prefer, which help them express themselves more effectively (Neisworth & Bagnato, 2004). Neisworth and Bagnato (2004) also say that typical assessments do not correctly measure a student's ability and that "misrepresenting children through mismeasuring them denies children their rights to beneficial expectations and opportunities" (p.198). Basically, we are not giving students the opportunity to succeed if we do not offer them the means to show us what they know.

There are other problems with the most widely used assessment methods. For example, current assessment techniques for students with disabilities focus on their deficits or weaknesses (Reid, 2000). That focus for students with certain disabilities, particularly students with learning disabilities and emotional and behavior disorders, needs to be turned towards more strength-based assessments (Reid, 2000). Good teachers want students to be able to share their strengths, and to utilize those strengths whenever possible.

Another type of assessment that allows children to use their creativity is the process of scrapbooking. Scrapbooking is a popular and new creative hobby that can surely find a place within the parameters of a classroom. Scrapbooks allow students to visually display their thoughts and feelings in a meaningful manner. They are similar to portfolios in that they may serve as a comprehensive representation of a

student's work. It can be assumed that if portfolios are a successful way for students to express themselves, then the similar idea of scrapbooking might also be a promising alternative.

Academic Achievement and Self-Concept

Much research has been done in the area of self-concept and academic success. Many studies have found a relationship between academic success and positive self-concept. Helmke and van Aken (1995) said that successes and failures in academic achievement areas influence self-concept, especially through the assessment of important people, such as teachers and parents. This study also found that the same correlation between positive self-concept and academic success is especially strong in elementary school (K-grade 6). One would assume from these findings that a significant person, such as an elementary teacher, should offer all students opportunities to be successful in order to build positive self-concept.

Students with disabilities are one population in particular that is also included in the research on self-concept and academic achievement. Heymen (1990) found, on average, that students with learning disabilities (ages 9-11) had a more negative self-concept than their peers without disabilities. This was said to be influenced by the student's perceptions of their disability, and the characteristics of school and classroom environment in which the students function (Heymen, 1990). One might speculate, using social comparison theory, that the decreased self-concept in the students with disabilities was caused by beliefs that their abilities were inferior to the abilities of their peers (Coleman, 1984). One exception to Heymen's findings is that

of students who are gifted and talented. Heymen (1990) also found that a student's level of academic achievement seemed to mirror that student's level of academic self-concept. In regards to social comparison theory, maybe those students who were gifted and talented saw themselves as superior to their average intelligence peers.

There are limitations to the studies reviewed. Looking back at the research findings, one must wonder which came first, the academic success or the positive self-concept. Many studies found a correlation between self-concept and academic achievement (Helmke & van Aken, 1995; Hoppe, 1995; and Skaalvik & Hagtvet, 1990). Not one of the studies could point out a direction of that correlation. Therefore, we are left wondering whether positive self-concept influences academic achievement, or if instead academic achievement is the determinant of a student's self-concept.

One major limitation of the studies reviewed is the fact that even though the studies have some common themes, they also have some contradictions. One study found that the correlation between academic achievement and positive self-concept in elementary students no longer exists when those students enter high school and go on to higher education (Helmke & van Aken, 1995).

Summary

There is no doubt that self-concept is an important construct. We know that it contributes to all areas of a child's life, including academic and social successes (Skaalvik & Hagtvet, 1990). We also know that children with disabilities are at higher risks for negative outcomes in the many domains of self-concept (Gresham,

1995). Researchers need to look deeper into the issue of self-concept, the factors that contribute to it, and methodologies to develop it in children. With the possibility that self-concept is a learned construct susceptible to being improved and/or compromised as a person moves through life's experiences (Franken, 1994), teachers and other persons who have continuous contact with children need to take action. Teachers also need to know that by utilizing proper methods, such as alternative assessments, student self-concept can be enhanced (Reid, 2000). It is imperative that steps are taken to learn more about self-concept, and ways to maximize the benefits that positive self-concept can reap. Children need to feel like they can achieve. Teachers, parents, and other adult role models can achieve this by offering children opportunities to recognize, and build self-concept.

Methods

Subjects

The subject sample for this study was a group of fifth grade students (n=9) with a mean age of 10.7 years. The sample was taken from the same fifth grade class in a predominately middle class suburban elementary school. Two of the nine of subjects in the sample had a classified disability; one subject was classified with Autism, while the other subject was classified with Other Health Impairment-Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder. The seven remaining subjects had no classified disability.

Instruments

The Student Self-Concept Scale (SSCS). The testing instrument administered to measure self-concept was the Student SSCS, created by Frank M. Gresham, Stephen N. Elliot, and Sally E. Evans-Fernandez (1993). The SSCS consists of 72 items that measure the self-image, academic, and social aspects of an individual. These three aspects are scored across confidence, importance, and outcome confidence responses. The test was norm-referenced for cultural norms of the entire United States. A representative norming sample consisted of 2,151 elementary students and 1,435 secondary students from 19 states. The sample was also stratified through gender, ethnicity, region, and community size with special emphasis on students with disabilities.

The SSCS has been found to be a reliable and valid measure of self-concept for students in the third through twelfth grades. In regards to validity, the SSCS

offers evidence of criterion-related validity based on correlations with other social, behavioral, and self-concept scales. The scale also proves to have construct validity based on subscale intercorrelations, developmental and gender differences, and comparisons of groups known to differ on the trait. The test proves to be reliable in that all but one or two subscales showed that the internal consistency and test-retest reliability estimates were all within the acceptable ranges. The standard error of measurements ranged from a low 5 to 16 depending on the confidence levels.

Scrapbook Rubric. In order to measure the students' academic achievement on the scrapbooks, the researcher developed a rubric (see Appendix A). The rubric was evaluated by an expert panel of three individuals, and was found to have both face and content validity. The panel determined that the rubric appeared to include criteria that match those used to measure self-concept. The panel also found that the instrument (rubric) was representative of the content area (self-concept criteria).

Outline for Scrapbook Implementation. The self-concept scrapbook outline also served as an instrument. This outline (see Appendix B) was given to the same panel of three experts and was determined to have content validity in that the product (outline) was a representative sample of the content being measured (self-concept).

Procedures

The researcher implemented this study by selecting the subjects from a suburban public elementary school in upstate New York. They were selected so that both subjects with disabilities and subjects without disabilities were represented as evenly as possible. Informed consent letters were given to subjects, and because all

subjects were minors, their parents or guardians also received informed consent letters. The subjects' informed consent letters were given directly to them. The parent or guardian informed consent letters were sent home with each subject to be signed and sent back.

The Scrapbooking Project Intervention. The scrapbooking project consisted of twelve 25-minute interventions. The interventions were spread out across four weeks, equating to three interventions a week. The interventions occurred at the same time every school day, from 11:35 am until 12:00 pm. Each week of the project was focused on a different area of self-concept. The researcher led a 5 to 10-minute introductory discussion at the beginning of each week to introduce the new topic. The subjects then spent the remaining intervention time each week working on their own scrapbooks. At the beginning of each intervention, subjects would place a sticker on their own calendars to record which interventions they completed. For subjects who missed any interventions, a period of one-week for make-ups was included for subjects to complete missed interventions during the four-week project. Therefore, the entire scrapbooking intervention project took five weeks to implement. It is important to note that no fees, grades, or extra credit were given for participation in this project, and the subjects were allowed to keep the scrapbooks that they completed about themselves during the research.

Measuring Self-Concept. The researcher implemented this research by using a pre-experimental, one-group pretest-posttest research design. The SSCS (Gresham, Elliott, & Evans-Fernandez, 1993) was administered to all subjects at three different

times during the research. Before the first administration of the SSCS (1993), each subject was assigned a coding number. Students with disabilities received odd numbers, while students without disabilities received even numbers. The SSCS (1993) was first administered before the implementation of any interventions for baseline data. The next administration occurred after two weeks and six interventions were completed. The final administration of the SSCS (1993) was at the end of the five-week scrapbooking project for comparison with previous data. The researcher planned both quantitative and qualitative analyses in interpreting the data.

Results

The research was guided by one specific question: To what extent, if any, does a scrapbooking project on self-concept impact a student's actual self-concept? Another facet of the research was to see if there were any significant differences in self-concept, as a result of the scrapbooking project, between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

The researcher used a quasi-experimental design using already intact groups. The research design was descriptive in nature and utilized the SSCS (Gresham, Elliot, & Evans-Fernandez, 1993) through a pretest/posttest technique. Data was collected and analyzed using the Statistical Packet for Social Sciences (SPSS, v.12.0). The raw data collected included the student self-concept surveys and the students' scrapbooks on self-concept. The scrapbooks were graded using the pre-designed rubric (Appendix A).

The researcher acknowledges that potential bias and alternative viewpoints may have influenced the results of this study. The process of non-probability sampling and also convenience sample size were used, therefore limitations on generalization to general population should be taken into account.

Descriptive Statistics

Pearson Product Moment Correlations were computed, using the academic, self-image, and social subtest scores of the three test administrations, by means of SPSS (v.12.0). Significant, positive correlations were found between the second and third administration of the academic subtest ($r=.772, p=.05$). The self-image subtests

also yielded significant, positive correlations between the first and second administrations ($r=.863$, $p=.01$), and the second and third administrations ($r=.747$, $p=.05$). Two additional significant, positive correlations were found on the social subtests between the first and second administrations ($r=.828$, $p=.01$), and the second and third administrations ($r=.904$, $p=.01$). No significant correlations were found between the first and third administration on any of the subtests.

It was difficult to identify a valid central tendency because the subjects were at varied levels in self-concept. Concomitantly, the data would have a platykurtic distribution because of the significant variance in scores. The data was decidedly evaluated on an individual subject level to look for trends and consistencies.

The amount of gain/loss of standard scores ranged for -38 to $+79$. The average effect that the scrapbooking project had on self-concept subtests was a gain of 10.1 . The two subjects with disabilities had gains of 79 and 6 , while the mean standard score for the other seven subjects was a loss of one.

Inferential Statistics

The research sample, though small, was representative of the classroom population. Students with disabilities made up 17% of the classroom population (two out of nine) and 22% of the research sample (four out of 23). The research sample was also representative of the school and district populations. Both the school and district's population of students with disabilities was approximately 11% . Therefore, the research findings should be representative of the classroom population and perhaps can be generalized.

Academic achievement scores were obtained using the pre-designed rubric. Scores can be viewed in Table 2. The mean scrapbook achievement score was a 14.8. Scores ranged from 16 (the highest obtainable score) to 12. A student with a disability earned the lowest score of 12 (the other student with a disability earned a 14). Students without a disability obtained all the four mode scores of 16.

Both of the subjects with disabilities had overall gains at the time of the final SSCS administration (+79 and +6), while the average amount of change for the subjects without and disabilities was a loss of one. It is also important to note that the subject that had the greatest loss did not have a classified disability. The subject that had the greatest gain did have a classified disability.

Correlations were found between the first and second administrations, and between the second and third administrations, but no correlations were found between the first and third administrations on any of the three subtests. The correlations that occurred between the second and third administrations of the academic subtests were the strongest for that subtest ($r=.772$, $p=.05$). According to the scrapbook timeline, the academic components were addressed between the second and third administrations. Self-image and social components had the similar trends. Both the first and second, as well as, the second and third administrations had strong correlations. The difference is that social and self-image components were touched on throughout the scrapbook project.

Conclusions

As mentioned in the introduction and review of the literature, self-concept is an extremely important construct. It is therefore critical that students have opportunities to build a more positive self-concept, especially within the school setting where those students spend so much of their time. The purpose of the current research was to identify to what extent, if any, a scrapbooking project on self-concept affected a student's actual self-concept as measured by the SSCS (Grisham, Elliot, & Evans-Fernandez, 1993). The research also attempted to identify whether there were any significant differences in self-concept, as a result of the scrapbooking project, between students with disabilities and students without disabilities. The difference in self-concept between students with disabilities and students without disabilities was also measured by results from the SSCS (Grisham et. al., 1993).

Limitations

The current research has three specific limitations. First of all, the issue of sample size is a limitation. The researcher's sample consisted of nine subjects, only two of which had a disability. In order to generalize to the represented population, a much larger sample size would have been more appropriate. The second limitation has to do with the actual sampling method used in this study. The type of sample method utilized was convenience sampling from an already intact group. An intact group may reflect the bonds, cliches, and allegiances among the individuals within the group. Each intact group has its own set of characteristics, which make it unique. The final limitation of this research is the issue of time. The researcher only allotted

a five-week time period, which in the end was insufficient. A longer time, three months for example, would have been much more sufficient.

Discussion

Self-concept is a critical area that needs to be studied because children who are empowered with positive self-concept will have the confidence to strive to achieve. It is encouraging to see researchers, like myself, making contributions back to the field of education. This study, like others such as Helmke and van Aken (1995) have shown the importance of self-concept and academic achievement. The researcher foresees many implications for research in the area of self-concept.

The current study offered interesting findings regarding children and self-concept that can be applied to the field of inclusive education. There was an increase in self-concept, as measured by the SSCS (Grisham, Elliot, & Evans-Fernandez, 1993), and the scrapbooking process. This means that teachers have the potential to positively impact the self-concept of their students. When looking at the correlations found in this study, it is important to understand that correlation does not indicate causation. What is equally important is that correlations do in fact indicate some form of relationship.

Teachers need to have studies like this current one to guide them instead of going with fads of the times. Studies like this yield research-based information that can be applied to all classrooms whether general education, self-contained, or inclusive classrooms. With the wide range of placement options, it is critical that students view themselves positively. All children can benefit from having a positive

self-concept; it forms the foundation of an individual (Franken, 1994). Even some theorists, like Lev Vygotsky, stand by their beliefs that self-concept is an important contributor to individual success (Peterson & Hittie, 2003).

Meaningful instruction and assessment, like creating scrapbooks, can make self-concept more positive because it allows students to construct their own meaning of an issue; something that Jean Piaget finds beneficial (Peterson & Hittie, 2003). Some researchers claim self-concept to be a learned construct, therefore it is open to improvement and modifying (Brigham, 1986; Franken, 1994). This study, along with Reid (2000), Washborn-Moses (2003), and Boerum (2000) suggest that with meaningful instruction and assessment allowing students to construct their own meaning, students will have the possibility of developing a more positive self-concept.

When looking at students with disabilities in comparison to students without disabilities, some differences were found. Both students with a disability had an average gain in self-concept at the end of the study. One student with a disability had the highest gain. It is also important to note that a student without a disability had the lowest overall scores, along with the largest loss at the end of the study. These findings are so critical to the success of inclusion because they prove to us that with proper instruction and assessments, students with disabilities can equally, if not more so, thrive in an inclusive setting. The results also suggest that students' perceptions of achievement play a role in their overall self-concept. With this information, it

seems apparent that if educators offer students opportunities to experience success in a positive way, they may develop a more positive view of themselves.

The timing of the intervention had a positive impact on self-image. Also, the timing of the training had a positive impact on the academic subtest between the second and third administration. Interesting that no significant correlations were found between any of the first and third interventions. Past studies had found correlations between academic self-concept and academic achievement (Heymen, 1990). The current study suggests similar findings in that the interventions had an impact on the student's actual self-concept:

There was a large variance both across the subtests for individuals, and between students. This could suggest that the students are at all different stages in the development of their self-concept. Perhaps the different effects that the scrapbook project had on each subject caused the variance. One week may have been extremely relevant to one subject, while at the same time not relevant at all to another subject.

Future Research

This study gives a possible glimpse into the field of inclusive education and students themselves as they go through their own education. In the researcher's beliefs, schools seem to put less emphasis on character education and self-awareness programs than they should. It seems that standards are the driving force for instruction and assessment materials in schools today. This force then appears to structure the curriculum so that it is impossible to fit in activities similar to the

scrapbooking project in this study. The beliefs that there is no time for taking chances on new materials then seem to take over. The results of this study contradict these beliefs and show the possibility of self-concept enhancement with the appropriate curriculum materials. The researcher found success with the creation of an individually tailored activity. The subjects in this study experienced an average overall gain by the end of the study. This could be promising if in fact the findings are representative. Future research on the issue may yield findings congruent with this study, or maybe modifications and/or alternatives that can be made to improve the education field.

This study is simply one piece of the big picture of inclusion. Hopefully, future researchers will seek to find more effective strategies to assist students in building a positive self-concept. The researcher suggests that future comparative studies be conducted in areas similar to suburban Western New York. Research in the future that compares suburban students to rural and/urban students might possibly yield results similar to those found in this study. A third suggestion comparing self-concept across age groups would be deemed interesting and valuable. A fourth suggestion for future research would be to develop a longitudinal study to follow and track self-concept in students through middle and high school. A fifth and final suggestion would be to develop a comparative study on character education programs and their effectiveness on self-concept. Whatever the research may be, it is sure to offer some valuable bit of knowledge for our education systems to grow and develop with.

There is a reason for so many suggestions for future research. With self-concept being so important to children and their development, it is essential that all angles be covered. Any piece of data that contributes to the field of inclusive education, as it relates to self-concept in children and overall success in life can fill part of the puzzle. Hopefully, with much time and effort from committed researchers, the puzzle will finally be completed, and children will have one more area in which they can shine.

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Appendix A

Scrapbooking Project Rubric

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Content Relevance	All pages are related to the weeks topic and are easy to understand.	3 pages are related to the weekly topic and easy to understand.	Only two page designs relate to the weekly topic.	Only one or no page designs relate to the weekly topic.
Grammar	There are no grammatical mistakes on any of the pages.	There is a maximum of 1 grammatical mistake on the each page.	There are a maximum of 2 grammatical mistakes on the each page.	There are more than 2 grammatical mistakes on the each page.
Effort	Student put forth much effort everyday during scrapbooking time. Set high priorities for self and project.	Student put forth much effort most of the time during scrapbooking time. Set good priorities for self and project.	Student put forth some effort during scrapbooking time. Set minimal priorities for self and project.	Student put forth little or no effort during scrapbooking time. Set few to no priorities for self or project
Creativity and Individuality	The scrapbook pages show high creative effort in terms of design, layout, and neatness. Student pages show very extensive individuality.	The scrapbook pages show creativite effort in terms of design, layout, and neatness. Student pages show individuality.	The scrapbook pages show some creative effort in terms of design, layout, and neatness. Student pages show very little individuality.	The scrapbook pages show little to no creativite effort in terms of design, layout, and neatness. Student did not attempt to make the pages individualized.

Appendix B

Outline for Scrapbook Implementation

- I. Personal Likes/Dislikes
 - A. Foods, Interests?
 - B. Sports, Hobbies?
 - C. Extracurricular activities
- II. Social Interests
 - A. How do you like to spend your free time?
 - B. Who are your friends? Why do you value them?
 - C. What are the best aspects of your closest friends?
- III. Personality/Character Traits
 - A. What personality/character traits do you have?
 - B. What traits do you value? Why? What makes you a good friend?
 - C. Would you change anything about yourself? If so, what?
- IV. Academic Strengths/Weaknesses
 - A. What are you good at?
 - B. What areas can you grow in?
 - C. How can you develop yourself?

Table 1 Student Self-Concept Survey Results and Timeline of Teaching Units

SSCS Subtest	Self-Image				Academic				Social				Range of Gain/Loss
	Pre	Mid	Post	Mean	Pre	Mid	Post	Mean	Pre	Mid	Post	Mean	
Subject 1	90	109	113	104	110	121	119	117	104	117	115	112	+43
Subject 2	99	103	103	102	107	119	122	116	116	121	124	120	+27
Subject 3	128	128	109	122	119	110	113	114	125	123	125	124	-25
Subject 4	87	84	84	85	104	79	79	87	89	79	79	82	-38
Subject 5	109	109	105	108	113	113	121	116	115	123	120	119	+9
Subject 6	117	101	103	107	102	93	112	102	96	93	88	92	-12
Subject 7	119	119	111	116	117	114	122	118	111	119	116	115	+2
Subject 8	71	78	97	82	99	102	79	93	91	99	91	94	+6
Subject 9	91	95	107	98	97	114	122	111	81	101	119	100	+79
Summary Averages	101	103	104	103	108	107	110	108	103	108	109	107	+10.1

*Subjects 8 & 9 represent students with a disability

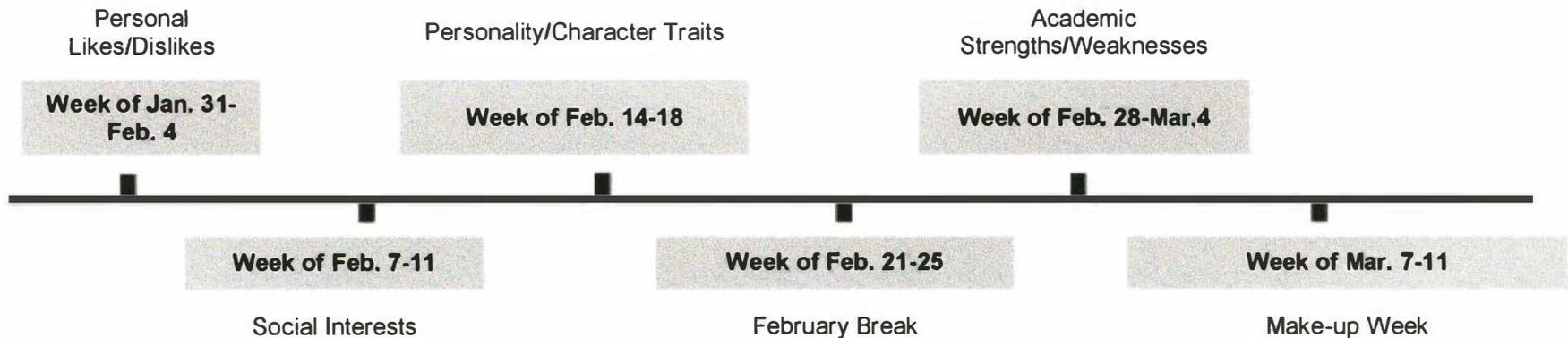


Table 2

Student Scrapbook Scores

	Scrapbook Score (out of possible 16)
Subject 1	16
Subject 2	16
Subject 3	16
Subject 4	14
Subject 5	16
Subject 6	14
Subject 7	15
Subject 8	14
Subject 9	12

Vita

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