# An Investigation Into How Children With Learning Disabilities View Themselves as Compared to Their Regular Education Counterparts

## THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the Department of

Education and Human Development

State University of New York

College at Brockport

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master

of Science in Reading

by

**Brian Todd Meister**

State University of New York

College at Brockport

Brockport, New York

May 2002

**Submitted By:**

_____          _____
Brian Todd Meister                          Date

Candidate

**Approved By:**

_____          4/17/02
Thesis Advisor                              Date

_____          4/12/02
Second Faculty Reader                       Date

_____          4/14/02
Director of Graduate Studies                Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine how children with special

needs at the third grade level view themselves both academically and

socially as compared to their regular education counterparts.  In order to

determine these views, 23 third grade students from a suburban western

New York school district were administered the Pier-Harris Children's Self-

Concept Scale.  Six of the students were labeled with learning disabilities.

The responses to this scale were divided into subsets to determine self-

concept in the areas of behavior, intellectual and school status, anxiety,

popularity, and happiness and satisfaction.  The students were

administered the self-concept scale in-groups of approximately six and

were read the prompts aloud.  This ensured that all of the students

received similar conditions regardless of academic ability.  The student

responses were separated based on services they receive and analyzed

using norms developed by the publishers of the Piers Harris Self-Concept

Scale.  The results of this study seem to indicate that special education

students at the third grade level do not see themselves as different from

their regular education counterparts.

# Table of Contents

# List of Tables

# CHAPTER I

## Statement of the Problem

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine how children with special needs at the primary level view themselves both academically and socially as compared to their regular education counterparts.

### Need for the Study

Throughout elementary school and into intermediate school, educators have placed a great deal of emphasis on developing positive self-image and self-concept in students. This has been a direct response to the research, which supports a positive correlation between children's self-concept and academic achievement. Studies have shown that children who feel good about themselves and view themselves as capable tend to perform better in school.

Special education students find themselves given a label and referred to as different. They also find that when placed in an inclusion setting, they do not match up academically and socially with their mainstream counterparts. Research up to this point has shown that

children with special needs often hold a poorer self-concept, particularly those placed within a mainstream setting. This is, of course, contrary to the theory of inclusion. The question being asked is, "How do children with learning disabilities, placed within an inclusion classroom view themselves as compared to their regular education-counterparts?" Prior research has provided conflicting results. It appears that advocates for the inclusion model seek to emphasize the benefits found in achievement while the opponents find justification in social relationships. Nearly all of the research found by this researcher has focused on intermediate students, primarily of middle school age. The intermediate age group is faced with an enormous amount of social pressure, regardless of their academic ability, and therefore singling out self-concept within this group is very difficult. When children are at the primary level, it should be useful to see what their self-concepts are within an inclusion setting. When social skills are still being developed and academic differences are still within a year or two, do children of varying abilities hold self-perceptions that are equitable?

## Research Question

How do children with special needs view themselves as compared to their regular education counterparts?

## Definition of Terms

Self-Concept: Self-concept can be viewed as the construct with which an individual allows positive and negative views to affect behavior (Strein, 1993).

Inclusion Classroom: For the purpose of this study, an inclusion classroom refers "the integration of children with disabilities into general education classrooms." (Tichenor, Heins & Piechura-Couture, 2000, p.569).

Ability Grouping: For the purpose of this study ability grouping is the segregation of students within a single class to provide more individualized on-level instruction. Also known as "streaming" (Lyle, 1999).

## Limitations of the Study

The present study was limited to a single classroom within a suburban school district. The population was limited to students from a single inclusion classroom. The findings reflect the attitudes of students on one day within a full school year.

# CHAPTER II

## Review of the Literature

### Children's Self-Concept

The term *self-concept* can be loosely defined as " the less changeable aspects of self, those that describe the individual across situations." (Lewis & Knight, 2000, p.46)  Given a set of circumstances, a person is forced to make choices based on his/her perceived abilities.  If, for example, children are given an opportunity to read in front of the class, they must make a series of calculated choices.  The children must first decide whether or not they are capable of performing such a task and at what performance level.  They must then decide whether the risk of failure is worth the potential reward.  In the case of reading aloud, the reward may simply be a congratulation by the teacher.  Finally, the children must evaluate how they will feel if they do, in fact, fail.  Although this all happens within a second, it is these decisions that sculpt self-concept.  Therefore, self-concept can be viewed as how a child sees himself with regard to meeting constant daily challenges.

Within an educational context, self-concept has been frequently studied with relationship to academic performance.  "Children's ability related self perceptions are important predictors of their task engagement

5

and performance", according to Simpson (Simpson, Licht, Wagner & Stader, 1996, p.387). "Individuals with learning disabilities (LD) are especially vulnerable to low self-concept." (Elbaun & Vaughn, 1999, p.92). Clever, Bear, and Juvonen (1992) found that "children with poor scholastic achievement, both those with and without LD, held lower self-perceptions of scholastic competence than their normally achieving classmates." (p.134) Conversely, students who show high achievement in academics are thought to have higher academic self-concepts. One study suggests that "the conventional wisdom of academically talented students seeing themselves in a uniformly positive light is misguided." (Plucker & Stocking, 2001, p.545). A study conducted in 1999 found that "the recent shift within the self literature from more general to domain-specific self-assessments has led to the finding that children may process information about self quite differently across domains." (Hymel, LeMare, Ditner & Woody, 1999, p.620) Having conducted a study with gifted adolescents, Plucker and Stocking found that exceptional performance in one academic area can have a positive impact in the self-concept of that domain, but have a negative impact on other domain specific self-concepts. (2001)

Self-concept has also been studied with relationship to social status. Throughout our childhood we all experienced the separation of

6

social groups.  Perhaps we fit into the "popular group."  That may have

meant that we were well liked by most and viewed highly by adults.  At

least that is what we perceived.  We may have been in the "rejected

group."  Maybe we looked or dressed a little differently or had less

mainstream interests.  Most likely we fit into the "average group" trying

each day to get by and not be ridiculed.  After separating students by

social group, Jackson and Bracken (1998) sought to determine if these

students have differences in self-concept.  They found that students within

the "popular group" did in fact have higher self-concepts than the "rejected

group."  The average group results reflected that there was tremendous

variation in responses and no significant findings could be generated from

the data (Jackson & Bracken, 1998).  Included in social self-concept, age

can be a large factor.  A study conducted in 1998 found that self-concept

ratings tended to be lower among older students (grade six) as compared

with younger ones (grade three) (Bear, Minke, Griffin & Deemer, 1998).

## Parental Roles in Self-Concept

What role do parents play in the development of their child's self-concept? Before a child places one foot in a classroom, they have already had four or five years of self-concept development. Psychologists suggest that infants as young as three months are aware of their immediate surroundings and begin to understand positive and negative feedback. Once in school, children are provided with an environment that reduces one to one interactions and promotes competition, unavoidably setting them up for potential failure, if not academically, then socially. With this in mind, can parents help? Anderson and Hughes propose that parental attitudes toward child rearing have a direct influence on the child's self-concept. (1989) "Parent involvement influences a child's feelings of confidence, the child's motivation levels, and the child's ability to perform with a sense of achievement in school." (Warash & Markstrom, 2001, p.485) Parents need to be actively involved with children's daily activities. Praise such as "I love you" is very important, but they need specifics, according to Kathryn Livingston. (2000) Her experience demonstrated that children need to be told what they are doing positively and why. Details provide children with a base to build from.

## The Inclusion Model

In the ongoing search for the ideal academic setting for all children we find ourselves moving towards an inclusive model where children with special needs are placed in classrooms with mainstream students. The design seeks to provide the special needs children with academic and social avenues comparable to their mainstream counterparts. If the children are given the opportunity to learn and socialize with children of varying abilities but of similar age, they will feel more confident and their achievement will thus be greater.

In order to meet the needs of this wide array of students, teachers are asked to modify and to adapt grade level material to meet the needs of the lower functioning students. Many teachers believe that this may cause dissension among the higher functioning students and embarrassment among the special education students. However, one significant finding of a study conducted in 1999 was that "most students did not perceive .instructional adaptations and accommodations to meet the special needs of selected students as problematic." (Klingner & Vaughn, 1999, p.33)

The theory of inclusion shows tremendous promise and, in an ideal situation, may promote such positive attitudes. However, while being given the opportunity to socialize with a larger and more diverse group of

9

peers results in greater numbers of friendships, academic differences and inadequate social skills can lead to negative self-perceptions in intermediate students (Tapasak & Walther-Thomas, 1999). As children progress through school, the academic gap between students with special needs and their mainstream counterparts widens. In most school districts, a student found to be one grade level behind in most subject areas in second grade is eligible for special education services. A student in fourth or fifth grade must be two or more grade levels behind to qualify for services. As this gap widens, the students' ability to compare themselves with their peers becomes more acute. The student is able to see the differences in ability and is often left with feelings of inadequacy. A study conducted in 1994 found that "after the early elementary school grades, exposure to more-competent peers will undermine perceived competence." (Butler &Marinov-Glassman, 1994, p.331) Tapasak and Walther-Thomas found that after a full year in an inclusion setting, the students with disabilities in the intermediate group (grades 3-5) were identified as increasingly shy and sensitive by year's end. (Tapasak & Walther-Thomas, 1999)

<u>Ability Grouping</u>

What is happening in the inclusion classroom that is causing students to feel different? Flexible grouping is a popular way districts are encouraging teachers to instruct in today's classrooms. What better way to meet each child's individual needs than to provide small groups within a single class to target specific skills. The theory works and is very useful when applied correctly. However as the material gets more difficult the children with special needs find themselves grouped together quite frequently. This less than flexible grouping can become a class within a class. A study conducted in the UK found that despite efforts to create mixed ability groups or flexible groups, teachers tended to polarize students into consistent groups. (Boaler, William & Brown, 2000) That is to say the groups were created based on need and remained throughout the longitudinal study. When this happens the children within the lower group begin to perceive themselves as less capable while the other children in the class develop similar views. (Pallas, Entwisle, Alexander, & Stluka, 1994) Unfortunately, these negative perceptions are not only held by the children, Pallas and his colleagues also found that parents and teachers tend to hold similar perceptions and teachers are often led to make placement decisions based on a previous placement. (1994) In the

case of the special needs child, they are almost always placed in the lowest group.

## Educators' Views on Inclusion

While the theory of inclusive classrooms has rallied much support, many teachers find themselves forced to teach in these classrooms against their will. What does this mean? Many teachers and administrators do not support the concept that inclusive classrooms are the best way to provide for all students. However, districts across the nation are moving towards full inclusion regardless of teacher support. How does this negative attitude affect students in the class and how can this be changed? A study conducted in 2000 revealed that one of the largest problems teachers had with inclusion was their ability to cooperatively teach. (Daane, Beirne-Smith & Latham, 2000) Teachers will need to be trained in cooperative teaching techniques. Smith and Smith (2000) suggest that "inservice training be made practical and relevant and focus on the training of both general and special educators in joint experiences directly related to the development of those skills needed to collaborate and teach effectively in inclusive classrooms." (p.177)

12

## Other Influences On Self-Concept

An individual's self-concept is very complex and unique. As
researchers attempt to break down the factors that come together to mold
one's self-concept, new or perhaps traditionally ignored factors enter into
play. Bachman and O'Malley examined how self-concept with regard to
academic ability is related to and influenced by "school climate."
(Bachman & O'Malley, 1986) They found that standardized test scores
often become a factor in self-concept. (1986) If the purpose of
standardized test scores is to evaluate students in order to drive
instruction, should not scores be kept within the confines of the school?
Otherwise the scores become a device for complacency. In other words,
a student will only seek to be as successful as he thinks he can be.
Renick and Harter (1989) found that "the extent to which LD students like
themselves as persons may be intimately linked with their perceptions of
their scholastic competence."(p.637). Self-concept can also be affected
by a child's socio-economic status (SES). A 1984 study found that
children growing up in low SES neighborhoods and families tended to
have lower self-concepts. (Marsh, H.W. & Parker, J.W.)

# CHAPTER III

## Design of the Study

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine how children with special needs at the primary level view themselves both academically and socially as compared to their regular education counterparts.

### Methodology

#### Subjects

The subjects consisted of 23 third grade students with an age range from eight to nine years old. They all attend a suburban-elementary school in western New York. Seven of the students are classified as needing special education services. Five of the students were labeled learning disabled in the areas of reading and mathematics. Two of the students are labeled functionally mentally retarded. All of the students are in the same classroom, which in structured as a blended setting. The classroom has one regular education teacher present at all times, a special education teacher who is present half time, and a teacher's aide who is present at all times.

14

## Materials

The students were given a modified form of the Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. This self-concept assessment tool consists of eighty questions that measure a child's overall self-concept. The results can also be divided to illustrate five subsets of self-concept. The subsets include: behavior, intellectual and school status, anxiety, popularity, and happiness and satisfaction.

## Procedures

The students were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. In-groups of approximately six students, the scale was read aloud to ensure that all the children will receive the same conditions. Each child was provided with a private place to complete his/her scale to prevent outside influence. This scale is not traditionally given orally, however, the population being observed contains several non-readers. Modifications were also made with regard to vocabulary. Synonyms more familiar and age appropriate were used throughout the testing. An example of this is "I am obedient at home." was changed to "I do what I am told at home." The Pier-Harris is designed for students in the fourth grade and up.

## Analysis of Data

The students' responses were separated based on services received and by the five subsets developed by the publishers of the Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. Subset data will be descriptively presented and analyzed.

# CHAPTER IV

## Analysis of Data

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine how children with special needs at the primary level view themselves both academically and socially as compared to their regular education counterparts.

### Results

According to the publishers of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, the results below indicate responses (Resp.) representative of negative self-concept.

Table 1
Subset I:  Behavior

| Question Number | Question | Resp. | Sp. Ed | Reg. Ed. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | I am well behaved in school. | No | 0/7 | 0/16 |
| 13 | It is usually my fault when something goes wrong. | Yes | 1/13 | 3/16 |
| 14 | I cause trouble to my family. | Yes | 0/7 | 1/16 |
| 22 | I do many bad things. | Yes | 1/7 | 0/16 |
| 25 | I behave badly at home. | Yes | 0/7 | 0/16 |
| 34 | I often get into trouble. | Yes | 2/7 | 3/16 |
| 38 | My parents expect too much of me. | Yes | 6/7 | 9/16 |
| 56 | I get into a lot of fights. | Yes | 2/7 | 3/16 |
| 78 | I think bad thoughts. | Yes | 3/7 | 2/16 |

Within the Behavior Subset, it was notable that 28.5% of the special education students reported they "often get into trouble" and "get into a lot of fights" whereas 18.75% of the regular education students reported similarly. It is often believed that special education students are trouble-makers. The results of this study indicate that the students also believe themselves to cause trouble. Also, 42.8% of special education students reported to "think bad thoughts" while only 12.5% of regular education students reported similarly. 85.7% of special education students and 56.2% of regular education students reported that "my parents expect too much of me." Both of these percentages show that the third graders in this study strongly felt their parents ask too much of them. Of the total students, 15/23 or 65.2% of the subjects responded positively to the statement "My parents expect too much of me."

Table 2
Subset II: Intellectual and School Status

| Question Number | Question | Resp. | Sp. Ed | Reg. Ed. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | I am smart. | No | 0/7 | 0/16 |
| 7 | I get nervous when the teacher calls on me. | Yes | 4/7 | 4/16 |
| 9 | When I grow up, I will be an important person. | No | 1/7 | 4/16 |
| 16 | I have good ideas. | No | 0/7 | 2/16 |
| 21 | I am good in my schoolwork. | No | 2/7 | 0/16 |
| 26 | I am slow in finishing my schoolwork. | Yes | 4/7 | 3/16 |
| 27 | I am an important member of my class. | No | 2/7 | 4/16 |
| 30 | I can give a good report in front of the class. | No | 2/7 | 8/16 |
| 31 | In school I am a dreamer. | Yes | 4/7 | 5/16 |
| 33 | My friends like my ideas. | No | 2/7 | 5/16 |
| 53 | I am dumb about most things. | Yes | 4/7 | 1/16 |
| 66 | I forget what I learn. | Yes | 4/7 | 2/16 |
| 70 | I am a good reader. | No | 1/7 | 3/16 |

The Intellectual and School Status Subset is where special education students and regular education students contrasted most greatly. All of the special education students were labeled in this study due to academic reasons. The design of inclusion is to minimize the student's perceived differences. This was not the case. 28.5% of special education students felt they were not "good at my schoolwork" as compared to 0% of their regular education counterparts. In addition, 57.1% of special education students indicated to be "slow at finishing my schoolwork" and "dumb about most things." 18.7% of regular education

19

students reported to be "slow at finishing my schoolwork" and 6.2% recorded to be "dumb about most things." It is noteworthy to mention that 57.1% of special education students and 25% of regular education students "get nervous when the teacher calls on me." This is particularly interesting because student responses to teacher questions are primarily voluntary. If a child is confident enough to raise his hand, he should not feel nervous when called upon. 28.5% of special education students and 25% of regular education students felt they were "an important member of my class." 50% of regular education students felt they could not give a good report in front of the class whereas 28.5% of the special education students responded similarly. This piece of data also stands out as one might expect special education students to feel less comfortable in front of the class.

Table 3
Subset III: Anxiety

| Question Number | Question | Resp. | Sp. Ed | Reg. Ed. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | I am often sad. | Yes | 1/7 | 3/16 |
| 6 | I am shy. | Yes | 2/7 | 7/16 |
| 7 | I get nervous when the teacher calls on me. | Yes | 4/7 | 4/16 |
| 10 | I get worried when we have tests in school. | Yes | 7/7 | 6/16 |
| 20 | I give up easily. | Yes | 3/7 | 0/16 |
| 28 | I am nervous. | Yes | 5/7 | 4/16 |
| 37 | I worry a lot. | Yes | 5/7 | 6/16 |
| 40 | I feel left out of things. | Yes | 5/7 | 5/16 |
| 43 | I wish I were different. | Yes | 3/7 | 4/16 |
| 74 | I am often afraid. | Yes | 3/7 | 0/16 |

Within the Anxiety Subset, it was notable that 28.5% of special education students consider themselves to be shy while 43.7% of regular education students think the same. This response contrasts with the fact that 57.1% of special education students and 25% of regular education students "get nervous when the teacher calls on me." 100% of the special education students got worried when tests were given in school. Only 37.5% of regular education students reported to get worried. While none of the regular education students reported to feel this way, 42.8% of the special education students claimed to be "often afraid" and "give up easily." 71.4% of the special education students responded indicating they were "nervous" and that they "worry a lot." 71.4% of special

21

education students and 31.2% of regular education students reported they

felt "left out of things." 42.8% of special education students and 25% of

regular education students "wish I were different."


Table 4
Subset IV: Popularity

| Question Number | Question | Resp. | Sp. Ed | Reg. Ed. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | My classmates make fun of me. | Yes | 0/7 | 1/16 |
| 3 | It is hard for me to make friends. | Yes | 3/7 | 1/16 |
| 6 | I am shy. | Yes | 2/7 | 6/16 |
| 11 | I am unpopular. | Yes | 4/7 | 1/16 |
| 40 | I feel left out of things. | Yes | 5/7 | 6/16 |
| 46 | I am among the last to be chosen for games. | Yes | 5/7 | 4/16 |
| 49 | My classmates in school think I have good ideas. | No | 2/7 | 1/16 |
| 51 | I have many friends. | No | 2/7 | 1/16 |
| 58 | People pick on me. | Yes | 4/7 | 3/16 |
| 65 | In games and sports, I watch instead of play. | Yes | 4/7 | 1/16 |
| 69 | I am popular with girls. | No | 3/7 | 4/16 |
| 77 | I am different from other people. | Yes | 7/7 | 13/16 |

The inclusion classroom design is supposed to allow students with

special needs to participate in a least restrictive environment. In doing so,

social success is equally important to a child's overall self-concept. The

results of this study show that 57.1% of special education students felt

unpopular and 71.4% felt they were "left out of things." The regular

education students appeared to have less concerns in this area as just

6.2% felt unpopular and 37.5% felt "left out of things." 57.1% of the

special education students and 18.7% of the regular education students

reported that people picked on them. There are no physical disabilities in

the sample, however 71.4% of special education students reported to be

among the last to be chosen for games and 57.1% reported to watch

instead of play in games and sports. Most notable, 100% of special

education students and 81.2% of regular education students responded

positively to "I am different from other people." That is 87% of the entire

sample.

Table 5
Subset V: Happiness and Satisfaction

| Question Number | Question | Resp. | Sp. Ed | Reg. Ed. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | I am a happy person. | No | 1/7 | 1/16 |
| 36 | I am lucky. | No | 1/7 | 4/16 |
| 39 | I like being the way I am. | No | 2/7 | 1/16 |
| 43 | I wish I were different. | Yes | 3/7 | 4/16 |
| 52 | I am cheerful. | No | 3/7 | 2/16 |
| 67 | I am easy to get along with. | No | 2/7 | 2/16 |

Within the Happiness and Satisfaction Subset, 28.5% of the special

education students and 6.2% of the regular education students indicated

they do not like being the way they were. In addition, 42.8% of the special

education students and 25% of the regular education students reported

23

they wish they were different. Special education students also reported to be less cheerful than their regular education counterparts. Of the total number of students, 42.8% as compared to 12.5%. Also, 28.5% of the special education students and 12.5% of the regular education students indicated they were not easy to get along with.

# CHAPTER V

## Discussion

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine how children with special needs at the primary level view themselves both academically and socially as compared to their regular education counterparts.

### Conclusions

The results of this study seem to support the notion that special education students did not see themselves as significantly different from their regular education peers behaviorally. The special education students did acknowledge that they got into trouble more frequently than their regular education peers, however, the difference was minor. Further, perceived trouble for a third grader can often be confused with extra attention paid to academics. Children in this age group seek positive feedback frequently. When children are struggling, they often feel they are letting the teacher down. Within this particular inclusion classroom, the teacher reported that there were no notable behavior problems and discipline was rarely needed.

The nature of special education services needed in the sample indicated that intellectual differences would pose a serious concern for some of the students. Of the seven special education students, five of them were labeled learning disabled and two were labeled functionally mentally retarded. Four of the students were non-readers. More than half of the special education students referred to themselves as "dumb" and reported getting nervous when the teacher called on them. One might imagine that feelings of inadequacy might lead to a fear of being singled out as one is when a teacher calls on a student. Further feelings of ineptitude were likely spawned when the special education students found that they were slower than their peers at finishing their work. Teachers often reward students who finish quickly with verbal praise. Special education students who have difficulty finishing in standard time frames rarely receive such rewards.

Students, who were labeled, were reported as having much more anxiety than their regular education counterparts. Considering that the purpose of inclusion is to make children feel more comfortable and less anxious within the school setting, it is interesting to note that five out of seven special education students reported being nervous and worrying frequetly. What is causing these anxious feelings? All seven of the

special education students claimed to get worried when there were tests in school. It appears that the children's fear of being unsuccessful had played a part in their feelings of discomfort. The classroom teacher indicated that modifications were made to assist the special education students on assessments yet feelings of anxiety were still present. Apparently, either students' self-perceptions of their own capabilities were low or they were feeling different due to the presentation of modified materials and fear being seen as different.

## Implications for Schools

Currently, inclusion is quickly becoming the program of choice in school districts throughout New York State. Over the past several years districts have progressively integrated the inclusion model to ensure special education students the "least restrictive environment" mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This study has sought to determine if the inclusion model is in fact the "least restrictive environment." This study has shown that although students may benefit from increased exposure to higher functioning students, they are also faced with potential frustrations based on their own limitations. It also

27

shows that these limitations, viewed by their peers, can lead to negative self-perceptions.

Schools need to carefully evaluate how they deliver inclusion programs. They need to use caution when assigning teachers to inclusive classrooms and students need to be carefully placed in a setting where they will feel most comfortable. Most importantly, schools need to realize that not all students are suited for inclusion. Districts and the states they are in must remain flexible with regard to their policies.

## Implications for Further Research

For further research in this area, it may be interesting to investigate students' self-perceptions through qualitative interviews. Another way would be to provide students with open-ended sentences and allowing the to use their own words to fill in their thoughts and feelings. One might also consider conducting this study with self-contained special education students. Do students in a self-contained model share similar self-concepts? It might also prove significant to conduct a comparative study using the same students three to five years later. How have their self-concepts changed over time? Most of the students in the sample have only been in inclusion for one or two years with a maximum of three.

Perhaps, these issues of negative self-concept are present now but as students become more comfortable with the model it reduces. In addition, this study has primarily sought to determine children's self-concepts within the classroom setting. A study could be conducted using the sample to determine if the children's self-concept at school is the same as it is at home. Self-concept is a complicated and very personal issue. Its links to social and academic development are numerous. More research needs to be done to understand how children view themselves and how educators can help to improve children's self-concept in order to better serve children in classrooms.

# References

Anderson, M., & Hughes, H. (1989). Parenting attitudes and self-esteem of young children. Journal of Genetic Psychology, 150, (3), 463-465.

Bear, G.G., Minke, K.M., Griffin, S.M. & Deemer, S.A. (1998). Achievement-related perceptions of children with learning disabilities and normal achievement: group and developmental differences. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 31, (1), 91-118.

Bachman, J.G. & O'Malley, P.M. (1986). Self-concepts, self-esteem, and educational experiences: the frog pond revisited (again). Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50, (1), 35-46.

Boaler, J., William, D. & Brown, M. (2000). Students' experiences of ability grouping—disaffection, polarization and the construction of failure. British Educational Research Journal, 26, (5), 631-648.

Bulter, R., & Marinov-Glassman, D.(1994). The effects of educational placement and grade level on the self-perceptions of low achievers and students with learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 27 (5), 325-334.

Clever, A., Bear, B., & Juvonen, J. (1992). Discrepancies between competence and importance in self-perceptions of children in integrated classes. Journal of Special Education, 26 (2), 125-138.

Daane, C.J., Beirne-Sith, M. & Latham, D. (2000). Administrators' and teachers' perceptions of the collaborative efforts of inclusion in the elementary grades. Education, 121 (2), 331-338.

Elbaum, B. & Vaughn, S. (1999). Can school-based interventions enhance the self-concept of students with learning disabilities. The Exceptional Parent 29 (9), 92-94.

Hymael, S., LeMare, L., Ditner, E. & Woody, E.Z. (1999). Assessing self-concept in children: variations across self-concept domains. Merril-Palmer Quarterly, 45 (4), 602-623.

Jackson, L.D., & Bracken, B.A. (1998). Relationship between students' social status and global domain-specific self-concepts. Journal of School Psychology, 36 (2), 233-246.

Lewis, J.D., & Knight, H.V. (2000). Self-concept in gifted youth: an investigation employing the Piers-Harris Subscales. Gifted Child Quarterly, 44 (1), 45-53.

Livingston, K.E. (2000). Balancing praise & criticism. Parenting, 14 (9A), 38-40.

Lyle, S. (1999). An investigation of pupil perceptions of mixed-ability grouping to enhance literacy in children aged 9-10. Educational Studies 25 (3), 283-296.

Klingner, J.K. & Vaughn, S. (1999). Students' perceptions of instruction in inclusion classrooms: implications for students with learning disabilities. Exceptional Children, 66 (1), 23-37.

Marsh, H.W. & Parker, J.W. (1984). Determinants of student self-concept: is it better to be a relatively large fish in a small pond even if you don't learn to swim as well?. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 47 (1), 213-231.

Pallas, A.M., Entwisle, D.R., Alexander, K.L., & Stluka, M.F. (1994). Ability group effects: instructional, social, or institutional? Sociology of Education, 67 (1), 27-46.

Plucker, J.A. & Stocking, V.B. (2001). Looking outside and inside: self-concept development of gifted adolescents. Exceptional Children, 67 (4), 535-548.

Renick, M.J. & Harter, S. (1989). Impact of social comparisons on the developing self-perceptions of learning disabled students. Journal of Educational Psychology, 81 (4), 631-638.

Simpson, S.M., Licht, B.G., Wagner, R.K., & Stader, S.R. (1996). Organization of children's academic ability-related self-perceptions. Journal of Educational Psychology, 88 (3), 387-396.

Smith, M.K., Smith, K.E. (2000). "I believe in inclusion, but...": regular education early childhood teachers' perceptions of successful inclusion. Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 14 (2), 161-180.

Strein, W. (1993). Advances in research on academic self-concept: implications for school psychology. School Psychology Review 22 (2), 273-284.

Tapasak, R.C. ,& Walther-Thomas, C.S (1999). Evaluation of a first-year inclusion program: student perceptions and classroom performance. Remedial and Special Education, 20 (4), 216-225.

Tichenor, M.S., Heins, B. & Piechura-Couture, K. (2000). Parent perceptions of a co-taught inclusive classroom. Education, 120 (3), 569-575. ·

Warash, B.G. & Markstrom, C.A. (2001). Parental perceptions of parenting styles in relation to academic self-esteem of preschoolers. Education, 121 (3), 485-493.