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**THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER ATTITUDES
in
EDUCATING DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN**

**AN ABSTRACT OF
A THESIS
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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This thesis was concerned with the problem of the failure of public education in providing for the disadvantaged children living in urban slums. The problem has been studied by examining the relationship of teacher and pupil with an emphasis upon teacher attitudes. An attempt has been made to discover the importance of attitudes in the teaching-learning process, and to reveal specific attitudes which are facilitating or impeding to learning. The self-concept was examined as a factor of importance in the teaching-learning situation. It was hoped that the thesis might be of value to those who might teach in disadvantaged areas, or to those with interest in the education of future teachers.

A study of characteristics common to the disadvantaged was undertaken as background material for the study. Since little can be done directly to change the background of the disadvantaged, these generalizations were used as a beginning for an examination of the relationship between teacher and pupil. The thesis was developed as a library study because it was beyond the scope of the author to conduct an action study concerning attitudes which must be inferred. Current books and articles written by authorities were used as a basis for critical thinking.

The thesis examined current theories concerning self-concept, perception, the nature of learning and teacher

attitudes. Then current literature describing teaching situations in the urban schools and investigations pertinent to teacher attitudes were examined to see if they substantiated the theory.

It was determined that the self-concept was a key factor in learning, since the individual with a positive self-concept actively learned by discovery and testing while the person with a negative self-concept remained passive and defensive, at the same time attempting to maintain an already weak self-concept. Also, perception was influenced by the self-concept, since an individual selects what he will perceive. Learning, according to this view, takes place within the learner and may be seen by others as a change of behavior. It was found that the curriculum must be relevant to the lives of the disadvantaged for learning to occur. The teacher has needed to become aware of the needs of these children in order to effectively help them to learn. Certain attitudes on the part of the teacher have facilitated learning. These were authenticity, acceptance, empathetic understanding and positive expectations that the child would learn. Attitudes which proved impeding to learning were shock and withdrawal, fear and the need for rigid control of pupils, low expectations, prejudice and patronization. These attitudes were communicated indirectly to the pupils. Teachers themselves have needed to be exposed to facilitating attitudes on the part of administrators and supervisors in order to realize their potential. The literature and investigations for the most part substantiated the theory.