

**A STUDY OF SELF CONCEPT
and
SOME TECHNIQUES FOR MEASURING IT**

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This study is an attempt to investigate the methods, materials, and techniques available to measure self-concept and to try some of them to see how effective they are. The study is based on the premise that people behave as they do, not only through the influence of external forces to which they are exposed, but also in relation to how things seem to them. People react in terms of what they see their roles and capabilities to be in any given situation, and in this frame of reference, the child's self-concept plays a major role in his functioning. The critical point here is that behavior is related to human perception. If we can gain insight into how the child really sees himself, if we can use this insight to subsequently help him to see and assess himself differently, more positively, we will then be able to help him gain a more positive self-concept, and this in turn should bring about improved behavior. The key lies in the child's own understanding, acceptance, and feelings about himself.

The significance to education of such a study is easily seen, for if we can help children to see themselves in a new way, we should expect changes in their overall adjustments and interrelationships, in their level of functioning, and in virtually every area of their existence.

The study covered the following questions:

1. What materials are available for measuring children's self-concepts?

2. What techniques can we use to measure the child's self-concept other than printed tests and check-lists?
3. What are the best conditions under which the testing should be done?
4. Are these self-concept tests standardized? Can the results be tabulated statistically?
5. What techniques can we use to determine how the child is seen by his peer group, by the important adult figures in his life?
6. Of what value to the growth and development of the individual child are the results of these tests? How can they be utilized effectively?

The study consisted of two parts. One part, a survey of the literature about self-concept and related readings, is discussed in Chapter II. The second part of the study involved searching out and trying the selected materials and techniques that are available in this area. The youngsters involved in the project were a group of twelve eighth grade students, three girls and nine boys, ages twelve through fourteen, all of normal or above intelligence. They were tested and observed both individually and in groups. A series of inventories, rating scales, free compositions, and tests was presented to them. They were observed and taped during group discussions. They participated in a program of sex education, and were involved in a unique photography program. Their responses and reactions were studied and interpreted along with the results of questionnaires and rating scales which their teachers completed.

The results of the study show that there are few available materials for use with elementary school children,

that most of them are not standardized, and that even when they are, the results should not be used as test scores per se. Many materials can, however, be developed by the teacher. The main value of these measures lies in the insights and understandings they give teachers and counselors about the individual students.

Perhaps the most promising result of this study was that it indicated the possibility of further research and study of self-concept. Some materials are available, techniques and instruments can be developed in the schools, and these can be applied to observe changes as students mature educationally and emotionally. The possibilities are many, and there seems to be positive evidence that the results of such study would be fruitful.