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**VALUES EDUCATION INFLUENCE
ON ELEMENTARY STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM**

by

Ron W. Germaine

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of San Diego

2001

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ABSTRACT

Values Education Influence On Elementary Students' Self-Esteem

The purpose of this study is to determine if there was a significant difference in measures of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught in their school as part of the curriculum and those who did not receive such instruction. The setting for the study was a school district in Canada that had identified sixteen values through community consensus. The district developed curriculum and lessons for the teaching of these values.

A quasi-experimental research design was utilized. The treatment group was taught values as a formal part of their curriculum for a period of four years, in grades four through seven. The control group did not receive the formal teaching of values.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the post treatment relationship between the independent variables (grade point average, citizenship scores, gender, and group membership), and the dependent variable (self-esteem). Self-esteem was measured by way of the Student Self-Esteem Inventory (Reasoner and Gilberts, 1992). The best fitting regression model was employed to estimate pre-treatment measures of self-esteem for both groups, allowing change in self-esteem to be calculated. Regression analysis was again

used to see what relationships existed between the change in self-esteem and change in the independent variables.

Results showed no treatment effect, but they did show a statistically significant, positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, and between self-esteem and a combined measure of academic achievement, behavior, and attitude, termed success in school. Results also showed a statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and gender, with girls having slightly lower self-esteem than boys. The findings indicate that further research is needed in the area of classroom climate and teacher modeling, which have been shown in other research studies to have a positive relationship on self-esteem and student behavior.

DEDICATION

To those who have gone before:

To my Dad and Mom, Harold and Nellie Germaine, who gave me life and
a plumb line for values;

To my son, Chris, whose brief 15 years changed the course of my life.

And to those who are:

To my sons, Matthew and Peter, whose lives continue to enrich my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Specifically, I want to thank the members of my committee, Mary Williams, Ed DeRoche, and Fred Galloway. Your scholarly input, challenging questions, and creative suggestions were infused with a passion for learning and with genuine care. Perhaps only other doctoral students can appreciate the clarity with which you understood this project, and the short “turn around” time you provided in giving feedback.

I am grateful to Bill Piland for the standard of rigor and excellence he established at the start of our doctoral studies, and for helping me begin this journey with the end in mind.

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CHAPTER ONE

The time of middle childhood through to adolescence is a critical period in the lives of both boys and girls. It is a time during which our children face new and increasingly sophisticated challenges. It can be an unforgiving time, often filled with emotional turmoil, and comparisons of social acceptability, athletic skills, and intellectual ability. Reasoner (2000) reported that from half to two-thirds of American children are “at risk” by virtue of the fact that they are growing up in families experiencing divorce or separation, poverty, alcoholism, abuse, mental illness, or criminal activity. Schools can play an important role in helping students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to meet the challenges of life and avoid the pitfalls of anti-social behavior or dropping out of school. Sirotnik (as cited in DeRoche & Williams, 2001) noted, “The biggest day-to-day repository of constructive power to improve schools is in the hearts, minds, and hands of people who work with them” (p. iv). Working with children to positively shape their attitudes and behaviors is one of the major purposes of schools (DeRoche & Williams, 2001). A 12-year study found that nurturing the self-esteem of school children in grades one to six resulted in improved achievement, attendance, and a reduction in the occurrence of risky behaviors in high school (Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, & Hill, 1999). Since values are one of the factors affecting the development of self-esteem, the question was

asked whether formal teaching of values in a school setting had an impact on the self-esteem of students.

Background of the Study

The motivation for this study came from the writer's interest in values and whether values might have an influence on the self-esteem of students. I learned that a public school district in Canada had developed and implemented a curriculum for values education. Contact with school district personnel resulted in an expression of their interest in determining the effectiveness of the values education program, and permission to conduct this study was given as a first step in determining program effectiveness.

How the Values Education Program Came To Be

The particular school district chosen as the location for this study was selected because of its clearly defined policy and practice of teaching values to students in elementary schools. The school district has taken a leading role in Canada in identifying community consensus values and producing curricular materials so that values may be formally taught. The following is a brief summary of how this came to be.

In 1984, the school district initiated a study entitled, *Addressing the Future: An Educational Plan for Public Schools: 1985-1990*. This plan set forth ten goals of education. They are shown in Table 1 according to academic, personal, and social/cultural development.

Table 1

Goals of Public School Education, 1984

Academic Development	Personal Development	Social and Cultural Development
1. Communication and computation 2. Critical and creative thinking 3. Lifelong learning	4. Healthy lifestyles 5. A sense of personal worth and dignity 6. Moral, ethical, and spiritual values	7. Growing with change 8. Democratic and responsible decision making 9. Respect for others 10. World citizenship

In response to this report, an action plan targeting academic goals was undertaken in 1985 and completed in 1987. Preparation of an action plan for personal and social/cultural goals was initiated later in 1987. It led to the 1990 *Personal, Social and Cultural Goals Study*. This study was conducted in three phases: first, a literature review; second, an examination of teachers' goals; and third, interviews with teachers and students

The purpose of the interviews with teachers and students was to determine three things: awareness of the district's goals, attitudes towards the district's goals, and practices used in teaching and learning about the district's goals.

In the first phase, a study of literature found that personal, social, and cultural goals should be taught in a deliberate fashion. The second phase of the study determined that teacher goals for social and cultural development matched the ten school district goals. The third phase of the study gave a composite

picture of how the personal and social/cultural goals were being attained. It showed a general, yet not clearly defined teacher awareness of the goals, a positive attitude toward the goals, and a wide range of practices for attaining the goals. Students were less aware of the goals, but showed similar positive attitudes when they heard the goals articulated.

One of the goals affirmed in the report, *Addressing the Future: An Educational Plan for Public Schools: 1985-1990*, was Goal #6, Moral, Ethical, and Spiritual Values. It stated:

Schools and educators will encourage and assist students to formulate a set of moral values and to display ethical conduct, harmonious with the ideals of a democratic society; sensitivity to right and wrong; the use of one's personal faith as a guide to individual behavior; and a regard for the dignity and infinite worth of each human being. (p. 39)

The 1990 report, *Personal, Social and Cultural Goals Study*, found that specific awareness of this goal was not high. It reported:

When teachers were asked to list values which were important to them, or values that could clearly be taught in a public school, most were able to list only a small number. Although detailed and specific awareness did not appear to be high, there was an intuitive recognition of the importance of this goal, and acknowledgement that it should in fact be taught in schools. (p. 16)

The report called for the development of “ . . . a clearly defined framework of generally accepted moral, ethical and spiritual values . . . so that values can be taught in a planned and deliberate manner” (p. iv). A desire was expressed to move the teaching of values from intuition and chance to foresight, knowledge, and planning. That same year (1990), parent and community groups, representing a wide range of religious and cultural backgrounds collaborated to identify a set of common values. The values they agreed upon were proposed to and approved by the district trustees as values reflecting the community. Within one year, pamphlets and posters displaying the school district's values were developed and distributed to each school. The pamphlets and posters identified the sixteen values grouped into four clusters as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Values Approved by the School Board As Those Reflecting the Community

Respect	Responsibility	Excellence	Joy
1. Cooperation	8. Responsibility	13. Pursuit of truth	15. Self-fulfillment
2. Tolerance	9. Freedom	14. Excellence	16. Joy
3. Compassion	10. Justice		
4. Respect for others	11. Respect for the environment		
5. Respect for self	12. Service		
6. Self-control			
7. Honesty			

It is not usual to see Joy included as a core value, and it is of interest to note why the community chose it. Its inclusion gives insight into their intent for

the values education program to address values inclusive of the whole child. Although Joy lacks the moral imperative found in the other value clusters, the community included it for two reasons: It addresses the wish that most parents have for their children's happiness; and without Joy the other core values stand as somber, lacking the wonder and enthusiasm that are important to learning, appreciation of beauty, and physical challenge. Armstrong (1998) observed, "If genius has any core component, it is probably Joy" (p. 9). Joy is found in the passion for learning, for work, and for play. As we shall see in the discussion of self-esteem in Chapter Two, Joy also results from living in congruence with reality, and from internalizing the values included in the other core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Excellence.

In 1994, a Values Education Committee was formed to write specific educational material for elementary school teachers to assist them in teaching the articulated values. The committee was supported by district funding to research curriculum and plan for values education. To implement the program, values education leaders were identified and trained in each elementary school. These leaders held workshops at their schools prior to the start of the 1995 school year to share with teachers the grade specific material developed for the purpose of teaching each value. As a result of these efforts, values have been taught in a formal manner to elementary and high school students in many of the district's classrooms since 1995.

A typical values lesson plan includes a specific objective and specific ways to involve students. Grade appropriate literature resources were provided

along with ways in which literature might be used. In addition, lesson packages came with a recommendation that teachers use a comprehensive approach to the teaching of values by integrating each value concept across the curriculum, through classroom management, by way of extra curricular activities, and by modeling. A typical lesson is described more fully in Chapter Three, in the section, Treatment.

There is an ongoing commitment in the district to evaluate results of the values education program and update teaching materials. The need has been expressed for an empirical study to help determine the effectiveness of values education in the district's public schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if there was a significant difference in measures of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught in their school as part of the curriculum and those who did not receive such instruction. The Student Self-Esteem Inventory (Reasoner and Gilberts, 1992) was used to measure the self-esteem of the two groups of students. With numerical measurements and data available, quantitative methodology was employed. Comparison was made between the measure of self-esteem and factors correlating with self-esteem to find the nature of relationships that existed. The literature review in Chapter Two shows that success in school and gender are linked with self-esteem. Hence, a

further purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which these variables contributed to a student's sense of self-esteem.

Values are integral to the concept of self-esteem, and their close relationship is shown in Chapter Two. Values linked directly to self-esteem include those of respect, responsibility, honesty, and courage. Such values enhance self-acceptance as well as interpersonal relationships, and therefore have a critical influence on self-esteem. Given what is known about self-esteem, and given that values were being formally taught to a group of students, it was reasonable to ask if a statistically significant difference in measures of self-esteem could be found.

Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study, two research questions were formulated:

1. Is there a significant difference in measures of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught in their school as part of the curriculum and those who did not receive such instruction?
2. To what extent do gender and success in school contribute to students' self-esteem?

Significance of the Study

This study has significance for several reasons. Those associated with the program deserved to know the nature and extent of the impact, if any, it is having. The study is important to schools, particularly those in which values are formally taught. It helps them to answer the questions: Is time spent on the formal teaching of values well spent? Is the goal of having a positive impact on the character of students being realized? The study has significance to those who designed the curriculum. It helps them to answer the questions: Is the curriculum we designed meeting our goals of public education? Is it meeting the specific goal of developing the moral, ethical, and spiritual values of our students?

The study has significance to researchers in the field of self-esteem. In a review of the concept of self-esteem, King (1997) observed that a better understanding of ways of enhancing self-esteem is likely to come from an investigation of teaching methodologies in a school environment. This study adds to our understanding of what contributes to students' self-esteem.

The study is significant because it may add to the research base in character education. The center of attention of character education has shifted from a focus on program development to that of program evaluation. Leming (1998) observes that there is a need for careful research to be undertaken and published, directed at program evaluation. He noted that most evaluation studies remain unpublished, and therefore are not open to analysis. The need exists to

build a research base of educational practice related to character education. This study contributes to that end.

The study is important to parents and educators generally because of their keen interest in seeing values taught to their children in schools. Such interest has been expressed in many polls. A 1997 poll, for example, found that teaching values to children ranked the highest among issues Americans considered most important to reforming schools (Education Week, October 15, 1997). The teaching of values is at the heart of this study, and it provides direction for parents and educators.

This study has significance for children and families. Self-esteem has been shown to be important in all stages of life. Galloway (1994) reported that several researchers found measures of self-esteem in young people to be important predictors of earnings later in life. Amen (1995) noted that parents are a child's first and most important moral educator. However, as Chase (1997) stated in a speech to the Character Counts! Coalition,

I am absolutely convinced that, given the decline of the family, schools can and must play a critical role, a more assertive role, a more organized role in inculcating basic, core moral values in America's young people. This should be a cardinal function of our public schools.

Self-esteem and values are important because of their link to relationships. As Wheatley (1995) stated so succinctly, "Relationships are all that is" (CRM Films). Children learn through relationships. Their relationships are enhanced when they see that the values taught are modeled, and practiced.

Helping children live out the core values of a community offers them the opportunity to be people of good character. Intellectual, ethical, and social learning are interdependent. This study has significance in that it explores relationships between these areas of learning in the context of values education.

This study uses technical rigor and documentation of methodology to show by quantitative measures that what happens in schools extends beyond intellectual growth.

Conceptual Definitions

The following definitions are given to clarify their meaning and usage.

Character Education

Character education is a planned effort to teach core values and moral literacy in homes, schools, and the community. Character education seeks to develop the whole child by developing the affective, behavioral, and cognitive areas of learning. It seeks to integrate the teaching of values, self-awareness, self-esteem, and critical thinking skills throughout the curriculum.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is defined in this study as the lived status of one's competence in dealing with the challenges of living in a worthy way over time (Mruk, 1999). This definition is used in this study because it states or alludes to the three elements essential to an understanding of self-esteem: competence and worthiness; cognitive and affective learning; and change over time. Healthy,

authentic self-esteem requires both competence and worthiness to be infused with personal virtues such as respect, responsibility, integrity, and courage. The balance needed between competence and worthiness is shown in Figure 1, page 112.

From a different perspective, Reasoner (1982) identified five components of self-esteem, and used them as a basis to develop the Student Self-Esteem Inventory (SSEI, Reasoner & Gilberts, 1991): security, identity, belonging, purpose, and competence. These components of self-esteem form the basis of the five sub-scales which make up the total score on the SSEI.

Treatment

Treatment is the term used to refer to the specific values and instructional strategies used by the teachers in the public elementary schools in the school district in which this study took place. The treatment is described in detail in Chapter Three.

Values

Values are concepts of what is desirable. They have motivating force that tends to act as a determinant of behavior (Hodgkinson, 1983). Many writers use the term “values” interchangeably with the term “virtues”. Though the terms “virtues”, “ethics”, or “principles” are more technically correct when referring to moral values, the word values will be used to refer to the concepts being taught

in the schools at the focus of this study. This choice of wording will be consistent with the terminology used at the schools, and with minor explanation, will be recognized by most readers. A more lengthy definition of values is given in Chapter Two to clarify its broader meaning.

Operational Definitions

In the discussion of methodology, a number of operational terms will be used. They include:

Academic Grade Point Average

Academic Grade Point Average (AGPA) is an evaluation of student academic achievement relative to curriculum objectives. A four-point scale was used at the end of the school year to indicate how the student was meeting the objectives. Results were taken from student reports on Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, and averaged into a cumulative index for AGPA. The rubric for evaluating academic achievement is shown in Appendix A.

Citizenship Grade Point Average

Citizenship Grade Point Average (CGPA) is a measure of the student's attitudinal and behavioral performance relative to school and classroom expectations. Teachers used a four-point Likert scale to evaluate students on each of five classroom expectations. These included: showing responsibility,

showing respect for self and others, participating actively in learning, working co-operatively, and using time wisely. For the purpose of this study, the five scores were combined into one CGPA index. The rubric for evaluating achievement in citizenship is shown in Appendix A and is referred to in the reporting document as Personal and Social Behaviors.

Group Membership

Group membership refers to whether a student was in the treatment group having been taught the values education curriculum, or the control group that was not taught the values education curriculum.

Historical Data

Historical data refers to the evaluative information available on each student from previous school years. Timing for the start of the study meant that the Student Self-Esteem Inventory was completed by students after the start of their 8th-grade year. Post treatment academic and citizenship information was gathered from final marks available at the completion of each student's 7th-grade year, four years after the start of the values education program. Pre-treatment report card information was gathered from final evaluations available prior to the start of the values education program.

Success in School or The Classroom Effect

This is a variable created by averaging a student's Academic Grade Point Average (AGPA) with his or her Citizenship Grade Point Average (CGPA). The

purpose in doing so was to capture what happens in the classroom by combining in one variable the available data that reflects what happens in the classroom. The amalgamation of academic achievement, behavior, and attitude are included in this variable.

Summary

Chapter One described the setting for the study and the rationale. A brief description was given of the school district explaining how the values education program evolved from a goal, to actual implementation. The purpose and significance of the study were developed, and specific research questions were stated. The chapter ended with conceptual and operational definitions. Chapter Two examines theories of self-esteem; the nature of values; measurable, correlates of self-esteem in a school setting; and examples of research in schools where values have been taught.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Volumes have been written about self-esteem. Self-esteem has been analyzed from psychological, social, philosophical, political, educational, and cognitive perspectives. William James' (1830/1890) formulation of self-esteem in 1890 became the cornerstone for modern approaches. James noted a connection between self-esteem, values, success, and competence.

The word, self-esteem, has numerous meanings. Kahne (1996) pointed out that it can be a slippery concept, and Hewitt (1998) stated that the flexible meaning of self-esteem is one of the most interesting facts about the concept. In reading the diverse perspectives on self-esteem, one can be left with the view that the only consensus surrounding the meaning of self-esteem is lack of consensus. It is a word that can be used to evoke various responses depending on whether it is seen as an end in its own right, a means to an end, an entitlement, a reward, or a myth.

The literature review that follows will look at self-esteem by identifying six theories of self-esteem. The purpose of examining the theories is to identify commonalities in the components of self-esteem. An overview of the theories leads to a discussion of the nature of values, and the relationship of values to self-esteem. The literature review concludes with examples of research done in settings where values have been taught.

Theories of Self-Esteem

A brief review of the theories of self-esteem is done here to identify commonalities in the concept, and specifically, to establish the place and importance of values in self-esteem. Doing so provides theoretical support for this study. Five of the six theories discussed were identified by Mruk (1999). They show a general pattern of development over time, but also represent major fields of social science. The sixth theory addressed states that self-esteem itself is not a valid scientific concept. We begin with this latter theory.

Self-Esteem as an Invalid Concept

Hewitt (1998) is representative of those who see the concept of self-esteem as not being a scientifically valid concept. He calls self-esteem a myth rooted in American culture. He believed it to be ethnocentric, a phenomenon of western society, important only because Americans have given it importance. Self-esteem is seen as bestowing unlimited power to an individual in a culture in which pride is valued over humility. Hewitt noted that self-esteem can mean almost anything the therapist or casual user might want it to mean. It has been described as a panacea for every personal problem that exists, and as a culturally specific emotion without basis in good science. As a result, it lends itself to a variety of interpretations. Hewitt (1998) stated,

The theory of self-esteem is ready-made: It has been created by social scientists and marketed by conceptual entrepreneurs. It fits a culture in which the individual is important and the self is central. It seems to make

sense of the vexing problems of academic failure, lack of motivation, and student rebellion. (p. 91)

To be even more specific, Hewitt (1998) stated,

The self is, in short, what social scientists nowadays often refer to as a social construction. . . . [it is] something brought into being by human beings as they act on the basis of their understandings and beliefs. The self, constructed in contemporary American culture is . . .an invention rather than a discovery. Once invented . . . this socially constructed self seems as real and inevitable as anything in nature. (p. 31)

Hewitt pointed out that when we act on such beliefs, we tend to create the evidence we need to verify those beliefs. He noted that the teaching of self-esteem leads people to believe that it is indeed real, when it may not be. His view casts the teaching of self-esteem in a sinister light as a subtle form of social control. Hewitt asserted that those who teach self-esteem assume they know what is best for others, when in fact they may not. A critical element of viewing self-esteem from this perspective is that it sees no basis for moral right or wrong. In this way it is related to cultural relativism. Self-esteem, if it exists, is tied only to consensus values. In Hewitt's words, self-esteem is "...a culturally specific emotion associated with a general human affective response called mood" (p. 127). It is shaped by cultural ideas and expectations.

Baumeister (1996), though acknowledging a concept of self-esteem, used the term as synonymous with pride, egotism, arrogance, and narcissism. Few

accept this definition of self-esteem, seeing such characteristics as symptoms of low self-esteem (Katz, 1993; Mruk, 1999; Reasoner, 2000).

Indeed, if self-esteem is simply a matter of arrogance or opinion, then it is a suspect concept. If, however, it is firmly based in social science, then self-esteem is more likely to be a concept of substance. The sheer volume of material written on self-esteem and the credibility of social scientists who research it, make even most skeptics recognize it as a concept of importance.

Mruk (1999) stated clearly three reasons why the topic of self-esteem ought to be further explored. The first is that because self-esteem is often understood in relation to positive mental health or the lack thereof, a need exists to understand how self-esteem is related to behavior. As insights are gained, the enhancement of self-esteem in individuals could make a significant difference in their lives as well as to society in general. A second reason to pursue the study of self-esteem is that it has been a foundational topic for psychological research since 1890, and today is still regarded as an indispensable concept in the social sciences. This increases the need to more clearly describe the structure and essence of self-esteem, and to develop a theory of self-esteem comprehensive enough to account for the theoretical diversity that currently exists. A third reason to further explore self-esteem is that it is a concept that helps researchers and practitioners in the social sciences integrate the complex interplay that personal and social factors have in determining human behavior. Given the foregoing reasons for studying the topic, we continue to look at theories that see self-esteem as a valid concept.

Self-Esteem from a Psychodynamic Perspective

Freud wrote of the ego representing reason and good sense and needing to be grounded in reality. He also recognized the need for values with which the ego could provide direction (Crain, 1980). Freud never referred directly to self-esteem, but he understood the importance of the concepts of reality and values in how we live. White (1959) is representative of the psychodynamic approach in which self-esteem is actually addressed. The name of this theory reflects both its roots in psychoanalytic theory and the developmental nature of the theory. It proposes that effective interaction with the environment requires a motivation called competence, and competence is the root of self-esteem. Self-esteem is earned as competence is gained, and thus self-esteem is developmental. Self-esteem is seen to be related to the ego by way of competence. A strong ego is one that has developed competence in dealing with the environment, whereas a weak ego has limited competence and develops anxiety and defensiveness. White's emphasis on competence included competence in relationships, and the ability to resolve conflicts. He saw respect for self as essential to self-esteem. By extension, respect for others is essential for demonstrating competence in relationships. As we shall see, competence and respect are important concepts in values education.

Self-Esteem from a Sociological Perspective

Rosenberg (1965) is representative of the sociological perspective of self-esteem. This theory accepts the premise that values associated with self-esteem

have their roots in the interaction of cultural, social, family, and other interpersonal processes. It tends to address self-esteem from the outside rather than the inside. Individuals have self-esteem to the degree that they internalize values and develop attitudes that match with core values of society at large. It is interesting to note Mruk's (1999) statement that the sociological perspective is the one taken by the California self-esteem movement. He said, "... their definitional focus is on worthiness and their practical focus is on improving social conditions as the main route to enhancing self-esteem" (p. 124). Of particular note to the current study, the sociological perspective focuses on worthiness and relationships, and has a clear reference to the importance of values as part of self-esteem.

Self-Esteem from a Behavioral Perspective

Coopersmith (1967) is representative of the behavioral perspective of self-esteem because of the way in which he described the development of the antecedents of self-esteem. He identified three antecedents: parental warmth, clearly defined limits, and respectful treatment. Although these are social forces, Coopersmith addressed them in light of behavioral theory, suggesting there are learning mechanisms that enable self-esteem to be acquired. He said that parental warmth was learned by children from the way they are treated by parents. Boundaries are learned when values are consistently reinforced. And respect is learned as children see their parents model it through relationships within and outside the family. Cassidy (1988) and Dunn (1988) are also representative of the behavioral perspective. Cassidy noted that construction of

the self is derived from early daily experience with attachment figures such as the mother. If infants are valued, they come to feel valuable. Dunn asserted that self-esteem is directly related to a sense of personal control in being able to cause and effect events or influence others.

As in the previous perspectives of self-esteem, we see again that values and relationships are emphasized as integral parts of self-esteem.

Self-Esteem from a Humanistic Perspective

Branden (1969, 1994) wrote extensively on self-esteem. He represents the humanistic perspective of self-esteem because of his existential focus on the objective reality of self-esteem and because of his emphasis on individual freedom, choice, and responsibility. Self-esteem is a real part of our existence and is something to which we must pay attention throughout life. In Branden's view, the need for competence and worthiness is so strong that people develop it in one of two ways: by living rationally, in congruence with the real world and by internalizing right principles which lead toward joy, happiness, and self-acceptance. The alternative is developing an illusion of self-esteem in ways that distort or evade judgment and allow one to avoid the need of facing objective reality. More will be said later about Branden's perspective.

Reasoner (2000) is also representative of the humanistic perspective of self-esteem. He suggested that self-esteem is the basis for all motivated behavior, and thus, " . . . the critical element of healthy self-esteem is having realistic, clear self-concepts as well as understanding one's values and the

importance of the various roles one is playing” (p. 3). Reasoner saw self-esteem based in the evaluation of self in six major areas:

1. One’s inherited endowments including intelligence, physical characteristics, and natural abilities;
2. Feeling likable and loveable;
3. Being a unique human being, of value, and worthy of respect;
4. Feeling in control of or responsible for one’s life;
5. Having moral virtue or integrity;
6. What one has achieved in skills, successes, and possessions. (p. 2)

This perspective includes seeing the components of self-esteem as competence and worthiness. It also states that values are integral to the concept of self-esteem. They are seen as a plumb line against which to measure important components of competence and worthiness. Values, including respect and responsibility, are important to both relationships and to self-esteem.

Self-Esteem from a Cognitive-Experiential Perspective

Epstein (1985), Bandura (1989), and Bednar (1989) are representative of the cognitive-experiential view of self-esteem. This view sees the mind as organizing experience and information in ways that make sense of the world. We gather data and feedback from our environment and from personal theories, and use these theories to process data, generalize it, and prescribe for ourselves ways of maintaining a balance in life. The cognitive-experiential view is less humanistic than other perspectives and more mechanical in its view of how we

take in and process information. Self-esteem is seen as a basic need. It is a dynamic phenomenon, influenced by external, social factors such as culture and gender, and internal factors that we use to evaluate our own behaviors. Bednar, Wells, and Peterson (as cited in Mruk, 1999), who also represent this perspective, noted the need for facing reality in issues of competence and worthiness. They also recognized that doing so may require courage, honesty, and responsibility, and therefore such values are important to healthy self-esteem.

Each of the theories of self-esteem clearly identifies values as integral to self-esteem. Values are part of self-esteem by way of theoretical construct, by definition, and by lived experience. Mruk (1999) underscored the fact that the theories of self-esteem show it to be a dynamic relationship between competence and worthiness. Social and personal values are imbedded in both competence and worthiness. Authentic self-esteem *requires* that personal virtue (as found in the values respect, responsibility, courage, and integrity) be lived out, and done so in congruence with reality (Branden, 1994a). The lived reality of self-esteem means that values chosen and lived out are felt and experienced in a personal way. A diagram showing the relationship of competence, worthiness, self-esteem, and values is shown in Chapter Five, page 112.

Self-Esteem: What It Is and What It Is Not

As mentioned earlier, the meaning of self-esteem used in this writing is the lived status of one's competence in dealing with the challenges of living in a worthy way over time (Mruk, 1999). This definition was chosen because it is

succinct, and because it includes the three components known to contribute to self-esteem: competence and worthiness; cognitive and affective learning; and change in self-esteem over time. The following section discusses these primary sources of self-esteem, and their relationship to choice and to values that reflect personal virtue, or doing the right thing even though it may be difficult.

Reasoner (1998) noted, "Definitive research on self-esteem has been difficult due to the variety of definitions, the many self-esteem measures being used, and the multiple factors which influence it. Nevertheless, the preponderance of evidence underscores the significance of self-esteem . . ." (p. 4). Despite the absence of clear agreement on the definition of self-esteem, there is growing consensus about what the concept should mean. The board of the National Association for Self-Esteem gave the following definition in 1991: "Self-esteem is the experience of being capable of meeting life's challenges and of being worthy of happiness." This definition implies the need for competence, and specifically notes the importance of a sense of worthiness.

Branden's writings and research have had significant influence on the concept of self-esteem. Branden (1994b) listed three factors impacting self-esteem: nature or heredity factors; nurture or developmental factors such as parental upbringing and peer influence; and will or volitional factors. He said that the essence of self-esteem is contained in the notions of self-efficacy and self-respect; self-efficacy being described as competence or, " . . . confidence in one's ability to think, learn, choose, and make appropriate decisions, and, by extension to master challenge and change" (p. 1). He described self-respect as

worthiness, or “ . . . confidence in one's right to be happy, and, by extension, confidence that achievement, success, friendship, respect, love, and fulfillment are appropriate for oneself” (p. 1). Note that with these definitions, the origins of competence and worthiness are internal. They have external manifestations in behavior, but originate internally with emotional, evaluative, cognitive, and volitional components. Branden (1994b) stated this clearly:

Clinicians cannot work on self-esteem directly because self-esteem is a consequence - a product of internally generated practices. If clinicians understand what those practices are, they can work with others in such a way as to facilitate or encourage their actualization. Interventions can be designed with that end in view. But the practices themselves can arise only within the client and can only be caused by the client. (p. 3)

Secretan (1997) supported this view, stating that self-esteem must be changed from within.

Branden (1994a) further described positive self-esteem as, “ . . . the immune system of consciousness, providing resistance, strength, and a capacity for regeneration” (p. 2). He said it is indispensable to normal, healthy development, and that positive self-esteem inspires people to achieve, allowing them to take pleasure and pride in achievements, as well as to experience satisfaction.

It is important to note that Branden's definitions of competence and worthiness are grounded in real things: real thoughts, real knowledge, real choices, and real decisions. We have a choice as to whether or not to focus on

reality. Choosing to do so means being honest with oneself. One cannot be honest with oneself and look at an object (or think of a thought in one's head) and say, "I choose to see this part and that part, but I'll pretend this other part is not there." Branden (1994a) described this focus on reality as the practice of living consciously. He underscores the importance of conscious living by saying, ". . . the extent to which a client honors 'sight over blindness' is the single most important determinant of their self-efficacy and self-respect" (p. 2). Competence and worthiness, therefore, are very much dependent on whether or not one chooses to live in congruence with reality. This is the first of Branden's 'Six Pillars of Self-esteem'. Branden (1994b) described six pillars or volitional acts that contribute to self-esteem (p. 4-7). They are:

1. The practice of living consciously, or having respect for reality. Branden said that choosing to live in congruence with reality is the single most important determinant of self-efficacy and self-respect. Bolman and Deal (1995) supported this perspective by saying, "When people feel a sense of efficacy and an ability to influence their world, they seek to be productive" (p.107). They made this statement in the context of addressing leaders, suggesting the importance of the role leaders can play in influencing the self-esteem of others.
2. The practice of self-acceptance, or applying realistic respect to oneself. It includes valuing one's own person without pretense, and refusing to engage in an adversarial relationship with oneself.

3. The practice of self-responsibility, or taking responsibility for one's life and well-being. Covey (1989) described this practice as the first of his seven habits of highly effective people. Being proactive is recognizing one's ability to respond to life and choosing to do so. The result is experiencing a sense of control in life. It is also noteworthy that Covey, in describing his first habit, made a strong link between integrity, personal responsibility, and valuing ourselves.

4. The practice of self-assertiveness: This flows from self-acceptance, and allows one to seek to meet one's own needs and wants, and to live out one's values and convictions. It included consciously confronting the challenges of life rather than evading them, and doing so in ways that allow us to live with integrity and joy while honoring commitment to ourselves and to others.

5. The practice of living purposefully: Purpose gives focus and direction to life. It helps organize and give structure to self-assertiveness. It mobilizes one to attain goals. Branden was careful to point out that a person's worth ought not to be tied to goal achievements themselves, though it is appropriate to admire achievements in ourselves and others. It is having a sense of purpose and living in accordance with that purpose. Choosing to live purposefully fits with Covey's (1989) second habit: that of personal leadership in which one identifies and chooses values, sets priorities, and lives in ways that are both ethical and fulfilling.

6. The practice of integrity: This is the practice of living congruently with one's professed values. Branden clarified his meaning by asking the questions, "Am I honest, reliable, and trustworthy? Do I do the things I say I admire, and avoid the things I say are despicable?" (p.6).

The focus of our description of self-esteem to this point has been on what self-esteem is. It is also important to clarify a concern about what it is not. Issues raised earlier by Hewitt (1994) about the ethnocentricity of self-esteem have support from some who see self-esteem as a valid concept. Hwang (1995) saw the validity of self-esteem, but as a concept out of balance in western society, as an obsession needing to be balanced by focusing on others. He paralleled Hewitt's view of self-esteem as emanating from a cult of individualism and self-sufficiency in which individual rights are favored over social responsibility, and emotions take precedence over reason. Personal and social responsibilities were seen as distinct from self-esteem. Hwang (1995) differed from Hewitt in recognizing the primacy of values. The balance Hwang proposed to self-esteem is "other-esteem" in which personal and social responsibilities take precedence over personal gratification and self-centeredness. He stated that positive, effective relationships are essential to our well-being (p. 11). Other-esteem as proposed by Hwang (1995), parallels the concept and definition of self-esteem used in this study. The balance between the self-centeredness of the West and the loss of individualism in some Eastern societies may find balance in a twist put on the golden rule by Etzioni (1996). He suggested that we

respect and uphold society's moral order, as we would have society respect and uphold our autonomy.

Self-Esteem and Values

Rawls (1971) articulated the view of self-esteem based in values, arguing that self-esteem should be based in respect and dignity rather than on judgments of social comparisons. This perspective, however, has much earlier beginnings, and is supported by philosophers, researchers, and clinicians. Sypher (1998) quoted Aristotle as saying that virtuous dispositions of character are necessary conditions for developing our human potential. Sypher added that just as food, water, and shelter are needed for us to flourish, so are qualities such as friendship and love. Popov (1997) described values as “gems in the mine of the true self” (p. 1). She said that virtues are at the heart of self-esteem. Amen (1995) observed that there is a direct relationship between good values and self-esteem. Secretan (1997) stated that self-esteem comes from being trustworthy and being trusted by others, from personal and corporate mastery, from practicing generosity and courage, and from nurturing others and being nurtured.

Values and self-esteem are inexorably linked by both logic and research. Morris (2000) observed, “The moral-ethical self functions as observer, standard setter, dreamer, comparer, and most of all, evaluator of who the individual says he or she is.”

Research by Myers (as cited by Branden, 1994b) found that high self-esteem is one of the best predictors of happiness. This is important because

feeling good about who you are requires one to live out values over time by doing what is right, fair, and generous, while practicing excellence, and living congruently. Hass (1998) stated, “. . . acting morally often serves our own need to self-actualize, as well as to register our concern for others” (p. 5).

Research to find correlates of self-esteem has established the importance of values like respect for others. Waterman (1981, 1984) found that a well-developed sense of self-esteem had a significant correlation with kindness, generosity, social cooperation, and a spirit of mutual aid. Such values reflect social behaviors that enable individuals to work co-operatively with others. Patro's (1999) findings provided additional support. His research indicated that 69 out of 84 adolescent males working in a community service program increased their sense of self-esteem through serving others. Thus the values of kindness, co-operation, and service may be seen as factors that are correlated with self-esteem. These findings support the use of scores reflecting personal and social behaviors in the research proposed for this study.

Coopersmith's (1967) research identified that the knowledge of a set of personal, moral, and ethical values and the actions which reflect such values, as one of the antecedents of self-esteem. Conrath (1986) found that self-esteem was enhanced through skill development and internalization of values reflecting caring relationships. Whitely (as cited in Reasoner, 1998) found a high correlation between moral decision-making and the level of self-esteem.

Branden (1998) listed a number of factors that influence self-esteem: parents, teachers, significant others in our lives, circumstances, and genetics. Of

these influences, Branden said that none is likely to be as important as the influence of parents by way of the values they instill. These values either lead a child toward or away from growing self-esteem. None of the influences actually determine someone's self-esteem. Rather it is the individual who determines the extent of self-esteem through the choices and decisions made daily. This is a limitation that is important to note in the teaching of values. Others may be inspired or coached to live with a greater level of integrity, or to practice greater self-acceptance; no one can actually give these things to us.

The logic of values as an integral part of self-esteem is quite clear. Reality and integrity are critical to self-esteem. Integrity is a virtue, and virtues lived out, are personal realities. Kindness acted out is real. It makes us feel better to act kindly than if we treat others, or if we ourselves are treated, unkindly. One could use the same pattern of logic for other values. Values internalized, give coherence to self. They dispel the schizophrenia of how to act at different times in different circumstances. Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) put it this way in regard to internalized values, "No aspect of self stands different or apart. At the center is clarity, not conflict. When people go inside to find themselves, there is only one self there" (p. 60). People feel a sense of self-acceptance because they know who they are. The values we choose and live out determine our relationships.

The Place of Values and Relationship

Values and relationships are directly related. The type of values we hold will impact the relationships we build, and our relationships influence our values. Dimock (as cited in Hodgkinson, 1983) underscored the importance of values in relation to the way we treat one another, saying that life is meaningless unless we work through to a philosophy, which sees human dignity and significance as essential. Barnard (as cited in Hodgkinson, 1983) concurred, stating that relationships, which reflect personal growth and interpersonal cooperation are a necessary condition for human life to exist.

Leming's (1998) research showed the importance of positive relationships in a school setting through his evaluation of the Heartwood Institute's character education program. He found that the strongest classroom level predictor for cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcome variables was the degree to which teachers infused character education into the entire curriculum. His study used program and comparison schools together with pre and post testing of both groups in an attempt to produce cause and affect knowledge about program effects. In addition, while summarizing Character Education program effectiveness, Leming (1999) found that the strongest positive behavioral change occurred when teachers demonstrated pro-social or caring behavior. Leming's findings are supported in Barth's (1990) observations of the need for collegial relationships among teachers. Barth stated, "My years in school suggest that the quality of adult relationships within a school has more to do with the quality and

character of the school and with accomplishments of students than any other factor” (p. 163).

The values learned from the parent/child relationship are critical to the development of self-esteem. Amen (1995) said, “Your relationship is the most important variable in [your children’s] value system” (p. 11). Chung (1998) found that adolescents who chose parents as the most significant others in their lives, received the highest scores in a self-esteem analysis. His finding underscores the important role parents can play in the development of a child’s values, but it is also important to note that children, who have not had parents as good role models, may be able to develop positive values and self-esteem by way of connection with another significant adult. It is possible to experience a sense of connectedness, caring, and belonging with significant adults other than parents. Brandon (1994b) while emphasizing the importance of the parental role noted that no research has ever found the results of healthy parenting to be inevitable. Referring to Coopersmith’s work, Brandon said there are,

. . . many examples of adults who appeared to have been raised superbly . . . , and yet became insecure, self-doubting adults. And there are many who emerge from appalling backgrounds, but who do well in school, form stable and satisfying relationships, and have a powerful sense of their own value and dignity, and, as adults, satisfy any rational criterion of good self-esteem. (p. 3)

Reasoner (2000) found a direct relationship between the perception of success in relationships and self-esteem. Such success may include confidence

in appearance, academic ability, social relationships, or simply the feeling that “I’m good enough or worthy of being accepted”. Reasoner stated, “Self-esteem might be viewed then, as a barometer of how we are doing socially. People seek a certain amount of social acceptance and belonging in order to view themselves as successful and have positive feelings about themselves” (p. 55-56).

All of us need to know that we matter, and that others care for us. We need to belong. We need to be heard and recognized. We need meaningful relationships rooted in respect and responsibility, care and justice. We need to love and be loved. Self-esteem is not, and cannot be independent of values or relationships. Because this is so, it is important to look at the nature of values and to ask the questions: What types of values are there? What basis is there for accepting values (epistemology)? And what consensus exists in regard to specific values?

The Nature of Values

Values are of different types and have a broad range of intensity. Individuals see certain values as being more or important than others. Environmentalists and industrialists differ on the importance of some values. Honesty to one person may be critical no matter what, yet to another person choosing to be honest may depend on who else might know. Types of values are now examined, and the relationship of choice, will, and values addressed. The question of how we know which values are right is discussed in light of a reference point, presuppositions, and consensus. Finally in this section, the term “values” is compared to similar terms: virtues, ethics, and principles.

Types of Values

Hodgkinson (1983) defined the term, value, as a concept of the desirable. He expanded the definition by saying, “. . . values are concepts of the desirable with motivating force, or concepts of the desirable which tend to act as motivating determinants of behavior” (p. 36). His point in expanding the definition to include words such as “tend” and “motivating”, was to point out that we can hold values without values themselves being operant. His definition helped clarify why one might hold a value such as honesty, for example, yet at times choose not to be honest.

Hodgkinson (1983) proposed three different grounds for values; grounds that people use to choose whether an object or event is good or bad. He saw these grounds for values as those based on principles (Type I values); values based on reason, consequence, or on consensus (Type II values); and values based on preference (Type III values).

Values have a broad range in the intensity of their meaning, from frivolous to deadly serious. Type III values are those that are justified simply because something is liked or preferred by the subject. One may prefer water to milk, for example. There is nothing obligatory about these preferences. Type II values are those that are justified by way of rational thinking. They may come by way of consensus in which a sufficient number in a group decide that something is good or bad, or they may come about by way of recognizing that a consequence should be avoided or is beneficial. Courtesy, for example, is better in business

relationships because discourtesy results in loss of business. Type I values, as seen in Table 3, go beyond reason and are accepted as principles. Some would say that lying is wrong and telling the truth is right because God gave that particular command to Moses. Hodgkinson (1983) said that Type I values go beyond the preference of Type III values and the reason of Type II values, to the

Table 3

Types of Values

Value	Basis for acceptance of the value
Type I	Principles
Type II	Reason, Consequence, Consensus
Type III	Preference

level of choice and commitment, which are part of principles. Type I values become part of one's central life meaning. They are the kind of values for which some are willing to die. Lickona (1998) referred to core ethical values as those of Type I. He stated,

These core ethical values are not mere subjective preferences like taste in music or clothes. They have objective worth (they are good for us whether or not we know it), are universal in validity, and have a claim on our personal and collective conscience. (p. 1)

Type I values translate into behaviors and consequences that have profound implications at both the individual and leadership level. They can further the common good or they can demonstrate man's inhumanity to man. Mother Teresa is an example of the former, Adolph Hitler an example of the

latter. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) underscored the importance of values in relationships. They state, “The three legged stool upon which leadership sits - ambition, competence, and integrity - must remain in balance if the leader is to be a constructive force in the organization rather than a destructive achiever of her or his own ends.” (p. 3)

Choice and Will

A number of writers underscore the importance of choice and will in regard to values. Carter (1996) said clearly, “Doing the right thing rather than the wrong thing is neither habit nor instinct. It is will” (p. 241). In arguing his case for the importance of the will in regard to morals, Carter said,

Aristotle placed the intellect over the appetites, Rousseau placed reason above inclination, and the theologians place God’s will above our own. What one sees in every case is the refusal to accept as the measure of morality, our choice to do the things that most attract us. To make satisfaction of our desires the only morality is to choose the path away from civil society . . . (p. 242)

Another perspective on values and choice is expressed by Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) who stated that choosing values that reflect servant leadership is the ultimate act of free will. Such choice requires values that build interpersonal relationships and contribute to the common good. Schlessinger (1996) pointedly summed up the importance of choice in regard to values by

stating, “All the high talk about philosophy, values, morals, and conscience is reduced to that moment when you choose an action or inaction” (p. 233).

Epistemology of Values

How do we know which values are right or a part of true truth, and how do we know that we know? Murchison (as cited in Noll, 1997) noted this problem in arguing that character education may be ineffective. He questioned which values can be held to be right or true, and, if some are selected as part of “true truth”, what is the standard for doing so? What measure do we have to determine that one value or virtue is better than its opposite? Someone might ask, “How do we really know that telling the truth is better than lying, and under what circumstances?” The response could be, “My religion tells me what I should do, or God said so.” And immediately the need for further explanation slips into deeper philosophical territory. It seems clear that a reference point for values is needed.

Reference Point for Values.

Schaeffer (1982a) wrote of Plato wrestling with problems associated with epistemology more than other Greek philosophers and doing so with the greatest sensitivity. He said that Plato understood the basic problem of epistemology, that there must be more than individual bits of knowledge if there is to be meaning. Plato and other Greeks looked for a universal law or principle that would give meaning to all other knowledge. They looked initially to the city-state

(society) to give this principle, but realized that it would end up by choosing values based on a vote of 51 per cent. Plato suggested philosopher kings would determine a unifying principle for knowledge, but that too, proved inadequate, as they were unable to do so.

The following illustrates what would embody the universal law that Plato and other philosophers have looked for: A finite point has no meaning in mathematics unless it is located in relation to a meaningful scale, and ultimately, to an infinite reference point. Similarly in learning, we move from individual bits or points of knowledge to grouping knowledge into concepts. Consider the notion of trees. We could speak of palm trees or other species of trees depending on our point of reference, but note that we may group them together to speak simply of trees. We take the same direction in science, grouping observations into larger and larger concepts until we end with global laws such as gravity and electromagnetism. Einstein was looking for unity above these two laws at the end of his life. Stephen Hawking and others continue the search for unifying principles today. Beyond this, is there a unifying law or principle that encompasses personality?

Philosophers since the time of Plato have attempted the same conceptual movement in the area of morals, going from individual cases to a global concept of right and wrong. Schaeffer (1982a) noted that Plato looked to the Greek gods for a universal principle, but found the gods to be too capricious. Philosophers since Plato's time have looked for the same universal principle, but while there is general agreement about the need for specific virtues such as honesty and

respect, society indicates there is little agreement on a universal law of right and wrong. While there may not be precise agreement on values there is a strong argument to accept the worth of values such as justice, caring, and integrity. Lickona stated the argument for moral truth as follows:

The case for "moral truth" argues that there is a natural moral law, based on human nature, just as there is a law governing physical nature. When we follow the natural moral law (e.g., treat others as we wish to be treated), we live in harmony with ourselves and with each other. When we act in ways that go against the natural law (when we lie, cheat, or steal, for example), we create problems for ourselves and for others. Values such as justice, honesty, and love are objectively true or good in that they affirm our human dignity, promote the welfare and development of the individual, and serve the common good - and they do those things because such values are consistent with what makes us human. (T. Lickona, email, Jan. 28, 1999).

Many would identify with Immanuel Kant who described two wonders: The starry heavens above and the moral law within. Often we refer to the moral law within as conscience.

Values and Presuppositions

Lived values, and the context in which we see values, are a reflection of our answers to deeper philosophical questions of existence. Some look to

religion or philosophy to find meaning, others to science, while others look to work, pleasure, or relationships. The values we believe to be important are those we live out in our daily lives. Rabbin (1998) said cogently, “Our real values are expressed in our actions, in what we do, and how we do it. Our actions never contradict our values: our actions are our values” (p. 87).

Even amongst those who subscribe to the importance of teaching values there are differences on how to approach the topic. Greer and Kohl (1995) came up with the idea of writing their book, A Call to Character, after reading William Bennett's, (1993) Book of Virtues because they felt it too religious in nature. Oder (1995) said Greer and Kohl recognized the importance of virtues, but were concerned about fundamentalists trying to monopolize that field. They included many of the same virtues as did Bennett, but wrote their book from a more ecumenical perspective.

Is it possible for any agreement on moral values? Strike (1988) suggested two general moral principles that, he believes, are part of the moral concepts of almost everyone:

- “. . . the principle of benefit maximization which holds that our most general moral obligation is to act in a manner that produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people” (p.353). Kidder and Born (1999) referred to this as ends-based thinking.
- “. . . the principle of equal respect for equal persons which holds that we must regard human beings as intrinsically worthwhile and treat them

accordingly” (p. 354). Kidder and Born (1999) referred to this as care-based thinking.

In a sociological study, Wuthnow (1976) identified four meaning systems that are consistent with those found in philosophical writings:

- A theistic system of meaning in which character traits and habits are rooted in a belief that virtues are transcendent values that have a source in God or gods;
- A social-scientific system of meaning in which there is a belief that virtues that espouse the good of society are important;
- An individualistic system of meaning in which the rights of the individual are seen to be more important than those of society, and reason and feeling more important than authority.
- A mystical system of meaning, which does not presume to understand the meaning of life, and emphasizes the importance of intuition, self, and soul.

The presuppositions behind these systems of thought have a profound impact on whether or not specific values (or any values) are regarded as right, and whether or not values should be taught. It does appear, however, that even within the different systems of meaning, there is general consensus on core values.

Consensus on Values

Wilson (1993) observed that moral values come from a rather imprecise moral sense that all people have. It is an intuitive or felt belief about how one

ought to act when doing so under their own free will, as opposed to acting under duress. Evidence for a moral sense comes when people speak in a detached way about the behavior of others. Conduct and speech are either praised or condemned. Core moral values are centered generally around the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do to you."

A number of studies have been done to identify core moral values. Kidder (as cited in Kidder and Born, 1999) interviewed twenty-four men and women around the world, described as moral exemplars, in an attempt to determine universal values. Loges and Kidder (as cited in Kidder and Born, 1999) continued this study by surveying 272 men and women at a conference convened in San Francisco by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1996. Kidder said his findings with each group, and with additional diverse groups he surveyed around the world, resulted in five key values being identified: compassion, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect. Kidder believed these values are so universal they are part of almost all religious perspectives. Similarly, Childs (1999) researched moral development and existing programs in search of universal concepts of character to include in the Heartwood Ethics Curriculum. She found that courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty, and love ought to be included in this group. In another study, Popov (1997) identified over 300 values (which she terms, virtues) by looking at religions and cultures worldwide. The virtues were acknowledged as being valued by all faiths, cultures, sacred literature, and oral traditions. Lickona (1998) observed a similar conclusion. In talking of core ethical values such as respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, self-

control, and courage, he says, "They are affirmed by religious traditions around the world and transcend religious and cultural differences. They are rooted in our human nature and express our common humanity" (p.1). Patrick (1997) stated that the values we need are those traits of character necessary for the preservation and improvement of a democratic society. He suggested that respect, integrity, self-discipline, tolerance, and compassion are examples of essential values.

Bob Chase (1997), president of the National Education Association, said that core values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility are essential to relationships and citizenship, and that core values such as these are recognized by most people as legitimate, good, and self-evident. He added that core values are what bind us together as civilized people, that they transcend barriers of class, creed, and ethnicity. Carter (1996) observed the necessity for agreement on core values:

The common objection that Americans cannot agree on values is not only false - it is dangerous nonsense. True, we have trouble on such issues as abortion . . . But on the basic, our agreement is broad. . . . the values our public institutions (including our schools) reinforce should be consensus values - those that are shared across religious traditions. (p. 237)

DeRoche and Williams (2001) supported this view. "Whose values? The quick answer is straightforward - those values on which a community can reach consensus" (p. 18). DeRoche and Williams give several examples of American

states that have adopted education codes or resolutions that include specific core values.

One way of clarifying the need for agreement on core values is to look at what life and relationships might be like if certain values were not operant. Covey (1989), in referring to the need for agreement on principles of character, said,

I doubt that anyone would seriously consider unfairness, deceit, baseness, uselessness, mediocrity, or degeneration to be a solid foundation for lasting happiness and success. Although people may argue about how these principles are defined or manifested or achieved, there seems to be an innate consciousness and awareness that they exist. (p. 35)

Covey (1989) noted the universality of values that enhance relationships, stating that core values seem to exist in all human beings, regardless of social conditioning and loyalty to them. He cited fairness, integrity, service, excellence, patience, nurturance, and encouragement as being examples of the principles about which he is talking. He described these values as lighthouse principles that are, “ . . . natural laws, woven into the fabric of every civilized society throughout history and comprise the roots of every family and institution that has endured and prospered. They are self evident and can easily be validated by any individual” (p. 33). In a later book, Covey (1991) reaffirmed this point, “Correct principles are like compasses; they are always pointing the way. And if we know how to read them, we won’t get lost, confused, or fooled by conflicting voices and values” (p. 19). His statement parallels one made earlier by

Schaeffer (1982a) who observed, “. . . with norms of truth, morals, values, and knowing, we have tracks (or to use a better analogy, a North Star) which give unity to the internal and external world” (p. 341).

Both writers emphasize that such principles are not situationally specific, but are fundamental truths having universal application. They are rules for human conduct that are obvious in importance and of permanent value to human relationships. Values that enhance relationships are equated with truth, with what is right, and what is evident in the reality of daily life.

Bolman and Deal (1995), in writing of the need for societal values that reflect caring and justice, stated,

Technological breakthroughs have created previously unknown conveniences and efficiencies. Yet we still face an onslaught of problems that are frustratingly resistant to rational and technical solutions. To prevail in the face of violence, homelessness, economic depression, and widespread malaise, we need a vision of leadership rooted in the enduring sense of human wisdom, courage, and compassion. (p. 166-67)

These are the values that are able to give life meaning and are what make life worthwhile. The same values are critical whether they are seen in reference to society or to the individual. The impact on self-esteem is evident. As we view life through the lens of values that build relationships, we create a paradigm for effective living. With virtues at the core of our being we have in place the qualities that allow for competence, a sense of worthiness, and wisdom, all flowing from a solid, unchanging core. Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996)

affirmed this assertion. They identify three basic desires of human existence: freedom, creativity, and meaning. When these are nurtured within the boundaries of right relationships, we have the freedom to play, experiment, discover, create, and the freedom to fail. Viewed in this way, life becomes much less serious, but far more purposeful.

Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) and Covey (1989) agreed on the merits and results of serious introspection. The former said, "If we take time to reflect together on who we are and who we could choose to become, we will be led to explore . . . the principles and values we display in our behaviors . . ." (p. 100). Covey pointed to the activity of creating one's own eulogy as an undertaking that underscores the principles that people see as important. When people imagine what their activities might look like in light of imagined, imminent death, "The dominant central theme of their activities, the underlying principle, is love" (p. 132). Love, by definition, is the embodiment of values that build relationships. It includes such qualities as patience, kindness, consideration, and courage.

Values, Virtues, Ethics, and Principles

A look at the meanings of words related to the word "values" helps clarify what is meant by relational values. Wilson (1993) suggested that the word, values, is sometimes used as a code word for "virtues" or "morality". He believed that science and philosophy have created a spirit of skepticism in regard to a moral standard by saying there is no basis for a moral standard in logic or

science (p. viii). Given this general bias, values are spoken of rather than virtues or morality because people are fearful or guarded when speaking of a moral standard, lest they be thought of as unsophisticated or fanatical.

Wilson believed the word, values, implied the notion of taste or preference, like that of Hodgkinson's (1983) Type III or Type II values. It avoids the idea of a standard or obligation that virtues or morality might imply. Strike (1988) referred to the term "ethics" rather than virtues. He distinguished between values and ethical questions saying that values concern what we deem to be worth liking, or what we believe to be good, but that there is nothing obligatory about them. Ethics, on the other hand concerns obligations of what we ought to do, independent of what we want or choose. Josephson (1999) used the same terminology and makes a similar distinction. He divided values into two groups: ethical and nonethical values. He described ethical values as beliefs and attitudes about ways of being, and traits that are morally right and good; and nonethical values as all other beliefs and attitudes about what is desirable, effective, or wise without reference to the moral quality of the result. Popov (1997) focused on the word virtues, describing them as the good characteristics inherent in all people. She said they differ from values in that virtues are recognized by most cultures and religions as being desirable, whereas values differ from culture to culture. Covey (1989) was also careful to distinguish between virtues and values, but used the term "principles". He said, "A gang of thieves can share values, but they are in violation of the fundamental principles we're talking about" (p. 35).

Bennett (1995) saw values as related to preferences, and virtues as, “. . . unequivocal standards of right and wrong, noble and base, just and unjust” (p. 12). Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) spoke of values in the way that others talk of virtues, ethics or principles. They stated that values help to provide boundaries in thought and action. If we go outside them, we are likely to destroy relationships with people or with our earth.

It is evident that the terms, values, virtues, ethics, and principles, are used interchangeably by various writers, though virtues, ethics, and principles are more precise in meaning when referring to moral values. However, for this study the word values will be used to refer to the concepts being taught in the values education program. This choice of wording will be consistent with the terminology used in the treatment program at the schools where data is gathered, and with limited explanation, will be recognized by most readers.

Based on research and the weight of expert opinion, the following can be said about values, and the basis for accepting them:

1. Values are the source of meaning.
2. There are different categories of values.
3. People choose their values.
4. Values are an integral component of self-esteem.
5. The values people choose are evident as those that become lived out.
6. The values we live out impact relationships.

7. Moral values are generally accepted as principles that apply to individuals and society whether we like them or not.
8. Moral values are notions of how one ought to act under his/her own free will.
9. Moral values originate from a moral sense that all people have.
10. Research and expert opinion show there is consensus on core values across most religions and cultures. Included in the consensus are some form of compassion, honesty, fairness, responsibility, respect, and courage.

These characteristics of values clearly show a link between values, relationships, personal and social behavior, and the components of self-esteem, competence, and worthiness. They provide further support for the use of a measure of personal and social behavior as one of the factors in predicting self-esteem.

Our attention is now turned to academic achievement, another element whose relationship with self-esteem has been investigated.

The Relationship of Self-Esteem to Academic Achievement

While self-esteem undoubtedly affects behavior in many situations, research shows its precise relationship to academic achievement to be unclear. Conclusions from studies done on the relationship are not always in agreement. Rand (2000) presented a summary of research that shows four conclusions to

which researchers have come in considering the relationship of self-esteem and academic achievement:

- Academic achievement leads to improved self-esteem because students are motivated to achieve by their desire to acquire and demonstrate competence (Conrath, 1986; Holly, 1987).
- Self-esteem is a pre-requisite for academic achievement because students' feelings about themselves consciously or unconsciously affect their academic performance (Coopersmith [as cited in Miller & Neese, 1997]; Covington, 1989; Lecky, 1945).
- Self-esteem and academic achievement have a dynamic, reciprocal relationship because a change in one will cause a change in the other (Hamachek, 1995; Rice, 1998; Walz & Bleuer, 1992).
- Self-esteem has little relation to academic achievement because it is rooted in the applause of others. Teaching students to feel good about themselves undermines the emphasis that should be placed on basic subjects (Hewitt, 1998; Rand, 2000).

The differences in conclusions can be attributed to the researchers' definitions of self-esteem, emphasis on different components of self-esteem, methods used to assess self-esteem, or to some combination of these factors. For example those who see little relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement view self-esteem as a questionable concept or a myth (Hewitt, 1998).

Conrath (1986), who saw self-esteem as a product of achievement, believed that self-esteem was enhanced through skill development and internalization of values reflecting caring relationships. Vaíl (1994) saw the reciprocal relationship of self-esteem and achievement:

We know from common sense, experience, and now neuro-psychological research that positive emotional stances enhance a child's capacity for learning, just as negative ones . . . deplete intellectual energies. Strong self-esteem is the flower and fruit of active involvement, emerging competence, exposure to appropriate challenge, and willingness to risk.
(p. v)

Holly's (as cited in Reasoner, 1998) summary of studies on self-esteem indicated that most researchers supported the idea that academic achievement was more likely the cause of self-esteem, than self-esteem the cause of achievement. He acknowledged, however, that self-esteem and achievement go hand in hand, and that they feed off one another.

In 1986 the State of California established the Task Force to Promote Self-esteem and Personal Social Responsibility. One of the findings reported was that self-esteem was the most effective predictor of academic achievement. Caldwell (1998) is also representative of those who see self-esteem as a prerequisite to academic achievement. He studied the impact of self-esteem of different ethnic groups, and found that as children felt better about themselves, academic achievement improved.

Though research clearly indicates a relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, disagreement remains on causality. I share the belief expressed by the Development Studies Center (1999) that, "Intellectual, ethical, and social learning are not independent. Each affects the others." Supporting this view is a study by Faouri (1998) on the impact of learning disabilities and giftedness on the self-esteem of students. He found that self-esteem was positively related to both academic success and to success in the adult world. Gage and Berliner (1992) saw the same positive relationship between measures of achievement and self-esteem, but stated that it was not possible to tell from the data which variable is the cause of the other. Torruellas-Caceres (1997) found that self-esteem was not related to ethnicity, but that it did have a direct relationship to academic achievement.

In a summary of findings from three evaluations studies using a program developed by the Child Development Project (CDP, 1998), researchers found mixed results in whether or not program implementation made a significant impact on academic achievement. Of central importance to the program was the development of a caring community. It was noted, however, that in two schools most consistent with CDP's goals and emphases, gains were realized in academic achievement. Students were also found to have shown positive changes in a broad range of attitudes, feelings, and behaviors, which included ". . . positive interpersonal behavior (helpfulness, kindness, consideration) in the classroom; and [an increased] sense of personal efficacy. . . ." (p.8). The description of what occurred matches well with three components known to

contribute to self-esteem: an interaction of competence and worthiness, cognitive and affective learning, and change over time. The researchers suggested that a possible explanation for lack of achievement gains in other schools using the program might be the need for a change in motivation to precede a change in academic performance. Lewis, Schaps, and Watson (1996) underscored the importance of practices that enhance academic achievement and impact self-esteem by stating five principles that lead to caring communities and to higher academic performance. Three of the five principles are directly related to self-esteem: warm, supportive, stable relationships; intrinsic motivation; and attention to social and ethical dimensions of learning. The other two principles involve constructive learning and a challenging curriculum.

While the case for causality between self-esteem and academic achievement is not clear, correlation is evident. Based on this evidence, academic achievement was used as one of the independent variables in this study in an attempt to predict self-esteem.

Self-Esteem and Gender

Another factor associated with self-esteem is that of gender. A large number of studies have been done in this area, but three are cited here for the purpose of validating the use of gender as a variable that influences self-esteem.

Mruk (1999) observed that even in childhood, gender is capable of influencing self-esteem to a small, but measurable degree. His review of research shows that females tend to place greater importance on the worthiness

component of self-esteem (that is, being valued or accepted by others), and males tend to place greater importance on the competence component (success or failure).

Rothenberg (1995), in reporting analysis of the Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development, also found that girls' self-esteem is at a critical stage and is noticeably lower in the middle grades. She stated, "...many girls seem to think well of themselves in the primary grades but suffer a severe decline in self-confidence and acceptance of body image by the age of 12." (p. 1)

Reasoner (2000) observed, "Girls are much more likely than boys to say they are not 'smart enough' or 'not good enough' for their dream careers" (p. 38). It is evident that gender has a relationship to self-esteem. It was therefore used in this study as one of the independent variables to help predict student scores of self-esteem.

Examples of Research in Settings Where Values Have Been Taught

Antis (1997) conducted an experimental study in which he looked at two elementary schools, grades one through six, in rural Pennsylvania. One was a control school in which no explicit effort was made to teach values. The other was an experimental school in which values were taught using the Heartwood Curriculum and other character related initiatives over the period of one year. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data. Pre and post-tests were administered to both student groups. In addition, parents and

teachers were surveyed. Antis' study found the following: Ethical understanding for students at the experimental school showed a significant increase; ethical sensibility and ethical behavior at the experimental school showed an increase. These findings are consistent with the fact that self-esteem is lived on both the cognitive and affective levels because it involves acquiring values, living them, and personally experiencing the results.

Antis' study was part of a larger quantitative study that evaluated the Heartwood Institute's (1992) Ethics Curriculum for Children. The study was conducted by Leming (1998, 2000) in four schools. Pre and post-tests were administered to the two treatment schools and two control schools. Measures were taken on students' ethical understanding, ethical sensibility, ethical conduct, and ethnocentrism. In addition, classroom climate was measured by observational ratings on four characteristics: curricular substructure, teacher characteristics, curricular emphasis, and interpersonal relations. Leming found that the extent to which teachers set a clear moral example for students and spontaneously used moral language in the classroom, were the single most important classroom characteristics in explaining positive changes in student behavior. This "teacher factor" accounted for 21 per cent of the explained variance in positive changes in student behavior. Also of note in the findings was a higher propensity on the part of students in the control schools to act more ethically than students in the treatment schools. Leming (2000) suggested this outcome resulted from students being negatively influenced by certain teachers

in the treatment schools in their attitudes towards ethics in general. This teacher effect was also observed in an earlier study by Williams (1992).

In that study, Williams (1992) thoroughly examined how the value, respect for others, was taught and how the teaching affected students. She looked at a cross section of schools (one each of urban, suburban, and private) and students in grades six, seven, and eight. She surveyed, observed, and interviewed students, teachers, administrators, and parents to assess how respect for others was taught, and how it was learned by students. Williams found few differences in the way respect for others was taught across schools, but large differences in how the value was taught within schools. An important finding from her study was that respect for others was not well learned by students when it was only taught formally. She found that respect for others was best learned by students as teachers lived it, as they modeled quality teaching, and generally as they created a positive moral climate within the classroom.

Results of Williams' study find support in a historical review of character education by Leming (1993a). He found that traditional didactic approaches of a values curriculum and moralizing by teachers have no discernable influence on character development, and that where moralizing and modeling do not match, the opposite lesson may be learned.

Williams' and Lemings' findings of the need for modeling and of a positive moral climate are paralleled by results of research conducted by Child Development Project researchers (CDP, 1998) in a study carried out to evaluate their own program. The CDP is a comprehensive program developed for

elementary schools to help strengthen children's caring qualities, motivation to learn, and their higher order cognitive abilities. The study involved classroom observations, student questionnaires, teacher questionnaires, and student achievement measures. It focused on the effectiveness of the CDP program within classrooms. The researchers concluded that the development of a caring community was of central importance to the success of the program.

Jacobi (1997) conducted a study in Whiteside School, Belleville, Illinois, in a Kindergarten to Grade 8 public school. The purpose of the study was to determine if a character education program, called 'ARCH', had a positive influence on student behavior, and whether it helped students develop a positive value system. The ARCH program consisted of moral education interwoven throughout the curriculum. Jacobi conducted her research by triangulating data from interviews and two sets of surveys done with both teachers and students. Her study concluded that the ARCH program did have positive influence and empowerment upon primary and intermediate age students (Kindergarten to grade 5), but showed very little empowerment for students in grades 6 through 8.

Smith (1997) found that a character education program was both statistically and educationally significant for a group of African American students. She administered a Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale pre and post-test to two non-randomized groups of 90 students: a treatment group who received character education teaching for a period of six weeks and a control group who did not. Analysis of co-variance was used to determine whether post-test scores were statistically different from pre-test scores. Her

findings showed that the self-esteem of the students, who were taught values by way of character education, was higher than the self-esteem of the students who did not receive the same teaching. Though the results of this study were encouraging, the short length of time during which the teaching of values took place is of concern.

Cole (1994) investigated the effects a character education program, Skills for Adolescence, had on the character development of 80 8th-grade students. She administered a Children's Self Concept Attitudinal Inventory in pre and post-test measures of six categories of personal and social relationships. While there were positive changes in all six categories, analysis of the data showed none of the changes were statistically significant.

For each of the six studies mentioned, a plan of action was in place, which reflected the same intent as that of the school district in the current study: to move the teaching of values from intuition and chance to foresight, knowledge, and planning.

Summary of Literature Review

In the preceding literature review, we have seen the importance of competence, worthiness, and values in the concept of self-esteem. Self-esteem is dynamic in that it is a lived experience, is developmental, and has both cognitive and affective processes. Values are integral to the concept of self-esteem because values and standards are part of how one is able to judge one's own competence and worthiness. Values are also critical to relationships and

relationships have major influences on both the cognitive and affective domains of self-esteem. Due to the importance of values, types of values were distinguished, as was the importance of personal choice and will. Both research and expert opinion pointed to the universal importance of values such as courage, respect, responsibility, justice, and caring.

Research showed support for a correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement, but differed on causality. It showed a correlation between self-esteem and gender, and also a correlation between self-esteem and social skills (or citizenship skills).

Finally, research in settings where values have been taught indicates student behavior was influenced, though not always positively, where a clear attempt existed in the schools to pass on values. It would appear that whatever curriculum is used as a vehicle for teaching values, the modeling of positive character qualities by teachers is an essential component in seeing positive character development in students.

To this point of the study we have established the importance of self-esteem, values and relationships and their intimate connection with one another. Research support has been shown, linking self-esteem to factors such as academic achievement, social skills, and gender. The opportunity existed to further investigate these interactions and attempt to measure how they influence the lives children in a setting where values have been taught. Our attention is now turned to the research design for the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study is to determine if there was a significant difference in measures of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught and those who did not receive such instruction. A quasi-experimental research design was utilized to measure the self-esteem of students, and to determine the statistical relationship of self-esteem to the formal teaching of values. The specific research questions identified in Chapter One were:

1. Is there a significant difference in measures of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught in their school as part of the curriculum and those who did not receive such instruction?
2. To what extent do gender and success in school contribute to students' self-esteem?

Operational Definitions

Several terms used in describing the methodology require clarification. These operational definitions were given in Chapter One, but are repeated here for convenience. Most readers will understand the generic meaning of each

term, but more a detailed definition has been given to provide a clear understanding of how specific data was determined.

Academic Grade Point Average

Academic Grade Point Average (AGPA) is an evaluation of student academic achievement relative to curriculum objectives. A four-point scale was used at the end of the school year to indicate how the student was meeting the objectives. Results were taken from student reports on Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, and averaged into a cumulative index for AGPA. The rubric for evaluating academic achievement is shown in Appendix A.

Citizenship Grade Point Average

Citizenship Grade Point Average (CGPA) is a measure of the student's attitudinal and behavioral performance relative to school and classroom expectations. Teachers used a four-point Likert scale to evaluate students on each of five classroom expectations. These included: showing responsibility, showing respect for self and others, participating actively in learning, working co-operatively, and using time wisely. For the purpose of this study, the five scores were combined into one CGPA index. The rubric for evaluating achievement in citizenship is shown in Appendix A and is referred to in the reporting document as Personal and Social Behaviors.

Group Membership

Group membership refers to whether a student was in the treatment group having been taught the values education curriculum, or the control group that was not taught the values education curriculum. All students in the treatment group population received the formal teaching of values for four years. Academic and citizenship data was not available for the few students who were in the program for less than four years, and therefore they were not included in the sample population.

Historical Data

Historical data refers to the evaluative information available on each student from previous school years. Timing for the start of the study meant that the Student Self-Esteem Inventory was completed by students after the start of their 8th-grade year. Post treatment academic and citizenship information was gathered from final marks available at the completion of each student's 7th-grade year, four years after the start of the values education program. Pre-treatment report card information was gathered from final evaluations available prior to the start of the values education program.

Success in School or The Classroom Effect

This is a variable created by averaging a student's Academic Grade Point Average (AGPA) with his or her Citizenship Grade Point Average (CGPA). The purpose in doing so was to capture what happens in the classroom by combining

in one variable the available data that reflects what happens in the classroom. The amalgamation of academic achievement, behavior, and attitude are included in this variable.

The Treatment

As noted in the Background to the Study, the school district in which the study was conducted, had established ten goals for their schools (Chapter One, Table 1). One of the goals was to develop the moral, ethical, and spiritual values of students. As part of the plan to meet this goal, sixteen specific values were adopted by the district trustees as values that supported school district goals (Chapter One, Table 2). The values had been identified and consensus had been reached as a result of discussions that included a broad range of community representatives. Detailed materials were prepared by teachers for use throughout the district to teach values to students at various grade levels. Lesson plans were provided to assist teachers in helping students understand and internalize the sixteen values. A number of one-day workshops were held for teachers to introduce the lesson guides, to encourage use of the lessons, and to illustrate how other curricula might be enriched through integration of discussions about values. Also, because the values taught were identified as being core community values, school administrators were given journal articles on specific values. The journal articles were to be included in newsletters to parents so that values taught at school could be a focus for discussion at home. Students in the school district were expected to receive formal lessons at school

in all of the 16 values in each year of from Grades 1 through 8. Students in the treatment group for this study began the values education curriculum in grade 4, the first year the program was introduced in the district.

A typical lesson plan included a specific objective along with several suggested instructional strategies. The lesson outlines included eight steps:

- Connecting with the value by investigating what it means;
- Examining personal definitions of the value;
- Imagining what the value looks like;
- Defining the value by comparison and contrast;
- Trying and experiencing the value;
- Extending knowledge of the value through writing;
- Refining understanding of the value through discussion;
- Integrating understanding of the value in real world situations.

Instructional strategies suggested for involving students included the use of learning partners; grouping according to mixed ability, according to interest, random grouping, and whole class projects; story-theater; and literature circles. Grade appropriate literature resources were provided along with ways in which literature might be used. In addition, the lesson package came with a recommendation that teachers use a comprehensive approach to teaching values by integrating each value concept across the curriculum, through classroom management, by way of extra curricular activities, and by modeling. Teachers were asked to look for specific areas in their curriculum where particular values might be introduced. It was recommended that classroom

management be built around positive development of values rather than on rules that reflect negative boundaries. For example, a class policy dealing with punctuality was stated as follows: "Being on time is a way to show respect for others and a way of demonstrating my own responsibility." Suggestions for incorporating values education into extra-curricular activities included timely illustrations of values such as co-operation, determination, and enthusiasm. Modeling was emphasized as critical to the values education program, both in the classrooms and outside the classrooms.

The lesson plans were developed for three grade groupings: Kindergarten to Grade 2, Grades 3 to 5, and Grades 6 to 8. They offer sensitivity toward cultural differences, and emphasize both personal and social responsibility. There is recognition in guiding statements preceding lesson plans that character formation involves acquiring internal qualities through the practice of good habits, and that positive social skills and attitudes are necessary to succeed in life.

Methodology

Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1996), pointed out that quantitative research uses objective measurement and numerical analysis of data in an attempt to explain changes in relationships between various phenomena. Quantitative methods were appropriate for this study because the nature of the questions being asked required the availability of numerical data, and the need to determine the extent of relationship between measures of self-esteem, achievement, and citizenship.

It is important to note that other metrics could have been used, and indeed would be valuable in measuring the success of the values education program. Increases or decreases in referrals to administrators, detentions, student/student and student/teacher conflicts, as well as parent phone calls and letters are important barometers of what is working well or not working well in a school. These and additional measures ought to be examined in a full evaluation of the values education program. The purpose of this study, however, is to look at how the values education program might impact student self-esteem.

Data collection began when two groups of students were given a post-test measure of self-esteem at the start of their 8th-grade. Having students complete the Student Self-Esteem Inventory (SSEI) at this particular time was both convenient and necessary. Grade 8 is the last year of elementary school for students in the district. It was convenient to gather results of the SSEI at the start of students' 8th-grade, and at the same time, gather historical data from their 4th-grade and 7th-grade permanent school records. There was a need to combine "end of grade 7" report card information and "start of grade 8" self-esteem information because this was the only window of opportunity to have access to students and to their historical data in the same school building. A treatment group of 37 students had the values curriculum formally taught as part of their curriculum during their school years, 4th-grade through 7th-grade. A control group of 62 students did not have the values curriculum formally taught. A few students in each group moved into the school district after the treatment program had begun. They were not included as part of the sample population,

because in each case, some historical data was unavailable. The schools selected for the groups were independently identified by school district personnel and by principals as schools where the values curriculum was formally taught, or as schools where the curriculum was not formally taught. In addition, the sites were chosen because of their socio-economic similarities. School district personnel identified the sites as being demographically similar, and their judgment was confirmed from statistics compiled by the city-planning department. The selection of sites included elements of purposive sampling. Pyrczak and Randall (2000) described a purposeful sample as, “. . . a group of participants that a researcher selects because they have characteristics that make them especially worthy of attention” (p. 97). Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1996) noted that purposive sampling involves the use of judgment in selecting elements from a population that are representative of the whole. In this case, purposive sampling meant that possible sites for measurement were those known as sites at which students received the treatment or at sites which they have not received the treatment. In addition, students at the schools chosen were known to have similar social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Data for the sample population is shown in Chapter Four, Tables 4 and 5.

A multiple regression analysis was used to determine the extent of post-treatment relationship of the independent variables to the dependent variable, self-esteem. The independent variables, chosen on the basis of the literature review in Chapter Two, were Academic Grade Point Average (AGPA), Citizenship Grade Point Average (CGPA), Gender, and Group to which the

students belonged (control or treatment group). Had the control and treatment groups been identical with respect to demographic characteristics, the post-treatment measure of self-esteem would have been sufficient for the study. However, since the groups were not exactly the same, and since no pre-treatment measure of self-esteem had been done, a measure of self-esteem was estimated to ascertain what self-esteem scores might have been at the start of the program. This was done using coefficients from the regression model calculated at the end of 7th-Grade with historical data available from the start of the values education program. Change in self-esteem could then be calculated.

Academic Grade Point Average for each student was recorded from permanent record files using their 7th-grade final marks. Results were taken from achievement reports on Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Language Arts had four subcategories, while Math, Science, and Social Studies each had three subcategories. Each subcategory had a maximum possible score of four on a four-point scale. The report card format is shown in Appendix A. Averages were calculated for each subject, then an overall academic grade point average determined.

Citizenship Grade Point Average was similarly calculated. Each student received a score from one to four in the five categories of Citizenship. These scores were then averaged for an overall mark.

Finally, numbers were assigned for gender, and for the control and treatment group so that these variables could be used in regression equations. Males were assigned 0, and females, 1. Students in the treatment group were

assigned the number 1, and students in the control group were assigned the number 0.

While other family related variables were shown in the literature review to impact self-esteem, they were not included due to lack of available data. Teaching style, attractiveness of the teacher, and time spent on teaching values are also variables in the school setting that may impact self-esteem, but measures were unavailable. The ideal application of data would have been to identify and record data for each and every variable that impacts self-esteem. In so doing, the combined effect of all variables would have fully explained the variation in self-esteem scores.

As noted in the section of this chapter entitled, Measuring Instrument, the Student Self-Esteem Inventory (Reasoner & Gilberts, 1992) is designed to ask questions that relate to the school environment only. The total possible raw score for each student on the self-esteem inventory was 50 points. To enable variations in self-esteem to be reported as percentage changes, student scores on the inventory were multiplied by two, and thus the total possible score became 100. This allowed any modification in self-esteem scores brought about by the independent variables to be referred to as a percentage change.

Data for grade point averages and citizenship scores for both regression analyses were available from permanent student records. With the post-treatment measure of self-esteem available, multiple regression models were calculated until the best fitting model was found. Results from this particular model were used to estimate pre-treatment scores of self-esteem. With pre and

post-treatment scores of self-esteem available, change in self-esteem was then calculated for each student. This measure, along with changes in academic and citizenship scores that had occurred over the duration of the values education program, allowed regression analysis to be used to more rigorously check for a treatment effect.

Hypotheses

The ultimate purpose of the following hypotheses was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between measures of self-esteem of students in the treatment group and those in the control group, and to discover the extent to which gender and success in school contributed to a measure of students' self-esteem. To determine these statistical relationships, a post-treatment measure of student self-esteem was obtained along with recent 7th-Grade data for independent variables. This data was entered in a multiple regression equation to determine how well the independent variables (AGPA, CGPA, Gender, and Group) predict the measure of the self-esteem of students. Results from the multiple regression calculations were then used in a similar equation (using historical data for AGPA and CGPA) to predict a pre-treatment measure of self-esteem. Change in self-esteem could then be calculated and used to see what relationships might exist between change in self-esteem and the change in the independent variables.

The following hypotheses were tested at the 0.10 level for statistical significance:

Hypothesis #1: The purpose of this test was to determine whether measures of the individual independent variables (AGPA, CGPA, Gender, or Group Membership) have an effect on a measure of the dependent variable (self-esteem).

- Null hypothesis: Individually, the measures of independent variables (AGPA, CGPA, Gender, and Group Membership) have no effect on the measure of the dependent variable (self-esteem).

Hypothesis #2: The purpose of this test was to determine whether the independent variables, grouped together, have an effect on the measure of the dependent variable, self-esteem.

- Null hypothesis: Taken together, none of the independent variables have an effect on the measure of the dependent variable, self-esteem.

Hypothesis #3: The purpose of this test was to combine two of the independent variables, AGPA and CGPA, to see if they have an effect on the measure of student self-esteem.

- Null hypothesis: Performance of students in the classroom as measured by an average of AGPA and CGPA scores, has no effect on the measure of the dependent variable, self-esteem.

Hypothesis #4: The purpose of this test was to determine which of the independent variables has the greatest effect on the measure of the dependent variable, self-esteem.

- Null hypothesis: The independent variables (AGPA, CGPA, Gender, and Group) have the same impact on the measure of the dependent variable (self-esteem).

Hypothesis #5: The purpose of this test was to determine whether the treatment made a statistically significant difference between measures of self-esteem of students in the treatment group and those in the control group.

- Null hypothesis: Group membership had no effect on the measure of the dependent variable, self-esteem.

The Measuring Instrument

The Student Self-Esteem Inventory (SSEI, Reasoner & Gilberts, 1992) was used for this study as a measure of student self-esteem. It is a 50-item inventory appropriate for students in Grades 4 through 12. The SSEI form presents favorable and unfavorable statements about self to respondents who indicate whether the statement is “usually true for me” or “usually false for me”.

The SSEI is founded on a study by Reasoner (1982) in which he identified five essential factors constituting self-esteem: security, identity, belonging, purpose, and competence. According to Reasoner’s theory, “. . . students with high self-esteem would have a strong sense of security and identity, feel a sense of belonging to a group, and feel both purposeful and competent in their school efforts. The converse would be true for students with low self-esteem” (Reasoner & Gilberts, 1991, p. 1).

The SSEI is unique to the school setting because the questions assess only those aspects of self-esteem that are influenced by school experiences. In research on Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory, Gilberts (1987) found that when statements about home and family were removed from the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, ninety-five per cent of the variance remained accounted for. This supports the notion that a valid measure of self-esteem can be made when the statements to which students respond are focused on the school environment.

Reliability and Validity of the SSEI

The SSEI has been normed in the United States, comparing test results of 10,000 students. All five subscales were found to be consistent in grades 5 through 9. Reliability tests included the Kuder-Richardson procedure, which assesses the inter-item consistency of responses to the statements. The Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficients for 5th through 12th-grades ranged from 0.90 to 0.96 (Reasoner and Gilberts, 1991). Nunnally (1967) stated that reliability coefficients of 0.60 are acceptable for research purposes, thus making this reliability measure well above that limit.

Three types of validity data are reported for the SSEI. The construct validity refers to whether the SSEI measures the factors it is designed to measure. It showed consistency in Grades 5 through 12. Concurrent validity assesses whether the SSEI correlates with other measures of the same constructs. In comparison with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, a

correlation of 0.7 was found. A similar test with the Piers and Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale found a correlation of 0.62 (Reasoner & Gilberts, 1991). Predictive validity refers to the ability of the instrument to predict levels on measures of other phenomena that are theoretically related to the constructs being measured by the scales. The SSEI sub-scales of security and identity correlated at statistically significant levels of 0.43 and 0.35 with SAT reading scores. The SSEI composite score correlated with reading scores at the 0.27 level, indicating a weaker, yet still significant relationship.

Strengths and Limitations of the SSEI

The construct validity of the SSEI is particularly strong in applications with students in Grades 5 through 8, and the instrument will be used with students who have started 8th-grade. The questions asked on the SSEI are aimed at the school environment, and that was where the treatment took place. The instrument has a 5th-grade reading level, making it suitable for the intended purpose.

Limitations of the SSEI include its relatively short history, dating from 1991. Though research has been done on reliability and validity, it is limited. The SSEI authors suggest caution in using the test at the 4th-grade level and for interpreting the Purpose and Competence sub-scale scores in Grades 9 through 12; however, students at these grade levels are outside the boundaries of this study.

Timeline

Official permission from the school district to conduct the study was obtained in September, 2000. The University of San Diego's Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects gave approval to proceed in November, 2000. Gathering of data followed. Analysis of data occurred between January and March, 2001.

Analysis of Data

Raw data was recorded from permanent student records. It was organized in tables to enable summarizing and averaging of individual student achievement scores and SSEI scores. Data was further analyzed using multiple regression analysis. This method was chosen because of the numerical nature of the data, and the need to look for relationships between self-esteem and correlating factors. Regression equations were calculated using self-esteem as the dependent variable, and all or various combinations of independent variables: academic achievement, citizenship, gender, and group. When the best fitting model was found, it was used with student data from the start of the values education program to calculate a pre-treatment estimate of self-esteem. Change in self-esteem between post and pre-treatment scores was then calculated, and used to further test for a treatment effect. An in depth analysis of data is given in Chapter Four.

Ethical Considerations

The established procedures of The University of San Diego's Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects were followed when embarking on this research study. A copy of the approval form is in Appendix B. Signed letters of permission were obtained from the parents of each student who participated. A sample letter is shown in Appendix C. The letter asked permission to gather historical data on the independent variables, academic grade point average, and citizenship grade point average, as well for each student to complete the SSEI. Participants' names remain confidential. The data will be kept for a period of five years in accordance with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (1998) guidelines for data verification. All data is stored securely and will be disposed of in such a way as to be certain that confidentiality is maintained.

Assumptions

An assumption of the study was the belief that self-esteem can be measured. The literature review addressed the fact that some researchers do not see self-esteem as a valid concept. Evidence from the literature review suggests self-esteem is a valid and very important concept to social science, and that it is reasonable to assume self-esteem can be measured.

A second assumption of the study was that there would be similarity in the treatment that took place in different classrooms in different schools. It is

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assumed that teachers taught the lessons on values equally well, spent similar amounts of time on the formal lessons, and that students were equally receptive.

A third assumption was that values are not openly discussed and not directly or formally taught in the control classrooms. It is recognized that there is no such thing as values free education because values are communicated in all we do (Lickona, 1991). It is, however, the formal teaching of values that distinguished the treatment schools from the control schools in this study.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the proposed research include the reality that teachers themselves, by virtue of their personalities and teaching styles, have an impact on the environment, self-esteem, and learning of the students. Some who were more knowledgeable, competent, or passionate in teaching values may have had a greater impact on students than those who were less knowledgeable or skillful in teaching. In addition, it was difficult to know whether teachers in the treatment group spent the same or varying amounts of time using the values education lessons, and whether they engaged students in exactly the same activities.

A second limitation of the study was that the school district and/or school administrators had control over the identification of the school sites and classrooms that were available for the study. To mitigate this limitation, a purposive sample, rather than a completely random sample, was used, as discussed in the section in this chapter entitled Methodology.

A third limitation of the study was the fact that statistical methods are inherently limited in their ability to distinguish some relationships because of the many interacting variables involved in our complex personal and social behaviors. Also, no measures were available for certain variables that could have significant impact in students' lives. Examples of such variables are family income, a recent death in the family, family break-up, other family problems, or other relational problems. An attempt was made to limit the impact of home-related issues by using the SSEI, but the nature of life is that some spillover may occur from one area to the other. For example, it has been shown that family income shows a relationship to the self-esteem of children (Galloway, 1994). Specific information on this item was not available, though it was known that the family income for students in the control group was 10 per cent higher than the family income for students in the treatment group. Though this difference is not large, it may have masked some of the change in self-esteem brought about by the values education program.

Finally, some may see the writer's personal bias as a limitation of the study. It is my belief that it is the privilege and responsibility of teacher/leaders to pass on values that enhance healthy relationships. I also believe that the need to do so is urgent. Whether the researcher's bias does or does not limit the value of the research is left up to the reader to decide. As Polanyi (1969) artfully argued, there is no such thing as a completely neutral observer. It is sufficient to be clear about what one's bias might be, and to use technical rigor and documentation of methodology so that others may review for bias (Patton, 1990).

Using quantitative measures for gathering data, the research study focused on the question of whether there was a statistically significant difference between measures of the self-esteem of students when values were formally taught as part of their curriculum, and students who were not formally taught values as part of their curriculum.

Summary

In this chapter, the research design for the study was described, including how the sample populations were determined. The independent variables were defined, treatment explained, and the method of collecting data portrayed. Five hypotheses were prepared to help answer the two research questions concerning whether or not the treatment of teaching values showed a statistical relationship to a measure self-esteem. The self-esteem measuring instrument, the SSEI, was described verifying its reliability and validity. Ethical considerations in regard to data collection were addressed, and limitations of the study were described. We turn now to the results of data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter Four begins with a summary of the purpose of the study and a description of the methodology. It then examines the results of data collection and provides analysis in light of the two research questions and the five hypotheses. The story is told about how the sample population was chosen, how data for the variables was reported, and continues by presenting results and analysis of multiple regression models.

The purpose of the study is to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in measures of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught as part of the curriculum, and those who did not receive such instruction. A review of the theories of self-esteem identified it to be a dynamic relationship of competence and worthiness. Self-esteem was defined as the lived status of one's competence in dealing with the challenges of living in a worthy way over time (Mruk, 1999). Authentic self-esteem is based in reality, and balances recognition of self-worth with consideration of the needs and feelings of others. Values such as courage, respect, and integrity were shown in the literature review to be an integral part of authentic self-esteem by way of theoretical construct, by definition, and by lived experience. Given what is known about the interdependence of self-esteem and values, and that values were being formally taught to a group of students, it

seemed reasonable to investigate whether, in this setting, a statistically significant difference in self-esteem could be measured between students who were formally taught values education lessons, and those who had not.

Background

The setting for the study was a Canadian school district that had identified a set of values through community consensus. In addition, they had prepared curriculum and lesson plans, and had instituted a values education program for a period of four years. Initiative for the program came jointly from school district leadership and the teachers. Workshops were held to introduce the curriculum to teachers, to encourage them to model the values, and to suggest they integrate discussion of values throughout other curricula. The lessons focused on 16 values reflecting four core values (as shown in Chapter One, Table 2): respect, responsibility, excellence, and joy. The lesson outlines included eight steps:

- Connecting with the value by investigating what it means;
- Examining personal definitions of the value;
- Imagining what the value looks like;
- Defining the value by comparison and contrast;
- Trying and experiencing the value;
- Extending knowledge of the value through writing;
- Refining understanding of the value through discussion; and
- Integrating understanding of the value in real world situations.

A variety of co-operative learning formats were suggested for involving students during the lesson. These included the varied use of random grouping, same interest groups, learning partners, and mixed ability teams; or larger groups including literature circles, whole-class projects, and story-theater.

Two research questions guided the investigation. The first asked, "Is there a significant difference in measures of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught and those who did not receive such instruction?" Part of the task in answering this question was to identify, by way of literature review, variables that have some correlation to self-esteem in a school setting. Academic success, gender, behavior, and values, were found to be factors that contributed to self-esteem. Other factors including physical appearance, social groupings, and physical abilities are known to be linked to self-esteem, but were not included in this study due to lack of available data. The literature review also recognized the home as having the greatest impact on self-esteem; however, measurable items from this source, including family income, were not available. With the focus on a school setting, and given the constraints of accessible, measurable variables, a second research question was asked, "To what extent do gender and success in school contribute to a measure of students' self-esteem?"

The research questions and literature support for correlates of self-esteem led to five null hypotheses:

1. Individually, none of the independent variables (Academic Grade Point Average [AGPA], Citizenship Grade Point Average [CGPA], Gender, and Group) has an effect on the dependent variable (self-esteem).
2. The independent variables, grouped together, have no effect on self-esteem.
3. Success in school, as measured by an average of the scores of AGPA and CGPA, has no effect on self-esteem.
4. The independent variables each have an equal effect on self-esteem.
5. The group to which students belonged (control or treatment) has no effect on self-esteem.

With numerical data available and determining the extent of relationships among variables as an objective, multiple regression analysis was chosen as the appropriate analytical tool to aid in the investigation. The plan for data analysis included determining a post-treatment measure of self-esteem using the Student Self-Esteem Inventory (SSEI, Reasoner & Gilberts, 1992). Then, using post-treatment data for each independent variable, determine relationships from the best fitting multiple regression model. Even though the control and treatment groups were demographically similar, enough difference existed to warrant the estimation of a pre-treatment measure of self-esteem with which to determine the change in self-esteem over the course of the values education program. Obtaining this estimate was accomplished by combining correlation coefficients from the post-treatment model, with historical pre-treatment data in a regression equation.

The SSEI was administered to the entire sample population: those who had received the values education program during the period of 4th-grade through 7th-grade, and those who had not. The SSEI was used because it was designed for students of this age group, and because it was intended to assess only those aspects of self-esteem that are influenced by school experiences. In addition, its predictive validity and reliability have been established.

The SSEI scores were recorded along with academic and citizenship scores from final 7th-grade report cards, and data indicating gender and the group to which students belonged. The information was entered into a multiple regression equation to determine a post-treatment relationship of the independent variables (AGPA, CGPA, Gender, and Group) to the dependent variable (self-esteem). A pre-treatment measure of self-esteem was calculated by using coefficients from the post-treatment regression model, and inserting student data from permanent records prior to the start of the treatment. Change in pre and post treatment scores of self-esteem was then determined. A regression model was used to look for relationships between change in self-esteem and change in the independent variables.

Choosing the Sample

A first task in addressing the research questions and hypotheses was to select students who had been taught the values education curriculum, and a demographically similar group of students who had not been taught the curriculum. I met with two members of the school district office to enlist their help

in identifying two such groups. As a result, a letter was sent to over forty elementary school principals. The letter expressed school district support for the study, and requested principals' help in identifying students who would fit into one of the two groups. Four administrators responded. They identified groups of students, and the teachers who could be contacted to ask about participating in the study. The sample size for the control and treatment groups arising from these contacts is shown in Table 4.¹

Table 4

Control and Treatment Group Size

	Control Group			Treatment Group			Sample Population		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
No. in Group	30	32	62	21	16	37	51	48	99
% of Group	48	52	100	57	43	100	52	48	100

Students from four schools became part of the sample population. The control group is larger because schools from this group each had two participating classes. The schools in the treatment group both contributed one class. All students in the treatment group had been exposed to the values education program from 4th-Grade through 7th-Grade.

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¹ Students in the Control and Treatment Groups included only those students for whom pre and post treatment academic data was accessible. Four students were eliminated as a result of these criteria.

Demographic Comparison

The next step was to determine the similarity of the two groups. School district officials were asked to look for two groups, demographically alike. Based on their personal knowledge of the city, they believed the two groups of students in the sample population to be comparable. When the groups were identified, a further check was made to confirm similarity by using neighborhood profiles developed by the city's planning and building department. The profiles allowed comparisons of the neighborhoods in which the schools were located. Table 5 shows data gathered by the city, midway through the four-year history of the values education program. The treatment and control groups are within one percentage point of one another in relation to having English as the primary

Table 5

Demographic Data from Treatment and Control School Neighborhoods

Neighborhood	% of Households with English as the Primary Language	% of Households with post-secondary education	Average family income
Treatment group schools	87.5	31	\$53,000
Control group schools	86.5	29	\$59,000

language spoken at home. Education backgrounds in the homes are similar. The biggest difference is that of average family income where a \$6000 or 10 per cent difference exists between the groups, with the control group having the higher income. As noted in Chapter Three, it would have been helpful to the

study to have included the family income of students as an independent variable, but data was not accessible.

Data from the demographic statistics, together with the intuitive insight provided by district personnel, gave the researcher confidence that the two groups were similar enough in nature to proceed with the study. Letters explaining the purpose of the study and requesting signed parent permission were returned by students who participated. A copy of the letter is shown in Appendix C. Both groups had an affirmative response rate of 76 per cent.

Calculating Values for the Variables

The total possible raw score for each student on the Student Self-Esteem Inventory (SSEI) was 50 points. To enable changes in self-esteem to be reported as a percent, student scores were multiplied by two, and thus the total possible score became 100. Any change brought about by the independent variables, could then be referred to as a percentage change.

Academic Grade Point Average (AGPA) for each student was recorded from permanent record files using their grade 7 final marks. Results were taken from reports on Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Language Arts had four subcategories, while Math, Science, and Social Studies each had three subcategories. Each subcategory had a maximum possible score of four on a four-point scale. An example of the report card format is

shown in Appendix A. Averages were calculated for each subject, then an overall academic grade point average determined.

Citizenship Grade Point Average (CGPA) was similarly calculated. Each student received a score from one to four in the five categories of Citizenship. These scores were then averaged for an overall mark. The report card, shown in Appendix A, labeled the categories of citizenship as Personal and Social Behaviors.

Finally, numbers were assigned for gender, and for the control and treatment group so that these variables could be used in regression equations. Males were assigned "0", and females, "1". Students in the treatment group were assigned the number "1", and students in the control group were assigned the number "0". Means and standard deviations of variables for the whole of the sample population are displayed in Table 6. A look at Table 6 shows that the mean for self-esteem is 72.7. Note that this would have appeared as a score of approximately 36 out of a possible 50 on the SSEI. The raw scores were doubled to allow increases or decreases in self-esteem to be reported as percentage changes.

Table 6
Sample Population Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-Esteem	72.7	15.1
AGPA	3.01	.602
CGPA	3.08	.644

N = 99

The means, identified by group and gender, are shown in Table 7. The table shows that the self-esteem of students in the control group is slightly higher

Table 7

Control and Treatment Group Means

Source	Control Group*			Treatment Group**		
Means	Males	Females	Gp. Ave.	Males	Females	Gp. Ave.
Self-Esteem	75.4	73.5	74.4	71.1	68.4	69.2
AGPA	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.8	2.9	2.9
CGPA	3.0	3.4	3.2	2.7	3.1	2.9

* N = 62

** N = 37

than that of students in the treatment group. Males in each group have slightly higher self-esteem than females in the same group even though females have slightly higher academic and citizenship scores.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Initial Models

Several regression analyses were applied to the data as part of the analysis plan. First, the dependent variable, self-esteem was used in an equation with all the independent variables (AGPA, CGPA, Gender, and Group) to determine two sets of relationships: the degree to which the model as a whole explained the variation in the self-esteem scores of students, and the degree to which each of the variables individually contributed to the variation in self-esteem. Results of the former are shown in Table 8. The statistic indicating goodness of fit, R^2 , shows that the independent variables as a group explain 26

per cent of the variation in self-esteem scores. By extension, this means that 74 per cent of the variation is attributable to other factors, which is not surprising. As pointed out in the literature review of Chapter Two, other influences including

Table 8

R Values From Regression Model Using All Independent Variables

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
.510	.260	.229	13.22

family, peers, heredity, and volitional factors were identified as powerful influences on self-esteem. They were not included in the model for this study because data were not available. Had it been available, the data would have been included so that as much as possible of the variation in scores of student self-esteem might be explained.

Table 9 presents the estimated coefficients and their *t*-statistics from the

Table 9

Coefficients, *t*-values, and Significance of the Independent Variables

Variable	Estimated Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i>
Constant (B_0)	37.1	7.294	5.081***
AGPA	10.5	4.091	2.555**
CGPA	2.2	3.972	0.544
Gender	-3.8	2.796	-1.356
Group	-2.0	2.857	-0.708

** = significant at the 5% level

*** = significant at the 1% level

same model, indicating the degree to which the individual independent variables contribute to student self-esteem scores. Table 9 also shows that AGPA is the only statistically significant independent variable at or above the 10 per cent level of significance, the stated threshold of acceptability for rejecting each of the null hypotheses. The coefficient of AGPA, 10.5, indicates that in this particular model, a change in one academic grade point produces a 10.5 per cent change in a student's self-esteem score. For example, if each of the other variables remained constant, a change in AGPA from 2.4 to 3.4 is likely to mean a 10.5 per cent increase in the self-esteem of a student.

Gender, while below the acceptable level of statistical significance of 10 per cent in this particular model, has a negative coefficient. The negative coefficient suggests that girls will have a lower score in self-esteem. The finding is supported by data from Table 7 which shows the self-esteem of girls in the sample population is slightly less than that of boys, even though academic achievement and citizenship scores are higher than that of boys in the same group. Also of interest in this model is the lack of significance of CGPA and of Group. The model shows that, in the sample population, the group to which students belonged had no statistically significant effect on the self-esteem of students. Citizenship scores are shown to have even less significance.

The analysis available from Table 9 indicates that we can reject a part of Hypothesis 1, that the independent variables individually have no effect on the measure of self-esteem. AGPA clearly shows a statistically significant correlation to self-esteem, and consistently did so as will be seen in other models. Gender

is without statistical significance in this model, but will show a weak, statistically significant relationship to self-esteem in a later model. Based on evidence shown in Table 9, we would fail to reject the null hypothesis for the treatment, shown by the variable, Group. The *t*-score of -0.708 is well below the critical value needed to show that Group has statistical significance.

Although CGPA is shown to have little significance in relation to self-esteem, the Pearson correlation matrix in Table 10 shows CPGA to have a strong relationship with AGPA at 0.828. (A perfect correlation would be 1.0.) This indicates that AGPA and CGPA are related in what could be described as “success in school” or a “classroom effect”, in which behavior and achievement are combined. One of the assumptions of multiple regression analysis is that the

Table 10

Pearson Correlation of Individual Variables

Variable	Self-Esteem	AGPA	CGPA	Gender	Group
Self-Esteem	1.000	.491	.423	-.069	-.111
AGPA		1.000	.828	.072	-.095
CGPA			1.000	.228	-.211
Gender				1.000	-.103
Group					1.000

variables used as predictors are statistically independent of one another. Since the high correlation between AGPA and CGPA show they are not independent of one another, the two variables were combined in another regression model that ultimately explained best how the independent variables contributed to student's self-esteem.

Before looking at the best fitting regression model, it is important to note the strength and consistency of the independent variable, AGPA. Three other regression models were calculated using self-esteem as the dependent variable. Results, presenting the estimated coefficients and significance, are shown in Table 11. The first model used AGPA only as the independent variable and omitted CGPA, Gender, and Group. A second model included AGPA and Gender as the independent variables contributing to self-esteem, and a third

Table 11

Strength and Consistency of the Variable AGPA

Variables Used	AGPA Coefficient	<i>t</i>
AGPA	12.297	5.557***
AGPA, Gender	12.484	5.639***
AGPA, Gender, Group	12.317	5.534***

*** = significance at the 1% level

model included AGPA, Gender, and Group as the independent variables. Table 11 shows that in each case, AGPA was shown to have a consistent, statistically significant effect on self-esteem slightly greater in magnitude than the coefficient of 10.452 shown by the model in Table 9. In that particular model all four independent variables were included. The coefficients in Table 11 show that a one-unit change in AGPA would result in a change in self-esteem in the range of 12 per cent.

The importance of the relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem of students is further shown in Table 12. It shows that AGPA by itself explains 24.2 per cent of the variation in self-esteem scores in the regression model. Because it explains close to one quarter of the variation in

self-esteem scores, it is a finding of interest to educators and to parents as they work proactively in helping develop the self-esteem of children.

Table 12

R-Values Using AGPA as the Only Independent Variable

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the Estimate
.491	.242	.234	13.18

The Best Fitting Model

The second research question asked directly how success in school might contribute to student self-esteem. The close correlation observed in Table 7 between AGPA and CGPA, along with evidence from the literature review, supported the plan to combine the two variables into one variable. The purpose of doing so was to represent academic achievement, behavior, and attitude in one variable termed, Success in School. Combining the two variables was accomplished by averaging the AGPA and CGPA scores for each student. The success in school variable was used in a regression equation along with the variables, Gender and Group. The results are shown in Table 13. Combining the effect of AGPA and CGPA produced a higher impact on self-esteem than did other models in which AGPA and CGPA were separate variables. Table 13 shows that as Success in School changes by one grade point, a 12.5 per cent change in self-esteem occurs. These results are statistically significant at the one per cent confidence level. They indicate rejection of Hypothesis 3, which

stated that there would be no effect on the measure of self-esteem when AGPA and CGPA were combined.

Table 13 also shows that the independent variable, Gender, is significant at the 10 per cent confidence level. The negative coefficient indicates that girls in

Table 13

Coefficients Showing the Variable Effect and Significance

Variable	Estimated Coefficient	Standard Error	t
Constant	37.370	7.294	5.123***
Success in School (Ave. of AGPA, CGPA)	12.480	2.298	5.431***
Gender	-4.565	2.704	-1.689*
Group	-1.458	2.810	-.519

* = significance at the 10% level

*** = significance at the 1% level

the sample population are likely to score almost five per cent less than boys on the Student Self-Esteem Inventory. Therefore, the part of Hypothesis 1, which stated that the effect of gender on the measure of self-esteem would be zero, can be rejected at the ten per cent confidence level. This finding corresponds with results of an eight-year study by Greenberg and Lake (as cited in Reasoner, 2000), and observations by Mruk (1999) and Rothenberg (1995) that gender is capable of influencing self-esteem to a small but measurable degree. Mruk noted that the difference in self-esteem between genders corresponds to the differences in importance placed by genders on the worthiness and competence components of self-esteem. To test whether this effect was evident in the data, a regression analysis was calculated with the self-esteem scores separated into the elements of competence and worthiness. Partitioning competence and

worthiness was accomplished by placing sub-scores of the SSEI Inventory into categories of either competence or worthiness, based on sub-scale definitions provided by the authors, Reasoner and Gilberts (1991). It should be noted that the authors of the SSEI did not intend their inventory to be used to calculate sub-scales of competence and worthiness. Doing so was simply an attempt to use the SSEI to confirm relationships that others have reported. Results of the regression analysis showed no statistically significant relationship of Gender to either worthiness or competence.

One further observation from Table 13 is that the *t*-value and significance for the variable, Group, shows the treatment effect of teaching the values curriculum is not statistically significant. Additional analysis of this finding will be described in the next section, Review of Hypotheses. This lack of statistical significance for the treatment confirmed what was evident from previous regression models. We thus fail to reject Hypothesis 5, which stated that the treatment would have no effect on the measure of student self-esteem.

Table 14 illustrates the combined effect of the independent variables, success in school, gender, and group on the dependent variable, self-esteem.

Table 14

R-Values Using Gender, Group, Success in School Variables

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the Estimate
.501	.251	.228	13.23

The goodness of fit statistic, R^2 , shows that the three independent variables together explain 25.1 per cent of the variation in self-esteem scores. This means that 74.9 per cent of the variation is due to other variables not included in this model.

Review of Hypotheses

The first hypothesis stated that none of the independent variables would have an effect on the measure of student self-esteem. Tables 9 and 11 showed that this hypothesis can be rejected at the one percent confidence level because AGPA is statistically significant. Hypothesis 1 is rejected equally emphatically in Table 13 in which AGPA and CGPA are combined into one variable. The best fitting model shows that each change of “one” in the combined variable produces a 12.5 per cent change in the self-esteem scores when the other variables remain constant. With a *t*-ratio of 5.4, the probability is remote for this to happen by accident with a sample of the size used in this study. This measure of success in school has a statistically significant effect on self-esteem at the one per cent level. It is consistent with studies mentioned in Chapter Two such as that reported by the Child Development Project (CDP, 1998), which found a relationship between self-esteem, academic achievement, and positive behaviors in the context of a caring community. The same study also stated that the development of a caring community was of central importance to the success of the CDP program. A caring community is one in which caring values are lived out. Williams (1992) and Leming (1998) also found that values like respect for

others were best learned by students as teachers lived it, as they modeled quality teaching, and generally as they created a positive moral climate within the classroom. The finding of a strong relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem, when seen in light of these other studies, suggests that classroom climate and teacher modeling may be fruitful areas in which to extend this study.

The second hypothesis concerns whether the independent variables as an entire set had an effect on the measure of self-esteem. Tables 13 and 14 show that Hypothesis 2 can be rejected because both Gender and the combined, classroom effect of AGPA and CGPA have statistically significant effects on self-esteem scores. Mathematically this can be shown by an *F*-statistic determined from the mean squares calculated in the regression analysis and shown in Table 15². The calculated *F*-value of 10.630 is larger than the critical value of 5.04 found in the *F*-distribution table. This allows us to conclusively reject the null hypothesis because the variables as a group are statistically significant.

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² The *F*-statistic can be determined from the values calculated in the regression analysis and shown in the ANOVA, Table 15:

$$F = \frac{SSY - SSE / k}{SSE / (N - k - 1)} = \frac{\text{Mean Square of Regression}}{\text{Mean Square of Residual}} = \frac{1861.031}{175.069} = 10.630$$

where SSY = the total sum of squares; SSE = the sum of squares due to the error; N = the number of the sample population; and k = the number of variables in the model. The calculated *F* value is larger than the critical *F* value, 5.04 at the upper 0.1% point of the *F* distribution.

Table 15

ANOVA: Dependent variable, Self-Esteem. Predictors: Group, Gender, Success in School

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	5583.094	3	1861.031	10.630***
Residual	16631.532	95	175.069	
Total	22214.626	98		

*** = significance at the 1% level

The third hypothesis stated that the combined effect of AGPA and CGPA would have no effect on the measure of student self-esteem. As has been pointed out, the classroom effect or success in school variable had a statistically significant effect on self-esteem at the one per cent level of confidence. A more rigorous test of this hypothesis is done by using another form of the *F*-test. In this test, two separate regression equations are estimated: the first using all the independent variables, and the second omitting the AGPA and CGPA, but including the variables Gender and Group.³ The per cent of the variation explained in each equation (shown in Table 16 as R^2) is then used to see if the difference between the models is great enough to demonstrate statistical significance. Table 16 shows the model summary from both regression

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³ Calculations for the *F*-statistic used to test Hypothesis 3 are as follows:

$$F = \frac{(R^2_{UR} - R^2_R) / q}{(1 - R^2_{UR}) / (N - k)} = \frac{(.260 - .019) / 2}{(1 - .260) / (99 - 4)} = \frac{.1205}{.0079} = 15.25$$

where R^2_{UR} = the variance of the unrestricted model containing all four independent variables; R^2_R = the variance of the restricted model containing only Gender and Group as the independent variables; q = the number of independent variables removed from the unrestricted model; N = the number in the sample population; k = the number of variables in the unrestricted model. The calculated *F* value is larger than the critical *F* value, 5.04 at the upper 0.1% point of the *F* distribution.

Table 16

Model Summaries Used to Test Hypothesis 3

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
SE with variables AGPA, CGPA, Gender, Group	.510	.260	.229	13.22
SE with variables Gender, Group	.137	.019	-.002	15.07

equations. The *F*-statistic calculated (15.24) clearly exceeds the critical *F*-value of 5.04, allowing rejection of the null hypothesis, which stated that together, AGPA and CGPA have no effect on the measure of self-esteem.

The fourth hypothesis stated that all of the independent variables would have equal effects on the measure of self-esteem. Results from regression equations shown in Tables 9 and 13 indicate that this hypothesis can be rejected. It can be shown more rigorously using a form of the *F*-statistic.⁴ Table 17 and 18 provide the necessary data. To carry out this version of the *F*-test, three steps are needed. First, a regression equation is calculated in which all independent variables are separate (or unconstrained). A second regression equation is then calculated in which all the independent variables are joined in the assumption

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⁴ Calculations for the *F*-statistic used to test Hypothesis 4 are as follows:

$$F = \frac{(RSS_U - RSS_R) / P}{ESS_U / (N - k - 1)} = \frac{(5784.162 - 2754.839) / 4}{16430.465 / 99 - 4 - 1} = 4.333$$

where RSS_U = the unrestricted sum of squares shown in Table 18; RSS_R = the restricted sum of squares shown in Table 17; P = the number of restrictions on the coefficients; ESS_U = the error sum of squares shown in Table 18; N = the number in the sample population; k = the number of independent variables. The calculated *F*-value of 4.333 is larger than the critical *F*-value of 3.98 in the upper 0.5% point of the *F* distribution.

Table 17

ANOVA: Restricted Model. Dependent Variable: Self-Esteem. Predictors: Combined Independent Variables

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	2754.839	1	2754.839	13.732***
Residual	19459.787	97	200.616	
Total	22214.626	98		

*** = significance at the 1% level

that they have the same effect on self-esteem. Third, the F -statistic is then calculated and compared to the critical F -value. Since the calculated F -value of 4.333 is larger than the critical F -value of 3.98 at the 0.5 per cent significance level, we reject the null hypothesis, and accept the fact that the difference in the independent variables is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 18

ANOVA: Unrestricted model. Dependent variable: Self-Esteem. Predictors: AGPA, CGPA, Gender, Group

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	5784.162	4	1446.040	8.273***
Residual	16430.465	94	174.792	
Total	22214.626	98		

*** = significance at the 1% level

The fifth hypothesis stated that the values education program, as indicated by group membership, had no effect on the measure of student self-esteem. The results of analysis of data from the sample population fail to reject this hypothesis. In none of the regression models was group membership found to be statistically significant. What this means for the sample population is that the

values curriculum by itself produced no evidence of change in student self-esteem scores.

Because an implicit assumption of this study was that the treatment would have an effect on self-esteem, another regression model was constructed to make sure the “no effect” result was, indeed, a robust finding. An estimation of pre-test scores of self-esteem at the start of Grade 4, was made by employing the best fitting regression model for 7th-Grade students, and using data available from permanent records prior to the start of the values education program. Change in self-esteem scores was then calculated by subtracting Grade 7 self-esteem scores from the starting estimate of self-esteem. Regression analysis was used to explore the relationship of “change in self-esteem” to changes in the independent variables. The minor effect of the treatment shown in Table 19 is, in fact, negative but well below statistical significance.

Table 19

Variable Effect and Significance for the Model Using Change

Variable	Estimated Coefficient	Standard Error	t
Constant	.517	2.051	.252
Group	-3.500	2.704	-1.294
Gender	-.85	2.529	-.338
Change in Success in School (Gr. 7 – Gr. 4)	4.319	2.467	1.751*

* = significant at the 10% level

Table 19 also shows that the success in school variable is statistically significant at the 10 per cent level. This means that students who showed an increase of one unit in the success in school variable between Grade 4 and

Grade 7, would also show an increase in self-esteem of about four per cent. The model as a whole accounted for only 6 per cent of the variation in self-esteem, as shown by the goodness of fit statistic, R^2 , in Table 20. This means that 94 per cent of the variation in change of self-esteem scores between grade 4 and grade 7 have to do with factors other than those measured in this study.

Table 20

R-Values Using Gender, Group, and Change Variables

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of the Estimate
.251	.063	.034	12.45

Does the finding of no statistical significance of the treatment on self-esteem mean that the values education program was ineffective? The emphatic answer is no. What it does mean is that the data used in this study in an attempt to link self-esteem with values education in the lives of elementary school children, may not have been precise or accurate measures of the outcomes of the program. In addition, variables known to influence self-esteem (home, family, physical abilities) may have masked the impact of the values education program. As shown in Chapter Four, Table 5, the difference in family income between students in the control and treatment groups was 10 per cent, with the control group students coming from homes having the higher family income. It would be most interesting to replicate this study using family income as an independent variable to see the extent to which it might have impacted the self-esteem of students in each group. It is important to recognize that statistical methods are

inherently limited in their ability to pick up certain relationships because of many other intervening variables involved in complex behaviors.

The theoretical basis for the study must be kept in mind. Five of the six theories of self-esteem reviewed in Chapter Two clearly identified values as integral to self-esteem. Values were seen to be a part of self-esteem by way of theoretical construct, by definition, and by lived experience. Theories of self-esteem showed a dynamic relationship between competence and worthiness, with social and personal values imbedded in each concept. The lived reality of self-esteem means that values chosen and lived out are felt and experienced in a personal way. The results of this study do not change that theory. We are ill advised to state that the teaching of values was ineffective in the lives of children. The need remains to capture data that better indicates factors related to self-esteem or to identify more effective ways of transmitting values to children. As indicated in the review of Hypothesis 1 and in light of the findings by Williams (1992), Leming (1993a), and the Child Development Project (1998), values may best be taught to children by way of modeling, by quality teaching, and within a classroom having a positive moral environment rather than by the formal teaching of values in the curriculum. Leming (1993b) underscored this point, "Didactic methods alone – codes, pledges, teacher exhortation, and the like – are unlikely to have any significant or lasting effect on character" (p. 69).

Additional discussion of findings from the data analysis, and recommendations for further study are addressed in Chapter Five.

Summary

Chapter Four began with a review of the purpose of the study and an outline of the methodology used to gather and analyze data. A description was given of how the sample population was chosen and ways in which the treatment and control groups were demographically similar. It detailed how values for the variables were determined. Results from multiple regression models were presented and the data analyzed with respect to the two research questions and the five hypotheses. The formal teaching of values did not have a statistically significant effect on self-esteem as measured by the Student Self-Esteem Inventory. Nevertheless, students may have learned important lessons about values. A self-esteem inventory may not be the best measure of the program's effectiveness, given the availability of the accessible, measurable variables used in this study. Academic achievement was shown to have a consistent and significant relationship to self-esteem. Results were discussed in the context of the review of literature in Chapter Two. An important implication came to light when results of this study were compared with results from other studies. They found that learning of values was related to teacher modeling and the classroom environment. As Chapter Five will show, it may be fruitful to investigate both teacher modeling and classroom environment to better understand the factors influencing student behavior and self-esteem.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This chapter provides a summary of the study, including the background, methodology, and analysis of data. A discussion of findings is given followed by recommendations for further study.

Summary

The study evolved from my interest in how the teaching of values in a public school system might affect the self-esteem of students. I learned of a Canadian school district that had identified consensus values and had implemented a values education program. The interest we shared led to the development of this study. The study has significance to those who worked together to design, contribute to, and implement the values education program: to community members, teachers, administrators, and parents whose children are being taught the values curriculum. The study is important to those interested in character education and to researchers because of the quantitative methodology used in the study, and because it attempts to determine whether a particular values curriculum had an effect on students. The study has significance for children because it examines factors that may influence self-

esteem, which in turn, has a bearing on relationships and how well these children will do later on in life.

The study was designed to answer two research questions. The first asked, "Is there a significant difference in measures of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught in their school as part of the curriculum and those who did not receive such instruction?" The second asked, "To what extent do gender and success in school contribute to a measure of students' self-esteem?"

Background to the Study

School district leadership, together with the teachers' union and community representatives worked together to find common values and develop grade specific curriculum for use by teachers. Sixteen values were identified and grouped into four core values of respect, responsibility, excellence, and joy. Table 2, repeated below from Chapter One, shows the core values and how they were grouped.

After adopting the consensus values, district staff invited teachers to prepare lesson plans. When the lesson plans were completed, all teachers were invited to one-day workshops to become familiar with the instructional materials. Grade appropriate lesson packages had been prepared for each value. Each lesson was divided into eight phases: connecting with the value by investigating what it means; examining personal definitions of the value; imagining what the

Table 2

Values Approved by the School Board As Those Reflecting the Community

Respect	Responsibility	Excellence	Joy
1. Cooperation	8. Responsibility	13. Pursuit of truth	15. Self-fulfillment
2. Tolerance	9. Freedom	14. Excellence	16. Joy
3. Compassion	10. Justice		
4. Respect for others	11. Respect for the environment		
5. Respect for self	12. Service		
6. Self-control			
7. Honesty			

value looks like; defining the value by comparison and contrast; trying the value through experience; extending knowledge of the value through writing; refining understanding of the value through discussion; and integrating understanding of the value through real world situations.

Strategies suggested for involving students included individual reflection and cooperative learning activities such as learning partners, mixed ability grouping, interest grouping, random grouping, whole class projects, story theater, and literature circles. Grade appropriate literature resources were provided along with ways the literature might be used. Teachers were also encouraged to maximize the impact of the values education program by modeling the values and by integrating the values in all curricula.

Preparing for the Research

To begin answering the two research questions, a literature review was conducted. Theories of self-esteem were compared to find commonalities and to articulate a clear definition. The theories of self-esteem and the research show clearly that self-esteem is a dynamic interaction of an individual's sense of competence and worthiness. It may be defined as the lived status of one's competency to meet the challenges of living in a worthy way over time (Mruk, 1999).

The term, values, was linked with virtues, and defined as those qualities needed for maintaining healthy relationships and moral self-approval. Values were shown to be a part of self-esteem by way of theoretical construct, by definition, and by lived experience. Values are an integral part of competence and worthiness, two key components of self-esteem. Figure 1 shows the importance of balance between competence and worthiness and the critical role of values and personal virtue in the development of healthy self-esteem. Personal virtue is needed for competence and worthiness to be in balance. There is general consensus that values such as courage, respect, responsibility, and integrity transcend religious and cultural differences and are accepted by most people as legitimate, good, and self-evident. Authentic self-esteem requires that such personal virtues be lived out and done so in congruence with reality (Branden, 1994a).

Figure 1. The Balance of Competence and Worthiness in Authentic Self-Esteem

Three types of values were identified: values based on preference; values based on reason, consequence, or consensus; and values based on principles. The importance of choice and the place of will in choosing to do the right thing or the wrong thing were discussed. Making choices that build interpersonal relationships and contribute to the common good were shown to be an important part of personal and public leadership. The thorny issue of moral truth was addressed; of how we know which values are right or true, and how we know this to be so. A number of arguments were presented, but perhaps the best synopsis is a quote from Lickona. It bears repeating:

The case for "moral truth" argues that there is a natural moral law, based on human nature, just as there is a law governing physical nature. When we follow the natural moral law (e.g., treat others as we wish to be

treated), we live in harmony with ourselves and with each other. When we act in ways that go against the natural law (when we lie, cheat, or steal, for example), we create problems for ourselves and for others. Values such as justice, honesty, and love are objectively true or good in that they affirm our human dignity, promote the welfare and development of the individual, and serve the common good - and they do those things because such values are consistent with what makes us human. (T. Lickona, email, Jan. 28, 1999)

Correlates of self-esteem in a school setting were also searched out. Evidence suggests that academic achievement, behavior, attitude, gender, social groupings, peer relationships, and appearance are among factors related to self-esteem in a school setting, though there is disagreement on causality. It is likely that a dynamic interplay exists between self-esteem and each factor mentioned, with self-esteem at times being dependent upon them, and at times the other factors being dependent on self-esteem. Ideally, every factor contributing to self-esteem, including those relating to the family, would be measured and included in the study. However, given the accessibility of data in a school setting, the independent variables were limited to academic achievement, citizenship, gender, and group membership (treatment or control group).

Previous research looking at the impact of the formal teaching of values to students had shown mixed results. Some studies indicated improvements in student achievement and/or ethical behavior as a result of a values education program (Antis, 1997; Child Development Program, 1998; Cole, 1994; Leming,

2000; Smith, 1997). Other studies had shown no statistically significant change in either dimension (Child Development Program, 1998; Jacobi, 1997), and two studies reported negative results when values were formally taught (Leming, 2000; Williams, 1992). Most of the studies identified modeling of values by teachers and the creation of a caring community as being the most effective characteristics in any effort to teach values to children.

Research Design

A quasi-experimental research design was utilized for this study because of the need to work with classroom-sized groups of students. Independent variables were defined. They included Academic Grade Point Average, which was calculated as an average on a four-point scale of final 7th-grade marks in mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies. Citizenship Grade Point Average was calculated similarly on a four-point scale based on teacher evaluation of five dimensions of observable behaviors. Group (meaning whether or not the students belonged to the treatment or control group) and Gender were the final two independent variables. With numerical data available and determining the degree of relationship among variables as an objective, multiple regression analysis was chosen as the appropriate analytical tool to aid in the investigation.

The measuring instrument selected for self-esteem was the Student Self-Esteem Inventory (SSEI, Reasoner & Gilberts, 1992). This particular instrument was chosen because its predictive validity and reliability have been established,

because it was designed for a school setting, and because it was appropriate for the age group of the sample population. It is important to note that other metrics could have been used, and indeed would be valuable in measuring the success of the values education program. Increases or decreases in office referrals, detentions, student/student and student/teacher conflicts, as well as parent phone calls and letters are important barometers of what is working well or not working well in a school. These and additional measures are variables for examination in a full evaluation of the values education program. The purpose of this study, however, is to look at how the values education program might impact student self-esteem in particular.

Five null hypotheses were stated:

- Hypothesis #1: Individually, the independent variables (Academic Grade Point Average, Citizenship Grade Point Average, Gender, and Group) have no effect on the measure of the dependent variable (self-esteem).
- Hypothesis #2: Taken together, none of the independent variables have an effect on the measure of the dependent variable, self-esteem.
- Hypothesis #3: Performance of students in the classroom as measured by AGPA and CGPA, has no effect on the measure of the dependent variable, self-esteem.
- Hypothesis #4: The independent variables (AGPA, CGPA, Gender, and Group) have the same impact on the measure of the dependent variable (self-esteem).

- Hypothesis #5: Group Membership has no effect on the measure of the dependent variable, self-esteem.

Methodology

The study began four years after implementation of the values education program. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the treatment and control groups. This is a method of selecting the sample population so that certain characteristics are similar. For the methodology used in this study, it was desirable for the treatment and control groups of students to be as similar as possible socially, economically, and ethnically. A total of 99 students from four schools became the sample population; 62 in the control group and 37 in the treatment group.

Post-treatment data for both groups was gathered by way of the SSEI at the start of their 8th-grade year. Academic and citizenship data came from 7th-grade final report cards. Multiple regression models were used to find which variables showed significant relationships to self-esteem.

At the start of the study, an implicit assumption was made that the values education treatment (indicated by the variable, Group) would show a statistically significant relationship to self-esteem. Analysis using only the 7th-grade data indicated no treatment effect. To strengthen this finding, and because the treatment and control groups were not exactly the same demographically, a pre-treatment estimate of self-esteem was calculated. The coefficients from the regression model calculated with 7th-grade data were used with academic and

citizenship data gathered from the start of the values education program. The result provided an estimate of student self-esteem at the start of the program. This pre-treatment estimate of self-esteem was compared with post-treatment self-esteem scores that had been measured by way of the SSEI. The difference was calculated, and the relationships of “change in self-esteem” to “changes in the independent variables” were then explored.

Analysis of Data and Findings

The data were analyzed using multiple regression models. Each model indicated the percentage of variation in student self-esteem scores explained by the independent variables used in the model. Self-esteem scores had been recorded out of a total possible 100 points so that each change of one unit in a variable coefficient predicted the percentage change that a particular variable would make in student self-esteem when other variables remained constant.

Several regression equations were used to calculate the effect of all or various combinations of independent variables. The purpose in doing so was to look for relationships; to see how well the variables fit with self-esteem scores. The first regression model used all the independent variables. As a whole, the model explained 26 per cent of the variation in self-esteem scores. The only variable to show statistical significance when all variables were included in a regression analysis was Academic Grade Point Average (AGPA). The model predicted that an increase or decrease of one unit in AGPA for a student would change his or her SSEI score by 10.5 per cent. Other regression models were

calculated omitting individual independent variables to see if additional relationships might become evident. Three consistencies were noted. First, whenever AGPA was included as an independent variable, it was shown to have a statistically significant effect as great or slightly greater than that shown in the first regression model. Secondly, none of the other variables showed statistical significance including the variable, group, which represented the treatment. Third, though Citizenship Grade Point Average (CGPA) did not show statistical significance in relation to self-esteem scores, it did show a high correlation with AGPA. Since an assumption of multiple regression analysis is that the independent variables are not correlated, AGPA and CGPA were amalgamated into one variable by averaging data for the two variables. The resultant score was called success in school or the classroom effect because it combined measures of academic achievement with measures of attitude and behavior.

The regression model that included success in school, group, and gender as the independent variables became the best fitting model. Though the model explained 25 per cent of the variation in self-esteem scores, one per cent less than the model in which all four independent variables were used, two other factors made it important. First, the combined variable, success in school, was the strongest individual factor among the independent variables with a coefficient of 12.5. The coefficient predicts that a change of one unit in success in school would change students' self-esteem score by 12.5 per cent. Statistical significance for this finding is at the one per cent level, meaning that it is highly unlikely the result could happen by chance. A second factor that made this

particular model important was that the variable, gender, was shown to be statistically significant at the 10 per cent level. Since the coefficient of gender was a negative 4.5, and the number, one, used to identify female students, the result suggests that the self-esteem scores of females are likely to be 4.5 per cent less than that of males.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of data showed the following:

- The values education program had no statistically significant measurable effect on student self-esteem.
- The variables, academic grade point average, and success in school showed consistent, positive relationships to self-esteem.
- Gender showed a statistically significant relationship to self-esteem, with girls having a slightly lower self-esteem than that of boys.
-

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study are discussed below in context of the two research questions.

First Research Question: Treatment Effect

The first research question asked, “Is there a significant difference in the measure of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught in their school as part of the curriculum and those

who did not receive such instruction?” The answer was very clear. The outcome, in light of the variables measured, turned out to be no. However, the answer must be seen in light of what is known from the literature review in Chapter Two. Values, relationships, and self-esteem are concepts inextricably linked as shown by research and by expert opinion. The theories of self-esteem, taken together, show it to be a dynamic relationship between competence and worthiness, with personal and social values imbedded in each concept. The obvious question, therefore, is: If values were taught and they are such an integral part of self-esteem, why was there no measurable difference between the treatment and control groups? Six possible answers are suggested followed by a brief discussion of each:

1. The values education program simply had no measurable effect.
2. The variables measured were different from the changes that occurred as a result of the treatment.
3. The measurement of self-esteem does not accurately address the values education efforts.
4. Changes occurred for both the treatment and the control groups outside the classroom, resulting in no measurable difference between the two groups.
5. The net effect of teacher influence on students in both groups was the same.
6. The relationship between values education and self-esteem cannot be determined through empirical research.

The first answer concludes that the values education program had no measurable impact on students' self-esteem. Accepting this conclusion assumes that the variables measured accurately what the values education program was designed to influence; and it assumes that no other factors associated with the control and treatment groups influenced student self-esteem. From a statistical perspective, this outcome is possible, but from the theory and research described in Chapter Two, this explanation of the outcome is unlikely. Teaching involves relationship, and values are neither learned by way of formal teaching nor by way of modeling, outside of relationships. Self-esteem is influenced by relationships. As Wheatley (1995) said pointedly, "Relationships are all that is", and relationships have to do with interactions between people. Rabbin (1998) noted that our real values are not what we say, but are expressed in what we do and how we do it. The influence of teachers and the nature of school climate would, therefore, appear to be fruitful areas for further research in determining the impact of the teaching of values. It is addressed as one of the recommendations for further study. It is important to note again that there may be more effective empirical measures than a self-esteem inventory to determine how well a values education program is working. The focus of this study, however, was on the relationship between the self-esteem of students and the values education program.

The second and third answers for the "no treatment effect" are addressed together. They suggest that the wrong variables may have been measured or that the self-esteem is not a good measure of the values education efforts. In

both cases, changes in students may have occurred but were not measured by the independent variables or by the measuring instrument. A way of addressing these assumptions is to examine the fit between report card items used to evaluate student citizenship, and the learning outcomes expected from the values education program to see whether changes in student attitudes or behaviors are taking place but not being measured. This possibility and the need for further study of this issue are addressed as recommendations.

The fourth answer suggests that the treatment effect may be hidden because other influences masked expected results. The literature review noted the powerful influence of the home (Amen, 1995; Brandon, 1994a; Reasoner, 2000). Similar family or other influences may have occurred in both the treatment and control groups resulting in both groups changing in comparable ways. In reviewing the sample population demographic data to see what factors may have had an influence, it is of interest to note that the control group students came from homes where the average family income was 10 per cent higher than that of the homes of treatment group students. Galloway (1994) points out that family income has an effect on self-esteem of children. The difference in family income may have been great enough to influence students' self-esteem and mask the results of the treatment program. Including family income as an independent variable, for example, is one of the recommendations for further study.

The fifth possible answer to why no measurable effect was evident between the treatment and control groups is that teachers in both groups had a

similar impact on students. This could have happened if the values program was taught only sporadically or not consistently. The effect on students in the treatment group may then have been the same as for students in the control group who did not receive the formal teaching of values. It is also possible that teachers in both groups modeled values in a similar manner, both positively or both negatively, and the values modeled were the values that really influenced students. This particular explanation has solid grounding in the review of literature, as noted above, and in the research. The Child Development Project (CDP, 1998) study found that behavioral, attitudinal, and academic improvement occurred most often in schools in which the development of a caring community was of central importance. In another study, Leming (2000) evaluated the Heartwood Ethics Curriculum and found, “. . . the extent to which teachers set a clear moral example for students and spontaneously used moral language in the classroom, made a statistically significant contribution . . . and accounted for 21% of the explained variance in positive changes in student behavior” (p. 422). In other words, when teachers “walked the talk” of character education and modeled the values they wanted to see in students, there was a positive influence on student behavior.

It is of interest to note what occurred when teachers did not create a caring environment. Williams (1992) found that formal values education lessons can do more harm than good if modeling of values by the teacher did not take place. In studying the teaching of the value, respect for others, and the effect of teaching on students, Williams found that respect for others was not well learned

by students when it was only taught formally. She found that respect for others was best learned by students in a caring environment as teachers modeled respect and quality teaching, and generally created a positive moral climate within their classrooms.

The sixth answer for the “no effect” result states that the relationship between values education and self-esteem is not to be expected. This answer, at least on the surface, is contrary to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Research and expert opinion show the link between values and self-esteem to be so obvious that it is really inarguable. A question arises, however, as to how soon one should expect to see the results of teaching values in a school setting. It may be that we are expecting measurable results to be shown too soon. Is it possible that a maturation period is needed before the values taught take hold and are then lived out? There is evidence that this may be so in the longitudinal study done by Hawkins et al. (1999). In a 12-year study, they found that nurturing the self-esteem of children in grades one to six resulted in improved achievement, attendance, and a reduction in the occurrence of risky behaviors in high school. It is possible that students who were taught values may show measurable changes at a later date. Further long-term research of this type is needed to determine whether change in students, as a result of values education programs, requires time.

Second Research Question

The second research question is now addressed in its two parts: how success in school and how gender contributed to students' self-esteem.

Success in School

The second research question asked, "To what extent do success in school and gender contribute to a measure of students' self-esteem?" The variable, success in school, was an average of academic achievement scores and citizenship scores. When academic grade point average was considered on its own, it consistently showed that a change of one grade point resulted in a change in the self-esteem score in the range of 10 to 12 per cent. As a single, independent variable in a regression equation, academic achievement explained 24 per cent of the variation in self-esteem scores. The combined success in school variable showed a similar but slightly higher result. According to the model, a change of one unit in the success in school variable would cause a 12.5 per cent change in the measure of self-esteem. This would show as positive gain if a student were to move from a 'C' average to a 'B' average. It would show as a decrease in self-esteem if a student were to decline a half point in academic average accompanied by a half point decline in citizenship score. The relationships of academic achievement and success in school to self-esteem both showed strong statistical significance at the one per cent level, indicating that these findings are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Two observations regarding the effect of the variables, academic achievement and success in school, bear noting. First, schools can indeed make a difference to students and do so in a significant ways. This study showed that 25 per cent of the variation in the self-esteem scores of the sample population were explained by the success in school variable, and that an increase of one unit in the measure of success in school would increase self-esteem scores by 12.5 per cent.

The second observation is made by way of caution. It is important to be careful of the apparent implication of causality between academic achievement and self-esteem because the relationship is likely to be bi-directional. For the purposes of this study, I looked at causality one-way, choosing self-esteem as the dependent variable influenced by other variables, including success in school. The regression analysis indicates a positive relationship between self-esteem and success in school, but does not clarify beyond a statistical analysis which factor causes the other to change. The answer to the question of how these factors influence one another is uncertain as evident from the literature review discussed in Chapter Two. Research studies were cited which indicated growth in self-esteem precedes increased academic achievement (Covington, 1984, 1989; Vail, 1994). Other researchers found improved academic achievement foreshadowed growth in self-esteem (Conrath, 1986; Holly, 1987). Still others saw a dynamic, reciprocal relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement (Hamacheck 1995; Rice, 1998). Reasoner (2000) summed up the argument cogently, " . . . the debate about which comes first – a

positive self-concept or academic achievement – is more academic than practical. The most important thing is to appreciate the interaction and the reciprocal dynamics between self-concept and achievement. They are mutually reinforcing” (p. 50). Courage and confidence must go hand in hand if students are to risk trying, chance failure and success, and stretch the limitations of their learning.

What kind of environment would best foster these conditions for learning? Barth (1990) observed that the collegiality between adults in a school has more to do with the quality and character of the school and with accomplishments of students than any other factor. Supporting Barth’s observation are results of studies mentioned earlier, including those of the Child Development Project (1998), Leming (1993a, 2000), and Williams (1992). Each indicated that a caring environment, teacher modeling, and a positive moral climate are precursors to a fertile learning environment. Teacher influence and school culture form a recommendation for future study in a following section.

The second research question also focused on whether gender might influence self-esteem.

Gender

In addition to asking how success in school contributed to student self-esteem, the second research question asked to what extent gender might contribute to a measure of students’ self esteem. Data analysis showed that the measure of self-esteem of girls was slightly lower than that of boys. This effect

occurred in spite of the fact that in both groups, the academic and citizenship marks for girls were higher than that of boys. The finding of a gender effect is not new. It is supported by research discussed in Chapter Two, in the section Self-Esteem and Gender. Studies reported by Mruk (1999), Reasoner (2000), and Rothenberg (1995) each found that gender influences self-esteem to a small, but measurable degree, and that a crisis in self-esteem often occurs for girls prior to, or at the onset of adolescence. The source of crisis is in feelings of a lack of worthiness associated with an ideal body image, resulting in self-esteem being negatively impacted by stereotypic role expectations.

It should be noted that the finding of a gender effect is statistically significant, but is not particularly strong. The effect on self-esteem at 4.5 per cent, is not large. It is enough, however, to raise the question of why this might occur in the setting for the study, and whether there are strategies to employ to overcome such a tendency. This concern, along with other questions raised in the discussion of findings, is addressed in the following section, recommendations for further study.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study ends with recommendations for further investigation. The grounds for suggesting further study come from questions raised by the findings. The first recommendation arises from the finding of “no treatment effect”, and the possibility that this finding could occur through the use of measures that did not accurately reflect outcomes of the values education program. The second

recommendation follows the finding of a gender effect on self-esteem. A third recommendation is to explore the influence of family income on student self-esteem. The fourth recommendation suggests further research in an area not directly covered by this study.

1. It is recommended that the school district evaluate the reporting items that assess student citizenship to determine if a better fit might be found between the values education program learning outcomes, and the attitudes and behaviors currently being assessed. At present, teachers record subjective evaluations on five dimensions of each student's personal and social behaviors: responsibility, respect for self and others, use of time, participation in class, and co-operation. The goals of the school district articulate the intent to develop the moral, spiritual, and ethical values of children as well as other personal, social, and academic dimensions. There may be more effective ways of measuring student progress toward these goals, other than what currently exists on student report cards. For example, a rubric of evaluation might be designed to match the ten goals of education in the school district as set out in Chapter One, Table 1. A more extensive rubric for evaluation might be constructed using all 16 of the values established by community consensus, shown in Chapter One, Table 2. Such measures could lead to a more accurate evaluation of students, and an evaluation of the district itself in determining its progress toward meeting stated goals. More refined measures such as these may be better indicators of the extent to

which students have internalized values, and thus become better predictors of student self-esteem.

2. It is recommended that a study take place within the school district to identify factors that may undermine the self-esteem of children by gender, and identify ways in which the self-esteem of both girls and boys can be further supported. Such a study may help raise the awareness of both teachers and parents regarding the importance of self-esteem and distinguish specific ways it may be supported at home, at school, and in the community.
3. It is recommended that family income be included as an independent variable in future studies to learn the extent to which it influences the self-esteem of students. If this study were to be replicated, inclusion of family income as an independent variable may help answer the question as to whether it masked results of the values education program.
4. The finding of no effect for the values education program indicates that future research may be needed in an area other than the formal teaching of values, as was the focus for this study. Previous research indicates that fruitful study could be done in areas such as classroom climate, school climate, and teacher modeling to determine their role in impacting student self-esteem and behavior. In addition, longitudinal studies may be helpful in identifying changes brought about by values education programs, but delayed by time.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to determine if there was a significant difference in measures of self-esteem between elementary school students to whom specific values were formally taught in their school as part of the curriculum and those who did not receive such instruction. Though the results showed no evidence of a change in the measure of self-esteem due to the values education program, it does not mean that values and self-esteem are unrelated. It does mean further study is needed to shed more light on the “no effect” result. There is overwhelming evidence from research and from expert opinion that there is an inexorable link between self-esteem and values that reflect the importance of personal virtue and relationships.

The study showed by quantitative measures that what happens in school extends beyond intellectual growth. Schools do have a significant influence on student self-esteem by way of the relationship between success in school and self-esteem. Fully one-quarter of the variation in self-esteem scores was accounted for with the success in school measure.

The study began by describing the risks our children face, and the urgent need for a more caring society. It is hoped that this study has contributed constructively to meeting these needs, and that it will encourage further research in identifying ways to positively influence the values of children in schools.

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APPENDIX A: SCHOOL REPORTING FORMAT

The following is an example of the form from which student data were taken. Additional information, including general achievement percentage was available on some report cards, but was not used in the study because it was not reported for all students. In evaluating expectations and objectives, teachers rated the child's progress with a check mark according to how he or she was meeting particular expectations or objectives. For the purposes of the study, check marks were translated into a "1" for "Not Yet Meeting"; a "2" for "Beginning to Meet"; a "3" for "Meeting"; and a "4" for "Exceeding". One overall grade point average was then calculated for Personal and Social Behaviors, and called Citizenship Grade Point Average (CGPA) in the study. Grade point averages were calculated for the four academic subjects. These scores were then averaged and became the input data for Academic Grade Point Average (AGPA).

_____ Elementary School Report

Student _____ Date: _____ Grade: _____

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

Expectations	Not Yet Meeting	Beginning to Meet	Meeting	Exceeding
Displays responsibility				
Shows respect for self and others				
Uses time wisely				
Actively participates in learning				
Works cooperatively				

LANGUAGE ARTS

Objectives	Not Yet Meeting	Beginning to Meet	Meeting	Exceeding
Listens with purpose				
Communicates orally				
Reads with understanding				
Communicates in writing				

MATHEMATICS

Objectives	Not Yet Meeting	Beginning to Meet	Meeting	Exceeding
Understands concepts				
Applies skills				
Uses problem-solving strategies				

SCIENCE

Objectives	Not Yet Meeting	Beginning to Meet	Meeting	Exceeding
Understands concepts				
Applies skills and processes				
Communicates learning				

SOCIAL STUDIES

Objectives	Not Yet Meeting	Beginning to Meet	Meeting	Exceeding
Understands concepts				
Applies skills and strategies				
Communicates learning				

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF PERMISSION

Dear Parent:

A study is being conducted at your child's school. The purpose of this letter is to request your permission for your child to participate.

You may be aware that a Values Education program has been taught in the school district since 1995. The study for which I am asking your help is to find out if the values program has made a significant difference in the self-esteem of students at the school.

All information gathered would be confidential and used only for the purposes of this study. No student names will be identified. Permission for your child to participate requires two things:

1. Your permission to have your child complete a Student Self-Esteem Inventory. This is a 50-statement inventory to which students respond 'true' or 'false'. The statements are all related to how students feel about themselves at school. The inventory is designed to measure academic self-esteem, and does not ask questions about home or family. The inventory takes students about 20 minutes to complete, and will be done in class. Risk to students is limited to anxiousness they might feel in reflecting on feelings about school. Benefits to students, parents, and educators will come from the increased awareness of the relationship between the teaching of values in school and self-esteem.
2. Your permission to gather academic and social behavior ratings from report cards in your child's permanent school record.

Participation of each student in completing the study is voluntary. You or your child may withdraw consent to participate at any time. Prior to signing this consent form, you may ask questions by calling me at 249-2452. I have left a copy of the Student Self-Esteem Inventory with the school principal if you wish to review it.

There is no agreement, written or verbal, beyond that expressed in the consent form. Thank you for considering this request and returning this form to your child's teacher by October 27th, 2000.

Ron Germaine, Researcher

I, the undersigned, _____, understand the above explanations, and
(Printed name)
on that basis give consent to by son's/daughter's voluntary participation in this research.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date