A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SELF-CONCEPT, READING ATTITUDE AND READING COMPREHENSION IN SECOND GRADE READERS

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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LESLIE E. COURTENAY BROWN, B.A.(Ed.), B.A.

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SELF-CONCEPT, READING ATTITUDE AND READING COMPREHENSION IN SECOND GRADE READERS

BY

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

Department of Education
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationships among the affective variables of self-concept and reading attitude, and reading achievement in grade two children. Whether gender had any significant effect on these variables was also considered. Strong relationships among these variables would suggest the need for primary teachers to consider the affective needs of their students in their reading programs in order to promote maximum reading achievement.

Scores obtained from 30 randomly chosen grade two boys and 30 randomly chosen grade two girls on tests measuring self-concept, reading attitude and reading comprehension were correlated. As well, T- tests were performed to compute the influence of gender on self-concept, reading attitude and reading achievement.

Significant relationships were found between parent relations' self-concept, reading self-concept, general school self-concept, total academic self-concept, and total self concept and reading attitudes, but not for peer relations' self-concept and total nonacademic self-concept and reading attitudes. Only the academic self-concepts (reading self-concept and total academic self-concept) were significantly related to reading comprehension. Reading attitude, however, was not significantly related to reading comprehension. Gender was found to have a significant influence only on reading self-concept and reading attitudes, with the boys

having less positive ratings in these areas.

The results of this study confirm the relationship between academic self-concepts and reading attitudes and imply the need for teachers to design their programs so that these affective behaviours are enhanced. Children with positive perceptions of a subject will be more motivated and put more effort into that subject, possibly leading to improved performance.

A relationship between reading self-concept and reading comprehension was shown to exist. Although this study did not determine causality between the two, the implication is there to consider the children's self-concepts in the reading program. If children's self-concepts can be enhanced while they are being taught to read, perhaps higher achievement would result. Remedial teachers should also consider remediating self-concepts while remediating reading skills.

The boys in this study were found to have less positive reading self-concepts and less favourable reading attitudes than the girls. This implies the need for teachers to pay particular attention to the boys in the classroom when designing activities that promote self-concept and attitude enhancement. Teachers should consider what they can do so that the boys find reading a more interesting and rewarding experience.

In sum, this study supports the importance of affective behaviours in scholastic performance. It suggests that

considering the affective needs of children in reading instruction may promote and sustain reading achievement.

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CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Today it is commonly believed that schools are responsible for helping all students achieve at their optimum level. One of the general objectives for education in Newfoundland schools is "to ensure that all pupils master the fundamental skills of learning to the limit of their abilities" (Department of Education, St. John's, 1984). Perhaps the area of deepest concern for teachers is that children learn how to read well because reading permeates all areas of the curriculum and skill in reading is vital for success in many other subject areas. Theories are constantly changing as to the best approach for teaching reading and in primary classrooms the greater proportion of the day is spent on reading and language arts activities. Nevertheless, some children do have difficulty with reading and their attempts at learning to read are less than successful.

What characterizes these children who have difficulty learning to read? Often teachers will record on report cards and anecdotal records that these children demonstrate a poor attitude to reading and/or a poor self-concept. Hardin (1980) reported that most poor readers do indeed, have a poor attitude toward reading, poor self-esteem and are easily defeated by mistakes.

Attitudes and self-concept are included in what

researchers in education refer to as affective concerns. Affective concerns and behaviours are important to the reading process, Alexander and Filler (1976) stated, because they provide the desire and the will to read. Similarly Hardin (1980) suggested that learning to read is 90% attitude and 10% skill.

Others also stressed the importance of affective behaviours in reading achievement. Wirth (1977) reported that when children see themselves as inadequate, they lose their sense of "can-ness" and what they can do diminishes. She suggested that if these children with poor self-concepts are to achieve in reading, they must regain their sense of "I can do it" and begin to view themselves as achievers. Ignoffo (1988) stated that remedial reading students must be helped to alter previously established attitudes about their own potential and their sense of self-worth and that any remedial help that deals solely with content and not with self-concept improvement is doomed to fail because the students' own "inner critic" will sabotage the efforts.

The role of affective behaviours, therefore, should not be overlooked in importance in the acquisition of reading skills and in the continued use of reading for informational and recreational purposes. Teachers, themselves, are aware of the importance of affective behaviors in reading achievement. Purkey (1970) stated that for generations wise teachers have sensed the significant and positive relationship between

students' concept of themselves and their performance in school. Heathington and Alexander (1984) found that reading teachers feel that developing a positive attitude towards reading is so important that they rate it higher than other activities in a reading program, such as teaching phonics, sight words, word meaning, silent reading, structural analysis, and study skills. Pottebaum, Keith and Ehly (1986) reported a recent upsurge in interest in self-concept and achievement because of the belief that children's feelings about themselves are key factors in school achievement, and that children's developmental needs, including a positive self-concept, should be a concern of the educational process.

Despite the importance teachers and others in the field of education place on affective behaviours, research into the variables of self-concept and reading attitude has left no clear cut answers as to their relationship with reading achievement. Hansford and Hattie (1982), in a review of 128 studies conducted to determine the relationship between self and achievement/performance measures, found that the contradictory nature of the research findings made drawing conclusions a difficult and imprecise task and call for additional research in the area. Parker and Paradis (1986) noted that research into a number of variables thought to be associated with attitude to reading, such as achievement, special programs and sex show conflicting findings, while Lohman (1983), in a study of the attitudes toward reading of

disabled and normal readers, recommended further research into the relationship between attitude to reading and achievement, sex and grade placement.

Statement of the Problem

In a class of thirty children, the teacher has about three minutes per day to spend on reading with each child (Weiser, 1974). This is certainly insufficient time for the primary classroom teacher to deal with able beginning readers, let alone those who are having difficulty in learning to read. The teacher must, therefore, take advantage of anything which may spur her students on to achieve in reading. Research suggests a relationship between affective behaviours and reading achievement, but also calls for further research into this area. If a strong relationship can be shown between children's self-concepts, attitudes to reading and reading achievement, it would suggest the need for teachers to gather, develop and use all activities and methods of instruction that foster the development of positive self-concepts and reading attitudes in their reading programs in the hope that the reading achievement of their students will also be affected positively.

Purposes of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships among the affective behaviours of self-concept and reading attitude, and reading achievement in a group of grade two children. This study should shed some light on the role these affective behaviours play in primary children's efforts in learning to read.

In the investigation the following questions will be addressed:

1. Are reading attitude scores and self-concepts scores related to reading achievement in grade two children?
2. Is there a relationship between reading attitude and self-concept in grade two children?
3. Do grade two boys differ from grade two girls in reading attitude, self-concept and reading achievement?

Significance of the Study

Helping all children learn to read well is an area of deep concern for primary teachers. Teachers will gratefully embrace any suggestions which will help their students achieve in reading to their fullest potential. If strong relationships are found to exist among self-concept, reading attitude and reading achievement, then the need for primary teachers to consider the affective needs of their students in a reading

program geared to promote maximum reading achievement is suggested. Perhaps lessons geared to enhance self-concepts and reading attitudes will result in improved reading achievement of the students involved. A strong relationship between self-concept, reading attitude and reading achievement may suggest the need to check children's self-concepts and reading attitude with some standard instruments early in their school careers so that an intervention program may be begun for those with low ratings.

Limitations of the Study

A number of limitations are inherent in a study of this nature.

1. It deals only with grade two children. Results obtained may not be generalizable to other primary grades.
2. All students reside in one geographical area-that of metropolitan St. John's. Results may not be generalizable to other school systems or districts.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Historical Perspective on the Self

Much of contemporary theorizing on the self can be dated back to the work of Henry James (1892). He proposed a global self-concept made up of spiritual, material and social aspects. Mental faculties comprised the spiritual self, material possessions the material self and the esteem and regard that one perceives others have for oneself made up the social self. For James, the origins of one's overall sense of self-esteem lay in how one weighted one's competencies (Harter, 1989). Thus, if one's demonstrated level of success across domains was equal to, or commensurate with, one's aspirations, then one would have high self-esteem, whereas low self-esteem resulted when one's pretensions vastly exceeded one's actual level of success. The notion that individuals compare their level of competence to the importance of success across numerous domains, and the degree of congruence or discrepancy that results will determine their level of self-esteem is implicit in this model (Harter, 1989).

In contrast to James who focused on the individual's own evaluations, Cooley (1902) felt that the origins of self were social and formed through the attitudes of significant others.

He coined the phrase "Looking-Glass Self" and suggested that the self is a reflection of what individuals perceive others' judgements of them to be. This idea is similar to that found in the work of G. H. Mead (1934) who theorized that infants are born without a self-concept but acquire one through social interaction. Mead felt that as children relate to peers and significant others in their world, they tend to take on the attitudes these individuals hold towards them (Swayze, 1980). Cooley's "Looking Glass Self" resembles Mead's "generalized other" - which is the pooled or collective judgements of significant others towards the self.

Ideas and theories concerning the self and self-concept have developed rapidly throughout the 1900's. Felker (1974) classified these theorists into three broad groups. Members in the first group, of which he saw Freud as a good example, place a heavy emphasis on the psychodynamic role of the personality - that personality systems are dynamic energy systems operating within the individual. Self-esteem develops through the inner image one has of oneself and on the ways one lives up to that image.

The second group of theorists, Felker suggested, take a more humanistic point of view. They feel that man naturally strives for those things that are most conducive to personal growth and self-fulfillment. Carl Rogers and A. H. Maslow exemplify this approach to self-concept.

Felker characterizes the third group as those theorists,

such as J. C. Diggory, who concentrate primarily on the cognitive dimensions of self. Diggory regards self as a type of reflexive relation - the self is characterized by relationships in which the individual or some part of the individual is both the subject and the object. He places heavy emphasis on competence as an aspect of self-esteem.

Felker summed up the contributions made by the three groups of theorists to the understanding of the role which self-concept plays in human behaviour in this way:

> The emphasis of the Freudian approach on the dynamic qualities of self has pointed out the necessity for looking at self-concept, not only as a product of what others do to an individual, but also as a determiner of what the individual does. The assumption of the humanistic theorists of the possibilities for human growth and attainment has emphasized the need for schools and other organizations in which children operate to develop growth facilitating environments. The rigor and experimental methods of those in the cognitive group of theorists hold promise for developing more detailed explanations of the mechanism by which the self-concept is developed and maintained (1974, pp. 21-22).

An outgrowth of these theories of self and self-concept has been a plethora of research studies on self-concept - studies aimed at defining, measuring and/or changing the self-concept. This has led to a lot of confusion in self-concept research or as Rosenberg put it, "it is no exaggeration to say that we are as far as ever from agreeing on what it is, let alone on how to measure it" (1979, p.5). A cursory examination of the research reveals a multitude of different definitions, some very precise, and others quite broad, general, and encompassing many facets. In fact this was one

of the criticisms Wylie (1961) made in an extensive review of research to that date on self-concept. She felt it was difficult to generalize from one research study to another when the researchers involved had not agreed upon a definition of the self-concept they were purporting to measure. Other studies even fail to define self-concept at all, believing that "everyone knows what it is" (Marsh, Smith, Barnes and Butler, 1983). In an attempt to shed some light into this matter, several definitions of self-concept will be considered.

Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) offered the simple definition of self-concept as one's perceptions of oneself formed through experience with one's environment. Beane, Lipka and Ludewig (1980) suggested that self-concept is a description held of oneself based on the roles one plays and the personal attributes one believes one possesses. Markus, Smith and Moreland (1985) considered self-concept to be a set of schemes or cognitive generalizations about self that organize past experiences and are used to recognize and interpret relevant stimuli in the social environment. Shavelson, in a later study, added to his earlier definition of self-concept by suggesting that the self-concept is influenced especially by reinforcements, evaluations by significant others, and one's attributions for one's behaviour (Shavelson and Bolus, 1982).

Others use the term self-esteem instead of self-concept

in their research. Coopersmith (1967) stated that self-esteem refers to the evaluation individuals make and maintain with regard to themselves and that it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, indicating the extent to which those individuals believe themselves to be "capable, significant, successful and worthy" (p.5). Branden (1969) referred to self-esteem as the overall evaluation of oneself. He continued:

> Self-esteem has two interrelated aspects. It entails a sense of personal efficacy and a sense of personal worth. It is the integrated sum of self-confidence and self-respect. It is the conviction that one is competent to live and worthy of living (p. 104).

Samuels (1977), on the other hand, considered self-esteem to be part of the self-concept - the evaluative sector, which is affected by children's interaction with significant others and their success and failure experiences.

Battle (1982) attempted to come to terms with this problem of numerous self-concept definitions by suggesting that although the definitions of self-concept differ slightly, their similarities outweigh their differences and they all indicate that the self-concept possesses perceptual and evaluative components. Self-concept, then, is exactly that - a concept of self - or simply the way one sees and feels about oneself. It is through the self-concept that one views one's experiences and interprets and evaluates them.

The theory and model of self-concept a researcher adheres to also causes some difficulty when self-concept is to be

measured. If a researcher considers self-concept to be a unidimensional construct, as does Coopersmith (1967), it is best measured on a scale where a person's self-evaluations made across items tapping a range of content are added together. The total score of the equally weighted items reflects the person's sense of self in various areas of life. (Harter, 1989).

Proponents of a multidimensional self-concept such as Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) felt this unidimensional outlook is too narrow because it neglects the evaluative distinctions that people make about their competence in different domains of their life. Measurement devices of multidimensionalists identify specific domains of self-evaluation, evaluate each separately and provide a profile of self-evaluations.

Still other researchers, such as Rosenberg (1979) emphasized a global self-esteem. Rosenberg felt that global self-esteem (the general regard one holds for the self as a person) is likely the product of a combination of judgements, but felt, nevertheless, that it could be measured directly.

Harter (1989) suggested an integration of approaches due to the need to consider the multidimensional nature of self-evaluative judgements as well as an individual's overall sense of self-worth. Harter proposed that when measuring self-concept, it is necessary and possible to construct questions that measure domain-specific judgements about competence as

well as an independent set of questions that tap global self-worth directly. She pointed out, though, that the ability to make reliable judgements of global self-concept is age related, whereas the domain specific judgements about competencies can be obtained from an early age.

Self-Concept and Academic Achievement

As is apparent from the preceding discussion, the realm of self-concept research is not an exact science. The different theories, definitions and measurement devices make the reliability of generalizing from one research study to another somewhat doubtful (Shavelson and Hubner, 1976; Drummond and McIntire, 1977; Thomas, 1985). Also, as Hansford and Hattie (1982) reported, the numerous studies completed and the contradictory nature of the findings make the traditional review of the literature a difficult and imprecise task. The thrust of this section, though, is to see if research findings indicate a relationship between self-concept and academic and/or reading achievement. This end can be achieved with a more general discussion of the types of studies undertaken and the results obtained.

When children begin school they already have some opinion of their self-worth, formed through the amount of interest, love and acceptance they have received from the significant others in their lives - usually their parents. They will have

an array of self expectations about how they will do in their school work and how others will react to them (Burns, 1979). Wattenberg and Clifford (1964) questioned whether the self-concepts of these kindergarten children were predictive of their reading achievement. In their study, they measured intelligence, self-concept, ego-strength and reading ability of 128 children in two schools upon entry to kindergarten and at the end of grade two. They found that an unfavorable view of self and poor achievement are already established in many children in kindergarten and that measures of self-concept and ego-strength were more predictive of reading ability two and one half years later than were measures of intelligence.

Correro and Turner (1985) also studied kindergarten children and from results obtained on a self-report self-concept test and a Stanford Early School Achievement test concluded that self-concept scores were significant predictors of academic success. A similar correlation between self-concept and academic achievement was also obtained by Trent (1986) in a study of 37 white and 25 black kindergarten children.

McMichael (1977) conducted a study aimed at determining the relationship between behaviour, self-esteem and reading ability in 198 kindergarten age boys. Results obtained at the beginning of the first year in school indicated children with low self-esteem were also less competent in the basic skills required for reading. The boys were retested as the end of

the year and again self-concept scores were related to reading test scores. McMichael determined that children with low self-esteem were more likely to exhibit antisocial and negative behaviour. She concluded that behaviour and self-esteem problems co-exist at school entry and that reading failure is likely to reinforce low self-esteem rather than cause it.

Strain et al. (1983), however, found no significant difference in self-concept scores among kindergarten children rated by teachers as being high or low in academic and social competence. The high rated children with the high self-concepts were high achievers and more compliant while the low rated children with high self-concepts were more negative, off-task and academically inferior. The researchers suggested, though, that this might occur because low-rated children are just not good at self-perception.

These studies show that the self-concept is an issue in education as soon as children enter school. Also, a persistent positive relationship between self-concept and reading achievement is also indicated by these studies. Does such a relationship exist as children proceed in school? Other research studies attempted to answer this question.

Thomson and Hartley (1980) found that dyslexic children, aged eight to ten, had overall lower levels of self-esteem than classmates reading at or above grade level. Vereen (1980) reported similar findings in her study of fifth grade

boys and girls - those students scoring higher on reading achievement tests also obtained higher ratings on measures of self-concept. Those students whose reading scores were lower represented themselves as having lower self-concepts. Battle (1982) reported that reading underachievers possess lower self-esteem, more hostility, more negative attitudes to school and generally lower levels of adjustment than their achieving and overachieving counterparts. Rivicki (1981) studied one hundred forty-seven second-graders in order to determine the relationship between academic achievement and self-concept. Results obtained on standardized tests indicated that reading and math scores were positively associated with self-concept and that the relationship was stronger for reading than for math.

Bulkowsky and Willows (1980) undertook an investigation to determine specific self-perceptions that might contribute to motivational and performance deficits in children with reading difficulties. In this study, fifth grade children of relatively good, average and poor ability were assessed on tasks in which success and failure were manipulated. Consistent with their predictions, the poor readers displayed low self-concepts and learned helplessness. They were less persistent and less confident than good or average readers and they attributed failure to personal incompetence rather than lack of effort or even bad luck. Johnson (1981) found similar results in a study of boys, nine to twelve years old. Failing

readers held low self-concepts, attributed success to factors outside of self, and attributed failure to personal incompetence.

Rogers, Smith and Coleman (1978) attempted to explain the relationship between academic achievement and self-concept in terms of social comparison theory - that people form their self-concepts based on significant others in their environment. One hundred and fifty-nine academic underachievers aged six to twelve from seventeen different classrooms were administered achievement and self-concept tests. Results were analyzed in two different ways, and showed that on all seven aspects of the self-concept measures, the high-reading achievement group had the highest self-concept scores and the low-reading achievement group had the lowest self-concept scores but when results were analyzed irrespective of within classroom standing, (that is, good, average and poor readers), there were no significant differences among groups in self-concept scores. The researchers concluded that the relationship between academic achievement and self-concept is based largely within the context of the social comparison group - children compare their level of achievement to that of their classmates, then form their self-concepts based on the results.

Other researchers (Peterson, 1981; March, Smith, Barnes and Butler, 1983; Byrne, 1986; and Briggs, 1987) also reported a positive relationship between self-concept and reading

achievement. These researchers, as well as others, have also been concerned with the issue of causality. Does a low self-concept cause poor reading performance or does poor performance in reading negatively affect self-concept? Some research has been done in this area.

Marklund and Hanse (1984) followed a group of 46 underachievers from first to sixth grade, testing for self-concept development at various intervals. Results indicated that the poor readers always maintained a more negative self-image than a matched reference group. Furthermore, those students who had overcome their reading problems by sixth grade had developed a more positive self-image. Marklund and Hanse suggested this implies that reading performance influences self-concept. Similarly, Thai, in a study of Vietnamese refugee children in southern California, found that as these students' reading ability increased, their self-concepts improved. In Rivicki's (1981) study of the self-concept and achievement of second graders, he concluded, based on the magnitude of the relationship between achievement and self-concept, that achievement more strongly influenced self-concept than vice versa. Peterson (1981), in a study of Mexican American children learning to read, attributed one reason for their low achievement in reading to their poor self-concepts.

Arguments can be made for the other side of the issue. Studies made of kindergarten children's self-concepts

(Wattenberg and Clifford, 1964; Correro and Turner, 1985; McMichael, 1977; and Strain et al., 1983) all indicated that these childrens' self-concept were already formed upon school entry, and that, therefore, reading problems do not cause poor self-concepts. Instead the poor self-concepts have a negative effect on reading achievement.

Still other researchers reported different findings. Pottebaum, Keith and Ehly (1986) took subjects from a large project of 58,728 students in a longitudinal study and applied cross-lagged panel correlations to data collected on achievement and self-concept to see if a causal relationship could be found and the direction of the causality. The results suggest that there is no significant causal relationship between self-concept and academic achievement, but rather that the observed relationship is the result of one or more uncontrolled and unknown variables - for example social class and ability may be predominant over both academic achievement and self-concept. The researchers qualified their study with the suggestions that self-concept and academic achievement may cause each other in a cyclical nature or that self-concept may cause academic achievement (or vice versa) but that the magnitude of the effect may be too small to be detected.

In another study undertaken to understand the implications of self-concept within the achievement process, Maruyama, Rubin and Kingsbury (1981) employed causal modeling

techniques on longitudinal data of four to fifteen year olds. They focused specifically on self-esteem. Their results indicate social class and ability are interrelated and cause achievement and self-esteem and that achievement and self-esteem are not causally related to each other. Byrne (1986) drew similar conclusions. She applied a structural equation model to data collected on 929 high school students to validate the self-concept construct. In this study, causal predominance between academic achievement and self-concept was not established. McIntire and Drummond (1977) also did not find a causal relationship between achievement and self-concept. In their study of 72 boys and 72 girls, they concluded that personality, rather than achievement, ability or demographic factors tend to be predictive of self-concept, but also added that their study still could not account for one half of the variance.

Shavelson and Bolus (1982) summed up the impasse in this area by stating that most theorists agree that self-concept and achievement are related but there is as yet no agreement on causal ordering. For teachers, it would perhaps be most logical to adopt the stance of Purkey (1970) who concluded that there is "a continuous interaction between the self and academic achievement, and that each directly influences the other" (p. 23).

Other Factors Influencing Self-Concept

Socio-economic Status

Attempts have been made to show that socio-economic status influences self-concept. Coopersmith (1967) found that the relationship between social class and self-esteem is positive, but weak. Data derived from his study indicated that individuals in the high (upper-middle) social class are more likely to have higher self-esteem than individuals in the middle-middle and working class, but that the difference is not significant. Maruyama, Rubin and Kingsbury (1981), in a longitudinal study of children ages 4 to 15, found social class and ability to be interrelated and to cause self-esteem and achievement. Battle (1985) also reported a relationship between socio-economic status and self-esteem.

Trowbridge (1972), on the other hand, found in a study of 3700 children in third through seventh grade that lower socio-economic status children had higher self-concept scores on the dimensions of general self, social self-peers and school-academic on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, while the middle socio-economic children scored higher on the home-parent dimension. Trowbridge explained the findings by suggesting that lower socio-economic status students may have lower aspiration levels and consequently derive greater satisfaction from their performances and that they may not blame themselves for bad experiences, while middle socio-

economic students may view their shortcomings as their own fault. Amato and Ochiltree (1986) found the importance of social and economic status to be age dependent. They reported that adolescent self-esteem was more sensitive to the social and economic resources of the family than was the self-esteem of younger children, possibly reflecting an adolescent's greater concern with significant others outside the family and pride or shame for one's own family. It is obvious that the relationship between self-concept and socio-economic status is still unclear.

Ethnicity

The research findings with respect to the relationship between ethnicity and self-concept are also mixed and inconclusive. Peterson (1981), in working with Mexican-American children, found that their different language and the alien environment of the school gives way to feelings of not belonging, of being inferior and of very low self-esteem. Silvernail (1985) examined the results of twenty-five studies which measured the self-concepts of ethnic groups (Chicanos, Blacks and Puerto Ricans) in comparison to Anglos, in comparison to each other, and/or in segregated and desegregated settings and could not draw any conclusions as to the influence of ethnicity on self-concept. He suggested that the mixed findings could be attributed to many factors, such as confusion over definitions - many different operational definitions were used in the studies and consequently

different dimensions of the general self-concept had been measured. As well, the influence of teacher expectancies and behaviours when teaching children of varying ethnic groups may compound the research in the area of ethnicity.

Gender

Another variable which may influence the self-concept is the sex of the child, but here again research reveals conflicting results. Coopersmith (1967) found self-esteem to be significantly correlated with sex, whereas Battle (1985) reported that in his research no significant differences in the various dimensions of self-concept (general, social, school, home) could be found, but he did discover that boys tend to gain higher self-esteem scores with maturity and that this trend continues into the college years. It appears that the issue of sex-linked self-esteem may be tied up with cultural expectations for the two genders. Males are expected to be more successful and their efforts and achievement tend to be valued more highly, resulting in more positive self-concept ratings for males. This may explain Battle's findings that males gain in self-esteem with maturity. Battle (1985) suggested that "society, by way of the conditioning process, shapes the behaviour of boys and girls somewhat differently, which subsequently causes boys and girls to perceive themselves somewhat differently" (p. 55).

Teachers' behaviours and expectations for boys and girls may contribute to differences found in the sexes with regard

to self-concept, but once again conflict in findings exists. For example, Elaugh and Harlow (1973) reported that males receive more attention than females do from teachers and that when the teacher is female this can result in lower self-concepts for females. Samuels (1977) suggested, though, that females more than males perceive their teachers' feelings toward them as positive. These results, although conflicting, along with the role of cultural expectations cited earlier, show the influence of others on the self-concept. Differences in male/female self-concept may result from how others perceive and treat each gender and how children of each gender react to such treatment.

Ability

Ability is another factor which one would assume would have a direct effect on self-concept. It seems plausible to expect that the very able child would have a high self-concept, whereas a child of lesser ability would have a more negative self-concept. The reality, however, is not as clear cut as that. Strain et al. (1983), in a study of fifty-six kindergarten children found no significant difference in self-concept scores between children rated as highly academically competent and those given a low competence rating. Woodlands and Wong (1979) studied 180 children in grades 4 through 7 and reported that only a "fairly" accurate prediction of a student's academic grouping (academically gifted, learning disabled or average) could be made on the basis of self-

concept scores. The gifted students only surpassed the average students on two aspects of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory - convergent thinking and academic factors. Woodlands and Wong suggest the myth that gifted students have consistently higher self-concepts should be re-examined.

Similarly, Chapman and McAlpine (1980) found that children with high academic ability scored higher on the part of the scale which related to academic self-concept, but such high perceptions do not necessarily transfer to other non-academic areas. Gonzales and Hayes (1988), in a study of gifted underachievers, reported that their academic achievement was influenced by their self-concepts, attitudes to learning, and their aspirations. It appears that being able does not necessarily translate into positive self-concepts or even high achievement. Rather, the factors discussed here, plus the experiences a child has and his/her interpretations of them all play a part in self-concept formation.

Parent Relations

Children's perceptions of themselves are greatly influenced by their relations with significant others (Brookover and Gottlieb, 1964; Purkey, 1971; Singh, 1972). Felker (1974) noted that in the first years of life, the most important significant others are the parents. How parents help their children grow and how they react to their exploratory experiences have tremendous influence on them.

(Coopersmith, 1967; LaBenne and Greene, 1969; Purkey, 1970; Samuels 1977; Hammachek, 1978; Battle, 1982; Silvernail, 1985). Felker suggested that parents influence the development of their child's self-concept in three basic ways: as primary models for the developing behaviour of the child; as primary feedback agents acknowledging how the child's behaviour is influencing others, and as the primary evaluator of the behaviour of the child (p. 44).

What children believe about themselves is partly a function of their interpretation of how significant others in their lives see them (Purkey, 1971). Children infer this from these peoples' behaviours toward them. Thus, children's self concepts rest in part on what they think others think of them. Parents are the first people to affect the development of children's self-concepts in this way, and they continue to be significant throughout the child's life (LaBenne and Greene, 1969). Silvernail (1985) summed up the role of parents in this way:

> Unquestionably, the parental care received in the early years plays an enormous role in defining the child's self-image. A supportive environment, with many stimuli and visible love and care on the part of parents, will enhance the development of a psychologically sound and stable self-concept. An opposite environment will, in all likelihood, contribute to the development of children who are psychologically crippled (p. 12).

Hamachek (1978) reported that parental qualities most clearly associated with the development of a positive self-concept in children include warmth and caring, encouragement,

some freedom for exploration, high expectations and firm discipline. In a seven year study of 1700 children Coopersmith (1967) found that the most notable antecedents of high self-esteem were directly related to parental behaviour and love for their children and the consequences of the rules and regulations that parents establish in the home. Coopersmith listed three conditions which lead the children to value themselves and regard themselves as objects of worth. These are: (1) parental warmth, where children sense the love and concern of the family and feel they value them; (2) respectful treatment, where children's views are considered and where they hold rightful positions in the family; and (3) clearly defined limits, where children learn, through the parents' relatively high demands and expectations for success, that they care what happens to them. If these three conditions are met, children will develop positive perceptions of self-worth.

Amato and Ochiltree (1986) reviewed a number of studies and reported that family environments that promote self-esteem are ones in which:

1. Parents encourage the child to explore and manipulate the environment.
2. Parents talk frequently with the child.
3. Parents have a close and supportive relationship with the child.
4. Parents have high educational expectations and

aspirations for the child.

5. Parents provide assistance with schoolwork.
6. Parents point out the consequences of behaviour to the child.
7. Parents use authoritative, rather than authoritarian or permissive styles of parenting.
8. Family life is relatively free of overt conflict between members. (p. 48).

In their own study, Amato and Ochiltree (1986) found that children's self-esteem is more strongly associated with the quality of interpersonal processes, such as parental aspirations, expectations, talking, helping, and interest and family cohesion, than with structural resources such as income level, social status and education of parents.

Samuels (1977) and Silvernail (1985) also reported the results of several studies linking parental self-concepts, particularly the mother's self-concept with the child's self-concept. They concluded that mothers who possess positive self-esteem tend to show greater warmth and affection towards their children and more approval and acceptance. This translates into children who are more positive about themselves and their abilities. Swayze (1980) also reported the importance of good parent relations on children's self-concepts. She found that mothers who exhibited affectionate warmth toward their children had children with high self-concepts and that fathers who took an active and supportive

role in child-rearing had children of high self-esteem. Thus, positive relationships exist between children with high self-concepts and good father-mother relations.

The impact of parental care on self-concept development is long lasting. Parents who have positive self-images create an environment which promotes positive self-concept development in their children. This environment of affection, warmth and respect between parent and child, with clearly defined rules and expectations of behaviour, results in children with positive self-concepts.

Peer Relations

Once children begin to play with others, their sense of belonging, competence and worth must be adjusted to take in these new experiences. As children begin to spend more time with peers, their competencies are evaluated by their age mates. Children who already feel competent and confident, usually will be successful in peer encounters, while children who have not developed a sense of belongingness and security from their family relations will be hampered when they move out into the wide world (Felker, 1974). Felker, (1974) also found that fearfulness and lack of confidence will prevent good peer relations and lead to negative self-concepts.

Similar conclusions were drawn by Heathers (1955), who studied forty, two-to-five-year olds at the Fels Institute, and found that socially competent children engaged more in social play, were more assertive, and sought attention or

approval from the other children more than from adults. McCandless, Bilous and Bennett (1961) found, from observing preschool children in a free-play situation, that popularity and emotional dependency were negatively related to one another. Henderson and Long (1971), in a study of ninety-five black lower-class children a year after school entrance, compared the children's self-social concepts, behaviour ratings by teachers, and reading behaviour, and found that those children in first grade who were reading had a mature independence, while the nonreaders were overdependent and those who were not promoted were socially withdrawn. These studies indicate that children who perceive themselves as competent and confident will interact with others in an independent and assertive manner and will enjoy more successful peer and social encounters and be more accepted by their peers.

A number of studies (Coopersmith, 1959; Carlson, 1963; Williams and Cole, 1968; and Richmond and White, 1971) indicated that children with positive self-concepts were more likely to enjoy high peer status than were low self-concept children. Teigland (1966) found that grade five achievers were better adjusted and chosen more often by peers in work and play situations, while Simon and Bernstein (1971) reported that sixth graders with high self-esteem believed that people whom they like reciprocated their feelings.

Samuels (1977) reviewed a number of studies on self-

concept and peer relations and concluded that children who feel good about themselves tend to be adjusted socially and to be more accepted by their peers, thus further increasing their self-concepts and increasing their desire for further peer interaction, while children who do not feel competent or good about themselves, often fear failure in peer interactions and tend to avoid getting involved in a group. Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1951) found that children with low self-esteem were more persuasible and more compliant, and suggested that these children, because they lacked in personal adequacy, had a strong need for approval which could inhibit their intellectual and creative capacities.

To summarize, then, children with positive self-perceptions feel more competent in social interactions, are more assertive in their interactions and tend to enjoy high peer status. Their success in their peer relations reinforces their feelings of competence, positively influences their self-concepts, and leads them to continue to seek out peer interactions. For children with negative self-perceptions the opposite is true. Their feelings of lack of competency prevent them from enjoying successful peer relations, and this, in turn, leads to diminished self-concepts. These children may become overly compliant to gain acceptance from others in social situations, or may shun mixing with peers altogether.

Enhancement of Self-Concept and Reading Achievement

Many research studies have shown a relationship between self-concept and reading achievement. Even though causality between the two cannot be conclusively proven, a continuous interaction and influence between the two has been suggested (Purkey, 1970). If there is a continuous interaction between self-concept and achievement, can teachers influence the self-concepts of their students in the hopes of also having some positive effect on achievement? Many educators believe so. These educators call for programs specifically designed to enhance self-concepts in the belief that children with healthy, positive self-concepts will be happier, will have a better attitude to school and will do much better academically (Brookover and Gottlieb, 1964; Singh, 1972; Sanacore, 1975; Canfield and Wells, 1976; Beane, Lipka and Ludewig, 1980; Carkhuff, 1982; Newberg and Love, 1982; Beane, 1982; Aspy and Roebuck, 1982; Combs, 1982; Moore and Harbeson, 1986; and Ignoffo, 1988). Research indicates, though, that self-concept is relatively stable (Shavelson & Bolus, 1982; Marsh, Smith, Barnes & Butler, 1983; Silvernail, 1985; and Byrne, 1986). Is it possible, then, to change the self-concept if it is a stable construct? Smith and Rogers (1977), in a study of 89 severe academic underachievers, found that in the early

formative years dimensions of the self-concept are relatively amenable to change, but will crystallize in later childhood and then become relatively resistant to change. Bayer (1986) found that the self-concept remains stable over time in the absence of enhancing or deleterious experiences, but can be changed as a function of various experiences and influences. These studies indicate that positive steps can be taken by educators to enhance the self-concepts of school children, but also caution that such steps should be taken in the early school years before the self-concept becomes too stable and resistant to change.

The research indicates some studies in which self-concept enhancement programs and techniques were employed which have resulted in improved school achievement. Gerler (1985) examined research published between 1974 and 1984 in the Elementary School Guidance and Counseling periodical. He found a number of studies reporting improved self-esteem and improved achievement as a result of the use of a preventative mental health program that concentrates on emotional and social development called Magic Circle, as well as other affective classroom guidance activities. Summerlin, Hammett & Payne (1983), however, found children exposed to Magic Circle improved in social and total self-concept, but not in personal or intellectual self-concept. Cant and Spackman (1985) investigated the effect counseling might have on self-concepts and achievement. They designed a study of children

with low scores on a self-esteem inventory. The experimental group received twice weekly, twenty minute counseling sessions over a three month period by the classroom teacher in which children were encouraged to talk about their experiences, behaviours and emotions in a non-evaluative way. The control group did not. Results indicated that the experimental group gained significantly in self-esteem and reading scores. Similarly, Wooster and Carson (1982) found that self-concept and reading achievement pre and post testing indicated improvement after the application of counseling skills to a class of 26 children with disruptive behaviour and poor reading achievement. Lawrence (1981) suggested that teachers are in a powerful position to be able to influence a child's self-concept. He reported that counseling programs he has designed specifically to improve a child's self-esteem have also improved the child's reading attainment.

Hadley (1988) also investigated the impact affective education has on academic growth. She conducted her experiment on 165 children in seven grade two classrooms - 3 classes were the experimental groups and 4 the control groups. The experimental groups were exposed to a twelve week affective education program using the DUSO Kit (Developing an Understanding of Self and Others) plus other Kits designed to improve self-concept. Self-concept and achievement scores were taken before and after the twelve week period. Results showed a significant increase in reading scores in favour of

the experimental group. There was a slight gain in self-concept, but it was not statistically significant. Hadley suggested that a longer program may make self-concept gains statistically significant. Hall and Runion (1983), though, found different results using the DUSO Kit. In their experiment with 22 grade two children, the experimental group used the DUSO Kit plus teacher giving positive reinforcement; the control group just had positive teacher reinforcement. The results indicated that the control group improved in self-perception, but the experimental group did not. Reading achievement was not measured. Hall and Runion suggested that the teacher has the major role in self-concept development and that affective approaches using puppets and DUSO material may improve the self-concepts of kindergarten and grade one children, but they are not effective for older children.

Other researchers found success in enhancing self-concept and reading achievement through other means. Miller and Mason (1983) used dramatics and found that it can enhance readiness, vocabulary development, oral reading skills, reading comprehension and self-concept from kindergarten to junior high school. They attributed this to the nonjudgemental nature of dramatics. Henderson (1987) found parental involvement plus an affective education program resulted in higher student gains in self-esteem, alternate thinking and reading comprehension than a program without planned parental environment.

Page and Winberg (1981) used cross-aged tutoring as mean of improving self-concepts. Their premise was that the key to changing a young person's self-image is to create opportunities for him or her to be seen in a positive and productive light. After 10 weeks of high school children tutoring elementary children, 56% of high school tutors and 87% of elementary tutees showed gains in self-concept. The researchers did not check to see if this program resulted in reading improvement, though.

Although not conclusive, a number of studies do indicate success in enhancing children's self-concepts through the use of various affective programs and techniques. Further research is needed, though, in order to find out if such improved self-concepts will result in improved achievement in reading and other academic areas.

Attitudes to Reading

Another affective behaviour which has a role to play in reading achievement is attitude to reading. Brown and Briggs (1989) stated that children who develop positive attitudes toward the value of reading will approach reading instruction with a greater possibility for success. Kennedy and Halinski (1978) found that good readers have a more positive attitude toward reading than poor readers do and that the poor attitude of disabled readers may have a negative effect on reading

achievement.

Smith (1990) defined reading attitude as "a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions, that makes reading more or less probable" (p. 215). As with self-concept research, because reading attitudes exist within the individual and cannot be directly observed, research in this area has been fraught with difficulties in the measurement of reading attitudes as well as in the conflicting findings of the studies carried out.

Some research indicates a relationship between attitude to reading and self-concept. In these studies, the lack of motivation and poor attitudes to reading that disabled readers exhibit are thought to be an outgrowth of a negative self-image. In Zimmerman's and Allebrand's (1965) study of 71 poor readers and 82 good readers, the poor readers were below average on feelings of self-worth, self reliance and belonginess and held feelings of hopelessness and discouragement; while the good readers were better adjusted in every area. Zimmerman and Allebrand summed up this study by stating that good readers were more internally motivated and well-adjusted than poor readers, resulting in more effort and persistence when striving for success. Similar results were obtained by Claytor (1979). In a study of 154 boys and 130 girls from regular fifth grade classrooms, Claytor demonstrated a positive relationship between attitude to reading, self-concept, behaviour and reading achievement.

Children with poor attitudes also had low self-concepts, behaviour problems and difficulty with reading.

Briggs (1987) reported that a child's self-concept has an impact on his/her attitude toward reading as well as the amount of effort put forth. He suggested that if a teacher can help children improve their self-concepts, they will be better able to develop positive attitudes. He also pointed out that the development of positive attitudes is extremely important in the educational process in that a positive attitude promotes and sustains learning while a negative attitude results in lack of effort, lack of motivation and misbehaviour.

There are a number of studies which show a relationship between attitude to reading and reading achievement (Fredericks, 1982; Wigfield and Asher, 1984; Walberg and Tsai, 1985). Hall (1978) in a study of fifth grade children, found a significant ($p < .05$) difference between all levels of achievement, with high achievers having significantly more positive attitudes than either middle or low achievers, and middle achievers having significantly more positive attitudes than low achievers. Although a clear relationship was found between reading attitudes and reading achievement in this study, no attempt was made to determine causality.

Lewis (1980) correlated the scores obtained by 149 third, fourth and fifth grade children on a reading attitude inventory with their scores on reading subtests of the

Metropolitan Achievement Test and found a correlation of .17 ($p < .05$) which indicates a positive relationship between attitude to reading and reading success. Lewis concluded, however, that attitude toward reading was not a major factor in reading success due to the low magnitude of the correlation.

Foley, Haneker, and Coriata (1984) researched the hypothesis that attitudes toward reading would vary significantly with achievement. Sixty seventh and eight grade students participated. When scores on the Estes Reading Attitude Scale (1971) and the reading comprehension subtest of the Stanford Achievement Test were compared, it was found that most students had a positive attitude toward reading regardless of reading achievement level (only 5 of 60 children revealed a negative attitude to reading). This study contradicts the normally held opinion that children with positive attitudes to reading also are high achievers.

In 1980, Roettger conducted a study of elementary students selected because they contradicted the belief that students who read well have positive attitudes to reading, while those who do not read well hold negative attitudes. All students completed the Estes Attitude Scale. Roettger found that the students had diffrent expectations for reading. Students who were high attitude, low performance viewed reading as a tool for survival while students who were low attitude, high performance saw reading as a means of gaining

information to help them get good grades in school. Roettger concluded that the commonly held belief that a high achiever has a positive attitude toward reading may be erroneous.

Johnson (1964) and Cramer (1975) both found low positive correlations between attitude and reading achievement. Roettger, Szymczuk and Millard (1979) found the correlation between attitude and achievement scores was significant, but low. These researchers felt that overall, attitudes cannot be used as a predictor of academic achievement.

The inconsistent results and the conclusions drawn in these research studies indicate a relationship between reading attitude and reading achievement is not a proven fact. Further research in this area seemed warranted.

Other Factors Influencing Attitude to Reading

Gender

There are also mixed findings in the area of gender and attitudes to reading. Reading experts generally recognize that females are more interested in reading and have more positive attitudes toward reading than males (Arlin, 1976; Kennedy and Halinski, 1978). Johnson (1964) for example, in a study of four elementary schools in Eugene, Oregon used the *T*-test to test for significance between boys and girls attitudes to reading and found that the mean differences in attitudes toward reading were higher for girls than for boys.

Johnson concluded that girls in this study indicated slightly better attitudes to reading than boys.

Crews (1978) found that females report significantly more positive attitudes toward reading than males. When the Estes Attitude Scale was used to measure attitudes, however, no significant differences in attitudes toward reading of females and males in terms of reading achievement could be found (data tested for significance at the .05 and .01 levels of confidence).

A study of fifth and sixth grade students in rural Ohio found that boys are more likely to perceive themselves as having difficulty in reading and acknowledge the existence of this problem in attitudinal type questions (Wallbrown, Levine, and Engin, 1981). Girls perceived themselves as getting more reinforcement from friends, parents and teachers in reading than did boys and also were found to value reading more and get more satisfaction from it.

Hall (1978) in a study of 300 pupils in both urban and rural Tennessee schools, however, discovered that sex is not always a determiner of more positive or more negative reading attitudes. He suggested that teachers must teach reading skills and work to improve students' attitudes to reading without allowing bias toward sex influence their attitudes to students.

Age/Grade Level

A general decline in positive attitudes toward reading,

continuing throughout the school years, has been found in longitudinal studies. Bullen (1972) found a decline in reading attitude from grades 1 to 3, while Crews found that sixth-grade students reported more significantly positive attitudes than seventh or eighth grade students. Parker and Paradis (1986), though, found evidence of an increase in reading attitude, but only from grades 4 to 5.

Swanson (1982) correlated scores obtained on a reading attitude inventory with composite scores from a reading achievement test of 116 first graders in rural Georgia. The low positive correlations obtained were interpreted as evidence that younger children usually have relatively positive attitudes in the initial stages of learning to read and that it is only when learning to read becomes a task that negative attitudes to reading begin to develop. Arlin (1976) also found that children like reading less as they get older.

In Johnson's study (1964) of four elementary schools in Oregon, similar conclusions were drawn. Two-way analysis of variance was used to determine whether there were significant differences in reading attitudes between grade levels and between schools. The results indicated differences in attitudes between grade levels, leading Johnson to conclude that children in the lower grades indicated better attitudes toward reading than children in each successively higher grade tested.

Ability

Whether able children have better attitudes to reading than children who find reading difficult has been the focus of some research. Waller, Trismen and Wilder (1977) examined the relationship among attitudes toward reading, participation in compensatory reading programs and reading achievement of grade 2, 4 and 6 children in programs designed for children reading below grade level and found that these children showed greater gains in attitude than students not participating in such programs, even though in some cases these children did not make gains in achievement. Lohman (1983) investigated the attitudes of 40 normal and 40 disabled readers in grades 3 through 6. Children were categorized as normal or disabled by scores obtained on a standardized reading achievement test and were also given an attitude inventory. Significant differences in attitudes were found with a greater number of negative and less positive attitudes among the disabled group than among the normal group.

Gifted children were the subject of a study of reading attitudes by Anderson, Tollefson and Gilbert (1985). Two hundred and seventy-six gifted students in grades 1 through 12 completed a reading questionnaire, developed specifically for the study by the authors, consisting of 11 attitudinal items and using a 5-point Likert Scale. The authors noted significant sex and grade level differences with females as a group reporting more positive attitudes to reading than males.

Also, primary students had the most positive attitudes with attitudes declining with each advancing grade level. These results resemble the findings of a number of studies of the general school population.

Bobel (1981), on the other hand, in a study of another gifted group, found consistently positive attitudes to reading. Similarly, Link (1984) in a study of thirty gifted students in grades four through nine in north central Texas found these children to have very positive attitudes to reading which were observable in their reading habits at home and at school.

From the above review, it can be seen that no decisive conclusions can as yet be drawn in the area of attitude to reading. It is readily apparent that further research in this area is needed.

Reading Comprehension

Throughout this review of the literature, reported studies have attempted to correlate reading achievement with some other variable. The reading achievement in these studies generally refers to reading comprehension, rather than word identification or vocabulary. Numerous models as to the acquisition of meaning exist. It is not the scope of this thesis to review all these models of reading. Instead, the focus will be on strategic reading - a model which emphasizes

the cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and affective dimensions of reading comprehension.

Strategic Reading

Strategic readers can be distinguished from less-skilled readers by their methods of interacting with text - they have some awareness of and control over their cognitive reading skills. Clay (1979) found that children she interviewed had vague and often inaccurate conceptions of reading, with the less skilled readers having little awareness of the need to use different strategies for variations in reading purposes and texts. Brown and Briggs (1989) have identified four characteristics of strategic readers:

1. They establish goals for reading.
2. They select reading strategies appropriate for the text.
3. They monitor their reading to determine whether comprehension is accurate.
4. They have a positive attitude toward reading (p.31).

Paris, Wasik and Turner (1991) distinguished between skills and strategies. They referred to skills as information processing techniques that are automatic and are applied to text unconsciously for many reasons, such as expertise, repeated practice, compliance with directions, luck and naive use. Strategies, on the other hand, are actions selected

deliberately to achieve particular goals. Strategies are conscious and deliberate and can be evaluated for their utility, effort and appropriateness.

Strategies can be applied for different purposes at different times during the reading process. First, some strategies are actually applied before any reading begins and are referred to as prereading strategies. These strategies provide a bridge between a reader's knowledge base and the text about to be read. Prereading strategies such as skimming text, looking at pictures, or examining the title and headings are important in reading comprehension because they activate prior knowledge. Prior knowledge has been described by Smith (1982) as the theory of the world in the brain, which is the source of all comprehension. In order to understand written language, a reader must bring to bear his knowledge of language, his past experiences, and his conceptual ability. Langer (1984) found that activating prior knowledge is important because, besides motivating children's interest in reading, it significantly improves comprehension. Paris, Wasik and Turner (1991) pointed out, though, that using effective strategies before reading is not automatic, but is dependent upon knowledge about text genre and structure, knowledge about relevant strategies to use and motivation.

Second, some strategies are applied while reading is taking place and are referred to as during-reading activities. These strategies help a reader elaborate the ideas suggested

by the text and make the information personally significant. Strategies such as discussion of ambiguous meanings, prediction of what will happen next, and clarification of the author's purpose increase the extent to which material is accessible to the reader and improve a reader's ability to comprehend text (Tierney & Cunningham, 1984). During-reading strategies help the reader go beyond text information by adding inferences from their background knowledge and the text itself. Strategies such as identifying main ideas, making inferences and looking forward and backward in text aid comprehension by filling in gaps in the reader's understanding. Such during-reading strategies are seldom used by beginning or weak readers, perhaps because they are unaware of how to use them or are unconvinced of their importance (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991).

Third, strategies used after the text has been read are called postreading strategies. Strategic readers reflect on what has been read and consider whether they have achieved their purposes in reading, have confirmed their predictions and have made sense of the selection. Strategies are applied to review the text and check comprehension. An example of a postreading strategy is summarizing. For very small children, this could take the form of retelling the story. Encouraging young readers to retell a story leads to an improved sense of story, better comprehension and a more complex use of vocabulary (Flood, 1977).

The acquisition and control of reading strategies is partly due to children's emerging metacognition about literacy, schooling, and themselves. Metacognition has been defined by Flavell (1979) as a knowledge of and a conscious attempt to control one's own cognitive process. Part of a reader's metacognitive development includes more detailed knowledge about what strategies are available, how they function, when they should be applied, and why they help comprehension. Such knowledge aids in the process of comprehension monitoring, which has been defined by Baker (1979) as the evaluation and regulation of one's own ongoing comprehension processes.

Strategic readers appear to be much more efficient at comprehension monitoring than poor readers. Swanson (1988) found that better readers were more likely to use higher level strategies, such as inferencing, than poor readers. Also, when failing to comprehend text, good readers employ such strategies as rereading text and drawing on prior knowledge to assist in their search for meaning.

Baker (1979) suggested that in order for readers to be successful at comprehension monitoring, they must be able to assess their present state of knowledge of the encountered text, must be knowledgeable about various elements of text, and must have the strategic knowledge to select the necessary information to reach meaning. Children who are successful at comprehension monitoring know when they understand, when they

do not understand and when they only partially understand.

It appears that besides differences in comprehension monitoring between good and poor readers, some differences in comprehension monitoring may be developmental. Markman (1979) found that when third, fifth and sixth grade children were presented with passages containing incomplete or inconsistent information, the young children were less likely than older children to realize the extent of their understanding. When second, fourth and sixth graders were asked to edit passages containing inconsistencies, Garner and Taylor (1982) found that the younger children did not find the errors spontaneously and even older readers had difficulty finding all the problems.

Comprehension monitoring also appears to be related to the ability to recall text and organize text information. Paris and Myers (1981) reported that the poor reader's low rate of error detection in passages containing inconsistencies was correlated with a more disorganized recall and fewer questions answered correctly about the passages. To be successful at comprehension monitoring, the reader must be able to detect unknown or inconsistent information, and also be aware of strategies that can be used to alleviate the problem.

Strategic readers, then, are able to monitor their own comprehension and take the necessary steps to cope successfully with any difficulty encountered in comprehending

text. Their comprehension monitoring reflects strategies for constructing meaning, knowledge about criteria for evaluating text and coherent recall and organization of text information.

Strategic Reading and Self-Concept/Reading Attitude

Strategic readers are competent in reading activities because they know how to learn effectively and have strategies available to monitor and improve comprehension. Harter and Connell (1984) reported that students who feel competent are intrinsically motivated and confident in their abilities. Covington (1987) pointed out that the child's self-worth is partly dependent on self-perceptions of competence in classroom settings. Children who are less skilled at reading perceive themselves as less competent and, in consequence, their feelings of self-worth (their self-concept) suffers.

An important outgrowth of children's confidence and competence is the control they exert over the environment. Children who feel little control may feel incompetent and helpless, leading to negative affect and defensive strategies, such as nonparticipation and even cheating (Stipek & Weisz, 1981). Beliefs about control can affect achievement. Butkowsky and Willows (1980) found that poor readers who believe they have no control over their achievement outcomes establish a cycle of diminished task persistence, low expectations for future success, and low self-esteem.

The competence and control felt by strategic readers also can play a role in their attitudes to reading. Children who

feel competent and in control will develop positive attitudes toward the value of reading and will approach reading activities with a greater possibility for success (Brown & Briggs, 1989).

Children's self-concepts and their attitudes to reading, then, are thought to be related to the extent to which they are strategic readers. A skilled or strategic reader is aware of what strategies to use to promote maximum reading comprehension, attributes success to the strategies and appropriate effort, and feels a sense of control for engineering the desired output. Skilled or strategic readers are self-regulated learners who establish positive self-esteem by exercising control over their own learning (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991).

Gender and Reading Achievement

Maccoby (1976) reported that girls in the primary and elementary grades usually show academic superiority over boys of the same age, especially in areas related to reading and language. This can be attributed to the fact that girls mature faster than boys during the first years of life so logically it would be expected that girls would develop certain abilities earlier than boys. As well, members of each sex are encouraged to be interested in activities relevant to their future role. Society also encourages sex-typed behaviours such as aggression in boys and conformity-passivity in girls. Males and females set attainment goals,

but the particular areas in which they direct their efforts are determined by cultural sex roles, with girls being expected to be good at reading, spelling and writing while boys are expected to be good at mathematics and science (Whiting and Edwards, 1973).

Modeling is also thought to play a role in gender differences in reading. Society encourages children to model the same sex. The fact that most elementary teachers in North America are female has been suggested as a reason for female superiority in reading on this continent (Finn, Dulberg & Reis, 1979). The opposite has been found in England, Nigeria and West Germany. In these countries, most elementary teachers are male and the boys are superior in reading.

The expectations of significant others also has a role to play in gender differences in reading achievement. Both teachers and parents expect girls to do better than boys in the elementary grades, especially in reading and language areas. Parsons, Adler & Kaczala (1982) have found a positive correlation between parents' and teachers' expectations for children's achievement and their actual achievement. Parents and teachers, because of their different expectations for girls and boys, reinforce these differences between the sexes daily, thus perpetuating the differences in gender in reading and academic achievement.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships among self-concept, reading attitude and reading achievement in a group of grade two children. Positive relationships found among the affective behaviours, self-concept and reading attitude, and reading achievement strongly imply the need for teachers to consider the affective needs of their students daily in the reading classroom. This chapter presents the hypotheses, describes the sample, outlines the procedures and discusses the instruments used for measurement purposes.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study are outgrowths of the questions posed in Chapter I and flow from and are supported by the related research presented in Chapter II. A testing instrument which measures general self-concept, as well as dimensions of general self-concept was used. The testing instrument for reading attitude also gave three attitude measures. The further divisions of self-concept and reading

attitude are reflected in the hypotheses proposed. The hypotheses are stated as null hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: The relationship between peer relations' self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between peer relations' self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between peer relations' self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between parent relations' self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between parent relations' self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 6: The relationship between parent relations' self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 7: The relationship between total nonacademic self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 8: The relationship between total nonacademic self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 9: The relationship between total nonacademic self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 10: The relationship between reading self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 11: The relationship between reading self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 12: The relationship between reading self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 13: The relationship between general school self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 14: The relationship between general school self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 15: The relationship between general school self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 16: The relationship between total academic self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 17: The relationship between total academic self-concept and academic reading attitude in a

group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 18: The relationship between total academic self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 19: The relationship between total self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 20: The relationship between total self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 21: The relationship between total self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 22: The relationship between peer relations' self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 23: The relationship between parent relations' self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 24: The relationship between total nonacademic self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 25: The relationship between reading self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 26: The relationship between general school self-

concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 27: The relationship between total academic self concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 28: The relationship between total self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 29: The relationship between recreational reading attitude and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 30: The relationship between academic reading attitude and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 31: The relationship between full-scale reading attitude and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Hypothesis 32: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on peer relations' self-concept.

Hypothesis 33: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on parent relations' self-concept.

Hypothesis 34: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on total nonacademic self-concept.

Hypothesis 35: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on reading self-concept.

Hypothesis 36: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on general school self-concept.

Hypothesis 37: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on total academic self-concept.

Hypothesis 38: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on total self-concept.

Hypothesis 39: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on recreational reading attitude.

Hypothesis 40: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on academic reading attitude.

Hypothesis 41: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on full-scale reading attitude.

Hypothesis 42: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on reading comprehension.

Sample

The study was conducted with 3 classes of grade two students of varying reading ability. These seventy-two children constituted the entire grade two enrolment in a three stream elementary school in the St. John's area. Two trainable mentally handicapped children integrated into the grade two classes for part days did not take part in the study due to the nature of their handicaps.

All children took part in the testing procedure. The children were then sorted for sex. As an equal number of boys and girls were needed, and as more girls were registered in grade two than boys, names were put in a bag and drawn out randomly. Names were drawn until 30 of each sex were obtained. The rest of the study was conducted on the test scores of these 60 children.

Procedures

Before beginning the research, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Memorial University, (Appendix A), and from School Board Personnel and School Administration, (Appendix B). A letter was sent to the parents explaining the purpose of the testing and asking permission for their children to take part, (Appendix C).

Testing took place over a two day period. The self-concept and reading attitude tests were administered on one day and the reading comprehension test took place on the following day. Classroom teachers administered the tests to their own children in order to minimize any apprehension a testing situation might arouse. All tests were easily administered. Procedures for introducing and administering tests were gone over with each teacher to ensure that the testing situation in all three classes was the same. Scores obtained by the children on the three tests were compared and analyzed to see if the relationships among self-concept, reading attitude, reading achievement, and gender were statistically significant.

Instruments

The Self-Description Questionnaire - 1 (SDQ-1)

This test (Marsh, 1988) measures self-concept in four nonacademic areas (Physical Ability, Physical Appearance, Peer Relations and Parent Relations), three academic areas (Reading, Mathematics and General School) and a General Self Scale. The nonacademic raw scores can be summed and divided by 4 to give a Total Nonacademic Self-Concept Score, while the three academic raw scores can be summed and divided by three to give a Total Academic Self-Concept Score. Finally, the Total Nonacademic Self-Concept Score and the Total Academic

Self-Concept Score can be added together and divided by two to give a Total Self-Concept Score.

The SDQ-1 can be administered individually or in groups, (as was done in this case) and no special administration training is required. Testing time was between 15 to 20 minutes. This consisted of the actual presentation of the test items, as well as time taken reading the instructions and answering any questions the children might have.

There are 76 items altogether. Children were asked to respond to simple declarative questions, such as - "I am interested in reading", and "I enjoy doing work in all school subjects" with one of three responses: No, Sometimes, Yes. Twelve items were negatively worded in order to disrupt positive response biases. These items were not included in the self-concept scores since research has indicated that young children and preadolescents do not give valid responses to these items (Marsh, 1988).

An extensive manual accompanied the test. The manual included administration instructions, the theoretical framework upon which the SDQ-1 is based, as well as the percentile ranks and T-scores by grade level and sex for the total and combined normative sample.

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

This group administered test (McKenna and Kear, 1990) is designed to ascertain attitudes to reading of children in

grades one through six. It consisted of twenty items which can be administered within ten to fifteen minutes. Each item presented a brief, simply-worded statement about reading, followed by four pictures of Garfield. Each pose was designed to depict a different emotional state, ranging from very positive to very negative. The test authors suggested emphasizing that there are no right answers in order to encourage sincerity in responding. Also, it was recommended to discuss each of Garfield's poses - very happy, a little happy, a little upset, very upset - so that the children would have a good understanding of them before proceeding with the questions. The four point scale of this test avoided a neutral, central category which respondents often select in order to avoid committing themselves. Each statement was read aloud slowly and clearly twice. Children were asked to respond according to their own feelings.

To score the survey, the happiest Garfield counted for four points, for three, the slightly happy, the mildly upset, for two and the very upset counted for one. Three scores were obtained for each student: the total for the first ten items related to attitude toward recreational reading, the total for the second ten related to attitude toward academic aspects of reading, and a composite score. All three scores were used in this study.

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test

This is a group administered test (MacGinitie, 1980)

designed to test vocabulary and comprehension. For this study only the comprehension subtest was used. In this part of the test, a passage was read and a picture chosen from a group of four, that illustrated the passage or that answered a question on it. The first passages were very simple sentences, but as the test progressed, the passages increased in difficulty. Two practice items to be done with the children were provided. They began at item one and proceeded throughout the booklet at their own speed until a time limit of 35 minutes has passed. Level B, Form 1 of the test, designed for use with grade two, was used.

The raw score was obtained by counting the number of correct items. Tables in the manual allowed conversion of the raw scores to stanines, T-scores, percentile ranks, grade equivalents and extended scale scores. Only the raw scores were used in this study.

Analysis of Data

The testing procedures yielded eleven self-concepts scores and three reading attitude scores. As physical abilities' self-concept, physical appearance self-concept and mathematics self-concept were not related to the thrust of this study, these three self-concept scores were not further analyzed. Regular correlational analyses using the Pearson Product-Moment Method, were performed to examine intercorrelations among the remaining eight self-concepts

scores, the three reading attitude scores and the one reading achievement score. Regular *T*-tests were performed to determine the influence of gender on self-concept, reading attitude and reading comprehension. Gender was considered the independent variable, and self-concept, reading attitude and reading comprehension, the dependent variables.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the data collected in the study to see if the questions asked in Chapter I and the hypotheses proposed in Chapter III have been supported. Besides descriptive statistics which generated means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores for the three tests and individual test items, two statistical procedures have been applied to the raw scores collected. Regular correlation analyses, using the Pearson Product- Moment Method, were performed to examine the relationships among measures of self-concept, reading attitude and reading achievement. *T* -tests were used to determine the influence of gender on self-concept, reading attitude and reading comprehension. For the *T* -tests, gender was considered an independent variable, and self-concept, reading attitude, and reading comprehension, the dependent variables. Each hypothesis is restated and the data pertaining to that hypothesis is reported. Tables are used to report the findings as well. Those data are then examined and interpreted as to their significance.

Self-Concept and Attitude to Reading

Non-school variables: Peers, Parents, Total Nonacademic Self-concepts and Reading Attitudes

Educators tend to feel that factors other than school-related variables may influence children's attitudes to reading. Measures were therefore obtained for the children's perceptions of peer relations and parent relations, as well as their total nonacademic self-concept. The raw scores obtained were then correlated, using the Pearson Product-Moment Method, with the three reading attitude raw scores (recreational, academic and full-scale) to see if any relationships existed The results obtained answer the first nine hypotheses formulated. Each hypothesis is restated and the data pertaining to it is discussed as to the significance found. The data collected for all nine hypotheses is reported in Table 1.

Hypothesis 1: The relationship between peer relations' self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A low, negative correlation (-.1523) was obtained between peer relations' self-concept and recreational reading attitude. This was not significant, indicating no relationship between these grade two children's perceptions of their peer relations and their attitude to reading.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between peer relations' self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

The correlation between peer relations' self-concept and academic reading attitude was low, negative, and not significant at -.0323. Thus, no relationship exists between children's perceptions of their peer relations and their academic reading attitude.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between peer relations' self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

The correlation obtained between peer relations' self-concept and full-scale reading attitude was also low, negative, and not significant at -.1020. This indicates no relationship between children's perceptions of their peer relations and their full-scale attitude to reading.

For the first three hypotheses, dealing with the relationship between children's self-perceptions of their peer relations and reading attitudes, no significant relationships could be found, leading to the acceptance of these three hypotheses as stated. There is no relationship between these grade two children's perceptions of their peer relations and their attitudes to reading.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between parent relations' self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A correlation of .2787 was obtained between parent relations' self-concept and recreational reading. This correlation was significant at the .05 level, and therefore indicates that how these grade two children perceive their relations with their parents has some relationship with how they feel about recreational reading.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between parent relations' self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

When the raw scores obtained for parent relations' self-concept and academic reading attitude were correlated, a .2425 correlation was obtained. This was significant at the .05 level, indicating a relationship between how these grade two children perceive their parent relations and their attitude to reading for academic purposes.

Hypothesis 6: The relationship between parent relations' self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A correlation of .2815, significant at .05 level, was obtained between parent relations' self-concept and full-scale reading attitude. This indicates a relationship between these grade two children's perceptions of their parent relations and their full-scale attitude to reading.

For hypotheses four to six dealing with the relationship

between children's perceptions of their parent relations and their attitudes to reading, significant correlations were obtained, leading to the rejection of hypotheses four through six. There is a relationship between these grade two children's perceptions of their parent relations and their attitudes to reading.

Hypotheses 7: The relationship between total nonacademic self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

When raw scores obtained for nonacademic self-concept and recreational reading attitude were correlated, a low, negative correlation was obtained (-.1130). This indicates no relationship between grade two children's total nonacademic self-concept and their recreational reading attitude.

Hypothesis 8: The relationship between total nonacademic self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

The correlation obtained between total nonacademic self-concept and academic reading attitude was low, negative (-.0129) and not significant. Thus, no relationship exists between these children's total nonacademic self-concept and their academic reading attitude.

Hypothesis 9: The relationship between total nonacademic self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A low, negative correlation (-.0700) was obtained between

total nonacademic self-concept and full-scale reading attitude. This correlation was not significant. Therefore, no relationship was found between these grade two children's total nonacademic self-concept and full-scale reading attitude.

For hypotheses seven to nine, dealing with children's total nonacademic self-concepts and their attitudes to reading, no significant correlations were found, leading to the acceptance of hypotheses seven to nine. There is no relationship between these grade two children's total nonacademic reading self-concept and their attitudes to reading.

Table 1

Peer, Parent and Nonacademic Self-Concepts and Reading Attitude

r	RECREAT	ACADEMIC	FULL
PEER	-.1523	-.0323	-.1020
PARENT	.2787*	.2425*	.2815*
TOTNON	-.1130	-.0129	-.0700

* P= .05

For these grade two children, no significant relationship was found between children's perceptions of their peer relations and their reading attitude or between their total

nonacademic self-concept (which included (a combination of) peer, parent, physical abilities, and physical appearance variables) and their reading attitudes. A relationship was found, though, between their perceptions of their parent relations and their reading attitudes. For this young age group, then, how they feel about peers, their physical appearance and their physical abilities is unrelated to their attitudes to reading, while how they feel about their parent relations does have some relationship with reading attitudes.

School Variables: Reading, General School, Total Academic Self-Concepts and Reading Attitudes

Data was collected for the children's reading self-concept, general school self concept and total academic self-concept. These scores were correlated with the three measures of reading attitude (recreational, academic and full-scale) using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Method. The results obtained answer hypotheses ten through eighteen and are presented in Table 2. Each hypothesis is restated and the data pertaining to it are discussed.

Hypothesis 10: The relationship between reading self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

When the raw scores for reading self-concept were correlated with the recreational reading attitude scores, a positive correlation of .3770 was obtained. This correlation

was significant at the .01 level and, therefore, indicates a significant relationship between these grade two children's reading self-concept and their recreational reading attitude.

Hypothesis 11: The relationship between reading self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A correlation of .3571 was obtained between the measures of reading self-concept and academic reading attitude. This positive correlation was significant at the .01 level and, therefore, indicates a relationship between these grade two children's reading self-concept and their academic attitude to reading.

Hypothesis 12: The relationship between reading self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A positive correlation of .3959 was obtained between reading self-concept and full-scale reading attitude. This correlation was significant at the .001 level and, therefore, indicates a strong relationship between these children's reading self-concept and their full-scale reading attitude.

For hypotheses ten through twelve, dealing with children's reading self-concepts and their attitudes to reading, significant positive correlations were found, leading to the rejection of hypotheses ten through twelve. There is a significant, positive relationship between these grade two children's reading self-concepts and their attitudes to

reading.

Hypothesis 13: The relationship between general school self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

When the raw scores for general school self-concept and recreational reading attitude were correlated, a low, positive correlation of .1959 was obtained. This correlation was not significant, indicating that no significant relationship exists between general school self-concept and recreational reading attitude for this group of grade two children.

Hypothesis 14: The relationship between general school self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A positive correlation of .3986 was obtained between the measures of general school self-concept and academic reading. This correlation was significant at the .001 level. This indicates that for these grade two children, a definite relationship exists between their general school self-concept and their academic reading attitudes.

Hypothesis 15: The relationship between general school self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A positive correlation of .3159 was obtained when the raw scores for general school self-concept and full-scale reading attitude were correlated. This correlation was significant at the .01 level and, therefore, indicates that a relationship exists between their general school self-concept and their

full-scale reading attitude for these grade two children.

For hypotheses thirteen through fifteen, dealing with grade two children's general school self-concepts and their attitudes to reading, no significant correlation was found for hypothesis thirteen, but significant positive correlations were found for both hypotheses fourteen and fifteen, leading to the acceptance of hypothesis thirteen and the rejection of hypotheses fourteen and fifteen. Grade two children's general school self-concept is not related to their recreational reading attitude. Their general school self-concept is, however, positively related to both their academic reading attitude and their full-scale reading attitude.

Hypothesis 16: The relationship between total academic self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

Scores for the children's total academic self-concept (made up of reading, mathematics and general school variables), were correlated with their recreational reading attitude scores. A positive correlation of .2894, significant at the .05 level was found. This indicates that a relationship exists between children's total academic self-concept and their recreational reading attitude.

Hypothesis 17: The relationship between total academic self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A positive correlation of .4019 was found between the total academic self-concept and the academic reading attitude

scores. This significant correlation ($p = .001$) indicates a positive relationship between these grade two children's total academic self-concept and their academic reading attitudes.

Hypothesis 18: The relationship between total academic self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

When the raw scores for total academic self-concept were correlated with those for the full-scale reading attitude, a significant positive correlation of .3700 ($p = .01$) resulted. This suggests that a relationship exists between these grade two children's total academic self-concepts and their full-scale reading attitude.

For hypotheses sixteen through eighteen, dealing with grade two children's total academic self-concepts and their attitudes to reading, significant positive correlations were found, leading to the rejection of hypotheses sixteen through eighteen. There is a significant, positive relationship between these grade two children's total academic self-concepts and their attitudes to reading.

Table 2

Reading, General School and Total Academic Self-Concepts and Reading Attitude

r	RECREAT	ACADEMIC	FULL
READING	.3770**	.3571**	.3959**
GENSCH	.1959	.3986***	.3159**
TOTACAD	.2894*	.4019***	.3700**

* p = .05 ** p = .01 *** p = .001

For these grade two children, significant relationships could be found for all school variables when correlated with attitudes to reading, except for general school self-concept and recreational reading. Therefore, for these grade two children, their reading, general school and academic self-perceptions are related to almost all aspects of their attitudes to reading. The fact that a significant relationship between general school self-concept and recreational reading was not found could possibly indicate that positive "school" perceptions need not necessarily translate into children who enjoy reading outside of school pursuits. The correlation between these two scores, though, at .1959 was in the right direction to show a positive relationship and close to the cut off point of .231 to be significant at the .05 level.

Total Self-Concept and Reading Attitude

The research literature reported positive correlations between children's general self-concepts and their attitudes to reading (Zimmerman & Allebrand, 1965; Claytor, 1979; and Briggs, 1987). To see if support could be found for this, measures of grade two children's total self-concept, which included academic and nonacademic variables, were taken. These raw scores were correlated with the three reading attitude scores to see if a significant relationship exists. The results, as reported in Table 3, answer hypotheses nineteen through twenty-one.

Hypothesis 19: The relationship between total self-concept and recreational reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

When total self-concept and recreational reading attitude scores were correlated, a low, positive correlation of .1804 was obtained. This indicates that no significant relationship exists between these grade two children's total self-concept and their attitudes to recreational reading.

Hypothesis 20: The relationship between total self-concept and academic reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A correlation of .3217, significant at the .01 level, was obtained for total self-concept and academic reading attitude. Therefore, a significant relationship exists between these grade two children's total self-concept and their academic

reading attitudes.

Hypothesis 21: The relationship between total self-concept and full-scale reading attitude in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A positive correlation of .2675 was found between measures of total self-concept and full-scale reading attitude. This correlation, significant at the .05 level, indicates a positive relationship between total self-concept and full-scale reading attitude.

For hypotheses nineteen through twenty-one, dealing with grade two children's total self-concept and their attitudes to reading, no significant correlation was found for hypothesis nineteen, but significant correlations were obtained for both hypotheses twenty and twenty-one, leading to the acceptance of hypothesis nineteen and the rejection of hypotheses twenty and twenty-one. These grade two children's total self-concept is not related to their recreational reading attitude, but it is positively and significantly related to both their academic reading attitude and their full scale reading attitude.

Table 3

Total Self-Concept and Reading Attitude

r	RECREAT	ACADEMIC	FULL
TOTSELF	.1804	.3217**	.2675*

* p = .05 ** p = .01

Self-Concept and Reading Comprehension

Non-school Variables: Peers, Parents and Total Nonacademic Self-Concept and Reading Comprehension

The raw scores obtained on the peer relations' self-concept, parent relations' self-concept and total nonacademic self-concept were correlated with reading comprehension scores to see if a relationship could be found between non-school related variables and children's reading achievement at the grade two level. The results obtained pertaining to hypotheses twenty-two through twenty-four, are presented in Table 4, and are discussed below.

Hypothesis 22: The relationship between peer relations' self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

When the raw scores for peer relations' self-concept were correlated with the raw scores obtained on the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test, comprehension section, a negative correlation (-.2288) was obtained. This correlation was not statistically significant and, therefore, indicates that there is no relationship between these grade two children's perceptions of peer relations and their reading comprehension.

Hypothesis 23: The relationship between parent relations' self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A negative correlation (-.0620) was also found between the parent relations' self-concept scores and reading comprehension scores. This correlation was not significant and, therefore, indicates that no relationship exists between these grade two children's perceptions of their parent relations and their ability to comprehend.

Hypothesis 24: The relationship between total nonacademic self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A significant and negative correlation, -.3088 (p=.01), was found between total nonacademic self-concept and reading comprehension. This indicates an inverse relationship between total nonacademic self-concept (which includes physical abilities, physical appearance, peer relations and parent relations variables) and reading comprehension. Therefore, in this group of grade two children, those who rated themselves highly for total nonacademic self-concept had a low score on reading comprehension and those who gave themselves a low rating on total nonacademic self-concept received a high score on reading comprehension.

Summing up the results for hypotheses twenty-two through twenty-four, no significant correlations were found for hypotheses twenty-two and twenty-three, but a significant, negative correlation was found for hypothesis twenty-four, leading to the acceptance of hypothesis twenty-two and twenty-three and the rejection of hypothesis twenty-four. For these

grade two children no relationship exists between their peer relations' self-concept and reading comprehension or between their parent relations' self-concept and their reading comprehension. A negative relationship does exist, however, between these children's total nonacademic self-concept and reading comprehension (see Table 4).

Table 4

Peer, Parent and Total Nonacademic Self-Concepts and Reading Comprehension

r	GATES
PEER	-.2288
PARENT	-.0620
TOTNON	-.3088*

* p = .05

School Variables: Reading, General School and Total Academic Self-Concepts and Reading Comprehension

In order to discover if positive school related self-concepts are related to achievement in reading, scores obtained on the reading self-concept, general school self-concept and total academic subtests were correlated with reading comprehension scores. The results obtained throw light on hypotheses twenty-five through twenty-seven and are presented in Table 5. Each hypothesis is restated and the

data pertaining is discussed as to the significance found.

Hypothesis 25: The relationship between reading self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

When the scores obtained for reading self-concept were correlated with reading comprehension, a positive correlation of .4574, significant at the .001 level, was found. This indicates a strong relationship between grade two children's reading self-perceptions and their achievement in reading.

Hypothesis 26: The relationship between general school self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A low, positive correlation of .1582 was found between general school self-concept and reading comprehension. This correlation was insignificant and, therefore, indicates that grade two children's perceptions about general school factors are not related to their achievement in reading.

Hypothesis 27: The relationship between total academic self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

The correlation between total academic self-concept and reading comprehension was .2877. This was significant at the .05 level and therefore indicates that a relationship exists between these grade two children's overall academic self-perceptions and their reading achievement.

For hypotheses twenty-five through twenty-seven, dealing

with grade two children's school related self-concepts (reading, general school and total academic) and their reading comprehension, significant, positive correlations were found for reading self-concept and reading comprehension and for total academic self-concept and reading comprehension, but not for general school self-concept and reading comprehension, leading to the rejection of hypotheses twenty-five and twenty-seven, and the acceptance of hypothesis twenty-six. For these grade two children, there is a relationship between their reading self-perceptions and reading achievement and between their total academic self-perceptions and reading achievement. There is not a relationship, however, between their general school self-perceptions and how well they do in reading comprehension.

Table 5

Reading, General School and Total Academic Self-Concepts and Reading Comprehension

r	GATES
READING	.4575**
GENSCH	.1582
TOTACAD	.2877*

* p = .05 ** p = .001

Total Self-Concept and Reading Comprehension

In order to determine if grade two children's general self-concepts were related to their reading achievement, total self-concept scores (made up of 4 nonacademic and 3 academic variables) were correlated with the reading comprehension scores obtained on the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test, comprehension section. The results, as reported in Table 6, relate to hypothesis 28.

Hypothesis 28: The relationship between total self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A very low correlation of .0701 was found between total self-concept and reading comprehension. This correlation was not significant and therefore indicates that how these grade two children feel about themselves (be it negatively or positively), has no relationship to their performance on a reading achievement test. This leads to the acceptance of hypothesis twenty-eight - there is no relationship between total self-concept and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children.

Table 6

Total Self-Concept and Reading Comprehension

r	GATES
TOTSELF	.0701

Reading Attitude and Reading Comprehension

In order to determine if grade two children's attitudes to reading are related to their reading achievement, the scores obtained for recreational, academic and full-scale reading were correlated with the reading comprehension scores on the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test. These data are reported in Table 7 and answer hypotheses twenty-nine through thirty-one.

Hypothesis 29: The relationship between recreational reading attitude and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A correlation of .0948 was obtained between measures of recreational reading and reading comprehension. This low, positive correlation is insignificant and, therefore, indicates that, for these grade two children, no relationship exists between their recreational reading attitude and their reading achievement.

Hypothesis 30: The relationship between academic reading attitude and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

When raw scores obtained for academic reading attitude and for reading comprehension were correlated, a low, positive correlation of .0886 was found. This correlation was not significant and shows that for this group of grade two children, no relationship exists between their academic reading attitude and their reading comprehension.

Hypothesis 31: The relationship between full-scale reading attitude and reading comprehension in a group of grade two children will be zero.

A low, positive correlation of .0989 was obtained between measures of full-scale reading attitude and reading comprehension. This correlation was not significant and indicates that for these grade two children, no relationship exists between their full-scale reading attitude and their reading comprehension.

For hypotheses twenty-nine through thirty-one, dealing with grade two children's attitudes to reading and their reading comprehension, no significant correlations were found, leading to the acceptance of these hypotheses. For this group of grade two children, no relationship exists between their recreational, academic and full-scale reading attitude and reading comprehension, i.e., whether these children have positive or negative attitudes to reading, has no bearing on how well they comprehend as measured by reading achievement tests (see Table 7).

Table 7

Reading Attitude and Reading Comprehension

r	Gates
RECREAT	.0948
ACADEMIC	.0886
FULL	.0989

Gender

Gender and Self-Concept

In order to see whether gender has an influence on these grade two children's various self-concept ratings, T-tests were performed. Gender was treated as the independent variable and peer relations, parent relations, total nonacademic, reading, general school, total academic and total self-concepts were treated as dependent variables. The hypotheses pertaining to these are restated and the data obtained are discussed.

Hypothesis 32: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on peer relations' self-concept.

When the T-test was used to test for significance between boys' and girls' peer relations' self-concept, the mean, as reported in Table 8, was minimally higher for the girls (boys, 19.3667, girls, 19.4) but this slight mean difference was not significant. This means that hypothesis thirty-two is accepted and that the gender of the group of grade two children has no significant influence on peer relations' self-concept.

Table 8

T-test: Gender and Peer Relations' Self-Concept

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	19.3667	2.646	.483
Group 2	30	19.4000	2.372	.433

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-.05	58	.959

Note: 1 = boys 2 = girls

Hypothesis 33: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on parent relations' self-concept.

The T-test was also used to test for significance between boys' and girls' parent relations' self-concept. The mean for the boys was 20.9333 and for the girls was 21.6333 (Table 9). The mean difference here was slightly higher for the girls, but was not significant. This indicates that hypothesis thirty-three is accepted and that gender has no significant influence on parent relations' self-concept.

Table 9

T-test: Gender and Parent Relations' Self-Concept

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	20.9333	2.959	.540
Group 2	30	21.6333	2.327	.425

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-1.02	58	.313

Note: 1 = boys 2= girls

Hypothesis 34: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on total nonacademic self-concept.

When the T-test was used to test for significance between boys' and girls' total nonacademic self-concept, means of 20.0800 and 19.6800 were computed (Table 10). The difference was slightly higher for the boys, but was not statistically significant. This indicates the acceptance of hypothesis thirty-four - that gender in a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on total nonacademic self-concept.

Table 10

T-test: Gender and Total Nonacademic Self-Concept

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	20.0800	1.857	.339
Group 2	30	19.6800	1.645	.300

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
.88	58	.381

Note: 1 = Boys 2 = Girls

For the three non-school related self-concepts (peer, parent and total nonacademic) gender had no influence. Being male or female has no influence on self-perceptions in these areas.

Hypothesis 35: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on reading self-concept.

The T-test was also used to test for significance between boys' and girls' reading self-concepts. In this case, the boys' mean was 19.7667, while the girls' was 21.7333 (Table 11). This difference, higher in favour of the girls, was significant with a probability of .011. This indicates that gender does have some influence on reading self-concept for these grade two children. Hypothesis thirty-five is, therefore, rejected.

Table 11

T-test: Gender and Reading Self-Concept

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	19.7667	3.411	.623
Group 2	30	21.7333	2.243	.409

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-2.64	58	.011*

Note: 1 = Boys 2 = Girls * p <.05

Hypothesis 36: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on general school self-concept.

The T-test was used to test for significance between boys' and girls' general school self-concept. Means of 18.6333 for the boys and 19.8333 for the girls were found (Table 12). In this case, the mean difference was higher in favour of the girls, but it was not a significant difference at p <.05. Therefore, hypothesis thirty-six is accepted and it can be stated that for this group of grade two children, gender has no significant influence on general school self-concept.

Table 12

T-test: Gender and General School Self-Concept

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	18.6333	3.755	.686
Group 2	30	19.8333	2.394	.437

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-1.48	58	.145

Note: 1 = Boys 2= Girls

Hypothesis 37: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on total academic self-concept.

When the T-test was used to test for significance between boys' and girls' total academic self-concept, the boys' mean was 19.3333 while the girls' was 20.4767 (Table 13). The mean difference was slightly higher for the girls, but was not statistically significant at $p<.05$. This indicates the acceptance of hypothesis thirty-seven - that gender in a group of grade two children has no significant influence on total academic self-concept.

Table 13

T-test: Gender and Total Academic Self-Concept

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	19.3333	3.157	.576
Group 2	30	20.4767	2.026	.370

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-1.67	58	.100

Note: 1 = Boys 2= Girls

For the three school related self-concepts (reading, general school and total academic) gender has a significant influence on reading self-concept, but not on the other two. Being male or female does have an influence on these grade two children's reading self-perceptions, but not on their general school or total academic self-perceptions.

Hypothesis 38: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on total self-concept.

The T-test was also used to test for significance between boys' and girls' total self-concepts. With means of 19.6983 for the boys and 20.0817 for the girls (Table 14), the difference is higher in favour of the girls, but this mean difference is not significant at $p<.05$. Hypothesis thirty-eight is accepted. Gender has no significant influence on grade two children's total self-concept.

Table 14

T-test: Gender and Total Self-Concept

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	19.6983	1.903	.347
Group 2	30	20.0817	1.468	.268

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-.87	58	.386

Note: 1 = Boys 2 = Girls

Gender and Attitude to Reading

Hypothesis 39: The gender of a group, of grade two children will have no significant influence on recreational reading attitude.

The T-test was used to test for significance between boys' and girls' recreational reading attitudes. As reported in Table 15, the mean for the boys was 29.7667 and for the girls was 33.2667, the difference being in favour of the girls. This mean difference proved to be significant (p=.012) and, therefore, hypothesis thirty-nine is rejected. Gender does have an influence on these grade two children's recreational reading attitudes. Girls have a more favourable attitude towards reading.

Table 15

T-test: Gender and Recreational Reading Attitude

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	29.7667	6.084	1.111
Group 2	30	33.2667	4.234	.773

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-2.59	58	.012*

Note: 1 = Boys 2 = Girls * p <.05

Hypothesis 40: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on academic reading attitude.

When the T-test was used to test for significance between boys' and girls' academic reading attitudes, the mean was computed at 31.2000 for the boys' academic reading attitude scores and 34.2000 for the girls' (Table 16). The mean difference of .021 was significant (p <.05) and, therefore, hypothesis forty is rejected. Gender in this group of grade two children has a significant influence on academic reading attitude. Girls possessed a more favourable attitude to academic reading.

Table 16

T-test: Gender and Academic Reading Attitude

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	31.2000	5.135	.938
Group 2	30	34.2000	4.612	.842

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-2.38	58	.021*

Note: 1 = Boys 2 = Girls * p <.05

Hypothesis 41: The gender of a group of grade two children will have no significant influence on full-scale reading attitude.

The T-test was also used to determine the significance between the mean scores obtained on the boys' and girls' full-scale reading attitude test. The mean for the boys was 60.9667, while the girls was 67.4667. This large mean difference in favour of the girls was significant ($p<.05$) and, therefore, hypothesis forty-one is rejected. Gender does have an influence on these grade two children's full-scale reading attitude. Girls possess a more favourable attitude to reading, overall.

Table 17

T-test: Gender and Full-Scale Reading Attitude

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	60.9667	10.404	1.899
Group 2	30	67.4667	8.080	1.475

Pooled Variance Estimate

t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-2.70	58	.009

Note: 1 = Boys 2= Girls * p <.01

When T-tests were performed on the mean scores for the attitude testing, it was found that gender had a significant influence on recreational, academic and full-scale reading attitudes. Thus it can be said that for this group of grade two children, being male or female influences their attitudes to reading.

Gender and Reading Comprehension

Hypothesis 42: The gender of a group grade two children will have no significant influence on reading comprehension.

The T-test was also performed to test for significance between boys' and girls' reading comprehension test scores. The mean for boys was 28.3000, while for girls it was 29.4000 (Table 18). While the girls' mean was slightly higher, this mean difference was not significant and, therefore, hypothesis forty-two is accepted. The gender of a group of grade two

children has no significant influence on reading comprehension.

Table 18

T-test: Gender and Reading Comprehension

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
Group 1	30	28.3000	8.718	1.592
Group 2	30	29.4000	8.307	1.517

Pooled Variance Estimate		
t Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
-.50	58	.619

Note: 1 = Boys 2 = Girls

Summary of Findings

In an attempt to analyze the data gathered in this study and to decide whether to accept or reject the stated hypotheses, regular correlational analysis and T-tests were performed. A number of statistically significant relationships were found. These will be listed first. Then the relationships which could not be supported statistically will be given.

For this group of grade two children statistically significant relationships were found between:

1. parent relations' self-concept and recreational reading

attitude (hypothesis 4).

2. parent relations' self-concept and academic reading attitude (hypothesis 5).
3. parent relations' self-concept and full-scale reading attitude (hypothesis 6).
4. reading self-concept and recreational reading attitude (hypothesis 10).
5. reading self-concept and academic reading attitude (hypothesis 11).
6. reading self-concept and full-scale reading attitude (hypothesis 12).
7. general school self-concept and academic reading attitude (hypothesis 14).
8. general school self-concept and full-scale reading attitude (hypothesis 15).
9. total academic self-concept and recreational reading attitude (hypothesis 16).
10. total academic self-concept and academic reading attitude (hypothesis 17).
11. total academic self-concept and full-scale reading attitude (hypothesis 18).
12. total self-concept and academic reading attitude (hypothesis 20).
13. total self-concept and full-scale reading attitude (hypothesis 21).
14. total nonacademic self-concept and reading comprehension

(hypothesis 24).

15. reading self-concept and reading comprehension (hypothesis 25).
16. total academic self-concept and reading comprehension (hypothesis 27).
17. gender and reading self-concept (hypothesis 35).
18. gender and recreational reading attitude (hypothesis 39).
19. gender and academic reading attitude (hypothesis 40).
20. gender and full-scale reading attitude (hypothesis 41).

Hypotheses 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 35, 39, 40, and 41 are rejected as stated, indicating significant relationships have not been found to exist between the variables measured.

For this group of grade two children, the following relationships were not significant:

1. peer relations' self-concept and recreational reading attitude (hypothesis 1).
2. peer relations' self-concept and academic reading attitude (hypothesis 2).
3. peer relations' self-concept and full-scale reading attitude (hypothesis 3).
4. total nonacademic self-concept and recreational reading attitude (hypothesis 7).
5. total nonacademic self-concept and academic reading attitude (hypothesis 8).
6. total nonacademic self-concept and full-scale reading

attitude (hypothesis 9).

7. general school self-concept and recreational reading attitude (hypothesis 13).
8. total self-concept and recreational reading (hypothesis 19).
9. peer relations' self-concept and reading comprehension (hypothesis 22).
10. parent relations' self-concept and reading comprehension (hypothesis 23).
11. general school self-concept and reading comprehension (hypothesis 26).
12. total self-concept and reading comprehension (hypothesis 28).
13. recreational reading attitude and reading comprehension (hypothesis 29).
14. academic reading attitude and reading comprehension (hypothesis 30).
15. full-scale reading attitude and reading comprehension (hypothesis 31).
16. gender and peer relations' self-concept (hypothesis 32).
17. gender and parent relations' self-concept (hypothesis 33).
18. gender and total nonacademic self-concept (hypothesis 34).
19. gender and general school self-concept (hypothesis 36).
20. gender and total academic self-concept (hypothesis 37).

21. gender and total self-concept (hypothesis 38).

22. gender and reading comprehension (hypothesis 42).

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 13, 19, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, and 42 are accepted as stated, indicating no significant relationships exist between the variables measured for the group of grade two children in this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is threefold. First, the study will be summarized and conclusions about the findings will be drawn. Second, educational implications arising from the study will be presented. Third, suggestions for further research will be made.

Summary and Conclusions

This study was designed to ascertain the relationships among the affective variables of self-concept and reading attitude and reading achievement in primary children. Whether gender had any significant effect on these variables was also considered. The study was conducted on grade two children in the City of St. John's. The scores obtained from 30 randomly chosen boys and 30 randomly chosen girls on tests measuring self-concept (which yielded 7 self-concept scores), reading attitude (which yielded 3 reading attitude scores), and reading comprehension were correlated using the Pearson Product-Moment Method. As well, *T*-tests were performed to compute the influence of gender on self-concept, reading

attitude and reading achievement. A number of significant relationships were found.

Self-Concept and Reading Attitude

When the nonschool related self-concept ratings were correlated with the reading attitude scores, significant relationships were found only between parent relations' self-concept and the three reading attitudes (recreational, academic and full-scale), but not for peer relations' self-concept nor for the total nonacademic self-concept and reading attitudes. This would indicate that children with good relationships with their parents also exhibit favourable attitudes to reading, both recreationally and academically. Coopersmith (1967), LaBenne and Greene (1969), Purkey (1970), Samuels (1977), Hamachek (1978), Battle (1982), Silvernail (1985) and Amato and Orhiltree (1986) all emphasized the importance of a positive home environment in the development of children with positive general self-concepts. This environment of affection, warmth and respect between parents and children, along with clearly defined rules and expectations of behaviour, could also result in children with positive reading attitudes. Amato and Ochiltree (1986) also pointed out that parents' high educational expectations and aspirations for their children are strongly associated with positive self-esteem. These expectations and aspirations, therefore, may also translate into the formation of positive reading attitudes. The fact that peer relations' self-concept

was not related to reading attitudes would offer support for the findings of Smith (1971), who reported that, although children may enjoy good peer relations, their attitudes more closely resemble that of their parents in educational pursuits. The significant relationship found between parent relations' self-concept and reading attitudes suggests the need to encourage positive, supportive home environments and good child/parent relations not only because of the strong influence on child self-concept development, but also because of the potential influence on the development of positive attitudes to reading.

Significant positive correlations were also found between reading self-concept and the three reading attitude measures, between total academic self-concept and the three reading attitude measures and between general school self-concept and academic and full-scale reading attitude, but not recreational reading. These findings lend confirmation to those of Zimmerman and Allebrand (1965) who found positive relationships between self-concept and reading attitude in a study of poor and good readers. The poor readers had poor self-concepts, poor attitudes to reading and also demonstrated feelings of hopelessness and discouragement, while the good readers showed positive self-concepts and reading attitudes and were internally motivated, showing more effort and persistence in their drive to succeed. Similarly, Claytor (1979) found that children with low self-concepts also had

poor attitudes to reading, as well as behavioural problems and difficulty with reading. In the present study of grade two children, strong relationships have been shown to exist between school related self-concepts and reading attitudes and, even though directionality between self-concept and reading attitude is not established, the need is definitely indicated for parents and teachers to encourage the development of positive self-concepts in their children in the hope of establishing positive reading attitudes as well. When children feel good about themselves and feel good about learning to read, the stage is set for success in reading endeavours.

A significant relationship was not found between general school self-concept and recreational reading attitude. This would suggest that children who view school favourably may or may not enjoy reading outside of school hours. A need is implied here to help all children learn to enjoy reading for its own sake as a pleasurable activity to pursue outside of school time, not just something that is done in reading class.

Total self-concept was also found to be positively correlated with academic reading attitude and full-scale reading attitude. This measure of total self-concept included both academic and nonacademic variables. It was interesting to find that if children feel good about themselves generally, they will show good attitudes towards reading in school. This finding adds weight to Briggs' (1987) contention that the

self-concept/reading attitude connection is of extreme importance, and that teachers must help children improve their self-concept as a way of helping them develop more positive reading attitudes, because positive attitudes promote and sustain learning while negative attitudes result in lack of effort, lack of motivation and misbehaviour.

Total self-concept was not significantly related to recreational reading attitude. Here again, the need to promote reading as a pleasurable activity to undertake at any time is indicated.

Self-Concept and Reading Comprehension

No significant relationship was found between the non-school self-concept variables of peer relations and parent relations and reading comprehension. A significant negative relationship was found, though, between total nonacademic self-concept (which includes physical abilities, physical appearance, peer relations' and parent relations' variables) and reading comprehension. Children who rate themselves highly for total nonacademic self-concept had a low score on reading comprehension and those who gave themselves a low rating on total nonacademic self-concept received a high score on reading comprehension. Are these children who had high total nonacademic self-concepts so concerned with their looks, sports, and their peer relations that they do not have any time for academic pursuits? Does this finding confirm the stereotypic notion that the popular, good looking "Jocks" are

not academically inclined while the better readers are poorer looking, poorer at athletics and unpopular? Perhaps this finding is due to compensation on the part of the less able readers. Are the children who are not good readers overemphasizing their ability on other areas as a way of preserving an overall positive self-concept? Another interpretation could be that these children are just not good at realistically interpreting their looks, sports ability and popularity with others. Perhaps the better students (those higher in comprehension) are overly modest about themselves. Also, it is possible that the time the better students spend reading lessens the amount of time they spend on sports and socializing. This area would be one where further research is warranted.

Significant positive relationships were found between reading self-concept and reading comprehension, and total academic self-concept and reading comprehension. This would confirm the findings of Wattenberg and Clifford (1964), Thomson and Hartley (1980), Vereen (1980), Peterson (1981), Revicki (1981), Battle (1982), March, Smith, Barnes and Butler (1983), Correro and Turner (1985), Byrne (1986), Trent (1986), and Briggs (1987) who found a significant relationship between children's self-concept ratings and academic achievement. The results of this study, then, emphasize the role of 'reader' self-concept in the reading achievement of primary children and also point out the need for teachers to

consider the affective needs of their children in the classroom, in taking on the identity of 'reader'. Teachers must not just be concerned with the subject they are teaching, but also must consider the self-perceptions of the children. If children think of themselves as readers and their affective needs are considered and met, perhaps more children would achieve more in reading.

A significant relationship was not found between general school self-concept and reading comprehension. This would indicate that children's perceptions of themselves in school generally are unrelated to how well they achieve specifically in reading. The fact that general school self-concept was found not to be related to reading achievement, while reading self-concept was related to reading achievement offers support for the notion that self-concept is made up of many subparts (Silvernail, 1985). It would be the subpart concerned with reading which is related to reading achievement, while the subpart concerned with children's general school self-perceptions is not.

When total self-concept scores were correlated with reading comprehension, no relationship was found. This total self-concept was made up of academic and nonacademic variables. This finding, along with the above finding of no relationship between general school self-concept and reading comprehension, lend weight to the theory that the self-concept is a multidimensional construct (Shavelson, Hubner and

Stanton, 1976 and Marsh, 1985). In the multidimensional theory of self-concept, it is proposed that people make judgements about their competence in different domains of their life. People may perceive themselves positively in some things and negatively in others and all these perceptions make up the overall self-concept. In this study, for these grade two children, it is the academic part of the self-concept (reading self-concept and total academic self-concept) which is related to reading achievement, while other aspects of self-concept are not. This would indicate that it is not enough for teachers to make children feel good about themselves generally when reading problems arise. Instead, efforts must be made to change the children's perceptions of their competencies in the actual reading process.

Reading Attitude and Reading Comprehension

A relationship was not found between reading attitude and reading comprehension for these grade two children. This result contradicts the findings of Hall (1978), Lewis (1980), Fredericks (1982), Wigfield and Asher (1984), and Walberg and Tsai (1985) who all reported significant relationships between children's attitudes to reading and their reading comprehension. This result is also somewhat surprising in that, for the most part, these grade two children's self-concept ratings were related to their reading attitudes, and their academic self-concepts were related to their reading achievement, and therefore, one would assume, in turn, that a

further relationship between reading attitude and reading comprehension might exist.

This study does support the research of Foley, Haneker and Coriata (1984), though. They found that most children in their study (55 out of 60) had positive attitudes to reading regardless of reading achievement. This study also lends weight to several studies of elementary children (Johnson, 1964; Cramer, 1975; and Roettger, Szymczuk and Millard, 1979) which found positive correlations between reading attitude and achievement, but, nevertheless, concluded that reading attitudes cannot be used as a predictor of academic achievement due to the very low correlations found.

The absence of a relationship between reading attitude and reading achievement may possibly be explained by the age of the children involved in this study. Swanson (1982) found that young children have relatively positive attitudes in the initial stages of learning to read and that it is only when learning to read becomes a task that negative reading attitudes begin to develop. Similarly, Arlin (1976) found that children like reading less as they get older. Johnson (1964), in a study designed to determine if significant differences exist in reading attitudes between grade levels, found that children in the lower grade levels indicated better attitudes to reading than children in successively higher grade levels. It is possible that the grade two children in this study have a good attitude to reading, regardless of how

able they are in reading. The scores on the full-scale reading attitude test indicate that of the 60 children in this study, 42 (or 70%) scored 60 points or higher out of a possible 80 points (80 being the most positive reading attitude rating), and that 59 of the 60 scored 42 points or more. Thus, these children are much more inclined to have positive attitudes toward reading, regardless of how well they do in reading comprehension. This indicates, therefore, the necessity of studying the reading attitude and reading achievement scores at varying grade levels in order to determine whether and when a relationship exists between reading attitude and reading achievement. It also would be interesting to follow this group over a number of years to see if a change occurs in the relationship between attitude to reading and reading achievement.

Gender

Gender was found to have only a significant influence on reading self-concept and all three measures of reading attitude. The boys were found to have less positive reading self-concepts and poorer attitudes to reading.

The fact that gender was not shown to significantly influence the other self-concept ratings is encouraging for it shows that boys perceive themselves just as positively as do girls in nonschool related areas, as well as general school areas and the total self-concept. This contradicts Coopersmith (1967) who found significant differences in self-

concept for the sexes. This finding does add weight to Battle's (1985) research, where no significant differences in the various dimensions of self-concept (general, social, school, home) could be found. Battle (1985) did discover, though, that males gain higher self-esteem scores with maturity. It would be interesting to follow the boys in this sample over a number of years to see if this finding could be confirmed.

The fact that the boys in this study had less positive reading self-concept ratings is disheartening. If this finding is typical of all young boys, then an examination of the whole approach to teaching reading is in order. Is it, as Wallbrown, Levine and Elgin (1981) found, that boys perceive themselves as having problems with reading more than girls do? Are reading programs not geared to the interest level of young boys and, therefore, they do not perceive it as an enjoyable activity? Is it because, as Maccoby (1976) reported, girls mature faster than boys and are therefore more ready and able for reading and language activities? Is society geared so that boys are expected not to perceive reading as enjoyable and therefore, do not? Do significant others (parents, teachers) just not expect boys to perceive reading positively? Perhaps the results can be explained by modeling. Society encourages children to model the same sex. In North America, as Finn, Dulberg and Reis (1979) found, most primary teachers are female and are more likely to influence the females than

the males in reading. Also, it has been found that in the early years, mothers rather than fathers spend more time with their children in reading related activities (Battle, 1985). The absence of male models for reading at home and in primary school may negatively influence boys' perceptions of reading. Further study of the gender/reading self-concept connection could possibly determine an answer to these questions.

The fact that gender differences were found for reading attitude, with boys having less positive reading attitudes, is not surprising, due to the fact that significant correlations were also found between reading self-concept and reading attitudes. This finding confirms research of Johnson (1964), Arlin (1976), Crews (1978) and Kennedy and Halinski (1978) who all found females are more interested in reading and have more positive attitudes toward reading than males. A further investigation into why boys do not find reading as interesting and pleasurable as girls do would be warranted.

It was very encouraging to discover that even though the boys in this grade two sample have less positive reading self perceptions and poorer reading attitudes, no significant differences were found for gender and reading achievement. This contradicts the work of Maccoby (1976) and Finn, Dulberg and Reis (1979) who found girls superior in reading and language activities. This also contradicts the research on the influence of significant others by Parsons, Adler and Kaczala (1982), who found that parents and teachers generally

expect boys to do more poorly in reading and, therefore, reinforce and perpetuate these gender differences. It can be said that for this group of children, either the teachers and parents did not hold such expectations, or if they did, these expectations did not have a significant influence on their reading achievement. A further examination of gender differences in reading achievement at varying grade levels would help substantiate this finding.

Educational Implications

The results of this study have a number of implications for education. The relationship found between parent relations' self-concept and reading attitudes confirm the importance of a positive, supportive home environment where good child/parent relations are maintained on readying children for school and making them receptive to the reading process. Schools would be well advised to promote the importance of a supportive family through meetings, films, literature and special programs. The possibility of early intervention through school agencies could also be considered.

The confirmation of relationships between school-related self-concepts (reading, general school and total academic), as well as total self-concept, and academic and full-scale reading attitudes implies the need for teachers to actively set about helping children improve their self-concepts in the

likelihood of establishing positive attitudes to reading as well. Affective education programs, such as Magic Circle, could be employed, along with role playing, dramatics, and peer tutoring, so that children will feel good about themselves. The school guidance counsellor may also be able to lend assistance and advice on special activities that enhance self-concept. If all children could be made to feel really good about themselves, they may also show more positive attitudes, more motivation and more sustained effort in learning to read.

A relationship was not found between general school self-concept and recreational reading attitude and total self-concept and recreational reading attitude. This implies the need to promote reading as a pleasurable activity to be pursued in leisure time. Children may only be seeing reading as a school-related activity, important only to do well in school. Teachers must help children see other purposes for reading that are unrelated to school success. One of the aims of education is to graduate a literate population. This aim cannot be fulfilled if reading is not pursued once the school doors close behind the individual. If reading is to become a sustained activity beyond the school setting, teachers must promote it for its value, enjoyment and importance in society.

The positive relationships found between reading self-concept and reading comprehension, and total academic self-concept and reading comprehension, but not between total self-

concept and reading comprehension have implications for teachers. To encourage positive self-concept is important, but it is not enough. Children must also be helped to develop good perceptions about their competencies in the specific subject they are pursuing. Teachers must run their programs so that all children meet with success each day, no matter how small, so that they will see themselves as competent. The more competent children feel in an activity, such as reading, the more they will strive and the more risks they will be willing to take. The establishment of more positive perceptions about one's competence in reading may lead to more success in reading (although causality between self-concept and reading achievement has not, as yet, been determined). Also, when reading problems arise, teachers must consider the children's self-perceptions of their competence in reading, and design the remediation program to erase any negative self-perceptions the children have.

The negative relationship between total nonacademic self-concept and reading achievement implies the need for schools to consider whether they are unconsciously reinforcing the stereotypic notion that popular, good looking athletes do not achieve well scholastically. Are only the academically weaker students on the teams? Schools should value physical and academic competence and promote excellence in all areas.

Another important implication arising from this study is the need for teachers to reevaluate the expectancies they hold

for girls and boys in reading. If boys are expected to have less positive reading self-perceptions and reading attitudes than girls, these expectancies may be unconsciously reinforced in the classroom. Teachers must help boys to feel competent in reading and help them find reading an interesting, rewarding and purposeful experience.

The fact that no significant differences were found between boys and girls in reading achievement implies that, for at least the grade two level, boys are as mature, capable and competent to do well in reading as are girls. Societal, parental and teacher expectations that boys will not do as well as girls in reading should be changed.

Although this study was conducted on a grade two urban population, the implications arising from it do have application to at least other primary grades, if not the whole school system. Promoting a supportive family environment, considering children's self-concepts, helping children feel competent and positive, encouraging good attitudes, promoting reading as a pleasurable activity, and eradicating unfavorable expectancies for the sexes in the hope of helping more children find success in reading and other academic pursuits, are important aims for all educators.

Suggestions for Further Research

The following suggestions for further research evolved from this study. Firstly, as this study was conducted only on grade two children in an urban St. John's school, similar results may not be obtained in other grade levels and districts. It would be beneficial, therefore, to conduct a similar study with larger samples, differing grade levels and both urban and rural schools to see if these results could be substantiated.

A second suggestion would be to investigate the questions of directionality. For example, a significant relationship was found between reading self-concept and reading achievement. A study could be designed, using appropriate statistical procedures, to determine if reading achievement affects reading self-concept, or whether, reading self-concept affects reading achievement. Similarly the directionality of the other significant relationships found in this study could be determined.

A third suggestion would be to investigate the role of the home environment and parental aspirations, attitudes and expectations on the attitudes of their children toward reading, other academic areas and school in general. If significant influences can be found, the argument for early intervention into homes of "at risk" children is given weight.

A fourth suggestion would be to further investigate the

relationship between nonacademic self-concept and reading achievement. In this study an inverse relationship was found between these two variables, which would indicate that the children who perceive themselves to be good looking, good at sports, and popular with peers do poorly in reading, and vice versa. Further research would determine if such a stereotypic notion is actually true.

A fifth suggestion would be to investigate children's school perceptions more thoroughly. It would be beneficial to determine how schools can be changed to be well perceived by all children and, in consequence, possibly more conducive to achievement by all.

A sixth suggestion would be to investigate children's attitudes to reading at varying grade levels, as well as the relationship between reading attitudes and reading achievement. In this study a relationship was not found between attitudes to reading and reading comprehension, although the research literature had indicated such a relationship exists. A number of studies, Johnson (1964), Arlin (1976) and Swanson (1982), indicated that young children's attitudes to reading are initially positive and then tend to decline with age. This finding was offered as a possible explanation for the lack of relationship between reading attitude and reading achievement in this study. Further research into reading attitudes at varying grade levels and the relationship between reading attitudes and

reading achievement could possibly confirm the results of this study and the explanation offered.

A seventh suggestion would be to further investigate the role gender plays in reading. Why do boys exhibit less positive reading self-concepts and less favourable attitudes to reading? The influence that the reading program, maturation, social stereotypes, and the expectations of significant others have on gender differences in the areas of self-concept and reading attitude and reading achievement could also be investigated.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

336 Canada Drive,
St. John's, Newfoundland.
A1E 4R6

March 3rd, 1992.

Dr. George Hickman,
Chair,
Faculty Committee for
Ethical Review of Research
Involving Human Subjects.

Dear Dr. Hickman:

In order to complete thesis requirements for a Master's Degree in Education, I wish to investigate the relationships among self-concept, attitude to reading and reading achievement in a group of grade two children. Three tests will be administered to three classes of grade two children. All tests will be administered in a group setting by the regular classroom teachers.

To ascertain self-concept ratings, The Self-Description Questionnaire-1 (SDQ-1) will be given. This test (Marsh, 1988) designed for use for grades two and up, measures self-concept in four nonacademic areas (Physical Ability, Physical Appearance, Peer Relations and Parent Relations), three academic areas (Reading, Mathematics and General School), as well as General Self. Total Nonacademic Self-Concept, Total Academic Self-Concept and Total Self-Concept ratings can also be calculated.

The second test, designed to determine attitudes to reading of children in grades one through six is the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (copy included). It consists of twenty items which can be administered within ten to fifteen minutes. Each item presents a briefly worded statement about reading, followed by four pictures of Garfield with expressions depicting a different emotional state, ranging from very positive to very negative. The child must circle the one that best matches his/her own feeling.

The third test, the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Level B, will be given to determine each child's reading achievement. Only the comprehension section of this test will be given. Children must read passages and a picture must be chosen from a group of four, that illustrates the passage or answers a question on it. Practice items to be done with the children are provided. Children work through the test at their own speed until a time limit of 35 minutes has passed.

I am presently a teacher at Cowan Heights Elementary in St. John's, where I plan on collecting my data. The children, therefore, are very familiar with me and I do not believe the testing situation will cause them any apprehension.

Sincerely,

Leslie E. Brown

Appendix B

336 Canada Drive,
St. John's, Newfoundland.
A1E 4R6

March 4th, 1992.

Mr. Fred Rowe,
Assistant Superintendent,
Avalon Consolidated School Board,
P. O. Box 1980,
St. John's, Newfoundland.
A1C 5R5

Dear Mr. Rowe:

I am a grade two teacher at Cowan Heights Elementary School and I am presently working towards the completion of a Master's degree in reading at Memorial University with my supervisor, Dr. Joan Oldford-Matchim. In order to complete this degree I must do a small research project. I have chosen to investigate the relationships among self-concept, reading attitude and reading comprehension of second grade readers.

In order to establish any correlations among these variables, it will be necessary to run some simple tests on grade two students. I am hereby requesting your permission to test the children in the three grade two classes at Cowan Heights. Mrs. Mehaney has already given me consent pending your approval. Except for the tests, which will take approximately one hour, the regular classroom program will not be interrupted in any way. I look forward to a favorable reply at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Leslie E. Brown

Appendix C

April 27th, 1992.

Dear Parent(s):

I am requesting your permission to have your child participate in an investigation I am conducting. I am presently working on a Master's degree in reading at Memorial University with Dr. Joan Oldford-Matchim and as part of my study toward this degree, I must do some work with grade two children. I am hoping to gain some information on the relationship of children's attitudes towards reading and their self-concept as readers. Several short tests/surveys will be used. The testing has the approval of the school board and principal, and will take place during school hours.

As I need as large a group as possible for this study, I hope all children will participate. If you would like any more information, please call me at 745-5320 after 6:00 P.M. If you give permission for your child to participate, please complete the form below and return it to school as soon as possible. I wish to thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Leslie E. Brown

Detach here

I give permission for my child to take part in the grade two reading study. In giving permission, I understand that these tests will only be used for the purpose of the thesis described above and will not determine my child's placement or instruction. The results will be kept strictly confidential and in the writing of the report, my child's name will not be used.

Signature of Parent_____
Child's Name_____
Date:_____

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I do not wish my child to take part in this grade two reading study.

Signature of Parent_____
Child's Name_____