Indicators of Positive Self Concept and Confidence that may aid you in monitoring **SELF CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND CONFIDENCE** in your classroom.

**WORK HABITS:**

**Children:**

* Concentrate for time span of given activities.
* Attack tasks presented without fuss.
* Go about tasks willingly.
* Listen without undue interruption.
* Organizes free time constructively.
* Recognizes personal strategies and weaknesses.
* Work towards neat and thorough presentation.
* Work towards overcoming difficulties.
* Accept failure without stress.

**CO-OPERATION:**

* Ask each other for help.
* Give help to peers when asked.
* Ask teacher for help without fear.
* Clear away without fuss.
* Take messages.
* Line up without fuss.
* Carry out classroom duties without prompting.
* Care for own and others property.
* Obey school rules.
* Be left alone and behave responsibly.
* Take orders without fuss from designated leaders.
* Shares equipment.
* Takes turns.
* Remember to bring things requested.

**MANNERS:**

* Says please and thank you at appropriate times.
* Apologises readily.
* Ask permission to leave room.
* Excuses self.
SOCIAL/CONFIDENCE:

* Are friendly
* Show few signs of aggression.
* Communicate feelings in an acceptable way.
* Listen without interruption in a group
* Talk to class
* Talk in a group
* Take a leadership role.
* Laugh at appropriate times.
* Share news/problems with teacher.

Key:  A = Always  
      F = Frequently  
      S = Sometimes  
      N = Never.
In considering the factors of freedom and challenge, the classroom teacher can ask himself:

- Do I encourage students to try something new and to join in new activities?
- Do I allow students to have a voice in planning, and do I permit them to help make the rules they follow?
- Do I permit students to challenge my opinions?
- Do I teach in an exciting and interesting manner as possible?
- Do I distinguish between students' classroom mistakes and their personal failure?
- Do I avoid unfair and ruthless competition in the classroom?

Questions like these can help the teacher evaluate himself and the classroom climate he creates.

**Respect**

A basic feeling by the teacher for the worth and dignity of students is vital in building self concepts in them. No aspect of education is more important than the feeling on the part of the teacher that the individual student is important, valuable, and can learn in school. Sometimes teachers forget the importance of respect and run roughshod over the personal feelings of students. Using both the official and unofficial school practices which we cataloged in Chapter 3, teachers sometimes lower the feelings of worth of many young people. One of my students told me why he could never get along with his previous English teacher. It was because, although his name is Cribbidge, "She always called me cabbage whenever she called roll, and then laughed." The rule seems to be that whenever we treat a student with respect, we add to his self-respect, and whenever we embarrass or humiliate him, we are likely to build disrespect in him both for himself and for others.

If the teacher genuinely values and respects students, it will be reflected in everything he does. Davidson and Lang (1960) found that when students feel that teachers value and respect them, they are likely to value and respect themselves. Moustakas summed it up this way: "By cherishing and holding the child in absolute esteem, the teacher is establishing an environmental climate that facilitates growth and becoming" (1966, p. 13).

The need for respect is particularly important in working with culturally disadvantaged students. These are the children whose behavior makes them most difficult to respect, but who probably need respect the most. Teachers must make an extra effort to communicate to these young people a feeling of trust, positive regard, and respect. Closely related to respect is the concept of warmth.

**Warmth**

There is considerable evidence to support the assumption that a psychologically safe and supportive learning situation encourages students to grow academically as well as in feelings of personal worth. Cogan (1958) reported that students with warm, considerate teachers produced unusual amounts of original poetry and art. Christensen (1960) found the warmth of teachers significantly related to their students’ vocabulary and achievement in arithmetic. Reed (1962) concluded that teachers characterized as considerate, understanding, and friendly, and with a tolerance for some release of emotional feeling by students, had a favorable influence on their students' interest in science.

Relating more directly to the task of building favorable self concepts, Spaulding's research (1964) supported the findings of previous investigators regarding positive attitudes toward the self. He found significant correlations between the height of the self concept and the degree to which the teachers in his study were calm, accepting, supportive, and facilitative. It is interesting to note that significant negative correlations with the height of pupils' self concepts were found when teachers were dominating, threatening, and sarcastic.

An important part of warmth is commitment. Teaching has been described as a delicate relationship, almost like a marriage, where, in a sense, the teacher and student belong to each other. The student says “There is my teacher” and the teacher says “These are my students.” The process of commitment is illustrated by the story of the chicken and pig who were walking down a country lane: The chicken excitedly told the portly pig of his latest business idea. “We’ll prepare and franchise the best tasting ham ‘n eggs money can buy, and we’ll make a fortune.” The pig thought it over for a moment and replied: “It’s easy for you to get enthused. For you it’s an occupation, but for me it means total commitment!” Perhaps total commitment is asking too much of teachers, but certainly they need to feel that their
work with students is more than an occupation. A warm and supportive educational atmosphere is one in which each student is made to feel that he belongs in school and that teachers care about what happens to him. It is one in which praise is used in preference to punishment, courtesy in preference to sarcasm, and consultation in preference to dictation.

Some practical questions about respect and warmth which the teacher might ask himself are:

- Do I learn the name of each student as soon as possible, and do I use that name often?
- Do I share my feelings with my students?
- Do I practice courtesy with my students?
- Do I arrange some time when I can talk quietly alone with each student?
- Do I spread my attention around and include each student, keeping special watch for the student who may need extra attention?
- Do I notice and comment favorably on the things that are important to students?
- Do I show students who return after being absent that I am happy to have them back in class, and that they were missed?

It is in ways such as these that we tell the student that he is important to us.

Control Coopersmith (1967) has suggested that children who are brought up in a permissive environment tend to develop less self-esteem than those reared in a firmer and more demanding atmosphere. The assumption that clearly established and relatively firm guidance produces more self-esteem in children can also be applied to the classroom. It is important for the teacher to maintain discipline, for the type of control under which a child lives has considerable effect on his self-image. It is yet another way of telling the student that the teacher cares about him and what he does. Classroom control does not require ridicule and embarrassment. The secret seems to be in the leadership qualities of the teacher. When he is prepared for class, keeps on top of the work and avoids the appearance of confusion, explains why some things must be done, and strives for consistency, politeness, and firmness, then classroom control is likely to be maintained.

When punishment is unavoidable (and often it can be avoided), then it is best to withdraw the student's privileges. Of course, this means that teachers must be sure that there are some privileges in school which can be withdrawn. Poor control procedures would include punishing the entire class for the transgressions of a few, using corporal punishment, or using school work as punishment.

In considering classroom control, teachers might ask themselves:

- Do I remember to see small disciplinary problems as understandable, and not as personal insults?
- Do I avoid having "favorites" and "victims"?
- Do I have, and do my students have, a clear idea of what is and what is not acceptable in my class?
- Within my limits, is there room for students to be active and natural?
- Do I make sure that I am adequately prepared for class each day?
- Do I usually make it through the day without punishing students?

Questions such as these help the teacher to estimate his ability to handle students in a way which maintains discipline and, at the same time, builds positive and realistic self-concepts in students.

Some teachers believe that warmth and firmness are in opposition to each other, but this is not so. Warmth is more than the obvious display of affection, it is also expressed by firmness which says to the student, "You are important to me and I care about the ways in which you behave."

Success Perhaps the single most important step that teachers can take in the classroom is to provide an educational atmosphere of success rather than failure. Reviewing over a dozen experiments, Wylie (1961) made the tentative statement that students are likely to change their self-evaluations after experimentally induced success or failure. This statement has been echoed in more recent studies. Costello (1964) found that over-all, regardless of the task or the ability of the students, praise produces more improvement in performance than blame. Ludwig and Maehr (1967) showed that the approval of significant others
caused an increase in self-ratings and an increased preference for activities connected with the criterion task, and that disapproval resulted in a lowered self-rating and a decreased preference for related activities. Moreover, the reaction to the evaluation was followed by a spread of effect, from the areas directly approved by the significant others to related areas of self-regard.

A number of writers have pointed out some of the steps involved in giving honest experiences of success. Page's (1958) research showed that pupils' performance improved significantly when teachers wrote encouraging comments on their written work. A control group, given conventional grades without comment, lost ground. Walsh (1956) explains that it is helpful to show students that they have mastered even the smallest step, rather than vaguely saying "That's nice" about everything.

The sensitive teacher points out areas of accomplishment, rather than focusing on mistakes. Continuing awareness of failure results in lowered expectations, not learning. According to Combs and Snygg (1959) a positive view is learned from the ways people treat the learner. People learn that they are able, not from failure but from success. Questions about success which the teacher might ask himself when he thinks about success experiences for students include:

- Do I permit my students some opportunity to make mistakes without penalty?
- Do I make generally positive comments on written work?
- Do I give extra support and encouragement to slower students?
- Do I recognize the successes of students in terms of what they did earlier?
- Do I take special opportunities to praise students for their successes?
- Do I manufacture honest experiences of success for my students?
- Do I set tasks which are, and which appear to the student to be, within his abilities?

What all of this discussion hopes to say to teachers is that a backlog of challenge, freedom, respect, warmth, control, and success develops positive self-images in students and encourages academic achievement. The absence of these factors makes for the person who is crippled psychologically.

The sensitivity the teacher develops

You can know me truly only if I let you, only if I want you to know me. . . . If you want me to reveal myself, just demonstrate your good will—your will to employ your powers for my good, and not for my destruction.

Sidney Jourard, The Transparent Self

"Sensitivity" is a term which is used to serve many purposes and to describe various processes. In this book it is defined as the ability to sense what an individual feels about himself and the world. Sensitivity first requires the honest desire to become aware of how others are experiencing things. This sounds simple, but the fact is that many people don't take the necessary time and trouble to be sensitive to others. After the desire must come the habit of really listening, and listening for meanings rather than words. For instance, a student might say that he does not wish to try, when he means that it is better not to try than to try and be proved wrong.

Entering a person's private world in order to understand how he is seeing things is difficult, for the individual self can only be approached through the perceptions of some other person, perceptions filled with all sorts of prejudices, aspirations, and anxieties. Fortunately, however, most teachers have a great supply of sensitivity, as do most humans. It's just a matter of applying this sensitivity more deliberately to teaching. To the degree to which a teacher is able to predict how his students are viewing themselves, their subject, and the world, to that degree he is in a position to become a successful teacher.

Throughout this book the idea has been stressed over and over that the teacher must give the self concepts of students far greater emphasis than is presently given. The purpose of this section is to assist teachers to become more competent in assessing the self concepts of the students with whom they work. For a long time, many of us in education and psychology have been saying that theory about the self has a vital role to play in the educative process and that teachers should be made more aware of the importance of how students view themselves. Yet little has been done to equip teachers and counselors with simple clinical
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<tr>
<th>How often do I do each of these?</th>
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<td>Stick to job until finished</td>
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<td>Plan carefully before starting job</td>
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<td>Start working promptly</td>
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<td>Share materials with others</td>
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<td>Work effectively in a group</td>
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<td>Use a wide range of resources</td>
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<td>Ask for help when I need it</td>
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<td>Follow directions</td>
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<td>Do additional work in interesting areas</td>
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<td>Understand the purpose of my work</td>
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<td>Work on my own</td>
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<td>Suggest different ways of doing things</td>
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HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD WITH READING?

Teaching reading is an important job in which both the school and parent can co-operate. Here are some ways to help your child become a reader.

1. TALK to your child. Almost from the day he is born, a child is ready to express himself. Tell him what you are doing, why you are doing it. Ask questions, point things out. Discuss books, pictures, T.V. shows. The more words he hears and can use, the more meaning he will get when he sees them on the printed page.

2. LISTEN to your child. Children must have many opportunities to express themselves. Encourage your child to talk about things he has seen or done. The more the child talks, the better he is likely to read. Do pay attention when he is talking to you. Listen to your child read. Suggest that before he reads aloud to you, he should read the story to himself to be sure he has the meaning. This makes listening to him read more interesting for you.

3. READ to your child. Every time you read to him you are building an appreciation of books and reading. Equally you are showing him the patterns and rhythms of the printed page. This will not only help him in reading but also in writing. A child who has been read to often, is likely to learn to read and write without anxiety.

4. HELP him with his reading. If he is in the beginning stages, look and talk about the pictures first. This will give him clues as to the words he is likely to meet on the pages. Read the story for or with him then let him read to you quickly providing him with words he has forgotten. The important thing is not to lose the meaning. At the later stages, help him to work out words by skipping over the unknown word and reading the rest of the sentence to see whether this suggests the new word, and checking to see whether the word makes "sense" in the sentence.

5. TEACH your child to take care of books. He will learn to regard books as friends and a source of pleasure.

6. TAKE him on trips. Even a short trip on the bus or train will excite his curiosity and interest in the world around him. Point out interesting things and give him new words and meanings for words.

7. BUILD up a reading atmosphere at home. Have books, magazines and newspapers around the house. Let your child see you reading. Tell him what you are reading about and if you are enjoying it.

8. ENCOURAGE him to join a public library. Take him to the library at first. Let him select his own books. If they are too difficult for him to read you can read them to him. Enjoy books together.
9. BUY or borrow from a toy library games and puzzles for your child. These help your child learn shape and form and help him relate words to things. Anagrams, letter games, Scrabble and Lotto will help him with his spelling and reading. (Midland Education Centre can help you in this area.)

10. BUY books for your child. A child who owns a few good books is usually interested in reading. Try to get books at his reading level so he can read these books with fun and pleasure. Your child's teacher or your local librarian can help you with the selection.

11. PRAISE your child. Remember reading is not always easy. Don't forget to praise him when he succeeds. Don't expect him to know the word when you tell it once or twice or even ten or twenty times! Children need to see a word frequently before learning it.

12. KEEP your child well and rested. A child who has stayed up late shows the effect next day in his school work. Check sight and hearing early on in school life.

13. VISIT the school frequently and share in your child's activities when possible. This will give you information on how the school approaches learning and teaching and how your child is responding.

14. ACCEPT your child as he is. Don't compare him with others but encourage him to do his best. Failure is a learned thing and a child learns it from those around him.

15. REMEMBER: Children learn to read by reading. The more they read, the better readers they become!
Use the owl chart by filling in or by having a student fill in a circle whenever he or she works hard or engages in a specific positive behavior.

Use the dragon chart by filling in or having a student fill in a circle whenever he or she works hard or engages in a specific positive behavior.

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Use the frog chart by filling in or by having a student fill in a circle whenever he or she works hard or engages in a specific positive behavior.

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Use the eagle chart by filling in or by having a student fill in a circle whenever he or she works hard or engages in a specific positive behavior.

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worked like a dog today to finish the work.

Teacher

---

Thanks for lending a hand. You are very helpful.

Teacher
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has had terrific bee-havior today.

Date

Teacher

has earned ________ minutes of free time.

Congratulations!

Teacher

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Happy Gram

Good work! ____________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

Teacher

I'm not lion!

__________________________________________________ did a fantastic job of

Teacher
Top Secret Note

has been doing very well at school.

has worked hard, cooperated, and followed the rules.

Teacher

Keep this note secret!
Thank You!

Your efforts at improving ____________________________________________ have been greatly appreciated.

Keep up the good work!

Teacher

Daily Report Card

________________________________________________________________________ had a fantastic day when it came to:

☐ Reading  ☐ Cooperating
☐ Arithmetic ☐ Working hard
☐ Handwriting ☐ Being helpful
☐ Science  ☐ Getting along with others
☐ English  ☐ Finishing work
☐ ___________________  ☐ ___________________

Date ___________________________________________  Teacher

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Certificate of Improvement

_________________________ has improved performance on

_________________________

Keep up the good work!

Seal of approval

Teacher

Cooperation Award

_________________________

has been cooperative and helpful in the classroom.

_________________________

Date

_________________________

Teacher
### Positive Interactions

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### Negative Interactions

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For use with solution sheet 23, "Arguing: An Individual Argues with Classmates."

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### Positive Comments

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### Negative Comments

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For use with solution sheet 46, "The Poor Self-Concept."

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This class behaved in a very mature and helpful manner in the cafeteria today.

They should be commended!
Each of these drawings can be used to record points or to count positive behaviors.

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