

LEARNING DISABLED AND NON-LEARNING DISABLED
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF SELF: AN ADLERIAN APPROACH

by

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ABSTRACT

In spite of numerous test batteries used to measure self-concept, there is still no test that measures self-concept in relation to sibling position. Most studies in measuring self-concept are inconclusive. This study took another approach and focused on self-concept in relation to sibling position.

In order to determine if learning disabled and non-learning disabled children's self-concept would affect their choice of self-descriptors, the following problem was studied: within different family constellations, with children occupying the same sibling position, was there a difference between the self-concept of learning disabled and non-learning disabled children?

Data were tabulated to determine the classification of each student, their ages, sibling position occupied within the family constellation, and the self-concept as measured by the Descriptor Exercise. T-tests were computed to determine if any differences existed. The sample population, when broken down into five sibling positions was not large enough to allow for tests of significance to be performed. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. Children have similar self-concepts regardless of their sibling position. Also, learning disabled and non-learning disabled children chose similar self-concept descriptors.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Self-concept and its effect on behavior has been a continuous concern of educators and psychologists. Many theories emphasize early childhood development and the effects of parental influence upon the formation of a child's self-concept (Baldwin, 1967). Other theories have focused on sibling relationships within the family constellation as a determinant of self-concept (Forer, 1969). The particular sibling position a child occupies within a family constellation affects self-concept. In turn, the child's self-concept can act as a determinant on that child's perception of the world. Children largely act in accordance with their perceptions of a particular situation, even though their perceptions may be incorrect.

It is not uncommon to find parents and educators complaining that children do not behave as they did when they were young. Today's school systems are becoming more specialized in dealing with "problem" children both behaviorally and academically. In order to deal more effectively with children, they have been classified as normal, learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, or mentally retarded, to name but a few. No matter what the classification, behavior problems are common to all. Some behavior problems are a result of how the child perceives (or misperceives) the world. Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1971) refer to this as a child's "private logic" or a child's subjective view.

Classroom behavior problems are disruptive, to say the least. Educators and students alike are distracted by the disruptive child. More and more parents are becoming discouraged in dealing with their child's behavior problems. Dreikurs (1957) states that in order to have a positive influence on a child, one must be aware that the child is not pathologically sick when he/she misbehaves, but is simply lacking education, insight, and direction on how to gain recognition through constructive means. In other words, the child is striving to move from feelings of inadequacy towards feelings of significance and adequacy. Self-concept influences a child's private logic. According to Dreikurs et al. (1971, pp. 10-11):

You cannot help your child unless you understand him. This complete lack of understanding is one of the tragedies of contemporary parent-child relationships. Most parents have not the slightest idea of why the child misbehaves; they are completely ignorant of the causes and purposes of his actions.

Educators also have their share of problem children. Specialists in the field of learning disabilities theorize that the learning disabled child has a very low self-concept (Barr and McDowell, 1972; Rosenthal, 1973). Learning disabled children are also reported to be more disruptive in the classroom than non-learning disabled children (Rosenthal, 1973; Bryan, 1974).

Many theorists hypothesize that self-concept is a determining factor affecting the way a child behaves. Adlerian theory emphasizes that a child's position within the family constellation plays a major role in the development of self-concept. Alfred Adler (1927) was one

of the earliest psychologists to theorize that ordinal or sibling position within the family constellation was a significant factor in an individual's development. Adler (1931) stressed the fact that his psychology was one of use, not possession. Adler explained this by stating that it is not as important to understand what abilities and potentials an individual may possess, but rather, what use that individual makes of these potentials and abilities. Because this study is based on Adlerian psychology, a presentation of basic Adlerian theory in relation to the family constellation will follow.

Fundamental Adlerian Theory

Adler's theory has one basic assumption central to most of his writings. Adler theorized that all humans are motivated in a striving effort to move from feelings of inferiority toward feelings of adequacy (Ansbacher and Ansbacher, 1956). An individual forms a lifestyle by the age of four or five (Adler, 1963). By this age individuals perceive how they fit into life. Adler states that heredity and environment can be construed as building blocks, not responsible for, but assisting in an individual's construction of his/her unique way of fitting into life (Adler, 1963). What is important in this concept is that one may perceive the world or their particular situation in a different light from that which actually exists. Ideas or experiences that do not fit into or contradict one's lifestyle, such as thoughts, feelings, and actions, are largely rejected.

A presentation of Adlerian theory and its assumptions has been well summarized by Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963). Pertinent Adlerian theoretical foundations are as follows.

All Behavior Has Social Meaning

Man is recognized primarily as a social being whose behavior can best be understood when viewed in a social context. One basic objective for every individual is the quest for significance; the need to belong and be accepted by peers. In summarizing Adler's theory of social meaning, Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963) state that the societal role each individual plays, and the individual's response to social stimuli, underlie personality development. The conceptual framework of social interest is much more than a feeling of belonging; it is more a key concept to understanding behavior.

All Behavior Is Purposive

Behind every thought and action there is a purpose directed toward a specific goal. In order to understand behavior, one must view it in terms of its purpose. Children are goal motivated and act accordingly. For example, the child who is most competitive in school may feel inadequate academically and compensate for this lack by being the "best" student. The child who finds this goal unattainable may become discouraged and seek significance (feelings of adequacy) by mistakenly assuming that they might be "best" by becoming the "best" underachiever or the "best" class clown. These are the psychic stimuli that motivate the child's behavior. When viewing behavior from a teleological basis,

we assume a fallacy exists if viewed from the basis of a direct causal relationship between the environment and resulting behavior. Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963, p. 11) state: "The principle of finalistic causality, indicating that in understanding the individual the goal for the future is more important than the individual's past history. This approach accepts the freedom of choice of each individual in regards to his goals and direction. He decides and acts."

The Individual Must Be Viewed Subjectively

It is important to understand that individuals are influenced by how they interpret facts and not by the facts themselves. In reference to children, it is not as important to know the details involved in an act as it is to know the purpose of the behavior and the accompanying feelings. Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963) refer to feeling as the child's "private logic." That is to say, each child interprets reality in a different manner. According to Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963, p. 11), "it is more vital to know how the person uses his abilities than to know what his ability is." One often finds that a child's behavior may be self-defeating. In the instance of a younger child whose older sibling is academically superior, the younger child might find it perfectly reasonable to become significant by becoming the "best" underachiever. In this case, the child's private logic is in direct contrast with judgment of the adult. As previously mentioned, the younger child who feels it is "impossible" to compete with an older sibling in the academic arena may seek significance by becoming the best outside of school.

Each Individual Has The Freedom of Choice

In contrast to the theory of direct causal relationships, Adler believes that individuals are responsible for their own actions. It is not the environment that shapes the individual's destiny, but the choice the individual makes with regard to how he/she interprets the situation. Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963, p. 12) state:

Freedom of choice means that the individual can and does decide for himself. He is not merely at the mercy of drives, nor is he the victim of impulses, nor does heredity or environment force him into a specific direction. He uses both as stimuli for his own interpretations, and these interpretations give significance to the forces which he encounters both in himself and in his environment. It is less important to know what a child is born with than to know what he does with it afterwards.

In reference to the younger underachiever and the academically superior sibling, this influence is not beyond the control of the younger child. When viewed subjectively, one can see that the child chose a non-growth producing means (perhaps without awareness) of seeking significance. According to Hillman (1969, p. 14):

Psychologists can begin to perfect ways to use this concept to help children become more adequate achievers at school. It is quite true that an educator or parent cannot change his child's position in his family constellation. However, an understanding educator or other adult may be able to help a child change his perception about his family constellation which may have resulted in self-defeating behavior.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if a difference exists in the self-concept of children who occupy the same sibling positions within different family constellations. This study will also attempt to determine if learning disabled children who occupy the same sibling

position as non-learning disabled children, within different family constellations, have similar self-concepts as influenced by the psychological position. Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963) hypothesize that it is not heredity or environment that shapes a person's life, but the person's interpretation of the situation and the choice he/she makes and acts upon. Birth order and sibling position are not of as much importance as how children perceive their position. Much of the research suggests a correlation between learning disabilities and poor self-esteem. This study will explore the hypothesis, using a comparative method, focusing on the assumption that it is not learning disabled students who are characterized by poor self-esteem, but rather, it is their own faulty perceptions based on their positions within the family constellation. In other words, children with unsurpassable older siblings, or only children unaccustomed to removing their own obstacles, may engage in self-defeating behavior by seeking significance through negative means. This behavior may be against established social norms, allowing children to choose to develop a poor self-concept. This study will therefore explore and compare self-concept differences and similarities of learning disabled and non-learning disabled children in relation to their sibling position.

Statement of Problem

In order to determine if learning disabled and non-learning disabled children's self-concept, as perceived by their sibling position, will affect their choice of self-descriptors, the following problem was studied: Within different family constellations, with children of

different families occupying the same sibling position, is there a difference between the self-concept of learning disabled and non-learning disabled children?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in order to investigate the problem stated above: (1) there is no difference in the self-concept of children who occupy the same sibling position within the family constellation; (2) there is no difference in the self-concept of learning disabled and non-learning disabled children.

Definition of Terms

Terms used in this study have the following operationalized definitions:

1. Family Constellation--used to describe the dynamic relationship between siblings of the same family; age spacing and family size are included in the concept.
2. Age Spacing--there are no more than 48 months between any two adjacent siblings.
3. Sibling Position--a family may be comprised of one or more of the following sibling positions
 - A. Only Child--only child in family, or more than 48 months between any adjacent siblings.
 - B. Oldest Child--oldest child in family, no more than 48 months older than adjacent child.

- C. Second Child--second child in two children family, no more than 48 months younger than older sibling.
 - D. Middle Child--any child in family with two siblings or more, with no more than 48 months age span between adjacent older or younger siblings.
 - E. Youngest Child--youngest child in family, no more than 48 months younger than adjacent older sibling.
4. Self-concept--an organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissible to awareness, composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities; the percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environment; the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences and objects; and goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive or negative valence (Rogers, 1951).
5. Private Logic--child's subject view.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

More school systems are placing emphasis upon individuals and individual learning. Exceptional children have a special niche in today's school system. Educators are becoming more concerned with the self-concept of students, especially the exceptional child (Twenter, 1977). Exceptional children have been the focus of many studies with more and more emphasis being placed on the relationship between achievement, self-concept, and the learning disabled child (Rosenthal, 1973; Griffiths, 1975; Leviton and Kiraly, 1975; Twenter, 1977).

Few researchers have attempted to study the self-concept of the learning disabled child as affected by the composition of the family constellation. The purpose of this study is to measure and compare the self-concepts of the learning disabled student, as influenced by the psychological position within the family constellation, with that of the non-learning disabled student.

The field of learning disabilities is relatively new. It began in the early 1960s with the writings of Kirk, Frostig, Werner, Orton, Strauss, and Cruickshank. The field of learning disabilities has grown considerably since its beginning, and the philosophies underlying the learning disability concept have played an important role in providing the learning disabled child with special education programs.

Special educators have attempted to define and operationalize the term learning disabled. Kass (1976) states that the most controversial issue in the field of learning disabilities is the definition. An Advanced Study Institute was held at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, in the summer of 1967. The purpose of that meeting was to educationally define the areas of learning disabilities and the multiply handicapped. As a result of this meeting the following definition for learning disability was accepted:

Learning disability refers to one or more significant deficits in essential learning processes requiring special education techniques for remediation.

Children with a learning disability generally demonstrate a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement in one or more areas; such as spoken, read, or written language, mathematics, and spatial orientation.

The learning disability referred to is not primarily the result of sensory, motor, intellectual, or emotional handicap, or lack of opportunity to learn.

Significant deficits are defined in terms of accepted diagnostic procedures in education and psychology.

Essential learning processes are those currently referred to in behavioral science as involving perception, integration, and expression, either verbal or nonverbal.

Special education techniques for remediation refer to educational planning based on diagnostic procedures and results (Kass, 1976, pp. 5-6).

Another definition for learning disability suggested by the National Advisory Committee, is as follows:

Children with special learning disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. These may be manifested in disorders of listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or in arithmetic. They

include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, etc. They do not include learning problems which are due primarily to visual, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage (Kass, 1976, p. 5).

Authorities so far have not been able to agree upon a single definition. Brenton and Gilmore (1976) write that the lack of an operationalized definition for learning disabilities has many educators wondering how many children assessed learning disabled are actually learning disabled.

In attempting to operationalize a definition for learning disability, Brenton and Gilmore (1976, p. 428) present the State of Michigan's definition, as presented in the 1973 special education code on learning disability.

Rule 13. "Learning disabled" means a person identified by an educational planning and placement committee, based upon a comprehensive evaluation by a school psychologist or certified psychologist or certified consulting psychologist or an evaluation by a neurologist, or equivalent medical examiner qualified to evaluate neurological dysfunction, and other pertinent information, and having all the following characteristics:

(A) Disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculation.

(B) Manifestations of symptoms characterized by diagnostic labels such as perceptual handicap, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia or aphasia.

(C) Development at less than expected rate of age group in the cognitive, affective or psychomotor domains.

(D) Inability to function in regular education without supportive special education services.

(E) Unsatisfactory performance not found to be based on social, economic or cultural background.

A radical point of view presented by Throne (1973) attributes the problems of the learning disabled to environmental rather than organismic variables. Throne (1973, p. 14) states:

Learning problems inhere in the circumstances of the environment in which children function, not in children. Any child may have learning problems, depending on the environment. Conversely, any handicapped child may become able, or more able, if the environment is structured to make him so. The key to making children able, then, rests in the hands of those--starting with parents and teachers--who possess the skills to alter the environment to facilitate their becoming able or more able.

Throne's basis for change lies in the premise that if the environment improves, the child will improve.

The question then becomes, what common behavior characteristics, if any, do learning disabled students display when compared with non-learning disabled students? Rosenthal (1973) notes a correlation between problems in reading and acted-out anti-social aggressions. The results of Rosenthal's study supports the thesis that dyslexic children are characterized by poor self-esteem. Rosenthal (1973, p. 28) attributes this characterization, in part, to the reaction by significant others toward the dyslexic child:

The dyslexic child is also subjected to pressure from concerned adults who view his future with foreboding. The same adults--and indeed, the same peers--who would react with compassion to learning problems attendant on cerebral palsy, blindness, or deafness, are likely to express tension and frustration toward the child who fails to read without discernible cause. Children with dyslexia have been called lazy, purposely negativistic, psychopathologic, and mentally retarded by peers, by professional workers, and by their own families.

Bryan (1974) notes such characteristics as hyperactivity, distractibility, short attention span, and perceptual handicaps as characteristics associated with the learning disabled. The purpose of Bryan's study was to measure task-oriented and social behavior of learning disabled and non-learning disabled children in the classroom. In an earlier study conducted by Bryan and Wheeler (1972), there were found to be significant classroom behavior differences between learning disabled and non-learning disabled children. Learning disabled children spent less time at task-oriented behavior and more time in acting-out behavior than did their counterparts. Bryan's second study reached similar conclusions. Bryan implies that there is a correlation between the learning disabled students' acting-out behavior and teacher interaction. Bryan (1974, p. 42) states:

The results also suggest that learning disabled children have different interpersonal relations with teachers and peers than non-learning disabled children. Learning disabled children interacted with others as much as comparison children, but were more likely to be ignored by teachers and peers when they initiated an interaction. In addition, the teacher interactions were more task specific for the learning disabled children than for comparison subjects.

The self-concept of the learning disabled child is a poor one indeed. Much of the research points to the fact that learning disabled children develop a poor self-concept through negative interactions with significant others such as parents, teachers, and peers. Decker and Decker (1977, p. 357) are supportive of this idea and state:

While the learning disabled child may present difficulties in the intellectual, conceptual, perceptual-motor, and speech and language areas to be sure, because of frustration and failures he has experienced, he frequently develops an

emotional overlay to his learning deficit. He begins to take on a concept of himself as "a person who cannot," an inadequate and sometimes worthless individual. Many of these children find it difficult to compete with their normally endowed peers, which further reinforces the crippling negative self-image they have developed.

Barr and McDowell (1972) note that learning disabled children may have a poor self-image and that they experience patterns of failure in both the home and school environments. In their study comparing the frequency of deviant classroom behavior of learning disabled with emotionally disturbed children, the results indicated that emotionally disturbed children exhibited a higher frequency of deviant classroom behavior than did learning disabled students except when compared in the area of out of seat behavior, where a distinctly higher frequency of such behavior was exhibited by learning disabled children. In another study conducted by Charley (1974) it was discovered that learning disabled children, when compared with non-learning disabled children, experienced a greater degree of, and are characterized by both underachievement and lower self-esteem. McDonnell (1974), while investigating the effects of teacher reinforcement on self-concept, academic achievement, and classroom behavior with regard to the learning disabled, found that impaired self-concept was probably not a causal variable central to the problems of learning disabled children. This result implies that improvement of the learning disabled child's behavior would not be affected by careful reinforcement of self-esteem. This conclusion is contrary to most findings existing in current literature. Twenter (1977), while studying the effects of self-esteem on

perceptual motor development, indicates that self-esteem is an important factor in a child's readiness for learning. Twenter (1977, p. 9) states:

There are many factors in the school curricula and school environment which would foster a feeling of neglect in the child with a learning disability. Therefore, the administration and teaching staff must, at the earliest possible time, recognize the child who is having a learning problem, and reconstruct the curricula and environment in order to promote within the child a feeling of success.

Griffiths (1975), who presented a 35 item self-concept scale to 131 dyslexic children, asked if it was possible to improve the self-concept of learning disabled children. Her results indicated that the children in this study, who were bright and came from homes with concerned, encouraging parents, also possessed many negative self-concept elements.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that learning disabled students in general have a negative self-concept of themselves in relation to home, school, family, and peers. The literature also suggests multi-causal variables as contributing factors in developing and maintaining this negative self-concept. However, one variable not previously mentioned, or studied extensively, is that of birth order.

Birth order, as a concept, refers to a person's position of birth among his/her siblings. It must be noted that although the Adlerian concept of family constellation is related to the concept of birth order, the terms have different meanings. According to Hillman (1969, p. 18): "Family constellation refers to the dynamic interaction between family members which may result in alliance or competitive relationships. Birth order is a much more static concept. It refers only to an individual's position of birth among his siblings."

In 1931, Jones pioneered an extensive research study of over 250 articles dealing with birth order. Jones (1931) concluded that there is little evidence to support the hypothesis of a relationship between birth order and intelligence, language development, or school achievement. Jones called for a combination of statistical and clinical methods as well as extensive follow-up data to further investigate the significance of birth order.

In a review of numerous birth order studies, Murphy, Murphy, and Newcomb (1937) found inconclusive results. Their conclusions did emphasize that ordinal position is an important factor in the child's behavior development. Hillman (1969, p. 20), in an extensive review of the literature, states that "psychological position per se without considering its meaning to the child, to his siblings, and to his parents, contributes little psychological insight into the operation of the social factors of family influence." Hillman then links the concept of psychological position to the Adlerian idea of interaction within the family constellation. As stated by Hillman (1969, p. 20):

Birth order is not viewed as a deterministic influence. This view is quite consistent with the Adlerian concept of self-determination. The Adlerian theory . . . is concerned with how the child perceives and chooses to react to his/her position in the family constellation rather than with birth order alone.

Sampson (1965), in his complete study of ordinal position, explores the methodological problems encountered in researching ordinal position. Sampson emphasizes the need for systematic studies as well as the control of potentially significant confounding factors. In

reference to extraneous variables, within the framework of the methodological conditions, Sampson emphasizes the need for systematic control of other early experiences one encounters which affect development. In reference to design, Sampson (1965, p. 178) states:

The practice of lumping together only children and first children on the one hand, and all laterborn on the other, seems to violate the psychological rationale of this research . . . the problems of subject sex, sibling sex, age spacing, family size, cultural and subcultural background, and socioeconomic status provide an even greater array of questions.

In his conceptual scheme, Sampson assumes that ordinal position by itself does not predict the development of behavior and personality. Sampson (1965, p. 180) states: "Ordinal position creates a particular kind of sociological environment and a set of psychological experiences that are assumed to lead to the development of patterns of personality and behavior." Sampson reports of inconclusiveness in the results of recent studies and attributes much of this to the designs and methodologies of the studies.

Family Constellation

Adlerian theory probably utilizes birth order information more than any other school of psychology. Adler's views on birth order were first presented in 1918 (Ansbacher and Ansbacher, 1956). Dreikurs (1950, p. 41) emphasized the importance of birth order by stating that it is "the only fundamental law governing the development of the child's character: he trains those qualities by which he hopes to achieve significance or even a degree of power and superiority in the family constellation."

Adler (1927) describes the only child as one in a very special situation. The only child, according to Adler, is at the mercy of the educational methods of the environment. The parents place all of their attention upon the only child. As a result, the only child is in search of support. The only child is pampered and unaccustomed to difficulties because an adult has always removed the difficulties for the only child. The only child is constantly seeking attention. Only children often have a predilection for adults, since they have spent their lives among adults.

According to Forer (1977), since no siblings exist, the lack of competition seems to increase self-confidence. Forer describes the only child as dominant, verbal, and a perfectionist. Only children are self-directed, having learned to do things by themselves.

Adler (1927) describes the oldest child as one with well-defined characteristics. By being the oldest, the child is in an advantageous position to develop his/her psychic life. Viewed historically, it was the eldest child who inherited family traditions and responsibilities. Adler (1927) states that the oldest child has an especially high evaluation of power. It is the oldest child who is constantly entrusted with responsibilities. Hillman (1969) states that the oldest child is often found in a supervisory capacity and is preoccupied with power and authority. When the second child is born, the oldest is "dethroned." When this happens, the oldest must compete to maintain the position of being first, and seeks to regain lost attention. According to Forer (1977), the birth of the second child may compel the oldest to shift

allegiance from mother to father. Forer (1977, p. 9) states: "This may be because the first born unconsciously realizes that mother was responsible for producing the competition for love and attention once reserved solely for him. In a sense, the first born rejects her."

Adler (1927) views the second child in sharp contrast to the first. The striving for power and superiority presents a special problem for the second child, namely pressure. The second child, in his/her quest for superiority, becomes preoccupied with trying to catch up and surpass the oldest. The oldest child's position of previously gained power may serve as a strong stimulus for the second born. According to Hillman (1969), if the first born is too strong, the second child may attempt to escape to "the useless side of life," and become lazy. It is also possible that the second child may find significance in an area where the first child has no interest.

The middle child is described as "squeezed." According to Dreikurs (1958), middle children may begin by believing they will hold the same superior position as their sibling held over them. However, middle children soon discover that the third born enjoys certain privileges denied middle children. Therefore, middle children have neither the rights of the older siblings nor the privileges of the youngest. Finding themselves in this dilemma, unless middle children surpass one of their competitors, they are likely to perceive life as unfair and feel that they do not belong.

Adler (1927) describes youngest children as playing one of two roles. The first role is that of the spoiled, pampered "baby" of the

family. These children may have a desire to excel but may lack the necessary self-confidence as a result of their relationships with their older siblings. The second role youngest children may play is that of the family's most capable member. In this situation, youngest children are stimulated and set out to prove they can do "everything" to compensate for their weaknesses.

Conclusions

Adlerians describe the different sibling positions in terms of allies or competitors. In contrast to the research of birth order position, Adlerians emphasize that birth order alone does not influence the self-concept, but birth order combined with the way children subjectively perceive their positions and choose to react to them is of primary importance.

Few studies have attempted to measure the self-concept of children in relation to sibling position. Also, few studies have attempted to apply this Adlerian concept to the field of learning disabilities. In order to adequately test Adler's theory, it must be expanded to include a broader area. The effect sibling position has on self-concept and its importance is questionable. There is a need for empirical data, validation, and further research in this area, especially in the field of learning disabilities.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES

Description of Subjects

The subjects used in this study were selected from a population of elementary school students in a metropolitan school district in the southwest. This district was chosen because of its size and accessibility to the examiner. Elementary schools used were located in middle-class neighborhoods. The sample was comprised of 45 students, 30 learning disabled and 15 non-learning disabled. No distinctions were made as to the elementary schools attended. No restrictions were made on ethnicity, sex, intelligence, marital status of parent(s), number of siblings, or family income.

Selection Restrictions

The students used in this study met the following restrictions:

1. Subjects were in grades two through five.
2. Subjects were eight through twelve years old.
3. Subjects needed signed prior approval of parent(s)/guardian(s) to participate.
4. Age spacing between any two adjacent siblings was forty-eight months or less.

Method of Identifying Subjects

Permission of the school district research office was obtained. The research office informed elementary schools within the district about the project. Interested educators volunteered their time and students' class participation. A total of 11 students, three learning disabled and eight non-learning disabled, were eliminated from this study because prior permission from the parents was not obtained.

Description of Selected Subjects

After 11 students were eliminated from the study, 45 students remained to become the sample population. The following presents a breakdown of the total sample population (Table 1).

Table 1. Sibling positions of the total sample population

	Only	Oldest	Second	Middle	Youngest	Total
Learning Disabled						
Male	4	10	3	2	6	25
Female	2	0	0	2	1	5
Total	6	10	3	4	7	30
Non-Learning Disabled						
Male	3	4	0	1	1	9
Female	2	1	0	1	2	6
Total	5	5	0	2	3	15

Description of Instruments

In order to measure the self-concept of children, an accurate description of each of the particular sibling positions was needed, i.e., only, oldest, second, middle, youngest. An accurate description of children in the learning disabled category was also needed. After a careful and extensive review of literature to measure self-concept, none could be found. The instruments used in this study were designed specifically for this study.

A list of descriptive adjectives was compiled for each of the five sibling positions and for the learning disability category. Adjectives chosen to describe each of the five sibling positions were chosen from existing literature (Adler, 1963; Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs, 1963; Forer, 1969; Dreikurs et al., 1971). Criteria for selections were adjectives used most frequently within the literature to describe a particular sibling position. Adjectives used most frequently to describe learning disabled children were also chosen from existing literature (Barr and McDowell, 1972; Rosenthal, 1973; Bryan, 1974; Charley, 1974; Kass, 1976; Decker and Decker, 1977). The lists were completed and sent to experts in each of the particular fields for rank ordering.

The completed lists of adjectives describing each of the five sibling positions will be referred to as "birth order descriptors" for the remainder of this paper. A letter was sent to each of the ten experts in the field of individual psychology (Appendix A). The letter was accompanied by the birth order descriptor exercise (Appendix B). Experts were instructed to rank each adjective according to importance

for the sibling position and to add additional adjectives they felt were important. Six completed rank ordered lists were returned and used in this study (Appendix C).

The same procedures were used in selecting adjectives most descriptive of learning disabled children. A letter was sent to seven experts in the field of learning disabilities (Appendix D). The letter was accompanied by the "Characteristics of the Learning Disabled" exercise (Appendix E). Six completed lists were used in this study (Appendix F).

After receiving the completed exercises rank ordered by the experts, six adjectives were chosen from each of the six categories (i.e., five sibling positions, one learning disabled category) for a total of 36 adjectives. The criteria for selection were the frequency and the mean, as rank ordered by the experts.

The 36 adjectives were submitted for definition independently to three University of Arizona faculty members in the Counseling and Guidance Department, and one University of Arizona faculty member in the Department of Special Education. Each faculty member was instructed to define the words in accordance with current theories in their respective fields. Each definition applied to the birth order descriptors was based on the fundamentals of Adlerian psychology, with a direct reference to sibling position. Each definition applied to the characteristics of the learning disabled adjectives was based on current learning disability theories. Agreement was reached among the four faculty members resulting in one definition for each of the 36 adjectives (Appendix G).

The Descriptor Exercise was then administered to a class of college students (Appendix H). Although this instrument has not been tested extensively, and ample evidence of statistical validity or reliability has not been achieved, there was sufficient content validity to test the hypotheses.

The list of adjectives and definitions was then submitted to a faculty member for the purpose of "childrenizing," or simplifying. The faculty member was instructed to simplify the reading level of the definition and to establish at least a second grade reading level. Upon completion, the list was resubmitted to the original four faculty members and an agreement was reached on the "childrenized" version (Appendix I).

The Family Constellation Questionnaire (Appendix J) was designed to determine the exact sibling position occupied by each child within his/her own family constellation. The Descriptor Exercise was designed to measure the self-concept of children. All instruments were developed specifically for this study.

Research Design

Since no instrument had previously existed for measuring self-concept and its direct relationship to sibling position, the self-descriptor instrument designed for this study had to contain enough content validity to adequately measure the dependent variable.

The dependent variable used in this study was self-concept as measured by the Descriptor Exercise. The independent variable was sibling position. Known extraneous variables included family size, grade

level, special education class placement, and age spacing. Extraneous variables were controlled by the process used in selecting the sample population.

This project was designed to measure whether any differences existed in the self-concept between learning disabled and non-learning disabled students based on particular sibling position. T-tests were performed on students' scores from the Descriptor Exercise. Means were used to determine significance at .05 and .01 levels.

Procedure

The Descriptor Exercise was typed on a 2 x 5 index card, one definition per card. There were 45 stacks of cards, each stack containing 36 cards. Each stack of cards was hand shuffled 40 times to ensure random order.

Volunteer educators were contacted by the experimenter and the project was explained (Appendix K). A total of six educators from five elementary schools within the selected school district agreed to participate. Three educators taught non-learning disabled students and three educators taught self-contained learning disabled students.

Educators were contacted by telephone and appointments were arranged. During this appointment time educators were provided with parental permission forms (Appendix L) and informed that the Descriptor Exercise would be administered to their students.

The following Descriptor Exercise directions were given when requesting participation from the educators:

This exercise consists of 36 index cards, each card containing a descriptive sentence. The purpose of this exercise is for each child to sort through the cards and choose six (6) cards that describe him/her the best. Although the definitions are "childrenized" (i.e., primary reading level) some children may have trouble understanding the definitions. The assistant will explain any definition to any child who requests help. It is important that the participants understand each definition.

Upon each child's completion of this exercise, the assistant will make sure that each participant has chosen only six (6) index cards. Collect each stack of six cards by wrapping them in the Family Constellation Questionnaire and securing this package with a rubber band.

Thank you for your cooperation.

The following Descriptor Exercise was given to each educator to administer to the students:

This is a group exercise that will take approximately one hour to administer.

Okay, everybody, look up here. We are going to play a game. This is not a test. This is a game about the way you think of yourself. There are no wrong or right answers. An answer is right if it is true for you. I am going to give each of you a stack of cards just like this. (Assistant holds up cards.)

Do not touch the cards until I say begin. (Assistant distributes one stack of cards to each participant.) Remember do not touch the cards until I say begin. Now I am going to give each of you two sheets of paper. One sheet of paper has a picture of a person on it that says THIS IS LIKE ME. (Assistant holds up a sheet of paper with picture.) The other sheet of paper has no picture and says THIS IS NOT LIKE ME. (Assistant holds up a sheet of paper and then passes out two sheets of paper to each participant.)

Now we are ready to begin. Everybody remove the rubber band and pick up the FIRST card. I am going to read the sentence aloud as you read it silently. (Assistant reads sentence.) Now, if the sentence (refer to first card) is like you, put it on the piece of paper with the picture of the person that says THIS IS LIKE ME. If the sentence (refer to card) is not like you, put it on the sheet of paper with no picture that says THIS IS NOT LIKE ME. (Assistant checks to see that all children have placed one card on one sheet of paper.)

Are there any questions? Now we are going to do the same thing for the rest of the game. Ready? Listen!!! (Assistant reads each sentence aloud and checks that each participant sorts each card after the sentence has been read.)

(After all 36 cards have been sorted the assistant continues.)

Now I am going to come to your desk and put a rubber band around the stack of cards THIS IS NOT LIKE ME. (Assistant puts rubber band around the stack of THIS IS NOT LIKE ME cards and, at the same time checks to see that each participant has at least six cards in his/her THIS IS LIKE ME pile. Assistant leaves THIS IS NOT LIKE ME pile on the desk with the child.)

Gee, that was fun. Now we are going to finish playing the game. The cards tied with the rubber band are no longer part of the game, so we do not touch them. Now pick up the remaining cards and put them into a neat pile. Now I want you to study the cards, read each sentence very carefully, and pick six (6) cards that are most like you. Put each card--remember only six (6) cards--on the sheet of paper marked THIS IS LIKE ME. Take your time. If you have trouble reading a sentence, raise your hand and I will read it to you. When you are finished and have six (6) cards that are most like you, raise your hand and I will collect the cards.

Forty-five completed exercises were collected. Data were tabulated to determine the classification of each student (i.e., learning disabled or non-learning disabled), their ages, exact sibling position occupied within the family constellation, and the self-concept as measured by this exercise. Data from the exercises were then compiled and t-tests were computed to determine the scores needed for the stated hypotheses.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, results of the investigation are presented. The purpose of this study was to determine if a difference exists in the self-concept of children who occupy the same sibling positions within different family constellations. The study also attempted to determine if learning disabled children who occupy the same sibling position as non-learning disabled children, within different family constellations, have similar self-concepts as influenced by the psychological position. T-tests were performed for each of the 36 variables in order to test the significance of the difference between the means.

Hypothesis 1 stated: "There is no difference in the self-concept of children who occupy the same sibling position within the family constellation." The sample population when broken down into five sibling positions was not large enough to allow for tests of significance to be performed. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained: children have similar self-concepts regardless of their sibling position.

Hypothesis 2 stated: "There is no difference in the self-concept of learning disabled and non-learning disabled children." For significance with 1 and 40 degrees of freedom, $t = 4.08$ at .05 alpha and, $t = 2.88$ at .10 alpha, the null hypothesis was retained. Therefore, learning disabled and non-learning disabled children choose similar self-concept descriptors (Table 2).

Table 2. T-scores summary for descriptor exercise

Descriptor	Proportion Chosen by Learning Disabled	Proportion Chosen by Non- Learning Disabled	Probability
Mature	.33	.07	4.02**
Pampered	.07	0	1.02
Effortless	0	0	0
Lonely	.10	.07	.13
Stubborn	.07	0	1.02
Shy	.37	.07	4.90*
Perfectionist	.43	.40	.04
Competent	.23	.27	.06
Overprotective	.17	.27	.61
Authoritative	0	.07	2.05
Superior	.03	0	.49
Responsible	.50	.40	.39
Insecure	.03	.07	.25
Discouraged	0	.07	2.05
Uncomfortable	0	0	0
Pushy	.07	0	1.02
Defeated	.07	.27	3.58**
Undependable	.07	.07	0
Adaptive	.30	.27	.05
Squeezed	.07	.07	0
Reasonable	.33	.60	2.98**
Helpful	.47	.60	.69
Perceptive	.20	.33	.94
Irritable	.17	.20	.07
Charming	.27	.47	1.80
Helpless	.17	.13	.08
Carefree	.20	.27	.25
Cute	.07	0	1.02
Playful	.10	0	1.60
Spoiled	.03	0	.49
Underachiever	.13	.13	0
Non-attentive	.10	.07	.13
Unorganized	.23	0	4.36*
Forgetful	.17	.40	3.01**
Frustrated	.20	.20	0
Impulsive	.27	.20	.23

*p <.10 critical value = 4.08

**p <.05 critical value = 2.88

However, Table 2 shows significance for six of the 36 variables. Even though significance is indicated, it should be noted that of the three variables significant at the .05 level, each variable was approximately 5% significant, or the same as chance. Variables significant at the .10 level were approximately 10% significant, or the same as chance. Therefore, there is a very strong possibility that these significances are Type II errors.

The variables, if the significance were a valid interpretation, would indicate the following:

1. A larger proportion of learning disabled students (.33) perceived themselves as being mature than did the proportion of non-learning disabled students (.07).
2. A larger proportion of learning disabled students (.37) perceived themselves as being shy than did the proportion of non-learning disabled students (.07).
3. A larger proportion of learning disabled students (.23) perceived themselves as being unorganized than did the proportion of non-learning disabled students (0).
4. A larger proportion of non-learning disabled students (.27) perceived themselves as being defeated than did the proportion of learning disabled students (.07).
5. A larger proportion of non-learning disabled students (.60) perceived themselves as being reasonable than did the proportion of learning disabled students (.33).

6. A larger proportion of non-learning disabled students (.40) perceived themselves as being forgetful than did the proportion of learning disabled students (.47).

Again, it is important to note that the significant differences reported above are probably due to a Type II error. No other significant differences were found upon analyzing the data. Supplementary data not directly related to the hypothesis indicate a higher proportion of learning disabled students to be oldest male children.

Summarizing Statement

The results of this study indicate: (1) that the hypothesis relating self-concept to sibling position was eliminated due to an insufficient sample size and was not large enough to allow for tests of significance to be performed; (2) that the null hypothesis relating and comparing self-concepts between learning disabled and non-learning disabled students was accepted. The results show that no significant differences in self-concept exist as measured by the Descriptor Exercise.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The self-concept of the learning disabled student is of increasing concern to educators. In spite of the existence of numerous test batteries used to measure self-concept, there is still no test that measures self-concept in relation to sibling position. Most studies in measuring self-concept are inconclusive. This study took another approach and focused on self-concept in relation to sibling position, as well as compared the self-concepts of learning disabled students with the self-concepts of non-learning disabled students.

Conclusions

The results of this study permit the following conclusions:

1. Learning disabled students were more likely to consider themselves mature than non-learning disabled students.
2. Learning disabled students were more likely to consider themselves shy than non-learning disabled students.
3. Learning disabled students were more likely to consider themselves unorganized than non-learning disabled students.
4. Learning disabled students were more likely to consider themselves less defeated than non-learning disabled students.
5. Learning disabled students were more likely to consider themselves less reasonable than non-learning disabled students.

6. Learning disabled students were more likely to consider themselves less forgetful than non-learning disabled students.

Limitations and Implications

Several limitations may be imposed due to the exploratory nature of this paper. Those of major consideration, along with implications for further research, are the following:

1. The sample size was not large enough to allow for tests of significance to be performed.
2. The design and implementation of the measuring instrument allowed subjects to choose words indicative of how they would like to be, and not how they actually perceive themselves.
3. The population was a result of educators volunteering their students, not a true random sample.
4. Because the population in each cell was so small, the process of effective random selection was limited.
5. The homogeneity of variances was unequal. The variance of the learning disabled category is considerably less in the total student population.

Recommendations

The following modifications are recommended for others who may want to extend the findings of the present study:

1. Implement a research design in which random sampling is present, allowing generalizations to be made to a larger segment of the population.

2. Obtain a sample population large enough to allow for tests of significance to be performed.
3. Design a reliable measuring procedure allowing the discovery of differences between and within groups. This may be improved by designing a framework where subjects are allowed to respond to all of the descriptors, with no limitations on the number of descriptors they are allowed to choose. The results would comprise a scale of learning disabled versus non-learning disabled students in relation to sibling position. The scale, when subjected to an item analysis, could provide correlates that should discriminate between and within groups. This would be appropriate for the comparisons of self-concepts and sibling positions.
4. The card sort/Descriptor Exercise was somewhat artificial in that children were brought into a contrived and unfamiliar situation. The Descriptor Exercise was also administered in a group setting, allowing for distractions. The instrument was administered by an aide or a teacher, which may have evoked idealized subject response. A more realistic approach may be to have a research assistant administer the exercise individually, which might yield different results than those found in this study.

It would appear that the information obtained in this study could be valuable in promoting further research in this area. Perhaps with further refinement and empirical research, educators might gain a better understanding of the self-concept of the learning disabled child.

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY EXPERTS

Dear

I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Counseling and Guidance. My master's thesis involves a comparison study between learning disabled and non-learning disabled students, ages 8-12 years of age. My hypothesis is: there is no difference in birth order/family constellation perception between learning disabled and non-learning disabled students. Subjects will participate in a card sorting exercise, each card containing one descriptive adjective.

I am writing to you because you are a recognized expert in the field of Individual Psychology. Would you assist me in identifying the most characteristic words for each birth order position? Enclosed is a list of words with instructions and a stamped self-addressed envelope. My deadline for completing this list is September 2, 1977. Thank you in advance for your assistance. If you would like a copy of the results, please indicate with a check mark. _____

APPENDIX B

BIRTH ORDER DESCRIPTORS

Please rank order the following words in reference to their importance (1 = most descriptive . . . 10 = least descriptive) for each of the five following birth order positions. Please add at the bottom of each category any additional words you feel are descriptive of that particular birth order position and rank them accordingly.

<u>ONLY</u>	<u>OLDEST</u>	<u>SECOND</u>	<u>MIDDLE</u>	<u>YOUNGEST</u>
___conceited	___authoritative	___defeated	___adaptive	___anxious
___dependent	___competent	___discouraged	___annoying	___boss
___effortless	___favored	___hyperactive	___deprived	___brave
___mature	___loving	___insecure	___gentle	___carefree
___spoiled/ pampered	___original	___lazy	___helpful	___charmful
___shy	___overprotective	___pushy	___irritable	___critical
___stubborn	___perfectionist	___uncomfortable	___neglected	___cute
___timid	___proud	___undependable	___perceptive	___friendly
___lonely	___quiet	___unloved	___reasonable	___helpless
___selfish	___responsible	___useless	___squeezed	___observant
	___superior		___uncertain	___playful
			___ungratified	___spoiled
			___uninterested	

APPENDIX C

SIBLING POSITION

Table C.1. Rank ordered by experts--only child

	Frequency	Total	Mean	Range	Median	*
Conceited	6	42	7.0	8	2.45	
Dependent	3	23	7.67	4	1.88	
Effortless	5	28	5.60	7	2.58	3
Mature	6	13	2.17	5	1.86	1
Pampered	6	22	3.67	5	1.70	2
Shy	6	42	7.0	6	1.91	6
Stubborn	6	39	6.50	4	1.61	5
Timid	5	45	9.0	4	1.55	
Lonely	7	43	6.14	6	1.88	4
Selfish	6	31	9.17	7	2.11	

*Rank order according to mean, and in case of tie, Mean and Median are used

Table C.2. Rank ordered by experts--oldest child

	Frequency	Total	Mean	Range	Median	*
Competent	6	22	3.67	7	1.97	2
Favored	5	42	8.4	7	1.62	
Loving	5	52	10.4	4	1.20	
Original	4	46	11.5	4	1.12	
Overprotective	6	30	5.0	5	1.29	3
Perfectionist	5	7.5	1.5	2	.45	1
Proud	6	44.5	7.42	3.5	1.02	
Quiet	6	46.5	7.75	6	1.63	
Responsible	7	14.5	7.25	3.5	.86	6
Authoritative	6	32	5.33	6	2.87	4
Superior	7	44	6.28	5	1.91	5

*Rank order according to Mean, and in case of tie, Mean and Median are used

Table C.3. Rank ordered by experts--second child

	Frequency	Total	Mean	Range	Median	*
Defeated	4	26.5	6.62	3.5	.96	5
Discouraged	5	21	4.20	9	3.12	2
Insecure	4	13	3.25	7	2.49	1
Pushy	5	23	4.5	7	2.33	4
Uncomfortable	3	13	4.33	2	.47	3
Undependable	3	21	7.0	3	.87	6
Unloved	3	24	8.0	4	1.41	
Useless	3	29	9.67	2	.47	

*Rank order according to Mean, and in case of tie, Mean and Median are used

Table C.4. Rank ordered by experts--middle child

	Frequency	Total	Mean	Range	Median	*
Adaptive	6	10	1.67	2	.47	1
Annoying	4	37	9.25	10	3.27	
Deprived	3	21	7.0	10	3.74	
Gentle	6	45	7.5	5	1.61	
Helpful	5	29	5.8	6	1.94	4
Irritable	5	34	6.8	9	2.79	6
Neglected	5	38.5	7.7	6	1.83	
Perceptive	5	29.5	5.9	12	3.69	5
Reasonable	5	27	5.4	5	1.62	3
Squeezed	7	17	2.43	5	1.50	2
Uncertain	6	42	7.0	9	3.11	
Ungratified	4	31	7.75	7	2.28	
Uninterested	3	34	11.33	4	1.25	

*Rank order according to Mean, and in case of tie, Mean and Median are used

Table C.5. Rank ordered by experts--youngest child

	Frequency	Total	Mean	Range	Median	*
Anxious	4	41	10.25	5	1.48	
Bossy	4	35	8.75	4	1.30	
Brave	3	31	10.33	3	.94	
Carefree	7	31	4.43	9	2.44	3
Charmful	7	21	3.0	8	2.27	1
Critical	5	48.5	9.7	7.5	2.40	
Cute	7	34	4.86	12	3.52	4
Friendly	6	35	6.0	7	2.24	
Helpless	7	28	4.0	9	2.67	2
Observant	4	35	8.75	3	.83	
Playful	7	37	5.28	9	2.66	5
Spoiled	7	41.5	5.93	9	2.40	6

*Rank order according to Mean, and in case of tie, Mean and Median are used

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO LEARNING DISABILITY EXPERTS

Dear

I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Counseling and Guidance. My master's thesis involves a comparison study between learning disabled and non-learning disabled students, ages 8-12 years of age. My hypothesis is: there is no difference in birth order/family constellation perception between learning disabled and non-learning disabled students. Subjects will participate in a card sorting exercise, each card containing one descriptive adjective.

I am writing to you because you are a recognized expert in the field of Learning Disabilities. Would you assist me in identifying the most characteristic words for learning disabled students? Enclosed is a list of words with instructions and a stamped self-addressed envelope. My deadline for completing this list is September 2, 1977. Thank you in advance for your assistance. If you would like a copy of the results, please indicate with a check mark. _____

APPENDIX E

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEARNING DISABLED

Please rank order the following words in reference to their importance (1 = most descriptive . . . 9 = least descriptive). Please add at the bottom of the list any additional words you feel are descriptive of the learning disabled and rank them accordingly.

_____ forgetful

_____ frustrated

_____ impulsive

_____ messy

_____ non-attentive

_____ underachiever

_____ uncoordinated

_____ undisciplined

_____ unorganized

APPENDIX F

LEARNING DISABILITY CATEGORY

Table F.1. Rank ordered by experts--learning disabled

	Frequency	Total	Mean	Range	Median	*
Forgetful	6	24.5	4.08	5	1.43	4
Frustrated	6	29.5	4.92	5	1.48	5
Impulsive	6	29.5	4.92	8	2.59	6
Messy	6	42	7.0	6	1.63	
Non-attentive	6	17.5	2.92	5	1.17	2
Underachiever	6	11.5	1.92	3	.93	1
Uncoordinated	6	42.5	7.08	4.5	1.24	
Undisciplined	6	51.5	8.58	5	.73	
Unorganized	6	21.5	3.58	5	1.79	3

*Rank order according to Mean, and in case of tie, Mean and Median are used

APPENDIX G

DEFINITIONS OF DESCRIPTORS (ADULT)

MATURE--I am adult-like, adult oriented, and have good relations with adults.

PAMPERED--I am/was treated with excessive care by my parents.

EFFORTLESS--I do not attempt to achieve.

LONELY--I have feelings of isolation.

STUBBORN--I am difficult to handle because I am strong-willed and powerful.

SHY--I force people to move toward me rather than me moving toward others.

PERFECTIONIST--I strive to be the "best."

COMPETENT--I have sufficient ability.

OVERPROTECTIVE--I protect others unnecessarily.

AUTHORITATIVE--I am bossy.

SUPERIOR--I view myself as being above and better than others.

RESPONSIBLE--I act appropriately and capable in most situations.

INSECURE--I am fearful of my place or identity.

DISCOURAGED--I am lacking in courage about myself.

UNCOMFORTABLE--I am not at ease within my family.

PUSHY--I am over-assertive and aggressive.

DEFEATED--I am a loser in competitive relationships.

UNDEPENDABLE--My responses to others are usually unpredictable.

ADAPTIVE--I am flexible and can find my place in a situation.

SQUEEZED--I perceive unfairness in my family and/or social position.

REASONABLE--I am a fair and understanding person.

HELPFUL--I assist others.

PERCEPTIVE--I interpret interpersonal (family) situations readily.

IRRITABLE--I am easily annoyed.

CHARMING--I gain the favors of others through an attractive personality.

HELPLESS--I use my inabilities to gain the service of others.

CAREFREE--I show little concern or worry.

CUTE--I win the recognition of others primarily to manipulate.

PLAYFUL--I am not serious.

SPOILED--I am usually making unnecessary demands. Tyrant.

UNDERACHIEVER--I do not do as well as I could.

NON-ATTENTIVE--I usually do not pay attention.

UNORGANIZED--I am messy and usually do not have my things in the right place.

FORGETFUL--I find it hard to remember important things.

FRUSTRATED--I get angry when I can't do something.

IMPULSIVE--I take action quickly, sometimes without thought.

APPENDIX H

DESCRIPTOR EXERCISE

DIRECTIONS: Below are statements that people might make about themselves. After each statement circle the number that best indicates THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOU PERCEIVE YOURSELF MOST OF THE TIME. This is not a test. There are no wrong or right answers. An answer is right if it is true of you.

- 1 = NOT AT ALL LIKE ME
- 2 = SOMEWHAT LIKE ME
- 3 = AVERAGE
- 4 = QUITE A BIT LIKE ME
- 5 = VERY MUCH LIKE ME

-
- 1 2 3 4 5 I have feelings of isolation.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 I am easily annoyed.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 I show little concern or worry.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 I win the recognition of others primarily to manipulate.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 I am a fair and understanding person.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 I am fearful of my place or identity.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 My responses to others are usually unpredictable.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 I am lacking in courage about myself.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 I interpret interpersonal situations readily.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 I am a loser in competitive relationships.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 I have sufficient ability.

- 1 2 3 4 5 I am/was treated with excessive care by my parents.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am bossy.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I protect others unnecessarily.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I gain the favors of others through an attractive personality.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am usually making unnecessary demands.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I strive to be the "best."
- 1 2 3 4 5 I usually do not pay attention.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I assist others.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I get angry when I can't do something.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I force people to move toward me rather than me moving toward others.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I perceive unfairness in my family and/or social position.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am flexible and can find my place in a situation.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I view myself as being above and better than others.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am not at ease or comfortable in my place within my family.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am difficult to handle because I am strong-willed and powerful.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am over-assertive and aggressive.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I find it hard to remember important things.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am not a serious person.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I act appropriately and capable in most situations.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I use my inabilities to gain the service of others.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am messy and usually don't have my things in the right place.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I do not attempt to achieve.

1 2 3 4 5 I am adult-like, adult oriented, and have good relationships with adults.

1 2 3 4 5 I do not do as well as I could.

1 2 3 4 5 I take action quickly, sometimes without thought.

Review your answers to the 36 statements and then choose the five statements that, in your opinion, describe you best (i.e., very much like me). If there are more than or less than five statements that describe you best, review the statements until you decide upon five. List the five statements below.

- 1. _____
- _____
- 2. _____
- _____
- 3. _____
- _____
- 4. _____
- _____
- 5. _____
- _____

Do not write below this line

P in F: _____

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____ 5. _____

APPENDIX I

DEFINITIONS OF DESCRIPTORS (CHILDRENIZED)

MATURE--I act my age, and have good relationships with others my own age or older.

PAMPERED--I am treated with too much care by my parents.

EFFORTLESS--I do not try to do my best.

LONELY--I have feelings of being all alone in the world.

STUBBORN--I like to have my own way no matter what.

SHY--I wait for other people to talk to me before I talk to them.

PERFECTIONIST--I try to be the "best."

COMPETENT--I have the ability to do whatever is asked of me.

OVERPROTECTIVE--I like to take care of others more than they like.

AUTHORITATIVE--I am bossy.

SUPERIOR--I think that I am better than others.

RESPONSIBLE--I do what I am supposed to do in most situations.

INSECURE--I am afraid that I am not good enough.

DISCOURAGED--I do not have enough belief in myself.

UNCOMFORTABLE--I do not feel at ease within my family.

PUSHY--I expect others to do what I want them to do.

DEFEATED--I am a loser when I must compete with others.

UNDEPENDABLE--I usually do not do what others want me to do.

ADAPTIVE--I get along with others and can usually fit into any situation.

SQUEEZED--I am not treated fairly by my family or by others.

REASONABLE--I am a fair and understanding person.

HELPFUL--I help others as much as I can.

PERCEPTIVE--I can easily tell what's going on between my family and me and between my friends and me.

IRRITABLE--I get crabby often.

CHARMING--I try to please others through an attractive personality.

HELPLESS--I use my problems to get others to help me.

CAREFREE--I do not worry very much.

CUTE--I like others to notice me, so I can get them to do things for me or to give me things.

PLAYFUL--I do not like to be serious.

SPOILED--I like to have my own way and have people give me things and do things for me.

UNDERACHIEVER--I do not do as well in my studies as I could.

NON-ATTENTIVE--I usually do not pay attention.

UNORGANIZED--I am messy and don't have my things in the right place.

FORGETFUL--I find it hard to remember important things.

FRUSTRATED--I always get angry when I can't do something.

IMPULSIVE--I act too quickly sometimes without thinking.

APPENDIX J

FAMILY CONSTELLATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. FAMILY NAME _____
2. NAME, BIRTHDATE, SEX, AND AGE OF EACH CHILD IN DESCENDING ORDER, BEGINNING WITH THE ELDEST CHILD. List all children who now live, or have ever lived, in your home, including the student participating in this study. Use back of sheet if additional space is required.

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE OF BIRTH</u>	<u>SEX</u>	<u>AGE</u>
a)	_____	_____	M _____ F	_____
b)	_____	_____	_____	_____
c)	_____	_____	_____	_____
d)	_____	_____	_____	_____
e)	_____	_____	_____	_____
f)	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. ADOPTED CHILDREN: Please identify any adopted children with a star next to their name. Give approximate date of adoption:

4. Have any of your children had a serious illness, emotional or mental handicap? YES _____ NO _____. Please give child's name and nature of serious illness or handicap:

5. If any of your children are deceased, please give child's name and year of death.

6. List all family members not living at home and the approximate date member left home:

7. Name of student who is participating in this study:

LAST

FIRST

School _____ Teacher's Name _____

APPENDIX K

LETTER TO EDUCATORS

Dear Educator:

As you are already aware I am conducting a research project concerning the self-perception of children. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

Enclosed please find two packets of forms: (a) Parent Permission Form, and (b) Family Constellation Questionnaire. Both forms are self-explanatory. Please distribute one of each form (a and b) to each of your students (*see eligibility criteria below).

Please request that each student:

- (a) Take both forms home.
- (b) Have parent complete both forms.
- (c) Return both forms to you.

The deadline for students returning both forms to you is April 7, 1978.

Please keep the completed forms in your file as you will be contacted no later than April 10, 1978. There will be no further work required of the teacher. Results of this study will be shared with any interested teacher.

*Eligibility Criteria:

1. Any child whose birthdate falls between April 1, 1965 to April 1, 1969 (8-12 years old).
2. Students must obtain permission from their parents, as well as returning Family Constellation Questionnaire (forms enclosed).

In summary, those children between the ages of 8-12 years old inclusive, whose parents completed both forms mentioned above, are eligible to participate.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and assistance in this research study.

APPENDIX L

LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents:

This letter is an invitation for your child to participate in a research project concerning the self-perception of children. This project will require approximately one hour of your child's class time. Counseling techniques relating to research findings will be shared with the classroom teacher and any interested parent. All research information concerning your child will remain confidential.

If you wish your child to participate, please sign the attached permission slip, complete the Family Constellation Questionnaire and return both forms in the enclosed envelope to your child's teacher.

Thank you.

Permission is granted for _____ to
participate in the Self-Perception of Children Research Project.

(School)

(Parent)

(Date)

(Phone)

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