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PROMOTION OF SELF-ESTEEM THROUGH CHARACTER EDUCATION

by
Rebecca Ann Muller

An Action Research Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
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Approved by _____
Dr. Beth A. Wassell

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June 19, 2008

ABSTRACT

Rebecca Ann Muller
PROMOTION OF SELF-ESTEEM THROUGH CHARACTER EDUCATION
2007/08
Dr. Beth A. Wassell
Master of Science in Teaching

This Action research project is on the topic of self-esteem in the classroom done

through character education activities and high levels of positive interaction with student

and teacher. The study incorporated field notes, observations, and interviews with

students through surveying which were done in a third grade classroom in New Jersey. It

portrays the idea that self-esteem is vital and invaluable to students in elementary

education, which can be achieved simply through interaction between teacher and student

on a regular basis. It also brings fort the idea that in order for students to be successful,

they must first understand the importance of their hard work, and the feeling that success

brings. It shows that to understand self worth and to value one's achievements is an

essential piece of self-esteem that many students lack. In other words, this study shows

that in order to find happiness in success, you must be presented with the challenge and

recognize the idea of the achievement in that goal. This action research project shows

that it is essential to incorporate self-esteem into education. As well as the idea of self-

esteem, self-awareness and positive self-image is important. For this to be done, students

must be presented with the idea that they are worthy of the success, which can be attained

in their educational journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

Story Behind The Research

Self-esteem is vital and invaluable to students in the field of education. In order for students to be successful, they must first understand the importance of their hard work, and the feeling that success brings. No matter how difficult a task is, the ability to understand self worth and to value one's achievements is an essential piece that many students lack. In other words, in order to truly find happiness in success, you must be presented with the challenge and recognize the idea of the achievement in that goal. In my opinion, it is essential to incorporate self-esteem into education. The idea of self-esteem, self-awareness and positive self-image is important. For this to be done, students must be presented with the idea that they are worthy of the success that can be attained in their educational journey.

In a personal way, I believe that the idea of teaching the importance of high self-esteem is at times overlooked as "fluff" because it is not a said part of the curriculum that must be taught. However I believe that the student who is unable to voice his or her opinion, connect with their school and interact with others is truly loosing out on knowledge that is being imparted. I feel that it is this student, who may need a personal connection, and the character education activities. These activities will help the student to understand their own personal worth, and then to take on the challenges of the classroom and school in general. I know that while there may be some who will not achieve success in every way, it is more likely for students to find success if they are aware of the possibility that they can do well, and believe that they too are a "good student." I also

know that while there are a thousand ways for teachers to be pulled during any given school day, that it is the little things that make teaching a rewarding career.

I believe self-esteem and self-awareness are crucial to all classroom levels and imperative for students and teachers alike. In my research I worked on a personal level with students to learn about their personalities in order to incorporate these identity traits into everyday classroom activities. In addition I hoped to have created a meaningful purpose for the students to connect with classroom actions and also with their teacher. I feel that this is a topic that should be dealt with in all classroom experiences to enable students and teachers to work cooperatively and also to understand truly what can be achieved when the pair works as one in the process of education.

Problem

As a new teacher and an action researcher, I believe that there is a lack of integration of character education to encourage high self-esteem in students at an elementary age. I feel that if there is a moment taken each day, even just one, to work with the student who needs self-esteem boosting, the rewards will be countless. For this reason alone, I believe that the decision to question the possible effects of this process was necessary, and that if I change one teacher's instruction process in his or her classroom activities after reading this, I will have been successful.

There has been much research done on the connections between students' self-esteem and their educational experience. Within the research done by Silvy (2008) on self-esteem in education, the most commonly used definition is how one feels about oneself. It is also stated by Silvy, that individuals consciously and unconsciously send thoughts and opinions about themselves to themselves. These thoughts can be accurate

and helpful or they can be false and damaging. High or positive self-esteem is a feeling of total acceptance and love for oneself as one is. It is respecting and valuing oneself as a worthwhile human being. It is honestly seeing your good and not-so-good points and taking care of and nurturing oneself so one can become all one is capable of being. Positive self-esteem is also enjoying and accepting who one is. This study has added the very important factor of age into the relationship. The research was conducted to determine the connection between age, self-esteem, and education. The hypothesis was that as a person's education level rises, their self-esteem also rises (Silvy, 2008).

The research that I have done is based on the ideas that self-esteem when promoted through specific character education activities will allow students to have more self awareness, especially at the elementary level. Also, it is important for students to recognize the need be part of a caring and open community of learners. It is essential in research of this topic to understand that self-esteem judgments are based on values or value indicators such as attitudes, beliefs, or interests. To enhance self-esteem an individual must develop a sense of their own personal worth and think of themselves in positive terms. One must also reflect on his or her self-esteem and the values on which it has been based (Silvy, 2008).

Question and Sub Questions

The following question guided my research on students and self-esteem in my 3rd grade classroom. What happens when I promote self-esteem in my students through specific character development and education activities?

The following sub-questions allowed me to provide further detail into my critical question. Does this promotion of self-esteem character education activities promote self-

esteem in my students? How do these activities impact student perceptions of their specific interpersonal abilities, both before and after activities?

Integrated Actions

The integrated action and activities that I choose to use for this Action Research Project is relative to important material that was useful to the topic of self-esteem in students, and the reactions of students in the classroom in reference to character education. I used a variety of interviewing methods, which ranged from personal reflections of students to questionnaires used to build student relationships. With a focus group of students, I took time both before and after activities to initiate conversations with them based on their feelings about self-esteem and awareness. I coded those responses based on positive, negative or indifferent reactions. For instance, while talking with a particular student I would take note, both during and after the interview, on any ideas that revealed a sense of their personal feelings. I used simple notations of smiley faces, sad faces, or no response faces to reflect each student's response.

In addition, the activities I did were a range of self-esteem boosting character education strategies both in formal lessons, as well as informal. A formal lesson included the standards and objective criteria, in regards to the goal that was projected for the students. In addition, the format of character education and promotion of self-esteem was included and carried throughout the lessons. I also integrated reading and writing lessons into character education and substantial lessons, such as the "I Am" Poem Activity (Appendix E) on promoting self-awareness in students. In this lesson (see Appendix E) the students took part in an ongoing writing activity, which allowed them to use their poetic skills and develop a poem about themselves. Through modeling and incorporated

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worksheets, the students created their own poems, which helped them, express their many characteristics, likes and dislikes. During this process, the students were able to become more self-aware, and learn about their classmates as well.

In addition to the activities that I created during my time at my placement for research, the class took part in Life Skills Training once a week. This program was from an outside of school organization and enlisted many of the skills that focused on self-esteem in students. The students were given resources and texts from the program and actively participated in the "Promotion of Health & Personal Development Program." Although I was not the head of this program I often reflected on the work my students did during this time, as well as incorporated discussions about these topics with my focus group of students. During this time I took formal field notes and engaged in informal discussions with my focus group. I asked questions during the lesson while the actions were taking place that engaged my students and informally analyzed their responses in my reflection notes.

<div align="center">Context</div>

School

My placement was in New Jersey at a school in a third grade classroom. The district currently serves more than 514 children in their schools. School management teams made up of grade-level and discipline-specific team leaders serve as a communication network to the administrative team to ensure that objectives are met, and to address issues that hinder the success of our children. The district has been awarded grants from the New Jersey Department of Education, including Reading First a $297,461 award, which supports early literacy efforts in grades K to three, and the $135,000 Early

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Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI) that funded the preschool program. The federal government also recognized the commitment of the district to pursue a thorough and complete education for our children with its $656,472 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant. This program provided for cultural and educational opportunities including trips and activities as well as before and after-school programs that our students would otherwise not be able to experience. The district will be building a new middle school facility and enlarging the elementary school, beginning this summer. The district builds relationships with parent groups, community organizations, and social agencies including the City Parent Teacher Organization, the City Education Foundation, Inc., the City Municipal Alliance, Atlanti Care, Atlantic County Family Services, DYFS, the Crusaders athletic organization, City and County law enforcement agencies and faith-based organizations. (http://education.state.nj.us/rc/)

The school district in which I completed my student teaching has students ranging in grades pre-kindergarten through fourth grades, including preschool disabled students. There are 15 regular education classes, two full-day special education classes, three learning resource center programs, and one full-day pre-school disabled class. Enrollment averages 290 students, but changes frequently due to high mobility rate of parents and caregivers in the district. In my particular class there are 24 third grade students. The school day hours are from 8:25AM to 3:10 PM.

The school is working within the district wide Reading First grant and has purchased many educational materials based on this. They take part in Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), which works with students one on one to assess fluency in reading. K-4 students take part in the researched-based Everyday

Math curriculum. The school's curriculum also includes art and music, physical education, science and social studies. These programs and state grants have really influenced the way the school is run. The activities and lessons that are being taught are all within the state mandates and have specific standards in place. They are moving in a positive way toward the future and they have been successful with these programs in place.

The school is open to students' parents and family members and conducts special school day and evening programs throughout the year including a Holiday Concert, "Muffins for Mom," "Donuts for Dad," readers' theatre performances at the local Borders Books and Music, and other initiatives. In addition, the school is host to a number of free, community workshops that offer parenting tips on a range of subjects. Childcare is provided free of charge and 67% of the students are eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. In terms of AYP, Annual Yearly Progress, the report card was not up to date; however as of 2006 the school had passed. (http://education.state.nj.us/rc/)

Classroom

My classroom was a very open and honest community of learners. We came from many diverse and interesting backgrounds and cultures. Each of my students was unique and I learned more about them each day. I have assembled (see Appendix F), the students' backgrounds, home lives and interests on a preliminary level. I engaged in many conversations with my students about their academic interests, as well as their extra-curricular activities, which they hold in high standing. I also gave my students an "about me" questionnaire, which gave me a glimpse into their world.

Participants

The participants of this study were a focus group of four students. They were

third grade students ranging in age from eight to nine years. The focus group consisted of

three males and one female. Two of the males are white, one is black, and the female is

white. I chose these particular students based on three things. In order to better

understand their participation in this study, see the student information table (See

Appendix F).

When deciding which students I was going to use as part of my focus group I

went through the following process. First I reviewed previous academic work and

achievement, which ranged from high, medium and low level students. Cole is a high

level academic student and Tom, Mike and Carly are all medium level academic students.

Second, I reviewed their attendance records and chose a range of absentee patterns. I

chose a range of students in the group who were frequently absent, to those who were

almost always present. Finally, I paid close attention to their participation in classroom

activities and interaction with others in and out of the classroom. Cole, while high

academic level and very capable of answering questions in classroom activities, rarely

participated willingly. In addition, Tom and Carly were very vocal, and did not always

have the correct answers, which gave them less confidence. In addition, low participation

and interaction levels ranged based on that academic level. While this was true, during

non-structured activities such as recess Carly was usually interacting with friends and

spent that time doing activities with others. In addition, Tom was often inactive because

he was not as friendly with his peers. Finally, Mike was often disengaged in lessons and

did not vocalize his ideas, which led to mostly self-interaction activities such as drawing

in the classroom and spending time on his own at recess. Each of these students had

something interesting happening while I observed them, which led me to believe that they would benefit from self-esteem boosting activities.

<div align="center">Review of Relevant Literature</div>

Connection Between Self-Esteem And The School

In order to create a place where self-esteem is in full bloom, it is necessary to take the time to manage, and not the investment of monetary funding. Manning (2007) found that there is more of a need to develop a supportive community and school environment that is devoted to helping students develop strengths. She found that there is less need for expensive programs to enhance student self-esteem and more for development within the classroom. Manning (2007) notes that teachers, administrators and parents commonly voice their concerns about student's self-esteem as well as collectively feel that there is a great need for action to be taken, but they are unsure what action that is. It seems that they tend to believe low self-esteem to be the root of all evil, and the reverse to be the cause of all good (Manning, 2007).

This can be rebuked with the idea that while promotion of high self-esteem is essential because of its relation to academic success, it is not always necessary to spend countless effort, hours and money. In promotion of my ideal that the teacher is the center of the enforcement of positive self-esteem in education, Manning suggested that it is more important to understand why such projects have previously failed, and the best way that schools can truly correct the problem. In her article she stressed that interventions both classroom and school wide are most important, and a positive environment is crucial for success. She notes that teachers, school psychologists, principals and counselors as the key players in the effective input of self-esteem in schools (Manning, 2007).

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In addition to the action taken by the students, it is important to note that the role of teacher is a critical piece in the puzzle of self-esteem in the classroom. Helm (2007), in her research on teacher dispositions, mentions that it is necessary to notice the differences in students and also to integrate positive reinforcement to all students. She notes that there are students who will come into school on the first day of classes and be labeled by their previous educational experiences, but also by what they bring, how they dress and their overall actions. She refers to those students as the haves and have-nots. In her discussion on the two variations of students, she discusses the role of teacher in the classroom, and some things that can be done in order to create a positive atmosphere for all students. She also mentions the role of the school system. In this she states that, "dedicated teachers, who possess the right dispositions, can be the keys to reach students who do not come from wealth or privilege (Helm, 2007).

Harme and Pianta (2001) found similar material in their research, which followed 179 students in a small district entering kindergarten in the same year and followed them through their education to eighth grade. In that study of student behaviors and interactions in an educational setting, they accounted for gender, ethnicity, cognitive ability, and behavior ratings of the students. Throughout this, the students' relationship with their teacher still predicted aspects of school success for them. This lends further to the fact that even in a wide spread of ages of students, the relationship of teacher to student is crucial in success (Harme & Pianta, 2001).

In relation to this idea of connecting to the student-teacher relationship, it may be essential to understand some of the physical and emotional development in the age group of students being taught. At a young age, students are able to identify their feelings, and thus so must the teacher understand their emotions as well. In a study done by Keverne (2004) on the

well being of brain evolution in students, the suggestion was made that being aware of sensitive times in students' brain development is important for teachers. It was mentioned that this brain development can affect emotional development and that knowing this may help guide teachers to set high self-esteem levels in children at a young age in their classroom environment.

In addition, Darling-Hammond (2000) remarked that the quality of teachers, as measured by whether the teachers were fully certified and had a major in their field of teaching, was related to the performance of their students. In addition, the measure of teacher preparation and certification were the strongest indicators of student achievement in such subjects as reading and math. This idea of proper training and certification, together with the identification of proper teacher dispositions and actions having a significant impact on student learning, directly relates to the ideas of Manning (2007). In that research it is said that it is not necessary to spend countless hours and dollars on promotion of self-esteem in schools, but more the day-to-day action of teaching that benefits students most.

As Woolfolk (2004) reported, there is a small list of indicators for teachers to have in order to relate to students in a successful manner. They are as follows: love children. Respect all children and parents in all circumstance. See potential in all children. Motivate children to reach their highest potential. Be a spontaneous and creative educator who is able to see teachable moments and seizes them. Have a sense of humor. In this short list of ideas for excellent teaching, there are ideas that require little more than time. This time can be spent each school day, and when taken into account, the lives of students can be changed in a positive manner (Woolfolk, 2004).

El-Anzi (2005) found that self-esteem relates to academic achievement and physical, emotional and social areas. It was stated that there is a significant positive correlation between

academic achievement and both optimism and self-esteem, whereas the correlations were

negative between academic achievement and both anxiety and pessimism (El-Anzi, 2005).

Social-Emotional And Character Development (SECD)

The effects of high self confidence, self worth and positive self attitude exercises on

students is supported by Elias (2008). Elias states that the fact is that there are many ways in

which we can affect the tone of our students and in our classrooms. In addition, students will feel

more connected and purposeful if we engage in continuous efforts to build their social-emotional

skills and develop their positive character. It also mentions the ideas of Developing Safe and

Civil Schools (DSACS) as a coordinating effort for Social-Emotional and Character

Development (SECD) programs used to benefit students and close the learning gap through

creating tight knit communities within our classrooms, where true learning can take place (Elias,

2008).

According to Elias (2008), in working to create a healthy, safe and civil environment

within the classroom, students benefit from an ethical experience and learning will flourish

accordingly. Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD) is an approach that embraces

the process of acquiring and applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to recognize

and manage emotions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations in a

capable and effective manner. There are specific participatory competencies that are involved in

this process. The competencies are part of the common set of abilities needed for effective social

participation in a range of settings and contexts. They can be used in all aspect of life, and should

be incorporated into daily classroom routines. The participatory competencies include the

following: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible

decision-making (Elias, 2008).

In the process of SECD, teachers play a vital role in blending the social-emotional learning process and character education. The idea is that SECD is created from input of educators in the school setting and has been implemented within the last ten years. It is based on the idea that in a similar way, students learn and can learn and practice SECD skills. This can be done by implementing those skills often and engaging in both positive learning experiences and social activities. The educator is to create complex situations for students to deal with and to develop the necessary skills involved in SECD. In order for students to master the skills for academic, social relationships and overall good health, SECD appropriate situations must occur. In this process there is development that takes place in students, which requires coordination and sensibility about the issues at hand. The focus and approach of Developing Safe and Civil Schools program (DSACS) is to work with schools to identify the needs of SECD efforts and bring them together in coordination within grade levels and across content areas, and to then sustain their presence over time thought all schools in New Jersey. There are many schools existing now with these programs in place, and many positive reflections and pieces of research coming from their work. The kinds of relationships that are promoted in the school and classroom directly connect to students' ability to learn and to internalize what they learn to put it to use in the outside world. In taking these small steps with the programs teachers can create climates where learning will become more engaging, collaborative and effective (Elias, 2008).

Life Skills Training Programs

In addition to areas of character education from various resources, there is also much research that implies the need for life skills training. Life Skills Training is a positive experience for students to identify their best qualities and understand that benefit of positive self feelings. While working with the activities on the promotion of positive health and personal development,

self-esteem boosters are implemented into everyday activities. This will encourage students in feeling good about them, incorporate education about easy ways to make good decisions, reasons why people turn to drug use to compensate for low self-confidence, understand ways to deal with stress, and communication about feelings. All of these and additional areas are done in a fun and interactive way for students to understand the importance of self-esteem. This program is a support to the idea that implementation of life skills training and positive influence, is a beneficial experience, which includes self-esteem (Life Skills Training, 1999).

Life Skills Training can all be related to the character education strategies used to enhance self-esteem, as taught through goodcharacter.com. According to this website, in order to enhance self-esteem you can follow these specific steps to make yourself feel good about which you are, positively influence the way that you treat others and also encourage the types of decisions you make in a positive manner. That list includes other character education such as setting and achieving goals as well as focusing on success. Goodcharacter.com states this list as a way to enhance self esteem:

- Spend time with people who like you and care about you.

- Ignore (and stay away from) people who put you down or treat you badly.

- Do things that you enjoy or that make you feel good.

- Do things you are good at.

- Reward yourself for your successes.

- Develop your talents.

- Be your own best friend - treat yourself well and do things that are good for you.

- Make good choices for yourself, and don't let others make your choices for you.

- Take responsibility for yourself, your choices, and your actions.

- Always do what you believe is right.

- Be true to yourself and your values.

- Respect other people and treat them right.

- Set goals and work to achieve them. (goodcharacter.com, n.d.)

Conclusions Of Literature Review

Based on the research I reviewed on self-esteem within education, there are many connections to the ideas of promotion of self-esteem based activities in the classroom. Correlations can be made between research done in character education on a professional level to the hands-on work being done in Life Skills Training on the topic of positive self-awareness and positive self reflection. There are also many similarities in the Life Skills Training program and the focus and approach of Developing Safe and Civil Schools program (DSACS) and Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD). It is essential to understand that there are many factors involved in high self-esteem. These include, but are not limited to, self-perceptions of the students, self-concept, physical appearance, and finally effective prevention of low self-esteem (Manning, 2007). Within the topic of education and self-esteem, it is essential to incorporate self-perception, self-concept, and physical appearance of students in order to have a comprehensive view of their impact. In addition, with the idea of self-esteem come meaningful relationships, especially of student and teacher in an educational setting. It is essential to note the importance of this relationship in classroom interaction and student success.

Research Methods

Overview Of Action Research

Action Research has been defined in many ways through the eyes and perceptions of countless researchers. In many of these definitions there are common themes and ideas about the process.

Action research for pre-service teachers is a process of learning with community to think and act critically, to recognize and negotiate political systems, and to focus passion growing in one's identity as a teacher. Such a process evolves out of desire to become a caring, intelligent, transformative educator and includes honing the art and science of planning, assessment, and a critical reflective practice that includes the interrogation of one's own paradigm while in active exploration of ways of thinking and acting beyond those said boundaries (Phillips & Carr, 2006 p.14).

As a result of this process, I, as a "student teacher action researcher" began my journey in a classroom of students. Over the course of the semester, I would come closer to becoming a full service teacher through the work that I accomplished in my time there. I was able to connect to my students immediately and while I was not in complete control of the classroom until the second or third week into the student teaching program, the relationship of teacher to student began from the first day.

Within the fifteen-week period that I was to be at my student teaching placement, I was to take part in research on the topic of self-esteem in education, character education, and overall interaction of students of elementary age in that subject. I choose this specific subject because I took part in this type of activities in various groups as a child, and I believe that they have benefited me. I began looking through articles which related to my topic, in order to begin my understanding of what action research truly is,

and how I was going to become an accomplished "student teacher action researcher." I read the work of other action researchers and began to formulate my own ideas and plans for my action research project. One idea that I related very well to was another of Phillips and Carr's,

> Action research is like budget travel. We know the destination conceptually and we anticipate arrival. We lay out everything we are going to take with us; then, we leave much behind and take only the essentials. We include our camera and journal: photos will give context and our written words will document the events, people, and places we visit and our reactions to them. Action research requires we meet along the way. We plan to pick up such souvenirs as language and experience along the way. We expect to come home changed because of our travels; in the end, we may find the destination is not what we thought and that arrival is an illusive concept (2006, p.15).

In this metaphor I was able to take comfort in many things. First, it is as though you are trying to collect so much data in such a short time, with the possibility of not actually using all of it in the analysis stages of action research. In addition, I understood that there were things that were truly important, such as my journal and other artifacts, which may be placed aside and unused. I also felt at ease with the fact that although it may feel that the chosen topic, which will be planned out, researched, analyzed and then taken into the data stage to make solid conclusions from, that this may not always be the case. In fact, there may not be an end to the journey, and conclusions may be a passing thought when looking to find concrete things in action research. Simply stated, it just cannot always be done. This thought, although at times troubling, is also a comforting

idea because it leaves room for human error, which I will discuss later on. The metaphor revealed to me that action research allows the researcher to be a real person. It allows one to be a typical teacher and to take part in the things that everyday teachers do on a daily basis. It also showed me that I can work through issues as they arise, and constantly work on the next steps of the project. It is also acceptable to reflect and work at my own pace as I want to.

Data Sources

The data that I complied during my Action research was mostly qualitative, meaning that I reflected on the differences and changes over time. I took detailed field notes and created reports for myself as I observed the student behaviors and interactions. I also took notes during the times of interviewing my focus group of students. In those notes I reflected on what was said, the length of the session, what was going on during the conversation, and how the student responded.

Before beginning any research or analysis in the classroom, I first developed and generated both assent and consent forms to be completed by parents and students (See Appendix C). In those forms I described what it was that I would be working with the students on, as well as other information that is important for everyone involved to know and understand. After gaining that permission from parents and students, I began with the collection of data in the classroom. I then chose a small focus group of four students that I would work one-on-one with, and create the bulk of my data from.

In this action research project I used mainly qualitative data through observations, both formal and informal interviews, and analysis of various artifacts. As an opener activity I used a simply stated survey. In this "All About You" survey (Appendix A) that

I created, the students were told that they could answer the questions however they like, and that there was no wrong answer. This was a voluntary process, and the students were not forced to answer the survey, however that did not prove to be an issue and they took part in each of the activities. I told them those things each time we had an interview. After the students completed the "All About You" survey, I discussed those questions and answers with my focus group of four students in an interview style conversation. (See Appendix A)

Another character education activity that the students engaged in was a "Goal Setting Activity" as shown in Appendix D. In this type of activity the students were able to express themselves in a positive way while reflecting on something that they wanted to achieve and planned to work on. This coincided with a lesson I taught about the importance of setting and achieving goals. In this particular activity the students worked to create a goal for that particular week, though we discussed the importance of lifelong goals or long term ideas that could be set as a way to work hard and feel the pride from achievement and success in many aspects of their lives.

Another source of data used was observation and their reports. While observing the focus group of students I took detailed field notes in the same notebook each time. I clearly noted the time of day, date, and what happened in reference to each of my focus students. I often observed during reading lessons, where there was a good amount of interaction between students as well as with the teacher. I observed as much as possible, and wrote down as many things as I could gather. Field notes and observations are a way of keeping track of the things that happen, that may be easily forgotten without a detailed system of notes. In addition I took these notes mostly in the classroom, however I also

reflected on times when I found a good amount of interaction of my focus students. For example, I would often observe at recess or at times when there was not direct instruction going on, to see what happened at those times when students were interactive.

In addition, we worked on a long-term writing project where the students created an "I AM" poem (Appendix E) to show their strengths, positive characteristics' and express themselves freely. In this there were many writing lessons that worked into the "I AM" poem activity, in which I modeled creating my own "I AM" poem, and showed the students that everyone has things to be proud of as well as things that others may not know about them. I explained through discussion and whole-group interaction that through writing you can be honest, silly, and spiritual or any other way that you want to express yourself. The students were able to take their time and allow creative energy to flow in this assignment. In addition they were required to draw pictures and illustrate their work as another dimension to the project.

While my students were working on these character education activities I was constantly taking field notes and working individually with students to gain meaning from the work they were doing. I would bring students to the back table in the classroom, where we could talk about the activities and their overall feelings that day. This would be part of my individual informal interviews, which took place after the activities were done. As a more formal interview I used the survey shown in Appendix B "Self-Esteem Questionnaire" to allow my students to respond quickly and honestly. I, again, reminded them that they were free to answer however they like, and that there is no wrong answer on this survey. We talked through each question and discussed their feelings that day. I

then took observation notes and wrote notes in response to the surveys for each specific student in the focus group. I gained a lot of material from those meetings.

Analysis

In addition to reflections after character education assignments and surveys, I also took notes and observations on interaction that the students in my focus group had with others in the classroom, including teachers and myself. I also identified themes through my observations and field notes based on Mill's framework (2007). In those themed notes I generated a process of note taking where I would add a smiley face, which correlated with the student's feelings, to notes wherever there was a positive, negative or indifferent interaction, experience, or reflection. I also made themes based on the time of day in which the notes were taken, what had happened earlier in the day, and the surrounding environment where I was taking my field notes at any given or specific time. In addition I used the triangulation of the field notes taken, interview reflections, and written observation reports that I had made to create materials for analysis in this action research project. I used coding and analysis of the surveys and interviews of my student focus group (Mills, 2007) as well as artifacts, such as, attendance records, worksheets collected from the various character education activities, and the field notes.

While analyzing data, I used Mill's (2007) method of coding. This is a process that deals with analyzing a specific set of data and the way that sense is made from the many different pieces. In my coding process I used smiley ☺ and sad ☹ faces to show the interaction, and what happened in reference to the student's self-esteem. I used a smiley ☺ face to signal a positive interaction, boost in self-esteem for the students or an overall positive experience. In adverse situations, where there was a negative interaction,

experience or something that was not good I used a sad ☹ face. This helped me to easily

identify how many times positive or negative events occurred, as well as gauging how to

reflect on the observation overall. I also used this code to analyze information from the

Self-Esteem Questionnaire that was given at two different times, to correlate the

information and student responses. This table and analysis was done later in the project,

and can be seen in this document, in Table 2.

Trustworthiness

    Validity of the research. According to the work done by Guba (1981, as cited in

Mills, 2007) I have made my qualitative research as valid as it can be. I have taken a

great deal of time to make my study as creditable as possible by using Guba's criteria.

    My review of literature does not have every piece of written material on the topic

of self-esteem in education, though it is a good representation of the framework of my

study. I was in my placement of a third grade classroom for a prolonged participation

period, and began collecting data in January and continued through early May. During

this time I have made as many data sets as possible and made additions to my research

project as I have seen as necessary. I am aware that it is essential in promoting

trustworthiness to have multiple perspectives, and thus I have included various insights

and as many "voices" from within the school as possible. This includes my cooperating

teacher's ideas as well as those of my students. In addition, I had conferences with a

"critical friend" and participated in many debriefings with peers, according to Guba's

(1981, as cited in Mills, 2007) guidelines.

    In his criteria Guba (1981, as cited in Mills, 2007) refers to Creditability,

Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability. In creditability, "the researcher has an

ability to take into account the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained" (p. 87). Furthermore, in transferability he states that, "the research believes that everything is context bound." In addition, dependability is the stability of the data being analyzed and confirmability is "the neutrality or objectivity of the data" (Mills, 2007, p. 87). Each of these guidelines is a tool for action researchers, who work to develop and comprise a valid project.

I also made my data as transferable as possible by developing detailed descriptions of my project context. When I say transferable I mean that I wanted my Action research project to be relevant to everyone, not just those who work with this type of data. In addition, I was not trying to make a "truth" out of my research, but more to be able to develop an idea for those who read this project, and also for myself in the future. I made my data as complete with much literature, many observations, numerous interviews and various artifacts that I gathered through experience. With this I practiced triangulation and made sure that my study had a high level of validity.

Potential bias. In this action research project there is a potential for bias in the sense that I am a human being with my own perceptions, lifestyle choices, and ideas of the place that self-esteem should hold in education. I believe that there is a great need for positive reinforcement in self-esteem activities through character education because there are so many people in society today that do not experience high self-esteem, self-awareness, or overall confidence. I feel that there is a great need for this to be done and therefore, have based my action research on this because of the place it holds in my own perceptions.

It is important to note that I was educated and raised in a different environment in comparison to that which I conducted action research in. I believe that my own view of the community was very much in contrast to the one that I became acquainted to during my student teaching placement. However, with that said I was aware of this bias and therefore attempted to go into the research with an open mind and heart. I allowed myself to become immersed into the culture of my placement, and did not see things as if I was an outsider, but more as part of the classroom environment and community as a whole.

Limitations of study. While this study was legitimate and the process of action research did take place, there were some limitations to what could be done. While I was choosing a subject to do research on, I felt strongest about working with students in self-esteem. I felt that this was very important, although I knew that I would not be able to measure this process as concretely as in other subject areas.

There were several limitations for this specific study. First there was only a limited amount that I could possibly do in the 15 weeks that I was placed in the school. In that time I did as much work as possible to gain as much data to be analyzed as I could, but again I am only human and did not achieve as much as some other studies have. Secondly, I was brought into this particular school in the middle of the school year. While the students knew one another well, I was still meeting and greeting during the first weeks of my placement and research. In addition, I was learning the processes and daily routines that the school had in place while there, and though I did this quickly as I could, I was not able to truly become accustomed until some time into the placement. Finally, while I was there I was not able to see as long term into the future of the research and activities that I did, as I would have hoped.

Unfortunately it seems that the greatest limitation of this study was time. The time it takes to become comfortable in a placement as well as the time it takes to gain respect of those present. In addition to the time that is necessary to implement actions and work with the students. In a sense I would have liked to do this work on a greater scale, and in that I plan to do this type of action research teaching in future classrooms, yet to be seen. In addition, because I took part in this research as a student teacher, I was less experienced in teaching in general than a veteran teacher would be doing this research. I was also taking part in a classroom which was not my own. Therefore, I was not able to incorporate every aspect of things that I may have if it was my own classroom.

Findings

Outcome Of Integrated Action

It seemed as if character-education activities directly dealing with the issues of self-esteem positively affected student behaviors in the classroom. In this study, the emergent findings began to reveal that there was a benefit to using character education as a regular part of classroom routines. This seemed relevant in the output of student work and the overall attitude towards class work and participation.

After interviewing and surveying the student focus group there seemed to be an absolute change in the student's general attitude and work ethic. In addition, my field notes and observation reports show that there was more communication and interaction with others in the classroom.

Based on specific interviewing and surveys, I was able to work with my focus group and complete the Self-Esteem Questionnaire. We did this together once at the beginning of the research, and then again, with the students working more independently,

towards the end of my placement. In direct reference to this questionnaire (see Appendix B) I created a table to help me review the results of each of the focus students' sets of responses. In the coding of the Self- Esteem Questionnaire I used ☺ for a positive change being reflected in the two different accounts. In addition I used the ☹ symbol for a change that I considered to be negative, in the sense that it did not show a positive self-esteem characteristic. The abbreviation n/c stands for no change in any of the students' responses to those questions.

Question	Code ☺ ☹
1	☺ ☹
2	n/c
3	n/c
4	☹
5	☺ ☺
6	n/c
7	n/c
8	n/c
9	☹
10	☺ ☺ ☹ ☹
11	☺ ☺
12	☺
13	n/c
14	☺
15	☺ ☹
16	☺
17	n/c
18	☹
19	☺
20	n/c
21	☺
22	☺ ☹
23	☺ ☺
24	n/c
25	☹ ☺
26	☺
27	n/c

Table 1: Self-esteem Questionnaire Reflections

In Table 1 I reviewed the results for each student in the focus group, and added the appropriate symbol for a change in their response. There are many responses with multiple changes. For example, the responses to question 5, which refers to having a friend to talk to, show that there were very positive changes made. In the first survey given, Mike and Carly both reported that they only sometimes (S) had a friend to talk to, and after the character education and other activities were completed, they changed responses on the second questionnaire to always (A). In addition, on that particular question, Tom and Cole each responded they same way on each questionnaire that they either always (A) or sometimes (S) do have a friend to talk to. In this particular case, all of the responses to the question would be deemed positive.

After the second round of interviewing and questionnaires, 25% of the focus group responses changed for the better on multiple other questions. For example, question number 11 refers to the student feeling important. On this question Carly responded sometimes (S) the first time and always (A) the second. While Mike responded in a negative way by giving the answer always (A) the first time and sometimes (S) the second time around. This was reviewed as negative because it is preferable for the student to always feel important. On question number 23 states, "my clothes are old or dirty," 50 % of the focus group gave the response never (N) the first time and Tom and Cole each revised their answers the second time from sometimes (S) to never (N). While some of the responses given may seem have a negative connotation based on the students attitude at that point, there is still the sense that the student responded in an honest manner, and that they kept their true feelings and self-awareness in mind while answering the questions.

In reference to each student in my focus group there was some type of change made in the two surveys given. I have shown these changes in this table (see above, Table 1), which are results after the work on character education activities. I asked each student two questions to get conversation started in the second session of the interviews and survey:

1. Tell me what you like about yourself. You can use sentences or even adjectives to describe yourself.

2. If I didn't know you, and we are meeting now for the first time, what would you want to tell me about yourself?

As seen in Table 2, Tom had five changes total. On two of the questions, he changed his response on in a positive way, and three were considered negative changes. During each of the survey sessions, Tom often looked at me to see what my reaction was as he answered the questions. He would read them aloud, look to me, and then say his answer out loud again. In the second survey and interview, I wanted the students to work more independently. After a few of this type of cycle I tried to give him space and look at the questions on his own, so he was not just looking for approval and answering how he thought I would like him to. I reminded him that this survey was his own thoughts and answers, and that it can be personal in that way. I also reminded him that this would not be graded and that he could answer however he thought was best. This helped and allowed the process to move on smoothly into the interview section.

In the second survey Tom did increase discussion with me, and talk more freely about himself during taking the survey. In response to the first question Tom's first comment was, "I like when I am un-punished, because that means I have been good."

Then he told me that he liked to play video games, and that he is a good friend. He also began to talk, saying that, "my mom thinks I am a good son." To which I asked him what he thought, and he agreed that he was a good son, so he would want to tell me that. I told Tom that I wanted him to tell me what he thought, so that I could learn about his feelings. In response to the second question, Tom said, " Hi my name is Tom and I live in…" and we then moved on to that he, "likes to go to "Chuck-E-Cheese" and play games, and that his birthday was coming up", which he then invited me to. Then he talked about, "going bowling on Saturday mornings, and he has gotten two very high scores, above his average score and that he has a favorite wrestler." When asked if he enjoyed the first or second survey more, he related that he liked this time, meaning the second, because he "knew what to expect and knew he could answer any way he liked and not have anyone tell him he was wrong."

The second student on this table is Carly. She was very excited to come and talk with me the second time. She had the most change in her answers on the second survey and interview session. She had six questions where she had a positive change in her answers, and only two that were not a positive self-esteem reflection. In response to the first question, Carly told me two words, "Smart and reading." She talked to me much more about the second question, of the second session and began to talk about things that she enjoyed and also about herself more. She told me that if I didn't know anything about her that she would tell me, "I'm forgiving, and I don't understand if people don't like me, that's fine you don't have to like me, because anything mean that people say isn't true and I know that." I was aware at the time of the second session that she and a few of the other girls in the class were arguing some, and I assumed that this is the cause of this type

of response. She then talked to me about the book she was currently reading, which was an advanced level chapter book, and was very proud. While she liked both surveys, she said that she liked the second time better, "because we talked more, and she likes to talk."

The third student, Cole had four positive changes in question responses, and two negative changes. Cole remained more reserved throughout each session. In response to the first question during the second session, he told me three words, "kind, helpful and caring." In response to the second question, Cole told me that he, "liked to play baseball and that he didn't like to watch it too much." He also told me that he liked to play football, but not watch that either." He did not talk more or less in the firs or second survey, and worked quietly on answering the questions. When asked if he liked the first or second time doing the survey best, responded, "The first."

The final student to take the second round of the survey was Mike. He had five positive changes in his responses to questions in the survey, and only two that would be considered a negative change. In response to the first question I asked, Mike said that he was a, "fast runner, has good handwriting, creative and open-minded." He thought about each of those words for a few seconds before he said them, and was very eager to talk with me in the second survey. In response to the second question, he said, "I like football, to watch and play it. I also like to play with toys, especially cars, and I like to watch wrestling." He continued talking to me for some time. He was much more vocal and interested in conversation in the second session, which was a big step for Mike. He said that he liked both sessions, but that he liked the second one better.

In response to Table 2 and the data, which shows the responses of the students in the surveys and also the ideas that they brought to the table, I feel that character

education on self-esteem was a positive influence. All of the students were able to talk

with me after the survey was completed and generate some type of answer. Also there

were a greater number of positive changes than negative changes, in all four of the

student responses on the self-esteem survey.

Name of Student in Focus Group	Number of Positive Changes	Number of Negative Changes	Did Conversation Increase or Decrease?	Were Interviews (1& 2) Enjoyed	Which Interview Enjoyed More?
Tom	2	3	↑	Both	2
Carly	6	2	↑	Both	2
Cole	4	2	No change	Both	1
Mike	5	2	↑	Both	2

Table 2: Analysis of Surveys/ Interviews

Themes That Emerged

It appeared as though some students were more responsive during interviews with

me as they became more comfortable with idea of self-esteem reflection. In the beginning

stages of interviewing and the project overall, it was as if the focus group of students was

not as willing to discuss their answers on activities and surveys. After a few sessions of

working one-on-one with me, and talking about their answers, it appeared as if they

began to open up and relate to me more. For example, Mike began to talk to others in the

classroom more, as was evident from my field notes and observation reports. As well as

in our meetings, with Mike I often talked for longer periods of time and about things that

he was interested in, after time passed and he became more comfortable with the

interviewing process and ideas of self-esteem. It was enlightening to see the results of the survey, see Appendix B, in a sense. In some students it seemed evident that there was a change in the way that he or she answered the questions. Although the questions were the exact same, the answers did vary, and many in a positive way. It seemed as though some students' self-awareness became more pronounced as work through character-education was completed. It was as though they had become more in touch with their own feelings, and understood more clearly what was going on.

With positive reinforcement in the classroom setting, some of my field notes reflect the students in the focus group having a higher self-esteem. For example, Carly began to discuss things that affected her emotionally more frequently during the interviews, which took place after the activities. According to a reflection (May 8, 2008) I took after an interview and discussion session, she began to discuss her love of reading much more, after the activities were completed. In the character education activity, "I AM" poem (see Appendix E), she was able to use her skills and write about her talents, including that of reading. From this information, I continually encouraged her to spend time doing things that she loves.

There is even some evidence of social and emotional improvement in some students after participating in character-education activities. For example, Mike began to interact with his peers, both in and out of the focus group, in a positive way. According to observation notes (May 6, 2008), he was more actively playing with classmates after the activities. This appeared to be happening in interactions with the students within the focus group of students as well as those outside the focus group.

Conclusions

After working on this action research project I have come to many new understandings. I feel that it is important for educators to be skilled in all areas of "real life" situations, which relate to the personalities and lifestyles of their students. In a sense I feel that it is more important for teachers to understand their students on a deeper and more meaningful level, because without this it is near impossible for a connection to be made between the student and the given curriculum. In other words, after the work that I have completed on self-esteem in the classroom and the promotion of character education activities, I am more aware of the benefits that progressively come with these activities.

In any classroom, there is some apprehension when it comes to the idea of self-esteem with students and teachers. In the activities of character education, there seems to be a true bond formed that turns into a relationship between the teacher and student. In addition to this teacher student union, there is a bond among the student body themselves. This bond allows for the peers to become friends and comrades to work as one. I feel that this is ultimately the most important piece in creating a community within the classroom. With this framework for a lasting relationship, there is nothing that cannot be achieved. I believe that this can be done focusing our energy on building these relationships by starting with strong foundations of self-esteem, self-awareness and true empathy for others.

Within any classroom there is a great deal of diversity, and if there is a way to unite students within the classroom, then there is a way to create a stronger sense of brotherhood and family. For many students this can be a very true and important connection that they will share with others. The only way to have a sense of belonging is to allow students to create their own student body community. Within this population of

students, there is a meaning to what happens both within the classroom as well as what may occur outside. If there is a relationship built with a strong foundation of high self-esteem and high levels of commitment to one another, then that structure cannot be broken down in any way. I believe it is necessary for teachers and students to connect and have a strong relationship. This is essential to then understand why I preformed this Action research to promote awareness on the subject.

The research that I have done is in accordance with the research that Silvy (2008) did on self-esteem. As previously stated, Silvy reported that it is essential for a student to reflect on his or her self-esteem and the values on which it has been based. In addition, it is essential for an individual to be able to enhance their self-esteem; they must develop a sense of their own personal worth and think of themselves in positive terms (Silvy, 2008). I believe that my research has shown this to be true, as well as enhancing those ideas through the character education activities that I integrated into my classroom placement. In addition, Elias (2007) notes in his research on Social Emotional Character Development, there are many ways in which we can affect the tone of our students in our classrooms. In addition, I believe that my Action research project is in accordance with the idea that students will feel more connected and purposeful if we engage in continuous efforts to build their social-emotional skills and develop their positive character. This was shown in my field notes (April 24, 2008), and interviews with my focus students on numerous accounts.

In conclusion I believe this project has taught me that self-esteem has many ways of being achieved, one of which is through character education activities. In addition to those activities being incorporated into everyday classroom routines, I feel that it is

necessary to have an open relationship among the students. With that said, I feel it is

important to have a connection between student and teacher as well. With that foundation

of healthy relationships and cooperation with others in the classroom, self-esteem can

become evident as a crucial part of students lives. Self-esteem is an area of life which

will enable them to achieve high standards and have a positive self outlook and great self-

awareness.

<center>Implications, New Directions, and New Questions</center>

In this research there are many ideas that have not yet come to fruition. I feel that

in my future teaching placements and classrooms, I will continue this work. My endeavor

as an educator will be to create new projects in this area and work toward all that I have

become aware of. In other words, I will try to keep a close eye on this research in self-

esteem and work with my future students on character education activities. I believe that

the benefits are countless when working with students on boosting self-esteem and will

frame my classroom and teaching strategies on this ideal. I plan to create a place where

students and teacher have a strong connection and can work together hand in hand.

In reference to working toward new projects, I believe I will always have ideas

about the use of character education and self-esteem activities in the classroom. I will

most likely begin a new cycle of action research and data as a new class comes in each

September. Just as with a new class list there are new student names and information

given to teachers, I believe there is a new set of exciting relationships and connections to

be made with each student on the list. If there is a way to connect with each of the names

on that roster, in even a small way, than there is success in my eyes.

As I continue this research, I will always remain and action researcher. I will work on a daily basis to create new data and find new material to work on. With my future students I will have countless projects to collect data on and work with on building lasting relationships.

This study has left me with the ever lasting question of "what if I had done this, or done that differently?" I believe this will be a remaining inquisition which I will have after each school year. However, this particular study has left me with the question of "how can I connect with more students in the way that I did with my focus group of this study?" With that question I have others such as, "will it work, when I have my own classroom and the responsibility is completely on me for all areas of teaching?" and "what is it that makes students really open up about their feelings?" I will strive to answer all of these questions in my teaching career. In addition, I will always be creating new ones.

In the greater scheme of things in the field of education, I believe that this action research project can open the eyes of anyone in the profession. It is a way to raise awareness about the many different hats that teachers may wear on any given day. It is essential to understand that there is a need to create a place of comfort and strong connections for the students in the classroom. It is also critical to understand that there is more to education and teaching than reading, writing and arithmetic. While these are essential pieces of the education puzzle, they are not the only things that create successful students. To be truly successful, students must be well rounded in all areas of communication, personal feelings and also in touch with their selves. In order to do this, students must have high awareness and esteem for themselves and others. The goal for

this project was to allow readers, of any background area, to see the need for character education in the classroom in addition to the other areas of the curriculum. If this is accomplished, than I believe education will be a more fulfilling experience for everyone involved.

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APPENDIX A

All About You Questionnaire

ALL ABOUT YOU!

DIRECTIONS: Please fill in the answers to the questions below. If you finish this sheet before I am ready to collect them, you may draw me a picture of yourself.

What is your name? _____

What gender are you? Male or Female

What is your race or ethnicity? _____

Who do you live with?

_____

What is your favorite thing to do outside of school? What are your hobbies?

_____

_____

What is your favorite subject in school?

_____

What language do you and your family speak at home?

_____

_____

Do you have any brothers or sisters? If you do, how old are they?

_____

_____

Is there anything that you would like to tell me about yourself?

APPENDIX B

Self Esteem Questionnaire

Name: _____

Please write a sentence or two telling me about yourself. _____

How are you feeling today?_____

	Please Answer The Following Questions	Always	Never	Sometimes
1	I feel happy.	A	N	S
2	I like myself.	A	N	S
3	I like my family.	A	N	S
4	My family treats me kind.	A	N	S
5	I have a friend that I can talk to.	A	N	S
6	I love my school.	A	N	S
7	I love my teachers.	A	N	S
8	I like to meet new friends.	A	N	S
9	I like to play outside.	A	N	S
10	I like to have time to myself.	A	N	S
11	I feel important.	A	N	S
12	My friends make me happy.	A	N	S
13	My teachers like me.	A	N	S
14	I am a good student.	A	N	S
15	I love animals.	A	N	S
16	I like to play with friends.	A	N	S
17	My teacher understands me.	A	N	S
18	I understand when people are mean to me.	A	N	S
19	I forgive people when they do not treat me nicely.	A	N	S
20	My hair looks awful.	A	N	S
21	When I have a problem, I tell someone about it.	A	N	S
22	I like to look nice.	A	N	S
23	My clothes are old or dirty.	A	N	S
24	I always finish when I start something.	A	N	S
25	I am very organized.	A	N	S
26	People treat me with respect.	A	N	S
27	I like to work on projects about myself.	A	N	S

APPENDIX C

Consent & Assent Forms:

Dear Third Grade Students,

      I am doing some research in our classroom about self-esteem and how it will help you in school. I think that there are lots of good things that we can do as a class to feel good about ourselves and be proud of the work that we do. In class we will be doing some activities and lessons about positive attitudes and being happy with whom we are. Even though I am going to be a teacher, there are still lots of things that I can learn. I hope that you will help me in learning about how students your age do in school with a good base of self-esteem to work from.
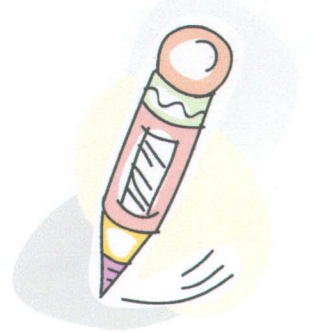
      The work that I do will be lots of fun, and I know that you will be great at helping me with my study. If you agree to help me, I will be asking you some questions and working on activities with you. You can ask me questions about our class work at any time and you never need to be afraid of what will happen if you decide to change you mind about working with me. I will be available to answer any questions that you may have, and we can work together to learn new things.

      Signing this paper means that you understand what we will be doing in class, and that you want to be part of the study. If you don't think that you like the idea of the study, you do not have to sign the paper. If you decide to sign it now, but then change your mind later, that is alright too. This study is not like a test, it is just a way for me to learn more about third grade students, and how they will benefit from high self-esteem.

Sincerely,
Miss Muller

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is Rebecca Muller and I am a graduate student at Rowan University. I will be student teaching in Mrs. Nandal's classroom for the next few months and will be graduating when I am finished in May. I am a very compassionate and energetic person and I cannot wait to become part of the teaching profession. While I am just getting to know your children I know that you know them best of all. I hope that you will help me get to know them and that we can all work together.

While I have the pleasure of being at Spragg School, I will be working towards getting information for my research project. As a final project for my graduate program, I have to put together an action research report that will be from the work that I do with your children. My research will be based on promoting self esteem in the classroom, to help students achieve more. I will be able to get a chance to work one-on-one with your children and take part in teaching their class lessons each day. During my teaching I will need your permission to work with your student regarding self-esteem in the classroom.

There are many benefits to my research and being part of your students' day. I will be able to help them with their work in class. I will also be able to work with small groups of students and they will get a great deal of attention in those groups. I would also like to let you know that all of my research findings will be kept completely confidential and no names will be used in my reports. There are many benefits of this work for everyone involved.

This study is completely voluntary and your decision to participate or not will not affect your relationship with your school or Rowan University. If you do allow your child to participate, you are free to withdraw your child at any time without affecting your relationships as well.

I will be available at any time to speak with you or answer any questions and concerns you may have, please feel free to call or E-mail me at any time. I hope to get to speak with each of you and get to know you and your families. Thank you in advance for anything that you can do to help my research and your child's experience in our class. I look forward to an exciting semester and can't wait to get started!

Sincerely,

Phone: 609-965-1034 x 308   E-mail: Muller76@students.rowan.edu

_____Yes, I would like my child to participate

_____ No, I would not like my child to participate

Please Sign and Return: _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX D

Goal Setting Activity

Name:_____ Date:_____

Please follow the directions to set and achieve your goal of the week!

1. Define your goal of the week.
2. Make up at least 3 steps you will take to achieve your goal.
3. Think about or write down at least three of the things you may have as an obstacle in your path to success.
4. Set the deadline for your goal to be the end of the week! (Friday, Saturday or Sunday.)

1. My goal for this week is to_____

2. The steps I will take are:

          1. _____

          2. _____

          3. _____

3. Some things that may happen as obstacles are:

          1. _____

          2. _____

          3. _____

4 The deadline for my goal of the week is_____

"I AM" poem (Final Draft Activity Sheet)

_____ I AM POEM

I am _____and _____

I wonder _____

I hear _____

I see _____

I want _____

I am _____and _____

I pretend _____

I feel _____

I touch _____

I worry _____

I cry _____

I am _____and _____

I understand _____

I say _____

I daydream _____

I try _____

I hope _____

I am _____and _____

APPENDIX F
Student Information Chart

Name	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Family Makeup- in household	Interest/Hobbies	Favorite Subject	Language at Home	Siblings
Cole	MALE	Italian	Mother, Father, Sister	Football & Sports	Gym and Math	English	1 Sister (3 yrs),1 Brother (12yrs)
Tom	MALE	Spanish, Polish	-Mother and her Boyfriend -Father (Separated)	Playing tag, Jumping on the bed & watching wrestling	Gym	English	None, 1 sibling on the way
Mike	MALE	White	Father, Grandmother, Brother and dog	Football, playing outside & inside, drawing, junk-food, goodies	Math	Spanish and English	1 Brother (11yrs), 1 Sister (17yrs)
Carly	FEMALE	German	Mother, Father, Sisters and Brothers	Bike riding, Reading & Jump-rope	Math	German and English	2 Sisters (13yrs), 2 Brothers (11, 12 yrs)

STUDENT INFORMATION CHART:

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