8-1990

The Relationship of Self-Concept and Apprehension to Writing: a Case Study of Avoidance Techniques in a Learning Disabled Student

Elizabeth C. Conte

The College at Brockport

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses

Part of the Language and Literacy Education Commons, Secondary Education Commons, and the Special Education and Teaching Commons

To learn more about our programs visit: http://www.brockport.edu/ehd/

Repository Citation


https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses/865

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Education and Human Development at Digital Commons @Brockport. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education and Human Development Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @Brockport. For more information, please contact kmyers@brockport.edu.
THE RELATIONSHIP OF SELF-CONCEPT AND APPREHENSION TO WRITING: A CASE STUDY OF AVOIDANCE TECHNIQUES IN A LEARNING DISABLED STUDENT

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the Department of Curriculum and Human Development State University College at Brockport in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education

by

Elizabeth C. Conte
State University College at Brockport
Brockport, New York
AUGUST, 1990
SUBMITTED BY:

Elizabeth C. Conte

Robert B. Miller 8/28/90
Thesis Advisor Date

David Johnson 9/6/90
Second Faculty Reader Date

Chairman, Graduate Policies Committee Date

Mavis Beers 9/7/90
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author extends thanks to her many friends and co-workers whose encouragement and support played an important role in the completion of this project.

The author also thanks all those family members who were understanding and sympathetic to the craziness this project created in her family life.

The author extends one very special thank you to R. Knowing him and working with him has left a permanent mark on this author's heart.
ABSTRACT

The background of a learning disabled student is profiled with specific details of his varied educational programs. Included is a review of literature concerning learning disabilities as they relate to self-concept, writing attitudes, ability and overall achievement.

The purpose of this case study was to investigate the relationship of R's self-concept to his writing disability and his non-achievement in school. Family history, educational placements, academic, standardized, and diagnostic tests as well as anecdotal comments were reviewed in an attempt to break down his pattern of failure.

There appears to be a strong correlation between R's achievement level and his lack of academic self-esteem. Although many attempts have been to remediate the writing disability and reduce the writing anxiety, R has not been receptive. Until R is willing to tackle this head-on, there appears to be little chance of reversing the pattern.

Further research into young students' perceptions of their academic abilities, the development of self-esteem groups, and alternative teaching strategies was suggested.

Appendices include samples of R's writing, strategies for lessening writing anxiety, and tips for helping students with writing anxiety.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Writing Process/Writing Ability</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Attitude, Anxiety and Apprehension</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept: Overall and Academic</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement: Motivation and Control for the Learning Disabled</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW--CASE R</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family History</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School History</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotal Remarks</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prognosis</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. SUMMARY &amp; CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for further study</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. R’s Level 2 SAT scores</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. R’s 4th Grade SAT scores</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. R’s 5th Grade SAT scores</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. R’s 7th Grade SAT scores</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

R is a 16 year old high school student who has spent his entire educational career as a non-achiever. As early as first grade, teachers recognized R's ability but were unsuccessful in motivating R to put anything down on paper. R was placed in a variety of educational programs throughout elementary school in hopes of discovering an appropriate placement to meet his educational needs. Nothing brought the results that were desired. After completing two years of high school, R has earned just 5 1/2 credits. He is looking toward a lengthy stay at this level or toward becoming a drop-out statistic.

As stated by Meyers (1987), learning disabled students such as R display many socio-emotional problems including skewed social perception, poor self-concept and lack of motivation. These problems are so intertwined with academic frustration, that it is difficult to determine whether a specific learning dysfunction or a lack of self-confidence is at the root of R's non-achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study is to describe and interpret the background and experiences of this adolescent,
underachieving, learning disabled student with above average ability. R's writing disability has been a factor in his development of avoidance techniques (almost to the point of non-function) to protect his ego from the reality of not being able to measure up to others. A secondary purpose of this study is to determine the relationship of his writing apprehension to his self-concept and to his overall writing and achievement levels. Through this research, potentially an educational plan to better meet the emotional and educational needs of R may be established.

Definitions

The key terms used within this report are defined here in an attempt to clarify the context in which the terms are used.

Self-concept/self-esteem

Rosenberg states, as cited by Searey (1988), that self-esteem is a measure of how one feels about himself and his value. His self-concept is the mirror image he sees reflecting this perception. Searey also cites Coopersmith (1967) and Schilling (1986) when identifying four components of self-esteem. In order for a person to develop positive feelings about himself he must 1) feel that he is capable; 2) feel that he matters to other people; 3) feel that he has power over what he does; and 4) feel a special uniqueness and worth (page 454).
Academic Self-concept

Crandall, et al (1962) felt that children's feelings of potential success in academic areas were directly related to their actual achievement. A child's perception of how his abilities measure up to others academically is the indicator of how strong his self-concept is in this specific area.

Writing

Irmscher, as cited by Alley and Deshler (1979), defines writing as "1) a visible indication of what students know and what they are thinking, 2) a means to organize, control, and direct thought, and 3) an aid to thinking and ideation" (p.104). It is a higher form of communication which builds upon progressive levels of language development. It entails mastery in a gamut of activities including handwriting, spelling, punctuation, grammatical context, content and organization.

Apprehension/Anxiety

Sieber, et al (1977) cites that "anxiety has been defined by both existential philosophers and scientists as an unavoidable unpleasant experience having physiological, phenomenological, and behavioral manifestations" (p. 21). The consequence of this unpleasant experience is the development of a dread of the activity from which the anxiety is created. It is in this context, that the term apprehension is used within this review.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review of literature is compiled from an investigation of representative educational research in the areas of self-concept, writing attitudes/apprehension, writing abilities, and achievement as each factor is related to Learning Disabilities.

UNDERSTANDING LEARNING DISABILITIES

"Anna was in the sixth grade. She was a good student in most respects. She tried hard and did acceptable work in most areas. She was easy to get along with and related well to her peers, but she just couldn't spell" (Payne et al., p. 23). Payne, et al. (1983) cite this as an illustrative example of a learning disabled student.

Understanding the nature of learning disabilities starts with defining the terminology. A wide variety have been employed, but Payne, et al. (1983) cite the following definition created by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities and presented by Hammill, Leigh, McNutt and Larsen (1981). "Learning disability is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, or mathematical
abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual. (Such disorders are presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction which can result from such factors as anatomical differences, genetic factors, neuromaturational delay, neurochemical/metabolic imbalance, severe nutritional deficiency or trauma.) Even though a learning disability may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g., sensory impairment, mental retardation, social and emotional disturbance) or environmental influences (e.g., cultural differences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction, psychogenic factors), it is not the direct result of those conditions or influences (p. 26).

Meyers (1987) cites the above definition as well, and further clarifies learning disabilities by describing those individuals as possessing at least average intelligence with an apparent processing deficit accompanied by one or more academic deficiencies (p. 27). Thurlow, et al. (1984) further state that an ability-achievement discrepancy, which refers to the gap between apparent ability and the level of achievement, is the most common method of classifying these students.

THE WRITING PROCESS/WRITING ABILITY

Temple, et al. (1982) identify writing as a mysterious process of relaying our thoughts through written symbols and
learning to write as an act of discovery (p. 1,2). Also cited by Temple, et al. (1982), were six points regarding the acquisition of written language. 1) Children will probably take most of the initiative in learning to write. 2) Children must be exposed to written language used in meaningful ways. 3) Children learn to write by formulating rules about how things work, like spelling, by making errors that they eventually correct. 4) Children learn composition strategies through gradual conceptual learning. 5) Children must have opportunities to write for different purposes as their needs dictate. 6) Children must exert their powers to learn for themselves in order for any explanation of writing process to have meaning to them (p. 9-10).

Dyson (1982) views young writers as observers who put their pens to paper and begin to make letter-like marks on a page just as they have seen others do (p. 829). The very act of writing itself could be responsible for the fine tuning of a child's written language system and for the establishment of a connection between reading, writing and language (p. 837). Dyson (1982) regards the process as complex. "In the case of written language, the whole is not a completed picture, but a completed meaning, a message. Through their own actions, children come to realize that the precise arrangement (writing) of the pieces (linguistic/graphic symbols) is necessary if the desired
whole (read message) is to be realized— that is, children establish connections between reading, writing, and language" (p. 838).

Kellog (1971), as cited by Alley and Deshler (1979), believes that an hierarchical relationship exists between the different facets of language development. "It is essential that, prior to mastering the intricacies of written expression, students have some knowledge and expertise in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, spelling, handwriting, punctuation, and capitalization. Difficulties in any of these skills will likely interfere with the normal acquisition and use of written language (p. 105)." Alley and Deschler also cite Lerner (1976) who relates that the inability to put thoughts into the written word is the most common communication disability (p. 104).

Clay (1975) states that "in the child's early contact with written language, writing behaviors seem to play the role of organizers of reading behaviors. Writing is not the only means of expressing ideas in written language, but it does appear to help the child come to grips with learning to attend to the significant details of written language (p. 3)." The process reflects the gradual development of awareness of the conventions of written language. The degree to which the child internalizes this understanding as important, will generally mirror the level of proficiency that child will achieve.
Clay (1982) views children as active participants in the development of their ideas about the written word; gaining insights from seemingly ordinary events such as receiving a birthday card or flipping through a magazine. "Early writing can begin with the teacher (or parent) as a scribe, helping children attempt all they can by themselves as soon as possible" (p. 67). Children should write out of their experiences, giving them flexibility and a variety of audiences and language options. Clay (1982) also emphasizes the importance of understanding how children go about their writing because knowing where they are is not necessarily a guide to how they got there (p. 66).

Billingsley (1988) recognizes the importance of active participation by students in the establishment of their writing goals. A critical aspect of gaining expertise in writing comes from effective self-evaluation (p. 27). Students need to be aware of what is expected from them. Personal involvement in this evaluation, tends to strengthened the understanding of the process (pre-writing, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing), and not merely force them to focus on a final product.

Handwriting's role in overall writing proficiency is an important one. Legible handwriting is needed to complete school work, fill out applications, or write a birthday card. Attempting to read illegible directions is a frustration almost everyone has experienced. Bing (1988)
suggests that while the development of strategies to improve or to circumvent handwriting are an important part of the curriculum, students should be encouraged to focus on the subject content material leaving handwriting (or its circumvention) to a later practice time. Concentration on the visual-motor skill of writing often prevents the acquisition of the content they should be learning (p. 509). The method in which the thought gets into written form is of less consequence than a possible loss of learning.

Researchers generally agree that writing proficiency increases as students are given more meaningful opportunities to write. Finding ways to encourage more writing production is a challenge many teachers face. Dangel (1988) presents a mnemonic system for encouraging written expression. While his program, called STARS, was designed for LD students, the strategies are applicable for any written language program (p. 250). The components of this program are structure, talking, assistance, reinforcement, and self-management. As Billingsley (1988) also states, the understanding of the process brings about a more skilled writer. Examples of student writing are everywhere, bookcovers, note exchanges, and even bathroom graffitti. Dangel’s system is his attempt to bring as much meaning to the writing done within the classroom.
Houck (1988) states, "Improved writing comes through lots of meaningful writing experiences. Yet, getting students who have experienced a considerable amount of frustration with writing tasks to view written expression as a doable, enjoyable and worthwhile endeavor requires considerable finesse" (p. 489). Many researchers agree that attitudes about writing are as responsible for competence in this area as is the understanding of the writing process.

Anyone who has ever worked with a young child recognizes the urgent "why" question every youngster asks when faced with a new experience. Birnbaum (1980) suggests that some children have little opportunity to observe others using written language, because a higher value has been placed on media such as television or telephone in their environment. These children internalize a lesser value for written expression since there is no modeling of its real value for their lives (p. 203). Children who become proficient in writing have more frequent exposure to people who actively engage in meaningful writing. These same children generally have an attentive audience for their written work as well because of the higher value placed on written language in their lives.

Alley and Deshler (1979) believe that writing instruction should begin with attitudes and move on to skill
development. They also feel that not dealing with anxieties and fears that students have about writing assignments minimizes the chance of improvement (p. 114). Students who have not been successful in the early stages of writing are likely to become frustrated as the complexity of these tasks increases. Sieber, et al. (1977) agree in stating that "one desirable aim of education is to create settings that do not engender anxiety in the first place, but once engendered, it must be reduced" (p. 37).

Cope (1978) feels anxiety about writing distorts one’s self-image and robs one of any possible pleasure from the act of writing. It has a major impact on academic and career decisions and restricts one’s possibilities. She cites research done by German psychoanalyst, Federn (1930), referring to a neurotic communication disorder, writing phobia. This is described as a "fear of revealing oneself through one’s writing which, in extremis, amounts to stage fright or writer’s block. The neurotic’s style is impersonal and self-hiding" (p. 4).

Kroll’s (1979) research, as cited by Holladay (1981), supports the importance of attitude on success because student effort is essential. He says: "Positive attitudes lead to more willing writing, and it is only by practicing writing that one can learn to write well" (p. 2). She also reports Eulert’s (1967) conclusion that learning to write is
dependent upon a student's self-image, attitudes and motivation and how they interact with one another (p.3).

It is generally believed that all writers experience a certain amount of stress over their work, but some experience such extreme anxiety that it creates poor performance while hindering chances for skill improvement. John A. Daly and his various associates have been responsible for much of the research in this area. Holladay (1981) quotes the Daly and Miller (1975) term, writing apprehension, as a descriptor of "anxiety about writing to the degree that an individual views any writing situation as more punishing than rewarding" (p. 3). They further describe the characteristics of typical writing apprehensives as 1) fear of the demand for competency; 2) fear of evaluation - they feel they will fail; 3) complete avoidance of writing; 4) they display destructive behaviors when forced (i.e. not turning in work, skipping class) and 5) often procrastinate and display unhappiness (p. 4 - 5). Raisman's (1980) research, as reported by Holladay (1981), supports this theory and further states that a child will give up trying to write in an attempt to avoid the hurt of failure thus beginning a cyclical pattern of writing failure. Writing anxiety perpetuates itself.

As Book (1976) says, "Written communication is an essential aspect of educational and professional life."
Apprehension severely limits or modifies an individual's ability to function with confidence and fulfill his/her aspirations" (Holladay, p. 12).

**SELF-CONCEPT: OVERALL AND ACADEMIC**

Self-concept evolves from the moment of birth through interaction with those people and things that surround us. Peters and Raupp (1980) believe self-concept is a reflection of the child's overall identity in terms of what the child sees as attainable within his limitations and how he feels about the different components of his self (p. 167). McDonald (1980) agrees and further states that the acquisition of positive feelings about self will more likely occur if a child is treated in such a way that he feels that he matters and that his thinking is respected. This child also needs to feel that people care about him (p. 51).

Coopersmith (1967), as cited by Searcey (1988), states that high self-esteem children have parents who are concerned and attentive and provide them with appropriate structure, while instilling a sense of freedom within those set boundaries (p. 455). Phillips (1982) supports this belief by stating that self-esteem is learned in early childhood, shaped by the child's experiences. The interactions that a child has with family and friends as he grows would bring about any modification in his beliefs about himself and others.
McDonald (1980) recognizes five component parts of overall self concept including feelings about body image (body appearance and performance), social self (relationships with others), cognitive self (what he knows), effecting self (ability to control), and self-esteem (self-value) (p. 53). A child's behavior tends to remain consistent with how he feels about himself in any of these aspects. As Lecky (1945) contends, as cited by Walsh (1956), "the child not seen as bright by his parents, who has, therefore, come to think of himself as stupid or incapable of learning, holds to this concept when he goes to school" (p. 3).

Academic self-concept emerges as a child evaluates his learning by comparison to his other classmates. It becomes an important facet of his self-judgment. This, as stated by Carroll and Friedrich (1984), seems to signal the need for understanding the affective component of education. Stipek (1981) cites test results that indicate that "children who are at the extreme ends of the performance continuum have begun to incorporate performance feedback into their self-perceptions as early as second grade" (p. 408). Walsh (1956) further indicates that these feelings become the basis for the development of behavioral defense mechanisms to protect the child's integrity. These mechanisms include negativism, stubbornness, withdrawal, passivity and daydreaming (p. 4 & 5). Phillips' (1983)
research supports this conclusion and adds that even a child's apparent ill health and school absenteeism may relate to real anxieties about his academic competence and worth.

Research suggests that children with learning difficulties are at greater risk for the development of a poor academic self-concept. Children tend to view their self-worth, at least in part, by the adequacy of their achievement in school. Black (1974) indicates that self-concept and learning disabilities are circularly connected. As these students progress in age and grade they tend to receive lower scores on self-esteem measures (p. 1139).

"To provide a child with learning disabilities the opportunity for maximum realization of potential, educators and psychologists must assess what effect the disability has on the child's perception of himself" (Larsen, et al., 1973, p. 510). Their research points to large discrepancies in these students' perceptions of what they are and what they would like to be. These differences are reflections of negative self-concepts. Research from Martire (1956), as cited by Lavin (1965), supports this thinking. Research conducted by Cooley and Ayers (1988) is consistent in its findings that students with learning disabilities often had deficits in their academic self-concept. They also suggested that intervention with these students should be
aimed at their perceptions of academic ability (p. 177). Black's (1974) research agrees that for any remedial program to be successful, it needs to focus on: academic self-concept as well as the learning deficit.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT; MOTIVATION AND CONTROL FOR THE LEARNING DISABLED

Brockner (1979) cites studies by Hamachek (1971) and Shrauger (1972) which show that "low self-esteem individuals do more poorly than high self-esteem individuals in achievement situations (i.e., situations that have evaluative implications for one's self-esteem). Poor performances, in turn would set the stage for continued self-criticism and low self-esteem" (p. 447).

Research indicates that a strong relationship exists between academic achievement and the motivational variable of control. As Crandall, et al (1962) state, "some children act as though they believe their own effort is the major determinant of their achievement reinforcements (success/failure), while other children behave as though they are the 'pawns of fate' or are at the mercy of the whims of others" (p. 649). Stipek and Weisz (1981) differentiate these two types of perceived control as internal and external control. How a child reacts to success and failure appears to be related to his perception
of whether he, or others, is the cause. Citing the research of Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfield, and York (1966), Nowicki and Strickland (1973) reported that the belief in destiny was a major factor in school achievement. It was their contention that pupil attitude was the strongest determinant of school achievement (p. 148).

Stipek and Weisz (1981) further state a child’s academic self-worth will only be enhanced if the child can take credit for the success he achieves. Success or failure will affect future behaviors only to the degree to which a child accepts responsibility for cause of that reinforcement. This resultant motivation, either from the hope of success or from the fear of failure, becomes the foundation for continued academic performance. Weiss and Weiss (1988) support the belief that success and failure are key motivators in learning and that without motivation, little learning can take place.

As Cooley and Ayers (1988) state "the children with low self-concept regarding school performance were more likely to explain their successes as being caused by external factors, and were more likely to explain their failures as being due to lack of ability (stable causes) than lack of effort (unstable causes). The student may feel that if he or she has little impact on academic success and
failure is due to ingrained shortcomings beyond personal control, what can be gained by continuing to try" (p. 177)?

This pattern of thinking is supported by Pearl, et al (1980) in reference to learning disabled students. These students often perceive success as unattainable because of things beyond their control (i.e., lack of ability). They give up without trying, believing that trying won't influence the outcome. They further suggest that "children with learning problems may react to the inevitable occasional failure with impaired performance, even in areas in which they do not have a specific learning disability" (p. 8). Their inability to attribute any self-responsibility to success or failure limits the acquisition of motivation for future achievement.
CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION

Several facets of R's personal life and educational career are being reviewed in hopes of better understanding him as a total learner. Particular emphasis has been placed on the elements of the affective domain. Even if a solution is not found for R, possible insights for other students with similar learning problems may become apparent from this review.

Included in this chapter is information compiled about his family history, his academic history, and the remedial efforts and programming in which R has been involved. Anecdotal records from school personnel and this author are also included. The chapter ends with the author's prognosis for R's future.

FAMILY HISTORY

R is an average 16 year old adolescent living in a medium-sized rural community. He has a husky build and is approximately 5 foot 10 inches tall. A good-looking young man, R has no physical disabilities or abnormalities that cause him to stand out in a crowd. He has a steady girlfriend and many friends. R enjoys the same activities most young men his age would, and he is very anxious to earn his driving privilege. For all intents and purposes, R
appears to be just an average teenager.

R's early childhood development was normal and non-traumatic. He walked at ten months and talked before he was a year old. Toilet training was successful at a young age (before 2). His pastimes included playing in the dirt and sand; as well as climbing trees. The Hulk, Spiderman, cartoons, and Sesame Street were the television shows that held his interest. As is typical of many young children, R was somewhat afraid of the dark and had occasional nightmares. Mother reading to R was an activity he enjoyed two or three times a week.

R's family is intact, with R being the oldest of three boys still living in the home. Two older boys from mother's previous marriage are now both married, but still in close contact with the family unit. The relationships within this family appear typical. There are no outstanding rifts between the brothers and the marriage is apparently secure.

R's father completed high school and has accumulated some college credits. He is currently employed in a factory job which is quite strenuous. Mother's educational career ended after the ninth grade. She has had a variety of mundane jobs, primarily in unskilled capacities. A trained Emergency Medical Technician, she is also actively involved with the volunteer ambulance corps in her home community. The two older brothers never completed education beyond the tenth grade and, like R's mother, have worked in a wide
range of unskilled jobs. R’s two younger brothers have had an assortment of school-related difficulties. One brother was placed in an alternative education program because of discipline problems, while the youngest brother is currently being tested for a special education placement.

Available information on the family’s medical history is sketchy. Father has been diagnosed with some form of cancer which now appears to be in long term remission. There is a history of epilepsy in mother’s family, but none of the siblings currently suffer with the disorder. R, as well as two of his brothers, have received a battery of neurological tests, but results proved to be negative. Aside from childhood ear infections and an allergy to bee stings, R has no apparent medical problems.

The underlying correlation between mother’s lack of school achievement and her sons’ lack of achievement is a question this author focused upon as R’s case was reviewed. Did each of them really function at a lower level of ability? Was mother, as well as each of her sons, learning disabled? Is there any degree of mental instability or do they merely demonstrate poor academic self-confidence? Each of this questions pose a possible cause for R’s low achievement level. It is this author’s goal to have a better understanding of how these factors have influenced the course of his academic career as well determining the probability of any change in his non-achieving pattern.
SCHOOL HISTORY

R did not attend any type of preschool program prior to kindergarten attendance.

ELEMENTARY

R exhibited poor small motor skills and a distinct dislike for writing as early as kindergarten. While he appeared to be well liked and content, his teacher saw him as immature. He easily tired with directed work. He was recommended for a transitional first grade.

R's first attempt at grade one was unsuccessful. He completed very little work and seemed preoccupied with all that was around him. R was frequently found daydreaming and staring. He needed constant attention just to accomplish simple tasks. When the possibility of retaining R in first grade was suggested to R's mother, she reacted strongly. While the teacher felt that R could adjust to this retention, mother felt that it would be a major blow to R's confidence level in school.

R was tested for epilepsy and hearing problems during his second year in first grade. The tests results did not support a physical cause for his low achievement level. The school also administered an intelligence test and determined his full scale IQ score to be 111, which is in the strong
average range. This testing also showed some indications of mild visual and auditory problems. R was still resistant to writing, but his Reading and Math skills appeared to fall in the average range. Table 1 shows R's Level 2 SAT's.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R/S</th>
<th>G.E</th>
<th>%T</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WORD S</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R COMP</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LISTEN</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N CONC</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M APPL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READING</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T LANG</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R continued to have difficulty completing work in the third grade. He started having recurring nightmares and frequent colds. R's work was satisfactory, but not consistent. R seemed to learn a great deal auditorially, and had a great deal to offer verbally. When involved in a project of particular interest to him, he far surpassed other students in the group in understanding and verbal involvement. R was also above the New York State reference point on both Math and Reading Elementary School Tests.

Fourth and fifth grades brought no significant changes in R's achievement level. While he continued to score fairly well on standardized tests, his everyday classroom
performance was extremely poor. Early in 5th grade, he was given *The Stanford-Green Diagnostic Math Test*. Since he did score well below grade level on this test, he was placed in a Math Center program to receive more intense help in Math. When he received this one-on-one assistance, he began to excel in Math. Unfortunately, this success did not transfer to regular classroom Math.

R's classroom teacher submitted a General Services referral in January of his 5th grade year for the purpose of better understanding R's difficulties in academics. He was administered the *WISC-R*, the *Kaufman ABC Battery*, and the *Bender Gestalt Test*. The testing did not indicate a significant enough disability to label R or to provide additional services.

Parent contact made at this time was favorable, but they still expressed anger about R's 1st grade retention. They were supportive of any assistance that was available for R. Mother also expressed concern that he might follow in her academic footsteps.

R also failed the New York State Fifth Grade Writing Test. R was then considered a PSEN student (Pupil with special educational needs) and recommended for writing remediation in the sixth grade.

R's SAT scores for 4th and 5th grades are listed in Tables 2 and 3 respectively.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBTEST</th>
<th>STANINE # ITEMS</th>
<th>RAW SCORE</th>
<th>NAT'L % TIE</th>
<th>LOCAL % TIE</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Study Skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Comp.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Concepts</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Comp</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Applications</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Reading</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Math</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Battery</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>199</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBTEST</th>
<th>STANINE # ITEMS</th>
<th>RAW SCORE</th>
<th>NAT'L % TIE</th>
<th>LOCAL % TIE</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Study Skills</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Comp.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Concepts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Comp</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Applications</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Reading</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Math</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Battery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MIDDLE SCHOOL.**

R continued in Math Center in the Middle School, but service was discontinued approximately midway through his first year.
R began receiving assistance in the Reading and Writing Center on a daily basis in the beginning of 6th grade. He again responded very well to the individual attention. The center teacher began to encourage R to learn to type in hopes of providing him the opportunity to get his thoughts down in a more efficient idea. While R appeared very interested helping to overcome his difficulties, he did not seem able to motivate himself to take the necessary steps.

Despite R's apparent success in this program, he continue to struggle in his regular classes. He refused to complete written work, he fell asleep in class and generally frustrated all his teachers. Verbally, R was very strong and demonstrated good understanding of a wide variety of topics. He was well read and spent much of his free time reading independently.

R was placed in a Resource Room in addition to the Writing Center in January of his sixth grade year for evaluation. His parents were contacted about a possible learning disability. The school then filed a Suspected Handicap referral with his parents' consent.

R continued with that level of service for the remainder of 6th grade. Testing did indicate the presence of a writing disability and R was labeled by his school district as a LD student. The school also designed a program for the next school year in which R would receive Language
Arts and Content Support in a Learning Center. He would continue to receive all his other subjects in the mainstream.

R scored well above the New York State reference points in both Math and Reading on the standardized tests administered to him at the conclusion of sixth grade.

R continued to have difficulty with all his mainstreamed classes in 7th grade as well. Despite close monitoring by his Learning Center teacher, R would not complete written work. An attempt was made in the center to teach him keyboarding, but he was not very receptive. His network of avoidance tactics was far reaching. Success was somewhat more likely if the teacher or aide sat with him in an attempt to keep him on task. He never passed a test, because he never completed one.

A personalized Language Arts program was designed to help R gain proficiency in all areas of the writing process. It focused on skill building as well as confidence building. He received much individual attention and support. Several testing modifications were also written into his educational plan. R was allowed flexible scheduling and setting, as well as use of a scribe, typewriter or word processor.

A counseling support system was put into place this year as well. It was an opportunity for R to discuss his perceptions about school and his lack of achievement. The weekly sessions were designed to be informal and
non-threatening. Richard was not at all receptive.

Near the end of the school year, R was reviewed by the school's Committee on Special Education to determine a placement to meet his needs. While these needs were recognizable, school personnel were in a quandary as to how to service R. R's parents continued to be frustrated with him as well. They again expressed disappointment over his first grade retention. After lengthy discussion, the committee decided to send R to the high school with continued Special Education placement. He had demonstrated verbal competency in his subject areas and the committee felt he may be motivated to work if he was earning high school credit. With his promotion, R was returned to his original grade status. Everyone believed that this would be a tremendous confidence booster as well.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBTEST</th>
<th>STANINE #</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>RAW SCORE</th>
<th>NAT'L %TILE</th>
<th>LOCAL %TILE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Comp.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Concepts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Comp.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Applications</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Listening</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Math</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 shows R's seventh grade SAT scores. It should be noted here that R was extremely resistant to taking these tests. An aide sat beside him for the majority of the examination time.

SECONDARY

R continued his avoidance of written work at the high school. His anxiety level increased and he was often seen pacing. R still was lacking in self-motivation, despite his apparent desire to graduate. His interest in Reading remained high and he demonstrated marked verbal proficiency. R experienced sporadic success in his mainstream class areas. Math and Language Arts continued to give him the most difficulty.

An evaluation was conducted by the school psychologist in January of his freshman year in order to review R's continued eligibility for a handicapped label and the appropriateness of his program. R's scores on the WISC-R demonstrated above average language development and perceptual organizational skills. His only weakness was in the area of graphomotor skills. R's performance on the WRAT-R supported those weaknesses, particularly in Spelling and in the writing process. Social-emotional factors were assessed through the use of a sentence completion test and interview. R discussed positive
attitudes towards family and friends, but his attitudes and perceptions surrounding school and his academic abilities were very negative.

R failed the New York State competency test in Math that was administered at the conclusion of ninth grade. He accumulated only four course credits as well.

Tenth grade was a disaster for R. Ironically, the only courses that he passed were those courses which he failed his first year, Math and Gym. Failures were again attributable to the refusal to complete written work. He did use the word processor on occasions, but R was inconsistent in his own efforts to improve his keyboarding skill.

An attempt was made to counsel R. He deliberately missed appointments. When he did attend, he was extremely passive and uncooperative. R was not willing to share any meaningful dialogue. Eventually, counseling was dropped as a service for R.

The district Committee on Special Education determined that R's program was educationally appropriate, but concluded that there would probably be no significant change in R's achievement until he developed the intrinsic motivation and confidence in his academic ability. He will continue receiving Language Arts and Content Support in the Learning Center and the remainder of his program will be in the mainstream.
ANECDO TAL REMARKS

Teachers' perceptions of a student and the subsequent comments made by them often reveal much more about the student than mere classroom or testing performance may indicate. In order to understand one as a total learner, it is necessary to view all the complexities of that personality and style. Just as a doctor investigates all possibilities before diagnosing an illness and prescribing the appropriate treatment, an educator should evaluate a student through a multifaceted perspective.

It is this author's intent to paint a more complete portrait of R by reviewing several comments and reports filed by school professionals who have worked with R. Whenever possible, parental response and/or concern is related as well.

R's teacher arranged a parent conference to discuss her concerns for R and the possibility of retaining him in first grade. Mother was staunch in her concern that R and his brother would be in the same grade. When the teacher did recommend retention for R she stated, "I don't feel that retention will be detrimental at all, unless parental pressure becomes involved."

Following is a letter in response to a parental request made of R's second grade teacher:
"Dear Mrs.,

Last week you asked me to keep track of how often and how long R stared into space.

I found this an impossible task. I cannot keep track of R and still teach the other children.

R usually stays or just sits when I am working with other small groups. If his group is with me things are better. He may take longer to do things with the group, but he does it.

When left to do work on his own he varies. Last week he did fairly well Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday morning. By Thursday afternoon it was as if his concentration had been exhausted: he did next to nothing.

Other weeks he usually starts out Mondays with little done and he gradually picks up as the week progresses so that he gets many more things completed by Wednesday through Friday.

Again I am sorry I could not keep track of the staring, but to be fair to R I cannot even guess on the length of time. I do know the times vary depending on who or what catches his attention.

Sincerely,

R's third grade teacher made this comment on his last report card. She stated, "R has a great deal to offer verbally. I wish I could have motivated him to put more of
his thoughts, ideas, and knowledge on paper. I have enjoyed working with him in verbal discussions. He needs to develop self-motivation."

In response to total nonproductivity in all his classes, R was recommended for testing on a general referral. The guidance counselor described R as follows, "R is a totally uninvolved child. His parents and he were very resentful of the manner in which retention was handled. He shows no enthusiasm for any part of school. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to determine just what R does know."

The results of the testing brought a psychologist's recommendation of TRUST and word processing.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

R failed to meet minimum requirements on the Fifth Grade Writing Test and therefore received service from the Reading and Writing Center. His teacher's comments at mid-year follow. "R is a very intelligent boy who has become very defeated in the area of written expression. I have seen a very positive change in his attitude. He has been more alert and definitely more interested in trying to do something about his problem. Instead of going into his shell, he has asked for help more overtly. We can't expect to solve all of R's problems this year or change all the habits he has depended on for the past six years in school, but I do see a positive change in his whole overall
attitude. I really enjoy R. His ideas are very intelligent and he really relates well to individual attention."

"R is delightful. He was seen on four separate occasions to complete the testing. Even though I spaced the TOWL (Test of Written Language) over four days, R didn't complete the paragraph section. It was too much for him to think up a sequence of events much less write them." These comments are taken from a report of testing results when R was labeled as a Learning Disabled student during sixth grade.

The author recalls writing this entry in her classroom file on R. "The only successful method that I could come up with to keep R on task is to sit beside him with a water bottle and "squirt" him when he strays. He loves the attention and R is completing work." While not a long term solution, R remembers and talks about that even to this day.

SECONDARY

R's Industrial Arts teacher comments that, "He just stands around and talks. He is just not doing any work and doesn't seem to care."

On the other hand, his Physical Education teacher sees him as "someone who always tries."

R's Math teacher was in constant turmoil because of R's inconsistency. "If he tries, I will pass him. Somedays I
really think he knows what he is doing. Other days, I'm just not so sure."

The above notations are just a few representative samples. R has definitely left an impression on all who have known or worked with him.

**PROGNOSIS**

R is so bright, but very few people are aware of this fact. He absorbs information given in classes, but refuses to do written work. A wide range of strategies has been tried with R, but to date nothing has had sustained success. While determined to finish high school, R does not appear able to follow the steps necessary to achieve that goal.

R will continue to receive support for his writing disability as well as the appropriate testing modifications. Unfortunately, these services will not be sufficient. It is this author's belief that the pattern of failure will continue until either R quits school or he recognizes his need for counseling support. He needs to gain an awareness of his true strengths and weaknesses in academic areas. Unless R becomes intrinsically motivated to improve, no real progress can be achieved.
SUMMARY

The purpose of this case study was to review the background of an adolescent, learning disabled student. A secondary purpose of this study was to interpret the relationship of his writing aversion to his self-concept.

R is an average young man with a history of academic failure. Several members of his immediate family also experienced some type of difficulty in school. His family remains intact with both parents employed outside the home.

R demonstrated an aversion to writing as early as kindergarten. This has continued throughout his school years. He was totally non-productive, passive and indifferent. Although he performed at above average levels on many standardized tests, he was unable to transfer this ability into daily written classwork.

R was placed in a variety of programs designed to support his special academic needs. These included Math Center, Reading and Writing Center and the Learning Center. Attempts were also made to support his non-academic needs through counseling. None of these programs brought the success that had been desired.

CONCLUSION

There appears to be an underlying correlation between R's mother's lack of school achievement and R's similiar
lack of success. A pattern of failure is clearly established. Mother expressed concern at many conferences throughout his school years about R following in her footsteps.

R and two brothers have been tested by school personnel and all achieved at least average level ability scores. This indicates each of them should be able to function within the average range. Therefore, lack of ability is not an attributable cause for lack of achievement in these siblings. Information on mother's ability level was not available to this author.

R was determined to be disabled in the areas of Writing and Spelling. R's youngest brother is currently being tested for a disability. The understanding of Learning Disabilities was not clear during the time when mother was struggling in school.

While there is no apparent history of mental instability in R's family, there are strong indications of poor academic confidence. Mother had a great deal of difficulty in school. She felt everyone accused her of not trying when she thought that she was. She continues to have a hard time dealing with her own educational experience. Mother also displays much anxiety over her children's performance in school, but can not be a real support because of her lack of self-esteem. For much of R's school career, she credited the school's retention of R in first
grade as the main reason for his lack of success. All the siblings have demonstrated this lack of academic confidence with passivity or disruptive behavior. None of them have experienced much academic success.

R demonstrates many negative perceptions of himself in his ability to accomplish school tasks. It is this author's contention that some of these were in place before R even started school. R was aware of his deficiency and internalized a very negative opinion of his academic abilities. He developed a network of avoidance tactics to keep him from the painful realization that he was lacking in writing skill. By avoiding writing, he avoided evaluation of what he deemed was inferior work. Teachers' expressions of frustration over his refusal to complete written were easier for R to handle than a possible criticism of something he had tried to write.

The only possibility of R breaking this pattern is from within him. This author believes he needs extensive support through counseling to tackle this problem head-on. With an understanding of himself and his feelings about school, he may be able to break the chain of non-achievement.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

The implications for further study are wide ranged. While this study was case specific, it indicated the need for continued research into young people's perceptions of their academic abilities. A better understanding of a
student’s confidence level in this area and its relationship to achievement might be useful in preventing a pattern of failure similar to that seen in R’s case.

This study also suggests a need for research into the development of self-esteem groups as an alternative support system within the educational program for at-risk students. A longitudinal study of low academic confident students could provide clues to the value of such support. It could also indicate the most opportune timing for such intervention.

Finally, this review emphasizes the continued need for varied teaching strategies to meet the individual learning needs of all students. The development of alternative approaches to education should be a focus for future research.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDICES
Rough Draft

I was 8 when I started playing First Pitch Baseball at the Helton Town Hall.

But when you play First Pitch Baseball, you get hit by the ball, muddy by sliding. I have also played Right Field, Left Field, and Short Stop. There is all positions. I struckout the first few games, but I hit the home run. But before that I had only batting and sliding.
I was nine when I started baseball at the town hall
I learn to field, bat, and slide
but when you field it's hard. It's hard because you have to cover a big space.
bating is fairly easy because all you have is swing. And sliding is very easy you just slide. NOW the games have begun
and we won. time goes on. Last game of the season. I am up two outs two strikes three balls I swong home run.
And that's how I got started.
George Bush was reading a Garfield comic when going to Japan to fight for rice he got two pounds of juicy rice. Bob said no send it back. He did and then to days latter Bob got a phone call from the US Energy he had won nobel peace prize.

FINAL DRAFT

George Bush was reading a Garfield comic when he was going to Japan to fight for rice he got two pounds of juicy rice but Bob said no send it back. He did and then he had won nobel peace prize.
APPENDIX C
RE-EVALUATION OF FIFTH GRADE TEST
SIXTH GRADE ADMINISTRATION

Date 5-15-87

One day I drank some thing and suddenly I was invisible! So I decided to play pranks in Mike's way. He was a nerd, I followed him one day, and that's when the good stuff started. As he walked into his house I tripped him and he fell at the floor. His face and his new white tennis shoes and all them all muddy! The his Father came home and the his shoes under the couch and killed him well. I didn't kill him but he was hurt lies.

By the next day I had played every trick in the book. I was getting bored. I thought being invisible would never get boring. So I walked me. When I got home I thought of something how am I going to be invisible again?
The Disaster at the Shoe Store

It was a cold winter day, and I was mowing the shoe store when somebody came in with her 3 kids to get winter boots. She told me to bring football and short the football at me. I fell with boots in my hand, and while flying, I hit the shelf and it fell over. One of the boots hit one of the girls. They let me go, and my boss walked in and said, "You delivered without pay. Before you leave, pick up this mess!"

I'll need to hire a bulldozer to clean up this mess. I'll have to find another job at a shoe store.

The End
APPENDIX E
NINTH GRADE RESEARCH PROJECT
INTRODUCTION

THE BMX BICYCLE WASN'T POPULAR UNTIL THE 1970'S. KIDS IN CALIFORNIA BEGAN TO COPY MOTORCYLE DAREDEVILS BY RACING THEIR BIKES ON HILLS AND VACANT LOTS WHERE THEY LIVED. BMX MEANS BICYCLE MOTORCROSS WHICH IS A COMBINATION OF MOTORCYLE AND CROSS COUNTRY.

TODAY 40% OF ALL KIDS HAVE BMX'S. 3 MILLION BOYS AND GIRLS OWN THEM. BMX RACING HAS BECOME A POPULAR ACTIVITY. FREESTYLING IS ALSO ANOTHER KIND OF RIDING THAT OWNERS OF BMX'S BECOME INVOLVED WITH. I WILL BE DISCUSSING BOTH TYPES OF ACTIVITIES, BMX RACING AND FREESTYLING AS WELL AS MAINTENANCE OF A BMX.

BMX RACING WAS FOUNDED IN 1939. BOYS AND GIRLS OF ALL AGES RACE BMX'S. THERE ARE RACES FOR THE BIKES IN EVERY STATE. A BMX CAN RACE IN EXCESS OF 30 MPH. THE MAIN FEATURE OF THE COURSE IS THE "TABLETOP". IT IS A JUMP WITH A FLAT TOP. IT SENDS PEOPLE SOARING IN THE AIR.

RACERS ARE DIVIDED INTO BEGINNER, NOVICE, EXPERT AND PRO. AGE CLASSIFICATIONS RANGE FROM 6 AND UNDER TO 17 AND OVER. THE BMX COMPETITORS AND THEIR PARENTS ARE OBSESSED WITH WINNING RACES. OF COURSE, THEY PAY $200.00 TO OVER $1,000.00 FOR A BIKE. RIDERS ENTER FOR TROPHIES OR BIKE SHOP CERTIFICATES.

A RACER FIRST NEEDS TO BECOME VERY ACQUAINTED WITH THE BIKE. HE NEEDS TO KNOW ALL THE PARTS ON IT, HOW IT FEELS WHEN MAKING TURNS ON HARD OR SOFT GROUND, HOW TO KEEP UP SPEED WHILE MAKING A TURN AND HOW TO USE HAND BRAKES INSTEAD OF COASTER BRAKES.

TRACKS ARE ANYWHERE FROM 600 TO 1400 FEET. THE TWISTING, TURNING ROUTE EACH TRACK TAKES IS USUALLY BORDERED BY BALES OF HAY AND AUTO TIRES. NO TWO BMX TRAILS ARE EXACTLY ALIKE BUT ALL HAVE SIMILAR
CHARACTERISTICS THAT ARE MEANT TO TEST RIDER'S SKILLS. THERE IS A HOLDING PIT AT ONE END OF THE TRACK FOR THE BIKERS TO STORE THEIR BIKES. THERE IS A BIKE INSPECTION BEFORE THE RACE AND THERE ARE MOTO SHEETS TO TELL YOU WHEN YOU WILL BE RACING.

SOME OF THE RULES INCLUDE BIKE WHEEL SIZE, NUMBER PLATES MUST BE VISIBLE, IT MUST HAVE STANDARD MOTORCROSS HANDLEBARS, NO SIDE STANDS OR CHAIN GUARDS, TIRES MUST HAVE TREAD, AXLES CANNOT PROTRUDE MORE THAN 1/4".

FREESTYLING ENTHUSIASTS OFTEN BUILD RAMPS IN THEIR BACKYARDS TO ENABLE THEM TO DO ROLLBACKS, KICKTURNS AND AERIALS. QUARTER OR HALFPIPES ARE USED IN FREESTYLING ALONG WITH THE CALIFORNIA SEWER PIPES. RIDERS WHIZ UP AND DOWN THE SIDES. OLD POOLS ARE ALSO USED BY FREESTYLING BIKERS. FREESTYLING CAN BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN JUST RACING BECAUSE THE RIDER PUTS HIMSELF MORE AT RISK WITH INTRICATE TURNS AND JUMPS MORE FREQUENTLY.

MOST RIDERS USE CALIPHER BRAKES TO DO THEIR TRICKS, ALTHOUGH SOME RIDERS PREFER COASTER BRAKES TO DO SPECIFIC STUNTS LIKE THE WHEELIE, CURB ENDO, RAMP RIDING AND FLYING.

BMX MAINTENANCE AND PARTS INCLUDES HANDLEBARS, WHEELS, NECKS, SPOKES, HUBS, TIRES, RIMS, BEARINGS, FRAME, FORK, LUG NUTS, SPROCKETS, CRANKS, AND PEDALS. MAINTENANCE IS FAIRLY SIMPLE IF YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING. TO KEEP A BMX IN GOOD WORKING ORDER YOU HAVE TO KNOW ALL THE PARTS, HAVE THE RIGHT TOOLS, AND KNOW HOW. IF YOU MESS UP IN MAINTENANCE, YOU CAN GET INTO BIG TROUBLE DURING A RACE. I HAVE SEEN SOME TERRIBLE ACCIDENTS BECAUSE THE BIKE WASN'T PROPERLY CHECKED. (RECENTLY, SOMEONE'S FRONT WHEEL Fell OFF AND THE FORKS PENETRATED HIS STOMACH). IF YOU DO IT RIGHT, YOUR BIKE WILL GO FASTER AND BE LIGHTER. THERE ARE THINGS TO DO LIKE GREASING AND OILING PARTS,
TIGHTENING THE LUG NUTS AND BOLTS, CAREFULLY TIGHTEN THE SPOKES SO THAT THE RIM DOESN'T GET BENT, TIGHTENING THE CHAIN, HANDLEBARS ETC. CHECK THE GEAR RATIOS OF THE SPROCKETS.

BMX RIDING AND RACING TAKES A LOT OF TIME, ENERGY AND MONEY, BUT IT IS ALL WORTH IT. IT'S A GOOD WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR ATHLETIC SKILLS, MEET NEW PEOPLE, TRAVEL AROUND THE U.S. AND FEEL GOOD ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH. RACING, RIDING, AND MAINTAINING A BMX HAS IMPROVED MY QUALITY OF LIVING AND TAUGHT ME A LOT.
APPENDIX F

TIPS FOR HELPING STUDENTS COPE

WITH WRITING ANXIETY

Respect students.
Create a supportive classroom environment—to reduce threat and fear.

Help students understand the writing process.
Break the process into steps and slow down the process to allow students to deal with cognitive constraints by giving attention to one aspect at a time.

Encourage planning.
Stress the recursive nature of the writing process.
Teach the students that writing is a messy process; allow students to be messy in writing.
Encourage students not to edit too soon.
Encourage revision. Teach strategies for revision. Perhaps give another grade for revision.

Integrate study of mechanics into the study of composition.
De-emphasize correctness until students are comfortable with the process of composing.

Design realistic specific prompts.
Give more attention to invention or generating ideas for writing.
Give more attention to audience for writing.
Provide examples or samples, not models, for writing.
Use student samples of writing.
Allow students to pace their own work.
Make expectations clear to students; take the mystery out of assignments and criteria for grades.

De-emphasize grades.
Provide assistance to the students during the writing process.
Initiate individual conferences and tutoring sessions.
Develop and use guidelines for self-evaluation of writing.
Develop and use guidelines for peer response to writing.
Understand the relationship of the affective to the cognitive.

Teach to change student's attitudes as well as to improve their writing abilities.
Use the workshop model for the classroom: it facilitates all of these suggestions.

APPENDIX G

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR

LESSENING WRITING ANXIETY

Free Writing
Looping
Journals
Brainstorming
Identifying a Question as a Starting Point
Problem Solving
Scenarios
Cases
Simulation Games
Peer Response to Writing
Peer Group Discussion and Study
Group Writing
Group Editing
Self-Evaluation
Emulation
Sentence Combining
Exploration for discovering a subject & for generating ideas