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ABSTRACT

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THE EFFECT OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION  
UPON THE SELF-CONCEPT-OF-ACADEMIC ABILITY, SIGNIFICANT OTHERS  
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This research utilizes Brookover's social-psychological theory of learning by evaluating the level and/or change in self-concept-of-academic ability, significant others and academic significant others of 121 black and white compensatory education students.

As a result of exposure to compensatory education there was a significant positive change in self-concept-of-academic ability for compensatory education students in general, as well as for blacks and whites. Males and females also had a significant positive change.

The students identified parents, teachers, relatives, friends, offspring, spouse and themselves as significant and academic significant others. There were significant changes in offspring, friends, teachers, spouse and themselves as significant other, and themselves, spouse, offspring and relatives as academic significant others as a result of compensatory education.

The Effect of Compensatory Education Upon the  
Self-Concept-of-Academic Ability, Significant  
Others, and Academic Significant Others of  
Black and White Pre-College Students\*

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The symbolic interactionist theory, with respect to the development of an individual's self-concept, is based upon the theoretical works of Cooley (1900) and Mead (1934). Briefly, the general theory states that self-concept is that organization of qualities that the individual attributes to himself, with the conception of himself emerging from social interaction which in turn guides, or influences, the behavior of the individual.

Brookover (1950) has superimposed Mead's interpretation of human interaction regarding self-concept to the school learning situation. Brookover (1964) concludes that:

- (1) Persons learn to behave in ways that each considers appropriate to himself.
- (2) Appropriateness of behavior is defined by each person through the internalization of expectations of "significant others."
- (3) The functional limits of one's ability to learn are determined by his self-conception, or self-image, as acquired through symbolic interaction.
- (4) The individual learns what he believes "significant others" expect him to learn in the classroom and other situations.

Brookover (1964) stresses that:

"...when applied to the specific school learning situation, a relevant aspect of self-concept is the person's conception of his own ability to learn the accepted types of academic behavior."

Brookover (1965) has also investigated the nature of self-concept-of-academic ability and its effects upon the school achievement of a class of white urban students from grades seven through twelve. Brookover concludes that:

- (1) Self-concept of ability is a significant factor in achievement at all levels, seventh through tenth grades.
- (2) The perceived evaluations of significant others are a major factor in self-concept-of-academic ability at each grade level, eighth

through tenth.

- (3) Change and/or stability in perceived evaluations of significant others is associated with change and/or stability in self-concept.

This investigation, by studying the consequences of compensatory education placement on certain socially mediated social psychological constructs, like self-concept-of-academic ability, and significant others, emphasizes the social consequences of being labelled a compensatory education student. Thus, this research focuses upon the following research problems:

- (1) What happens to the self-concept-of-academic ability of students engaged in compensatory education?
- (2) Who are the "significant others" and "academic significant others" of compensatory education students?
- (3) Is the change in self-concept-of-academic ability similar for black and white compensatory education students?

These questions are important since their answers will supply insight into the social processes which influences the success or failure of expensive compensatory education students.

#### Method of Research

##### Sample:

The population consists of 188 compensatory education students that entered the SEEK program at the State University College at Buffalo in September, 1968. However, the final sample consists of 71 males and 50 females, 108 blacks and 13 whites. A sample of 15 black and 15 regular college freshmen were selected at random for comparative purposes.

##### Materials:

The scales utilized were the Brookover Self-Concept-of-Academic Ability Scale, the Significant Others Test and Academic Significant Others Test.

##### Instruments:

The Brookover Self-Concept-of-Academic Ability Scale is an eight-item Guttman scale with a score of 8.000 indicating that the student has a "poor" conception of his own academic ability, a score of 16.000 indicates a "below

average" conception, 24.000 an "average" conception, 32.000 an "above average" conception, and, 40.000 emphasizing a "superior" conception. The Brookover scale has coefficients of reproducibility of .95 for males and .96 for females. In addition, the scale has reliabilities calculated by Hoyt's Analysis of Variance of .82, .91, .92, and .96 for males, and .77, .84, .84, and .84 for females.

#### Procedure:

The Brookover Self-Concept-of-Academic Ability Scale, the Significant Others Test, and the Academic Significant Others Test were administered to the entire compensatory education student population prior to their enrollment in compensatory education, but after actual acceptance, in August, 1968. The post test was administered to 121, of the original 188, compensatory education students in May, 1969.

#### Analysis:

All hypotheses related to self-concept-of-academic ability, and significant and academic significant others were tested for significance by utilizing and multivariate analysis of variance with planned orthogonal comparisons. Classification factors were race (black-white) and sex (male-female). A functioning computer program for univariate and multivariate analysis of variance with unequal subclass frequencies by lease squares was utilized. Rejection level was set at .05 for all hypotheses.

#### Hypotheses

1. There will be a change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores of compensatory education students from Test 1 to Test 2.
2. There will be no difference in the change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores between black and white compensatory education students from Test 1 to Test 2.
3. Those named as significant others and academic significant others by compensatory education students at Test 1 will change in frequency of identification at Test 2.

Results

Table 7 indicates that when all respondents are combined, compensatory education students and regular college students, there is a significant positive change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores from Test 1 and Test 2.

However, there was no significant difference in the change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores between black and white regular or compensatory education students. And, there was no significant difference in the change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores between regular college and compensatory education students.

Table I. An Analysis of Variance of the Pre-Post Test Mean Self-Concept-of Academic Ability Scores for the Total Group, and By Race and College Status.

	Total Group	Race	College Status
Means Squared	29.3472	5.8695	.0111
Univariate F	6.8125	1.3625	.0026
Pre-Post Probability for regular college and compensatory education students	.0101*	.2452	.9596

\*  $p < .05$

Thus, Hypothesis I is rejected because there was no significant difference in the change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores between regular college students and compensatory education students. However, it must be stressed that there was a significant change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores from Test 1 to Test 2 for the total group of students tested. Therefore, the compensatory education students did have a significant positive change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores from Test 1 to Test 2, but, so did the regular college student sample.

Table I, as previously noted, indicates that there was a significant positive change in the mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores of compensatory education students, as well as regular college students, from Test 1 to Test 2. Table I also points out that although there is a significant positive change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores for compensatory education students, there is no significant difference in the changes in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores between black and white students. Thus, Hypothesis II is accepted in that there is no difference in the change in mean self-concept-of-academic ability scores between black and white compensatory education students.

To elicit from the respondents which persons they perceived as significant others they were asked, "Who are the people that you feel are important in your life?" These responses were categorized into seven groups: parents, offsprings, relatives, friends, teacher, spouse and themselves.

Table II indicates that during regular college enrollment or enrollment in a compensatory education program there was no significant difference in the changes from Test 1 to Test 2 when identifying parents, relatives, friends, and spouse as significant others between compensatory education students and regular college students. There was a significant difference in the changes from Test 1 to Test 2 between compensatory education students and regular college students when identifying significant others for the categories of offspring, teacher and themselves. All these changes were significant for compensatory education students.

Table II. Percentage and Changes in Persons Named as Significant Others by Compensatory Education Students and Regular College Students For Pre and Post Tests.

Significant Others	Compensatory Education Students		Regular College Students		Pre-Post Probability for Compensatory Education and Regular College Students Combined
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
parent	84	84	90	94	.9122
offspring	24	40	00	00	.0499*
relative	53	53	82	76	.5594
friend	45	53	82	71	.0811
teacher	17	49	29	29	.0360*
spouse	01	21	00	00	.3851
self	01	61	00	00	.0001*

\*  $p < .05$

To elicit from the respondents which persons they perceived as academic significant others they asked, "Who are the people that you feel are concerned with how well you do in school?" These responses were also grouped into seven categories; parents, offspring, relatives, friends, teacher, spouse and themselves.

Table III. Percentage and Changes in Persons Named as Academic Significant Others by Regular College Students and Compensatory Education Students For Pre and Post-Test.

Academic Significant Others	Compensatory Education Students		Regular College Students		Pre-Post Probability for Compensatory Education and Regular College Students Combined
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
parent	78	73	94	94	.839
offspring	12	19	00	00	.724
relative	33	40	53	47	.593
friend	39	40	59	59	.975
teacher	39	44	53	47	.783
spouse	01	16	00	01	.766
self	01	55	00	00	.001*

\*  $p < .05$

Table III points out that during regular college enrollment, or enrollment in a compensatory education program there was no significant changes in the categories of parents, offspring, relatives, friend, teacher, and spouse by either regular college students or compensatory education students. However, there was a significant increase in the academic significant other category of self for the compensatory education students.

Thus, Hypothesis III is rejected for the categories of parent, relative, friend and spouse as significant others by compensatory education students, and accepted for the categories of offspring, teacher and themselves. Hypothesis III is also rejected for the categories of parent, offspring, relative, friend, teacher and spouse as academic significant others by compensatory education students and accepted for the category of themselves.

#### Significance of Study

These questions are important since their answers supply additional insight into the social processes which influence the success or failure of expensive compensatory education program. The answers also expand Brookover's social psychological theory of learning beyond the traditional K-12 level. The significance of this research is threefold. Brookover (1965) has illustrated that the constructs from the symbolic interaction theory is relevant to understanding the academic achievement of students in regular classes, the application to the compensatory education situation may provide a theoretically based explanation of success or failure of compensatory education students. Two, it explores conditions associated with change in self-concept-of-academic ability which, if identified, may be altered to facilitate the learning students enrolled in compensatory education. Three, it examines the generality of the basic tenets of Brookover's social theory of learning.

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