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DESCRIPTIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM AMONG WOMEN IN A GENERAL
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) PROGRAM

DISSERTATION

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By

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This research investigated changes in self-esteem and whether the origin and development of that self-esteem could be described in adult females participating in a GED program located at an Army Community Outreach Center.

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was used to measure the self-esteem of 22 female family members of military personnel who did not adequately complete a high school program in the United States. Data were collected through interviews, daily journal writings, questionnaires, instructor's written observations, and the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.

The descriptors of the changes in self-esteem provide educators with insight into instructional procedures that could efficiently and effectively develop self-esteem in GED students. Adults who gained a more positive self-esteem while in an academic environment were more willing to continue their education while reducing emotional blocks to learning. Adult educators should formulate strategies which help students develop support systems within the classroom

thus enhancing academic skills and social acceptance which lend to the development of higher self-esteem. Also, educators must recognize self-esteem enhancement as a vital component of the total GED instructional program and must establish educational objectives emphasizing the development of positive self-esteem for the adult learner.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Educational Development (GED) examination programs educate adults who have not completed high school and need remediation in mathematics, reading, English, social studies, and science to pass the high school equivalency examination.

The ultimate goal of a GED program is to develop or remediate deficient skills and to direct the individual toward developing goals. These educational programs should assist the adult in coping with anxiety, low self-esteem, and general inferiority feelings concerning abilities to succeed in the classroom and in society. The student's failure in achieving the recognized American standards of success frequently lead to discouragement and may result in a complete resignation to ominous fate (Ulmer, 1979, p. 19). Adults who enter these programs may be expected to have low self-esteem and be pessimistic about their academic abilities to learn. Thus, motivation to set realistic goals, to seek new learning experiences, and to reverse negative attitudes toward school and self are essential in the learning process of the educationally disadvantaged adult.

The military wife is in an unique situation. She is constantly exposed to circumstances where her spouse may suddenly be sent away for days, weeks, or months. In many instances, she is given short notice for assuming total family responsibilities, creating stress and frustration. The female family member (known as "dependent") may doubt her ability to cope with the financial responsibility (which in most instances is maintained by the spouse) or her "smarts" in handling problems. These women are truly "dependents," dependent on others to maintain continuity. This can be expected to further reduce self-esteem. In addition, the woman is likely to experience isolation within the community. She may feel she is always the unwelcome outsider. She does not know how to inquire about (much less use) the existing resources available to diminish this isolation. Such negative feelings reinforce her already low self-esteem. For many, the completion of the GED program is the first successful educational experience. It may even be the first experience of completing something on her own with her own skills and abilities. Specifically for these women, helping them believe in "self" may provide a dramatic and far-reaching domino effect upon their relationships with their families and on their interaction with society.

Statement of the Problem

Is there a measurable difference in self-esteem experienced by military female family members as a result of

participating in a GED program located at an Army Community Outreach Center and can the origin and development of that self-esteem be described?

Research Questions

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the following research questions were answered:

1. Will scores on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory increase after passing the GED and course completion?
2. Can the factors that a student attributes to changing her perception of success in the course be identified?
3. Will these factors be similar for all students or will they vary among the students?
4. To what factors will students attribute their changed attitudes?
5. Will the instructor's perception of changes in student's self-esteem and attitudes be congruent with student reports of when and what factors influenced change?

Significance of the Study

This study was significant because it identified and described the development of self-esteem of adult women in a GED class. No studies were reported in the literature which have attempted to accomplish this. The description of the changes in self-esteem provides educators with insight into instructional procedures that may or should speed the efficiency and effectiveness of the development of self-esteem among adults who do not have a high school diploma.

Educators know that self-esteem develops within some clients, but chronological examination of the changes in self-esteem may result in understanding how to improve instruction so that a greater number of students in a classroom develop self-esteem earlier in the instructional process.

Definitions of Terms

1. GED - General Educational Development. An educational program directed toward adults functioning at or above the eighth-grade level who wish to take the GED examination and earn a high school equivalency diploma. Areas tested are: social studies, science, English, mathematics, and reading.
2. Self-esteem - An evaluation a person makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself or herself. Self-esteem expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which a person believes himself or herself capable, significant, successful, and worthy. Self-esteem is a judgement of worthiness that is expressed by the attitudes he or she holds toward self (Coopersmith, 1986, p. 5).

Delimitations

1. The population was limited to military (active duty) female family members who did not adequately complete a high school program in the United States.

2. The educational program was limited to the GED program at the Reynolds House facility located on Ft. Hood, Texas.

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- Ulmer, Curtis. (1979). Teaching the disadvantaged adult. Washington, DC: National Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Education, as a process, ideally builds upon all the adult's daily experiences. By addressing the multiple needs of the disadvantaged learner, the adult educator helps the adult acquire knowledge and move toward self-actualization (Long, 1982). Teaching basic skills is essential for the disadvantaged adult, but opportunities for social interaction, community awareness and involvement, and exposure to the liberal arts are also necessary.

"Self-esteem is a process of evolution" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 205). One does not develop healthy, positive self-esteem in isolation but rather through gradual and evaluative processes enveloping our experiences within our environment. These are all part of the "self" which strives for recognition. The adult must be made aware that education is an opportunity for opening new avenues for one's self and family. Frey and Carlock characterize self-esteem as the degree to which one values self; this self-esteem is the "fertilizer which nourishes one's talents, resources, and abilities" (1989, p. 11). "Self-esteem refers to negative, positive, neutral and/or ambiguous judgments that one places on the self concept. It is an evaluation of the emotional,

intellectual, and behavioral aspects of self concept" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 7).

Coopersmith (1986, p. 5) defines self-esteem as the evaluation a person makes and customarily maintains with regard to him or herself. 'Self-esteem' expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which a person believes himself/herself capable, significant, successful, and worthy. A person's self-esteem is a judgment of worthiness that is expressed by the attitudes he/she holds toward the self. It is a subjective experience conveyed to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior.

"Self-esteem is vital to our psychological health. It is that trait that gives us a proper perspective on ourselves and our fellow human beings. It helps us identify ourselves and respect ourselves for what we are and can become" (Bergevin, 1967, p. 78). Feeling worthy is a significant part of positive self-esteem. It encompasses the feeling of self-respect and affirming one's self in one's environment (Frey and Carlock, 1989). When a person forms a concept of self, that person is defining himself or herself based upon past, present, and potential future experiences. "Status and role are basic to understanding self-esteem because they tell the individual what he/she is entitled to, obligated to do, and how he/she should feel about self when he/she does it" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 379). How one feels about one's

self influences patterns of behavior, ability for goal setting, planning, interaction, and socialization within the environment.

The "level of an individual's self-esteem rises as needs arise and are satisfied" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 109). The phasic increases and decreases in self-esteem bring about substantial changes in the pleasure and pain balance within an individual. Positive increases in self-esteem manifest themselves in the adult through feelings of affection, alertness, calmness, clear-mindedness, directed motivation, energy, freedom, happiness, security, and spontaneity. When the adult experiences a decrease in self-esteem, negative emotions of "unhappiness, anger, threat, fatigue, withdrawal, tension, disorganization, feelings of restraint, conflict, and inhibition" (Epstein, 1985, p. 288) are intensified.

In the findings of Frey and Carlock it is noted "Women tend to internalize their oppressors, blaming their unhappiness on some 'flaw' inside themselves rather than being able to distinguish between psychological and social determinants" (Frey and Carlock 1989, p. 380). The authors examined the relationship between self-esteem and the types of change manifested. Low, negative self-esteem produced behavior in which the adult would "provoke negative changes and/or take responsibility inappropriately for some negative changes" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 273). In many cases, abused spouses believed they warranted the abuse because their

actions, behavior, or appearances were not adequate in the judgment of the abuser. They viewed themselves as failing to meet the abuser's standards and warranted discipline in some form. The woman with low self-esteem believes herself to be inadequate in assuming or maintaining control over her life and therefore relinquishes that control to others.

Frey and Carlock (1989) find that individuals with self-esteem problems tend to overuse self-evaluation and to devalue themselves by placing excessive judgments upon their actions or behaviors. This adult formulates the concept of not being fully adequate in any realm of her life whether it be physical or mental, nor does she feel adept at instigating changes to do so. Research by Frey and Carlock (1989) also indicates that females of all ages typically devalue their own competence in comparison with their actual abilities. In many cases, it appears that individuals with low self-esteem cannot identify at what time in their lives that deterioration of self-esteem began. Basically, it has been a factor that has existed in their life-style.

Markus and Wurf (1987) note "self" as being a reflection of one's social experiences while Epstein (1985) theorizes that a person's self-esteem is the incorporation of the views and actions of others within that person's environment. In addition, Frey and Carlock make several interesting discoveries regarding the individual's interaction with her environment. They find that "those individuals with low self-esteem

readily accept any feedback as if they were 'sponges,' believing and absorbing everything that is told to them as if it were essentially true" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 192). These individuals have difficulty distinguishing between fact and opinion as their low self-esteem negates any possible positive interpretation. Frey and Carlock (1989) helped their clients interpret feedback through the process of intervention by which individuals are taught to evaluate and accept what they believe is true about themselves and to identify what is a projection of someone else. Markus and Wurf (1987) recognize feedback as having direct impact upon the development of self-esteem. Positive affective consequences happen when feedback is congruent with one's affirmation and conceptualization of self.

"Chronic low self-esteem is a common problem in cultures such as ours, where self-worth is made to hinge on access to or possession of unequally distributed material and symbolic resources" (Schwalbe, 1988, p. 33). Unfortunately, many women are in situations in which they are neither "possessors" of material goods (i.e., ownership of land, houses, etc.) nor able to gain exemplified leadership positions. Overall, women have resources defined by their marital status, which for many disadvantaged adult women, has a negative impact upon positive growth and advancement. Frey and Carlock (1989) find that women who have few self-enhancing resources become dependent upon those limited resources and

are hesitant to seek additional resources. Work, home, or recreational environments all have a direct, strong influence over those individuals lacking in self-esteem (Frey and Carlock, 1989). Women, especially those with low self-esteem, have difficulty recognizing their accomplishments when that recognition conflicts with negative, limiting personal beliefs (Frey and Carlock, 1989).

"Maturation in the female is forestalled when she is not encouraged to shift from environmental support to self-support and taught the skills to do so" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 401). Individuals seeking to change behaviors are being assisted by mental health workers to comprehend that successful behavior management includes not only employing the right strategies, but knowing how and when to use them (Markus and Wurf, 1987).

"For the woman, self-esteem must be examined in the context of her family and of the culture in which she was reared" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 380). For those individuals who feel they have limited control over their lives, the expectations of family and culture take precedence over personal goals or objectives. Often the women transfer, through marriage, from a situation of family dominance to spouse dominance. The marriage continues the same situation but with a new cast of players in a new setting.

A suggested topic at either workshops or educational classes for women with low self-esteem would be various

social and environmental explanations for low self-esteem in women (Frey and Carlock, 1989). Each woman should be encouraged to examine those influences upon her own situation and conflicts. She could then better determine the methods to pursue which would best rectify her discord. "Importantly, each woman needs to uncover and analyze the influence of family scripting and societal scripting in maintaining her low self-esteem" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 380). "If people can come to understand how they maintain a negative self image, by what processes, by what internal representational systems, they can more effectively short circuit the effects" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 141).

Another major theoretical presupposition suggests that each adult has a fragile "self" to be recognized yet protected. Education, as a philosophical enterprise, may be viewed as a process which establishes the adult as a real person, an educated someone. With the attainment of this stage, the adult should progress to the final, highest level of needs, that of self-actualization. Self-actualization means actualizing one's potential, becoming everything one is capable of becoming (Knowles, 1980). Maslow himself questioned whether educators could teach for self-actualization while at the same time develop academic competencies. The paradox consists of academic goals conflicting with or restraining the development of the total human being. He thought it was possible, although difficult, to integrate the

two goals. For example, the teacher's role of evaluator in competency education is often seen as incompatible with the humanistic role (McNeil, 1985). However, the successful program intricately integrates academics and personal development and allows the student freedom to set personal goals, to direct the course of her future, and to develop a healthy awareness of self.

Illiterate adults may feel pressure to minimize their strengths (Fingeret, 1983). The successes are minimized and passed off as flukes of luck. Past experiences and failures surface and undermine the foundations of confidence. There is a sense of helplessness experienced by the adult who believes that personal actions cannot change or improve "fate" within society. "Avoiding self-esteem loss or threats to more valued self-perceptions may lead people to engage in self-handicapping, self-defeating actions prior to a performance to provide a ready-made excuse for failure" (Markus and Wurf, 1987, p. 320). The adult believes and lives the notion that actions speak louder than words. The results are the most pessimistic thinking of all: I am illiterate and without educational skills; therefore, I must abide in a bondage derived from illiteracy. I cannot go beyond the walls created by my limitations.

Adulthood is characterized by periods of stability and periods of change. Managing transitions (i.e., marriage, employment, retirement) are intricately related to attitudes

which one holds in regard to self (Frey and Carlock, 1989). If an individual maintains a positive self-esteem, these transitions may more likely be viewed in terms of "new adventures or exploration of opportunities." According to Frey and Carlock (1989) an individual with more positive self-esteem will initiate life changes resulting in exploration and expansion of the self. With higher self-esteem, one is better able to judge incoming experiences and assess their potential effects upon the self. Many adult education students, specifically GED students, are examples of this personal growth. The completion of the GED is viewed as an "opening of the door to the future" which they had believed otherwise closed. By completing the GED the student gains confidence in self which can act as a catalyst to seek more challenging experiences.

Need for change is not always readily acknowledged or actively pursued. "One reason for the resistance to change is that changing self-esteem develops an identity crisis for the person. Changing one's self-image can have a ripple effect which could threaten other parts of the person's life" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 211). The learners must face facts for which they may have inadequate skills to either evaluate or change.

Those individuals with low self-esteem are more negative and are overpowered with a sense of failure. The person with low self-esteem may not consider failure an evaluative

teaching tool but rather an affirmation of inadequate skills or abilities. In contrast, "The higher one's self-esteem, the more able is one to cope with negative transitions" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 273). Transitory events which stimulate change offer great potential for continued growth and development, and changes in a person's life are most likely to result in systematic learning experiences (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982). It may be presupposed that individuals innately need to achieve complete self-identity through developing their full potential. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs categorizes these needs into five stages of development. He hypothesized the fourth necessary stage as seeking esteem needs, a need to respect one's self.

Bergevin (1967) finds that adults who know something about themselves and their need to develop as social beings as well as individuals become better learners. He finds most adults tend to respond to persistent and appropriate teaching methods which respond to personal needs and not goals or needs of the instructor or the educational establishment. The educator is a facilitator to the adult, assisting the adult in identifying personal needs and, in a partnership, developing and initiating flexible learning experiences to secure established goals.

"School is the second most important environment in the development of self concept" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 23). Self-esteem is a fragile component of that self concept.

School can positively reinforce that arena which challenges the evolving self or it can diminish personal growth in the same way that negative factors in the learner's total environment have.

Education for the educationally disadvantaged adult should not follow traditional adult education methods. The adult requires assistance to recognize learning as a lifelong process (Knowles, 1971). The adult learner is handicapped by both the lack of adequate job skills and a low self-esteem which prohibits the acceptance of normal necessary life changes. The learner, because of past experiences, seems to believe the mind has somehow remained at the same level or capacity as it was at the time in which she dropped out of school. "Students need to be encouraged by teachers to develop the belief that the ability to learn is an ever improving capacity" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 23). Adults have for too long lived by the old adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." Technological advancement has disproved this antiquated philosophy as people are returning to the educational realms to be "retooled" to meet the new demands of work.

The disadvantaged adult is often not prepared for the self-directed learning styles found in middle-class society. In a pilot study, a majority of the adults stated that as school-children they never felt involved in any learning experience. They stated that they sat in the classroom and

attempted to obey their teachers. As students they did not make the mental connection with the directed purposes of educational experiences; they may have gradually begun to interpret educational experience and relevance from the position of a passive observer and not as an active participant. For many adult dropouts, it was during this crucial time they generally began to be resigned to "putting in their time" until they were legally permitted to withdraw from school. Many young students mature to adulthood yet unwittingly maintain the self-esteem conflicts of adolescence.

The disadvantaged adult does not visualize learning occurring outside the classroom. This adult believes learning can only take place in a structured environment. Unfortunately, it may have been this structured environment which hastened the student to drop out. Generally, the American educational system is based upon middle-class values in which goal setting is paramount. Usually, the adult dropout lacks the basic skill of goal-setting. Adult education should attempt to help adults identify and meet personal needs. The adult's variety of daily experiences becomes a focus for meshing personal needs and learning experiences into a positive educational curriculum. The development of the adult's self-esteem can be closely linked with the development of the adult's academic success. Each is an integral part of the other. Academic achievement is positively related to one's concept of self. The higher the self-esteem,

the better the chance the person will do well on academic tasks and vice versa (Wlodkowski, 1985). Interestingly, a similar hypothesis was verified by a study conducted at the middle school level. It found "the correlate of self-concept as learner can be twice as powerful as I.Q. in relation to academic achievement in school" (Maeroff, 1990, p. 509).

Many competency-based adult basic education and GED preparatory programs tend to overemphasize lower academic needs and provide little attention to the social and self-actualizing "needs" of the clients, even though adult educational philosophy has attempted to emphasize establishing affective relationships between teacher and student and among the students themselves. As important as developing the student's cognitive domain is the strengthening of the student's affective domain. "The adult needs a great deal of attention, approval and acceptance, a greater respect for his or her own sensitivities and more opportunity for affective communications that are in need of satisfying" (Hampton, 1977, p. 47).

In a 1972 study by Smith (cited in Rossman, Fisk, and Roehl, 1984), a relative difference was recorded between a group of students who completed their programs and a group who dropped out. The dropouts seemed to lack confidence, were more self-critical, and more generally perplexed. They demonstrated less tolerance for frustration and stress and revealed lower self-esteem. These feelings are held by many

GED students. There is a feeling of inadequacy, a general lack of confidence, and low expectations for those adults experiencing low self-esteem (Rossman, Fisk, Roehl, 1984). The adult is in a continual state of fear, afraid that she will not measure up to the rest of the class. A student feels that she is the dumbest person in the class and that everyone else is smarter and has less trouble with academics. A paramount fear is that everyone will discover that the student does not measure up or that she does not "fit in" with the class. A tension is created between a less literate adult's view of herself and an understanding of how she is seen by members of the larger literate society.

The educator's role includes helping the adult contribute to the class. "One of the best survival tactics is to involve oneself in a support group" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 407). Alcoholics Anonymous is a successful support group which allows each individual to interact when and with whom-ever that individual feels is appropriate. How we communicate with others reflects our interpretation of our relationship within our environment. Likewise a person's self-esteem influences this communicative interaction (Frey and Carlock, 1989) which in turn can either enhance or diminish one's self-esteem.

"Psychological isolation also is commonplace. Those who feel inadequate do not have support groups to aid them in times of increased stress, thus, all coping becomes the

responsibility of one person. Feelings of loneliness are common" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 179). The adult has been led to believe that to be a real "grown-up or adult" one must shoulder personal conflicts with a "stiff upper lip" and not let anyone know you are experiencing conflicts. This is similar to the belief that men should not cry or show emotions. Incidences of mental and physical illnesses are more likely to be evident in those who closely adhere to these philosophies. One cannot survive in isolation. It is through our interactions with those we trust and love that we grow both psychologically and spiritually. "Research indicates that social support may act as a buffer for life's stresses as well as having a direct negative affect on psychological distress and the actual incidence of stressful life events" (Pugliesi, 1989, p. 90). Pugliesi clarifies the influence of social roles upon the social support affecting self-esteem in a positive manner (Pugliesi, 1989). Epstein (1985) identifies acceptance and competence as key sources for both negative and positive changes in self-esteem. For women, self-esteem changes are more closely associated with experiences of acceptance. Pugliesi (1989) denotes social participation as having a direct positive effect upon individuals resulting in an increase of self-esteem.

"Research indicates that men tend to increase their independent social activities following marriage while a woman's social activity decreases. Hence, women may

experience a decline in social ties, which are potential sources of support outside the marital relationships" (Pugliesi, 1989, p. 90). Women entering GED classes usually have very restrictive or non-existent support systems. Their support group may consist of the immediate family and limited friends. All too often the support system is inadequate to sufficiently assist the woman with either academic or moral support. Many of the women enrolled in GED classes are isolated by their fears which can be directly linked to their lack of academic skills and education.

Women who are isolated due to a lack of role involvements or social ties (e.g., traditional homemakers) should be particular targets for such programs. Married women who are frequently mobile due to their husband's occupation (e.g., military spouses) would also be especially served by programs which encourage and provide opportunities for additional role involvements (Pugliesi, 1989, p. 97).

The findings of Pugliesi are very supportive of community programs for women which emphasize esteem-enhancing activities and encourage the formation of social relationships among the participants. She indicated such programs would not only have a positive affect upon the individual's self-esteem but would promote the overall well-being of the women participants (Pugliesi, 1989).

"Mastery and its public recognition provide the necessary reassurance and reinforcement to help the student to view himself/herself as adequate" (Wlodkowski, 1985, p. 90). The disadvantaged adult too often enters into situations with feelings of inadequacies and defeatistism. Wlodkowski notes that, "When people have had a learning success, it will probably best enhance their self-concept and their motivation to believe that the major causes for that success are due to their ability and their effort" (Wlodkowski, 1985, p. 95). One of the adult educator's functions is to enhance this vital factor of self-esteem. "To be highly facilitative, the helper needs to be empathic, congruent, genuine, and high in positive regard for the low self-esteem person" (Frey and Carlock, 1989, p. 213).

"There is not a fixed or static self, but only a current self-concept constructed from one's social experiences" (Markus and Wurf, 1987, p. 306). Each individual strives for recognition, for a sense of importance. Adults want acknowledgment of their presence in the classroom. They want to feel that they belong, that they are part of an accepted group. Glasser pointedly stated, "Literally, no one in the world who isn't struggling for bare survival will do intellectual work, unless he or she has a sense of personal importance" (Gorugh, 1987, p. 658).

The educationally disadvantaged adult has finely honed survival skills which substitute for academic skills. To the

disadvantaged adult, intelligence may be considered incidental, with no bearing on outcomes. Therefore, one does not attempt to gain peer acceptance by demonstrating intelligence or academic superiority. Intelligence is removed from the dynamics of classroom learning. The adult's relationships with fellow students determine the basis for acceptance and supersede the need for academic recognition. The emphasis is not on how smart a person is in the classroom but on how fellow classmates interpret and relate to the adult's performance. According to Markus and Wurf (1987) individuals seek to interact with those who provide support for their perception of self. For example, one's self-esteem is thought to be enhanced by self-recognition of achievements such as reading ability; however, Gold and Johnson (1982) conclude that self-esteem is more related to one's ability to develop and use coping skills than to reading ability. The adult feels peer acceptance has precedence over academics in the classroom. Students in these classes are more willing to help each other in learning activities, and in doing so, the adult is able to reinforce personal skills and "build a greater feeling of self-confidence to stronger self-actualization" (Hampton, 1977, p. 47).

"Overall findings support the view that there is an integrated self-system in which self-esteem plays a critical role and that when self-esteem changes it instigates wide-spread changes throughout the entire system" (Epstein,

1985, p. 288). Adult education has always been about change: change in the way one approaches situations in one's life; change to overcome and manage situations in life; and change to know that each individual must assume responsibility for what does and does not happen in one's life. Adult education programs provide opportunities for adults to pursue this "change" and to acknowledge their role as contributing members of society. Adult education should be actively investigating its role in incorporating self-esteem development into the full range and scope of adult education programs. Programs have been designed to fulfill the academic needs of the student based upon the student's present and potential skills. Adult education programs have always been unique in incorporating factors and resources drawn from the student's home and work environments into the academics. These programs are designed to enhance and expand the survival skills necessary to promote positive mental and physical well-being. Skills cannot be developed if other factors, such as self-esteem, are not acknowledged and promoted. When a person has positive self-esteem, that person is more likely to seek and use opportunities to meet needs and to interact in a positive manner within society.

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CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES UTILIZED

This study was designed to gather descriptive and qualitative data regarding GED students. It was not the purpose of this study to test stated hypotheses but rather to examine students' academic and self-esteem development as they progressed through the program; thus, the study was inductive.

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and uses multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1984, p. 23). The case study explains, describes, and explores. Qualitative data allows the researcher to go beyond initial preconceptions and design structures and evoke data inaccessible by quantitative methods. The case study differs from quantitative studies in two additional sources of evidence: direct observation and systematic interviewing. "It is the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life content" (Yin, 1984, p. 13). The "how" and "why" questions are explanatory.

Each student was considered as an individual case. Information was derived from the registration form, entry and exit questionnaires, Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, student daily journals, recorded teacher observations, and an exit teacher interview.

The registration instruments and forms elicited student information regarding name, age, gender, last full academic grade completed, and the name and location of last school attended. Class attendance was noted on this card.

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Adult Form) is an adaption of the School Short Form. Most of the items in the inventory were constructed from items selected from the Rogers and Dymond (1954) Scale. It is a self-report questionnaire measuring attitudes towards the self in social, family, academic, and personal context. The inventory consists of 25 statements which the adult checks either "Like Me" or "Unlike Me" regarding her personal feelings in relationship to these statements. Eight statements (statements 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 19, and 20) have expected positive responses of "Like Me" and 17 "Unlike Me" statements reflecting high self-esteem. Designated responses are tallied and multiplied by four to give a total score. The maximum score is 100. There are no exact criteria for high, medium, and low self-esteem. They should and will vary with characteristics of the sample, the distribution of the scores, and theoretical and clinical considerations. The questionnaire showed

significant relationships to academic achievement and personal satisfaction in school and adult life. The means have generally been in the range of 70 to 80 with a standard deviation of 11 to 13 (Coopersmith, 1986, p. 8). The test has no time limit and took approximately 15 minutes to administer and score. The test was administered after registration and before the initial GED pretesting. The Coopersmith Inventory was re-administered during the student's last class attendance.

The Class

For the purposes of this study, the class was conducted in a typical adult education format. Each student established her own goals, chose the amount of time and effort to be applied, and worked with the instructor who acted as a facilitator to the group. Flexible schedules were arranged for students with special needs due to work or other requirements. At no time was a student penalized for tardiness or absences, though a student could lose child care privileges if, on three occasions, she did not notify the Reynolds House staff of an anticipated absence before class.

Two weeks before class began, the staff of Reynolds House conducted the initial registration. The program was advertised in the Reynolds House monthly activity calendar distributed throughout the post and through the Ft. Hood newspaper and television station. Registration began at 7:30 A.M. and several women were waiting on the step for the house

to open. It was an open registration. Usually, 40 to 50 women registered. The staff contacted the registrants which included one male. (On occasion, a male family member or military service member would register for the class. The programs provided through the Army Community Service are open to all active duty and retired service members and their families.) The male student was not included in this study as he was anticipating an out of state move in the near future and this study was directed toward women. If, after two attempts, the potential student could not be contacted, she was placed on the waiting list for the next phase. The first day of class I was responsible for the students completing the required registration forms and collecting the \$5.00 fee.

I began my first program by introducing myself to each student as she entered the classroom. Once the student had selected a seat I gave her a registration form. After everyone was seated I again introduced myself and told them about myself and my background for teaching GED classes. I shared that I enjoyed teaching GED classes and, though I was a great teacher, I was not a miracle worker. I could not wave my hand over them and make them instantly smarter. They would have to give 100% effort and I planned to do the same.

They seemed surprised when I told them I was usually nervous my first day as I was worried about whether I would be able to help each one of them. I assured them I would give all of my effort in helping them obtain their goals. We

also discussed the nervousness we all experienced the first day of class. I would retell my experiences of returning to college after a few years absence and coming home in tears after the first class. I thought I was the dumbest person in the class and felt completely out of place. I was also afraid I would say something stupid in class and be embarrassed. The students could identify with these emotions and experiences. Several students told me they were surprised a teacher could feel like they did during the first week of class. My intention was to alleviate the stigma attached to the role of teacher. During this introduction I informed the students that the program was non-graded and that each could progress at her own pace. One or two students had concerns regarding maintaining the personal control of their learning and the independence associated with this teacher relinquishment. I reminded them they already started this independence by enrolling in the GED program.

The first two and a half days of class were utilized for GED pretesting. Though this put additional stress on the student, I was required to administer these official practice tests. The tests included the areas of social studies, mathematics, science, reading, and English. Each test contained half the number of questions of the official test and was administered in a proportionally shorter time frame. I explained to the students that this pretest would only indicate just how close they were to being ready to take the

GED test. I always stressed to the students that I knew their anxiety would affect their achievement level. I was not overly concerned about the scores in the 39 to 44 range as I believed the emotions of the students many times overrode their abilities. I sometimes used humor in an attempt to diminish the stress. I kiddingly told about some of them doing well just to spell their names correctly on the answer sheet. I also emphasized a retest would be given before I would allow them to take the GED test and this retest was a truer indicator of their abilities. Together we would develop their abilities, and together we would decide when the students were ready for the GED test. I always administered the Interpreting Literature and the Arts (reading) test first even though it was the fourth test in the booklet. In my opinion, it is the easiest test and the least stressful. I explained how to read the test booklet and demonstrated the correct methods for completing the Scantron answer sheet. As each student completed the test, she brought it to me for grading. After scoring the test, I explained the significance of the score and added positive reinforcement. We continued in this manner through all the tests with the mathematics test scheduled last. The students usually had a shocked expression on their faces upon learning they had passed a test. One student asked me to re-grade her test to make sure I had not made a mistake.

On the first day of class the students wrote their initial journal entry assignments. They were to write during the extra time between tests. The first entry was entitled, "Here I Am...." This assignment served two purposes. The first was the writing experience itself. The GED English portion requires a 200 word essay. In this essay test, the student was presented with an issue confronting the community. The student had to choose and defend a position on this issue. In order to improve writing skills, I believed one must write at every opportunity. These students had limited writing opportunities within their present life-styles. The assignment was designed to reflect their emotions on that first day of class. It would also allow them to write me anything which they felt I should know about them but which they were not yet comfortable telling me personally. There was no set length but I required a minimum of three sentences. The entries were neither graded nor were corrections made on the papers. Together the student and I discussed what was written and possible revisions. Several students were rather frank and candid in what they revealed about themselves and their experiences. After the students handed in their writing samples, I would, without looking at their papers, briefly state what was included in their statements. There were enormous similarities among the samples. Their comments included statements reflecting their thoughts of being the dumbest person in class, of saying something stupid

resulting in embarrassment, and of being out of school too long to learn now. The students realized they were not the only ones experiencing such emotions and that there was nothing odd or strange about these feelings. From this beginning session, students maintained a written journal. Twice a week specific topics were suggested for the students to write about. Topics included goals for the next three months, how education could affect her life, problems to overcome, the inner person she would like to be, one thing she would change about her life, how she felt about being a member of the group, anticipated feelings on graduation day, what she would tell a potential GED student about class, favorite class subject, making the decision to attend GED classes, fears, would she attempt to convince someone not to drop out of high school, feelings regarding self, stress within the family, leaving home, being someone else, what she had learned in class, and adjusting to change. The topics were directed toward aiding the student to identify needs, goals, and issues of concern. For this study, journal entries and the entry and exit questionnaires were quoted directly from student responses. No corrections were made in either grammar, punctuation, or spelling.

Also during the first day I gave each of the students an entry questionnaire to complete at their leisure and administered the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. I read each question to the class and explained that the entry

questionnaire responses would give me further insight into developing a more comprehensive program to meet individual academic needs. I continued with the Inventory. I told the students the Inventory would allow me to have a better understanding of their feelings which, I believed, had a direct influence on their progress displayed in class. I read each question aloud to avoid misinterpretation of each question's relevance. Students completed the questionnaire and the Inventory. We then took a short break at which time I requested each person at a table to introduce themselves to the remaining members of the group. They were to do a mini-interview in which they could learn and share with the class two interesting points about another group member. We spent about 15 minutes in this activity before I administered the first pretest.

I grouped students according to the level of mathematical abilities they displayed from the pretest. Mathematics, especially fractions, was the major concern of all the students. There were usually four tables utilized with four to five students per table. I preferred to use tables rather than individual desks for the students as the tables created instant support groups (especially important during the first days of testing). By using the tables, a student was prevented from being isolated from the rest of the class. Several students experienced this isolation in their communities, and through the use of a table they were now in a group

atmosphere. Students were free throughout the program to move to another table, but most chose to remain with their original group. Occasionally a student would move to another location to study a different subject but would return to her original group. For the most part, the friendships which were formed were between members of a specific group and not within the class as a whole.

After the pretest, the next three weeks were designated as a mathematics review. I found the major concern of the students to be their lack of mathematical skills. We began with a review of addition and subtraction and progressed through basic geometry and algebra. I had prepared a four-page mathematics handout with problems representing all major areas. The students were encouraged to take notes during the review. In addition, students were free to respond at any time during the review. They did not have to raise a hand and be recognized. All mathematical examples were related to experiences in the student's lives. Fractions always proved to be the most difficult area for the students. I often involved the students in round-robin activities to insure the concepts were instilled. I used a dry board for my lessons and the students particularly liked to write on it. During this review the students were taught the mechanics of specific mathematical processes and my own word problems. Once the review was completed, the students, according to their levels, received one of three worksheets containing

12 word problems. An answer sheet for each worksheet was attached. Each student worked one problem and checked the answer immediately. If she was correct, she was to proceed to the next problem. If she was incorrect, she had to rework the problem. I required the students to attempt the problem twice before asking for my assistance because, in many instances, the initial error was due to incorrect copying of the problem or a simple calculation mistake. I was more concerned with the student identifying the correct process to employ. Students at each table were encouraged to assist each other, to become peer tutors. I constantly circulated around the tables. When I stopped to assist a student I used indirect questioning to help the student arrive at the correct response. The student had to complete a minimum of 24 word problems in a specific area (i.e. fractions, percents, decimals, etc.) with 80% accuracy before she could proceed to a different mathematics area.

Once the mathematics review was completed, the class period was divided into two ninety-minute sessions. The first session was for mathematics and the second session was for the subject (i.e., English, social studies, science, or reading) of choice. Most students preferred to remain with mathematics but I insisted on this expansion. They seemed obsessed with becoming experts in mathematics. It was mathematics over which they believed they had no control. The majority did not wish to study mathematics at home as the

husbands would attempt to help. The husband's occasional lack of patience and understanding usually resulted in arguments and additional stress. The students did enjoy studying other subjects at home. They found they could discuss many of the subjects with their children and could, with their new knowledge, assist their children in their school work. Instructors were not allowed to let the books leave the classroom or be taken home by the student. I always allowed free access to the books and encouraged the students to browse through the books at home. I did warn the students to "guard those books with your life" as there was a very limited supply. We had five books per subject area. We never lost a book and had only one slightly damaged. This was unique as the main adult education campus, which does not allow books to be checked out, had all of its books stolen during the year.

If a student had to drop out or completed the GED early, her slot was not filled immediately. I waited until there were two or three openings before I had the staff contact the next women on the waiting list. By employing this technique I created an instant mini-support group which was beneficial to the student. This group would be together in another area of the building while they were pretesting. Using this method helped to alleviate the alienation they would experience by joining the established group and thus reduced stress. The student could now concentrate on the test

without the additional stress of dealing with a group of strangers. Sometimes the new student would be joined by other students who were retesting prior to taking the GED or needing a quiet atmosphere to meet their specific learning style. The student was then gradually introduced to her classmates. When they were allowed to move into the regular class, I found this mini-group usually remained together at a worktable.

The educational atmosphere of the classroom was adult oriented. The students were free to move about the classroom for necessary breaks. It was infrequent that anyone took a break as there seemed to be an urgency in their drive to complete the GED. If the students did take a break it was usually to visit their children downstairs. There were occasions when the students would bring their children up to the room before class started. They would show their children where they sat during class and say something like, "Here is where Mommy goes to school."

As I was promoting an adult atmosphere I explained to the class this program was really a team effort and we had to work as a team to get through this successfully. I would treat them in a courteous manner and I expected the same consideration from them. Absenteeism was low and most called if they were unable to attend class. The students said they enjoyed the new experiences of having their families ask them

what they had learned that day at school and what had happened in class.

For the most part, the students stayed on task. There were occasions when academics were sidetracked by student needs. On these occasions students wanted to discuss something beyond the subject matter at hand. If I believed this subject was pertinent to their physical or emotional welfare we became involved in the discussions. Several students stated they had attempted a GED program before but had dropped out. They did not like feeling alone in the room and not being able to relate to the other students. Sometimes the students had this need to talk, to have an opportunity to express an opinion with peers. There were positive, encouraging comments as students responded to each other. Discussions ranged from world events, information regarding community services, employment opportunities, Army life, and child care to how to not blow up your toilet by mixing Clorox with some other cleaning agent. They particularly liked to discuss basic rights they should have as people and as women. For some, a decision was made to take more control of their lives and to accept the subsequent responsibilities. I openly encouraged and challenged the students in this pursuit. They believed the GED was the first "in control" action of their lives. One student said they should adopt the Army slogan, "Be the Best You Can Be" as that was a new goal for them. We often discussed college, working outside the

home, or working within the home. I expressed that college is not for everyone nor is employment outside the home. Being a homemaker, college student, or employee was fine as long as it was a free choice and not forced. Some students said that since they would be getting a GED they felt pressured by some force to go to work. They were very uncomfortable with these feelings. I encouraged them to begin to find out who they were and what they really wanted out of life. They needed to examine their short and long range goals.

During the first few weeks of class I constantly encouraged the students with scores over 46 to take the GED test. They all said they were not ready and needed a few weeks to review. By the eighth week most were still reviewing. I had them take the pretest again, and the scores were improved. It was at this point I threw out the challenge of who was to be the first person to test. At first there was no response. I then suggested they all meet at the testing center and take the test together. At this point there would be a buzz of discussions checking schedules. Usually a table group would decide to go. Once they started testing, all tests were completed within two weeks or less. If a student did not go with the initial wave, there was always someone from the class to go with her. There was never a student who went alone to take the first test. That first group seemed to send most of the students into a testing frenzy. They traded off child-care during the tests and assisted each other with

necessary transportation. There were occasions when a student would be afraid to call the testing center for her first test's results. Another student would volunteer to call. After someone completed the first test she shared her feelings with the class. The successful support system these women developed was clearly visible.

I usually administered another Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory to the students after they completed the GED test but soon realized I would have problems. I needed to administer it after they had taken one or two tests because often they would not return to the class until the last day of class for the potluck luncheon. At this time I asked them to complete the Exit Questionnaire. We sat in another room and discussed the significance of the questions of both the inventory and the questionnaire. I would make arrangements to conduct the Exit Interview. In two cases, due to personal conflicts, interviews were conducted via telephone. If possible, I also conducted the exit interview the same day the student completed the inventory and exit questionnaire. I explained to the student I liked to tape-record the interview as I would be transcribing the results for a study I was conducting. With these results I hoped to improve my teaching effectiveness to other GED students. We discussed various happenings in our lives to set a more relaxed atmosphere conducive to withdrawing useful data from the student. I also recorded information regarding body language and facial

expressions during the interview. Included were my own personal knowledge of student's family stability and observed effects on the student's behavior and emotional status in class.

Data Analysis

All information was transferred to the computer and annotated in the graphs I was compiling. A comparison chart was devised to represent results of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory responses at both the entry and exit level. Each question was recorded to reflect the comparison between the pretest and posttest program feelings of self-esteem as interpreted by the inventory. Individual question responses were recorded to indicate whether a student experienced a change in feelings during the time between the two tests. I divided the questions into two areas: student's relationship with family and student's relationship to self and others. I compared the positive, designated responses of these areas at both the entry and exit levels. Entry and exit score were noted and computed to reflect the gain or loss of self-esteem. Both the entry and exit scores were compared to the norms established by the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Likewise I compared several responses from the entry questionnaire with the exit questionnaire. For each exit question the responses were polled and recorded. Descriptive answers implying an awareness in growth of self-confidence or self-esteem were tallied. Exit interviews were transcribed

and included a descriptive narrative I wrote from notes in my personal daily journal of class activities. I had attempted to tape-record all class activities during this study. These recordings were transcribed daily and noted in each student's narrative. I included the student's personal feelings, as written in her journal entries, in the narratives.

Chapter Bibliography

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CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

For the purpose of this study, the students were female family members (known as "dependents") married to Army personnel stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. A male family member was enrolled in the class but was not included in this study.

General Educational Development examination programs educate adults who have not completed high school and who need remediation in mathematics, reading, English, social studies, and science to pass the high school equivalency examination. The GED tests take from 60 to 90 minutes each and require a minimum passing score of 40 points each. The GED preparation program, for these students, was maintained at Reynolds House, an Army Community Service Outreach Center. Reynolds House is a Texas Historical Landmark as it housed one of the earliest settlers to this area in addition to being the first general officer's quarters for the then, Camp Hood, in the 1940's. Reynolds House is located within one of the oldest enlisted housing areas of the fort. We met in a renovated, bottle shaped bedroom upstairs. Reynolds House provided what is typically described as community education activities. An excellent, free child care program was

provided to the participants of the GED program. I was employed by the Killeen Independent School District to be the instructor at the Reynolds House facility.

The study at Reynolds House was conducted during the Spring Semester 1988 with GED graduation on Thursday of the second week of May. Each student worked at her own pace and in academic areas both she and the instructor determined to need remediation. The students began testing for the GED certification within 9 to 12 weeks after the first class meeting. Demographically, the study comprised four Hispanics, five Blacks, and nine Caucasians. Only one student was employed outside of the home. The students' ages ranged from 17 to 35. Past educational attainment levels ranged from 8th grade to 12th grade. The names of the students have been changed to protect their privacy.

Courage is not a word one usually associates with enrolling in school, especially when it refers to adults. Yet, it is courage which must be mustered and called forth from the recesses of the human mind in order for the women of this study to initiate the step forward to begin a GED program.

Growing up we all have experienced first day school jitters, but, for these women, it was a day of extreme stress and confrontation with self. They realized that they were seeking to confirm their own worth and intelligence. They were afraid: afraid they would learn they really were as "dumb" as they have been repeatedly told, and that their

lives were unchangeable. They grappled with the inner question: "Do I have the abilities to do this, to pass the GED test?" They were a contradiction of emotions. Their mere presence indicated a desire to know and achieve, but their body language and comments projected opposite emotions. For these women, stress and low self-esteem hindered their own potential achievement and success. These case studies are the reenactments of the unfolding courage of these women.

Narrative Portraits of the Students

Alice:

Alice was a 27-year-old Hispanic female. She was married and had three children. She dropped out of school in the eighth grade because she wanted to be a mother. She was from Puerto Rico and lacked confidence in her English speaking abilities because Spanish was her native language. Alice watched Sesame Street with her children to improve her English. Not only did she feel she was learning from the program, but it gave her special times with her children. In her first journal entry Alice wrote, "Here I am scare [sic] to deth [sic] but my life depent [sic] on this. May be [sic] I felt [sic] again but I will stand up again. One day I will make my dream come true." During the first week of testing Alice did not talk to anyone in the class. Of the four tables in the classroom, Alice choose the furthest from the teacher and from the concentration of other students. Only

one other person shared the table, a young adult male. Her appearance the first day of class was unusual. She wore a mid-thigh black satin skirt, black hose, spiked heels and a knit tube top. She has long dyed red hair and wore dark sunglasses.

In the second week of class, Alice brought a synopsis of the book she was writing. Alice hoped to get it published and wanted to know how to contact a company. The story was a complete contrast to the quiet, withdrawn person she projected in class. She told me the book was about a married Army wife getting "revenge and who would stop at nothing to get to the top." It was much later before it was evident she was drawing from her own life. The paragraphs of her story flowed well, but there were variations of style. It was almost as though two different people were writing. She borrowed a typewriter from the library and spent hours typing the synopsis. We discussed the fact she needed to read other short stories in order to discover the formula for writing short romance stories. She agreed and quite proudly told me she had just read her first "whole book" last year. It had been in Spanish, but nonetheless, she had completed it. She was proud of this accomplishment.

Alice did not actively participate with others in the class. She did form a support system with the adult male. They seemed to form a friendship which extended beyond the class. They worked as partners during mathematics. She

usually possessed the stronger skills, but he took the lead in determining the process utilized. One day, she came up to the front of the class to show me a mathematics word problem. Alice told me she had gotten it right and had to explain it to her partner who had problems with it. She was smiling and excited about her "first" successful experience. Alice said she got to "rub it in" because she had to help him that day. This experience appeared to be a turning point for her confidence as she became more articulate in class, participated with others, and enjoyed helping her partner. Often I assigned her to assist other students, specifically with word problems. She had become very confident in her abilities.

Alice experienced very depressing moods. I could not determine if this was due to her unhappiness in her marriage or whether there were other problems (i.e., drugs). There were occasions when she wore sunglasses the entire class and seemed not to be able to function at any level. She was there physically but not mentally or emotionally. I believe it was her drive for education which accounted for her high attendance, no matter what her mental state. After several weeks in the class, the dark glasses disappeared and she became very actively involved in class discussions. In addition, she moved to the second table and began to interact with other group members.

Alice began to arrive 15 to 30 minutes early for class just to "chat." Eventually, she confided about her life, her

marriage, and her abusive husband. She had stopped writing her book due to family demands. We discussed this and thought of various times she could schedule her writing without being disturbed. On one occasion, she began talking about the drastic changes in her life in the last year. She had been totally dependent on her husband for all aspects of her life. As she stated: "I needed him just in order to breathe." When he was sent to South Korea for 13 months, this dependence overwhelmed her. Before her husband left for Korea, she attempted suicide by overdosing. The thoughts of having to assume sole responsibility for the children, herself, and what she considered her inevitable failure instigated the attempt. She knew she was a good mother and could maintain a clean household but had never had the experiences of real responsibility. She actually believed she could not adequately or successfully assume this role. Alice believed her family would be better without her than to suffer from the results of her inadequacies. Alice recovered and her husband proceeded to Korea.

After he left, something startling occurred in Alice's life. She found her independence awakened to a whole new world. She began to enjoy the new role and could see the results of her efforts. Alice described herself as becoming very happy and she developed an improved relationship with her children. She felt she could try anything and was, as she stated, "a success for the first time in my life." Prior

to this time, she would not talk to people and remained secluded in her house. Now she thought people wanted to listen to what she had to say. Alice found value in her life for herself and in her relationships with others. She was very happy to have had this change come into her life.

I asked Alice whether at times she was depressed in class. She explained that her husband had returned three months earlier and he had expected her to return to the dependent stage. She refused and as a result extreme marital problems had occurred. Her husband's reactions to her going to school were to put stricter demands on housekeeping and telling her she would not pass the test. Violence had become the husband's way of dealing with the changes and problems. On occasion, he had repeatedly struck her and completely ransacked the house. The military police had been called to their military quarters on two occasions since his return. As he had destroyed the telephone, a neighbor heard the noise and her screaming and called the police. The damage was so extensive when he ransacked the house they were notified that they had lost housing privileges and would have to move off post. He was removed from the quarters by the military police but returned the next day. As the weeks progressed she told me more of the situation and that she planned to file for divorce. On several occasions she referred to her husband as "the animal." At first I did not understand her references when she talked about the animal. One particular day

she arrived late and could not stay. "The animal" was waiting in the car and he would not let her stay. I asked, "The animal?" With an ugly facial expression she said, "My husband." The Army and the community provides services which could aid her, but other than calling the military police, she had done nothing. On two occasions we discussed the options which were available to her. She had confided that he had raped her. Alice did not say when this occurred, but I believed this occurred since his return. Her anger was still very evident. She felt she must do something as she believed that one day he would kill her or she would kill him. Alice seemed to rise above all this by holding firm to the idea that getting an education was the only solution for escape. She remarked, "With an education, I can do anything."

Approximately eight weeks into the program, Alice began the required retesting to estimate her potential to pass the GED. Her scores indicated that she could pass the examination and she believed that by taking the test in Spanish, she would do much better. (The center attempts to dissuade people from testing in Spanish, but I told Alice to do what was comfortable for her.) While Alice began taking the tests at the testing center, she still attended class and continued to participate in class discussions. One day one of the other students was discussing a family problem. Alice

interrupted the other student by saying: "You have to stop that. You must do what is right for you. It's your life!"

Alice completed all her tests one month before the May graduation and therefore stopped attending classes. Approximately one week later, she attended a scheduled tour of the local training institute at the community college. Registration and financial aid were discussed and she wanted to understand everything so she could begin in the fall. Alice was not seen again until graduation night. She was very nervous about graduation. She had brought her family to graduation and had a new dress from K-Mart. As Alice walked across the stage after receiving her diploma, she stuck her tongue out at her husband.

On the initial administration of the Coopersmith Inventory, Alice scored 44. As the national mean score was 80, Alice scored substantially below the mean. Lower scored areas were spread across personal feelings, interaction with others, and family. On the posttest, Alice scored 68. The lower scored areas were concentrated in the family related questions. The marital situation was hypothesized to be the major influence for these results. Her confidence increased in areas of (1) relating to other people and (2) confidence in her own abilities.

In Alice's exit interview, she stated she had learned "alot" [sic] about herself. She now liked herself and believed in her abilities. Prior to participating in the

program, Alice thought suicide was the only solution to her problems. Now she believed she had a positive attitude and realized she could do well in school. After the class and passing the GED, Alice saw herself in positive terms but could not pinpoint why she was "worse" before. She realized she could pass the exam after two months. Alice said she awoke one morning with the first thought of "I'm going to do it!" When reflecting on the first days of class and testing, she vividly described herself and her emotions as being "like a roach in a big kitchen. It's scary and you're lost." Her confidence had grown and as she retested in class she felt the material was easy. Alice stated she believed she felt this was because she believed in herself.

Alice described herself as a person with a "can do" attitude and "hungry" for education. Her goals had also expanded. From the basic goals of completing a GED, knowledge of mathematics, and a desire to continue writing, she progressed to the following goals: to be someone important (a good writer); to get a divorce; and, to get a good job with people. She wanted "everything" and still hoped to develop her writing skills. When questioned about what she would tell a perspective GED student, she replied, "Go for it. I'll push her there. If it was needed, I'd take her over there myself!" Graduation was a "big day, a big step." For Alice, participation in this program affected her self-image in that she realized she was not dumb. A few months after

graduation, Alice left her husband and filed for divorce. She was much happier and had plans to start college. She had started looking for a job. Alice became excited when she recapped her first experience of writing "GED" on an employment application.

Betty:

Betty, a married Hispanic student, dropped out of school at age 15 when she had become pregnant. She was 17 years old when she entered the class. On several occasions she wrote in her journal about how she regretted dropping out of school. Most of her entries reflected a lack of maturity; one, for example, was that of not developing the responsibilities of being a wife and mother. Betty apparently lacked the necessary skills to take care of her small baby. She repeatedly forgot feeding bottles and extra diapers for the child care center downstairs. One Friday Betty was asked to leave class in order to take her child home as ill children were not to be brought to the center. The child had diarrhea and Betty had not brought extra diapers. Betty did not know what to do to aid the child nor had she sought medical attention. I suggested she take her child to pediatrics at the military hospital. Both Betty and the child returned to Reynolds House on Monday.

During the first month Betty was extremely quiet during class. Her initial journal entry stated,

Here I am in this GED class my first day. I am embarrassed, scared, and nervous making it through even though I'm having alot [sic] of fun learning things. I hope to make it through this class because it is very important to my future.

She spoke to only one other person, Helen, who became her friend. This was not a friendship which seemed to enhance the emotional growth of either. They were both new to the area and had no other friends outside of this class.

Betty did not have any particularly strong academic skills. She passed all of the tests with scores below 44. A score of 40 is necessary to pass the test. Initially Betty had good attendance and began to show rapid progress in her studies. She responded well during the mathematics review and did not display any negative feelings toward mathematics. Her initial pretest low scores may have been a result of nervousness. After a few weeks in class, it was apparent that Betty would not have difficulty with the GED test. She did well on her assignments and required limited supervision from me. English punctuation and grammar were the areas of her concern.

I did become concerned about Betty's expressed attitudes, however. She displayed little concern for her responsibilities as a wife and mother. She began to spend increasingly more time chatting with Helen during class. They acted as if they both were still in high school and were making big

plans for the weekend. When she wrote about graduation, "My Feelings on Graduation Day", she basically referred to how "real nice everyone was going to look." Graduation was a chance to finally wear a cap and gown. Education meant she could go on to college and she had "thought" about going to secretarial school. There did not seem to be any real enthusiasm or convictions when she expressed those ideas. From discussions in class, it seemed as if she had not really set goals before. To Betty, one graduated from high school and then either married or enrolled in college. As she was already married that left college. She showed no interest when either spokesperson (for the skills institute or financial aid) spoke to the class. Betty brought a newspaper to class and glanced through it. I asked her to put it away. When I asked her about her interest in getting started in school, she replied that she had plenty of time and just wanted to relax for a time before going back to school. With my students, I have found that if necessary forms for registration, financial aid, etc. are not obtained by the student in these special workshops there was a negligible chance the student would pursue this on her own.

Towards the completion of her tests (one test remained), there was a marked difference in Betty's behavior in the classroom. Her attendance dropped. Helen and she became rather annoying with loud conversations when they did show up for class. On two occasions instead of doing any class work,

Betty read the newspaper. She did put it away when asked but did not have supplies to complete assignments. One of the older students, also Hispanic, who sat at the table with Betty, moved to another table. She was angry with Betty and Helen. They had shared several activities together after class for several weeks. The day before, Betty and Helen acted badly during an outing and had embarrassed her. She had left the group then and refused to speak to them now. The problem was never resolved.

The following class period, Betty was back but did not bring her child to the child care center. Her son had an ear infection. She said he was not any better and he was even more fussy. Her husband was watching the child. I was in the child care center the next class session when she brought in the child. The child had a facial rash. I stopped her and asked what type of medication she was using. When she told me, I then told her I thought the child was having a reaction to the medication. I told her to take the child to pediatrics immediately. She did not want to because of the wait she would incur. I told her she did not have a choice and she left. The problem was rectified. Again later, I happened to be in the center when she came in. She was about to put the baby in a crib when I remarked that I thought the baby had an eye infection. She agreed saying the doctor told her it was conjunctivitous and had given her medication. She

was unaware that it was contagious. The center asked her to leave and she did.

Betty's initial score on the Coopersmith Inventory was 68. Most of the areas of concern regarded interaction with others. She seemed more conscious of this interaction and how others perceived her. The two family points (as I was to find out later) were due to her husband "treating her like a kid." It seemed Betty had transferred from a situation of parental control to that of control by her husband. Her posttest had a score of 84. Her areas of concern included being popular with others, making up her mind, and letting things bother her. She still did not feel her family considered her feelings. She refused to take the time for the complete exit interview as Helen and she were going out to the mall. She did complete the exit questionnaire. She stated that the one thing she learned about herself by participating in the program was "I can do anything I put myself to do." She described herself as an outstanding student whereas before she thought of herself as good. Betty had gained more confidence since enrolling in the GED program. Again, graduation meant to graduate the way she would have in high school. She felt fortunate to be graduating six months before her friends back home. Her goals for the next three months were to go to college, work as a secretary, and make good money. Later, I learned she did not do any of these. Instead she decided to have another baby. For now, Betty was

content with her life: no new responsibilities would have to be assumed.

Cathy:

Cathy was a 30-year-old Caucasian female, the mother of two children. Cathy came from a family in which none of the children graduated from high school. She completed the tenth grade. She was a very talkative person, outgoing with the members of her table. Cathy was very tense the first day of class but became more relaxed as the class progressed. Apparently she had previously attempted GED classes with another institution because her husband asked her if she would finish this time. Like so many others, now was apparently "the time." She was a very pleasant person and showed enthusiasm for academics. Her initial pretest scores varied, but no score was substantially low. She was relieved she did not fail a pretest. Immediately, Cathy began taking home extra assignments. There seemed to be an urgency in her working. Cathy proved to be an excellent student. She was the "heart" at her table who brought an excitement about learning. She was much more outgoing than the two other students. Cathy was very humorous and always has a funny story to share with the class. Cathy did not hesitate to assist others at her table. One of the students was becoming too dependent on Cathy. They were already friends and they had enrolled in the class together, but the friend's dependence seemed to

conflict with Cathy's urgency to progress as quickly as possible. The best word to describe the other student would be traumatized. She was terrified about class and on several occasions cried. After several such incidences Cathy did not know how to react. Cathy discussed with me the dilemma she was experiencing. She felt sorry for her friend and was attempting to help her at home. Cathy seemed to minimize the ease and efficiency in which she was completing assignments in class. She knew her friend had many academic deficiencies to overcome yet she wanted for them to finish the program together. Cathy did not think her friend could keep up with her yet Cathy believed she had to go on. Cathy finally made the decision to meet her own immediate needs and goals. She would attempt to help her friend after completion of the GED. About eight weeks into the program Cathy came into class in a very down mood. She had received an opportunity to earn extra money by doing baby-sitting in her home. In order for her to now come to class she would have to find and pay a baby sitter for the period of the class. We checked her scores and I suggested she start retesting. Like so many others, it is frequently the confidence rather than academic skills which keep them from the GED test. Cathy's scores reflected substantial improvement and she decided to test "soon." I also suggested she might prefer to switch to the evening class taught by another instructor at the Community

Education Building. She gave an emphatic "No!" and said she had tried it but preferred this class.

In her journal entries, Cathy always maintained one special thought: she was doing this (GED) for herself. Her first assignment read,

Here I am ready for a big chance to change my life.

I am ready for it, my kids are getting older and I need to show them mom [sic] is no dummy. My husband is very proud of me for doing this.

She would tell a potential GED student that obtaining a GED was the best thing you could do for yourself. "It is a chance in a lifetime to increase your life!" was included in the advice.

One day in class we were talking about sewing. She indicated she would like to take sewing classes at the community college after she obtained her GED. She already had the skills but believed she would like to experience professional classes. Her friend and classmate said Cathy sewed beautifully. I suggested to Cathy that she teach a mini-class at Reynold's House. We had been talking in class about expanding horizons and how they all had skills that could be put to use somewhere in our community. I have had only one student who had ever been involved in the community. Cathy gave me a shocked "Who me? No!" expression. I asked her to think about it. Cathy's attendance began to be erratic. She always called to let me know she would not be in class due to

the expense of the baby-sitting. I urged her to begin testing.

A note from Cathy was left for me on my table. She had begun to test. She thanked me for all my assistance and encouragement. There was a postscript included in the note: she was to teach a mini-course at Reynold's House. Cathy managed to find a baby sitter and came to the end-of-class party. She was her usual very upbeat and vibrant self. I did not see Cathy again until graduation, and almost did not recognize her. She had her hair professionally styled and wore makeup. She was extremely nervous about the ceremony. She said her husband's sole function that night was to get plenty of pictures. She said, "I knew this day would come. I am glad it's here." Cathy had called her parents to share her good news and to invite everyone to her graduation. She said her entire family, including her brothers, had been at her parents' home when she called. Everyone was very excited and proud of her. Cathy said her parents always said they would give the children in the family a car if they would graduate. She kiddingly asked, "Do you think I'll get my car now?" Her Dad had said he knew she could do it all the time and her Mom had started crying.

On her Coopersmith Inventory, Cathy made a 68 for both scores. Of the eight negative statements, only three were the same for both scores. They were in regard to personal appearance and family. When asked what had she learned about

herself by participating in the GED program, she wrote, "That I am an important person in this world." Cathy regarded herself as bright and intelligent. When questioned further, she said she was relieved to know (through her test scores) that she was not a dummy. Cathy felt stronger about herself and her potential. She believed that with applied effort, such as extra studying, she could achieve any goal. Cathy wrote about one established goal, "I want to be a substitute teacher or teacher. I know I am starting late in life, but I want to do this for me." Cathy reemphasized that she completed the GED for herself and not to prove to her husband, family, parents, or siblings that she could accomplish it. Cathy went on to say, "I did it because I wanted it. You have to do for yourself." Her future plans, in addition to attending college, included gradually becoming involved with her children's school. She believed now (with her GED) that she had proved she was capable of assisting teachers or being involved in the learning environment at her children's school.

Dede:

Dede was a 21-year-old Caucasian female with two small children under the age of four. She completed the ninth grade and dropped out of school for marriage and the approaching birth of her first child. Dede stated in her first day journal entry,

I am 21 years old, I feel 30. I told myself when I got my driver's license I could do anything. Now if I get my GED I can do anything. I never thought I would look forward to going to school, but I am.

For Dede, education meant she would now be the intellectual equal of her husband and friends. Education, to Dede, would allow her to "hold up my end of the conversations." She was extremely quiet, rather shy in class. Dede was neat in her appearance and prompt for class.

Dede was very anxious about the future. Her reason for seeking an education was to be able to provide security for herself and her children. Six and one-half weeks before the scheduled completion of the GED classes, Dede's husband would be out of the Army. They were moving to Tennessee where he would begin college on the GI Bill. She was under much self-induced pressure to complete the test early, before they left. I told Dede she could begin the test here or wait until they moved to complete the test. She said that would not be possible for their plans. The plan was for Dede to obtain employment to supplement the husband's government educational benefits. She was frightened about this prospect for fear that she would not be able to obtain a position to augment their meager savings (less than \$500). Dede had never worked before and was not sure of her skills or abilities. She ideally wanted to obtain a position as a secretary on campus. Dede noted on her entry questionnaire that she needed to

learn to type or something to get a good job. Dede was extremely stressed by this uncertain future and by her new role requirements.

Dede was a very good student. She had very high pretest scores with all scores greater than 45. It would be several weeks of my urging before Dede would go to take the first test. Dede's written statements indicated a low self-esteem. She regarded herself as a dependent person as "I married young. First I depended on my parents, now on my husband." My impression of Dede was a contrast to her own thoughts. I saw her as a rather smart young lady who did her work assignments with very little supervision and who interacted well with her classmates. I did not see any of the signs indicating a low self-esteem. She seemed very confident regarding her academic skills. Dede requested additional work to take home to complete. She wanted to assure herself that she had reviewed all the material. She was always helping the other students at her table. I considered Dede to be an asset to the class.

I had not read Dede's entry questionnaire or scored her Coopersmith Inventory until she had been in the class for two weeks. I had not wanted the information to predispose my analysis of her actions. Her entry score was 32. There was no concentration of scores in any specific area (i.e., family or relationships with others) but rather an overall negative feeling. She stated she did have a low opinion of herself

(44% of the women scored a low opinion of themselves on the entry inventory versus 17% feeling so on the exit inventory) Dede was one of three women who were consistent in a low rating of self-esteem. I believe Dede's low self-esteem was directly related to her feelings of always being dependent on others (family and husband) conflicting with the anxiety of assuming the new role which was being thrust upon her. She, therefore, felt she had no control over her life. Dede had gained confidence in the development of her academic skills, but unprecedented future responsibilities loomed over her. Upon entry she regarded herself as a poor student and was afraid she would fail. Dede's exit questionnaire, when asked what she had learned about herself by participating in the program, reflected a growth of self-realization. Dede described herself as, "I'm smarter than I thought, (it) gave me self-confidence. I am more eager to learn." She realized she could pass the GED during the third week of class. Dede stated she did better on the tests because she had more faith in herself. Though Dede stated she believed in herself more, this was not reflected in her Coopersmith Inventory. Her score on the exit inventory rose slightly to 36. As Dede would not be attending graduation, she came by to tell the class she had completed the tests and to thank me. Dede had called me the previous night to tell me she had completed all the tests. Dede was very relieved it was over. Dede was starting on a new adventure, but by realizing her goal of

passing the GED, she had now enhanced her abilities to control her future.

Ellen:

Ellen was a German national seeking United States citizenship. She was 26 years old and had two children. The first day of class Ellen wrote,

Here I am feeling nervous and a little scared. I don't know what to expect. I wonder how the other students feel about being in this class. I also feel a little better about myself because I finally had the courage to sign up for a GED class.

She spoke to me after class about her feelings. Now that the initial "big step" had been taken, Ellen felt a little better about herself. Her husband was very supportive and as the class progressed he often assisted her with her homework. He was one of the few husbands who was helpful. Most husbands, when asked for help, had very little patience, which resulted in arguments and wives feeling even more inferior. Ellen was very enthusiastic about his assistance and school in general. The word to describe Ellen was "bubbly." She brought much vitality into her studies and the class environment. She displayed an unusual sense of humor and was extremely friendly with everyone in the class. Ellen seemed eager to learn and was delighted with her developing abilities.

Ellen did not complete the high school program in Germany. She was very concerned that she would not do as well as the other students. Ellen was somewhat stressed by the methods employed for mathematics as they were not the same as used in Germany. I assured her as long her answers were the same, her method would be acceptable. This relaxed her and allowed her the freedom to progress at a faster pace. Ellen's pretest scores were all passing, with scores in the 44 to 46 range. Ellen's main goal was to attend the nursing program at the local community college. She liked working with people and she felt this would be the area best for her. She was very outgoing with the other students and was quite open with her opinions. Ellen was quite frank, but diplomatic, in expressing her opinions on the various topics of class discussion.

I thoroughly enjoyed teaching Ellen as she seemed consumed with the need to absorb everything accessible for learning. Ellen had a very positive attitude toward education. She wrote,

With an education I have a better chance to get a good job and to become more independent. I feel more positive because I can face certain situations better. I can assist my son more with his homework and let him see at the same time that education doesn't stop when you are an adult.

Ellen proved to be an excellent student as she had an inquiring mind and did not hesitate to ask questions. She readily assisted other students at her table. Ellen had concerns regarding the diverse levels of abilities displayed by various students. She had assumed everyone would be as academically advanced as she because they were citizens of this country. She was totally surprised by disruptive behavior of four students. Ellen told me later she could not believe that grown women had acted in such a manner nor been so rude.

Ellen began her tests with others from the class. Several met at the testing center for moral support. That night she called me to inform me that she had passed the tests she had taken. She told me of how scared she had been when she went in. Ellen tested for several days before returning to class. It was not necessary for her to return to class, but Ellen wanted to share with the other students her experiences with the various tests. She talked about areas she found easy and those which were confusing to her. Ellen reassured the class that if they had listened to me and studied the mathematics review sheet they would probably do all right on the test. She told them the mathematics test would hold no surprises as we had covered all the material and methods in class.

The exit interview was conducted by telephone. Ellen's youngest son had the chicken pox so she could not come to Reynolds House. Ellen was relieved that the testing was

over. In retrospect she thought the tests, except for the "confusing" writing test, were not too difficult. She had already written the good news of her passing to her parents in Germany. She was very proud of herself. She was especially proud of her scores which were all above 49. She was still planning to go to college the next semester. After her son was better, she planned to get the necessary registration information. Ellen was excited as there would be a double celebration. She was graduating from the GED program and her husband was graduating from the local university.

Ellen's initial score on the Coopersmith Inventory was 72. There was no concentration of scores in any particular area other than lack of self-confidence. Ellen's exit score was 88. Her negative responses were 1) things usually did bother her, 2) people did not follow her ideas, and 3) she often got discouraged with what she was doing. Overall, she had a healthy level of self-confidence. She stated she was becoming a more secure person and that she felt better about herself. In regards to what she learned about herself by participating in the GED program, Ellen stated, "I know now that I can accomplish more things than I thought." In addition, she could now stand up for herself and could keep believing in herself. Ellen described herself as feeling more educated and becoming a more secure person. Ellen also realized there was much more to learn and education would assist her in this search.

Frances:

Frances was a 26-year-old Caucasian female with two children: a daughter in the first grade and a 4-year-old son. Frances wrote on her registration form that she completed the tenth grade but told me later in class she completed only the seventh grade. Her husband was enlisted, E-4, and joined the army because he was laid off from his job in Michigan. The majority of the spouses held ranks of E-5 and above. Frances and her husband had been in the army only a short time and Fort Hood was their first military assignment after basic training.

The first day of class, Frances was extremely quiet. She looked frightened and sat next to the wall, in a corner. As she was taking the test she kept shaking her head in a negative fashion. Frances appeared very distraught. After the first test I asked if she was feeling well. She said she was okay [physically] but it was just that she did not know any of the answers. I told her this was a normal response; that was why she was in this class. If she knew how to do everything, she would not need to be here. I would have recommended she take the GED test immediately. I explained that nervousness can affect our thinking and that we all had plenty of time to get through this. She seemed to relax. Frances did have very low scores. She failed all the tests by ten or more points. When scores are below 35 the student is encouraged to participate in either the Basic Skills

program or the Pre-GED program at the downtown educational facility. I discussed this possible transfer with Frances. Frances did not want to transfer due to two reasons: (1) child care was provided only at Reynold's House and (2) she did not think she would feel comfortable being in a larger class with civilians. I did not force this issue as I was concerned she would drop out. I was determined to work with Frances on any level which would prove beneficial to her. At that time I was more concerned about her maintaining a positive self-esteem as I knew I could develop an individual program to assist her.

After a week of class, while we were working on a mathematics problem, Frances asked quite loudly, "Am I the dumbest person in this class?" Scores are never discussed openly by me and there are no grades to spur competition. For some reason Frances felt she needed to know. One other student started laughing and said, "Honey, that's exactly how I use to feel!" The whole class came to a halt and this matter was discussed. We talked about the courage it took to show up that first day of class. I read some of the "Here I am...." essays written the first day of class. The majority reflected this fear of being a failure and having people laugh at them. Frances's expression showed total surprise to discover that others felt the same as she. She said she really believed she was the only one struggling with school.

Several times during the following weeks Frances said she hoped that I had the patience to work with her. She was afraid I would give up on her as she had a hard time understanding things sometimes. As we progressed through the mathematics review it became apparent the classes were indeed going to be a struggle for Frances. She seemed to be frustrated and was afraid that she would not be able to keep up with the class. I explained to her she was to work at her own pace, remaining in a specific area of mathematics until she felt comfortable to move on. Again there seemed to be major relief at being allowed to control her learning experiences.

One day during class, Frances began speaking about scores on the GED and asked exactly how the scoring system was established. She wanted to "beat" a specific score her husband had made on his GED test several years earlier. He did not challenge her, but she was doing this herself to show him she was not dumb. Frances told the class that her husband said she would not pass the GED test. The class responded by being somewhat indignant and told her she would just have to show him! It was probably fortunate for him that this was not one of the days he picked her up from class. The ladies were irritated with him and would have liked to discuss this matter further with him.

We usually had some type of discussion going on before, during, and after class. On a particular day we discussed

the topics of doing what was right for oneself and the effects of letting others have complete control over your life. I added (drawn from the previous class's comments and experiences) that husbands are sometimes afraid of what will happen to their lives if their wives obtain their GEDs and have the opportunity to get a job. Several of the women began an in-depth discussion. Frances said she thought her husband was like that (afraid). After class Frances stopped to thank me for talking to the class about those two particular subjects.

As Frances walked into the room she asked me "What does retention mean?" I told her it basically meant to "hold back", but I needed to know in what context she was using the word. Frances got a rather surprised look on her face and said, "Oh." Then she began talking about what was happening to her daughter in the first grade. Frances said she did not know what to do about this matter. Her daughter made all S's on her report card and read stories to her at home. The child's teacher, a new first grade teacher, had sent a note home stating the child could not read the required word lists during the timed tests. The teacher was requesting a meeting to talk to Frances about the "retention" of her daughter. The class once again responded to Frances's plight and made recommendations.

Frances surprised me on another day. In a very sincere matter-of-fact tone, she informed me she had brain damage.

I questioned her further as to how she knew she had brain damage (i.e., test results, doctor's statements, etc.). Frances had none of these, but she just knew because her parents said she was dumb. Somewhere she heard the term "brain damaged" and associated it with her situation. Her parents agreed that she did indeed have brain damage. When I asked whether birthing difficulties, later injuries, or illnesses caused her brain damage; she did not know of anything. She knew only that she had brain damage. Frances talked about working with her daughter at home and how she was trying to have patience with her so as not to make the daughter feel dumb. Frances said her parents used to call her names and tell her she was dumb. She said, "After a while I began to believe it and wondered why I should try." Unfortunately, it is apparent that now Frances has a husband who has taken over the parent's destructive practices.

Frances came in to class talking about how she was showing her husband what she was learning in class. He wanted to learn more and Frances was to relay the knowledge to him. He apparently got her so confused (in mathematics) that she finally "ran him off" so she could get herself straight. Later Frances mentioned that she could not read. She had been a "helper" to the younger classes and therefore had been passed along. This may explain the discrepancy about the grade in which she dropped out. Frances may have actually completed the seventh grade but was used as a helper until she dropped

out in the tenth grade. She did not want to discuss this matter. Frances had taken a test (the type and reason for taking it were unclear) and it was determined her reading ability ranged from the second to sixth grade levels, depending on the areas. Frances knew she could not read but made C's in school in spite of this. She taught herself to read by reading True Confession. She could not help her daughter with school work and in the future this was something she would like to do. I suggested she enroll in the local literacy program in addition to participating in this class. She said she would. Based on my interactions with her and knowing her confidence level, I doubted whether she would follow through. Frances had dropped out of school to get married. This marriage had ended in divorce. Frances never mentioned anything about the marriage other than the divorce. Later she married her present husband.

Frances was very depressed during one class. She usually started talking the moment she walked through the door. Frances did not talk to anyone for the entire class except to ask me for assistance. In mathematics she worked on finding the common denominator. It was a struggle for her, and I thought she was going to cry. I spent every opportunity with Frances. She could not do this task on her own that day. Frances did not initiate a conversation with me so I did not pry. She seemed to want to be left alone.

The next class, Frances came in early as she wanted to talk to me privately. She told me about her fear of not finishing. "Spending all that time and still not passing" were comments she heard from her husband. She felt this was a threat to her. He thought the test was a "snap" and that she must be a dummy. Frances confided that she had never talked with her husband about her feelings regarding herself, the low self-esteem due mainly to her parent's actions. Frances did not know how to tell him it hurt her feelings when he said things like "she should be able to do things faster or be smarter." The other students came in at that point and Frances sat down quickly. At that time I was not able to assist Frances with her problem. She established a pattern of coming in early when she wanted to discuss a problem with me. One Monday she told me she almost left her husband over the weekend. A friend living in San Antonio was moving back to Michigan and called her. The friend wanted to know whether Frances wanted to go with her. Frances packed her personal belongings and those of her children. She was ready to go. Her husband, who had been gone, came in about that time. At first he did not want her to go but then became rather upset and told her it was up to her to make the decision. At this point he seemed so sad that Frances stayed. She also decided that another reason for staying was the child care provided at Reynolds House while she attended school. If she returned home, she would not be able to attend classes.

As the class was drawing to a close, Frances had yet to attempt a GED test. I encouraged her to take either the reading or the social studies test. Frances still lacked the self-confidence needed to go out to the center. I think she was more afraid of spending the money (\$25 for all five GED tests), failing a test, and having to ask her husband for the \$5.00 fee to re-test. Frances said she felt much better about herself and for right now that was just as important as taking the test.

Frances's initial score on the Coopersmith Inventory was 60. She wrote clarifying remarks on several of the statements. She had a low opinion of herself which was confirmed by her related statements. Her negative scores were spread across the spectrum. Her greatest concern regarding the class was whether the teacher would have enough patience with her as she asked a lot of questions. She identified her weakest skill as "Everything because I am a slow learner." In the journal entry "One thing I would change about my life," she wrote, "I would like to change my life by improving my education but it's hard for me. My brain doesn't move fast enough. I might have brain damage."

Frances's exit Coopersmith Inventory score was 88, with two of her three negative responses being that she was still getting upset at home and that most people were better liked than she. The one thing Frances learned about herself by participating in the program was that she could finish what

she started. Even though Frances did not complete the GED, she still considered herself successful (i.e., she finished) because she had stayed until the end. Like most students enrolled in this program, this was her first experience at completing something she had started. Frances was disappointed she did not do better on the first testing. Her new attitude toward education had helped her to "like" school, and she want to do more with school in the future. After observing the program with the children downstairs, she had established a new goal. Frances would like to be a preschool or kindergarten teacher. An aide conducted the programs at Reynolds House and Frances felt confident she would like this type of position. I personally believed Frances would be excellent in this endeavor. Frances said she would tell a perspective student for a GED program to "Try it. Even after failing, try again. Don't ever be afraid."

Frances kept in contact with me in the following months. Because of a difficult pregnancy, she was not able to return to school in the fall. She said she was not going to give up. She had come this far and there was no turning back. When the right opportunity came along, she would be back.

Georgia:

Georgia was a 26-year-old Caucasian female with one child. Her appearance projected that "tough cookie" image. Short and somewhat stocky, she was rather intimidating to me.

As Georgia told me later, she was so afraid she would do something which would draw unpleasant attention to herself.

Her initial journal reflected this uneasiness. It stated,

I am sitting here in my classroom getting ready for my GED. I'm scared to death wondering what the class is going to be like. I'm also thinking, 'I'm in this class for nine weeks, am I going to pass my GED?' I also realized the people in the class are know [sic] different than I am. I just hope after all my learning from these classes I can pass my GED. I will keep saying to myself I can do it.

Georgia completed the eighth grade. By the ninth grade she realized school was not her "thing" for now. She was not failing or in any type of trouble while in school. Georgia admitted school did not offer anything which she felt would warrant her attention or attendance. She was just there and seemed to gradually drift out of the academic realm. Georgia had not begun to connect the importance of academics on her present or future life.

Georgia's pretest scores were not especially high but were within acceptable limits. Georgia was pleased with her scores. She was somewhat unsettled by what she considered my "laid back" teaching style. She wrote in her journal the GED program was nothing compared to her last [high school] class. Her greatest fear regarding the class was not being able to get too much out of the class to pass the GED. She soon

realized there was structure to the class, but the real difference was that the class was conducted on an adult-to-adult level. Removed were the (you) will do, have to do, and when I want you to demands from the teacher. She soon understood we were all cooperative partners in this learning experience.

Georgia became a vital addition to the classroom. She had an excellent sense of humor and could laugh at herself. I enjoyed teaching and sharing with Georgia. She was eager to work on mathematics. The majority of the women believed, and told me, their weakest academic area was mathematics. They said they could not do mathematics and it was the mathematics which would keep them from passing the GED. This fear of mathematics created high test anxiety. Georgia enjoyed helping others with mathematics. She identified mathematics as her favorite subject even though she had only a C average. She always enjoyed working with numbers and had fun doing mathematics. This particular statement was unique in that Georgia was the only student to ever make this claim.

Georgia always said she tried to keep her worries down. In class she finally brought out a concern of hers. Her husband had recently been promoted from the enlisted ranks to Chief Warrant Officer. She expressed concern over the big changes they were experiencing in their lives, life-styles, and expectations. There were additional expenses and new roles, for both the husband and Georgia, associated with this

promotion. It was her husband's promotion which finally prompted her to seek her GED, to seek closure on that part of her life. A certain amount of participation within the military functions was expected from officers' wives. It was an unwritten policy to enhance the husband's career. Georgia was concerned she would either say or do something to embarrass herself or hamper her husband's career. She felt inadequate because "all" the other wives were involved in college and she was just finishing her GED. "But," Georgia said, "my test scores are high enough that I know, if I wanted to, I would do all right in college. I might try later, but for right now, I'm happy right where I am." We discussed the possibility of her observing the other wives at military functions. By utilizing this method she would be able to adjust to her expected role as a military officer's wife. This action would allow Georgia to have more choices of what was, or was not, acceptable and appropriate for her. She did end the discussion with some rather exciting news. Georgia's husband was buying her a graduation ring. Georgia had always wanted one and seemed to see this purchase as the final act of a real graduate. They had been to a jewelry store and had selected a stone which resembled her former high school's ring. I asked her if she had considered buying a nice necklace or bracelet for the occasion. She was determined to have the ring. Georgia also planned to hang the

graduation tassel, along with her husband's, from the mirror in the car. She described herself as "being on cloud nine."

Georgia's scores on the Coopersmith Inventory stayed basically the same, but with a four point increase to 68. In the exit interview she stated that one fact she learned about herself was, "I can do almost anything once I put my mind to it." When questioned as to whether her participation in the program had affected her self-image she agreed that it had and concluded with, "Now I feel like I'm somebody." Georgia was very optimistic about finding employment but if she didn't, she would be content to help her daughter with her school work. Georgia experienced more confidence about this aspect of her life. One of the new goals Georgia established was to go to school. Attending the local skills institute was now a more realistic option.

Helen:

Helen was a Black female who had recently celebrated her 18th birthday. She was newly married and did not have children. Academically, Helen would do very well as she had high pretest scores. In the beginning, she seemed interested in school and applied herself to the assignments. For some reason, the students began discussing test scores during a class. Helen was surprised to learn she had the top scores. From this point on there was a marked change in her attitude

and use of time. I suggested she take the GED, but she said she wanted to wait until she was ready.

Socially, Helen was immature. She was a continuous talker during the individual study periods. Helen was somewhat offended when I discussed the matter of talking with her. She either could not or would not realize everyone at her table was not at the same academic level as she. Some of the students who responded to her talking found socializing enjoyable, yet at the same time, they could not concentrate on their studies. Helen became friends with Betty. Their friendship extended beyond the classroom. They shared similar interests and experiences which seemed to strengthen their friendship. Helen told one of the students she was new to the area and therefore knew absolutely no one. The class became a place where she could be with other people. I now understood why Helen did not want to take the GED test when I previously suggested she do so. One of the women at her table moved to a different table. This woman told me she had joined Helen and Betty for an activity after class. Both had acted so "silly and immature" that she was embarrassed to be seen with them. She walked away and went home. She no longer wished to share the table with Helen and Betty. Helen became resentful about the other student's moving and always seemed rather curt with that student. This situation was never resolved.

Helen's journal entries reflected many of the changes in her life. She wrote about her feelings on the first day of class. She wrote, "I thought I would be scared at first but I am not. I don't have that feeling when it was time for the first day of school. Here for the first day I feel comfortable." She thought marriage would provide new freedoms (away from her parents). She apparently had not considered the new responsibilities associated with marriage. One entry did display unusual insight. Helen wrote,

The stress also builds up when I think back on when I was living with my Mom and Dad. I think when my parents tried to tell me not to do something and at the time I thought they were being old-fashioned and weird but now that I'm married and live in my own place some things I do exactly like they do. Those are the parents that I thought were so weird. My parents live in Harrisburg, Pa., and I miss them very much.

Helen's Coopersmith Inventory score remained consistent at 84. She wrote that she always had confidence in herself. The program affected her self-image as reported as "Knowing that when I start something I will surely finish." Helen could not identify any goal beyond "walking across the stage in my cap and gown" and getting a job. She thought she might like to further her education but really had not thought of a specific area to pursue. Helen had not participated in the

session on financial aid from the college. In fact, during the session I had to ask Helen and her friend to put their newspapers away. She did not have a specific area or career to pursue. The majority of the answers on the entry and exit questionnaires were very vague. Helen did come to graduation, and she did walk across the stage in her cap and gown.

Ida:

Ida was a 28-year-old Hispanic woman from San Antonio. She was the mother of two daughters, one was 12 and the other was four. Ida neither read nor spoke Spanish. She appeared very self-conscious of this fact as other Spanish-speaking students attempted conversations with her in Spanish. Even though her parents could speak Spanish, it was not spoken at home. In addition to herself, no other sibling spoke or understood the language. Ida admitted this had previously caused her some difficulties with her friends who preferred to speak Spanish.

Due to either being scared or her extreme shyness, Ida did not project a favorable first impression. I would describe her as having a defiant expression on her face for the first three days of class. I thought she was going to have a negative attitude. Ida was very shy and thus had limited interactions with others at her table. Ida was observant of what was happening in the classroom and was aware of activities in other students' lives even though she did not

know their names. She had recorded in her first journal entry, "Here I am scared to death. I hope I pass this test. I am glad to be here today. I really need to be so I can get some education back in my brain." Ida did not talk to another person through the first three days of pretesting. I began to talk to her more once I observed she lacked interaction with her group. Ida began to respond and I realized I had misjudged her. I told her of my reactions to her. She was not surprised but said this happened to her all the time. Apparently, like me, people did not realize Ida was shy because she always maintained direct eye contact when spoken to. Ida said she rarely attempted to change this image because, due to both the neighborhood and friends she associated with, she found if she kept that image people would not "mess" with her. As the weeks progressed, so did Ida's interactions with her classmates. I noticed her talking with the other students after class. In addition, Ida's husband was supportive of her in this program. She wrote, "My husband really pushed me, he said how do you expect to get anywhere in life. So here I am trying the best I can."

Ida had high scores, all above 46, on all her pretests. She was an excellent student. Ida was quick to answer my questions and was usually correct. Much of the mathematics she did mentally. If she was incorrect, Ida would quickly work the problem and present the correct answer. Ida seemed quite pleased with her ability to do so. I suggested she

test right away. Ida refused saying she needed time to review the material to get ready. In fact, Ida delayed taking any of the test until two weeks before graduation. Once she started, Ida completed all the tests in three sessions. She made excellent scores on all.

Like so many of the students, Ida started arriving early for class. There was a problem in her life and she needed someone to listen. There was a major problem with her 12-year-old daughter. The daughter was totally rebellious and constantly arguing with the husband. Ida's husband was not the father of the older daughter, but was to the younger child. He thought she was overly teasing and sometimes hurting the younger daughter when she thought neither Ida nor he were around. The home situation was not pleasant. In addition, the daughter's grades were low. Ida tried the "don't make the same mistakes as me" approach but to no avail. The situation was to the point where the daughter was going to be sent back to live with Ida's parents. Ida was somewhat hesitant about this idea but felt pressured to accept this action as her only recourse. It was during her exit interview Ida revealed her reasons for the hesitation to send her daughter to her parents. We discussed the possibility of seeking counseling from her husband's unit chaplain or with outside counseling through Champus. I explained counseling may not only help the child with her conflicts but could assist the entire family with the anxiety they were

experiencing from this situation. We discussed this on several occasions, but no action was taken. Basically, Ida wanted someone to listen to her without making any type of judgment. It soon became clear that Ida really did not have a true friend, someone she could talk to, here in the area. Other than her fellow classmates, Ida did not know another person on a first name basis. We continued discussing the daughter and tried to imagine how the daughter could be feeling about the situation. Ida and her husband began talking about the how's and why's of what was happening rather than just reacting. To my knowledge, they did not seek counseling. After a while Ida said things were going better. The older daughter had fewer confrontations with the husband and the younger sister.

Ida would not allow the exit interview to be taped. Even though I assured her the interview would be confidential, she would not consent. The content of the interview and the possible effect on her husband's career led her to this decision. She did not want the interview traced to her husband. Ida had been, in her own words, "wild" in school. School was a place to hang out until later in the day. She did not do well in school due to excessive attendance problems and lack of motivation. She continued to attend school until the mandatory age of 16. Ida dropped out and shortly after became pregnant. She did not view her pregnancy as a catastrophe but rather as another event. Her family had no

problem accepting the pregnancy. Ida had low paying jobs which did not last very long. She continued to live at home and enjoy her previous life-style as her mother cared for the daughter. Eventually Ida was hired by a major clothing manufacturer of jeans. Hispanics were the major ethnic group at this facility. Her job was to sew (tack) across the bottom of the jean zipper. To alleviate the boredom of the job, she used drugs. Ida stated that drugs were in abundance at work and used excessively by the majority of workers. Her future husband put the brads in the pockets of the jeans. She stated he was usually so stoned she did not know how he kept his hands out of the press. His hands would have been crushed if they were caught by the press. Drug usage was not limited to work. Her whole family, except her mother, used drugs. Her sisters, brothers, and father would sit around the kitchen table smoking marijuana or "whatever." The father said he knew they were doing drugs so they might as well do it at home where it would be safer. There were occasions when the father provided the drugs. All this time Ida continued to enjoy her free life-style. She would be gone for weekends with no thoughts as to the care of her daughter. She never knew when she would take off, she would just not go home one Friday evening. This continued for several years.

Three major events changed Ida's life. Her future husband's behavior and actions had progressed to the point where he was in trouble with the legal authorities. He was

given a choice to either join the military service or go to jail. He chose to enlist in the army as it had lower entrance requirements than the other military services. They became engaged and married when he returned from basic training. Ida continued to live at home with her family.

The second event which affected her life was the closing of the manufacturing company. She found herself unemployed and with neither a high school diploma nor marketable skills. She gathered her daughter and her few possessions and joined her husband on his army assignments. The life-style and drug usage continued as before. He restricted his usage of drugs to the weekends. Due to the availability of new drugs, they expanded their usage. One of them would stay rather "straight" to watch over the daughter. Ida said she had unlimited drug usage and managed to stay high most of the time.

The third event occurred two years into the marriage. Ida became pregnant again. She said she stopped drugs immediately. Ida wanted this baby to be healthy and not be born addicted to drugs. She also knew if an addicted baby was delivered at a military hospital their drug involvement would have been exposed. At that point the military authorities would step in and there would be severe repercussions. Ida did not elaborate on why there had been the two different and distinct levels of responsibility expressed toward the welfare of the two daughters during each of the pregnancies. She has not had any type of drug since the last

pregnancy. She confessed she did not realize she had missed so much of life due to drugs. Her husband eventually, and without a program intervention, overcame his drug cravings. She said they were much happier now. He planned to continue in the army.

Ida would like to obtain a part-time job. At the community skills center she became very interested in the printing operator program. She had a female relative who was a printing operator and made "good money" (\$23,000 annually). On her own, Ida returned to the center to discuss the program with the staff. Her husband encouraged her to enroll. The program was self-paced and allowed the student to determine the class hours. She would be able to attend training and still be home for her children. Ida was very excited about the program and seemed determined to get started on a new phase of her life.

Ida's entry Coopersmith Inventory score was 52. She expressed a low self-esteem, lacked self-confidence, and had difficulty in the family areas. Ida had enrolled in the GED program the year before and had been placed on the waiting list. At that time she had no long range goals other than to obtain her GED and to lose weight. She chose the word "uncertain" to describe herself as a student now and in the future would like to be considered "all right." Ida considered herself both a dependent and an independent person based upon specific events and situations. She did not see herself as

a contributing member to the community but would like to get involved.

Ida's exit Coopersmith Inventory had a score of 92. She had checked "unlike me" for 1) things usually don't bother me, and 4) I can make up my mind without too much trouble. By being involved in the class Ida learned new self-confidence and how to better relate to others. After completing the course, Ida described herself as a better person and she personally felt better about herself. As she stated, "I don't feel like I am dumb." Ida believed it was the development of self-confidence which led her to pass the GED. Ida recalled the first days of pretesting. She was scared that she would not make it through. Even later in the course as she retested she was still frightened of failure. Ida told herself to calm down and relax. She was pleased about her development of skills to write a better letter. She also noted that she had learned a little more about life. Ida would tell any perspective GED student, "You'll never know until you try it. If I can do it, so can you." She recognized the change in herself as she progressed through the program. Ida believed she was overcoming her shyness because of her interactions in the class. On graduation day Ida was going to be a little nervous. But I am not going to be scared. I am going to feel happy and proud of myself because now I can do anything. I feel I will be the

happiest person there. I can't wait until that day comes when I am walking across that stage.

Graduation, to Ida, was "finally being able to show my older daughter that dropping out of school was not smart."

Judy:

Judy was a 17-year-old Black female from Florida. She had no children and had been married less than one year. Judy completed the tenth grade but her pretest GED English and reading scores (which were in the 30's) were deficient. She also had weak mathematics skills but was determined to develop them. Judy regarded herself as a poor student and was very frightened the first day of class. In her initial journal entry she wrote,

I came early this first class to get my nerves together.

But I don't think I will ever get them together.

Because I never dream [sic] I would be seating [sic]

here trying to get my GED. Miss Mary I am scared.

Because I bet \$300.00 with my husband. If I don't pass it will never rest in peace. He will tell everyone I'm stupid.

Throughout the length of the program Judy continued to call me "Miss Mary." She seldom talked to anyone at her table and when she did, it was strictly about the school work. Judy was the only Black at her table and I had the impression she did not have many positive experiences with

people of other races. Judy had an excellent attendance record and made rapid improvements academically.

Judy seldom talked about her husband nor did she make any comments about her personal life. She did mention her husband wanted her to go to college and become either a doctor or a lawyer. He made no such commitment for himself. One day Judy came to class with bruises on her face and arms. Privately I inquired about the bruises. She said her husband had beaten her again. Judy said she was tired of it and that was the reason she was in school. She needed an education to be able to get a job and leave her husband. Judy said she was "going to put up with it until graduation and then leave him [the husband] the next day." The students at her table noticed her bruises. As usual, this led into a general discussion by the class of what Judy should and should not do. She seemed strengthened by their involvement. Now Judy seemed to have more confidence in her decision. After this incident, Judy became more communicative with others in the class. The students became very supportive of her. Judy did not form a friendship with any particular individual but rather became outgoing with everyone. Some time later Judy again came in with a large bruise on her forearm. She told me she would have to leave early as she and her husband had a conference with her husband's company commander. While at the Post Exchange her husband became irritated and began slapping her around. The military police were called and he

was arrested. When he was released, he returned home and she refused to let him in the house. She became frightened by his actions and called the military police. This type of action always warrants intervention by the soldier's commander. At the next class period Judy told us the commander was very supportive of her and had told her husband his career was at stake. If his behavior continued, he faced arrest or discharge from the service with a less than honorable discharge. His commander moved him back into the barracks. Judy had all the locks in the house changed. He continued with what she considered harassment. Judy decided she wanted a divorce. At this point Judy's attendance became erratic. She started staying with various friends and her husband did not know her location. He called the Reynolds House and was abusive to the personnel. He arrived at Reynolds House looking for her. He became irritated when he realized she was absent. He became abusive with the staff who in turned contacted his commander. His activities at Reynolds House ceased. When Judy was told of the events she smiled and seemed very smug. Judy did not seem to be the same person who had started the class several weeks before.

Judy was absent for two weeks. Upon her return she told the class she had completed all the GED testing. She was extremely proud of herself especially since she had "shown" her husband. As Judy did not drive, her husband had taken her to the testing center. All the way to the center he kept

telling her she would not pass. She believed he did this in an attempt to upset or break her confidence. Judy did not mention whether they were living together again.

On the first Coopersmith Inventory Judy made a 24. She answered six of the questions with both choices. She stated she had low self-esteem. Her entry goals for the first three months were to finish school, be happy, and be wise. Even though she had mentioned making her husband proud of her she established "divorce" as one of her goals for the next 12 months. She had a large number of negative scores concerning areas of her family. At first, her writing samples reflected positive thoughts of goals, dreams, and of pleasing herself and her husband. Regarding the decision to begin GED classes she wrote,

I really need my education to help me to come a better person, just to make me happy. This mean [sic] so much to me. I have to do it for me so I can get the hell on with my life. Stuck [sic] in there with me. I am really-really trying to pass your class.

As she progressed, the samples became mirrors of the abuses at home. She wrote, "I want to get on with my life" and wanting to get certain things behind her. Her posttest Coopersmith had a score of 52. This time, four of the questions had both choices selected. She selected low self-esteem again. Generally the same negative responses were checked but there was one less regarding family. Judy did

not do an exit interview. Her husband had brought her by Reynolds House so she could tell the class she had passed. This seemed very important to her. Her husband was waiting for her in the car and told her she had ten minutes to get back downstairs.

For graduation, the students are advised to wear something nice, as if they were dressing for church. Judy arrived wearing a short, blue satin strapless formal. This was the first time I had seen Judy with makeup. She had her hair styled by a friend. Judy looked very attractive as well as extremely excited. She came to the reception without her husband. He waited outside for her. She talked for some time to another student and myself. After she left, one of her classmates came over to me. She asked whether I had noticed Judy's legs. The student said there were bruises all over Judy's legs. I did not hear anymore about Judy until the new spring class. A friend of Judy's had enrolled late in the class and had news about her. Judy left her husband the day after graduation and went home to Florida. Several months later Judy's husband had gone to Florida. He had talked her into returning with him. She was presently living in the area but her friend did not think this would be for long.

Karen:

Karen was a 19-year-old Black female with a six-month-old daughter. Karen completed the 11th grade in Maryland. She was of slight build, attractive, and extremely neat. Fort Hood was Karen's first move with her husband and also the first extended stay away from her family. She presented a positive image of someone seeking success. Karen continually used the word "success" in her questionnaire and journal entries. Karen wrote,

Here I am doing something that I know will help me to accomplish my goals in life. There is a great feeling of satisfaction and excitement inside me, knowing that this day is the first day to my road of success. I was a little nervous leaving home today. The whole time I was thinking of what the GED class is going to be like. But once I arrived I started to feel positive. Here I am hoping for the best, and keeping in mind that my positive attitude and self-confidence will help me become a very effective and productive individual.

On her questionnaire Karen, in addition to identifying completion of the GED as a goal, also included attending business school to become a certified accountant. Apparently Karen was limited in her knowledge of the skills required for this profession as she stated mathematics was her weakest skill. The reason for such a statement was she really did

not like mathematics. Her pretest mathematics score reflected this definite lack of mathematics skills. Karen did not pass the mathematics pretest but did relatively well on the other pretests. She was upset about the mathematics score but did not consider this an obstacle to becoming an accountant.

Karen remained after class to ask questions concerning enrolling at the local community college. She did go out to the college to pick up the necessary registration packet. Karen brought the packet from financial aid to class. She needed assistance to complete the form as the directions were complicated. As her husband's military pay voucher was needed, I suggested to Karen she contact Ms. Smith, the financial aid officer at the college. Ms. Smith was very professional, always attempting to assist the student in receiving the maximum benefits. Karen seemed disturbed and very hesitant about this suggestion. She was rather relieved when I volunteered to make an appointment for her. The next meeting she informed me she had an excellent chance to qualify for financial assistance.

Karen was a very conscientious student. She expressed confidence in her abilities to pass the GED tests. Since mathematics had been her main concern, she always asked to take additional mathematics problems home. Karen continued to develop her mathematics skills; therefore, I began to ask her to help others at her table. She seemed rather pleased

about this role. Though she did this request willingly, Karen rarely spoke to anyone during class. I can not say whether Karen developed any friendships within the class. She was the only Black student at her table and though she always had to option to move, she remained in the same seat. Georgia seemed to be the one person Karen did converse with. Karen was usually the last student out of the building as she would stop to talk to the day care worker. They seemed to have a warm relationship.

Karen's journal entries revealed a person who equated education with success. She wrote,

I think education is a tool that helps me to develop and learn many skills. In my life, education is important for me to succeed and become a productive person. I think without education people cease to grow. In some way or another we learn new things everyday, but good education is a valuable asset. Education is like a ladder, the more you learn, the closer you get to the top of the ladder. At the top of my ladder is a successful business woman. Hopefully, my education will take me to the top of that ladder.

Karen began her GED testing with mathematics. She wanted to get that "out of the way." During class Karen had concentrated on mathematics in case she had questions. I allowed her to take the other subject books home to study. Karen was very nervous and arranged to meet Georgia at the

test center. She passed the test and called me at home to tell me the news. Karen always called me after passing each of the remaining tests.

Karen did graduate but she would not have the opportunity to begin immediately at the community college. Her husband had received orders for Germany and they would be leaving one month after graduation. She was rather upset when she told me the news in class. The entire class then discussed this as her "big adventure." Besides her move to Texas, Karen had not ever been far from home or known anyone who had been to Europe. Her spirits seemed to lift when I informed her the local community college had branches at most of the major posts in Europe. The other students did an excellent job of telling her of their experiences in Europe. I think Karen left that day with a more positive attitude toward her future move.

Karen's Coopersmith Inventory score dropped from the initial 76 to 72. The only responses which were unchanged were "There are a lot of things I would change about myself." and "I get easily upset at home." During her exit interview these points were discussed. She loved her daughter dearly, as well as her husband, but she wished they could have come at a different time in her life. The marriage was the result of Karen's pregnancy. Karen stated, "I really would like to have known how far I could have gone (professionally)." She had wondered what level of success she could have achieved.

Karen had spent a great deal of time thinking about this. She felt she could be very successful. Karen recognized in herself someone who was a hard worker and was making strides in reaching her goals. Attending classes only reinforced Karen's strong belief in herself.

Lori:

Lori was a 24-year-old Caucasian female, married, with two daughters. The youngest daughter accompanied her to Reynolds House. Lori said she was more at ease knowing her daughter was downstairs rather than at a sitter's. Lori was one of the few students who seem concerned about personal appearance. Most had losing weight as a future goal, but Lori was actually involved in a weight loss program. She began the program after she started her GED classes. Once she had identified weight loss as a goal on her questionnaire, Lori realized she had to get serious. She was always well-groomed. Lori did interact with people at her table, especially Olive. They became friends. Lori did not extend this friendliness to others in the class or to me. She did not seem comfortable with anyone outside her "team." Based on my observations, I was rather surprised when Lori wrote about having had only one previous job, a Tupperware dealership. She continued with the statements that she did not do very well in sales because she felt she was not a very outgoing person.

In her first journal entry Lori stated, "I'm glad that I came and I feel that I'm ready for this class. I'm confident I'll do fine." She regarded herself as dependent because she "had to be shown how to do certain things." She also thought she had no control over her own life, yet she saw herself as a contributing member to her community. For the next three months, Lori established three goals: finish the GED, lose 10 pounds, and see her family at Christmas. She did not identify any goals for the next 12 months. Though she did not list it on the questionnaire, Lori wrote in her journal she would like to become a barber. She had learned of the local barber school and had made inquiries. Lori had a desire to develop her self-confidence. A week after beginning the program she wrote in her journal,

I already feel better about myself, just coming to these classes. I'm sure you can understand how it can sometimes feel to be at home a lot. I've never worked and I take care of my little one, Mandy, and clean house. This class gives me something to look forward to every week. It feels good to use my brain a little more often now, instead of physical things all the time.

Her writing assignment, "Feelings Regarding Self" was written retrospectively. The "then" was a person who felt she could not make lasting friendships and who was not a very likeable person. She did not have any confidence in herself. From her journal entries one could surmise she had friendships

which had been painful, resulting in Lori being hurt (emotionally) and made to feel foolish. It was if she wanted to be more open, to be friends with others, but the risks of being rejected or hurt were too threatening. She had written of situations where she had confided too readily with others. Lori believed she needed to let the relationships develop more before she revealed so much about herself. Lori's "later" displayed a woman who was evolving into someone whom she considered worthwhile and could do anything she set her mind to do.

Since she began the class, Lori did lose weight. She worked out at the gym with her husband and lost 10 pounds. More importantly, she made five new friends. Olive became her special friend. They both seemed very pleased to have formed this friendship. Olive was very competitive with Lori, but I did not think this offended Lori or threatened her in any way. She worked well with Olive and assisted Olive with an occasional problem. Lori responded immediately when Olive lost two bedrooms of furniture and clothing in a fire. It may be this need, appreciation, and friendship which instigated the new awareness of self in Lori.

She always did well in class and rarely needed assistance. Lori's pretest scores were in the "test now" range 46 and above, yet, like many of the students, it would be several more weeks before she began to test. To Lori, graduation meant she actually started and completed something (the

GED program). This was a "first" for Lori as she had not followed through with previous attempts of fulfilling her interests and desires. Lori stated she would definitely attempt to stop or talk someone out of dropping out of school. She would attempt to explain about the jobs and opportunities which would be missed without a diploma. A person with a diploma would have a better job, higher pay, and "would not be stuck in a low paying job the all their lives." Lori went on to state, "There is also a special feeling you get from knowing that you can make it through school and graduate with a diploma. Pride in yourself." One aspect of her life Lori would like to change would be that she had dropped out of school. "It's too important to get your diploma," she wrote. She believed one must either have or develop a positive attitude in order to be successful. She identified one fact which she learned about herself by participating in this program: she could set a goal and accomplish it. Before leaving the class Lori established new specific goals. She initially thought of enrolling in barber school but changed to pursuing a medical records clerk certificate through the community college. Another goal Lori established was to have a church wedding. Ten years earlier she had been married by a justice of the peace. She felt she had missed something special; therefore, on her tenth anniversary in October, she and her husband were to repeat their vows during a church ceremony. Lori was going to sew a new wedding dress for

herself and new dresses for her daughters. She was going to have a small reception and invite special friends. For graduation, Lori bought herself a new dress. Her family came to graduation and to the reception. Everyone was dressed exceptionally well. Lori introduced her husband to me. He had always been very supportive of Lori and was pleased she would be starting the community college.

Lori's Coopersmith Inventory scores were much higher than expected based on her comments regarding self. Her score was 68. Three-fourths of the negative statements were in regard to her interactions with others. In the exit inventory, Lori score rose to 80. Of the five negative responses, all but one were people related. In her exit interview she was still rather shy yet much more confident than when she began the program. For Lori, now had been the time for her to begin the GED classes. She did not have the courage before because of how she felt about herself. She was very determined now to start classes at the local college. Her husband was going to school and was also confident she would do well. Coming to the GED classes had stimulated a new outlook on life for Lori. She felt better about herself and had developed a "can do" attitude replacing a negative attitude of "I get less because I am less." Lori was very optimistic about enrolling in the community college program and had set a completion goal of one year. Lori learned not only skills for the GED, but started, she felt,

to develop real communication skills. She was learning to listen to people and to develop friendships. Her basic academic skills were always prominent, but "something" while she was in class fostered the growth of self-esteem. Apparently, for Lori, it had become the right place and the right time. In concluding the interview, Lori stated, "I realized I am a worthwhile person."

Matti:

Matti was a tall, slender 25-year-old Black female. She had one son in the second grade. Matti dropped out of school during the ninth grade. She had been considering enrolling in a GED program for three years. Matti enrolled in this class because it was on post, Fort Hood. That first day of class she appeared so frightened that she sometimes seemed to be holding her breath. Her pretest scores, though passing, were not above 45. She failed the English test with a 39. Matti was very discouraged by her test scores. I explained how stress had a direct impact on pretest scores and I was confident her scores would improve with development of her study skills. Matti agreed with me and told me she was determined to do this. She was planning to attend beautician school and needed a GED to be accepted. Overall, Matti always applied herself in class. Matti possessed good mathematical mechanical skills but had difficulty applying these skills to word problems. I did not tell students which

processes (addition, subtraction, division, or multiplication) were needed to complete a problem. Rather, I used leading questions to direct the student to the correct response. Matti had difficulty with this approach. She became very defensive and always said, "All right" to any type of directive. She wanted me to tell her which processes to follow. With time this attitude eased and she began to apply analytical thinking.

For the first two weeks of class Matti had segregated herself from others. I moved her into a team setting which proved very beneficial for Matti. She had been called from the waiting list of students; therefore, it was reasonable to believe she felt alienated from the established group. By this time there were fewer than ten people in the class. Being the new person, Matti did not feel comfortable initiating any action to be accepted by the group. She soon became very outgoing and responsive to the various students.

From her constant interacting conversations in class, it appeared Matti was quite independent. She identified herself as being independent "because I like to try on my own rather than ask somebody else." She had definite opinions on how to handle specific situations discussed in class. She rarely spoke of her husband other than to mention he was usually in the field (military field exercises which vary in length of time away from home). This type of situation often created this independence in military wives. They had to learn to

constantly cope with being a married yet "single" parent. Once one of the women remarked she had been to an all-male dance performance the night before. Matti became very enthusiastic and launched into a conversation about her experience at a performance of male dancers. Needless to say for the next 10 minutes there was very little class work completed. Matti had the whole class laughing.

Matti's scores did improve as she retested in class. She was not too confident about the writing test. She had not liked English in high school and this attitude had not diminished. She failed the first GED test, which for Matti, was the reading. It is unusual for someone to fail the reading test. She was not discouraged or upset. She had made a 39 and she thought she could pass it the next time. Her reason for failure was the lack of time to complete the test. Whereas most students stop coming to class once they start testing, Matti continued to attend.

Matti's entry score on the Coopersmith was 72. Her negative responses related to how she thought people interpreted her actions and viewed her. Matti did not think she could pass the test the first day of class and really did not know if she could pass it after being in the program, but she did realize an education could help her in her life. If Matti could change one thing in her life it would have been to stay in high school. In her journal she entered,

One thing I would change in my life is to go threw [sic] school again. Only if I could change the time back to 1979. I would complete my high school diploma. Things would be better for me. Then I could complete college, and on my way to a career in the '80's.

Matti's exit Coopersmith Inventory had a score of 64. All her negative scores displayed a questioning of self in regard to others and her personal worth. By the end of the program Matti realized she "could accomplish something within herself." She felt she had progressed into society. Speaking and communication skills were two skills Matti developed during the program. She had more confidence in herself and was very enthusiastic toward education. Matti's established goals for the first three months were to get her GED, go to hair styling college, and to start a career.

Matti had two remaining tests (one a retest) when a situation arose which resulted in Matti becoming a casualty of the system. The testing center at the community college somehow lost or misplaced a GED test. As regulations required, the center was closed until approval was received from the main office in Washington, DC to reopen. This incident occurred two weeks before graduation. The local testing center decided to remain closed for the next month and a half due to the introduction of the new GED test. Arrangements were made for students to test at the Temple High School, twenty miles away. Bus transportation was recruited from

local churches. Once there, the students were confronted with another stressful situation. Unlike our testing center, cash and checks would not be accepted and payment must be in the form of money orders. As the school was not conveniently located, the bus had to be boarded and driven to several facilities which did sell money orders. Sixty students purchasing money orders resulted in a delay of 1.5 hours. It was eleven o'clock when the last person boarded the bus to return home. Due to this scheduling of tests, the scores would not be available until the day of graduation. Matti called me the night before and wanted to know if she could still be in the graduation. I assured her if she had passed the tests, she definitely had a place at graduation. She told me she thought she had passed the tests. The following night at graduation, no Matti. I asked the director about Matti's status. She said Matti had called her three times that day and had gotten ugly with her when her scores were not available. The director told me she learned later in the day that Matti had not passed the tests as her name was not provided from the "passed list" at the other testing center. I did not see Matti again. Several months later, at the beginning of the new term, I sought out Matti's educational record to see if she had gone and retested again. Her test score sheet indicated she had passed the tests that night in Temple. No one had an explanation for the error. I attempted to contact Matti by telephone, but was unable to do

so. Her official GED certificate would be mailed to her by the Texas Education Agency but if she moved the document will not be forwarded. She would not receive her certificate unless she contacted this agency. Without this knowledge, Matti might not receive her GED certificate and her dreams would be diminished.

Nelda:

Nelda was a 22-year-old Caucasian female married to a Hispanic man. She had an 8-month-old daughter. On side one of the Coopersmith Inventory information data was recorded for "Institution," meaning registered with which school or organization. For this entry Nelda had written in "a mental one." Nelda's educational history was quite unique in that Nelda was a high school graduate. She had attended a private church affiliated school in the Dallas area. All of Nelda's classes had been in one classroom with programmed text utilized for all subjects. Nelda had attempted community college courses in the Dallas area but had dropped out due to feelings of inadequacy.

Nelda had identified three reasons for enrolling in the GED program: her "husband's nagging"; she felt the previous school had not prepared her for college; and she needed to review the academic subjects so she could take the SAT for the local community college. At first, Nelda rationalized her present enrollment as preparation for the SAT. After

taking the GED pretest, Nelda confided that she lacked the basic academic skills for her life. She complained of an inadequate teaching and learning environments in which she felt uncomfortable about asking questions. Nelda questioned her previous high school classroom experiences because she did not feel comfortable or adequate when she had to utilize her academic skills for everyday living.

Nelda was always making derogatory remarks about her looks and abilities. From the first day of class, Nelda appeared frightened of potential failure. It was apparent from her facial expressions that my supportive comments to the class about [each student] not any longer being her own worst enemy had some effect. Nelda's first journal entry stated,

Here I am in a room with what it feels like a million other nervous [sic] GED students. My heart is pounding hard because it seems like forever since I went to High School and my brain died once I got married. At least my husband can not cumplain [sic] now that I am not studying.

Nelda had verbalized, in class, that she had little self-confidence. Nelda made a great effort to insure that everyone knew she had low skills and limited abilities. The students at her table were very supportive of Nelda in her attempts to achieve her desired academic skills. Nelda reached out to these people for companionship and they warmly responded

though I could not identify any specific close relationships being formed.

One afternoon Nelda came into class early. She chatted mainly about her baby. I assumed this was leading up to a major discussion. Nelda told me about her previous school experiences and her feelings of inadequacy with skills needed for today's world. Her journal entry for "One thing I would change about my life" was a single-page compression of all the unhappiness she had been experiencing. She felt like a complete failure as a housewife as she could not meet her husband's expectations for house cleaning. He always seemed to find something wrong. The situation was to the point that she did not care about trying to clean the house anymore. She stated she would rather spend the time with her daughter. Nelda felt trapped in the apartment. The apartment was not located in a very desirable neighborhood, but it was all they could afford. She was too frightened to take her baby out for a walk. Additional problems included her non-English-speaking in-laws. Nelda did not speak Spanish and therefore could not communicate with them. Whenever the families did get together, she was left isolated by the language barrier. Nelda also believed her husband spent too little time with their daughter. She loved her husband and though she did not believe in divorce, she was very unhappy. Her husband was very unresponsive to her attempts to discuss their problems. Nelda felt her only recourse was to go back

home to her parents. She really did not want to do this as they had been against the marriage and she did not want to admit "defeat."

One Friday afternoon Nelda stayed after class. She started crying as soon as the last student left. She was still having marital problems and did not know where to turn. I suggested the unit's chaplain, but she was afraid there would be repercussions. I suggested her minister as she had expressed very strong religious beliefs in class. They attended a Spanish-speaking service and therefore the communication problem was extended there. We talked about 25 minutes. Nelda told me that she had indirectly been attempting to tell her husband about her feelings. He was always too busy watching television to listen. We discussed two factors: the cultural differences of the male role expected of a Hispanic male and the jealousy he may be experiencing due to the baby. She had not thought of this as she had let her feeling of failure accounts for his lack of actions. Together we discussed new ways to address the problems. Nelda planned to make the effort to meet his "demands." Since he had set a priority for a clean apartment, she would attempt to do so. Nelda was going to bathe and feed the baby before he came home. She planned to prepare a very simple meal, with candles, for just the two of them. Due to their financial circumstances they had very few evenings alone outside of their apartment. For Nelda, this was to be a date.

She was to make a point of explaining that the evening was a special occasion for them to spend quality time together enjoying each other's company. Two days later she came in with a smile. She said things were going much better and that they had a long talk. He really was not aware of her feelings of inadequacy. Nelda acknowledged that they "had a long way to go towards a happier marriage but at least I told him of my unhappiness."

A week later, Nelda asked for a ride home. We sat and talked for about 20 minutes outside her apartment. She (not her husband) had turned to a new church and they were praying to help her. Nelda met with this group three times a week and considered this to be a bright spot in her life. Actually, it appeared this was an avoidance technique for problems remaining at home. She felt accepted and appreciated with this group. Religion had always been a major factor in Nelda's life, first through the strictness of her parents, her school, and now as an outlet for herself. From comments in class, it seemed that Nelda's life-style now had to accommodate her husband's drinking buddies coming to the apartment which initiated another source of conflict. Apparently Nelda had led a rather sheltered life. Once in class, we discussed how movies misrepresent facts such as having people fighting dinosaurs. I stated this was a misrepresentation as humans did not evolve for thousands of years after dinosaurs were extinct. Nelda interrupted by saying she did not believe

what I was saying was the truth. I then asked her when did she think the dinosaurs died. Nelda replied, "With Noah and the Great Flood." Her information came from the Bible and, for Nelda, there could be no questioning of this information. There was complete silence in the room with all eyes on me. It was apparent she was steadfast in this belief and there would be no point in trying to convince her otherwise.

I tell all my students to "get out, get involved, volunteer, get experience." Nelda actually did it! She started taking sewing lessons there at Reynolds House. Nelda then became a volunteer to assist others at Reynolds House. She answered the telephone, registered people for classes, and did whatever she was asked to do. This was a wonderful outlet to get out of that apartment and child care was provided for the volunteers. Nelda was therefore able to do something constructive with her life yet still be able to continue nurturing her daughter.

One Monday Nelda came in exhausted. They had been down to their property near San Antonio. They were hoping to get it all cleared and put a trailer on it. Her husband had orders for a 3-year tour of Germany. For some reason, they decided not to accept the extended tour. If he were to go unaccompanied this tour would be reduced to two years. He was choosing this option. It would be left to Nelda to move all their possessions down to a trailer they were to buy. She was to live there by herself, in the country, while he

was gone for the two years. They did not know a person in that area and had bought the land because they thought it was cheap. This seemed rather overwhelming for Nelda considering her personal feelings regarding her abilities. Her convictions seemed to wane during the next two weeks. She was caught between the options of living with a set of parents, which she did not want to do, or assuming responsibilities for which she questioned her abilities. I do not know how this was resolved as the husband's orders were suspended before the course ended.

Nelda had been very excited about graduation. There was no "real ceremony" at her other school. It seemed important, as it does to the majority of the students, to have that cap and gown, and to walk across the stage. She never gave any indication that she would not be attending the ceremony. She wrote in her journal that she would not be coming to the graduation ceremony as she did not have the \$10 fee. She was informed that the fee could be waived, but she refused to accept.

As Nelda did not drive, she rode with other students to begin her testing. She did very well and had much higher scores than on her pretests. She came by to tell me she was finished and to share with the class. She did not sound or act like the same frightened person who had started the class. She displayed extreme self-confidence and it was as if there had been no problem in the first place. She completed

the Coopersmith and exit questionnaire but said she could not do the interview as scheduled. She was going to the lake with her husband and could not take the time. Most students express some gratitude for the assistance received in preparing for the GED. Nelda just turned around after informing me she could not stay and left me standing there with the recorder in my hand.

Nelda realized the impact of education upon her life. To Nelda, education meant freedom and happiness.

Freedom from the fear of making a mistake in front of anyone, especially my husband. He asks me questions about common things of life and simple things in history and I don't know the answer because I didn't learn it in high school.

Nelda said she often felt like she did not know anything. This lack of knowledge often led Nelda to tears, yet she believed her husband was understanding of this situation. To Nelda, education would bring her happiness through knowing the answers and not having to feel embarrassed because the knowledge would now be in her head. Nelda expressed positive opinions in regard to discussing GED classes with a potential student. She believed the student would receive freedom, joy, and friendships from the classes. Nelda wrote, "Freedom knowing that you have accomplished something you have put off for years. Joy because your heart is relieved from all the pain of not knowing if you can make it." In Nelda's case,

the friendship was the most important aspect. She believed the understanding and compassion of fellow students developed into friendships which would be "long lasting and long appreciated."

Nelda's entry Coopersmith score was 32. There was not a specific area identified as more outstanding than another. Nelda's entry questionnaire reflected the unhappiness in her life. The decision to enroll now in the program was due to her husband's nagging. She described herself as a poor student and was concerned about working with a teacher. She would like to be described as an excellent student. Nelda considered herself a dependent person because she was scared to be alone. She believed she did not have control over her life and could not identify skills or abilities to solve her problems. Nelda did state, "I need more modivation [sic] for my own personal lively hood. With my husband bugging me about certain things, I don't care anymore if they are accomplished." In contrast to all her negativism regarding self, she saw herself as a contributing member to her community. She was very strong in her feelings about being a good mother.

Nelda's second Coopersmith Inventory had nine additional comments written next to specific statements. The score was now 68. Number one, "Things usually don't bother me" was left unchanged but written in was "getting better." Number four still presented the problem with making up her mind

without too much trouble but it "is also getting better." Number six, "I get upset easily at home" was left unmarked (this would raise the score to 72) but "about in between now" was written in. Number 10, "I give in very easily" now included "getting better but hard to change." Number 11, "My family expects too much of me" had the added comment, "It's hard when family doesn't accept you being yourself." Number 13, "Things are all mixed up in my life" had "better" added to her unchanged negative response. Number 15, "I have a low opinion of myself" was not negatively checked on the second test and she had added "not anymore." Number 16, "There are many times when I would like to leave home" had a negative response with "still unfortunately" written over it.

On the entry questionnaire, Nelda's goals for the next three months had been to "get more confidence, become more knowledgeable, and become more loving of myself." In her journal she stated,

My goals for the next three months are to get my life in order and to get on my way to a better education. The GED classes will help me alot [sic] because I am getting more confidence in myself and my abilities. When I get the education I need I feel the rest of my personal problems will pretty much be solved too.

Her goals for the next 12 months were to become more independent, start college, make her family closer, to have happier

experiences than fear and boredom, and to find some way to get her husband to listen to her.

On Nelda's exit questionnaire her goals for the next three months were to wean the baby, get the baby less dependent on her, and to get Shari's (the baby) father to do more for her. Her goals for the next 12 months were to get a job, start college courses, and get a trailer put on the land. She now described herself as a good student and would still like to be considered "excellent" one day. Nelda also wrote "It is slowly getting better as far as my gaining control over my life."

Olive:

Olive was a 25-year-old Caucasian female and the mother of four children ranging from four to ten years of age. Olive's husband had recently joined the army as he could not find employment. He was in a lower paying rank. Army life was a new experience for Olive at this stage of her life. She was married when she was 13 years old, divorced at 16 and remarried at the age of 18. Olive completed the fifth grade. The first day of class, Olive was to tell me later, she was so scared she was almost sick to her stomach. Because of this fear, she projected an unfavorable image and I found myself being intimidated by her appearance and actions. Olive wrote,

Here I am in a class. I'm really excited and scared at the same time. I want to learn alot [sic] more than I know and be able to go to college to be a LVN. It was to [sic] late to learn but I'm only 25 and I can do it. I don't want my children to tell there [sic] friends my Mother didn't finish school.

She also discussed going on to college to become a LVN.

For the first two weeks of school Olive said very little to others at her table nor did she participate in class activities. She put much effort and concentration into developing her skills. Olive also requested additional mathematics assignments to take home. Olive gradually began to respond in class and started to develop a working relationship with others at her table. She often questioned her abilities to pass and stated that she was "dumb." Olive was a very good student. She stayed on task and worked on specific problems until she had a complete understanding. Olive also started to assist others at her table. She said she was under a lot of stress, by herself, to pass these tests. The stress was apparent by her rather haggard appearance. Olive said she was thinking about stopping her smoking but thought she should put that off until she had completed her GED.

Olive had talked about going to college to become an LVN and I was pleased when she came in one day saying she had signed up for a typing class through community education. It

was a two-week class which met every night. She would have to drive 15 miles each way and hoped her husband would cooperate by being home in time for her to leave. She knew this would add stress, but she wanted this typing class and this was the only available time. As she progressed through the typing class it became a very positive experience for her.

Olive had trouble maintaining a calm behavior toward a rather loud, outspoken student. She would overreact negatively to everything the other student would say. Olive was extremely diligent about school and had a definite goal. She felt the other student was taking the class too lightly, which she was not, and would not tolerate the student's comments. The other student was using her own humor to alleviate her stress. Several times I had to maintain the balance of control between the two. I attributed Olive's behavior to the extreme stress she was experiencing.

Olive was the ideal student. She continued to request additional assignments to complete at home. Olive developed a very good friendship with another student at her table. They would study together and also spent time together after class. Olive's friend had excellent pretest scores; Olive did not. Olive's friend had quit school in the tenth grade and had a completely different background, including a very secure and loving family. Olive began to push herself to compete with her friend. They both started testing at the

same time, and they went together to take the test. Olive was unable to pay the fee for the GED test; therefore, I made arrangements for Olive to receive a grant from the Officer's Wives Club which then paid for the test. Olive was extremely disappointed by her test scores. She had passed with grades in the 40's, but she had wanted to score in the 50's. When Olive completed all the tests, she cried. She cried not out of relief that the testing was over and she had passed, but rather because her scores were not higher. Apparently the competition with her friend extended into the GED test itself. After completing the tests, Olive asked if she could continue coming to class because she felt there was still so much for her to learn. She wanted to build on other skills so she would be able to get a job.

As part of my class, I included two activities not usually associated with the typical GED program. I had the community college representative speak regarding registration, financial aid, and types of vocational programs available. Olive expressed interest in the medical records and office occupations classes, asking many questions about the programs available. The financial aid representative had informed me that if the students would bring specific financial records she would assist them in completing the necessary financial request forms. Olive was the only student to bring all of the forms. Due to this fact, the representative was able to use her portable computer to calculate possible financial aid

for Olive. She also made an appointment for Olive to come in for assistance in completing the financial aid packet. Olive seemed overwhelmed with the idea that college could really be within her grasp and was very excited about the possibility of attending.

Olive attended graduation, having bought a new dress for herself, and had her family dressed in their best for this occasion. They all attended the reception [husbands, for some reason, have a tendency not to participate] and she introduced her family to me. Olive thanked me for all my assistance and told me this was the very first time that she has ever completed a project she had started.

In regards to being a member of this class, Olive had written, "I feel good. We are all wanting the same thing, our GED. I feel comfortable around this group. I don't worry about things like the way I talk, dress, nor what I say. This group is great!" Her scores on the Coopersmith Inventory reflected her "can do" attitude which she identified. The entry scores was 88 and the exit score was 100. In most of the writing assignments she displayed self-knowledge and recognized her abilities if given opportunities and assistance. One of Olive's journal entries included these comments: "I wouldn't change a thing. I'm very happy with my life just the way it is. I'm afraid I wouldn't have them, the experiences I've had, nor the happiness I now have if I changed anything." She now described herself as "Gung Ho!"

on education. Olive wrote another entry regarding what she would say and do to convince someone not to drop out of high school. She entered,

I would say to them, if you drop out, your life will be completely different than if you had stayed in and finished. Sooner or later you will have to go through alot [sic] of heartache because you'll feel that you're not as good (and or) as smart as someone else. Your husband will feel he's got one over on you. I know you won't see or feel any of this at first, but later on in life it will happen. If you finish your high school education you'll feel more confident in yourself. Also, you'll be able to do and say things in a manner that will please yourself and others.

For Olive, graduation meant she could now go on to higher levels of education and training. She established goals to increase her spelling abilities and to enroll in the medical secretary program at the community college. In her exit interview she did not seem very confident about her abilities, but this could be attributed to the stress over the possibility of attending or not attending the training institute. Olive did not want to get her hopes up if she did not receive the financial aid.

Several months after graduation I was walking across the college parking lot. A lady coming towards me stopped and waited for me to approach. It was Olive. I did not

recognize her. She had completely changed her appearance to include a more fashionable hair style, makeup, and new clothing. She had received approval for financial aid and was attending classes at the community college training institute. She was enrolled in the medical records program and taking typing and English. The self-paced classes allowed her a great deal of flexibility. She stated her favorite class was English. Olive told me she could not believe all the new things she was learning. She planned to continue the program and would be graduated in one year.

Patty:

Patty was an attractive 21-year-old Caucasian female expecting her first child. She had dropped out of school after completing the 10th grade. Patty had been contemplating returning to school for her GED for two years. She had not done so before because she had always worked and therefore could not attend a convenient class. Patty was frightened by the thought of entering school again. Her first day journal entry revealed this fear:

Here I am at Reynolds House, didn't really think I'd make it up the stairs to the front door. I was so nervous, thinking I was too old for this. I found out this is not true and there is know [sic] need to be nervous.

Patty was concerned that since her baby was due before the scheduled closing date, it would not be possible for her

to complete the class. I explained the program was basically self-paced after the two-week mathematics review. I assured her the pretest scores indicated she would probably be able to progress quickly through the material. There were subjects which she was unsure about, but she was determined to do her best. Patty established goals for the next year. For the next three months she planned to complete the GED, be a good wife and mother of a healthy baby, and to get back to her original weight. The 12 month list included having a happy home life, making friends, and managing a restaurant. She did not consider herself a contributing member of her community. To do so, she thought she had to be active in church or any other social activity having to do with the community. She considered herself an "all right" student but would like to be described as "excellent."

Patty was a very quiet person. She usually did not initiate conversations at her table but did respond once one was started. Patty never responded openly during our occasional group discussions, but she actively assisted others at her table. She was considered quite smart by the other students at her table and on one occasion a student asked her, "What are you doing in this class? You already know how to do all this stuff." Patty just reiterated she needed more practice.

Patty proved to be an excellent student. She adequately understood the level of skills needed to pass the GED. Although, on the first day of class, she did not think she

could pass the test, she was confident she would be able to pass by the end of the program. Her pretest scores were extremely high, all in the 50's range. I suggested she test, but she wanted to spend some time reviewing and building her courage. To actually go out to the test center the first time is an extremely stressful experience for most students. Patty was among those who requested that I accompany them to the center. For Patty, it would be another month and a half before she ventured out to the center. She had a good attendance record, but once she started testing she stopped class. Patty took two weeks to complete all the tests. When she finished she came by Reynolds House. This was the most I had ever seen Patty smile. She talked to the class about the test and encouraged the other students to begin testing. She did say she thought the test was not very difficult. She was very proud of herself and felt like "shouting at the world." Patty was not coming to graduation as, hopefully, the baby would be one to two weeks old. After her exit interview she thanked me for my assistance and encouragement.

Patty's Coopersmith Inventory had a higher score than most of her classmates. The entry score was 76 and was 80 upon completion. Her concerns were family oriented. Through her participation in the program Patty learned, "You put your mind to it, you can do anything." Additional mathematical skills were developed by Patty. In addition, she regarded feeling better about herself as a developed skill.

Apparently, she saw herself as a person striving for change and growth, and hence, these factors should be included in the comments. Her self-image was enhanced to feeling better (level of self-respect and worth) and smarter. She never thought of herself as a "dummy", but there was always that doubt because she had not finished high school. When asked why she dropped out, she replied, "There just wasn't any reason to stay. It didn't seem to make a difference." Education had changed Patty's life.

With a GED I don't have to feel foolish or lie on applications. With an education I can feel my life has more meaning. I don't have to be imparrest [sic] when asked what year did I graduate. With an GED education I will feel that much smarter to myself and around other people.

For Patty, graduation from the program would mean, "I did it. I finally did it!!"

Rose:

Rose was a 28-year-old Black woman with three children. In class she always had a very positive attitude. Whenever materials were to be distributed, Rose was there to assist. She was a very quiet person during class, often appearing nervous when I spoke to her and had difficulty maintaining eye contact. Eventually, Rose relaxed and began to interact with the class. She became a person with a smile and a

cheerful comment for everyone. She seemed to like to help others at her table and was undaunted when her assistance was incorrect. Rose would acknowledge her mistake, smile, and continue her task.

On several occasions Rose brought in poetry she had composed and typed at home. They were all love sonnets varying in length from 5 to over 20 lines. Rose was rather surprised when I told her I enjoyed reading her poetry. I read three of the poems to the class and everyone was somewhat in awe that a member could write such lines. They were especially impressed when Rose said she "just let it pop out of my head." Several members asked her to allow them to read her poetry. Rose shared these poems with the class:

1. I walked along the shore and see the
glare of the sunbeam upon the waters.
I hear the ocean waves splash against
rock. It causes no fear for my thoughts
are being cleared in silence.
2. A heart filled with love covers all
sadness inside. But to a heart that
is true, the heart knows only joy.
3. Love is like layers, layers without
depthness which goes far and beyond.
It is warm and calm.

Rose seemed to be very pleased by their expressed interest. All of her poetry relayed the strong emotion of love, presumably for her husband, though Rose never mentioned him or her children in class. From time to time she would read me a line or two from a new poem. In the last two weeks of class Rose brought in three typed pages of poetry. Through

her poetry Rose was able to communicate that which she could not verbally express. Though she lacked basic writing and English skills, several of Rose's shorter poems were very moving and poignant.

During her exit interview Rose told me she never had a real friend. As a young child she was the victim of other children's taunts and mischief. Rose believed this occurred because of her extreme shyness. Her unhappiness continued throughout her school years. When she became pregnant at age 17, she decided she had had enough of the teasing and quit school. Rose knew she would one day return to school; she "just did not think it would take me eleven years to do so." She cited "confidence in one's self" as her key to passing the GED test and "getting on with one's life." After completing the GED, Rose planned to enroll in the two-year nursing program instead of the one-year LVN program at the community college. She had contacted the admissions office prior to taking any of the GED tests. Rose was a very caring person, empathic to the needs of her fellow students. Nursing would allow her to continue with her nurturing desires. She had written, "I like the feeling of help giving encouragement to another of the group if they feel a little down." During her GED preparation, Rose was one of the students who completed all the writing assignments. She gradually expanded her writing from the minimum five sentences to a complete page. By participating in the program, Rose believed

her self-confidence improved and she felt she "could do anything I set my mind to."

Rose's Coopersmith score increased from a 48 to a 56. Major areas of improvement were in family relationships and overall personal confidence. Though Rose did not discuss her husband and children, she did recall stories about growing up with her family. I mentioned to Rose the fact she had never talked about her immediate family and that I really did not know anything about her family. Rose gave me her usual huge smile and did not say anything. When it became apparent she was not going to say anything, I changed the subject.

Rose brought her husband to the pot luck luncheon held the last day of class. She was very nervous about his presence and seemed to hesitate before speaking. Rose made no eye contact with anyone during her rare comments. He did not stay for the entire lunch period and once he left Rose seemed more relaxed. She was soon interacting freely with other members of the group. During this time she told me she had gone by the college to pick up the necessary papers to enroll in the nursing program. Rose told me she knew nursing was what she wanted to do with her life. Rose was very happy and reassured now that she had accomplished her GED goal. Rose was confident her nursing dream and her future were now within her grasp. "I know I can so because I have this piece of paper to say so," vividly expressed Rose's confidence. She planned to "grab on and hold tight to her dream."

Tara:

Tara was a 24-year-old married Black woman. She had one son and was expecting another child in two months. For the most part, Tara was very quiet and passive. She was not very responsive to the other students at her table and remained rather aloof. Tara did seem to enjoy the journal writing and never hesitated to complete each topic assignment. For her initial journal entry she wrote,

I know that I am going to need a lot of help But [sic] this time I am willing to fight this one until I get my ged. [sic] and when I say fight I mean keep going on until I get it right and all I ask of you is that you Be [sic] patient with me and please help me to do the Best [sic] I can in the GED class.

Afraid she would look foolish, Tara was in the class three weeks before she asked a question in front of the other students. Mathematics seemed to present the biggest obstacle for Tara. The mathematical processes, according to her, just weren't connecting. She had very negative feelings about herself and her ability to do mathematics. One day I was helping another table when someone at Tara's table asked her for assistance. She responded with help but asked me to check as she did not think the problem was correct. It was. Tara seemed shocked that she actually helped someone work a mathematics problem correctly. From that point on she asked more questions and took the initiative in helping others.

Sometimes she was incorrect with a mathematical procedure but she would ask for help to get the two of them on course again. Tara had attained a new level of self-gratification through sharing of her knowledge with others. For someone to ask her for assistance with academics was a new experience for Tara. Tara felt very grateful to be a member of the group. She did not think she would be comfortable with a larger group and each student shared the common goal of striving for the GED. Before entering the group she would never have told anyone she did not have a high school diploma. Now that she was in the group she could tell inquiring people "straight out that I am going to school to get my GED. Now if I wasn't in This [sic] group i [sic] would be to ashame [sic] to tell anyone that I don't have a Diploma [sic]."

Tara remained rather quiet throughout the weeks. One Friday I left the room to assist a student who was retesting. I was gone less than five minutes. As I walked in, I was met with total silence. Immediately I sensed something had happened. A group of students in the back of the class kid-dingly told me I had missed the big "blow-up." I looked around, but I did not see anything but heads bent over books. I chose not to pursue this matter. The next Monday one of the students, who I learned was involved in the "blow-up," came to me before class. She was still rather upset about the incident. She and another student had been working with

mathematics problems and were discussing the problem with a minimum of chatter. Tara, at another table, became very upset and told them they would have to be quiet. She said, "This is a classroom for learning and studying. If you can't keep it down then you should leave." This left the two women shocked and embarrassed. Tara began to talk with someone at her table. This action resulted in a major confrontation between the two tables. Thinking I would return, which I did, both groups called a "time-out." This student did not know exactly what or why this all occurred but was still emotionally upset. The only explanation I had for her was in regard to another unpleasant experience which occurred before she enrolled. I had confronted four German nationals who refused to refrain from laughter and loud talking during the mathematics review. I had to stop my teaching and it was an unpleasant situation. I told the student I believed Tara was actually trying to avoid or prevent, for me, what she thought would be another such situation. Everyone in the class had been embarrassed by the Germans' attitude and lack of respect. I believe Tara thought so highly of me at this point that she made the attempt to stop what she deemed inappropriate behavior. The student accepted the explanation. There was never another incident. In one of the journal entries, Tara made note of people talking while I was trying to teach.

I believe her concern was directed more toward my reaction to the rude talking rather than to the noise.

Tara's scores on the Coopersmith rose from a 64 to a 76. She showed improvement in areas of interactions with others and with her self-image in relation to other people. Four of the six negative responses were in regard to family relationships.

From her journal entries, Tara seemed to feel her husband was somewhat demanding of her time and attention. Apparently, by achieving her GED, she believed she would gain some freedom from his demands. She never mentioned marital problems but she wrote that a GED would enable her to support herself if the need arose. Tara wrote an extensive journal entry regarding adjustment to life after dropping out of high school. For her, one does not really get a chance to adjust to life after dropping out because

everyone will always have to help you and you never get a chance to do anything by yourself or for yourself. If you drop out it's like you have become a handicapped person. You are always looking for help from someone because you have lost the power to do things for yourself.

If she could live her life again Tara stated she would never think about dropping out of school, "dropping out of school just isn't the answer." If someone would assist her, Tara was willing to write a book about her life experiences since

dropping out of high school. She felt very strongly about preventing this "worst thing you can do to mess up your life." Tara wrote two additional journal entries of her own choice. Both expressed gratitude to me for assisting her with the program. She told me she wanted to write all she felt in her heart because she did not know if she would have the chance to tell me. For Tara, the GED program had been a rewarding, positive experience.

Tara's entry questionnaire presented a rather wide range of goals for the future. For the first three months she planned to complete her GED, have the baby, and after six months either find a job or go home to visit family and friends. For the next 12 months she would go to the community college after returning home (if she did not have a job), complete a program at the college, pursue a good job, and if that was not possible, join the army. Her exit questionnaire reiterated the same goals but also included pursuing certification as a legal secretary or nurse. The GED experience assisted Tara in formulating her goals. She wrote, "I feel like I could go and do almost anything now since I have enrolled in the GED class."

Tara recognized a change, growth in herself, as reflected in her exit questionnaire and interview. Participating in the program had fostered confidence in self. This was in total contrast to how she felt during the first three days of pretesting. She wrote, "I was very afraid to take the

first test Because [sic] I knew that i [sic] didn't know much and i [sic] was afraid of being a total out cast [sic] in the class". She described herself in terms of being a whole different person because she knew much more than she did when she was a beginning student. Tara was pleased with her progress. In regard to her retesting she wrote, "I felt like i [sic] was dreaming because the scores i [sic] got before was so low and i [sic] couldn't believe that i [sic] had done this work and got a higher score." Her attitude toward education was changed by her GED experience. Tara described her feelings with "I use to hate school. That's one reason why i [sic] dropped out, But [sic] now i [sic] love it because i [sic] see that i [sic] have to challenge the work to learn how to do it." Graduation is a very meaningful experience for the GED candidate. For Tara, graduation meant, "Now I can live a normal life like everyone else and go out and find me a very good job. Maybe I'll even open my own business one day." Tara's self-image was enhanced by her GED experience. The GED program had changed her way of thinking; it had changed her life. "I think that it helped me to see that life can be different if only I would do something to help myself" were Tara's concluding remarks about her GED experience.

Students Who Chose Not to Participate:

Not all students were cooperative nor all teaching sessions conducive to creating positive learning experiences. Four members of the class refused to participate in this study. The group, consisting of one German national and three students from various sections of the United States, sat together. Two members of this group, who were approximately 27 years old and five years older than the other two group members, were very aggressive, whereas the younger two were very passive. The group consisted of three Caucasian students and one Black student, strangers prior to enrolling in the class. The German student had completed high school in Germany, but by completing the GED she could enroll in the community college without paying the \$200 fee required to evaluate foreign transcripts. They all completed the first journal assignment of "Here I Am..." which was to relay their feelings about their first day of class. Until this point everything was going smoothly. Three of the group completed the Coopersmith and the entry questionnaire. The German refused and stated she did not answer questionnaires for anyone or anything. From this point on the group never completed any of the future writing assignments.

Two of the group, including the German, had high pretest scores of above 47. They refused my recommendation to proceed to the center to test. The two passive students had scores which were either low or failing. By the time all the

pretests had been completed we were in our third class session. The two older students seemed to completely control the others in the group. The younger students cooperated with whatever the older students began. I attempted to do ability grouping yet at the same time instigate peer tutoring. It was immediately clear the arrangement at this table was not conducive to a total learning environment employing any of my methods. The two older students, through their manipulative control, would not allow the other two students to be drawn into class activities. The Black student always seemed uncomfortable with the situation, but the older two had made her feel such a part of their group she was unable to break away.

Overall, the group was not cooperative and, at times, belligerent. Their behavior and attitudes were not limited to my class. Reynolds House received funding based on the number of program participants. Records had to be maintained as to who participated and also the rank of the sponsor. Additional monies were provided for lower-ranking participants. Each day the students were to sign-in and note the husband's rank next to their name. The two older students quite vehemently refused to comply which then meant the other two followed suit. No amount of persuasion on my part would have them cooperate. At this point the director of Reynolds House became involved. She had noted the absence of ranks on several of the sign-in sheets and asked that I cooperate in

gathering this data. I explained the situation to her. She appeared at the next class session and reiterated the data request. She received the same reaction from the two older students. The director explained to these women if they could not cooperate in this matter maybe they really did not need to use the facilities at Reynolds House. From that point on they cooperated, but their attitudes worsened.

About two weeks later an unpleasant situation occurred. The group became quite disruptive. They would laugh, giggle, and talk constantly during the mathematics review. This was quite annoying to the other students and myself. At one point, the two older students began to mimic my presentation. The rest of the class had shocked expressions on their faces. I stopped my teaching and said in a slow, even tone, "Your actions will stop now. That is not the appropriate behavior for this class." They did stop and this particular type of incident did not recur. Their attendance became erratic. Soon it was not unusual for the entire table to leave by as much as 45 minutes early. For the two older students a day-time serial had taken on new importance.

The Black student with low scores was struggling with mathematics and needed constant attention. She did not openly ask for my help, but through observation I noted her struggle. Apparently she was trying to maintain some facade in front of the others. I moved her to another table where other students were closer to her skill level. There was a

marked improvement in her work. She seemed happier and smiled while at the new table. The next class period she was back with her old group. Again the struggle resumed. I asked her if she really wanted to remain with this group. She did. I did not attempt to move her again. Soon after there was a day in which she was the only member there from her group. She did not want to be by herself at the table; therefore, she sat with the new group. She seemed more at ease and completed more mathematics word problems correctly than previously. The next class she returned to the other group. Everyone there was retesting. She became very upset and asked, in a belligerent manner, whether she had to retest. She was told no. It was reemphasized that everyone progresses at her own pace with no competition against others. She decided to retest, but her scores demonstrated minimal improvement. Previously I had noticed her copying off others at her table. The pressure to be with the "in group" was so powerful it actually kept her from acknowledging her lack of skills. She did not want to risk losing their acceptance if she did not maintain their level. On this day I also discovered she had been, for the past two weeks, paying \$20 per day for taxi fees in order to attend class. As she lived in another city I suggested she transfer to the program there. She refused, saying she wanted to continue here. Her old group started testing and I did not encourage her to test. Unknown to me, she went to the center

to test and she failed. She blamed me for her failure and said she was going to school somewhere else.

Of the four students, only the German completed all the GED tests in time for graduation. The remaining older student completed all but the mathematics test. She said she was not ready and did not have the time. She would "get around to it someday." She did come for her friend's graduation. They both wore blue jeans. Little is known about the remaining student. She did not have a telephone; therefore, a follow-up was impossible. She was fully committed to her group and followed the actions of the two leaders. She had completed two tests before dropping. She did not complete all the tests prior to graduation.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Every student in the GED program regretted dropping out of school and wished it could have been different. They admitted that dropping out had been a mistake and each was adamant about preventing this from happening to their own children. All attached a stigma to being a dropout, as if it were a disgrace. For some, it was difficult to admit to friends and family that they were attending GED classes. One student told her family she was attending a reading class instead of GED preparation classes. Another student admitted that her family did not know she was a middle-school dropout until she had the courage to sign up for the GED classes. For some, the resulting stress was manifested through interactions with parents, families, and husbands in that the student did not want to be confronted again with failure by not passing the GED. They were afraid of the ridicule which might result if they proved unable to do the work. The students placed unbelievable pressure upon themselves to succeed. The question, "Am I really dumb?" seemed to loom over their heads and was at the core of their stress. A majority stated that completing the GED was the first time in their

lives they had finished something they had started. These two last statements seem to be the motivating factors behind the students' drive to obtain the GED. These key points were significant motivators in the quest for more control over their lives. The GED represented success, a conquering of previous negative educational experiences which had undermined their dignity and self-worth. Each student became renewed when awakened to the relationship of education to her life.

On the last day of scheduled class we had a pot luck luncheon to celebrate. I had mentioned this on the first day of class and again two weeks prior to closing. I allowed the students to have complete control of this event. On their own, and not during class time, they planned the luncheon. I did not know what to expect from these students as many had limited experiences with this type of function. That last day was quite a surprise! There were two tables of ethnic foods and desserts. They brought me gifts to show their gratitude for my assistance. They had all signed a card with special comments for me. For two hours we talked about those first weeks of class, experiences during the class, and dreams of the future.

Graduation was held in May at the Community Education Building, a Texas Historical Building. My students joined the students from the other two GED classes. Graduation, for these students, was a dream come true experience. Even their

physical appearances were transformed. For the first time many had on makeup and had their hair styled. Several had bought new dresses or wore formals they would have worn to the high school prom. The expressions on their faces were similar to those on the first day of class: drawn with stress. They seemed terrified they would make a mistake walking across the stage to receive their diplomas. Each did not relax until after receiving the diploma and walking off the stage. They had smiles on their faces as they raised their diplomas over their heads in triumph. Several families stood and clapped as their graduate received her diploma. For a while it seemed a contest to see which family could make the most noise shouting, clapping, and whistling. After graduation, we attended a small reception held in the conference room. Most of the students and their families attended. It was a time of hugs and confirming their success. A majority of the students came by to give me a hug and to thank me for my assistance. It was a wonderful experience to share their present joy and to be a part of their dreams.

Most of the women enrolled in this GED program shared several similarities: limited or nonexistent emotional support, limited community involvement, and the realization of education's relevance to their lives. Each had a need to be an "educated someone." Each believed she needed to take new directions in her life, to do something for herself. The women developed their own support systems within the program.

For a few, this group provided the only positive, stable situation within their lives. They became a "we the people" and not "I or me." They laughed, struggled, cried, comforted, and rejoiced together as they progressed through the program. Successful completion of the GED was not only an academic, but also a psychological and sociological culmination of a dream.

In the program I had to cope with the stress that several women created for me. It was if I were their last hope of completing the GED program and their success or failure relied on me alone. Initially they seemed to feel they had no control over this situation and would be dependent on my teaching abilities to help them with the struggle. We had to come to terms with the responsibilities of each of our roles. I had to learn how to contend with being intimidated by the body language and appearances of some of the students. I had to distinguish between the fear, panic, and stress resulting from their low self-esteem and that resulting from their behavior. Sometimes I initially assumed the latter when in reality it was the fear, panic, and stress with which I was being confronted.

I was pleased to recognize that, except for the one group, we all became team players helping, teaching, and learning together. The class did not always run smoothly and confrontations did arise. What was unique was that together, we all worked to rectify the situations and to get the class

focused again. The women recognized the obstacles and worked toward solutions.

Discussion of Major Findings

The mean scores of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory generally range between 70-80 with a standard deviation of 11 to 13. For this study, the entry scores had a 60.4 mean. Five students had scores in the normal range of the established means. One student was above this mean with a score of 88. Scores ranged from 24 to 88. The mean for the exit inventory was 73.77 which indicates a 22% overall increase. Ten students scored at or above the established norm mean. Scores ranged from 36 to 100.

Sixteen students increased their scores on the exit Coopersmith Inventory. There was an average increase of 13 points from the entry to exit inventory. Scores ranged from a loss of points (Mattie -8, Karen -4) to a positive gain of 40 points by Ida. Seven students exceeded the average gain. The smallest gain was four points. One student had no gain.

Six students who had the most significant percentage increase, 20% to 52.9%, had initially described themselves as shy, incapable of speaking in front of strangers, limited in friendships, and, except for one, experiencing marital problems. Five of the six students were minorities. Five of the six became actively involved with the entire class. All

6 students sought additional teacher contact beyond the class. Four of the six had set major goals of seeking additional education at a higher level (local community college) and then career goals. Of the 11 who made a minimum 8-point gain, 8 students had set positive life and career goals by the time they had completed the GED.

All 7 students who either made no gain, minimal gain (four points), or loss were experiencing major changes in their lives. Their situations differed from the gain group in that these students experienced a negative feeling concerning the amount of control they had over their lives. Their situations included adapting to marriage, first separation from nuclear family, birth of first child, transfer to Germany for three years, becoming primary financial support for family, career and social status change for husband, conflict of GED classes with employment, and temporary closing of testing center one week before GED graduation.

Eleven questions showed positive improvement with an increase of three points or more:

Question #2 (I find it very hard to talk in front of a group.) had the largest positive gain with eight points. The initial inventory had 5 students identified as "unlike me" whereas on the exit inventory 13 students selected "unlike me." (61.5% increase)

Question #12 (It's pretty tough to be me.) had a 5-point gain. Ten students selected "unlike me" on

the entry inventory and 15 selected this response on the exit inventory. (33.3% increase)

Question #15 (I have a low opinion of myself.) had a 5-point positive gain. Nine students selected "unlike me" on the entry inventory and 14 selected this response on the exit inventory. (35.7% increase)

Three questions had a positive gain of two points; six questions had one point increases.

Two questions had no change in scores.

Question #4 (I can make up my mind without too much trouble.) remained constant with 10 responses of "like me."

Question #6 (I get upset easily at home.) remained constant with eight responses of "unlike me."

Three questions had a loss of 1 to 2 points.

Question #1 (Things usually don't bother me.) had a 2-point loss. Seven students initially selected "like me" and the exit responses had 5 students selecting "like me."

Question #9 (My family usually considers my feelings.) had a 2-point loss. Eleven students selected "like me" for entry responses and 9 students made this selection for the exit response.

Question #22 (I usually feel as if my family is pushing me.) had an one-point loss. Thirteen students

selected "unlike me" for the entry response and 12 made this selection for the exit response.

The above negative loss responses can have a positive interpretation. For the first time in her life the student may be examining or questioning her relationship within the family, as two of the questions were family oriented. As her academic skills improved so did her levels of confidence. By developing an "in control" attitude she may have examined more closely the effects of family interactions upon her feelings of worth. Alice, Judy, and Nelda, who had the lowest entry scores, experienced a negative change in 2 of the last 3 questions (questions 1, 9, and 22) on their final exit scores. All were experiencing marital difficulties while enrolled in the program. Their exit scores reflected an increase of 24, 28, and 36 points.

Students recognized their own change in attitude towards self. In the exit questionnaire, 16 students answered the question, "What have you learned about yourself by participating in this program?" Fifteen of those responses contained positive comments and included repeated statements such as "Have more confidence in myself" and "Feel better about myself." Each statement shared a common belief, and to paraphrase Patty, "If you put your mind to it, you can do anything." When questioned about attitudes toward abilities, 12 students expressed positive responses and five responses contained references to a higher level of confidence.

Fourteen students completed the question about attitudes towards education. All 14 expressed positive feelings. The general consensus was that the GED was the key element which had awakened a new appreciation and a renewed quest for education. Through their successes in the GED program they believed they had the abilities to progress further academically. As one such student stated, "I found out I wasn't dumb."

For the students, success was basically a result of two key factors: application of self to studies and the development of self-confidence in existing and newly developed skills. On the exit questionnaire, the majority of the students related their success in completing the GED to having confidence in themselves. They not only had to have the basic skills to pass the GED test, but had to be able to maintain those skills under the stress of the test itself. These two key factors are inseparable influences toward the completion of the GED.

A homogeneity of factors affected the students. Building self-confidence was a determinant because not one student attempted the GED before the sixth week of class even though pretest scores indicated a high probability of passing. Once the initial first test was achieved, the students usually completed all the tests within two weeks.

As the instructor, I noticed a marked difference in the growth and self-confidence of the students. They progressed

from isolated individuals to team members assisting each other in various endeavors. I noted the strong support systems which developed though a few may not have been as beneficial as others. Though I differed from my students in the length of time I expected would be needed to prepare for the GED (I believed the students would test within eight to nine weeks from registration, but it was actually closer to 12 weeks), there was no difference in identifying factors responsible for student growth. I always believed the positive growth of self-esteem to be the essential ingredient necessary for completing the GED. Academics are secondary. A positive self-esteem allows one to accept failure as temporary and encourages the pursuit of alternative methods to insure success.

Implications

Adult educators must examine the effects of adult students' self-esteem upon learning potential and student retention in GED programs.

Low self-esteem blocks effective learning and deters academic advancement. This finding reaffirms the conclusions by Wlodkowski (1985) which identifies the strong relationship between academics and self-esteem. He recognizes higher self-esteem as a promoting factor in improving academic performance and vice versa. Academic materials can be adapted to meet the needs of the student but low self-esteem extends

a continual downward spiraling of adaptations. Positive self-esteem frees the student to expend energy on academic endeavors rather than maintaining handicapping views of self.

Findings of this study confirm Smith's (1972) research regarding dropouts in that it reveals a population lacking confidence in self, having lower self-esteem, and less tolerance of stress and frustration; thus, given these conditions, effective learning is blocked and academic advancement is hindered. Adult students with low self-esteem have higher incidences of absenteeism. Findings in this research, as reflected in the case study of Olive, corroborate observations which identify those adults who, when receiving positive reinforcement to self-esteem in an academic environment, are more willing to attempt higher levels of learning and have a much higher attendance rate. This observation corresponds with the findings of Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) who recognize that changes in a person's life (to include self-esteem) produce systematic learning experiences for the adult learner. By focusing on the development of self-esteem, the instructor may reduce an emotional block to learning which influences the adult to believe she could not learn and was incapable of attaining future goals.

Adult educators must examine the effects of support groups within the classroom on student learning and retention in GED programs. A support group consists of any number of people who interact with and promote positive feelings of

acceptance among themselves. Such groups may enhance academic skills and feelings of social acceptance which lend to the development of higher self-esteem. Findings in this study regarding support groups confirm discussions by Fingeret (1983), Hampton (1977), and Pugliesi (1989) who affirm the positive effects of group support systems upon the development of self-esteem. Support groups allow for each student to interact at her own level and in her areas of expertise. Feeling accepted by the group and acknowledging their own roles as group contributors allow students the luxury of a non-threatening academic environment.

Studies have shown adult students need smaller classes and more teacher contact. Due to an open registration, student-to-teacher ratios are often stretched beyond acceptable numbers (often 50 to 1). In many cases such rates are accompanied by two factors: self-paced instruction allows for varying times of student course completion and the high 50-70% dropout rate results in fluctuating enrollments. One must question whether the 50-70% dropout rate is more directly related to class size and teacher-to-student interaction time than to non-educational factors. Limiting class size promotes more quality instruction between individuals and the instructor and assists the instructor in individualizing the instructional program to meet the needs of the student.

Adult educators must question the effectiveness of the open registration policy upon student retention in GED programs. Open registration may not have negative effects if utilized with a sophisticated Computer-Assisted-Instruction (CAI) program but most adult education programs cannot afford computers or effective software programs. A program lacking such CAI advancements lets the late registering student feel academically behind other students and anxious at having missed vital information from the initial class. Though most classes are self-paced, the late registering adult believes she should progress as quickly as possible to the perceived higher academic level of the class. The student, therefore, feels in competition with the class rather than participating in a supportive academic environment. By restricting registration to designated time-frames (e.g., every four weeks), programs can ensure that students begin their academic search with other adults sharing similar feelings of being the "beginner" thus reducing the stress encountered with a new educational situation.

Recommendations

Adult educators should explore and formulate strategies which help students develop self-support systems within the classroom. Social and educational support systems are vital and necessary ingredients to the development of healthy self-esteem. Such systems may not exist in the home

environment, yet the need for them can potentially be met in an educational setting.

In most adult programs, an open registration permits adults to register and begin class at any time during the program's length. The new student is therefore confronted with not only the stress of beginning the educational program itself but also the feelings of isolation associated with being new. By restricting registration to four-week intervals, mini-support groups are automatically formed by the new students. The result is a learning environment which is not only less threatening but also more conducive to learning and building self-esteem. Educators should restructure GED programs to emphasize development of positive self-esteem, with academics as a secondary factor.

In addition, I encourage adult educators to use cooperative (i.e., peer group) learning as an educational tool. Adult educators should create and nurture a learning environment in which peer tutoring is encouraged. Self-esteem is enhanced when a student can successfully assist another student in an educational endeavor. Peer tutoring also allows the "tutor" to strengthen academic skills in a less threatening environment. Furthermore, cooperative learning is easily implemented by using tables rather than desks. Desks separate the adults both physically and socially, thus creating additional isolating barriers for learning, peer

acceptance, and interaction. Tables, on the other hand, foster learning, peer acceptance, and interaction.

GED class size should be limited to 25 students. Larger classes restrict the instructor in "personalizing" the teaching approach. It is believed that large classes intimidate the student and create feelings of isolation and irrelevance to the group. Smaller class size encourages socialization which should enhance self-esteem.

Within the GED guidelines and procedures, educators should augment the program to help students develop realistic life goals and provide opportunities for exploring career goals through community contacts. In addition, educators can initiate programs linking state and federal agencies with educational institutions to define employment and community needs. These needs could be satisfied by this cooperative effort. Life goals are more easily defined when environmental, employment, and educational resources are established and clarified.

In-service training for adult educators should include instructional time for exploring and identifying the self-esteem needs of the GED student. Self-esteem enhancement must be identified as a vital component of the total GED instructional program and educational objectives established to mesh these two focuses. The educator would learn to differentiate between self-esteem problems and other factors affecting adult educational achievement. Instructors should

receive training in the appropriate manner and methods which could enhance the self-esteem of the adult student. These methods should prepare the instructor for giving positive feedback and reinforcement to the student in a manner which is neither condescending nor unresponsive to the needs of the adult.

Because Adult Basic Education (ABE, educational level of zero through fourth grade) and English as a Second Language (ESL) are components of the adult education program, further research could determine the adult student's level of self-esteem and the impact of those levels upon the adult's continuation into more advanced adult education programs. If such progress is noted, then research is essential to determine whether factors affecting self-esteem of the adult at the GED level are similar to those factors in both the ABE and ESL student.

Follow-up studies of GED graduates who participated in self-esteem identification studies could determine whether the adult has been able to maintain or increase the level of self-esteem.

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APPENDIX A

Selected Questions and Student Responses
From Exit Questionnaire

Selected Questions and Student Responses
From Exit Questionnaire

1. What do you think you have learned about yourself by participating in this program?

Rose: I learned I could accomplish what I wanted and need to do when I can get my nerves to do so.

Frances: I can finish what I started.

Karen: I have learned that most of the things I've been afraid to do could be done, but I needed to build up my confidence.

Lori: That I can set a goal and accomplish it.

Judy: No response.

Betty: I can do anything I put myself to do.

Alice: A lot. I like myself. I found out that I can do better, I can do better in school.

Matti: I realized in myself that I could accomplish something within myself.

Georgia: That I can do what I put my mind to it.

Olive: I'm not very confident.

Patty: That if you put your mind to it, you can do anything.

Tara: I have learned to have confidence in myself since I have been participating in this program.

Ida: I guess I can say I can relate to people better and have self-confidence. I can see how much I have changed. I am not as shy as I use to be.

Ellen: I know now that I can accomplish more things than I thought.

Dede: That I'm smarter than I thought, it gave me self-confidence.

Cathy: That I am an important person in this world.

Helen: Do not get discouraged if you do not understand something and do the best.

2. After completing this program how would you now describe yourself as a student?

Rose: A better student. There was so much I had forgotten and being in this class seemed to help me keep it all in mind.

Frances: No response.

Karen: As a student I feel that I am a hard worker. I don't give up as easy , and I actually like doing the work.

Lori: Determined to get through any course I may take in the future.

Betty: Very outstanding I guess.

Alice: Not bad. I thought I was worse before.

Georgia: Good.

Matti: I feel like I have progressed into society.

Olive: Very good.

Patty: A fair student.

Tara: Since I have completed this program I feel like a whole different person because I know more than I did when I was a beginning student.

Ida: I guess as a better person. I feel better about myself.

Ellen: I feel more educated. I also realize there is so much more to learn. I'm planning to attend more schooling in the future.

Dede: More eager to learn.

Cathy: Bright and intelligent.

Helen: I was very determined to finish. Nothing was going to stop me. I would describe myself as a good working student.

3. When did you realize you could pass or complete the program? (Approximately which week into the program)

4. What happened to make you feel you could now pass the GED test?

Rose: No certain week. I set my mind on the test and said I have to enter college.

Frances: No response.

Karen: I think I knew it all the time but during the second week I really had hope after taking the pretests. Basically it was the things the teacher said to us that hit home such as we had the ability but we are afraid to use it.

Lori: Around the 6th week. I was able to remember a lot from high school.

Betty: 4th week. Pushing of Mary Bonnett.

Alice: About two months. I woke up one morning thinking, "I'm going to do it."

Georgia: The last two weeks.

Matti: When my teacher retested my ability indifferent areas.

Olive: I didn't. Taking and passing the (initial) tests (again).

Patty: The first week after I took the pretest. Because I did good on the pretests.

Tara: I realized that I could complete the program about the 7th week of the program.

Ida: Just yesterday (6th week) I had more confidence in myself than before.

- Ellen: My teacher let me know that I was ready to test in the sixth week. I felt more reassured and I also had more knowledge in subjects which I would be tested in.
- Dede: Third week. A lot of it was something you read about every day.
- Cathy: After 4 weeks. I had listened to Mary and really studied.
- Helen: I really don't know what week but when I started understanding the math because I knew I would not have a problem with the other subjects.
7. Why do you think you did better on the tests?
- Rose: I think I did better because I felt confident.
- Karen: I think I did better because I studied at home and applied myself in class.
- Lori: I studied.
- Betty: Because I came to this class.
- Alice: I thought, "This is easy."
- Georgia: Luck.
- Matti: By studying the material that was presented to us to study.
- Olive: I knew what to expect.
- Tara: Because I studied all the material over and over every night before I took the test again.
- Ida: Because I studied so hard.
- Ellen: I did better on the tests because I was reassured about myself.
- Dede: I wasn't quite so nervous, and I had more faith in myself.
- Cathy: They wasn't as hard as Mary was. I was ready for them.

Helen: I wasn't as nervous as when I took the very first test.

9. Has your attitude toward your abilities changed?

Rose: Yes, they have.

Frances: No.

Karen: My attitude toward my abilities has changed a lot because I believe in myself a lot more than I did.

Lori: Yes.

Betty: Yes, I feel more confident.

Alice: Yes, I now have a "can do" attitude.

Georgia: Yes, there better.

Matti: Yes, more confidence in myself. (She wrote that she had developed the skills of "more speaking and communicate [sic] with others.")

Olive: A little.

Patty: Yes.

Ida: Yes.

Ellen: Yes, I know I have more abilities than I thought.

Helen: Yes, definitely because thinking they were so hard and I thought I would score good but I scored a lot more than what I thought.

10. What is your attitude toward education?

Rose: I feel I can get it if I study hard and pass what I need to.

Frances: Want to do more with school.

Karen: I think education is something you could never have enough of. It's also important because this world is constantly changing.

Lori: That it is a lot more important than most people realize.

- Alice: "Hungry for education"
- Georgia: I can get a better job and it meant a lot to me.
- Matti: Very enthusiasm [sic].
- Olive: GUNG HO.
- Patty: Alot [sic] better. You can learn if you put your mind to it.
- Tara: I use to hate school. That's one reason I dropped out, but now I love it because I see that I have to challenge the work to learn how to do it.
- Ida: Well I think am going to try and get a better education by taking more courses.
- Ellen: I know there is so much more to learn, I would like to learn more.
- Cathy: Learn all you can and more.
- Helen: My attitude towards education is very positive. I love to do work and study and my favorite is I love to read.
11. Since your enrollment have you established any new goals?
- Rose: Yes, to continue my education and enroll in college for nursing school.
- Frances: More determined to be a teacher.
- Karen: I haven't established any new goals. I just have confidence to accomplish the goals I already had.
- Lori: Yes.
- Betty: Yes. I'm planning on going to study office occupations.
- Alice: Yes. I can be somebody except a housewife, I can go to college. I want everything and I want to write.
- Georgia: Thinking about going to school.

- Matti: Yes, accomplishing a career.
- Olive: Yes.
- Patty: No.
- Tara: Yes, I have a feeling like I could go and do almost anything now since I have enrolled in the GED class. Now that I have enrolled in the GED class I would like to be a nurse also.
- Ida: Yes. I have lost weight and feel better about my life.
- Ellen: I lost a couple of pounds.
- Cathy: Yes.
- Helen: Yes, completing the GED program.
12. What would you tell a perspective student about enrolling in this program?
- Karen: I would tell them that enrolling will help them in more ways than one.
- Lori: To start this class with a positive attitude.
- Betty: To enroll in this class because you learn a lot.
- Frances: Try it. Even after failing try again. Don't be afraid.
- Rose: That it is a good program and that they will get the encouragement, confidence in themselves to complete and pass all the tests.
- Georgia: It is good and do it!
- Alice: I would push her over there. Go for it! I would take her over there.
- Olive: Go ahead, it really does make a difference.
- Patty: I would tell them to enroll because you can learn a lot from this program.

Tara: If I had to I would stand on corners and try and reach out to people who have dropped out of school and tell them that it's not as hard as it seems. Just try again.

Ida: You'll never know until you try. If I could do it, so can you.

Ellen: I would encourage the student to enroll in this program. I would tell him my experience about the program.

Cathy: It is worth your time and effort.

Helen: To definitely consider enrolling because this program is excellent and very helpful and the thought of getting the GED and graduating is remarkable.

14. What does graduation from the program mean to you?

Rose: It means a lot. I know that I have achieved one of my goals. One that is important to me.

Frances: Nothing.

Karen: Freedom. Freedom from always wondering if I could have finished school.

Lori: A lot. It means that I actually started and completed the entire program.

Betty: It means graduating the way I would of in high school.

Alice: It is a big day, a big step for me.

Georgia: It feels great. I feel like I'm on cloud nine.

Olive: It means I can go on to better education and training.

Patty: I did it, finally did it!!

Tara: It means to me that now I can live a normal life like every one else and go out and find me a very good job. May be even open my own business one day.

- Ida: It means a lot. I also wanted to do this so I can show my daughter that getting out of school isn't very smart.
- Ellen: It means a big step towards my goal of becoming a registered nurse.
- Cathy: It means everything to mean and more. I can work towards my goals.
- Helen: The graduation means the world to me. I have been looking forward to the day. I think having a graduation is great.
15. How has your participation in this program affected your self-image?
- Rose: It make [sic] me feel I can do anything by setting my mind to it.
- Frances: Yes. I feel more like I want to learn, go further at college, maybe a teacher.
- Lori: I'm more confident with myself.
- Betty: Not in any way.
- Alice: Better. I realized I was not dumb. (Alice had thought of killing herself before she started the class. She believed this was her only solution for her problems. Since being in the class she has developed a more positive attitude.)
- Georgia: I feel like I'm somebody. I learned a lot about myself.
- Patty: I feel better and smarter.
- Tara: I don't think that by my participating in this program affected my self-image in the wrong way. I think that it helped me to see that life can be different if only I would do something to help myself.
- Ida: It's affected me by seeing what kind of person I have become.

Ellen: Yes, I feel better about myself. (Ellen set goals of: educate myself more, stand up for myself more, and keep on believing in myself.)

Cathy: Made it stronger.

Helen: Showing that when I start something I will surely finish.

APPENDIX B

Coopersmith Inventory (Adult Form)

Coopersmith Inventory (Adult Form)

ADULT FORM

SEI

Coopersmith Inventory

Stanley Coopersmith, Ph.D.
University of California at Davis

Please Print

Name _____ Age _____

Institution _____ Sex: M ___ F ___

Occupation _____ Date _____

Directions

On the other side of this form, you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Like Me." If a statement does not describe how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Unlike Me." There are no right or wrong answers. Begin at the top of the page and mark all 25 statements.

	x4 =	
--	------	--

- | Like
Me | Unlike
Me | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Things usually don't bother me. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. I find it very hard to talk in front of a group. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. I can make up my mind without too much trouble. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. I'm a lot of fun to be with. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. I get upset easily at home. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. It takes me a long time to get used to anything new. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. I'm popular with persons my own age. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. My family usually considers my feelings. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. I give in very easily. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. My family expects too much of me. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. It's pretty tough to be me. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Things are all mixed up in my life. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. People usually follow my ideas. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. I have a low opinion of myself. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. There are many times when I would like to leave home. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. I often feel upset with my work. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 18. I'm not as nice looking as most people. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 19. If I have something to say, I usually say it. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 20. My family understands me. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 21. Most people are better liked than I am. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 22. I usually feel as if my family is pushing me. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 23. I often get discouraged with what I am doing. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 24. I often wish I were someone else. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 25. I can't be depended on. |

Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.
577 College Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306

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Coopersmith Inventory—ADULT FORM ADULT Scoring Key

- | Like
Me | Unlike
Me | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 2. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 6. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 7. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 10. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 11. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 12. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 13. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 15. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 16. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 17. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 18. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 19. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 21. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 22. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 23. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 24. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 25. |

To find the ADULT score, place this stencil on the test sheet so that the item numbers on the stencil line up with the item numbers on the test sheet. Count the number of times the adult's marks correspond with the marked boxes on the stencil. Enter the total on the front of the test sheet in the box before the x 4 --.

APPENDIX C
Entry Questionnaire

Entry Questionnaire

1. How long have you been considering enrolling in a GED class?
2. What helped you to make the decision to enroll now?
3. Why did you choose the Reynolds House program?
4. What do you think this program will be like as compared to your former school?
5. What is your greatest concern/fear regarding this class?
6. Which term would best describe you as a student?
Uncertain Poor All right Good Excellent
7. Which term would you like to have describe you ?
All right Good Excellent
8. What do you believe to be your weakest skill? Why?
9. Do you believe you can pass the GED test today?
10. Do you believe you can pass the GED after completing this program?
11. Do you feel completing your high school education will help you in your life?
12. Do you view yourself more as an independent or dependent person? Why?
13. Do you feel you have control over your life?

14. Can you identify the necessary skills or abilities you need to solve your problems?
15. Which two skills or abilities would you like to develop further?
16. Do you consider yourself as a contributing member to your community?
17. If #16 is no, what do you think you must do or be in order to be a contributing member to your community?
18. List three (3) future goals for the:
- | Next three (3) months | Next 12 months |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |

APPENDIX D
Exit Questionnaire

Exit Questionnaire

1. What do you think you have learned about yourself by participating in this program?

2. After completing this program how would you now describe yourself as a student?

3. When did you realize you could pass or complete the program? (Approximately which week into the program)

4. What happened to make you feel you could now pass the GED test?

5. How did you feel about the very first testing?

6. How did you feel when you retested on the same material prior to taking the GED test?

7. Why do you think you did better on the tests?

8. What skills did you develop?
9. Has your attitude toward your abilities changed?
10. What is your attitude toward education?
11. Since your enrollment have you established any new goals?
12. What would you tell a perspective student about enrolling in this program?
13. How would you describe your progress in the program?
14. What does graduation from the program mean to you?

15. How has your participation in this program affected your self-image?

16. List three (3) future goals for the:

Next three (3) months

Next 12 months

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

APPENDIX E

A Comparison of Entry and Exit Question Responses
of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

A Comparison of Entry and Exit Question Responses
of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

	Qu#1	Qu#2	Qu#3	Qu#4	Qu#5	Qu#6	Qu#7	Qu#8	Qu#9	Qu#10	Qu#11	Qu#12	Qu#13
Program Start:	7	5	6	9	14	8	12	8	10	9	12	11	11
Program Completion:	5	13	10	10	13	8	15	9	11	13	12	14	13
Difference:	-2	8	4	1	-1	0	3	1	1	4	0	3	2
Percent Difference:	-28.6	160.0	66.7	11.1	-7.1	0.0	25.0	12.5	10.0	44.4	0.0	27.3	18.2

	Qu#14	Qu#15	Qu#16	Qu#17	Qu#18	Qu#19	Qu#20	Qu#21	Qu#22	Qu#23	Qu#24	Qu#25
Program Start:	7	10	11	11	10	9	8	12	12	8	11	12
Program Completion:	9	14	13	14	11	12	12	12	13	11	14	16
Difference:	2	4	2	3	1	3	4	0	1	3	3	4
Percent Difference:	28.6	40.0	18.2	27.3	10.0	33.3	50.0	0.0	8.3	37.5	27.3	33.3
Overall Change:	22.222 =====											

APPENDIX F

Report of Pretest and Posttest Individual
Responses of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

Report of Pretest and Posttest Individual
Responses of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14	#15	#16	#17	#18	#19	#20	#21	#22	#23	#24	#25	Scores
Correct Response	X	0	0	X	X	0	0	X	X	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	X	X	0	0	0	0	0	100
Alice	XX	XO	XO	XX	XX	XO	XO	XX	XO	OO	XX	XO	XX	OX	OO	XX	XO	OO	OX	XO	OX	OX	XO	OO	XO	44/68
Betty	OO	OO	OO	OO	OX	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OX	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OX	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	68/84
Cathy	XX	XO	XO	XX	XX	OX	OO	XO	XX	OO	OX	XO	OO	XO	OO	XX	OO	XX	XX	XX	XO	XX	OO	XO	OO	68/68
Dede	OO	XX	XX	OX	XO	XX	OO	OO	OX	XO	OX	OX	XX	OO	XX	OO	XO	XX	OX	OO	OX	XO	XX	XO	OO	32/36
Ellen	OO	XO	OO	XX	XX	OO	OO	XX	XX	OO	XO	XO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	XX	XX	OO	OO	XX	XO	OO	72/88
Frances	XO	OO	OO	XX	XX	XX	OO	XX	OX	XO	XO	OO	OO	XX	XO	OO	XO	XO	XX	OX	XX	OO	XO	OO	XO	60/88
Georgia	OX	XX	OX	XX	XX	XX	OO	OX	XX	XX	OO	OO	OO	XX	XO	OO	OX	XX	OO	OX	OO	OO	XX	OO	XO	64/68
Helen	OO	OO	XX	OX	XX	OX	OO	XO	XO	OO	OO	OO	OO	XX	OO	OO	OO	OO	XX	OX	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	80/84
Ida	OO	XO	XO	OO	XX	XO	XO	OX	OX	XO	OO	OO	OO	OX	XO	XO	XO	OO	OX	XX	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	52/92
Judy	XO	XO	XX	OX	XX	OO	XX	XO	XO	XO	XO	OO	XO	XO	XX	XO	XO	XO	OX	XX	XO	XX	XO	XX	OO	24/52
Karen	XO	OO	XX	XO	XX	XX	OO	XX	OX	XO	OO	OO	XO	XX	OO	OO	OO	OO	XO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OX	XO	76/72
Lori	XO	XO	OO	XX	OO	OO	OO	XX	OO	XO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	OX	XX	OX	XO	OO	OO	OO	OO	68/80
Mattie	OO	XO	XX	XO	XX	XX	OO	OO	XX	OO	OO	XX	OO	XO	OO	OO	OX	OO	XX	XX	OO	OO	XX	OO	OO	72/64
Nelda	OO	OO	XO	OO	XX	OX	OO	XX	OO	XX	XX	XO	XO	OO	XO	XX	OO	XO	OO	OO	OO	OO	XO	XO	XO	32/68
Olive	XX	XO	OO	XX	XX	OO	OO	OX	XX	OO	OO	OO	OO	XX	OO	OO	OO	OO	XX	XX	OO	OO	OO	OO	OO	88/100
Patty	OX	XX	XO	OX	XO	XO	XO	XX	XO	OO	OO	OO	OX	XX	OO	OO	OO	OO	XX	OO	XO	OO	OO	OO	OO	76/80
Rose	XX	XX	XX	XO	XX	OX	XO	XO	XX	XX	OO	OO	OO	XX	XX	XO	X	XX	OO	OX	OX	XO	XX	XO	OO	48/60
Tara	XX	XO	XX	XX	XX	OX	OO	OO	XX	XX	XX	OX	XO	XX	XO	XO	OO	OO	XX	XX	OO	XO	XO	XO	OO	64/76

X = Like Me.

0 = Unlike Me.

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