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The self-concept of students in remediation in a rural community college in Mississippi

By

Corky Fitzgerald Wicks

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
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Mississippi State, Mississippi

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The self-concept of students in remediation in a rural community college in Mississippi

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One of the aims of this study was to look at the difference in self-concept between traditional and non-traditional community college students. This study also examined self-concept differences based on ethnicity and gender and focused specifically on community college students in one or more developmental courses.   Students from developmental math, reading, and English classes were given the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition survey (see Appendix B for a list of the questions on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition). Students were asked to complete the long form consisting of 82 questions using Likert Scale responses from 1-Always False to 5-Always True. The results showed that among the 135 developmental students participating in this study, the total self-concept score did not differ statistically between traditional and non-traditional students. This study did, however, show that the mean value score for Black students was statistically significant and higher when compared to White students. All other ethnic groups were statistically equal. There was also no statistical difference in self-concept score based on gender. The overall self-concept score mean value fell in the 29th percentile for the students in the survey. This was well

below the desired 50th percentile range between 296 and 299 as the cutoff point for high self-concept as referenced in the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition Profile chart for the Adult Form.

Based on the results of this study, the self-concept score was proven to be a bi-product of student background and academic success. Self-concept can be a valuable pre-test and post-test tool for measuring the impact of developmental programs. Academic success raises self-concept, and given the statistical significance of the difference between the scores of Black developmental students and White developmental students, more research is warranted. The results from this study of developmental students provide additional support for the use of a self-concept score as a pre-test and post-test metric. Other than the pass or fail grade that a student may receive, the self-concept score can be used as a reliable way of measuring the impact of programs designed to improve retention and graduation rates of community college students.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and in-laws for providing me with a solid foundation and for giving me a lifelong curiosity about the power of education to improve lives. I also dedicate this study to my children, Brayden, Sydney, and Gerald, for their love, patience, encouragement, and unwavering faith. I owe a special debt of gratitude for this study to my wife, Paula, who has provided life-sustaining counsel, encouragement, support, and love throughout my 10 year Ph.D. journey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Self-concept is often influenced by academic success and encouragement from external resources such as graduation status, financial and family status, and enrollment status. Traditional students and non-traditional students may have different levels of self-concept, and factors that affect self-concept may differ depending on student experience level. Traditional student, in this study, refers to students between 18 and 24 years of age. Non-traditional students are classified as any students 25 years of age or older.

The community college being studied had a fall 2014 enrollment that included 33% non-traditional students and 67% traditional students with a total enrollment of 11,839 students according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2014). According to the same publication, the enrollment status included a makeup of 65% full-time students and 35% part-time students at the community college being studied. The 2014 Mississippi Community College Report Card stated that over 3,600 students required one or more developmental courses at the community college being studied (2014).

This study examined the difference in self-concept between students in developmental courses at a single community college campus in Mississippi. According to Bean and Metzer (1985), age is a surrogate variable that captures a large, heterogeneous population of adult students who often have family and work

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responsibilities. A non-traditional student is 25 years of age or older. The use of the age of 25 as the delineation threshold best fits the Bean and Metzer (1985) model.   Thus, the age range of 18 to 24 is the defining characteristic for the traditional student for purposes of this study. This study used age as the characteristic for assessing self-concept scores between traditional and non-traditional students.

Regardless of the student classification, all entering students are required to take a placement test to determine college readiness. Currently, readiness for coursework for traditional and non-traditional students is determined in the same manner. Placement tests assess the student's readiness for college-level coursework. The ACT Compass test is used as a placement test to determine if entering community college students need developmental coursework. Students in developmental courses experience a high level of attrition. Tinto (1982) noted that the field of student attrition had grown significantly for over two decades and warranted the need for institutions find ways to be more effective at retaining students until degree completion. Tinto goes on to express the need for studying student disengagement and attrition at community colleges. This study contributes to the ongoing research related to improving student performance and student retention levels. Mississippi community colleges can utilize the results to design and evaluate intervention programs targeted at students in developmental courses based on their self-concept score.

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale can help administrators identify students with low self-concept scores among the population of students in developmental courses. The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition calculates total score as a composite of the responses associated with a subject's Physical, Moral, Family, Social, and

Academic/Work survey sections. The students with lower self-concept have a greater risk of becoming frustrated and dropping out. Megerian (1994) concluded that of the students with children (non-traditional students), 79% of the ones with adequate self-concept persisted to completion while only 39% without adequate self-concept persisted. Adequate self-concept is defined by a Tennessee Self-Concept score of 50th or higher on the Total Positive Score.

Identifying students who may require additional assistance and coaching based on their self-concept score will also allow community colleges to provide additional support services for those students. If there is a difference in self-concept among students in a Mississippi community, leaders might be able to use self-concept as a way of building additional services that help students improve their self-concept and subsequently reduce attrition.

According to Twigg (2005), 74% of the traditional students at Tennessee Board of Regents 2-year schools required developmental coursework in 2005. Twigg also stated that 40% of the traditional students at 4-year schools required developmental coursework along with 50% of the non-traditional students. In 2005, the state of Tennessee led the effort to redesign developmental coursework with the Developmental Studies Redesign Initiative in partnership with the National Center for Academic Transformation. The design initiative followed five principles that included 1) redesigning the whole course, 2) encouraging active learning, 3) providing students with individualized assistance, 4) building in ongoing assessment and prompt feedback, and 5) ensuring sufficient time on task and actively monitoring student progress (Twigg, 2005).

Understanding the difference in the requirements for developmental coursework and its relation to self-concept among students in developmental courses will lead to the development of more effective ways to help students achieve academic success. Understanding the difference in self-concept between students at a community college adds to the body of knowledge related to the overall community college mission to improve attrition rates and student academic self-concept.

Statement of the Problem

The problem this study examined was the extent to which self-concept differed between students taking developmental coursework at a rural community college in Mississippi.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the difference in self-concept among Mississippi community college students. The study used the total self-concept score as measured by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition for students enrolled at the participating community college. A representative sample of 135 students came from the population of traditional and non-traditional students participating in developmental math, English, and reading courses.

An ex-post-facto design was used for this study with the independent variable of the overall score on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition and student classification as traditional or non-traditional based on student age. The research included t-test analysis allowing for analysis of other categories including gender, age, and ethnicity.

Research Questions

The research questions that were answered by this study included:

1. Is there a difference between self-concept of traditional and non-traditional students?

2. Is there a difference between self-concept for gender and ethnicity?

Design of the Study

This empirical study employed both a positivist approach and social constructivist approach while assessing the self-concept score of students taking developmental courses in a community college in Mississippi. Sipe and Constable (1996) state the positivist approach is characterized by the researcher's handling of the subject with a structured plan. The positivist approach is grounded in the fact that positive knowledge is based on natural phenomena and their properties and relations. The social constructivist approach encompasses the importance of the impact that the group has on the individual. Both approaches have implications on how an individual's self-concept forms and changes over time.

The developmental class participants enrolled at the community college being studied were given the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition while in their respective classes. The original Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and its updated version have been widely used to assess self-concept. According to Bertinnetti and Fabry (1977), the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale supports the individualized multi-dimensional measurement of self-concept.

Analysis of the independent variable of the self-concept score as measured by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition included the t-test to measure differences

in the self-concept score of students taking developmental courses in a community

college in Mississippi. This study also included t-test analysis of ethnicity and gender

differences for the total self-concept score. The t-test is best applied for assessing

differences when there are categories from a single population of students. This study

examined the difference in the score on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second

Edition between students taking developmental courses in a community college in

Mississippi from a sample of 135 students enrolled in developmental coursework at a

rural Mississippi community college.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions are provided to clarify

unique terms. These terms are used throughout the study.

1. Academic achievement represents student progress measured by grade
   point average.

2. Black student refers to students attending the community college being
   studied who classify themselves ethnically as African American.

3. Grade Point Average is defined as the average of the scores representing
   the cumulative measure of academic performance.

4. Developmental learning or remediation represents any coursework or lab
   structure to support developmental education and does not count towards
   degree requirements credits.

5. The dropout rate is the percentage of students who do not persist to
   completion.

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6. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are online courses that are offered to the general public as open enrollment free courses.

7. A non-traditional student is defined as any student who does not meet the requirements to be considered a traditional student. The non-traditional student is 25 years of age and over.

8. Not-retained is defined as a student who does not continue to be enrolled for a contiguous semester at the institution of original entry.

9. Retained is defined as continuous enrollment that leads towards completion of degree or certification requirements within six years from initial enrollment.

10. Retention is defined as the act of being retained. It described programs developed to keep students enrolled and matriculating toward degree completion.

11. Self-concept is the measure of how students perceive their ability to do well academically.

12. The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition is a survey instrument designed to measure self-concept. The scale includes 82 questions that examine 15 facets of self-concept. The original Tennessee Self-Concept Scale was developed by Ashcraft and Fitts (1964). The updated version of the scale was developed by Fitts and Warren (1996).

13. A traditional student is defined as those students who have a high school diploma, enroll immediately after finishing high school, depend on their

parents for support, and have limited work commitments. The traditional

student is between 18 and 24 years of age.

Limitations of the Study

Restricting the study to look at self-concept among students in developmental

courses during one semester makes it impossible to observe the effect of self-concept on

long-term student performance. This study was also limited by the fact that only 4% of

the survey respondents identified as nontraditional. This study was limited to students

who are taking one or more developmental courses at a single campus in one community

college system in Mississippi. Looking at self-concept may also provide limited

evidence that having a high self-concept is different for traditional students and non-

traditional students, gender groups, and ethnic groups. There was also a limitation due to

the limited ethnic and age diversity of the sample group consisting of 81% Black

students.

Significance of the Study

The current research study adds to the body of research that examines academic

performance and retention. This study provides valuable insight into the difference in

self-concept among developmental students at a Mississippi community college along the

categories of age, ethnicity, and gender. The study also implies that among students with

low self-concept, there is some difference between ethnic groups.

Community college leaders, educators, and policy makers can use quantitative

data specific to Mississippi community college students to make more informed decisions

about the delivery methods for developmental coursework. The self-concept scale can be

used to measure the impact that successful course completion has on students regardless of class delivery method. The state community colleges are working toward improving overall college completion rates and students taking developmental courses are the most at risk of not completing degree requirements. Increasing the completion rate provides business leaders with more graduates who are workforce ready upon completion of degree programs.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Organization

The research review is organized by major topic as it relates to key areas of discussion of self-concept and academic achievement. Reviewed literature includes research on self-concept, factors affecting academic achievement, and course delivery methods.

Self-Concept

Self-concept is defined as an individual's evaluation of self that is based on his or her experiences and interpretations of those experiences, according to DeFreitas and Rinn (2013). Taylor, Davis-Keen, and Malanchuck (2007) define self-concept as the cognitive representations that an individual has of himself or herself. The Taylor research project focused on the role of low or high self-concept on aggressive behavior and found that self-concept was negatively correlated with school aggression. Students with lower self-concepts exhibited more aggressive behavior.

Demo and Parker (1987) suggested that academic achievement was not critical to the self-concept of college students even with wide variances in grade point average between Black students and Non-Black students. The Demo and Parker study included 298 black and white college students at a southern 4-year college and did not find any significant difference in self-concept between black and white students.

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Improving self-concept and academic outcomes are central themes to the mission of the community college. Stumpf (2013) postulates that the community college leaders must continually search for meaning and purpose against a backdrop of uncertain intellectual and environmental landscapes as they examine the mission. According to Stumpf (2013), the uncertainty comes from the expansion of the original role for community colleges to provide a gateway to 4-year institutions into the expanded role as a provider of vocational education. Stumpf (2013) states that "The self-confidence of students who pursue to completion an associate degree in science or in liberal arts may be such that they hardly remember the self-doubt that preceded such pursuit. Self-confidence will stand them in good stead when they transfer to the university."(p. 571). If administrators could effectively measure initial self-concept of entering students, they may be able to effectively counsel students during their academic tenure even in the face of developmental learning requirements. This counseling and focus on improvement of self-concept will undoubtedly lead to enhanced academic performance.

Ashcraft and Fitts (1964) developed the Tennessee Department of Mental Health Self-Concept Scale in 1956 to create a multiple factor concept scoring instrument to examine the effects of psychotherapy. The Ashcraft and Fitts study focused on the individual performance of patients at the Nashville Mental Health Center's outpatient clinic. They used a control group and experimental group to test the effectiveness of psychotherapy versus the denial of psychotherapy. The study concluded that patients receiving psychotherapy over a 6 to 8 month period had a significantly higher self-concept than those that did not receive therapy for the same period. This focus on the individual was a stark deviation from other studies that compared the individual to group

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studies. The study also validated the assumption that the effects of psychotherapy are best studied in individuals rather than groups due to changes that individual members may experience that cancel each other out.

Bledsoe and Dixon (1980) also used the original Tennessee Self-Concept Scale to measure the impact of socioeconomic status on self-concept. Bledsoe and Dixon (1980) wanted to prove that socioeconomic status as measured by family income impacted self-concept. Disadvantaged students were identified by family income below the median level for the neighborhood used in the sample pool. Conversely, advantaged students were identified by family income above the median level for the neighborhood. The purpose of the Bledsoe and Dixon study was to compare the self-concepts of economically disadvantaged and advantaged Black students by using the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. The study examined the sub-scores for 12 variables from the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale that included identity, satisfaction, behavior, physical self, family self, social self, certainty, self-criticism, variability, and conflict. The data strongly supported the hypothesis that economic status was related to self-concept. For all other variables, the advantaged compared favorably to the disadvantaged. No main effect differences in self-concept scores were found for gender, and only one difference was found for grade point average. Gender and grade point average did have a relationship with economic status. Significant linear trends suggested that disadvantaged students who reached the 12th grade were not significantly different from the advantaged in the self-concept scale components of Satisfaction, Physical Self, and Personal Self. The students classified as advantaged compared favorably with general population norms, but disadvantaged students were lower in all variables (Bledsoe & Dixon, 1980).

Additional studies also utilized the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale as the instrument for measuring self-concept. Demo and Parker (1987) examined college students' grade point average and self-esteem. Although they used the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, it references the self-concept score as a measure of self-esteem. The Demo and Parker study suggested that grade point average had no impact on self-concept among Black students and White college students (Demo & Parker, 1987). The study compared grade point average and self-concept between 298 White students and Black students. For White female students, there was an inverse difference between self-concept and grade point average. The study found that self-concept levels between Black and White students showed no significant difference, but grade point average was significantly lower for Black students. Demo and Parker (1987) recommended further study of the self-concept sustainability through support from an ethnically homogeneous community of other students in the form of family and on campus organizations.

This study included a review of existing or recently designed programs that aimed to develop positive self-concepts at an early age and throughout a student's academic career. All the programs examined were designed to improve self-concept, enhance academic achievement, and ultimately improve attrition and completion rates.

Academic Achievement Factors

Rasul, Nor, Amat, and Rauf (2015) evaluated self-concept in high-income community college graduates and found that high self-concept was influenced by congruence, boldness, vision, skills, and experience. Conversely, low self-concept would be influenced by the absence of the elements above.

McJamerson (1991) highlighted the fact that Black male students have few role models on the faculty who can act as coaches and mentors. McJamerson examined data from the Center for Education Statistics from 1988. McJamerson referenced work by Astin (1985) that was related to minority participation in higher education as dependent on persistence in the education pipeline. Entry into college and completing college represents two of the five crucial leakage points. The five leakage points include (1) completion of high school, (2) entry into college, (3) completion of college, (4) entry into graduate or professional school and (5) completion of graduate or professional school (Astin, 1982).

Community colleges work to improve student outcomes by implementing programs that result in positive academic outcomes for the participants. The Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) at the City University of New York was one program that demonstrated effectiveness in improving academic outcomes for students needing developmental coursework. According to a report on the 2-year results, the ASAP program provided support services to students who went beyond remediation. Services implemented in the program included non-credit seminars on goal setting and academic planning, block-scheduled classes, advisement, tutoring, career services, tuition waiver, and free textbooks (Scrivener & Weiss, 2013). The program required full-time enrollment, and students were encouraged to take developmental coursework early in their academic careers. Early in the program, the students at the City University of New York were randomly assigned to the program and included both students who required developmental coursework and those that did not. Tinto (2000) advocated the creation of learning communities as defined as a cohort of students who are grouped together for the

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explicit purpose of creating a sense of community for the participating students. Perhaps the collaborative course structure can provide the necessary support and socialization that both non-traditional and traditional students need. As an example, the Coordinated Studies Program at Seattle Central Community College offers a collaborative course called Of Body and Mind. The collaborative course included tracks in human biology, sociology, and psychology. Students are challenged to examine how the courses are connected with an overarching objective to gain an understanding of why humans behave as they do (Tinto, 2000).

Older students participating in developmental learning courses are expected to have a greater chance of dropping out when you compound the effect of the extra courses and outside obligations. The community college being studied also has a high enrollment percentage of Black students, so it provided the ideal environment for a study looking at how ethnicity and self-concept might be related.

Black student completion is a growing issue for post-secondary institutions. The report, *Gaps in Access and Persistence Study* (Ross et al., 2012) stated that only 51% of the Black male students who entered college in the 2003-2004 school year had attained some type of degree by June of 2009. Fortson (1997) stated that Black men fail to persist more than any other ethnic or gender group in college. To follow up on the initial study by Fortson (1997), Sedlacek (1999) completed a study on the academic achievement of Black students who identified eight critical variables affecting success. The factors include (a) a positive self-concept or confidence, (b) realistic self-appraisal, (c) understanding of racism, (d) ongoing community service, (e) ability to indicate long-range goals rather than short-term or immediate needs, (f) availability of a strong support

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person, (g) successful leadership experience, and (h) knowledge acquired in an occupational field.

Course Delivery

Given the high attrition rate among the developmental student population and a desire to improve completion rate, this study included a review of different course delivery methods being explored by community colleges. Although the effectiveness of developmental coursework and its effect on students taking developmental courses is well documented (Bahr, 2012; Hern, 2012; Rutschow, Cullinan, Welbeck, & MDRC, 2012), the impact of the growing use of online instruction in higher education is a relatively new subject area. On-campus computer based courses have been used substantially for developmental courses at community colleges, but off-campus online courses are a relatively new area of course delivery. This delivery method has been made possible due to the availability of broadband access for all ethnic groups.

Self-concept is commonly lowered when students are required to take developmental coursework regardless of the delivery method (Blaauw-Hara, 2015). While the use of placement tests allow college administrators to identify student needs, coursework that does not count towards degree or certification requirements puts the student at a disadvantage. In students who may come underprepared for college-level work, the combination of the course delivery style and their need for success as identified by Sedlacek (1999) may explain the high attrition rate among Black students taking online courses. As a means of expressing the urgency for more focused research on self-concept, researchers must assess at the growing trend to move more developmental education online.

The availability of advanced and developmental training is becoming more accessible with the development of online courses available through the college of enrollment. The development of MOOCs also shows significant promise for helping more learners achieve training and certification from institutions around the world. This platform allows multiple colleges to offer college credit courses to a large population of students who may or may not be enrolled in a campus program (DeFreitas, Morgan, & Gibson, 2015). Community colleges are turning to both open online courses and online developmental course to address the needs of its students for both ease of access and efforts to reduce costs. Online courses represent a great opportunity for community colleges to address the needs of students requiring developmental coursework by providing a self-paced environment, technical assistance, and online access to instructors.

Jaggars, Hodara, Cho, and Xu (2015) examined three developmental programs and found that the accelerated programs did improve success in college-level courses in a shorter timeframe than the student would have achieved in a normal developmental course. The study identified the development of rigorous content, faculty development, and student support as key factors of success (Jaggars et al., 2015). In their examination of performance gaps between online and face-to-face courses, Xu and Jaggars (2014) found that there were significant gaps in student performance in online courses and face-to-face courses. The study showed that performance in the online courses declined based on gender, age, and ethnicity.

Online courses also provide opportunities for assessing student behavior through the collection of data on student performance and providing instant feedback through integrated assessment. Three core guiding principles should be considered when

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designing online courses. Those principles include integration with non-developmental courses, improving student interaction with instructors in a virtual classroom, and creating a sense of community among participating students.

This research indicates that the students who gravitate to online opportunities are students who are already doing well and have a high self-concept. Online courses offer the convenience that the students desire but still have a high occurrence of attrition. Students may feel isolated from other students in courses that limit group interaction and instructor feedback.

Summary of Research Meaning and Relationship to Current Research

By examining self-concept, academic achievement, and course delivery, this literature adds to the body of current research for community colleges looking to improve academic performance. Community colleges are also experimenting with accelerated developmental courses to improve academic achievement among students requiring developmental coursework. New course delivery methods may accelerate the rate at which students matriculate to college-level coursework and subsequently reduce attrition.

By examining a student's initial self-concept, community colleges can then shape orientation and support programs that provide rich development experiences for students with low self-concept through face-to-face accelerated courses. Successful completion of coursework has been demonstrated to show an improvement in the overall self-concept score (Fenning & May, 2013; Poorgholami, Ramezanli, Jahromi, & Jahromi, 2016; Rogers & Gottlieb, 1999).

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Chapter Organization

This chapter outlines the design of the self-concept research. It is ordered to

include the overall design of the study, the research questions, research instruments, data

collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

Research Design

This study was a cross-sectional design study that used results from the Tennessee

Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition to assess differences in the sample group based on

age, ethnicity, and gender. The research hypothesis of this study is that self-concept

differs for students taking developmental coursework. The study also examined

differences in self-concept based on ethnicity and gender. This study included a sample

of students from a community college in Mississippi that completed the Tennessee Self-

Concept Scale: Second Edition. This study analyzed the total score from the survey

instrument based on age, ethnicity, and gender.

Research Questions

The performance of non-traditional students is seen as a critical issue for

community colleges and their mission to serve the community with open enrollment

access to higher education. Specifically, the study examined the following research questions:

Do traditional students score higher on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition than students categorized as non-traditional?

Are there any differences in self-concept based on ethnicity, gender, and age?

Instruments and Materials Used

This particular study used the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition to measure participant self-concept score. The institution under study provided a list of developmental courses and a description of the developmental coursework. The principal investigator received approval from the Mississippi State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior contacting the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) for approval to conduct the study at a single campus in the Mississippi community college system. The principal investigator issued and received teacher consent forms for each of the developmental classes participating. The principal investigator also issued and received consent forms for 135 students.

Data Collection Procedures

The principal investigator received approval from the MACJC to conduct the study on one community college campus on September 8, 2016. After obtaining approval from the IRB on October 31, 2016 (see Appendix A for contents of the email from the IRB), the principal investigator began the process of contacting the instructors on campus. The campus under study provided a list of classes and instructors who agreed to allow their students to be asked to participate in the study. After scheduling a time to

issue the survey with each instructor, the principal investigator contacted each instructor via email to confirm the time. Each instructor was then provided with an electronic calendar appointment with the agreed upon time and date as a reminder. During each visit to campus, the principal investigator administered the instrument during the first or last 15 minutes of a total of 11 developmental English, Math, and Reading classes for a sample size of 135 students.

The principal investigator started the data collection on November 10, 2016, and attended two developmental English classes for a collection of 30 consent forms and 30 surveys. After a brief introduction from the instructor, the principal investigator gave the students a brief overview of the requirements to complete each field on the survey form. The instructions included replacing name on the survey form with the class name so that survey data would remain anonymous.

The principal investigator attended one developmental math class on November 16, 2016, and followed the same script to distribute and gather consent forms prior to issuing the survey instructions. The principal investigator distributed the paper survey and addressed individual questions. Students returned their surveys in about 20 minutes after starting at the beginning of the class period. The principal investigator checked each survey for completeness and anonymity. The principal investigator returned incomplete survey forms to the individual for correction. The principal investigator collected about 12 surveys only after each student had completely filled out the survey.

The principal investigator visited the community college being studied again on November 30, 2016, and attended five developmental reading classes. The first class included 14 students followed by a class of 12 students. The other classes included 11,

13, and 12 students respectively. The principal investigator collected 62 student consent forms and 62 surveys. For each class, the instructor gave the principal instructor a brief introduction. Following the introduction, the principal investigator read the consent form and presented each student with a form to sign. Once the students signed the consent form, the principal investigator collected the forms and read off survey form instructions. The principal investigator then presented the survey to the students and each form was checked for completeness prior to collection. Again, the principal investigator instructed the students to enter a class name instead of their real name to allow data to stay anonymous.

Finally, on December 1, 2016, the principal investigator returned to the community college being studied and attended three developmental math classes. Each instructor gave the principal investigator a brief introduction followed by the reading of the consent form. Once the principal investigator read the consent form and addressed concerns, each student signed the consent form. There were approximately 10 students in the first class followed by a class of 11 students and a class of 10 students. After about 20 minutes all students had completed the surveys.

Due to the use of a paper copy of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition questions for each participant, the principal investigator then entered each survey into an electronic form. Once collected, the principal investigator entered the data to determine the self-concept score for each survey. The data from the electronic form were used to calculate the total score for the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition. The principal investigator then exported the calculated total score information and survey demographic information to a file format compatible with IBM's Statistical Package for

the Social Sciences (SPSS) package. The principal investigator then used SPSS functions to generate the t-test results outlined in the results section.

Once all the paper forms were collected, the principal investigator developed a Google Form online to allow for secure data storage and to facilitate calculation of the total score. Using the scoring instructions for the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition manual, the principal investigator created and validated spreadsheet formulas identical to the ones on the manual scoring sheet.

The principal investigator then entered the data from each instrument in order to calculate the overall total self-concept score. This study examined the overall score from the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition and compared the t-tests of each segment including student classification as traditional or non-traditional; ethnicity as Black, Hispanic, White, Asian, and biracial; and gender as male or female. Age, ethnicity and gender information was collected from the profile section of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition.

Each participant was asked to complete all information on the instrument and to leave no items unanswered. Each student complied with the requirements and participated at a 99% return rate. One student declined to participate.

This study used the total score on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition for analysis of the differences in self-concept based on student classification as traditional or non-traditional. This study used data collected from the demographic questions on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition identifying participant age, ethnicity, and gender. Examining differences in the mean of each of the categories of age, ethnicity, and gender indicated that there was a statistical difference in students

only based on ethnicity. Unlike other studies referencing ethnicity and self-concept, this study showed that Black students enrolled in the developmental courses scored higher on average than other ethnic groups with the exception of biracial students.

Summary of Method

The method deployed in this study included data collected with the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition. That information includes demographic information related to ethnicity, gender, and age. Students between 18 and 24 were classified as a traditional student and students 25 and over were classified as a non-traditional student. All students currently taking developmental coursework were eligible to participate in this study, but 11 classes participated. The campus under study provided a list of the instructors teaching developmental courses. Each instructor consented to allow the principal investigator to administer the survey during class. Each student was asked to sign consent forms before the survey way distributed to the class. The resulting sample group of 135 students reflected the campus's population of developmental students well with consideration for age, gender, and ethnicity.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Differences between Traditional and Non-traditional Students

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine if there were differences in self-concept score between traditional and non-traditional students. There was not a significant difference in the scores for traditional ($N = 130$, $M = 226.58$, $SD = 16.84$) and non-traditional ($N = 5$, $M = 215.20$, $SD = 9.73$) students; $t (133) = -1.50$, $p = .137$. These results suggest that age does not have an effect on self-concept.

Differences based on Ethnicity

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in self-concept based on ethnicity for Black students and White students. There was a significant difference in the scores for Black students ($N = 110$, $M = 227.50$, $SD = 16.86$) and White students ($N = 14$, $M = 215.93$, $SD = 13.30$); $t (122) = 2.47$, $p = .015$. These results suggest that there was a difference in self-concept based on ethnicity with the difference between Black students and White students. The data suggest that Black students in developmental courses have a higher self-concept than White students in developmental courses.

Conversely, an independent-samples t-test comparison compared Black students and Hispanic students. There was no significant difference in the scores of Black ($N = 110$, $M = 227.50$, $SD = 16.86$) students and the scores of Hispanic ($N = 3$, $M = 218.33$,

SD = 14.50) students; *t* (111) = .931, *p* = .354. The results suggest that there is no difference in self-concept between Black students and Hispanic students.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare self-concept for ethnic groups of Black students and biracial students. There was no significant difference in the self-concept among Black (*N* = 110, *M* = 227.50, *SD* = 16.86) students and biracial (*N* = 7, *M* = 229.14, *SD* = 17.99) students; *t* (115) = -.249, *p* = .804. The results suggest that self-concept does not differ between Black students and biracial students.

Furthermore, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare self-concept of Black students and the Asian student. There was no significant difference in the self-concept score for Black (*N* = 110, *M* = 227.50, *SD* = 16.86) students and Asian (*N* = 1, *M* = 224.00, *SD* = N/A) students; *t* (109) = .207, *p* = .837. The data suggest that there is no statistical difference between the two groups.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare White student self-concept scores to Hispanic students' self-concept scores. There was no significant difference in the scores of White (*N* = 14, *M* = 215.93, *SD* = 13.30) students and Hispanic (*N* = 3, *M* = 218.33, *SD* = 14.50) students; *t* (15) = -.281, *p* = .783. These results suggest that there are no statistical differences between the self-concept scores of White students and Hispanic students.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the self-concept score of White students and biracial students. There was no significant difference in the self-concept scores of White (*N* = 14, *M* = 215.93, *SD* = 13.30) students and biracial (*N* = 7, *M* = 229.14, *SD* = 17.99) students; *t* (19) = -1.91, *p* = .071. The results infer that self-concept does not differ between White students and biracial students.

An independent-samples t-test assessment was conducted to compare the self-concept of White students and the Asian student. There was no significant difference in the self-concept score for White ($N = 14$, $M = 215.93$, $SD = 13.30$) students and the Asian ($N = 1$, $M = 224.00$, $SD = $ N/A) student; $t (13) = -.586$, $p = .568$. These results suggest that self-concept score does not differ between White students and the Asian student.

An independent-samples t-test assessment was conducted to compare the self-concept score for the Hispanic students and biracial students. There was no significant difference in the self-concept score of Hispanic ($N = 3$, $M = 218.33$, $SD = 14.50$) students and biracial ($N = 7$, $M = 229.14$, $SD = 17.99$) students; $t (8) = -.912$, $p = .389$. The results suggest that self-concept score does not differ between the ethnic group of Hispanic students and biracial students.

An independent-samples t-test assessment of the score was conducted to compare Hispanic students and the Asian student. There was no significant difference in the scores of Hispanic ($N = 3$, $M = 218.33$, $SD = 14.50$) students and Asian ($N = 1$, $M = $ 224.00, $SD = $ N/A) students; $t (2) = -.338$, $p = .767$. The results suggest that self-concept does not differ between Hispanic students and the Asian student.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the self-concept score of the Asian student and biracial students. There was no significant difference between the ethnic groups of Asian ($N = 1$, $M = 224$, $SD = $ N/A) students and biracial ($N = 7$, $M = $ 229.14, $SD = 17.99$) students; $t (6) = .267$, $p = .798$. These results suggest that there is no difference in self-concept for the Asian student and biracial students.

Differences based on Gender

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the self-concept score of male and female students. There was no significant difference in the self-concept scores of male ($N = 56$, $M = 225.50$, $SD = 15.91$) students and female ($N = 79$, $M = 226.62$, $SD = 17.40$) students; $t(133) = -.382$, $p = .703$. These results suggest that gender does not affect self-concept.

Summary of Self-Concept Analysis

There was a traditional student makeup of 130 students and 5 non-traditional students participating in the study. A total of 135 surveys were completed with the following distribution of ethnicity Asian (1), Biracial (7), Black (110), Hispanic (3), and White (14). There were 79 female students and 56 male students in the mix of 135 survey responses. The combined average of 226.1 fell in the 29th percentile range of 223 to 226 according to the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition.

The figure below (Figure 1) shows a graphical summary of the average scores based on ethnicity and gender. The graph also shows an average for the different developmental classes that each participant attended. This specific study did not analyze differences in average score based on the type of development course because some respondents participated in more than one developmental course.
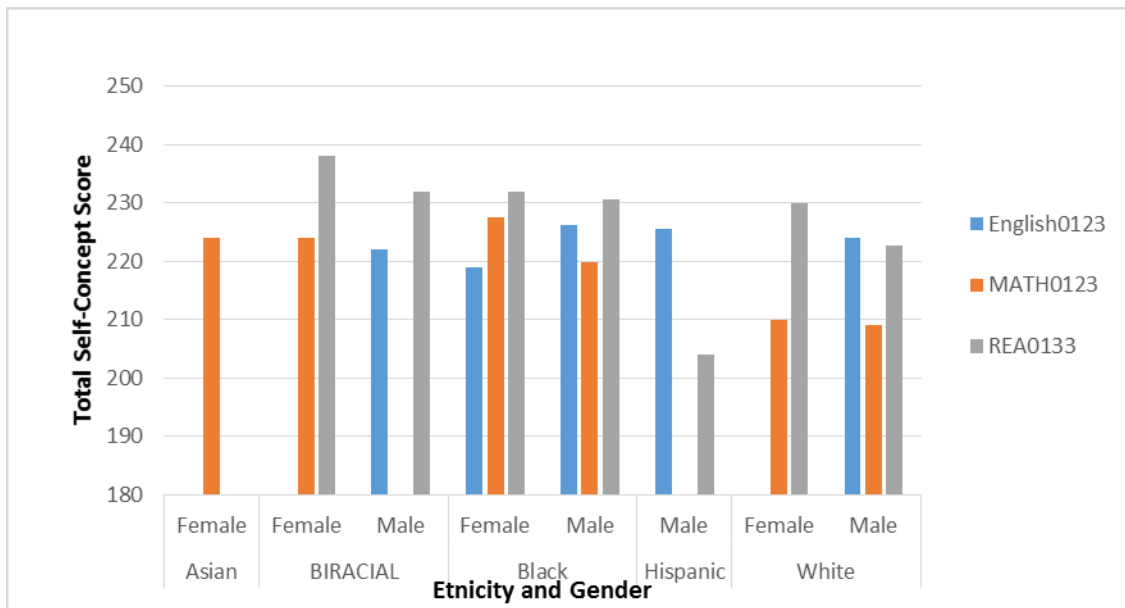
Figure 1. Ethnicity and gender total self-concept.

In addition to the summary graph, the table below shows a summary of the participant demographic information including gender, ethnicity, and classification as traditional or nontraditional.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Classification		
Nontraditional	5	3.52%
Traditional	130	96.48%
Ethnicity		
Black	110	81.50%
White	14	10.40%
Asian	1	0.70%
Hispanic	3	2.20%
Biracial	7	5.20%
Gender		
Male	56	41.50%
Female	79	58.50%
	Mean	Range
Age	19.52	18 - 66
Total Score	226.16	191 - 285
Totals ($N =$ 135)		

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The fact that self-concept did not differ between traditional and non-traditional students infers that the two groups do not need different treatment at community colleges based on self-concept scores. The two groups can be treated the same when it comes to the development and design of different courses and course delivery methods based on self-concept. The self-concept score, however, shows promise as a metric for evaluating the impact of retention programs through the use of pre-tests and post-tests using the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition. Community colleges may, however, want to consider the need for extra support and coaching for students with low self-concept levels regardless of course delivery method. Much more research is needed to evaluate how self-concept changes over time for developmental students. According to a study by Megerian (1994), self-concept correlated better with academic success than the placement test that is used to determine the need for developmental coursework. The study recommended institutions of higher learning develop orientation courses that focus on improving the student's self-concept versus assigning a student to developmental courses based on academic placement tests (Megerian, 1994). Students in developmental courses represent a population of students who show a higher risk of dropping out. Open-admissions community colleges present traditional students with the opportunity to

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continue their education past the high school level while easing the transition into college with usually smaller classes and more intimate instruction. Open-admissions community colleges also offer non-traditional students an opportunity to continue academic pursuits that were interrupted by life events such as service in the military, starting a family, or having a desire for a change in career. The self-concept score represents each student's personal assessment of the truthfulness of internal feelings about things such as their attractiveness and standing with family members.

Conclusions

Based on the survey results, there is no difference in self-concept between traditional and non-traditional students participating in the developmental courses at the community college being studied. There was also no significant difference based on gender. In addition to age and gender, self-concept did not differ statistically by ethnicity except between Black students and White students. Black students in the developmental classes surveyed had a higher self-concept score than White students in the same developmental classes. More research is needed to determine factors that lead to higher self-concepts for Black students as compared to other ethnic groups. Assuming that most students participating in developmental courses have had limited academic success, why did the participating Black students have a higher self-concept score? On average, for the sample taken, Black students also scored higher than the Asian student and Hispanic students, with the exception being students who identified as biracial. Biracial students scored higher than any ethnic group, but there was no statistically valid difference. Based on the relatively high percentage of Black students to Non-Black students, more research with a larger sample of non-Black students may offer valuable data points to further

validate this study. A study to compare the self-concept of Black students attending a predominately white institution would also provide valuable insight into the effect the campus environment has on self-concept.

The lack of a difference in the self-concept score for traditional and non-traditional students might be explained by the Tinto's (1988) model of retention. The Tinto (1988) model postulates that socialization is a critical component to student retention. Perhaps non-traditional students and traditional students do not have the opportunity to develop social differences on campus because many community college students are commuters who may spend limited time with colleagues outside of class. This study only looked at age and did not examine the student's social engagement with campus activities or their status as a commuter or campus resident.

Rogers and Gottlieb (1999) concluded that self-concept is a by-product of academic success and social standing rather than a predictor of success. This study supports the theory that homogeneous groups, such as the group of students taking developmental courses, are linked together by other courses designed to improve overall academic self-concept. The students achieve academic success together when they complete the requirements for the developmental coursework thus raising their self-concept collectively.

In trying to explain the role of ethnicity and its difference to self-concept, one might look to the Hawthorne effect for some explanation of self-concept score differences between Black students taking developmental courses and the other ethnic groups in the same classes. The Hawthorne effect is characterized by the effect that occurs when the participants in a study are affected by a change in the environment or in

the subject's perception of their worth (Jones, 1992). The student's outlook, and in this case self-concept, may have improved because of the principal investigator's validation of the subject's knowledge and ability to evaluate themselves using the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale: Second Edition. The principal investigator also observed that instructors provided in-class group and individualized coaching to the students. This interaction and personal attention might also contribute to the overall differences in self-concept.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study warrant additional research to address the following questions.

1. Why was there a difference in self-concept based on ethnicity when student academic standings were similar?

2. Can the self-concept scale be used a metric for measuring the effectiveness of programs designed to improve retention and completion rates?

3. Does self-concept improve after successfully completing developmental courses? The self-concept scale could be used to measure overall student confidence levels as they matriculate to degree completion.

4. What type of qualitative follow-up study would shed more light on the self-concept of non-traditional students in developmental courses?

5. What are some additional non-academic programs that might raise self-concept and positively affect academic self-concept? Participating in developmental courses and a structured exercise and diet program may improve self-concept and accelerate developmental learning.

6. How would self-concept change if students were allowed to form support and accountability teams? The teams could participate in accelerated developmental courses while participating in non-developmental courses to reduce overall degree completion time.

The fact that ethnicity and self-concept showed a statistical significance for Black students and White students warrants more discussion. Black students scored statistically significantly better than White students and averaged a higher mean value score than Asian and Hispanic students. Given the high percentage of Black students taking the survey as compared to other ethnic groups, it is recommended that future studies include both students taking developmental courses and students not enrolled in developmental courses. Future studies should also employ stratified sampling methods to obtain a larger sample of ethnically diverse student subjects.

For practitioners, the use of self-concept as a way of looking at students in developmental courses shows promise as a way of identifying students who believe in their ability to tackle whatever coursework lies in front to them. Students previously identified as needing developmental coursework with high self-concept scores may make excellent candidates for accelerated programs designed to address retention concerns.

Policymakers can use self-concept scoring to develop student metrics and personalized development plans for community colleges as a way of assessing workforce readiness. Both training and academic programs have shared objectives of improving the odds for successful entry into the workforce. While self-concept may not be a good predictor of academic and professional success, the absence or presence of a high concept

does indicate an individual's capacity to approach each learning opportunity with a heightened sense of self-confidence.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL EMAIL

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to cw575, ads124, jed11, +2
Oct 31, 2016
Details
IRB has approved the protocol with the following details.

Protocol ID: 16-263
Principal Investigator: Wicks, Corky
Department: Educational Leadership
Protocol Title: The difference in self-concept between traditional and non-traditional community college students.
Review Type: EXEMPT
Approval Date: October 31, 2016

APPENDIX B

TENNESSEE SELF-CONCEPT SCALE: SECOND EDITION

Name _____

1 = Always False
2 = Mostly False
3 = Partly False and Partly True
4 = Mostly True
5 = Always True

Examiner's Name _____

Administration Date _____

Age (Required) _____

1	2	3	4	5	1. I am an attractive person.
1	2	3	4	5	2. I am an honest person.
1	2	3	4	5	3. I am a member of a happy family.
1	2	3	4	5	4. I wish I could be more trustworthy.
1	2	3	4	5	5. I do not feel at ease with other people.
1	2	3	4	5	6. Math is hard for me.
1	2	3	4	5	7. I am a friendly person.
1	2	3	4	5	8. I am satisfied with my moral behavior.
1	2	3	4	5	9. I am not as smart as the people around me.
1	2	3	4	5	10. I do not act the way my family thinks I should.
1	2	3	4	5	11. I am just as nice as I should be.
1	2	3	4	5	12. It is easy for me to learn new things.
1	2	3	4	5	13. I am satisfied with my family relationships.
1	2	3	4	5	14. I am not the person I would like to be.
1	2	3	4	5	15. I understand my family as well as I should.
1	2	3	4	5	16. I despise myself.
1	2	3	4	5	17. I don't feel as well as I should.
1	2	3	4	5	18. I do well at math.
1	2	3	4	5	19. I am satisfied to be just what I am.
1	2	3	4	5	20. I get along well with other people.

Continue unless you have been instructed to stop at Item 20.

1	2	3	4	5	21. I have a healthy body.
1	2	3	4	5	22. I consider myself a sloppy person.
1	2	3	4	5	23. I am a decent sort of person.
1	2	3	4	5	24. I try to run away from my problems.
1	2	3	4	5	25. I am a cheerful person.
1	2	3	4	5	26. I am a nobody.
1	2	3	4	5	27. My family would always help me with any kind of trouble.
1	2	3	4	5	28. I get angry sometimes.
1	2	3	4	5	29. I am full of aches and pains.
1	2	3	4	5	30. I am a sick person.
1	2	3	4	5	31. I am a morally weak person.
1	2	3	4	5	32. Other people think I am smart.
1	2	3	4	5	33. I am a hateful person.
1	2	3	4	5	34. I am losing my mind.
1	2	3	4	5	35. I am not loved by my family.
1	2	3	4	5	36. I feel that my family doesn't trust me.
1	2	3	4	5	37. I am not good at the work I do.
1	2	3	4	5	38. I am mad at the whole world.
1	2	3	4	5	39. I am hard to be friendly with.
1	2	3	4	5	40. Once in a while I think of things too bad to talk about.
1	2	3	4	5	41. Sometimes when I am not feeling well, I am cross.

continue on back

Adult Form

TSCS:2
AutoScore™ Form

W. H. Fitts, Ph.D. and W. L. Warren, Ph.D.

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Publishers and Distributors

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Grade/Years of Education Completed

☐ <7	☐ 9	☐ 12	☐ 15
☐ 7	☐ 10	☐ 13	☐ 16
☐ 8	☐ 11	☐ 14	☐ >16

Ethnicity

☐ Asian	☐ Native American
☐ Black	☐ White
☐ Hispanic	☐ Other: _____

Directions

This scale asks you to describe how you feel about yourself. There are no right or wrong answers, so please just describe yourself as honestly as you can. When you are ready to begin, read each statement and decide how well it describes you according to the scale below. Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that shows your answer. Circle only one number for each statement, using this scale:

Answer 1 if the statement is ALWAYS FALSE.

Answer 2 if the statement is MOSTLY FALSE.

Answer 3 if the statement is PARTLY FALSE AND PARTLY TRUE.

Answer 4 if the statement is MOSTLY TRUE.

Answer 5 if the statement is ALWAYS TRUE.

If you wish to change a response, cross it out with an X, and circle the new response you have chosen.

PLEASE PRESS HARD WHEN CIRCLING YOUR RESPONSE

3
4
5
6
7
8
9

45

```
1 = Always False
    2 = Mostly False
        3 = Partly False and Partly True
            4 = Mostly True
                5 = Always True
```

1	2	3	4	5	**42.**	I am neither too fat nor too thin.
1	2	3	4	5	**43.**	I'll never be as smart as other people.
1	2	3	4	5	**44.**	I like to work with numbers.
1	2	3	4	5	**45.**	I am as sociable as I want to be.
1	2	3	4	5	**46.**	I have trouble doing the things that are right.
1	2	3	4	5	**47.**	Once in a while I laugh at a dirty joke.
1	2	3	4	5	**48.**	I should have more sex appeal.
1	2	3	4	5	**49.**	I shouldn't tell so many lies.
1	2	3	4	5	**50.**	I can't read very well.
1	2	3	4	5	**51.**	I treat my parents as well as I should.
1	2	3	4	5	**52.**	I am too sensitive about the things people in my family say.
1	2	3	4	5	**53.**	I should love my family more.
1	2	3	4	5	**54.**	I am satisfied with the way I treat other people.
1	2	3	4	5	**55.**	I ought to get along better with people.
1	2	3	4	5	**56.**	I gossip a little at times.
1	2	3	4	5	**57.**	Sometimes I feel like swearing.
1	2	3	4	5	**58.**	I take good care of myself physically.
1	2	3	4	5	**59.**	I try to be careful about my appearance.
1	2	3	4	5	**60.**	I am true to my religion in my everyday actions.
1	2	3	4	5	**61.**	I sometimes do very bad things.
1	2	3	4	5	**62.**	I can always take care of myself in any situation.
1	2	3	4	5	**63.**	I do as well as I want to at almost any job.
1	2	3	4	5	**64.**	I feel good most of the time.
1	2	3	4	5	**65.**	I take a real interest in my family.
1	2	3	4	5	**66.**	I try to understand the other person's point of view.
1	2	3	4	5	**67.**	I'd rather win a game than lose one.
1	2	3	4	5	**68.**	I am not good at games and sports.
1	2	3	4	5	**69.**	I look fine just the way I am.
1	2	3	4	5	**70.**	I do not know how to work well.
1	2	3	4	5	**71.**	I have trouble sleeping.
1	2	3	4	5	**72.**	I do what is right most of the time.
1	2	3	4	5	**73.**	I am no good at all in social situations.
1	2	3	4	5	**74.**	I solve my problems quite easily.
1	2	3	4	5	**75.**	I am a bad person.
1	2	3	4	5	**76.**	I am satisfied with my relationship with God.
1	2	3	4	5	**77.**	I quarrel with my family.
1	2	3	4	5	**78.**	I see something good in everyone I meet.
1	2	3	4	5	**79.**	I find it hard to talk with strangers.
1	2	3	4	5	**80.**	Sometimes I put off until tomorrow what I ought to do today.
1	2	3	4	5	**81.**	It's easy for me to understand what I read.
1	2	3	4	5	**82.**	I have a lot of self-control.

There are no right or wrong answers.
Just answer as honestly as possible.
Please answer ALL items.

PLEASE PRESS HARD
WHEN CIRCLING YOUR RESPONSE