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# The Effect of Building Up Self-Esteem Training on Students' Social and Academic Skills 2014

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## Abstract

This study aimed at analyzing the effect of training a sample (N =116, ages: 7-9) of regular and special needs students in “Building Up Self-Esteem Program” on their academic and social skills in an integrated environment. The sample was randomly selected from three Lebanese schools and divided into three groups: 2 experimental groups (68 students) were trained in the year 2014 in Robert Reasoner program: “Building -up Self- esteem” and- 1 control group (48 students). Pre and post –training scores were collected from the sample on Cooper Smith Self- esteem Scale (CSES), Conner’s Social skills subscale CTRS-F, and academic performance. Results revealed significant differences on these scales on the benefit of the experimental group. Findings revealed that the training had contributed in decreasing the average of Conner’s subscales for the participants with special needs as compared to the members of the control group who showed an increase in these elements. Moreover, findings showed that the integration of the students with special needs with regular students had helped in decreasing the behavior problems (as it shows through the decrease of their post averages on Conner’s subscales and the increase in the grade average of self- esteem and scholar achievement as compared to the control group. Results revealed the teachers' self-evaluation can have a positive impact on the students' self-esteem. Future recommendations and researches were discussed.

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of education and teaching differs from what it has been during the past decades. After the teaching-learning process, the student’s role was to receive the information and store them in his memory; today he became a key and basic element of this process. Such process as Ashukker (2010) stated, is now based on the self-motives of the student and his special needs, which made the teaching process an individual one emerging from the motives and

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the needs of the individual, rather than being a collective one. A conclusion confirmed by the modern psychology theory revealed that all human beings have a specific need they seek to satisfy to control their behaviors. Among the essential needs the students, in general, and those with special needs, in particular, seek especially to satisfy the need to self-esteem.

The students with special needs enrolled in the Lebanese public schools suffer from a low level of self-esteem, which weighs on their social skills and their academic achievement within a total absence of the school inclusion mechanism. They also suffer from the minimum requirement of care and attention at the psychological, social and academic level, which endanger the future of this marginalized category and maximize the risk of reclusion, dropouts and negative views towards this category (El Daw, 2008). This study will highlight three linked variables that directly affect the performance of special needs students who are enrolled in inclusive public schools: self-esteem, social skills, and type of inclusion. In order to see if there is a relationship between self-esteem and academic skills in inclusive setting, first the concept of self-esteem will be explained, then definition of inclusion and its related advantages and disadvantages will be reviewed.

#### Nomenclature

A	CSEI: Coopersmith Self- esteem Inventory
B	CTRS: Conner's Teacher Rating Scale
C	F-(subscale) CTRS: RL, social problems
D	Academic Performance
E	Full Inclusion
F	Partial Integration
G	Resource Room
H	Special Education

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Self esteem

Self-esteem has been defined simply as a “belief and self-confidence in your own ability and value” (Cambridge Advanced Dictionary, 2004). Self-esteem is how you feel toward yourself. Your feelings about yourself come from convictions about yourself as a capable, competent person having worth. Feeling capable is having self-confidence, viewing yourself as able to cope effectively with life’s challenges. A feeling of worth means having self-respect, which comes as a result of living up to your own standards of values and potential (Mc Farla, 1988). Also, self-esteem is an evaluation the individual puts for himself and others whom he considers to be important. According to Younisi (2012). The individual here tends to care about the opinion of those who have a big influence on him and those who can be called as important in his life, and they are the parents, the teachers and the peers). For Bandura (1977, as cited by Bandura 1989), Self-efficacy is defined as the “Self-assessment of ability to master a task or achieve mastery over a specific situation or set of circumstances”. Self-efficacy has been found to academically predict performance. In this study, the operational definition of self-esteem is measured by Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (CSEI; translated by Yakoub and Antoun, 2004). Individuals who have high self-esteem usually demonstrate a high degree of acceptance of themselves and others. These individuals recognize their skills and strengths and feel safe and secure within their social relationships and environment. Self-esteem affects social skills, the more the student feels self-esteem, the more he will enjoy social skills to satisfy his basic needs.

Learners with special needs, who are in mainstream schools, are deemed to be at risk for low self-esteem associated with the significant difficulties they experience in mainstream schools, both in terms of academic performance and peer acceptance (Martinez & Semrud-Clikeman, 2004; Gans, Kenny, Ghany, 2003; as cited by Ntshangase, Mdikana and Cronk, 2008). These learners, due to their histories of repeated failure at school, are likely to feel as though academic outcomes are beyond their control, thus perceiving themselves as less competent than their peers. There has been widespread interest in researching the self-perceptions of children and adolescents with special needs due to the concern that academic failure or difficulty may affect global self-concept; as well as the concern about the self-perpetuating cycle of failure (Heyman, 1990 as cited by Ntshangase, Mdikana and Cronk, 2008).

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