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EDUCATORS' ROLE IN FOSTERING SELF-ESTEEM IN THEIR STUDENTS TO PROMOTE ACHIEVEMENT

By

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Abstract

In an age of extreme technological and media exposure, children are bombarded with subliminal indoctrination of messages which place undue value on outward appearance. This results in constant disappointment and dissatisfaction with one's self because it is impossible to compare or keep up with the false ideals and unattainable expectations that which society sets. When a child experiences a decrease in self-esteem, he begins to question his self-worth. Further, if unequipped with adequate social and life skills, such as self-competence or self-efficacy, he begins to doubt his abilities and his potential for success. Once his self-confidence is lost, he descends into a state of perpetual doubt of self-worth and self-love; thus, partaking in a cycle which is difficult to break. In turn, educators must implement prevention tactics for students to become more prepared to face inevitable challenges. This qualitative research study seeks to investigate the various perceptions, pedagogies, and experiences of two primary and junior teachers from Ontario and Quebec who aim to tackle this recurring phenomenon. Through a thorough literature review in collaboration with two qualitative interviews, I aim to explore the ways in which educators implement pedagogies that help foster self-esteem in their students. The findings of this research should provide educators with practical and transferrable strategies that can support students' growth and success in all aspects of their lives.

Keywords: Self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-worth, self-competence, unconditional love, confidence, resilience, life skills, social skills, success, growth, community, primary, junior, academic achievement, character development, character education, mental health
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1.1 Introduction to the Research Study

Young, Canadian adolescents face many issues regarding their self-image. Early adolescence is a crucial time to develop positive self-esteem; however, being bombarded with implicit and explicit messages from society on what is the ‘ideal’ image, they learn to be very negative and critical about themselves. This topic is a recurring problem and it is becoming more popular, for a lack of better terms, due to the powerful influence of media. According to the American Psychological Association or APA (2007), the widespread sexualization of people plays a major role in the deterioration of adolescent mental health. Sexualization occurs when a person is valued primarily based on his or her sexual appearance rather than their intelligence or other qualities. Moreover, the APA links sexualization with the three most common mental health problems: eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression. Media such as television and magazines, to name a few, are powerful tools that promote sexualization. Statistics show that 80% of students entering school feel good about themselves, but by the 5th grade only 20% of them feel happy with their image (Grunbaum et al., 2004). In addition, only one out of five high school students has positive self-esteem (Grunbaum et al., 2004). One cannot help but wonder what is changing as these students get older and why some students are affected and not others.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory study is to describe the perceptions and practices of two primary and junior (grade 1 to 6) teachers who are committed to enhancing
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students' positive self-esteem in Canadian classrooms. Like anxiety, negative self-esteem impedes student learning. It is important for teachers to tackle this issue at the junior level so that students can develop a positive self-esteem. According to the Canadian Women's Foundation (2007), "The best time to teach these skills is between the ages of nine and thirteen." In turn, their level of self-efficacy could potentially rise, which would allow them to achieve academic success. Self-efficacy predicts the quality of student functioning. Students who doubt their capacity to cope with situational surprises and setbacks experience anxiety (Bandura, 1988), confusion (Wood & Bandura, 1989), negative thinking (Bandura, 1983), bodily tension, and aversive physiological arousal (Bandura et al., 1985). (O'Donnell, 2008, p. 297). These overwhelming factors contribute to students' mental health, development, and ultimately, their success.

1.3 Research Questions

Through this study, I explore the perceptions, experiences and teaching strategies of two primary and junior teachers in Ontario and Quebec who foster the development of self-esteem in their students. My research sub-questions are:

- What are teachers' perceptions on developing their students’ self-esteem?
- What are teachers' experiences in effectively fostering students' self-esteem in their classrooms?
- What are educators' perspectives on the impact of self-esteem in their students' learning?

Research shows that—with the right help—adolescents can successfully navigate adolescence and avoid the negative patterns of self-objectification, low self-esteem, negative body image, anxiety, depression, and passivity (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2007). My goal for this project is to educate teachers in the areas of adolescent self-esteem and how it has an impact on student learning. Moreover, I encourage teachers to
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take action by implementing strategies for character development in the curriculum, and
modeling unconditional love so that "[students] begin to learn how to interpret, challenge,
and ultimately change the message that their value depends solely on their outward
appearance." (CWF, 2007).

1.4 Background of the Researcher

In 2013, I graduated from Glendon College, York University with a Bilingual
Honors Bachelor of Arts in English and Sociology. Currently, I am close to completing
my Masters in Teaching degree at OISE of University of Toronto, at the
Junior/Intermediate level. Throughout my high school and university career, I have
worked at numerous summer camps, tutored, and taken up other leadership roles which
have shaped the teacher I am today. My Master of Teaching Research Project (MTRP)
topic is of great importance to me because I have a personal connection to it. My sister
developed negative self-esteem in her early adolescent years and this was one of the
factors which affected her academic achievement. I could not fathom how such a bright
girl was failing most of her courses in high school. Whatever was deeply wounding her
was naturally hurting and concerning me as well, but I promised myself that I would
never lose hope. For years, my family and I tried everything to help improve her personal
sense of self-worth, but we seemed to fail each time. My sister constantly struggled with
her body image and she gradually lost confidence in herself and in her abilities. Due to
these personal life experiences, I decided I would do more research on this topic and try
to help children develop positive self-esteem.

Fortunately, my sister transferred to an all-girls high school in grade eleven and
felt comfortable there. She developed positive relationships with her teachers and peers.
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Her self-esteem improved greatly; she became much happier about her image even though it had not changed. Consequently, she excelled in her academics, graduated with honours, and received acceptance for the Criminal Justice program in all the universities she applied for. Currently, she is studying Criminology at Ryerson University with aspirations of becoming a lawyer.

Needless to say, I learned a great deal from my sister and I am thankful for that. After all, life experience is the best teacher, but I do not want to stop there. The issue of self-esteem cultivation has been examined briefly in a few of my academic courses. It is evident that it is an important phenomenon which must be overcome because students deserve a positive academic and social experience.

1.5 Overview

This study is designed to provide additional insight surrounding research on the implementation of strategies to foster self-esteem in students. The 1st chapter includes the introduction and purpose of the study, the research questions, as well as the purpose of my involvement in this topic and study. The 2nd chapter presents a review of the current literature on the concepts of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic achievement. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and procedure used in this study including information about the participants and data collection instruments. The 4th chapter identifies the participants in the study and describes the findings from the data as it addresses the research question. Finally, the 5th chapter contains the discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for practice, and further reading and study. References and a list of appendixes follow at the end.
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Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study of self-esteem has been explored through theoretical and empirical work for decades. However, as Miller and Moran (2012) state, "what we believe about self-esteem is not supported by research evidence" (p. 4). Before learning how to effectively enhance students' self-esteem, one must be familiar with its theory. It is important to gain insight from extensive literature on self-esteem. It is then essential to put into practice the strategies, supported by research, that effectively enhance self-esteem and ultimately build self-efficacy. In this chapter, I explore the concept of self-esteem and its importance in students' lives through the theoretical lens of Miller and Moran (2012). Moreover, this literature review identifies different factors, conceptions and misconceptions of self-esteem. It will also examine various pedagogical practices and strategies related to the fostering of self-esteem, specifically looking at character development methods that improve student success.

2.2 Conceptualizing Self-Esteem

Although difficult to define, one must first begin to understand the difference between self-esteem, self-concept and self-efficacy in order to better grasp the topic under study. Whereas self-concept is a description of oneself, self-esteem is an evaluation of oneself (Rosenberg, 1979). How one values him or herself (positively or negatively) determines his or her self-esteem.
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2.2.1 Self-Esteem Theory

A person's self-esteem, "is partly evaluated on the emotional basis of how others treat him or her. It is also partly evaluated on the basis of that person's competence and achievement in different domains" (O'Donnell, 2008, p.104). This provides a two-part definition of self-esteem. O'Donnell goes on to further explain that self-esteem "exists as the sum of evaluated domains of the self-concept" (p.104). Some authors like Rosenberg, Rosenberg, Schooler, and Schoenbach (1995) suggest that there are two types of self-esteem: specific and global self-esteem. Specific self-esteem is most relevant to behaviour, whereas global self-esteem, also known as general self-concept, is most relevant to psychological well-being. It is believed that school marks produce an effect on self-esteem. Global self-esteem has very little effect on marks whereas specific self-esteem has a strong effect on school performance (Rosenberg, Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, 1995). Charles Horton Cooley (1902) coins the idea of a "looking-glass self" where he argues that how people feel about themselves is influenced by what they believe others think of them. People take into consideration the views that others express about them, thus informing their thoughts and behaviors. Although the aforementioned theories attempt to define self-esteem, they do not fully paint a picture of this concept.

2.2.2 Self-Concept

Self-concept is a more global construct that contains many perceptions about the self, including self-efficacy (Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). Although this definition seems consistent with the notion of self-esteem and self-efficacy, it is quite different. Efficacy beliefs are strong predictors of behavior, but self-concept has weaker predictive power (Bandura, 1977). The structure of academic self-concept is depicted in a hierarchal
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model by Herbert Marsh and Richard Shavelson (1985) where they link self-esteem and self-concept closely. They claim that general self-concept (or global self-esteem) is influenced by judgments people make about themselves, such as academic, social, physical, and emotional aspects, which in turn, is informed by judgments of competency in each aspect. Furthermore, self-concept is swayed when people identify with role models. A child would imitate a model closest to him, such as a parent. If the parent has a healthy self-esteem, then it is expected that the child would imitate the same mentality, thus contributing to the child's own self-concept.

2.2.3 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, on the other hand, is "one's judgment of how well one will cope with a situation, given the skills one possesses and the circumstances one faces" (O'Donnell, 2008, p. 296). Pearson (2008) argues that there are two types of self-efficacy: self-efficacy theory and academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy refers to one's perceived ability to perform academic tasks at desired levels (Pajares & Miller, 1994; Schunk, 1991; Pearson, 2008). According to Bandura (1977), the behaviour on which people base their beliefs can be developed by four forms of influence: (a) enacted mastery influence, (b) vicarious influence, (c) physiological and emotional influences, and (d) verbal and social persuasion influence (Pearson, 2008). The most influential source of perceived self-efficacy is the enacted mastery influence experience because successful experiences provide tangible evidence that one can accomplish the behavior and can manage whatever it takes to succeed in spite of circumstances (Pearson, 2008). However, students must be taught that "a resilient sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort" (Bandura, 1995, p. 3). In their
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A longitudinal study, Rosenberg, et al. (1995) were able to find that school marks significantly affect self-confidence. Students must learn that they may not always get immediate results and that success will not always come easy. They may have to work diligently to achieve their goals.

2.2.4 Interrelated Concepts: Two-Dimensional Model of Self-Esteem

Compared with self-esteem, self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal capabilities; self-esteem is concerned with judgments of self-worth (Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). For example, if students have not developed strong self-efficacy, then their self-esteem easily gets destroyed and their motivation in academics deteriorates. On the other hand, if a student has positive self-esteem, then he or she will more likely develop strong self-efficacy. However, Gaskill and Woolfolk Hoy, state that "it is possible to feel highly efficacious in one area and still not have a high level of self-esteem, or vice versa." (2002, p. 186). They further argue that "if you were a teacher and your self-efficacy for teaching started dropping after several bad experiences, it is likely that your self-esteem would suffer too" (2002, p.186). In this case, self-efficacy for a particular task affects self-esteem only if the person values that task. This is not any different than the type of experience a student has in school. If a student's self-efficacy started dropping after receiving a few bad grades, then his or her self-esteem would likely be affected too.

In my research, I explore the notion of self-esteem through the theoretical lens of Christopher Mruk (1999) and Moran and Miller (2012). When I use the term self-esteem, it essentially is encompassing the concept of self-efficacy. Mruk (1999) offers a view, that which he introduces a two-dimensional model of self-esteem and how it is comprised
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of two interrelated components: self-worth and self-competence. For my study, I will use this model of self-esteem as a conceptual framework. Miller and Moran (2012) further explain this idea in their own terms:

This reflects a fundamental belief that how we feel about ourselves is dependent on two types of judgment, linked to two aspects of the 'value' of a person. These are the intrinsic worth of the individual (what we are), and the instrumental value (what we can do). The former relates largely to aspects of character, the latter to competence (p.5).

A sense of worthiness is established by how one sees himself and how others perceive him. If he is seen in a positive light, as a likeable and honourable man, for example, then he is more likely to feel a sense of worthiness. Moreover, self-competence is determined by how well man copes with adversity. Bandura's (1992) work on self-efficacy closely resembles Mruk's idea of self-competence - two terms that I will use interchangeably throughout my study.

Alternatively, there has been much debate about the interchangeability of the concepts of self-esteem and self-efficacy. While the former is believed to be an affective phenomenon, the latter is perceived to be cognitive. However, Miller and Moran argue that the two-dimensional model of self-esteem "involves the belief that coping with the challenges one faces in life (or failing to do so) carries with it subjective feelings about the self" (2012, p.6). Evidently, the notion of success or failure results in having a positive or negative feeling and it influences one to feel a certain way about oneself. Therefore, "self-competence is more than just the imprint of efficacy; it is both the cognitive recognition of my success or failure and how I feel about it" (p.6). Thus, if one has low self-competence and self-worth, then one has low self-esteem. Below is a table of
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**Table 2.1** Miller & Moran (2012) Visual Conceptualization of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition and Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept</td>
<td>Self-concept seems to have been conceptualised in different ways, but is usually defined as the overall body of beliefs that an individual holds about himself or herself. It is generally accepted that it includes both descriptive and evaluative judgements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Again, this has been defined in different ways, but it usually refers to an evaluation or judgement about oneself. It is how you feel about the picture you have of yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-image</td>
<td>The way you see yourself. As with many of these terms, there are different interpretations, but essentially self-image is descriptive rather than evaluative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal self</td>
<td>A notion of the person you would like to become: what you aspire to be. Links can be made with the idea of a role model. The gap between your ideal self and your current self-image is often taken as an indication of your level of self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-worth</td>
<td>This has two meanings, depending on which model of self-esteem you subscribe to. For many writers, self-worth is synonymous with self-esteem. However, it has a more specific meaning for those who are attracted to the idea of a two-dimensional model of self-esteem, to be explained later. For these people, self-worth is one component of self-esteem; it is the extent to which you feel you are leading a good life (based on good principles) and deserving of care and respect from others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-competence</td>
<td>If self-worth (above) is one component of self-esteem, as some writers argue, self-competence is the other component. It is a feeling that you can cope with the challenges you face in life. It has much in common with the idea of self-efficacy (below).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Confidence in one's ability to achieve a given task. It tends to be specific to a task, or a relatively narrow set of behaviours – for example, computer self-efficacy. A generalised sense of self-efficacy is similar to what is called 'self-competence' (above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-regard</td>
<td>Self-regard is a term associated with the work of Carl Rogers. In use it seems broadly comparable to self-respect, self-esteem or a positive self-image.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Changes in Self-Esteem During Early Adolescence

Early on, children develop their personal theories of schooling, often based on social interactions in the classroom. These theories influence their actions at school and either foster or impede academic achievement (Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). Wigfield and Eccles' (2002) study found the following:

The early adolescent developmental period is one in which individuals experience many changes, including the biological changes associated with puberty, important changes in relations with family and peers, and the social and educational changes resulting from transitions from elementary to junior high school. (p. 159)

Different theorists have proposed that these changes have significant impact on a variety of developmental outcomes. Gaskill and Woolfolk Hoy (2002) argue that "Besides beliefs about their academic abilities, [students] also form beliefs about the nature of academic tasks, cognitive strategies, social dispositions of others, and expectations for their own success." (p. 189). Children's beliefs influence their attitude towards life and school.

2.3.1 Elementary vs. Middle School Classrooms

Changes in early adolescents' motivation and self-concepts are influenced by different experiences in middle schools (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). One of the changes is in authority relationships in which Wigfield and Eccles argue:

Middle school classrooms, as opposed to elementary school classrooms, are characterized by a greater emphasis on teacher control and discipline and fewer opportunities for student decision making, choice, and self-management. (p. 167)

These practices, which can reduce students' sense of control and autonomy, can also affect students' self-efficacy.
Second, research has noted a shift in the classroom environments from elementary to middle school which can affect students’ self-efficacy. Middle school classrooms are often characterized by less personal teacher-student relationships. Elementary school classrooms are depicted as the opposite where positive and emotionally warm relations with teachers influences students' motivation and adjustment in the classroom (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Children entering first grade already show a wide range of individual differences. Yet, because their self-beliefs for school success and their efficacy for cognitive learning are so underdeveloped, they undoubtedly are at their most malleable stage because efficacy is most pliable early in the learning experience (Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002; Bandura, 1997). Even though the foundation for future success or failure is built in the primary grades, relatively little research directly explores self-efficacy under fourth grade (Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). The lack of research on this area is unknown, so I attempt to fill this gap through my study. As children get older, around 11 or 12 years of age, they begin to differentiate among effort, ability, and performance. They may protect their self-esteem about ability by avoiding the appearance of working hard, a strategy that will undermine learning and thus diminish self-efficacy in the long run (Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). This may be one of the contributing factors of the diminishing of a child's self-efficacy as he grows older.

2.4 The Importance of Self-Esteem in Education

Ferkany (2008) argues that "self-esteem is a crucial element of the confidence and motivation children need in order to engage in and achieve educational pursuits" (p. 119). Moreover, self-esteem can be facilitated socially, without hindering the pursuit of other high priority aims at school, such as a challenging academic curriculum (Ferkany, 2008).
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This suggests that teachers do not necessarily need to implement self-efficacy skills in the curriculum, but they can encourage, motivate, and advocate for it in the classroom. If they do not, then low self-esteem becomes "an impediment to achievement, and is something to be overcome" (Ferkany, 2008, p. 125).

Cross (1997) however, believes that teachers' perceptions about self-esteem have implications and that broad conceptualizations of self-esteem are largely useless in education. According to her, there is scarce information and little knowledge about self-esteem. Thus, "causal determinants are inappropriately linked to self-esteem" (p. 89).

Wigfield and Eccles (2002) do not agree as they state:

the development of a positive sense of self in school needs to be done in the context of legitimate accomplishments: students' sense of themselves needs to be grounded in this way. (p. 180)

Teachers must build a strong foundation for building students' self-esteem and promoting self-efficacy beliefs. In order to do so, they must have a basic understanding of young children's common characteristics and conceptions about competence (Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). Efforts to enhance self-esteem and efforts to increase academic rigor and performance need not be in opposition (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Self-esteem enhancement does not have to be at the expense of core learning (Miller & Moran, 2012, p. 8). Miller and Moran (2012) claim that the self-competence component of the two-dimensional model of self-esteem has not received much attention in schools. They suggest that "while there may be a place for 'finding' achievements of which we are proud...it should not be confused with the process of creating a genuine sense of competence based on new achievement" (2012, p.15). Allowing students to build their competence essentially helps foster positive self-esteem.
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2.5 Measuring Self-Esteem

According to Cross (1997), teachers should participate in systematic inquiry to analyze the effectiveness of the various activities they are engaged in under the auspices of improving self-esteem. However, she argues that determining program effectiveness is uncertain and difficult. She believes that it is a difficult task to measure individual students' self-esteem and develop activities according to each of the students' needs. I would argue that quantifying self-esteem is unnecessary, but gauging it as positive or negative is certainly useful. Self-esteem is something to be honed in order to have a more meaningful life. Teachers must take into consideration the class as a whole when implementing resiliency or self-efficacy in classrooms. All students (even the ones with positive self-esteem) should be able to benefit from these learned skills. Thus, there is no need to measure each student's level of self esteem. Rosenberg, et al. (1995), on the other hand, use a self-esteem scale to measure two components: self-confidence and self-deprecation. Using structural equation based measurement models, they later confirmed that a two-component model that separates the positive and negative aspects of self-esteem proves a better fit to the data (Rosenberg, et al., 1995).

2.6 Fostering Self-Esteem Through Character Education and Narrative

Stories have a tremendous power to influence, inspire, and transform one's thinking and behavior. When students learn the stories of resilient well-known or familiar people, they become engaged and are more inclined to accept the message being conveyed. In a Huffington Post article, Renne Jacques (2013) shares stories of successful people who overcame obstacles because of their high self-efficacy skills. Benjamin Franklin dropped out of school at age ten. Bill Gates' first business failed. Stephen King's
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first novel was rejected 30 times. Michael Jordan did not make his high school basketball team. What all these people have in common is that they persevered even when faced with adversity. Each of these people had their own version of success which they aimed to achieve. They are not extraordinary people, but rather ordinary people with extraordinary skills.

Whether stated explicitly or implied through subconscious attitudes and behaviors, educators convey the notion of success by measuring student work with a grading scale. In his book, How Children Succeed, author Paul Tough (2013) argues that the qualities that matter most in student success have more to do with character or non-cognitive skills, such as perseverance, curiosity, conscientiousness, optimism, and self-control. He claims that these qualities are what make up one's character; therefore, it is the development of character that which helps foster one's self-efficacy. In the Ministry of Education document titled "Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12", character development is defined as "the deliberate effort to nurture the universal attributes upon which schools and communities find consensus. These attributes provide a standard for behavior against which we hold ourselves accountable" (2008, p.3). Educators are encouraged to promote these attributes because "they are a foundation for excellence and equity in education, and for our vision of learning cultures and school communities that are respectful, safe, caring, and inclusive" (p.3). Moreover, character development supports student achievement because it "addresses the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains of learning" (p.5) This, therefore, is directly linked to self-efficacy. Furthermore, since self-esteem is two-dimensional and is a combination of self-worth and self-competence (Miller & Moran, 2012), then character development is closely connected to self-esteem.
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Tough (2013) uses real-life stories to depict the importance of character in helping to achieve success. Through the stories of educators, researchers, and children, he traces links between childhood stress and life success. Those who overcome stressful situations due to a high self-efficacy, not only succeed, but essentially have a higher self-esteem. He quotes the following narrative found in his book in an interview discussing how his ideas play out in the lives of children:

Sometimes these kids are achieving great things: Take James Black Jr., a student who just graduated from Intermediate School 138 in Brooklyn. He grew up in a low-income neighborhood, he has siblings who’ve spent time in prison, and he doesn’t do great on traditional tests of cognitive ability. But he might be the best thirteen-year-old chess player in the country. I followed him for a year, trying to figure out why he’s so successful. When I started my reporting, I thought what everyone thinks: that chess is the ultimate intellectual activity, a skill inextricable from IQ. But to my surprise, I found that many chess scholars now believe that chess success has more to do with non-cognitive skills than with pure IQ. James’s chess teacher at IS 318 is a woman named Elizabeth Spiegel. She’s a great teacher, and I think what makes her so good is that she’s able to help her students develop their non-cognitive skills to high levels — in James’s case, to very high levels.

Evidently, Tough's findings demonstrate that children who grow up in painful circumstances can achieve success with the appropriate help. By aiding to enhance non-cognitive skills, children are able to face adversity. While he does not undermine the importance of school subjects, content, and grades, he advocates for character education because he believes it is as important, if not more, in children's lives. During a question and answer interview, now posted on his website, he shared his concern for his own child's education and well-being:

I’m less concerned about my son’s reading and counting ability. Don’t get me wrong, I still want him to know that stuff. But I think he’ll get there in time. What I’m more concerned about is his character — or whatever the right synonym is for character when you’re talking about a three-year-old. I want him to be able to get over disappointments, to calm himself down, to keep working at a puzzle even when it’s frustrating, to be good at sharing, to feel loved and confident and full of a sense of belonging. Most important, I want him to be able to deal with failure.
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The goal here is not to teach students to be successful (although that is ultimately what parents and educators want for them), rather to teach them how to respond when unsuccessful. These are skills that parents and educators alike can help develop in children.

In "The Truth About Stories", Thomas King (2003) claims that "Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous" (p. 9). However, one could alter that statement slightly by adding that "they can be dangerously good". They allow imagination to come to life. Whether stories are of good or bad nature, they help make writing become more personal and meaningful. The late Dr. Maya Angelou, an American author, poet and activist, is best known for recalling and sharing her experiences of resilience. She has made important contributions to literature and civil rights albeit having a difficult childhood. In Amy M. Azzam's (2013) article "Handle with Care: A Conversation with Maya Angelou", Angelou touches upon the notion of resiliency, which is the ability to recover from adversity. This concept closely aligns with that of self-efficacy, which is why I have included it in my literature review.

When asked if children can learn resilience on their own, Angelou responds with the following:

I'm not sure if resilience is ever achieved alone. Experience allows us to learn from example. But if we have someone who loves us—I don't mean who indulges us, but who loves us enough to be on our side—then it's easier to grow resilience, to grow belief in self, to grow self-esteem. And it's self-esteem that allows a person to stand up.

Here, Angelou expresses the importance of love and self-esteem which contribute to a child's development of self-efficacy. Moreover, she explains that children can learn resilience not only at home or in school, but in church too.

Sometimes the church is a place where young people learn resilience. They do so from the sermons, from members' treatment of the young people, and from
lyrics in the gospel songs and the spiritual songs. They get to hear some of the African American poetry of the 19th and 20th centuries. They learn there's great beauty in those lyrics—and great resilience. They begin to hear this music and see how the quality of this art that people like them created affected—and still affects—the world. And that gives them some resilience.

Character development is not a stand alone initiative; it has linkages with learning and academic achievement, respect for diversity, citizenship development, and parent and community partnerships (Finding Common Ground, 2008, pg.4). A strong advocate of literature and the arts, Angelou places importance in listening to lyrics of songs which inspire and motivate children to persist and to move forward. When inquired about how schools can best support children and foster resilience, Angelou answered with the following statement:

I would ask the teacher to be sure that this is the program—this is the job—that he or she is called to do. Don't just teach because that's all you can do. Teach because it's your calling. And once you realize that, you have a responsibility to the young people. And it's not a responsibility to teach them by rote and by threat and even by promise. Your responsibility is to care about what you're saying to them, to care about what they're getting from what you're saying. If you care about the child and care about the information, you'll handle both with care, and maybe with prayer. Handle them both with prayer.

Angelou advocates for holistic education and adds that prayer helps achieve positive results. A quality education is about more than academic achievement - it is about the development of the whole person (FCG, 2008, p. 4). Additionally, Angelou stresses the impact of love and care of educators on students' character development. If one applies the definition of love from 1 Corinthians 13:4, then one is ultimately fostering character development, for "love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth" (ESV). Since love encompasses attributes like respect, compassion and kindness, and "Ontario’s Character Development Initiative emphasizes the importance of equitable and inclusive schools in which all students are
welcomed and respected” (FCG, 2008, p.4), then love is absolutely necessary in the classrooms. More than that, it should be the cornerstone of every classroom in order to promote "community development" and "respect for the dignity of all persons", which "are essential characteristics of an inclusive society” (FCG, 2008, p.6). Thus, character development helps cultivate both collective and individual self-esteem of students.

2.7 Pedagogical Practices

Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy (2002), examine what teachers can do to foster self-efficacy and self-esteem for junior level students and then turn to instructional approaches that build self-regulated learning. Children need to be able to initiate their own activities when possible, with the flexibility to change tasks as necessary to avoid failure (Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). Miller and Moran (2012) argue that in order to have a balanced approach to self-esteem enhancement, "it is necessary to complement such self-worth activities with techniques designed to develop a sense of competence or efficacy" (p.15).

2.7.1 Implementing Strategies

In their classrooms, teachers can incorporate modeling experiences, such as the following:

- allow peer models to demonstrate a task, verbalizing their thoughts and reasoning as they perform
- encourage peer tutoring when appropriate
- incorporate cooperative learning activities with partners or small groups
- provide attributional feedback that focuses on effort
- use constructive feedback to enhance future performance

(Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002)
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These modeling exercises help foster self-esteem as they help set guidelines and expectations for students on what achievement should look like.

Implementing superficial activities occasionally will not benefit the students.

Miller and Moran (2012) state that teachers must implement self-esteem enhancement strategies in their day-to-day teaching in the core subjects. They offer the implementation of everyday techniques, which if well-managed, could enhance self-esteem and self-efficacy (p.29).

Table 2.2 Miller and Moran (2012) Everyday Activities to Enhance Self-Esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don't</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Use differentiation in the classroom to ensure realistic challenges</td>
<td>• Give children easier work to avoid failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn more about the abilities and learning preferences of the children in the class</td>
<td>• Make assumptions based only on previous attainment levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get to know the barriers to learning which individuals may face</td>
<td>• Assume that low achievers lack ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve your skills at differentiating by outcome, task, support and response</td>
<td>• Rely exclusively on whole-class teaching approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop higher order questions to deepen engagement and encourage new learning</td>
<td>• Limit your questioning to checking on recall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Investigate resources (both low- and high-tech) to see how they can help individuals – but evaluate them carefully</td>
<td>• Accept the latest ideas in an uncritical way – or dismiss all new resources as worthless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, Miller and Moran offer four strategies which promote beliefs of children and teachers and which enhance children's sense of self-competence. By (a) challenging children's views of intelligence; (b) employing contingent praise to build self-competence; (c) understanding children's motivational mindsets; and (d) sharing expectations and other messages for pupils, they believe that children's self-competence would improve. When children begin to form positive views of themselves, their abilities, and their learning process, they feel a higher sense of worth, which boosts their self-esteem. Miller and Moran provide specific examples of these strategies in the following table format (p.29):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use formative assessment techniques to help build self-competence</td>
<td>Focus on the summative aspects of assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure children are always clear about the set learning outcomes and</td>
<td>Assume that children know what is expected, and what constitutes success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>success criteria</td>
<td>Allow self-assessment to become ‘a dialogue with the self’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make time to discuss self- and peer assessments with pupils</td>
<td>Compare children’s performance with other children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on ipsative techniques</td>
<td>Ignore or downplay errors and misunderstandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use errors to help learning</td>
<td>Just assume that children will appreciate what they have achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point out progress made</td>
<td>Assume that the children will automatically link skill in one domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help children understand transfer (of skills or knowledge) – how new</td>
<td>with other similar skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning can help in other areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximise the potential of peer learning</td>
<td>See peer learning as a threat to teacher control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate different types of peer learning</td>
<td>Limit peer learning to (unstructured) group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide structure in the form of clear goals and role responsibilities,</td>
<td>Assume that children will know how to work effectively together in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and training in group-work skills</td>
<td>peer learning tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use opportunities for (fixed role) peer tutoring</td>
<td>Worry that in tutoring tasks the more able child gains little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For less able children in particular, give them the chance to tutor</td>
<td>Assume that less able children cannot be tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>younger peers</td>
<td>Dismiss this process as being unrealistic or difficult to organise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate possibilities for reciprocal peer tutoring within the class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.3 Miller and Moran (2012) Specific Strategies Implemented in the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don't</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Vary groupings where possible</td>
<td>• Just stick with the same set grouping for all areas of the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allow children to see that movement is possible between groups in your classroom</td>
<td>• Simply use the groupings from the previous teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Look for examples of negative beliefs about learning and try to counter these</td>
<td>• Let unhelpful beliefs about ability go unchallenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage positive mindsets: intelligence is not fixed and children can become better if they work harder and smarter</td>
<td>• Underestimate the difference you can make by helping children to develop an internal locus of control and task orientations to learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use techniques such as empathetic prefaces to support honest feedback</td>
<td>• Avoid telling children they have made a mistake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Think carefully about the way you use praise</td>
<td>• Be fooled into thinking all praise is good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure that children know what they are being praised for; that is, use contingent praise</td>
<td>• Use over-generalised praise to enhance beliefs about competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be aware that children react differently to praise</td>
<td>• Assume public praise is necessarily best, and that more is always better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure that praise is sincere and proportionate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pearson (2008) encourages teachers to become voices of hope so that students can find their voices. By honing self-efficacy skills in students, they "discovered while finding their voices that they had untapped potential, unseen promises, untaught principles,
unbelievable possibilities, and underdeveloped power." (Pearson, 2008, p. 96). It is critical for educators, especially at the elementary level, to provide pedagogical practices that support academic achievement among students. Supporting academic achievement has a direct effect on developing self-esteem, since students' beliefs about their self-competence naturally affects their beliefs about their self-worth. Teachers should nurture their students' dreams and embrace talents in order to give them a sense and a voice of hope (Pearson, 2008). This would ultimately prepare them to adequately navigate in their society.

2.8 Conclusion

To conclude, teachers must cultivate self-esteem in their students by protecting their self-worth and promoting their self-competence. Moreover, fostering character development helps improve students' sense of self-worth. This will allow them to cope with difficulties not only in school, but in their personal lives also. By fostering this life skill in students, teaching and learning becomes more meaningful for the students and teachers alike. Teach a student subject content and it may last with him for a limited period of time. Teach a student appropriate life and social skills to build his character and that lasts a lifetime.
Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Procedure

This qualitative study explores the perceptions and practices of grade one to six teachers who develop students' self-esteem in Canadian classrooms. I conducted face-to-face and Skype interviews with two primary and junior teachers to determine their current knowledge on self-esteem and self-efficacy. In addition, I explored the various strategies these teachers put into practice to improve their students' self-esteem and self-efficacy in the classrooms. I also inquired if administrative staff had implemented any programs or workshops related to the developing of self-esteem and/or self-efficacy in their schools.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The completion of a literature review was one way for me to collect data, however, the primary means of data collection was through the interviews I conducted with teachers. My aim was to gather information on my participants’ current knowledge, beliefs and strategies for fostering self-esteem in their students. If they had not heard of particular pedagogies and techniques, I asked if they were willing to implement strategies in their teaching to cultivate these skills in their students. I was curious to find out whether principals had already incorporated or would have liked to integrate these strategies in school assemblies or programs. The interview questions that were used for the data collection can be found in Appendix B.
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3.3 Participants

For a diverse data, I interviewed two teachers at the primary and junior (grade 1-6) levels from both the public and Catholic district school boards in Canada. For the purposes of confidentiality, I have given pseudonyms to my participants. Britney is a grade two teacher from Montreal. She has been teaching for five years. John is from Toronto and he is a grade six teacher. He has been teaching for ten years in the Catholic school board. Both of them have previous experience working in kindergarten. I selected two different boards because the Catholic board may promote Catholic values as a means to strengthen students’ self-esteem. Additional interview questions were asked to Catholic educators. My goal was to find teachers who implemented or attempted to integrate strategies to develop self-esteem in their students. This allowed me to see the benefits from their already existing pedagogical perspectives. Interviewing educators with a range of teaching experience was also advantageous as I was able to determine the current knowledge of my participants and the importance they placed in cultivating self-esteem in their students. Moreover, interviewing about the administrative staff for this research topic offered me insight into the school as a whole.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The answers I acquired through the interview process were the sole means of my data collection. I read over the transcribed interview data numerous times, focusing on key words, phrases and ideas that the participant had expressed. I jotted down a list of words that could potentially be coded. Then I simplified the list into smaller categories, and grouped them under more general headings, thus having sub-categories for each
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code. I used a computer assisted qualitative data analysis (QDA) software to analyze and organize the interview response and to code several themes that emerged from my data. I coded sentences and paragraphs within the text in three to four cycles. Each code represents and captures the datum's primary content and essence. I used descriptive, in vivo, and values coding to categorize, capture and label the perspectives of my participant. After reading through the transcription numerous times, I recoded and re-categorized my data, colour coordinating it to simplify and specify it even more.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

I followed the ethical review process outlined by the Master of Teaching Program at the University of Toronto. A consent form (see Appendix A) was given to each participant to read and sign prior to the interview process. The participants kept one copy of the consent form and another copy remains in the records for my research study. They were also well informed of the purpose of this qualitative study. Moreover, their comfort and willingness to participate in this research was taken into consideration. They were assured that pseudonyms would be used for individuals and institutions to maintain anonymity.

3.6 Limitations

One limitation I came across was that my participants had difficulty answering some questions because they implicitly and inherently fostered self-esteem in their students. Another limitation was the sample size of my participants. I would have liked to interview a few more teachers and also principals to obtain additional data. Also, the
time constraint for each interview acted as a limitation as I wanted to attain more information.
Chapter 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I analyzed two interviews that were conducted with educators of junior and intermediate grades from Toronto, Ontario and Montreal, Quebec. The purpose of this analysis is to explore and investigate the various pedagogical approaches these teachers developed in order to foster self-esteem in their students. This chapter is divided into five themes, the first of which informs the findings in the subsequent sections. Moreover, these themes are condensed into sub-themes in order to provide a more in-depth analysis of my participants' perceptions in regards to my research question and literature review. Though these themes are separated into different categories, it is important to note that they are neither fully-inclusive nor mutually exclusive of each other. My findings aim to contribute to the ongoing discourse pertaining to the fostering of self-esteem in students. The following themes and sub-themes are:

- Theme 1: Conceptualizing teachers' perceptions
  - Definitions of self-esteem
  - Interrelated Concepts

- Theme 2: Importance of self-esteem
  - The importance teacher education places on these concepts
  - The importance educators place on these concepts

- Theme 3: Implementing strategies to build self-esteem
  - Instructional
  - Environmental
  - Assessment
    - Importance of the learning skills
4.2 Conceptualizing Teachers' Perceptions

In this section, I explore my participants' definitions of self-esteem to be able to contextualize the rest of their answers that they provide during the interview. Their awareness and interpretation of this concept allows me to better understand my research question. Moreover, it helps me make connections with the literature I reviewed.

4.2.1 Definitions of Self-Esteem

My participants were asked to provide definitions relating to their perceptions of self-esteem. This was to inform me of their interpretations and to contextualize their answers throughout the interview process. Both participants had similar explanations for this term. Also, each teacher was aware of the formal definition which I discussed in my literature review. However, neither of them were familiar with the two-dimensional model of self-esteem, as presented by Mruk (1999) and Miller & Moran (2012). When attempting to interpret the notion of self-esteem, Britney expressed that "it is the overall perception of yourself, whether it's positive or negative" and John stated that "it's really the way you think of yourself." Moreover, Britney defined self-efficacy as "how you apply yourself in certain difficulties or situations." John described it as "the ability or
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skill to overcome obstacles." Both teachers' descriptions of these concepts align with the definitions from my literature review.

4.2.2 Interrelated Concepts

In my literature review, I argue that although self-esteem and self-efficacy are independent terms, they are still interrelated. Whereas self-esteem is one's perception of self, self-efficacy is one's judgment on how well one will cope in face of hurdles.

Interestingly, both Britney and John stated that they believe that self-esteem and self-efficacy are closely related. For example, Britney explained:

I think self-esteem goes hand in hand with self-efficacy. The more confident you are with yourself, the better you will perform. However it's more about how you feel you can do things, your beliefs about your abilities and your accomplishments.

Britney claims that self-esteem and self-efficacy is a belief system. If one believes and feels that one is competent in a task, then one will rise up to the occasion and perform well. Similarly, John mirrored Britney's sentiment in stating the following:

In my opinion, it's almost the same thing. I really believe that it goes hand in hand because if you don't believe in yourself and you don't believe that you're good in anything, you're not going to perform well. I think the kids who have a low self-body image have the ability to do well but their low self-esteem prevents them because they don't believe in themselves. It's not that they can't, it's just they don't feel good about themselves. Their constant negative thoughts and energy present negative results. But it has nothing to do with their potential.

John expresses the idea of connection between the two concepts. He thinks that one's low self-esteem prevents one from achieving success. One's level of self-esteem and self-efficacy predicts one's quality of functioning. If anxiety, negativity, bodily tension, and confusion dominate thinking, as demonstrated through previous research, one becomes vulnerable to performing poorly whether it be in an academic or social setting (O'Donnell, 2008, p. 297). High self-esteem and self-efficacy keep these debilitating
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thoughts and feelings quiet so that one can focus on the task at hand. Moreover, they influence the choices one makes, the effort one puts forth, and the duration of persistence it takes when confronted with an obstacle.

4.3 Importance of Self-Esteem

My findings demonstrate that teacher education programs place less importance on the concepts of teaching strategies to promote self-esteem, compared to the emphasis from practicing teachers. There are slight discrepancies between what is taught in teacher education and what is conveyed in the classrooms.

4.3.1 The Importance Teacher Education Places on Self-Esteem

In our interview, when I asked Britney if she had learned about self-esteem in her teaching institution, she responded with the following: "Yes, I learned about these concepts in some of my classes but it wasn't the main focus. There weren't specific classes on improving student self-esteem or self-efficacy. It was never explicitly taught." The fact that these concepts are briefly and implicitly touched upon in teacher education shows that they do not hold high priority. John, on the other hand, recounted his experience in teachers' college a little differently: "We would learn about positive reinforcement and the idea of self-esteem and self-efficacy would kind of fall under that category. My classes focused more on inclusion and what we [teachers] would do to make our students feel more welcome and accepted." Britney believes that although the notion of self-esteem and self-efficacy is not a separate category, it is woven through other content objectives, such as motivation and classroom management. For example, she recalls:
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I think the notion of self-esteem always was present [in teacher's college] like making all students feel accepted and valued, but on a more subconscious level. We were indirectly taught how to raise students' self esteem. We're encouraged to promote students self-confidence, you don't want to embarrass a kid. Stuff like that was said in all our classes but never had a course to emphasize how to do so.

John echoed a similar instance that of which he stated:

We had to obtain a required textbook for the Child Development course in which there was only one chapter dedicated to self-esteem and self-efficacy. The rest of the chapters heavily focused on different concepts like motivation, success, inclusion, etc. But then, within these chapters, concepts like self-esteem briefly popped up from time to time.

The experiences of my two participants show that the delivery of instruction about self-esteem in teaching institutions is not specifically emphasized but is addressed to a degree. I must note that there may be many different factors for not covering these concepts. Perhaps it is the lack of instructional time, or the lack of academic research in this subject area. Whatever the reasons may be, educators should not undermine the significance of fostering self-esteem in students.

4.3.2 The Importance Educators Place on Self-Esteem

My participants certainly feel it is important to foster self-esteem in their students. Britney believes that building these skills in students is beneficial in her classroom. She stresses the importance of these skills because she believes that it results in high academic achievement:

If I want to see results from my students, I need them to be confident in their abilities. If they're not confident, then they're not gonna get what I want done and because of that I'm not doing my job as a teacher. If I don't see results, I feel like I'm not fostering self-esteem in my students.

Teachers express frustration when they do not see positive results from their students. When this happens, Britney is quick to assume she is the one responsible. She feels that
she is doing something wrong and therefore the student is not producing quality work and
not reaching his/her potential. Her self-blame leads her to believe that she is not
promoting self-esteem in her students.

John, on the other hand, believes that the importance of these skills goes beyond
academics. He boldly exclaims that "as teachers we have to foster these social/life skills,
giving them tools and understanding of why and how so that they know how to
implement it at one point in time, in any given situation." The fact that he considers these
concepts as social and life skills demonstrates the importance they have in student growth
and success. Although both participants did not use any variants of the term succeed, they
imply that the ultimate goal they have for each student is for him to succeed. Anecdotal
evidence suggests that the notion of success is different for each student. For one, it is to
arrive school early. For another, it is to survive throughout the day. Perhaps for someone
else, it is to achieve a grade level two. Whatever the goal may be, teachers must first be
aware of it and then help the student to achieve it. Parents and teachers alike want their
children and students to perform well not only academically, but socially also. According
to research and my data collection, it seems the best way for a teacher to help a student
achieve their targets is by fostering self-esteem.

4.4 Implementing Strategies to Build Self-Esteem

Throughout my data, I have found great evidence of instructional and
environmental strategies and assessment used in the classrooms. This section will provide
insight into the types of strategies both of my participants instill in their practice while
promoting student success. They stress the importance of some common examples of
approaches, such as modeling, differentiating instruction, building a safe community,
motivating, and using appropriate forms of assessment. It is important to note that these
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strategies are neither fully-inclusive nor mutually exclusive of each other. My participants incorporate elements of the four strategies Miller and Moran (2012) into their practices.

4.4.1 Instructional Strategies

Britney utilizes some strategies that she had learned in teacher's college. In terms of classroom management, she believes that reinforcing good behavior helps with improving student self-esteem. She explains the following:

Like, if a kid is misbehaving, instead of calling out on the negatives all the time, I focus on the good behavior of other students. This way you're not putting down a child's self-esteem but at the same time you're letting them know that you're not promoting this kind of [negative] behaviour. At the same time you're modeling the desired good behaviour you expect from your students and encouraging them to do better.

Britney refrains from calling on negative behaviour because she claims that it would hurt the child's self-esteem. Moreover, her claim is based on what she has read and learned from her professional learning community, which is "that a lot of students who are misbehaving is often because of their low self-esteem or self-efficacy. So when they act out it's really a cry for help." By promoting the good behavior she sees in the class, not only is she building self-esteem, but she is also preventing the level of self-esteem in a student to decrease.

John declares that it is his "responsibility to motivate, encourage, model, foster, these skills and provide the tools so that they [the students] accomplish the task successfully and perform well." This technique touches upon Miller and Moran's (2012) strategy to understand children's motivational mindsets. Based on the strategy John provides during his interview, it seems that he, too, likes to emphasize the positive
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behavior he observes in class. He recommends the following approach for all grade levels, obviously modifying the rewards appropriate to age level:

I have a stick system. I have a chart with pockets and each student's name on the pocket. And this is displayed on the board. I put a stick in a student's pocket every time I notice the kid displaying good behaviour. If they reach 10 sticks they get a prize, a non-material one. Like I've done, lunch with teacher, extra computer time at the end of the day, sit beside a friend in class, wear a costume to school and they love that. I take away sticks if I notice bad behaviour. The whole point of this system is to always try to emphasize the positives. In the beginning they make sure you're looking at them when they do something positive but later on it becomes a natural habit for them.

John later explains that this strategy works extremely well with the younger grades and gets a little more difficult with the older grades. However, he argues that "the teacher must know his class, find out what interests them and base the rewards on that. You'd be surprised the lengths the older kids go through to get a reward." Anecdotal evidence suggests that children nowadays are growing up too quickly. They do not want to be treated like children. They want to have autonomy in the classroom. Perhaps it be best to provide choice to the students by asking them what kind of rewards they would like to have when they model good behaviour.

4.4.2 Environmental Strategies

One theme that kept reappearing during my analysis was the role of the teacher to create a safe and inclusive environment. Both participants were in unison that they, as educators, play a vital part in their students' character development. Britney feels that the more she encourages mistakes to occur, the safer students would feel. For example, she voices that she "would model this by accepting mistakes, using mistakes as learning opportunities, where students understand that learning is about trial and error, and that it's not personal." This notion of challenging children's views of success and intelligence is a
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strategy Miller and Moran (2012) advocate for. She goes on to explain that the perfect way to demonstrate this is by modeling her own mistakes:

I often would let the kids know that even teachers make mistakes. They always look up to me and want to make me happy so they're scared to make mistakes, but if they see that I made a mistake, it sends them the message that it's okay. If I'm not sure about something, I let the kids know and tell them that I'll do research and provide the answer.

Britney stresses that ultimately this is what makes a student feel valued and accepted. Whether the student has high or low self-esteem, she wants him to be part of a safe learning environment. Those with lower self-esteem, she states that she consciously provides extra comfort to give them the encouragement they need.

John utters similar remarks as he talks about inclusivity:

In our daily interactions with students, kids need to feel safe in their environment. When they come to school they should know that they're in a safe place. There should be a positive aura in the classroom. The teacher should be very motivated and passionate about his/her position and the kind of power they have over the students.

Based on his experience in the classroom, he accentuates the notion of safety and respect. He believes that when students feel respect -and not fear- it helps with their self-esteem. He further explains that when there is a reciprocity of respect, students feel empowered as well. Some examples of tools John utilizes to promote a safe learning environment are co-constructing classroom rules and success criteria. He claims that "when you co-construct expectations, model positive behavior and model good social skills, children will absorb that and in turn reciprocate it." This allows there to be explicit communication between teacher and students. It also promotes better understanding of relevant and meaningful expectations for students. When students see the teacher trusts them to have the opportunity to help shape the structure of the class, this grows their self-esteem. Interestingly, throughout both interviews, the participants used the terms self-
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esteem and self-efficacy interchangeably as they believe that one cannot exist without the other.

In order to build self-esteem, Britney recalled another approach she uses in her classroom. She provides opportunities for students to reflect on their behavior, stressing the importance of empathy. Instead of pointing out to a student what he did wrong, she would ask how his behavior would affect his peers or the environment. Character development strives for "an ever-growing depth of self-awareness, reflection and understanding. It is not about indoctrination. It is about the development of critical and analytical thinking. It is not about punishment. It is about developing self-discipline" (FCG, 2008, p. 5). Students are more likely to respond appropriately to this kind of approach because they are not being condemned or demoralized. They are given another chance to improve their behavior. This helps shape the belief that they deserve multiple chances to become more responsible, which ultimately impacts their self-esteem.

4.4.3 Assessment

The use of assessment is vital in order to evaluate student progress and to ensure success. My findings show that appropriate assessment helps build student self-esteem. John strongly advocates for explicitly delivering learning goals and co-constructing success criteria in order for students to achieve each of their goals. John clarifies that these forms of assessment "allow them to have a checklist so that they know exactly what they've accomplished and where they've failed in accomplishing and have better steps for next time, which also increases self-esteem." He also recommends displaying finished products on the walls for students to be proud of their work and to help with their self-
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esteem. Moreover, he adds that when "they know what's expected of them, it ultimately builds their self-efficacy skills." Both John and Britney made a similar comparison between child and adult. John claimed that if adults need to be aware of expectations in order to fulfill a task in any given environment, then how much more structure do children need in order to satisfy the success criteria. Britney echoed a similar remark when she stated: "Appropriate praise is very important. Even for us, we want that pat on the shoulder sometimes because we can be so unsure and we want to hear good things and when we do hear it we kinda feel like, okay, I can do this!" Employing contingent praise to build self-competence is one of the strategies I found during my literature review (Miller & Moran, 2012). Britney recalled a time when one of her grade four students, who had a learning disability, was struggling with the French language. After giving constant encouragement, motivation, and praise when she observed his efforts, his attitude toward the French language changed. Moreover, his perception of his self and his abilities transformed too. Britney strongly believes that had she not done that, he would have never realized his potential.

4.4.3.1 Importance of Learning Skills

John brought up an interesting observation during the interview when he mentioned the need for teachers to implement learning skills in the curriculum. He considers the learning skills just as important, if not more important, as the other subjects taught in school. He holds students accountable for each learning skill and work habit: responsibility, organization, collaboration, initiative, independent work, and self-regulation. John states that strong learning skills and work habits are often an indicator of future success in school, at home, and in life in general. He stresses the importance of
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certain character traits like empathy to be woven into the promotion of these skills.

Having taught at the kindergarten level as well, he remembered examples such as this:

   With emotional self-regulation they need to have empathy...they have to think: "Is my voice too loud, am I being kind, am I sharing, am I being a good friend, a good listener?" If I'm angry how should I react, for physical self-regulation? Should I punch a wall, should I break something? I need to know that I'm angry and I need to use my words, maybe walk away from the situation and go to a quiet area, go somewhere to decompose and calm down, have a drink of water. I have to think about what happened and then go back in to interact with my peers. This is more common for the kindergarten students, but it should be for older kids too. They need to know when to walk away from certain situations and how to react, resolve conflict.

John encourages this approach from the youngest to oldest grades, believing that the ability to resolve conflict helps foster self-efficacy skills. He trusts that it is easier to help students cope with conflict at a younger age. Moreover, once children have gained the necessary skills, they would become more adapt to the adversaries they may face as they get older.

4.5 Pedagogical Approaches

In this section, my findings illustrate a correlation between a teacher's philosophy of education and his promotion of self-esteem. Moreover, the data I collected conveys a close parallel between character development and the fostering of self-esteem, which is considered a social or life skill.

4.5.1 Philosophy of Education

During the interview, I asked Britney if her school administration places an importance on implementing these concepts within the classrooms. Britney's response was that of conflicting dualism:
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Yes and no. I think it's a character choice. I think of myself and my kids. How would I want my own children to feel in the classroom? It's more of a personal choice. I had one principal and she was fantastic. She cared about how students feel. She was very into the promotion of a safe, inclusive, valued classroom. I also had another principal, she wasn't bad or anything but never did anything to promote positive self-esteem or self-efficacy. It all depends on your character and your teaching philosophy I think.

A teacher's own philosophy of teaching impacts the lives of students. It had never occurred to me that a school's overarching teaching philosophy or mission statement greatly affected the educators' teaching practice in individual classrooms. John admitted that it is difficult, even impossible, to remove one's philosophy while teaching. It is inherently embedded in the teacher's instruction and practice.

4.5.2 Character Development

By fostering positive self-esteem in students, teachers are ultimately helping them develop their character. Britney utters the sentiment that when students perform well, they feel good about themselves. It could also work in the reverse; if students feel good about themselves, they will do better in all aspects of their lives. For example, Britney states:

I think better performance, better social skills... when you're confident with yourself you're more open with others, not just with people but with events and obstacles. All these skills allow be you to persevere, to be motivated to do things. And this leads to a growth mindset, rather than a fixed mindset. And that, ultimately, leads to character development.

John associated low self-competence with poor academic achievement as he recalled some of his experiences with certain students in the class. He clarified that "they do poorly, because they don't put as much effort in their work because they don't believe that they could. They don't apply themselves the way that they should. They have no motivation because they don't believe they have potential." If students are not made
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aware of their potential, then they are unable to reach it. John, who teaches in a Catholic school board, believes that cultivating Catholic values or virtues fosters resilient skills in his students. The Catholic Character and Culture initiative brings an explicit focus on character development to our call to form our students in their faith and educate them to become citizens of the world who can transform it into a more just and loving society (FCG, 2008, p.15). John also points out that public school boards have citizenship values, such as leadership and advocacy skills, which is a similar approach to the notion of Catholic virtues. John suggests that "as Catholic teachers we should bring in virtues to classroom learning and always engrain them across the curriculum and in everything we do. We need to model, show by examples, and reinforce it by praising students who model these values." He adds the following quote from Mahatma Gandhi which leads him to believe that this inherently helps students develop character: "Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny." By changing students' perceptions of themselves and of their abilities, they are able to transform their thoughts, habits, and character.

4.6 Barriers for Fostering Self-Esteem in Students

In this section, I investigate and report on the obstacles my participants face when trying to cultivate self-esteem in their students. While both teachers expressed similar concerns, one of them mentioned an additional barrier. The lack of consistency was a common denominator, however, Britney communicated her frustration for the lack of support she receives from her school.
4.6.1 Inconsistency

Britney and John both echoed similar thoughts in that they are helpless whenever a student brings problems to the classroom from his home. Britney admitted to generalizing based on her own experiences when she stated:

I find that kids are growing up so much faster and they have less time to be creative. They have less time for free play. I find now that both parents are working. Both parents are stressed because of so many expectations and have less time with their kids. Everything is rush-rush and go-go-go. Kids don't have time to build self-esteem and self-efficacy skills at home.

As a teacher, Britney further explained that she is with her students for most of the day and that her role has changed to provide students with the skills they are unable to build at home. She lists how demanding her profession can become by expressing:

I'm a mother, nurse, a doctor and not just a teacher. I feel like kids don't have the time to find what they're good at so we teachers must make sure to see what students are good at. We have to draw on their strengths. Until you figure out each student's strength given you have 30 students in the class, it will take time. I think students benefit from us constantly talking about and modeling these skills because of the consistency it provides in class.

John, having taught in inner-city schools, also claimed that the lack of consistency is a downfall for fostering self-esteem in students. For example he stated that "if it's not consistent at home or in other classes, then there's only so much you can do. I could make a kid feel confident in my classroom, but if other teachers don't do it, it's not consistent and there's no balance." John shared another example of an instant when a student found herself in a negative situation at home. Almost in tears, John recalled how difficult it was to convince that student how valuable she was and what great potential she had. He felt that all his work was in vain because he would make progress with the student at school and the following day he would feel like he had failed. John, having reconciled with this
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experience, justified his reasoning by stating: "Sometimes, unfortunately, you just can't get through a student because you don't know what's happening at home. Sometimes, no matter how positive the teacher or school environment, these children are still unable to grasp anything positive." John's justification evidenced that teachers must look further, beyond the walls of the school, and see what is happening at home.

Another inconsistency Britney pointed out was the change of a student's perception of his self as he got older. She also noted that character was always changing based on students' surroundings. She was able to compare a previous kindergarten class she had taught to the current grade two class she was instructing. She stated:

The downfalls to try to foster self-esteem is how you approach certain conflicts. The young ones forgive easily, but the older they get the more tainted and broken they become. They lose connection with empathy, they stop feeling sorry or having positive regard for other people. Part of it is because they're trying to figure out who they are. They want to be with the cool group. They want to fit in with the 'in crowd'. Another reason is that something can be going on at home. Kids aren't intentionally malicious. I think the situations around them dictate their behavior. We need to be approachable to the behavioral students...we have to build their trust.

As Britney highlights, teachers play an integral role in helping students develop positive self-esteem when they are faced with so much instability in other areas of their lives.

4.6.2 Lack of Support for Differentiation

There is a growing number of students who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in the classroom across Canada. In addition, class sizes are expanding, overwhelming teachers, especially if they do not receive extra assistance. Britney uttered aggravation as she exclaimed: "Here in our classrooms teachers don't get any help. We don't have education assistants or even resources. Life as a teacher can become very
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draining." With the many different needs and personalities in her class, she finds it difficult to consistently differentiate her instruction. However, she is determined to help each student succeed as she states, "I feel like I already do that but I could do more."

John points out the difficulty he has with the students who have exceptionalities in his classroom. With an integrated homeschool program and extra support from a homeschool teacher, he still feels uneasy about his own practice. He explains: "Most kids with exceptionalities aren't aware of what their potential is. It takes a longer period of time to help them discover their strengths and guide them to success." John feels that students with exceptionalities suffer the most because they are always reminded - implicitly and explicitly - of their shortcomings. This speaks even more to the need for teachers to focus on developing self-esteem in students, so they know their self-worth.

4.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the data I gathered from my interviews, my findings illustrate five reoccurring themes: Conceptualizing teachers' perceptions, importance of self-esteem and self-efficacy, implementing strategies to build self-esteem and self-efficacy, pedagogical approaches, and finally, barriers of implementing self-esteem and self-efficacy skills. Both of my participants expressed similar perspectives on the concepts of self-esteem and how it is interrelated with self-competence or self-efficacy. They each shared their own reasons on the importance of fostering these skills in their students. They also articulated different pedagogical techniques and provided strategies that they have implemented in the classroom which promotes these social and life skills. These strategies closely aligned with the research I found during my literature review.
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Finally, they both expressed concerns and downfalls, such as inconsistency and lack of support for differentiation, of attempting to cultivate self-esteem in their students.
Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

I conducted this study in order to explore the ways in which junior and intermediate teachers in Ontario and Quebec implement strategies to foster self-esteem in their students. My aim was to use the findings to first, inform my own teaching practice and, second, provide insight and assistance to other educators as well. I began this research seeking to address the question, “What are teachers' experiences in effectively fostering students' self-esteem in their classrooms?” I learned that each teacher utilized techniques according to their own philosophy of teaching, experiences, and relationship with the students.

After analyzing the data I collected, five themes were revealed, which closely tied to the themes that emerged during my literature review. Throughout this chapter, I reveal the connections and oppositions to the literature I reviewed. My findings pointed to the importance of fostering self-esteem in students from a young age, implementing these skills through the use of instructional, environmental, and assessment strategies, encouraging character development from a pedagogical standpoint, and overcoming barriers to cultivating these social and life skills.

5.2 Interpretation and Evaluation of Findings

5.2.1 Conceptualizing Self-Esteem

When my participants were asked to define self-esteem, they both provided similar answers that which revolved around the beliefs one has about oneself. Interestingly, their answers correspond with other theorists' ideas found in my literature review. The influence of one's own beliefs dictates one's feelings and attitudes (Gaskill
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& Woolfolk Hoy, 2002), are strong predictors of behavior (Bandura, 1977) and are able to be promoted to enhance a sense of self-competence by integrating everyday strategies in the classroom (Miller & Moran, 2012). In addition, although they had not heard of the two-dimensional model of self-esteem (Mruk, 1999), they both stated that self-esteem is interrelated with self-efficacy. Moreover, they used the term self-efficacy interchangeably with self-competence and resilience.

5.2.2 Change in Self-Esteem in Adolescents

In my findings, I found that my participants observed a change in the level of self-esteem from primary to junior and intermediate grades. Both of them have experience working with the primary grades in recent years, which gives them credibility for their views. I found that their viewpoints corresponded with the Gaskill and Woolfolk Hoy's (2002) research from my literature review. Relevant findings show that students' self-esteem plummets once they become young adolescents. An overbearing factor for such phenomenon is that of a student's search for personal autonomy. The older they become, the more they try to fit in and that is because they are seeking acceptance. Another reason, which my participants do not provide, but rather theorists do is that adolescents try to protect their fragile self-esteem and self-efficacy by avoiding to work hard or appearing diligent (Gaskill & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002).

5.2.3 Promoting Success

My findings show that my participants made it a priority to build a safe, inclusive learning environment, so that all students feel valued and accepted. By doing so, they are helping prevent the deterioration of their students' self-esteem. Both my participants and
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Ferkany (2008) suggest that low self-esteem becomes an impediment to achievement, whether it be for academic or social purposes. If this is the case, then the promotion of self-efficacy skills becomes crucial in a student's life. Like Pearson (2008) suggests, my participants' aim is to unwrap students' untapped potential so that they are able to explore the many possibilities of success. Each student's notion of success is different and teachers must realize that in order to provide assistance. Gaskill and Woolfolk Hoy's (2002) research and my findings point to the importance of incorporating modeling strategies in the classroom. Modeling positive behavior and success encourages students to reach their potential and build on their character. The techniques my participants shared aligns with Miller and Moran's (2012) four strategies which enhance students' self-esteem. They believe that building intrinsic motivation in students helps cultivate high self-efficacy, which becomes a lifetime gain for them.

5.2.4 Overcoming Barriers

According to my findings that there a number of barriers which teachers come across when attempting to foster social and life skills in their students. However, what I have learned from my participants, Britney and John, is that it is possible to still make a difference in a student's life, no matter the extenuating circumstances. Factors such as inconsistency at home or in school and lack of support may be difficult problems now, but one does not know the power of a caring, supportive teacher's impact until later in the future.
5.3 Implications and Recommendations

This research study offers practical implications with regards to fostering positive self-esteem in students. It also informs useful pedagogical approaches which can impact the everyday teaching practice of educators, including myself. Now that I have completed the study, I plan to implement the strategies that I have unveiled through my findings into my instructional practice. One word that stands out from my interviews is *unconditional love*, which I have come across during my literature review. If that is the cornerstone of the classroom it can help create a safe and positive community. Not only would students learn to be cooperative, respectful, understanding and inclusive in the classroom, but perhaps it will become a habitual act in their daily interactions with other members of their family and toward society. The reciprocity of love and respect must therefore be a taught life skill, not limited to the confines of a classroom.

5.3.1 Role of the Teacher

For students to become resilient, teachers must make continuous, consistent efforts in the classroom. Moreover, these efforts must become habitual so that they permeate in students' character and development. Modeling behavior, co-constructing success criteria, constructive feedback, motivation, encouragement, and a safe learning environment are just few things teachers can implement to ensure student growth and success (Miller & Moran, 2012). However, most importantly, on a day-to-day basis, teachers must model unconditional love that which encompasses respect, kindness, attentive listening, and patience. Students should feel loved as they step into not the classroom, but into any space (Tough, 2012). Moreover, they must learn to love themselves by accepting both their strengths and weaknesses and thus using opportunities
to always improve. Life is a learning process. There is no perfection. It is acceptable to fail in order to succeed.

5.3.2 Role of the Educational Community

Character development must be a whole-school effort. All members of the school community share the responsibility to model, teach and expect demonstrations of the universal attributes in all school, classroom, and extra-curricular activities (Finding Common Ground, 2008, p.5). Educational communities should promote the cultivation of self-esteem and self-efficacy skills. School administration should encourage teachers to attend workshops and seminars related to character education, resiliency and anything of that nature for professional development purposes. Tough (2012), Miller & Moran (2012), and Maya Angelou all believe in the power and role of the community to foster children's self-esteem. Educators, parents, leaders, mentors, and counselors alike need to promote positive character development through modeling. There needs to be an increase of school-wide assemblies on self-esteem empowerment and self-efficacy skill development. Additionally, schools should be able to provide students the tools and resources that they need to improve their self-efficacy. Finally, I highly recommend that the above implications be put in action from the primary levels (kindergarten to fourth grade). These are a child's most impactful years in terms of growth and skill development.

5.4 Limitations

There are several limitations for this research study. Based on the research I conducted through my literature review and interviews, I realized that the foundation for
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student conceptions of failure and success is mostly developed in primary grades. However, little research directly explores this phenomenon, which is a limitation in itself. Another limitation is the small sample size I used to conduct my interviews. It is plausible that the results cannot accurately represent all teachers in Ontario and Quebec. Additionally, it is possible that my participants were not able to disclose all of their knowledge due to the time constraint during the interview. Furthermore, factors such as the demographics of their schools and the number of years of experience as teachers, may be contributing factors to the limitations of this study.

5.5 Further Study

To further investigate the successful implementation of strategies to cultivate self-esteem in students, a larger sample size needs to be explored. Knowledge and expertise of administrative staff must also be taken into consideration to investigate the pedagogies of the school as a whole. Interviews need to be conducted over a longer duration of time, examining pre- and post- implementation of strategies. Additionally, it would be interesting to collect data from students, in regards to their own perceptions of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Further research studies could lead to the following questions:

1. Why do some students develop self-efficacy skills, while others do not?
2. Are there gender differences towards developing high self-esteem?
3. How is self-esteem affected in children with disabilities and exceptionalities (i.e. ADHD, ASD)?
4. Can students' self-esteem benefit from single-sex schools, rather than co-ed schools?
5. What impact does high self-esteem have on students' mental health?
6. What impact does spirituality have on a child's self-esteem?
7. How do educators' own self-esteem impact their students’?
5.6 Conclusion

I believe that social and life skills are essential to develop in school. I have found that they are usually undermined and buried due to the rigorous attempt to deliver the curriculum. Although subject-specific instruction is important, fostering the skills of self-efficacy in students is just as important. These skills are what shape student identity and impact their future. Facing stress and obstacles in life are inevitable, therefore, one must develop healthy ways of dealing with challenging problems. By building positive character traits in children, such as perseverance and optimism, they learn to develop self-esteem and resiliency. The implementation of appropriate, relevant pedagogical strategies through continuous efforts will ultimately set children up for success.
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REFERENCES


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Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: ___________________

Dear: ___________________

My name is Mariam Arakelian, a Master of Teaching candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). This is a letter inviting you to participate as an interview participant for the research I will be conducting regarding the fostering of self-esteem and self-efficacy skills in students. In this research, I will be exploring the ways in which teachers and principals develop and promote self-esteem or self-efficacy in their classrooms and in the school.

Your involvement in this study would consist of a 40 minute audio-recorded interview, taken at a time most convenient to you. Prior to the interview, the list of general interview questions will be provided to you. The recordings of the interview will be transcribed, and the data will be analyzed and incorporated into the research paper. Your specific responses will be kept confidential, and your identity will be kept anonymous as pseudonyms will be used in any written report or presentation which arises from this work. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this data as it will be stored in a secure location and all data will be erased five years following the conclusion of this study.

I would like to assure you that your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question in the interview, stop the interview at any time, or withdraw from the study at any moment, for any reason.

The information gained from this study and from your interview will help provide some insight regarding the value placed on self-efficacy in schools and classrooms. A summary of my research results, including the full report, will be sent to you via email should you like a copy.

If you agree to be interviewed, please sign this form and return a copy to me at the time of the interview, keeping a copy of this letter for your own records. Thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher name: Mariam Arakelian
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Email: mariam.arakelian@mail.utoronto.ca

Instructor’s Name: _______________________________
Phone number: ____________________ Email: ________________

Research Supervisor’s Name: _________________________
Phone #: ____________________ Email: ____________________

Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Mariam Arakelian and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: ______________________________________

Name (printed): _________________________________

Date: _______________________________
Appendix B: Interview Questions

Teacher Interview Questions

General
1. How many years have you been teaching in Canada?
2. Have you taught in a different board? If so, which one?
3. What grades have you taught?
4. What subjects have you taught?
5. What grade are you currently teaching?
6. What subjects are you teaching?
7. Which institute did you receive your teacher's education?

Self-esteem and Self-efficacy
1. Can you define self-esteem?
2. Can you define self-efficacy?
3. Did you learn about self-esteem and/or self-efficacy in your teaching institution?
   a) If yes
      i. What did you learn about these concepts?
      ii. Were you taught particular teaching strategies? If so, what were they and do you use any of them? If yes, how often?
   b) If no
      iii. Why do you think these topics were not covered in your pre-service training?
      iv. Where did you learn what you know about self-esteem and self-efficacy if not from your teaching institution?
4. Do you believe that fostering self-efficacy skills in students is beneficial in your classroom? Why or why not?
5. What do you believe is your role in character development?
6. Have you had students who you suspected of having low self esteem and/or poor self-efficacy skills? If yes, did you do anything to help?
7. In your opinion, how well do your students with low self-efficacy do academically?
8. How well do your students with low self-esteem do academically?
9. Do you think there is a correlation between self-esteem and level of academic achievement?
10. Do you cultivate self-efficacy/self-esteem in your students?
    a) If yes
       i. What methods have you tried to cultivate it?
       ii. Do you think it works well?
       iii. Have you talked about these concepts with your students, directly or indirectly?
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iv. Do you think the students are benefiting from this? If yes, how?

b) If no
i. Why not?
ii. Would you be willing to try it in your classroom?
iii. Would you be interested in gaining more knowledge about these concepts

11. Have you gone to workshops or presentations on self-esteem and/or self-efficacy? If yes, what did you learn? If no, would you be willing to attend?

12. Would you implement self-efficacy skills in the Ontario curriculum? Why or why not?

13. What are some limitations for cultivating these concepts in students?

14. What are some benefits?

15. Does your administration place an importance on implementing these concepts within classrooms?

16. Would you modify your current teaching strategy to teach these concepts/skills? If so, how?

Additional Questions for Teachers in Catholic district boards

1. Which promoted Catholic values help improve students' self-esteem/self-efficacy?
2. Which Catholic values do you promote in your classroom/school?
3. Do you have monthly assemblies which promote Catholic values? Details.
4. Do you see a difference in students' behavior/attitude after promoting these values?

Administration Interview Questions for Further Research

General
1. How many years did you teach prior to becoming a principal?
2. How many years have you been a principal?
3. What grades and subjects have you taught?

Self-esteem and Self-efficacy
1. What do you believe is your role in character development?
2. What are some ways you and teachers have empowered students?
3. Can you define self-esteem?
4. Can you define self-efficacy?
5. Did you learn about these concepts in your teacher education institution?
   a) If yes
      i. What do you remember learning about it?
      ii. Did they discuss particular teaching strategies? If yes, what were they? Did you use any of them? If yes, how often?
   b) If no
      i. Why do you think these topics were not covered in your preservice training?
      ii. Where did you learn what you know about self-esteem and self-efficacy if not from your teaching institution?
6. Do you promote the cultivation of self-efficacy skills in your school?
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a) If yes
   i. How do teachers implement it?
   ii. Does it work well?
   iii. Are the students familiar with these concepts?
   iv. Are the students benefiting from these strategies?

b) If no
   i. Why not?
   ii. Are you willing to learn more about these concepts?
   iii. Are you willing to learn different strategies to implement in classrooms? If no, why not?

7. Do you encourage teachers to attend workshops or presentations on self-esteem and/or self-efficacy? If yes, did any of them attend?

8. Have you run assemblies on self-esteem empowerment and/or self-efficacy improvement?

9. Do you place an importance on these concepts in your school?

10. Have you read current literature on these concepts?

11. What do you believe students can gain by getting the tools to improve their self-efficacy?