Four Case Studies Investigating Differences in Teachers’ Patterns of Attributions Made to Pupils with Low versus Average Academic Self-concepts.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present enquiry is to investigate whether or not there are any differences in the way teachers explain the classroom conduct and learning of children who differ in academic self-concept.

As this is a study based on classroom setting, observation and tape-recording constitute parts of the methodological procedures, as well as the administration of self-concept inventories: Harter's Perceived Competence Scale (1982) and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (1965).

The hypothesis underlying this enquiry was:
Teachers would differ in patterns of causal attributions of conduct and learning that they make to pupils identified as having low and average academic self-concepts:

The results are presented and discussed within the theoretical framework of attribution theory and focus on the role of the teacher. Some methodological issues are also discussed and suggestions refer to theoretical and practical aspects, as well as to future research work.
I - The Self-Concept

There have been many different definitions of self-concept since the first attempts to conceptualize it as a theoretical construct for scientific investigation. Indeed, these definitions have varied from one pole to another, sometimes linking different authors' opinions, sometimes presenting separate definitions, clearly representing direct or indirect movements within Psychology towards the construction of a theory of the self-concept. Fruitful or not, convergent or divergent, all studies about self-concept, as well as the attempts to provide a consensual definition of what self-concept consists of have certainly brought one general acknowledgement: that the self-concept is relevant and has an important role to play in both psychological and educational fields.

Among the authors concerned with the definition of the self-concept, Burns (1979, 1982) offers an extensive review of the literature about self-concept in an attempt to organize it as a whole theory. He therefore presents the historical-theoretical and measurement aspects of the self-concept, as well as its developmental and behavioral aspects. In his own definition, the self-concept is composed of two basic components. The first component is descriptive. Also named "belief knowledge" or "cognitive component", it

"...represents a proposition about, or a description of, the individual irrespective of whether the knowledge is true or false, based on either objective evidence or subjective opinion." (p.4)
Related to the perceptual field, it sums all perspectives from which one perceives themselves. Terms such as self-picture or self-image are included in this component.

The second component is affective and evaluative, and involves terms like self-esteem, self-acceptance and self-worth. It refers to the intensity of the feelings a person has about their many facets, and to the positiveness or negativeness of the opinions one has about these facets. Another important aspect of this component is that it is learned, and as well, it can be altered according to the occurrence of new learning experiences. So the self-concept is, in Burn's opinion, "...a dynamic complex of attitudes held towards themselves by each person..." (p.7).

Burn's (op cit) "cognitive component" embodies Combs, Soper and Courson's (1963) definitions of self-concept (defined by them as relating to the beliefs one holds about oneself) and self-report (defined as related to the descriptions one makes about oneself). However, Combs et al (op cit) pointed out the importance of distinguishing between these two constructs and not using them interchangeably. Their distinction brought relevant methodological issues related to the measurement of the self-concept, which will be discussed later.

Purkey (1978) shows a systemic definition of the self-concept when he states

"One's self-concept is a complex, continuously active system of subjective beliefs about one's personal existence. It serves to guide behaviour and it enables
the individual to assume a particular role or stance in life." (p.30)

Here, the Burn's (1982) cognitive and learning components can already be identified, although the affective/evaluative component is not so clear.

Canfield (1976) refers to the self-concept as a "blob", which has a skin that filters the new perceptions about ourselves and decides whether or not they will be incorporated into the perceptual scheme we already have. Thus, he referred to the name "blob" to exemplify a dynamic system in the sense of its possibilities to change, but also having characteristics of self-protection. Therefore, within the "blob" stay all the concepts, images, beliefs one has about oneself. The value a belief has for oneself will depend on the placement of this belief within his scheme: if central, the value attributed will probably be greater and more difficult to be altered. If peripheral, the value attributed will be less and the belief easier to suffer alterations. In Canfield's opinion, too, the self-concept is learned and it occurs according to the experiences we pass through in our lives.

In a similar view, Staines previously emphasized this developmental aspect of the self-concept when he said that the self-concept:

"...is primarily...built from many perceptual experiences. ...Gradually, the raw perceptual materials of the self are transformed by the manufacturing processes of the mind, so that the self also becomes conceptual." (1958, p. 98)

Thus, facing so many different definitions of a same construct, and despite
them sometimes showing common points, it became obvious that a consensual definition would be extremely useful. First, because it would facilitate the development of the self-concept as a scientific construct. Second, because it could make possible some generalization among the results of the studies done so far in this field, which in turn would help develop a self-concept theory.

Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton (1976), considering these needs and assuming the self-concept as "...critical variable in education..." (p. 408) despite it being "...used as an outcome in itself or as a moderator variable..." (p. 408) reported seventeen different definitions of self-concept from their extensive review. Based on this review, they proposed a clear definition, constructed upon the combination of many common points of all different definitions they gathered. They defined the self-concept in a general sense as

"...a person's perception of himself. These perceptions are formed through his experience with his environment... and are influenced especially by environmental reinforcements and significant others." (p. 411)

They pointed out the importance of the self-concept as a construct to explain and predict behaviour.

In a more specific sense, these authors described the self-concept as divided into two main dimensions; academic and non-academic. These dimensions are in turn divided into specific sub-areas such as subject matter and physical and social self-concepts, respectively. The division is then continued
towards specific areas within the sub-areas. Overall, the scheme presented by these authors shows a general self-concept at the top, that goes into a division process with very specific sub-areas at the bottom. This structure reflects seven fundamental aspects of the self-concept: organisational, multifacetal, hierarchical, stability, developmental, evaluative, differential.

The work of Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton is especially important for two reasons. Firstly, it confirms the necessity pointed out earlier by Wylie (1974) of improving the studies about self-concept by considering its smallest constructs (In: Chapman & Boersma, 1980). Secondly, it clearly highlights the importance of the academic dimension of the self-concept and places it in a constructive and organised scheme. As the academic self-concept constitutes the construct of interest in this report, I will now talk about it.

II - The Academic Self-Concept

As a dimension of the general self-concept, the academic self-concept will be considered here on the basis of Shavelson's et al (1976) definition of self-concept: one's perception of oneself; in the academic case, one's perception of one's own ability to achieve tasks. The academic self-concept will also be formed by exchanging with environment, and will be influenced by environmental factors and significant other's feedback. It is also assumed here that, in relation to the academic aspect, teachers are the most significant others.
The discussion about the academic self-concept will also be extensive. For example, Bloom's focus (in: Norwich, 1985) is on "...the conditions influencing learning outcomes and therefore on individual differences in learning..." (p. 45). These conditions can be considered as the way in which progress is verified, as well as feedback and past performance experienced. So, the more successful academic experiences the learner has, the more likely s/he will be to approach future tasks with more confidence. Similarly, unsuccessful academic experiences will probably result in the perception of a low academic ability, and approaches in future tasks will occur with more reluctance.

In a broader but similar view, Bandura (1977) points out the importance of expectations of personal efficacy (which is originated from past performance experiences, others' experiences taken as example, others' feedback and physiological conditions) in determining resultant behaviour. He says:

"...people process, weigh and integrate diverse sources of information concerning their capability, and they regulate their choice behaviour and effort expenditure accordingly." (p. 212)

So the academic self-perceptions of ability, in Bandura's view, will depend on the level of self-efficacy one has in relation to a given behaviour. Therefore, self-efficacy will be prior to and distinct from what he called "behaviour efficacy", which is related to one's assumption that a behaviour will cause an expected result (Saltzer, 1982).
So far, one very important point can be extracted from the above mentioned authors, which is of interest for this report: the fact that attributions made by significant others to pupil's learning outcomes constitute part of learning experiences and therefore influence academic self-concept, which in turn influence academic behaviour. It is a dynamic process that occurs in school setting, where, as I said before, teachers' attributions play a fundamental role in pupils' learning process because the learning process is linked to academic self-concept. This idea could be schematized in the following figure:

![Fig. 1 - Interrelation between teachers' attribution and academics' self-concept and behaviour](image)

This scheme has much to do with Weiner's (1979) attribution theory. In his opinion,

"...attribut ional inferences often are quite retrospective, summarize a number of experiences, takes place below a level of immediate awareness, and are intimately tied with self-esteem and self-concept." (p. 4)
He believes that academic behaviour is influenced by the perceived factors pupils see as causing their outcomes. He establishes three basic dimensions of causality pupils usually apply to explain their obtained results.

The first dimension, called "locus of causality", refers to whether the result is attributed to an external or internal cause, that is, to environmental factors or to pupils' inner aspects. In his view, the psychological implications of this dimension would be related to the self-esteem, which he sees as "an emotional consequence of achievement". (p. 8)

"Stability" is the name of the second dimension and refers to whether the result is linked to a stable or unstable cause, that is, if it can be changed or not. This dimension, he contends, has psychological implications to changes in expectations after one succeeds or fails.

The third dimension is named "controllability". It refers to the attribution of outcomes to controllable or uncontrollable causes, that is, whether it depends on one's action to modify the results or if any actions provided do not change any results. This dimension is psychologically related to "...helping, evaluation and liking." (p. 8)

Besides these dimensions, Weiner (1979) also calls for the usefulness of Abramson's "Globality" dimension of causality, which "capture the concept of stimulus generalization" (p. 7) in his view; and, in my view, it complements his own dimensions.

Thus, it is a basic assumption of this study that the way in which causal attributions are made to pupils' academic performance affects their actual
academic self-concept, which in turn reflects on their academic behaviour. As the causal attributions are comprised in the above mentioned categories (internal/external, stable/unstable, etc.) these latter will constitute a strong instrument for data analysis in this study.

In sum, academic self-concept might be low, average or higher, depending on academic past experiences and expectations of personal efficacy, to use Bloom’s and Bandura’s terminologies. Further, as shown in fig. 1, teachers’ attributions to pupils are part of pupils’ learning experiences. Thus, and since teachers are significant others in academic context, their attributions will probably affect pupils’ academic performance. Indeed, many studies point out the importance of teachers in enhancing self-concept, and this will be the next issue.

III - The Teachers’ Influence on Academic Self-Concept

The majority of the studies reported so far here, provided indirect implications for teachers’ influence on academic self-concept, and this was because the social aspect of the self-concept and significant others’ feedback were mentioned.

Staines’ (1958) research can be considered a classical study directly related to this aspect. Interested in investigating factors other than knowledge and skill acquisitions produced in classroom-setting, he found that teachers who most involved status situation and made relevant comments had greater probability to modify children’s self-picture.
As a second part of this study, he found that the teachers' frequencial difference in comments yielded different self-pictures, which confirmed his hypothesis that there are educational results other than the production of knowledge and skills, and that the self-picture is probably one of these other results.

The conclusions of his study draw attention to the need for teachers to develop awareness of these other aspects to which teaching-learning process is linked and to consider them as factors to be controlled (since they are learned) in teaching situations.

Purkey (1978) believes that good teaching is related to an invitational process in which students are considered in relation to their abilities and values in a humanistic and constructive approach that fundamentally deals with the self-concept. He then proposes a series of skills to which the "invitational teacher" must be trained in order to provide a constructive, positive teaching and consequently, by enhancing students' self-concept, make teaching successful.

In a similar line, Canfield and Wells (1976) described more than a hundred techniques aiming at enhancing pupils' self-concept. They pointed out that the children's reaction to learning and schooling processes is very much determined by the self-concept they already have by the time they go to school. And as this self-concept is not yet entirely formed, it can (and must) be enhanced by teachers in order to provide better learning results and reactions at school. Thus, they also acknowledged the relevance of teachers' influence on pupils' self-concept.
Dweck et al. (1978), investigating sex differences in learned helplessness, asserted that

"...the meaning of the evaluative feedback is likely to be influenced by the attribution the teacher makes when delivering feedback." (p. 270)

Although they were rather interested in the relationship between teachers' attributions and sex differences, the statement above is of interest for this report, since it also asserts the importance of attributions made by teachers toward pupils' outcomes.

Their findings are also of extreme interest here. First, they found that teachers did not differ in the amount of correctness feedback given for boys or girls after schoolwork neither did the amount differ in their approaches of intellectual quality of work. However, they also found that teachers did differ in their causal attribution given to boys and girls, related to the latters' outcomes. For boys, most of the positive feedback attributed outcomes to intellectual ability, whereas for girls this proportion was smaller.

Referring to the negative feedback, this relation was inverted and the proportions were greater. Boys received less than one third of attributions in intellectual ability, while girls received more than two thirds of attributions to intellectual ability. They concluded by saying:

"...both contingencies of evaluative feedback and the explicit attributions made by teachers are one
that were hypothesized to promote attributions
characteristic of helplessness in girls, but not in
boys." (p. 272)

Thus, Dweck's et al (1978) study is crucial in demonstrating how important
teachers' attributions are toward pupils' outcomes. One could even say how
effective they might be in producing or modifying pupils' academic self-
perceptions.

So far, the self-concept as a construct and the academic dimension of the
self-concept were mentioned, as well as teachers' participation on the
development and modification of the academic self-concept. However, a
fundamental aspect of self-concept research was not mentioned yet: its
methodological issues. Since the complexities of defining such a construct
as self-concept were pointed out, it is not very difficult to realize the
methodological implications for research in this field. This will consist
in the focus of the next point.

IV - Methodological Issues

As said before, Combs, Soper & Courson (1963) have discussed an interesting
problem related to research on self-concept. They categorically asserted a
difference between self-concept and self-report. They pointed out that while
the self-concept is related to the beliefs one has about oneself, the self-
report is what one says about oneself. And although what one says is
influenced by what one believes one is, "The self-report will rarely ... be
identical with the self-concept." (Combs et al, op cit, p. 494) The
consequent problem that emerged from this assertion is obvious: if the self-report did not necessarily represent the self-concept, the former cannot be used to measure the latter.

The authors, then, attempting to solve this problem, and, since the self-concept is "...not open to direct observation" (Combs et al, op cit, p. 494), proposed and defended its investigation by considering the self-report as one class of behaviour to be observed by a trained observer who would then "infer the nature of the individual's ways of perceiving himself and his world" (Combs et al, op cit, p. 495). They provided a study in which the relationship between the inferred self-concept and children's self-report were investigated. As they found no significant relationship, they concluded that this finding supported their proposition about the difference between self-concept and self-report and their recommendation for not using both constructs interchangeably.

However, although they presented strong argument for a greater reliability of inferred self-concept rather than the self-reported self-concept, the problem of assessing directly the self-concept still remained unsolved.

Crowne & Stephens (1961), in a broad study about self-acceptance and self-evaluative behaviour, distinguished four main problems in measuring these constructs, that were later extended by some authors to the self-concept (for example, Dobson et al, 1979; Harter, 1981; Hensley & Roberts, 1976). The first problem they named "equivalence of operations" and is related to

"...the question of the basis on which the findings of individual studies employing different measuring
operations are generalized and incorporated in the larger body of self-acceptance research." (p. 106).

They argue that by simply considering all the tests equally valid without making sure, through scientific procedures, of their validity, the test in itself is confused and becomes the own construct.

The second problem, also referred before, is the "definition of the construct", in which they mention two needs: the need to specify parameters in order to define variables and consequently make the generalization of results possible and of its relationship with other constructs. The other need mentioned refers to a representative sampling, which involves "the systematic sampling of some specified universe of self-evaluative behaviours." (Crowne & Stephens, op cit, P. 111) It is then relevant drawing "...one's sample of test items in such a way as to represent their occurrence in the population." (op cit, p. 111)

A third problem is related to the "social desirability", that is, how one can be sure that the subjects are really attributing their answers to themselves or answering in this or that way because it is more socially accepted or desired. According to Crowne & Stephens, self-acceptance tests do not show if the subjects want or not to express their own feelings, but only if they do it or not.

Finally, a fourth problem concerns the "generality of self-acceptance", where they point out the necessity of studies approaching this question, because if
"...the self-concept and self-acceptance can be considered to be relatively stable characteristics of a person, one should find that situational variables have only a negligible effect on self-acceptance, that measures of self-acceptance taken in different social contexts are highly correlated, and that measures taken over temporary intervals are likewise highly stable." (op cit, p. 117)

Although these authors have made important considerations to methodological issues concerning researches in self-constructs, they did not present an alternative way of how their points could be put into practice. They argued for a behaviouristic approach of self-construct and presented convincing points for it, but they did not detail exactly how a behaviouristic approach would deal with these problems in practice.

Harter (1981), considering many of the methodological issues presented so far, and interested in the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic orientations and perceived competence, developed a self-report scale in which the following questions were considered: 1) trying to delineate probable components of effectance motivation; 2) addressing the extrinsic aspect of motivation and relating it with the intrinsic; 3) analysing components in a developmental framework, attempting to individual differences in a developmental level; and 4) carefully attempting to the ecological validity of her construct. In her findings, she points to the successful efforts in the construction of the scale as a "...reliable and valid measure sensitive to individual differences in both intrinsic and extrinsic orientation" (p. 309). But she also reinforces the need to be precise in defining terms such as intrinsic motivation.
Again Harter (1982), now more specifically interested in constructing the "perceived competence scale for children", starts from the point the children feel competent in different ways, according to different skill areas. Then she set some goals for devising the scale, such as: 1) it should produce a profile of how children perceive their competence in the cognitive, social and physical dimensions as well as provide the children's general self-worth; 2) it should yield an indicative factor of the psychological importance of the dimensions; and 3) it should minimize the social desirability factors of answers. Her findings indicated that

"...the new question-format not only provides a four-point ordinal index of a child's feelings of competence and self-worth but also functions effectively to reduce the child's tendency to give socially desirable responses." (p. 95)

Harter's work was then important in that it took into account some of the methodological issues pointed out by Crowne & Stephens (1961). Her work also has to do with Shavelson's et al (1976) idea about the importance of dealing with these constructs by "breaking" them into dimensions and sub-areas, which in turn represents a good alternative to Wylie's (1974) criticism about construct-definition, although still Combs' et al (1963) distinction between self-concept and self-report remains unsolved.

A further issue related to methodological instruments refers to the Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (1965), an instrument that was used in this report. The questions refer to the investigation of the unidimensionality of the scale. Kaplan & Pokorny (1969, In: Hensley and Roberts, 1976), for example, found a two-factor solution using old men as sample. Hensley and
Roberts (1976), using a sample of adolescents also found a two-factor solution, the first related to the positive self-appraisal and the second to the negative ones. However, they concluded for the unidimensionality of the scale, since "...the factors identify an underlying response set and the scale probably measures a single variable." (p. 584)

Three years later, Dobson, Goudy and Keith (1979) returned to the problem in their investigation. Their findings coincided with Kaplan and Pokorny's (op cit) in two instances, but also coincided with Hensley and Roberts' (op cit) in the other two. They interpreted the results by saying that the age may be an influencing factor in the structure of the scale. In their conclusions, they said:

"Support for the unidimensionality of the scale is not as strong with the adult samples as with the younger sample, but the association of the factors in the oblique rotation argues against the independence of the two factors."

(p. 641)

Thus, whether or not the instruments used here are the best cannot be answered with certainty. However, all the instruments utilised were carefully considered together in their common points and analysed separately in their particularities, in attempting to provide as best a data analysis as possible.
V - Purpose of the Study

The starting assumption of this study is that the way in which teachers explain classroom conduct and learning of children who differ in academic self-concept will probably be different from the way they do concerning children with average academic self-concept.

It was hypothesized:

That teachers' patterns of causal attributions of conduct and learning differ for children identified as low versus average in academic self-concept.

This hypothesis will be analysed within the attributional approach framework (Weiner, 1979), since it relates specifically to the different kinds of causal attributions made by teachers of children's conduct and learning. Thus, from the general comments to be recorded in the lessons, the ones characterized as attributions will be selected and categorized within that framework. For example, one teacher might predominantly make more external, unstable, specific, academic and positive attributions, whereas another might make it in a more internal, stable, general, behavioral and negative view of the pupils' conduct and learning, and so forth. In the first situation exemplified, a typical attribution would be: "Yes, you're right. I must explain this exercise better to you." In the second, a proper attribution would be: "Stand outside the door. You are chatting again while I'm talking and I've told you about that too many times."
METHOD

I - The Schools:

The study took place in two secondary comprehensive schools belonging to the London Educational Authorities of Haringey and Barnet, catering for approximately 1000 students each. Although the schools differ in some of their general aims, they both have the following similarities (extracted from the background booklets of the schools):

1) Concern with making children as independent as possible, as well as self-disciplined, responsible and active participants in society;
2) Promotion of awareness of and respect towards other individuals, within school and the whole community;
3) Enabling pupils to fully develop and reach all their potential, related to several different aspects: physical, creative, intellectual, etc. through both curricular and extra curricular activities;
4) Attribute value to parental involvement and motivate any parental contribution to the schools in relation to the schools' organization, events and teaching;
5) Development and improvement of a multi-cultural policy, considering their wide range of different cultural and social backgrounds;
6) Concern with offering special educational provision at either special units level or supportive teaching.
II - Subjects:

A) The Teachers

Four English teachers, 3 men and a woman, two from one school, two from the other, agreed to collaborate in the present study. However, considering the above mentioned purpose, it was said to the teachers that the main focus of observation would be on the pupils to be selected and all important others in the school related to them, especially peer mates and teachers. This was done in order to avoid any affect on teachers’ attitudes towards the pupils, which could have happened if they had felt they were the main focus of observations.

B) The Pupils

Forty first-year children aged 11-12 were selected for observation through teachers' report and the administration of self-concept inventories. Each group of ten children belonged to the classroom of one of the four teachers.

From each group of ten children, 5 belonged to the group scoring low in academic self-concept in English, and the other 5 scored average. The average ones were selected as control-groups for further result comparisons.

III - Instruments:

In the identification and selection of the children, the following instruments were used:
A) Description Sheets

In which the 'low and the average academic self-concept pupils for the purposes of this study were defined. They consisted in the description, at the top of each page, of the characteristics of the low (page 1) and average (page 2) academic self-concept children. Below the descriptions, three columns were provided for the teachers to answer. In the first column they should write the names of the pupils they thought would fit in the description. In the second, they should indicate which of the given characteristics they thought would be most applied to that child. The third column was provided for any other characteristic the teachers could wish to add in order to complement the previous ones (see appendices 2).

B) Inventories

Three inventories were used to assess the children's self-concept in attempting to match it with the teachers' information and to provide a stronger basis for selecting the pupils. The first one was the Harter's Perceived Self-Competence Scale (Harter, 1982), which provides scores on four different self-concept's dimensions: cognitive, social, physical and general. Each dimension is assessed by 7 items containing specific questions in which two different alternatives were always given. The children had to choose between one or another statement and then tick whether the chosen statement was really or sort of true of them (see appendices 3). As the scores vary from 1 to 4 in each statement, the minimum score for each sub-scale would be 7 and the maximum 28.
the second inventory used was the Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), containing ten statements. For each statement there were four judgements to be chosen, varying from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The children should tick one of the judgements they considered most appropriate to their opinion in relation to each statement (appendix 4). The statements scored from 1 to 4, the minimum of the whole scale being 10 and the maximum, 40.

As the subject-matter chosen for this study was English, a third inventory was devised as an adaptation from Harter's scale, but focusing specifically on English (see appendix 5). The basis of this scale was the same as Harter's - 7 statements scoring from 1 to 4 each - and the format was identical. But the sentences themselves were adapted from both Harter's and Rosenberg's scales. Although the methodological implications for the validity and reliability of the scale were considered, it was still considered worthwhile to adapt and create a more specific instrument, providing it would only be used to complement the official scales.

IV - Procedures:

1) The Negotiation Procedures

Two part-time students also doing the MSc. in Special Educational needs introduced me to the two schools, where they work. The first contact I had in both schools was with the Head of the English Department, to whom I explained my objectives and showed an explanatory letter in which the aims and permission to tape-record the classroom-setting was mentioned (appendix
Based on the ages I was interested in for investigation, the Headteachers sent me to the teachers (two in each school), to whom I showed the same letter, discussed with them and clarified any doubts they could have about the study. Once they agreed to collaborate, we set a timetable of the assessments I could observe, and the enquiry was initiated.

The Pilot-Study

During the first 6 weeks a pilot study was carried out in order to check the reliability of tape-recording interactions in the classroom setting and writing them down for the specific aims of the study.

Another reason for piloting first was to do with my presence in the classroom as an outside observer; to get teachers and pupils used to my presence at the English lessons.

A specific child was selected at this point, but the teachers were asked to show me any two children they considered could have any learning difficulty, and interactions between teachers and these children were observed.

The Selection of the Pupils

After the pilot-study had proven the effectiveness of doing such a kind of inquiry, the identification of the pupils was initiated. This process was basically composed of two steps. In the first step, teachers were given the no description-sheets of low and average academic self-concept students (Appendices 2) and asked to fill in the sheets by indicating as many students they could think of, to whom the described characteristics could be
applied. As said before, teachers were also asked to write, next to the name of each pupil, the characteristic(s) they thought could best describe those pupils and space was provided to add any other characteristic the teachers could consider as necessary.

The second step was the administration of the scales. It was administered to the classes in groups, by each of the four teachers. Three reasons supported the use of the scales in this study: 1) to ensure another way of identifying the specific kinds of pupils who were being sought; 2) to check the teachers' perceptions on pupils' academic self-concept as well as pupils' own perception and 3) to provide more data for any possible later correlation between the two different groups of pupils of each school.

Since I would not be present at the moment of the administration, an explanatory sheet about administering questionnaires (appendix 6) was provided to the teachers as well as a personal explanation about what the children should do. Among the instructions in the sheet, the third one was to be read by the teachers to the pupils so as to clarify what was being required. The scales were administered together, on the same day, and the approximate time spend for this was 1/2 hour. The sizes of the classes were 25, 26, 26 and 28 pupils.

Once having the children indicated by the teachers and the inventories administered, the identification of the forty children (20 low and 20 average academic self-conceptualized) was carried out. The criteria for selecting the pupils were:
1) They should have been indicated by their teachers as having low or average academic self-concept in the description sheets;

2) They should score low or average in at least two or more of the questionnaires. Preference was given to the Cognitive subscale whenever possible, and to pupils whose scores were closer to the low and average means.

In some cases (teachers A, C and D) some of the children were not indicated by the teachers but were still included in the groups to be observed. The reasons for this were, firstly, because I wanted to maintain an equal number of five pupils for each group of children (low and average) set for selection from the scales. However, a fundamental criteria underlying this procedure was that the pupils selected only from the inventories should not have any contrary indication from the teacher. For example, if by the inventories they scored low but the teacher had indicated them as average, those pupils were not selected. Therefore, all of the pupils chosen only from the inventories had no indication from the teacher of whether they would be considered low or average in academic self-concept.

Appendices 7 provide the 10 selected children of each teacher, who scored low and average in the inventories and in teachers' identification, including the exceptions selected only from the inventories.

D) Classroom Observation

Having chosen the children, four English lessons of teachers A, B and D, and five English lessons of teacher C were observed. In each lesson, the
teachers' interactions with the specific selected pupils were recorded and annotated during approximately 30 minutes.

Two tape-recorders were put in the classroom one on the teacher's desk, the other at the opposite side of the teacher's desk in the classroom. In order to better observe and write down the teachers' comments and the on-going during the lessons, I placed myself in the middle or at the end of the room, whenever possible. The notes were made by following an observation-sheet designed for the purposes of the study (see appendix 8). It consisted of 3 columns basically, the first for the general issues and explanations given by the teachers, the second column for any teachers' comments related to the subject and control groups of pupils and the third one used to note any pupils' questions to or comment on the teachers.

E) Transcription-Categorization

After recording and writing the classroom settings, each lesson was transcribed into a written form by using the written material of the observation sheet as a route to identify the important comments recorded, from which the attributional ones were selected (appendices 10). These attributions were then categorized according to two of the 8. Weiner's categories academic/conduct, positive/negative/neutral and unsure were added to these authors' criteria.

Therefore, the criteria for categorizing the teachers' comments were:

1) Whether they were directed to pupils' internal characteristics or external factors (Weiner's Locus of causality dimension) eg,
attributing causes to pupils' personal or environmental factors respectively;
Whether they implied that pupils' characteristics were stable or unstable ones (Weiner's Stability dimension of causality) eg, if they were considered invariant or variant, respectively, by the teachers;
Whether they referred to pupils' actions as general or specific (Abramson's et al Globality dimension of causality), eg, if comments originated from particular situations were used as general characteristics of the pupil or if they were used to refer to the pupil only in that particular situation;
Whether comments were related to academic or conduct areas;
Whether they were made in a positive, negative or neutral way, by using constructive, destructive criticisms, or non-judgemental comments, respectively;
Whether they were uncategorizable, belonging to no one of the above categories, or belonging to both of the two categories of a same dimension.

The Judges

the categorization of the teachers' comments on pupils' academic performance provided the basis for supporting or rejecting the main hypothesis (that is: if the patterns of causal attributions teachers make of pupils' conduct and learning differ for children teachers believe are low academic self-concept from the ones they believe are average), two judges were asked to read more than a half of the transcriptions and categorize them according to the above given categories, in order to assess reliability.
The categories were given to them on a separate sheet (appendices 9), to be used by them when categorizing the transcriptions. Thus, whenever agreement was difficult to set among the judges' categorization, the comments were not considered for analysis. So, the criteria for considering the categorizations was that there should be agreement between at least two of the three people involved in categorizing: the two judges and myself.
RESULTS

The results of each teacher will firstly be presented separately, in order to provide a better view of each case. Then, the similarities and differences among the teachers will be analysed in attempting to verify whether or not the hypothesis can be confirmed.

As confidentiality was assured to all subjects involved in this study, a code was devised for them. Thus, the four teachers will be referred to as teachers A, B, C and D. The five pupils with low academic self-concept of each teacher will be called pupils 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The five pupils with average academic self-concept of each teacher will be called pupils 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

I - Teacher A

Through his four recorded sessions, this teacher made eight attributions. However, after the judges' categorization, agreement was not possible in relation to the stability dimension of the fifth attribution selected (appendix 11). Therefore, as said previously, this attribution was not considered for analysis.

Thus, the final number of attributions selected for this teacher was 7 (an approximate mean of 2 attributions per session). The total of pupils who received these attributions was 4, all of them having average academic self-concept. No pupil with low academic self-concept received any attribution.
Table 1 shows the categorization of the attributions made by teacher A. As can be seen, in relation to the locus of causality dimension, he tended to take more internal attributions (6 out of 7, representing 85.7% of the total).

The focus of the stability dimension for this teacher was on unstable category (4 out of 7, meaning 57.1% of the total).

The globality dimension scored higher in the specific category (5 out of 7, representing 71.4% of the total of this dimension).

In the theme dimension, only academic category of attribution was made, representing, thus, 100.0%.

In the judgemental dimension, positive was the most used category of attribution (5 out of 7, meaning 71.4% of the total of this dimension).

The attributions presented in the table were numbered according to their numbers in appendix 10-A, so it can easily be found. It is important to stress that attribution number 5 was excluded, as a result of the judges' categorizations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To pupil no</th>
<th>Dimensions and Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 (Low)</td>
<td>6-10 (Aver)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Causality (Int/Ext/Unsu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6 External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9 Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9 Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8 Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6 Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8 Internal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - Categorization of attributions made by Teacher A
I - Teacher B

This teacher had also four recorded sessions, through which she made seven attributions. But again there was no agreement between the judge's categorization in one of the attributions (once more stability dimension, attribution number 7). The differences among the three categorizations can also be seen in appendix 11.

Therefore, attribution number 7 could not be considered for analysis. This reduced from 7 to 6 the final number of attributions to be analysed. It represents an approximate mean of 2 attributions per session.

The total of pupils who received the attributions was 3, all of them having low academic self-concept. Contrarily to the first teacher, no pupil with average academic self-concept received any attribution.

Table 2 shows the categorization of teacher B's attributions. Differing only in the quantity and group of pupils, the categories most used by teacher B were the same as the ones used by teacher A.

Thus, concerning the dimension locus of causality, teacher B tended to make more internal attributions (4 out of 6, representing 66.6% of the total of this dimension).

In the stability dimension, her tendency was to use the unstable category (5 out of 6, meaning a percentual of 83.3).
The dimension of globality also had the specific category as the one most used (4 out of 6, representing 66.6%).

Concerning the theme dimension, 4 out of the 6 attributions were to academic category (66.6% of the total).

The positive category was the most used in the judgemental dimension (5 out of the 6, representing 83.3%).

Again, the number of attributions correspond to their number in appendix 10-B. The seventh attribution, as said before, was excluded from the analysis.
### Table 2 - Categorization of attributions made by Teacher B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To pupil no</th>
<th>Dimensions and Categories</th>
<th>Judgemental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Causality</td>
<td>Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Int/Ext/Unsu)</td>
<td>(St/Unst/Unsu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 (Low)</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 (Aver)</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 - Categorization of attributions made by Teacher B
III - Teacher C

Through his five recorded sessions, teacher C made twenty-seven attributions. In here, too, the original number of attributions was reduced to 27 because of disagreement between judges' categorizations and mine of attributions number 19 (stability dimension) and number 21 (causality dimension). For details, see appendix 11.

The mean per session, however, had a slight change (from 5.8 to 5.4), which gives an approximate mean of 5 attributions per session. A considerably high number, despite this teacher having one session more than the others. In my view, this number was influenced by the fact that his fifth session consisted of a feedback lesson, in which he was presenting marks for some of the pupils. Coincidentally, three of them were being observed (pupils 10, 9 and 3).

Teacher C's total of pupils who received attributions was, thus, 9. Four having low and five having average academic self-concept. So, unlike the teachers presented so far, this teacher made attributions to both low and average groups of pupils, with a tendency to make more to the average ones.

Table 3 shows the categorization of the attributions made by teacher C. Like teachers A and B, teacher C also tended to make more internal attributions (18 out of 27, representing 66.7% of the total) in the locus of causality dimension.

The stability dimension had, too, higher scores in the unstable category (17 out of 27), representing 63.0% of the total for this dimension).
Also, the globality and theme dimensions were very similar to the other teachers in having higher scores for specific category (21 out of 27, meaning 77.8%) and academic category (20 out of 27, meaning 74.1% of the total), respectively.

Teacher C differed from the other two mentioned in the judgemental dimension. This tendency was to make more use of negative category (18 out of 27, meaning 36.7% of the total for this dimension).

Once more, the attributions were numbered in order to facilitate their identification in appendix 10-C. Remembering, attributions number 19 and 21 are missing in the table because they were excluded from analysis.

The discrimination of the percentuals of each category used by teacher C between pupils with low and average academic self-concept can be visualized in Figure 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To pupil no</th>
<th>Dimensions and Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Locus of Causality (Int/Ext/Unsu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 - Categorization of attributions made by Teacher C
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cause of Failure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impediment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2 - Discrimination of Percentages of Categories of Attributions

Self concept made by teacher of the people with low versus average academic performance.
As the first two ones, this teacher had four sessions recorded, through which he made seven attributions. However, as happened with the others, one attribution (the fifth) had to be excluded from the analysis because no agreement (see differences in appendix 11) in relation to the dimension of causality was possible among the judges.

Thus, the revised total number of attributions made by teacher D sums 6, which represents an approximate mean of two attributions per session, as in teachers A and B.

The total number of pupils who received attributions was 4. One with low and 3 with average academic self-concept. This teacher, therefore, also made attributions to both groups of pupils, as did teacher C.

Considering only the number of pupils, it could be said that teacher D's tendency is to make more attributions to average pupils. However, considering the number of attributions given for each of the average pupils (1), the pupil with low academic self-concept equals the average ones, since he himself has received 3 attributions.

Table 4 shows the categorization of the attributions made by teacher D. He coincided with the three others in his tendency to make more internal (4 out of 6; 66.6%), specific (4 out of 6 too; 66.6%) and academic attributions (the latter 3 out of 6, representing 50.0% of the total attributions of this dimension).
In the judgemental dimension he coincided only with teacher C, for he also ended to make negative attributions (4 out of 6; 66.6%).

In the stability dimension he had a singular result. Out of the 6 attributions, 4 were unsure, or uncategorizable (66.6%).

The attributions were again numbered according to their sequence in appendix O-D. The attribution number five was excluded.

The percentual distribution into pupils with low and average academic self-concepts of each category used by teacher D can be verified by consulting Figure 3.
## Table 4 - Categorization of attributions made by Teacher D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To pupil no</th>
<th>Dimensions and Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Causality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Low)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIG. 1. Discrimination of Perceptions of Categories of Attributions made by Teachers to Pupils with Low Versus Average Academic Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V - General Analysis

Having shown the main results of the four teachers, it is now possible to analyse some similar and different aspects of their results altogether. As a starting point, Table 5 is presented because of the possibility it offers to view the results of the four teachers at once.

As shown in Table 5, all teachers tended to make around two attributions per session, excepting teacher C, who did around five. As I said earlier, this difference might be related to his last session, which consisted of feedback of marks and in which three of the selected pupils were receiving feedback.

From the four teachers, teachers A and C directed most of the attributions to pupils with average academic self-concept. Teacher D equalled the number of attributions between one pupil with low and three pupils with average academic self-concept. And teacher B directed the attributions only to pupils with low academic self-concept.

Thus, in general the teachers of this study tended to make more attributions to average pupils. The differences shown by teacher B might be related to her ideas about enhancing self-concept by reinforcing the children positively as an important teaching aim, which is compatible with the policy of that school. However, teacher A, who comes from the same school and has the same kind of thinking, only made attributions to average pupils. Perhaps his ideas about enhancing imply not discriminating between these pupils in any way but trying to treat them in the same way as the others. If this was his approach, it could be pointed out that sometimes not discriminating might be a discrimination in itself, since there were no attributions at all to these
pupils. But these are just suppositions. It is not possible, from the data available, to know exactly what caused this difference between teachers A and B.

In relation to the most used categories of attributions, all the teachers of this study tended to make internal attributions. Depending on the judgemental category used together, it might be enhancing self-concept or not. For example, teachers A and B tended to make internal attributions accompanied by positive judgement. On the other hand, teachers C and D tended to make it together with negative judgements. These results suggest that teachers A and B might be attributing success to factors internal to the pupils (such as effort and ability), whereas teachers C and D might be doing the same for failure instead, with internal factors such as lack of ability and effort.

Related to the stability dimension, three teachers used the unstable attributional category most. This would apparently suggest more realistic views of pupils' performance, considering the fact that people develop and nature. Especially considering the children's ages investigated here (11-12), which represent very changeable phases not only in terms of physical but also moral development (Zecker, 1985). That is, these children are at the beginning of adolescence, in which it would be said a new world is open to them since new ways of seeing, approaching and questioning values and events take place. As the school is not an exception, the children's attitudes and performance in relation to schoolwork will also oscillate, reflecting all their questionings. However, it would be hasty to come to this conclusion only, since many other factors might be involved in this situation. For instance, it would be interesting to know if these attributions were relate
o pupils' success or failure situations. In the globality dimension, all
eachers tended to make more specific attributions. From this it can be said
hat particular situations constituted the major source of stimuli for
eachers to make attributions. And according to the category most used in
he theme dimension, these stimuli were more related to the academic issues
han to conduct ones.

The analyses made so far will now be considered in relation to the hypothesis
of this enquiry, in order to discuss its confirmation or rejection. After
this, the conclusions will relate to this study as a whole, as well as to
some methodological limitations found throughout this study.
**Table 5:** Distribution of categories of the dimensions between teachers A, B, C, and D.
DISCUSSION

I - The Hypothesis

The first topic to be considered in this chapter is the relationship between the results and the hypothesis set for investigation. In other words, and recalling the hypothesis designed previously, did teachers' patterns of causal attributions of conduct and learning differ for children identified as low versus average in academic self-concept?

As shown in Table 5, the majority of the teachers tended to make most of the attributions to pupils with average academic self-concept. However, this factor per se does not answer the hypothesis because the results of each teacher presented particularities that must be taken into account. Therefore, in attempting to check the hypothesis, it will be necessary to turn back to an individual analysis of the results of each teacher in separate.

Considering first the case of teacher A, it is impossible to draw aspects for any discussion related to the hypothesis, for this teacher did not make any attribution to the pupils with low academic self-concept. Since there are no data for comparison, analysis cannot be made.

The same occurred with teacher B, in the opposite way from teacher A. Teacher B did not make any attribution to pupils with average academic self-concept, which makes it impossible to compare the data for further discussion.
However, an interesting factor must be remembered here. These two teachers belong to the same school and are, both, apparently more concerned with individualized, self-enhancing teaching than the other two. This concern has to do with the policy of the school where they work, which is more related to the formation of values and personal development than the other school, where emphasis is more on preparation for work and practical life.

It is difficult to say to what extent them both belonging to the same school is related to them both not making attributions to one or another group of children. But it seems that from the school proposal for teaching aims and commitments, each of these teachers, according to their own personal interpretation, designed particular ways of achieving those aims. One, by avoiding making attributions to pupils he believes are low in academic self-concept. The other, by making distinctive but positive attributions especially to these pupils. More data would be necessary to further investigate this supposition, though.

Teacher C’s results offer some possibility for comparison between attributions made to pupils with low and average academic self-concept. Figure 2 showed earlier permits a better visualization of the specific results. There it can be seen that although most of the attributions were to pupils with average academic self-concept, some of the attributional categories were higher to pupils with low academic self-concept. This was the case of the stability dimension, for example, in which average pupils scored higher in the unstable category. The theme dimension presents a similar situation, in which average pupils received more academic attributional category, whereas the low ones received more conduct.
If an attributional profile was to be traced for this teacher in relation to his low and average pupils, it could thus be said that he tends to make more internal, stable, specific, conduct and negative attributions to pupils with low academic self-concept. To the average ones it could be said that his tendency was to make more internal, unstable, specific, academic and negative attributions. His pattern, then, would differ in some dimensions for these groups of children.

Combining Weiner’s (1979, 1980) analysis of the causal attributions according to the stability and locus of causality dimensions, as well as the other dimensions added in this study, it could be said that the causes of the attributions made to pupils with low academic self-concept is related to “ability”. (Weiner, 1979, op cit, p. 7) In this particular case, as the stimuli initiator for attributions was conduct, the cause could be extended to ability to behave consistently with the teacher's expectations. To pupils with average academic self-concept, the causes implied by the attributions would be related to “immediate effort”. (Weiner, op cit) In extending to this particular case, immediate effort in tasks, since the initiator stimuli to attributions in the academic aspect.

Teacher D’s results, although not as distinct as teacher C’s, also offer some possibility for comparison. By consulting Figure 3 presented earlier, it can be observed that the number of unsure categories in general was considerable. However, as it is related to methodological issues of categorization, which will be discussed later, attention will be concentrated now in the analysis of the actual categories utilised.
Thus, in Figure 3 it is possible to see that in the causality dimension the average pupils scored higher in the internal category. In relation to the use of stable/unstable categories of stability dimension, average pupils scored higher in the unstable, whilst low ones scored higher in the stable category. Again, in the globality dimension some differences occurred. The specific category was more used for average pupils, whereas the general was with low ones. In the theme dimension, the average pupils received predominantly academic attributional category, while the low pupils equalled in number for academic and conduct. This possibly represents equal chances of pupils with low academic self-concept to receive either academic or conduct categories of attributions. Certainty for this interpretation, however, could only be ensured in the presence of more data.

So, in tracing a profile for teacher D’s attributions in the basis on the analysis above, it could be said that his tendency in relation to pupils with low academic self-concept would be to make more external, stable, general, negative and either academic or conduct attributions. On the other hand, his tendency in relation to the pupils with average academic self-concept would be to make more internal, unstable, specific, negative and academic attributions.

Once more combining Weiner’s (1979, 1980) analysis of causal attributions according to the stability and locus of causality dimensions together with the other dimensions of this study, the causes of the attributions made to pupils low in academic self-concept would be relate to “task difficulty” or “teacher’s bias” (Weiner, 1979, p. 7). To pupils average in academic self-concept, the causes underlying the attributions would probably be related to “immediate effort” (Weiner, op cit).
Therefore, assuming the analyses and interpretations based on the results of teachers C and D, which constitute the only concrete bases for discussing the hypothesis of this study, it can be said that these two teachers had different patterns of causal attributions for children identified as low versus average in academic self-concept. And also, that the pattern of causal attributions made by both teachers to pupils with average academic self-concept was the same.

Coincidence or not, the fact is that these two teachers also work together, in the second school in which this study took place. As suggested for teachers A and B, the policy of the school allied with teachers C and D's personal opinions, might somehow be related to these results. But again, certainty cannot be ensured. Further data collection would be necessary to investigate the possible relationship between the policy of the school and teachers' patterns of attributions.

II - The Frequency of Attributions

A second topic to be considered in this chapter relates to something that was expected, although not hypothesized. That is, the frequency of attributions to be made, which was expected to be higher than it actually was. A higher frequency was expected, mainly, for two reasons. First, because the attributions would reflect that teachers think about their pupils' learning and conduct. Second, because they would express the way teachers think about pupils' learning and conduct. So it was supposed that the more attributions found, the more it would be possible to investigate the way teachers try to understand pupils' general performances.
As shown in Table 5, less than 50.0% of the general comments of three teachers (A, B and D) were attributions. Only teacher C had 55.0% of attributions from his general comments. But this teacher, as said before, had one session more than the others, in which 21 of his total of 27 attributions were made (77.8%).

Once more the few data available do not allow any conclusion, but some interesting suggestions can be drawn from this for further investigations.

Firstly, teachers may have made fewer attributions than they could have done because of the presence of an observer. For many times, for example, during the observations, teachers looked at me after having said or done something, as if they were seeking approval or understanding about their attitudes. When they themselves were not very sure of being right or wrong in what they said or did, they sometimes justified some of their attitudes to me. I interpreted this as a censor mechanism occurring on their part, due to my presence in the classroom. Based on these facts, and on my interpretation, I think it is important, in future studies, to set more time for them to get used to the presence of an outsider, and not control themselves, as they sometimes appeared to do.

The second suggestion comes from the fact that the one session more teacher C had (the fifth session), was his feedback lesson. Two things called my attention here. First, he did it in a very low voice. Second, he spoke as he had never spoken before: very much.

In relation to the first aspect, there could have been at least two reasons for him feedbacking in a low voice. One is because that was a reading
esson, planned especially for him to deliver feedback some of the pupils while the others read. The other possible reason is the presence of the tape recorder in his desk, while he was delivering feedback, which in my interpretation is an intimidating factor.

In relation to him speaking more than usual, again two possible reasons may be drawn from this. One may be because it was a feedback, which in itself may be reason for some teachers to speak more than usual. The other may be because I was sitting on the other side of the classroom, and as he was speaking in a low voice I could not hear what he was saying. In this case, he might have felt more comfortable to speak more than usual, since there was a large distance between ourselves and the tape recorder would not, supposedly, record a low voice. If this was so, the supposition made above for the other teachers is reinforced, confirming, then, the need for more time to get the teachers used to my presence there.

But the main supposition to be drawn from these aspects and their respective reasons is that maybe teachers tend to do more attributions when delivering feedback than when during common lessons. This seems to be logical since it is usually in these moments that teachers most try to make pupils think about their results and to do it, teachers themselves have to think about pupils' results too. The suggestion, then, would relate to the importance of investigating, for example in a comparative study, whether teachers really make more attributions when delivering feedback or not, and if this difference would be significant in relation to the number of attributions they make during common lessons.

In general, from all of the teachers' general comments, the majority were
prescriptions and rules they set for pupils to follow during the lessons, either related to the activities or to the pupils' behaviour. This happened even with teacher C, in his first four sessions. Again, this seems to be consistent with the supposition made that teachers tend to think more about the "whys" of pupils' when delivering feedback than during common lessons. However, the data available is not enough to confirm these suppositions, but originate important suggestions and valuable reasons to be pursued and investigated in future studies.
CONCLUSIONS

To make research in attributional and self-concept areas has some limitations. One of these relates to the aspect of subjectivity, given the relativity of constructs that were to be dealt with in this study. A clear example is the differences in the categorizations made by the judges and in the attributions that had to be excluded. Although Weiner (1979, 1980) himself points out some difficulties that might appear in working with the dimension of causality (which was one of the non-agreement point in two of the attributions excluded). I believe that the personal ways of approaching different situations that the three of us have done make the process of categorization more difficult.

Moreover, the elements on which my judgements were based were more varied than the judges' elements. For instance, they could not display of visual memory when categorizing as I did, because they were not present during the observations, neither could they make notes of it. This factor did help me to better understand the contexts of the dialogues, when categorizing them.

The frequency of using the unsure category was also something to be considered. It might well represent the limitations in categorizing certain situations in the sense that these latter, for being sometimes dynamic and complex, cannot be always included in a theoretical definition.

The observation and tape-recording of the lessons were also limiting aspects, sometimes. Firstly because the extent to which one can be sure that one's observation corresponds to the actual facts cannot be ensured. This is so given the rapidity with which things happen in classroom setting and the
amount of situations to pay attention to at the same time. Perhaps it would have been more useful to have another observer and a video-cassette instead of the tape-recorders. However, my initial preoccupation was to use as few materials as possible which could threaten or somehow modify the classroom setting.

Secondly, because these techniques are very time consuming and subject to many uncontrollable variables. Many were the times in which, for instance, some of the teachers were not present in the days set for my visit. Nevertheless, the kind of issue investigated in this study calls for this type of research structure. So, the conclusion to be drawn from this is that setting as much time as possible for data collection is a fundamental aspect.

Another problematic issue was the size of the sample. This brings the problem of generalization of results, which is something impossible to do with such a size of sample. Even considering this study being a case-study, to analyse and compare the four different results was something complex to do, considering the lack of data and the many particularities of each case.

The use of the scales, although fundamental to the process of selecting the pupils, was also something that required extreme attention and careful analysis, given the variety of unexpected answers. The result of this was exhaustive discussions in order to set the criteria for selection based on both teachers' indications and scores of the scales. I believe that it would have helped if only one person (preferably the researcher) had administered all the scales, instead of the teachers.
Further, an ethical issue to be mentioned concerns the actual focus of the research being on the teachers. As said in the method, it was explained to the teachers that the focus would be on the children and important others, including them as part of "others". This was done because of the possible changes in attitudes teachers could have if they knew they were the focus of attention. It is my impression now that if I had told them they were the main focus of the study, it would not have changed or influenced teachers' changes in their attitudes at a significant level. Even because in this case considerable time should be set during the piloting stage for them to get used to the presence of an observer.

However, as time was of the essence, the above procedure could not be adopted. Thus, it is an important suggestion for next studies to set enough time in order to allow the researcher to tell his/her objectives in detail and to allow the teachers to get used to the presence of the researcher in their classroom, or, if not, to have the right to choose for participating or not in the study.

In the whole, despite all the difficulties mentioned, this research constituted an important contribution to the educational field, considering the few number of studies in attributional approach focusing on the role of the teacher. Thus, firstly, the importance of the role of the teacher, was, once more, asserted. A clear need for teachers to know more about their relevance to pupils' development was confirmed through the observations. Many times teachers do not even perceive the strong implications of their comments on pupils' reactions.
A second contribution relates to the acknowledged importance of doing more research within attribution theory framework, but focusing on the teachers' perspectives as a complementary part in the process of development of children's academic self-concept.

A third contribution refers to the importance of considering the academic self-concept as a relevant construct to be dealt with in educational research. Despite the problems with subjectivity and definitions when working with such a kind of construct, this study asserted the worthiness of working with this construct, given the results provided here and the possible implications for teaching-learning processes.

Another contribution is related to the methodological issues mentioned above. As an initial step in studying teachers' attributions in relation to pupils' performances, this enquiry provided interesting results that will certainly be useful for future works within the same area.

Finally, this research showed the possibility and necessity of taking over such a kind of study, given its relevance to the educational field. As a major suggestion, it would be interesting to replicate this study in a larger scale, using larger samples and considering the methodological and procedural issues raised in this study as some starting points for consideration.
REFERENCES


BATTLE, James (1979) Self-Esteem of Students in Regular and Special Classes Psychological Reports, 44, 212-214.


APPENDIX 1

Introductory letter given to the teachers and Headteachers

The aim of the present enquiry is to investigate how pupils with low and average academic self-concepts interact with other pupils and with their teachers.

Academic self-concept refers to the way in which the pupil sees him/herself as a student and a learner, i.e., the image he/she has built up as a student with or without worth, as intelligent or unintelligent, able or not able in relation to the other students.

The term interaction refers to all the kinds of social/group relationships these pupils could build up and maintain in the classroom. It is also related to the pupil's reactions to their own performance in classroom tasks and exercises.

Thus, this is fundamentally a study based on classroom interactions, in which shall observe how the pupils interact with their class-mates and teachers, as well as how they deal with any task or exercise required during the lessons.

However, as observations can be very subjective, interactions need to be recorded as objectively as possible. Therefore, permission will also be asked to tape-record all phases of this study. Confidentiality will be insured.
APPENDIX 2-A

Description Sheets

NAME:

DATE:

SCHOOL:

1) Could you list the names of all the pupils to whom any of these characteristics could be considered to apply?

2) Could you also write, next to the name of each pupil you have identified, the characteristics in each category which most define that pupil? (Please, add any characteristics which you consider relevant in the space provided).
APPENDIX 2-B

Description Sheets

The pupil with a low academic self-concept shows little interest in tasks, seldom completes tasks, has little patience or perseverance when s/he meets difficulties, is careless when doing tasks, easily loses interest in a task, demands a lot of help, is pessimistic about the results of his/her efforts, is constantly afraid of doing or saying the wrong thing, might be disruptive, might be anxious, finds it difficult to concentrate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUPIL</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS (from above)</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS (if any)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
he pupil with an average academic self-concept shows more willing attitudes related to complete tasks, has a more positive reaction to difficulties, is careful when doing tasks s/he likes to do, is able to last more time interested in a task, usually tries to do the tasks before asking for help, is realistic about the results of his/her efforts, is not afraid of doing or saying something wrong, finds no difficulty in concentrating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUPIL</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS (from above)</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS (if any)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3-A

Identification and Practice sheet given with the Inventories

NAME: __________________________________________________________

SCHOOL: _________________________________________________________

AGE: ___________________ DATE OF BIRTH: _____/____/____

SEX: ___________________ TODAY’S DATE: _____/____/____

QUESTIONNAIRE 1 - PRACTICE ITEM

Really true of me
Sort of true of me
of me

Some children are very interested in playing tennis
Other children are not so interested in playing tennis
APPENDIX 3-B
Harter's Perceived Self-Competence Scale

**QUESTIONNAIRE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Really true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some children are good at school work</td>
<td>Other children are not so good at school work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some children like school</td>
<td>Other children do not like school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some children are not so clever</td>
<td>Other children are clever</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some children can work out answers</td>
<td>Other children cannot work out all the answers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some children finish school work more quickly</td>
<td>Other children finish school work slower</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some children can remember things easily</td>
<td>Other children often forget what they read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some children can understand what they read</td>
<td>Other children cannot understand all they read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some children do not have so many friends</td>
<td>Other children have a lot of friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Really true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Harter's Perceived Self-Competence Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Really true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some children are popular with others but Other children are not liked by others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are not so easy to like but Other children are easy to like.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children play with others but Other children do not play so much with others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children find it difficult to make friends but Other children find it easy to make friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are important to their classmates but Other children are not important to their classmates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are liked by most children but Other children are not liked by most children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children do well at all sports but Other children do less well at all sports.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are better at other things than sport but Other children are not better at other things than sport.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows a comparison of how some children are perceived by themselves and how others perceive them. It includes statements about popularity, likeability, social interaction, self-esteem, and academic performance. Each statement is marked as 'Really true of me', 'Sort of true of me', or 'Really true of me'.
### Harter's Perceived Self-Competence Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Really true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children do well at a new activity but Other children do less well at new activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are good enough at sports but Other children are not good enough at sports.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are not chosen first for games but Other children are first to be chosen for games.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children prefer to watch rather than play but Other children prefer to play rather than watch.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are good at new games but Other children are not good at new games.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are sure of themselves but Other children are not so sure of themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children would like to be different but Other children are happy the way they are.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children do not feel good about the way they act but Other children feel good about the way they act.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
<td>![Blank Box]</td>
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<td>![Blank Box]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX J-E

**Harter's Perceived Self-Competence Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Really true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are sure they are doing the right thing</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other children are not sure they are doing the right thing</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are good people</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other children are not good people</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children would like to change</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other children want to stay the same</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children do things well</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other children do not do things as well</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Box" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 4

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale

**QUESTIONNAIRE II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am able to do things as well as most other people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I take a positive attitude toward myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I wish I could have more respect for myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I certainly feel useless at times</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. At times I think I am no good at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 5

English Academic Self-Concept Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Sort of true of me</th>
<th>Really true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some children are good at English but Other children are not so good at English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children like English but Other children don't like English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children find work in English easy but Other children find work in English difficult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children can work out answers at English class but Other children cannot work out answers at English class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children learn English quickly but Other children take more time to learn English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children often forget what they learned in English but Other children can remember what they learned in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children get good marks in English but Other children don't get so good marks in English</td>
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APPENDIX 6

Instruction Sheet

ABOUT ADMINISTERING THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The aim of this study is to investigate how pupils with low and average academic self-concepts interact with other pupils and with their teachers. The application of these questionnaires is meant to help in identifying and selecting those pupils. So, please, read out these instructions fully before administering the questionnaires.

Instructions:

1. Distribute the questionnaires to all pupils;
2. Check if all of them have something to write with;
3. Then read this out to the class:
   a) "You are asked to fill in these questionnaires about what you think and feel. This is not a test; there are no right or wrong answers.
   b) This is part of a study about how you get on in your English lessons. Your answers are confidential.
   c) The first thing to do is to write your name, age, sex, and date of birth on the first page."
4. Then explain to the students what the first questionnaire consists of and do the practice item together with them;
5. Explain the second questionnaire to them;
6. Allow them to ask you any necessary questions;
7. Let them start.

OBS: Please, make sure they wrote all the personal data required before starting.

Thank you.
APPENDIX 7-A

Children who scored low and average in academic self-concept according to Teacher A's criteria and Inventories administered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Teacher A's criteria</th>
<th>Harter</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Rosenberg</th>
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Observations:

1) Pupils 4, 5, 9 and 10, although having not been indicated by the teacher, were also selected for observation in order to complement the 10 pupils.

2) The spaces not fulfilled in the results of the scales mean that in those areas pupils scored above average, or did not complete the questionnaire.
APPENDIX 7-B

Children who scored low and average in academic self-concept according to Teacher B's criteria and Inventories administered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Teacher B's criteria</th>
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Observation:

The spaces not fulfilled in the results of the scales mean that in those areas pupils scored above average or did not complete the questionnaire.
APPENDIX 7-C

Children who scored low and average in academic self-concept according to Teacher C's criteria and Inventories administered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Teacher C's criteria</th>
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Observations:

1) Pupils 8 and 10, although having not been indicated by the teacher, were also selected for observation in order to complement the 10 pupils.

2) The spaces not fulfilled in the results of the scales mean that in those areas pupils scored above average or did not complete the questionnaire.
APPENDIX 7-D

Children who scored low and average in academic self-concept according to teacher D's criteria and Inventories administered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Teacher D's Criteria</th>
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Observations:

1) Pupils 4 and 5, although having not been indicated by the teacher, were also selected for observation in order to complement the 10 pupils.

2) The spaces not fulfilled in the results of the scales mean that in those areas pupils scored above average or did not complete the questionnaire.

3) Pupil 5 does not have two or more scores for low in the inventories, but in the Physical subscale he was very close to the mean for low self-concept and he was the only one whose choice would not contradict the teacher's indications.
APPENDIX 8

Observation Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER'S DIRECTIONS TO THE LESSON</th>
<th>PUPILS' COMMENTS, ANSWERS OR QUESTIONS TO THE TEACHER</th>
<th>TEACHER'S COMMENTS, ANSWERS OR QUESTIONS TO A SPECIFIC PUPIL</th>
</tr>
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Could you please read these dialogues and classify the teachers' underlined comments according to the following categories:

- **INTERNAL** If the comment is related to any personal characteristic of the pupil, eg:
  - "What a funny way of holding the pen!"  
  - "S/he enjoys difficult tasks."

- **EXTERNAL** If the comment is related to any environmental causal attribution for any pupil's result, eg:
  - "You’re doing ok; this is a difficult task."
  - "You’ve got an A! Lucky child!"

- **STABLE** If the comment relates to the pupil’s result as invariant, eg:
  - "S/he always holds the pen in this way."
  - "You’ll never do ok at a difficult task."

- **UNSTABLE** If the comment relates to the pupil’s result as variant, eg:
  - "You used to enjoy difficult exercises!"
  - "You don’t always have enough luck to get an A."

- **GENERAL** If the comment is related to a specific action of the child in a particular situation as if it was a pupil’s general characteristic eg:
  - "S/he is too lazy to hold the pen correctly."
  - "You don’t do anything well."
APPENDIX 9-B
Explanatory Sheet

SPECIFIC If the comment is on something directly related to a particular pupil’s attitude in any specific situation, eg:

“Would you stop talking now, please?”
“You must try to do this exercise again.”

ACADEMIC If the comment is related to any pupil’s academic situation, eg:

“That’s an interesting question.”
“You need to work harder.”

CONDUCT If the comment is related to any pupil’s behavioral aspect, eg:

“Be quiet, please!”
“Behave yourself.”

POSITIVE If the comment implies a constructive judgement, eg:

“You’re getting better!”
“That’s a good answer.”

NEGATIVE If the comment implies a depreciatory judgement, eg:

“Don’t be silly!”
“No, this answer is too obvious!”

NEUTRAL If the comment doesn’t imply any judgement, either positive or negative, eg:

“Now, get on with your work.”
“Well, you can do it in both ways.”
APPENDIX 9-C
Explanatory Sheet

UNSURE
If the comment cannot be categorized or if it can be either:
External or Internal
Stable or Unstable
General or Specific
Academic or Conduct
Positive or Negative or Neutral

OBSERVATION:
The five dimensions are not excludent; a comment might be simultaneously external, specific, academic, stable and positive, for example. However, each two opposite categories are mutually exclusive; you cannot categorize a same comment as stable and unstable, for example.
APPENDIX 10-A

Attributions made by Teacher A

TEACHER A - ATTRIBUTIONS

1. TEACHER: Pupil 10? (allowing him to answer to the question he made)
   PUPIL 10: Things that you see in the picture like a tattoo or a scar.
   TEACHER: Yes, but would that be part of their personality?
   PUPIL 10: No, they are...
   TEACHER: (interrupting) No. So, you're right, but...
   PUPIL 10: (interrupting) You could put them in the picture, though.
   TEACHER: Yes, you're right, yes.

2. TEACHER: Is anybody unsure of the way in which you'd set out a letter.
   If you are, we can talk about that. Pupil 6? (allowing him to ask)
   PUPIL 6: Yes, will you show us... (referring to how to set out a letter)
   TEACHER: Yes, I think you're right, to be honest. It's silly, it's silly to think you can know it, if it's not on the handout...

3. TEACHER: What do you think would be the most important thing in number 3? What is it, regardless of what you're writing about, what would it be important to do in that piece of writing? Pupil 9. (allowing her to answer)
   PUPIL 9: The descriptions.
APPENDIX 10-B

Attributions made by Teacher A

TEACHER: Yes, that's right. Telling it clearly, and making it clear what the person, what your character felt when this happened. That would be the most important thing. How clearly you can describe their feelings and thoughts.

4. PUPIL 9: You know for each thing that we do, do they have to be from the same person's point of view or could each one be from some different point of view?

TEACHER: Yes. Yes, you can do it or all from your character's point of view or from different points of view about your character. If you could do that, it would make it more interesting.

5. TEACHER: ... two homework per week for 3 weeks that's 6 homeworks.

PUPIL 10: Can you do more?

TEACHER: You can do more, if you wish to.

PUPIL 10: So, if you got better you do more.

TEACHER: Yes, but as I say, all the folders must stay in class for the first couple of weeks. So, if you need to do homework you must be sure to make a note of the next task we're going to do.

5. PUPIL 8: I've only read one book more and I can't remember the other one...
APPENDIX 10-C

Attributions made by Teacher A

TEACHER: When you go the library on Thursday we can ask other people what books you've read. If you can't remember anything about the books it'll help us. Help jog your memory.

7. TEACHER: Pupil 6? (allowing him to ask something)

PUPIL 6: Sir, will we get that on Tuesday the eleventh? (referring to the work the teacher was explaining)

TEACHER: Ahn... yes, you'll get that... rather than handed in on the Monday, you can hand it in on the Thursday, ok? So, you're right.

8. PUPIL 8: Is there lined paper?

TEACHER: Right. There's lined and plain paper there in the normal place, ok? Anybody else don't know what to do?
APPLENDIX 10-D

Attributions made by Teacher B

TEACHER B - ATTRIBUTIONS

1. TEACHER: (After seeing Pupil 4's work) Class, I'm really impressed, some of you have got the most wonderful imagination.

2. TEACHER: Some of you really did try to convey the actual feelings.

3. TEACHER: ...so, when you've done that... Will you listen? This is important. I'm sorry to interrupt you (to Pupil 1, who was talking to a friend) I know it's frustrating when you're in school all day. Shhh! (she waits) Pupil 1, give me a minute.

4. TEACHER: (after reading Pupil 4's work) Right! Excellent!

5. TEACHER: Pupil 1, how are you getting on?
   PUPIL 1: He shows her what he has done.
   TEACHER: (after having seen what he did) Have you got to Ruith... great. Good, good.

6. TEACHER: Excuse me, excuse me. One O (the name of the class), can you all stop working for a minute and just listen. Now, I'm in there, and I think it's too loud even for me in there. So, I don't know what the people who are working feel like. Now, I don't want to ask you for silence because I know that as writers, you need to discuss your ideas with people. But,
please, don’t be so selfish! Remember, you’re not the only person who wants to discuss ideas, you’re not the only person who wants my attention. Now, starting with a little bit of help and appreciation, and I can see people in here... Pupil 3, if you could stop talking I would very much appreciate that! Now, I’m sure I can rely on you too; I’m sure about that. Just get on with the work.

7. TEACHER: Pupil 1, how much have you done today? (he was talking a lot)

PUPIL 1: I've finished.

TEACHER: All of it?

PUPIL 1: No...

TEACHER: (Goes there and sees what he's done) Half of it.
APPENDIX 10-F

Attributions made by Teacher C

TEACHER C - ATTRIBUTIONS

1. TEACHER: ...Pupil 5, you haven't done a thing yet, you have already been here 5 minutes, come on.

2. TEACHER: Pupil 7? (allowing her to ask something)
   PUPIL 7: Asks him something related to the exercise
   TEACHER: At the moment you're doing so much wandering around. I'm fast beginning to think I might have to ask you to stay on to finish off this work you should've been doing now. You haven't done a thing.

3. TEACHER: Pupil 2, you're chatting, not working again.
   PUPIL 2: Sir, can I do the work in my house, because I didn't...
   TEACHER: Try to fix it in time, now.

4. PUPIL 5: Sir, is that long enough...
   TEACHER: (Is talking to another boy) I'll explain everything to you later.
   PUPIL 5: (Anxious) Sir, sir. Is that long enough for a chapter?
   TEACHER: Yes, if it's just about your parrot there's not a lot to say. You get a piece of paper, but don't take the whole folder. Ahn, can I look at what chapter it is? Oh, in that case you've nearly finished.
5. TEACHER: (To the pupils around) Hey, shut the door!

(But somebody opened the door)

TEACHER: Pupil 4, stay behind for a while. Be last out.

PUPIL 4: I didn't open the door. It was Pupil 8.

TEACHER: Pupil 8, who did open the door?

PUPIL 8: I opened it and Pupil 4...

TEACHER: Sorry?

PUPIL 8: Pupil 4 said open the door.

TEACHER: But you opened the door?

PUPIL 8: Yes...

TEACHER: Well, then you stay behind. Sorry, Pupil 4.

PUPIL 4: Pulls a face, and the teacher sees it.

TEACHER: Pupils 8, 4, the rest of you off you go quickly, quietly. Now you can wait behind and keep open the door (to Pupil 8). Now what I want to say to you (Pupil 4) is if you were to say to me: Sir, I didn't open the door it was Pupil 8; I would have said: come on Pupil 4 - Pupil 8 can stay 'til you go - instead you did this (the face) which isn't going to help anyone, is it? Now, no nonsense.

6. TEACHER: ...if people only talk, we'll have to work in silence. Pupil 8 is doing a good one here (referring to his work).
APPENDIX 10-H

Attributions made by Teacher C

7. TEACHER: (To the whole class) Pupil 6's got a brilliant idea. She's going to tell us one, it's a brilliant idea. She's actually going to write hers as an advert for a school. If she's imagining... there might be you, you know, an advert for a school in fifty or a hundred years time. Certainly seems to be the way things are going.

8. TEACHER: One E (The name of the class)... Pupil 4, stand up. Leaning on the back of my chair again, I've told you about that too many times.

TEACHER: Right, Pupil 10. (The teacher begins to call pupils to give them their marks).

PUPIL 10: Goes there.

9. TEACHER: Pupil 10. Right. A good effort, because it's got loads in it but spoiled by poor presentation. Now, look, this is meant to be a really neat piece of work, isn't it? It's not really very neat, is it? Look. Hum?

PUPIL 10: Assert with the head.

10. TEACHER: So, that spoils it, I'm afraid. I mean look at that page there!

11. HOW MANY CROSSINGS OUT YOU'VE GOT? Hum? How many on that page?
APPENDIX 10-I

Attributions made by Teacher C

PUPIL 10: About ten...

TEACHER: Let's have a look. One, two, three... five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve... fourteen... and that's even on the first page, it's a... So, you let yourself down a bit there, I'm afraid, but... I mean... there were some good things in it.

16. Loads and loads and loads of crossings out.

17. Hum? It's not really good enough, is it? Do you see what I mean? Hum?

PUPIL 10: Yes.

18. TEACHER: Here, that really spoilt it, I'm afraid. Really spoilt it... because... you know, it... it was... you've... you've put some good work into this, it's a good effort, as I've said, good effort. But... it's an interesting story to read, and I enjoyed reading it, but I got stuck with the poor presentation. It's difficult to read, all right?

19.

20. So, you might have been able to have done better than that.

21. But that's not bad, but that's not bad.

22.

TEACHER: Pupil 3 (Continuing the marks)

PUPIL 3: Goes there.

TEACHER: Right, right. Then, you've got those, which is very important. Yes? That means I'm pleased with the work.
that you've done. All right? That means I think you've made a very good effort... All right? Ahn... And I am pleased with that, right.

Because there's been some good effort there, ok? So, basically you and R. did quite, you know, you put some effort in it. Ok? And I think compared to some of the others you did very, very well.

TEACHER: Pupil 9.
PUPIL 9: Goes there.

25. TEACHER: Right. It's a good review, a good piece of work. But there's no... reason... no reason I actually got a plus to what you've done as well. The reason because I've got you a plus in your piece of work is because I know that you wouldn't have an A work. And I'm quite surprised that you managed to do what you did... because I did expect you to make some improvement at schoolwork... But you were just lucky that you got yourself that mark... So, you've got just as much work to do. All right?
PUPIL 9: Yes.
APPENDIX 10-K

Attributions made by Teacher C

TEACHER: Pupil 4! (calling back the pupil that was outside)

28. Then, you're right in it. *I told you too many times about sitting, and it just reflects your whole attitude.* It just

29. reflects the whole way of your thinking. *In other words, you're not thinking right.* Not getting your act together.

I told you to stand up. How dare you sit down! How dare!
APPENDIX 10-L

Attributions made by Teacher D

TEACHER D - ATTRIBUTIONS

1. TEACHER: Stand up girl! (to Pupil 8) How dare you shout out like that! I'm the only person allowed to shout! What a cheek you've got! Certainly. Now sit down and behave yourself, please. I don't want to have to shout like that but if you're going to annoy me in that way, I will. It's too hot for that sort of behaviour and too hot for that sort of provocation. Too hot to shout!

2. TEACHER: Pupil 10, will you bring it here, please? (Referring to the work she had just done). This looks very nice! (keeps reading her work) It's good work. Pupil 10 (after having read her work). Why are the tickets up here?

PUPIL 10: (answering) The collection point and... Oh... just to show what colour they are.

TEACHER: Oh! So, you did the work yourself?

PUPIL 10: Yes.

TEACHER: So, you see, your verb has to be...

PUPIL 10: ...must have.

TEACHER: (confirming) ...it has to be... Which is it: 'must have' or 'ought'?

PUPIL 10: (answering) 'Must have' or 'ought'... Must have; is more proper. It's stronger.

TEACHER: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't understand you.
3. PUPIL 2: Sir, sir. You mean a crime, you mean a burglar?
TEACHER: Yes, that's right, yes. Could be a burglar. Could be any sort of crime. A burglary, a murder, a kidnapping.

TEACHER: Pupil 9, have you finished?
PUPIL 9: No.
TEACHER: No; in about 5 minutes I'm coming and I'll want to see how you've got on.

TEACHER: (to the whole class, just after having talked to Pupil 9) I must say, some of you haven't made any progress at all, as far as I can see (referring to the exercise being done).

4. PUPIL 9: Yes.
TEACHER: Right. We'll have you extremely quiet now. Extremely quiet.
PUPIL 9: (tries to say something to a friend)

5. TEACHER: You've had enough time to swap ideas.

6. TEACHER: (joking) I wouldn't like to be your teacher, Pupil 2.
PUPIL 2: Why?
TEACHER: Must have a hard time (meaning: you'd give me a difficult time)

7. TEACHER: Now, right this moment, we will have silence. (Pause - children begin to talk again) I said Silence! The noise, the fuss, the commotion... all disgusting. Pupil 2, sit down.
APPENDIX 11

Differences in the categorization of the attributions excluded from data analysis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER A (Attribution number 5 - to pupil 10)</th>
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