

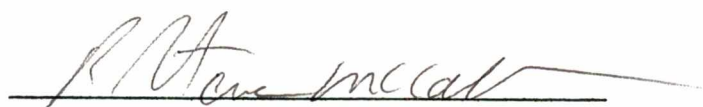
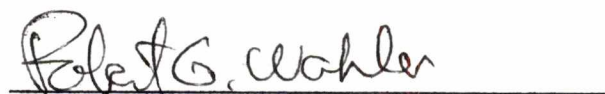
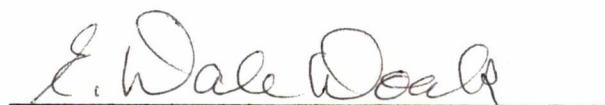
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Linda C. Jessie-Jones entitled "Analysis of Academic and Social Coping of African American and Caucasian Elementary School Students." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

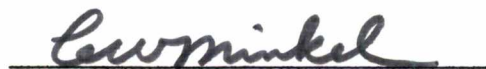


Donald Dickinson, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council: .



Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of The Graduate School

**Analysis of Academic and Social Coping of African American
and Caucasian Elementary School Students**

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Linda C. Jessie-Jones

August, 1996

Copyright 1996 by Linda C. Jessie-Jones

All rights reserved

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,
Charles Reuben Jessie, who demonstrated exceptional coping skills while dealing with
Amyotropic Lateral Sclerosis,
and
Audra Redford Jessie,
who daily shows me that the impossible can be done.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my major professor, Dr. Donald Dickinson, for his patient guidance and encouragement. I also thank the other committee members, Dr. Dale Doak, Dr. Steve McCallum, and Dr. Robert Wahler for their patience in waiting for this project to reach completion. I want to acknowledge the encouragement that my daughter provided when I began this program during her high school years. Her enthusiastic belief that her mother could do anything provided a confidence that I lacked during various portions of this project. I want to thank my temporary colleagues and permanent friends from the Milwaukee Public Schools who provided support for me during my first adventure into providing psychological services in a multicultural environment. I want to thank Joanne Baez for providing the nudges as needed and understanding as we both struggled with sustaining our energy to complete our research projects. How interesting that her data seems to be indicating that achievement and ethnicity significantly impact her analysis of self-esteem. Joanne, are those results final yet? I also want to thank my current colleagues for their unending encouragement that this process is somehow "normal" and there is an end to the tunnel.

I deeply thank my son and daughter for the arrival of their sons, my four grandsons, during the duration of this program. I sincerely welcome the opportunity to devote my time as "Dr. Granny."

Abstract

Analysis of Academic and Social Coping of African American and Caucasian Elementary School Students

This study compared the academic and social coping of a group of African American children in grades four and five and a similar group of Caucasian children. The *Academic and Social Coping Inventory* (ASCI) (Cupp, 1993) measured Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping Style in academic and social situations common in the school environment. Four Adaptive Coping Strategies including Seeks Assistance, Defines Problem, Plans Solution and Executes Plan combined to provide an Adaptive Coping Style. Four Maladaptive Coping Strategies of Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, Displacement and Projection combined to provide a Maladaptive Coping Style. Using the ASCI, teachers rated the frequency with which the children utilized the eight coping strategies in stressful social and academic situations.

In Academic situations, no differences were found between the two groups for the composite scores for Adaptive or Maladaptive Coping Styles or for any of the component coping strategies based on race.

In Social situations, no differences were found between the two groups for the composite scores for Adaptive or Maladaptive Coping Styles. When analyzing the component coping strategies, African American students utilized the Maladaptive Strategies of Oppositional/Emotional and Projection more often than the Caucasian group.

The analysis of covariance used in this study also indicated that coping varied due to sex. Male students demonstrated more utilization of the Academic and Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal.

While this study suggests variances in coping accounted for by race or gender, the methodology utilized may mask other variables contributing to these differences. Suggestions for improved methodology are included. These finding cannot be generalized beyond the limited sample studied.

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
I. Problem	1
Introduction	1
Literature review	2
<i>Coping</i>	2
Definition	2
Instruments Measuring Coping	8
<i>Ethnicity</i>	14
Awareness of Ethnicity	14
Development of Ethnic Identity	19
Ethnic Differences in Coping Styles	22
<i>Summary</i>	29
<i>Statement of the Problem</i>	29
<i>Hypotheses</i>	30
II. Method	33
Subjects	33
Definitions	34
Instrument	35
Procedure	37
Data Analyses	39
Research Questions	40
III. Results	43
Data Analysis	43
Research Question Analysis	44

IV. Discussion	56
Summary	56
Reasons for Differences	58
Limitations	59
Implications	60
References	62
Appendix	68
Vita	73

CHAPTER I

Problem

Introduction

Our world provides a plethora of examples of failure to cope in academic and social situations as well as examples of multicultural interactions and conflicts. Especially in urban areas, large numbers of students do not complete basic high school curricula, perhaps due to an inability to deal with the academic demands. Frequently, social problems are resolved by violence instead of negotiating solutions. Some minority children can not communicate effectively because of language and cultural barriers. Bilingual and bicultural programs designed to alleviate such difficulties are criticized as encouraging the growth of the minority culture instead of facilitating the melting of the minority culture into the dominant culture.

In addition, there are examples of pleas and attempts to create new ideas and plans to cope in today's world. Victims of violence, such as Rodney King (the subject of a video taped beating at the hands of police officers in Los Angeles, CA, 1993), beg people to "just get along." In East Tennessee, a Republican U. S. Congressman and a Democratic U. S. Senator campaigned together, asking that political differences be put aside for the sake of "getting things done." In Kentucky, a remote radio station carried a public service advertisement telling the story of stone age men refusing to "discover" fire because the group of people currently using that resource were "different" than the group interested in the invention. This story encouraged people to acknowledge differences and cooperate for the betterment of the society. In these examples, people are encouraged to use new styles and strategies to cope with an ever-stressful and multicultural world.

This study examined teacher reports of academic and social coping styles and strategies of two groups of fourth- and fifth grade urban students. One group contained African American students, and the other group contained Caucasian students. This

analysis describes the similarities and differences in adaptive and maladaptive coping between the two ethnic groups and names the coping strategies most frequently observed within each group. Awareness of these similarities and differences is the first step toward developing societal coping strategies for dealing with the dynamics of educating students in a multicultural, high stress society.

Literature Review

Coping

Definition

Lazarus defines stress as "an external load or demand on a biological, social or psychological system" (p. 2, 1993). Stress is present daily in the lives of school students, as well as other residents of today's world. The academic pressure of curricular demands and progress measured by test performance combine with complex social interactions to escalate tension for all students. This phenomenon is particularly true in the public school systems of urban areas where multi-national and multi-lingual classes are rapidly becoming the norm rather than the exception. At the same time, violence and economic difficulty continue to invade both urban life and public education systems (Fad & Ryser, 1993). The trauma and the routine of daily life provide increasingly complex challenges to be met by both adults and children. Current demographics indicate increasing percentages of ethnic minority students enrolling in metropolitan school systems. These demographics also indicate increasing numbers of low-income, two-income, single--parent, and homeless families. The problems of drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, and dropping out complicate school performance (Klauke, 1989). The result is stress for parents, teachers and students.

Lazarus further defines stress as "environmental and internal demands and conflicts...which tax or exceed a person's resources" (Lazarus & Launier, 1978, p.211). In earlier studies, (Lazarus & Eriksen, 1952 in Lazarus, 1993), he had determined that

individual differences in motivation and cognitive variables made a difference in how people identified and dealt with stress.

Coping is defined as the process used to face and challenge these life situations (Cupp, 1994). Individuals perceived different levels of stress in similar situations and reacted with impaired performance, improved performance or no change in performance. Lazarus (1993) described the stress process as having the following four parts: 1) a cause that can be internal or external and impacts the person-environment relationship, 2) an evaluation that determines what is threatening from that which is not, 3) a coping process implemented by the mind or body to deal with the stress and 4) a stress reaction involving the complex pattern of effects on mind and body. He further stated that there are two kinds of psychological stress: eustress that generates positive feelings and healthy body reactions and distress that generates negative feelings and disturbed body reactions. Lazarus further described three kinds of eustress as harm, threat and challenge. Harm refers to psychological damage that had already been done—e.g. an irrevocable loss. Threat is the anticipation of harm that has not yet taken place but may be imminent. Challenge results from difficult demands that we feel confident about overcoming by effectively mobilizing and deploying our coping resources (Lazarus, 1993). He gave examples indicating that the perception of a threat generates an “unpleasant state of mind that may seriously block mental operations and impair functioning, while challenge is exhilarating and associated with expansive, often outstanding performance” (Lazarus, 1993, p.5).

Lazarus (1993) indicated that appraisal, the process of active negotiation between demands, constraints and resources of the environment and the goals and personal beliefs of the individual, is a key component of the coping process. He stated that individuals constantly evaluate the importance of what is happening in relation to their personal well-being. Coping is the outward reaction to the eustress or distress perceived in a situation according to this cognitive mediation model. The evaluative appraisal determines the

degree of stress reaction or coping used as we attempt to alter the circumstances or our interpretation of the circumstances to provide a more pleasant situation.

The current emphasis is on coping as a process rather than a stable personality trait. Lazarus (1993) emphasized that "coping is highly contextual, since to be effective it must change over time and across different stressful conditions." Lazarus further contends that there are two main ways that individuals cope. They attempt to change their relationship with the environment by changing the conditions of stress or solving the problem that is causing the stress (problem focused). The other coping process is to change the way the individual interprets what is happening and the resulting emotional reaction (emotional focused). Whether problem-focused or emotion-focused coping is utilized, a person's appraisal of the situation is always the mediator in dealing with psychological stress (Lazarus, 1993). Folkman and Lazarus developed *The Ways of Coping Questionnaire* (WOC) to measure the coping process in diverse situations. Utilizing this instrument, Lazarus determined that:

- 1) Coping is complex and people use most of the basic strategies of coping in every stressful encounter.
- 2) Coping depends on appraisal of whether anything can be done to change the situation.
- 3) When the type of stressful encounter is held constant, women and men show very similar coping patterns, despite public prejudices to the contrary.
- 4) Some strategies of coping are more stable than others across diverse stressful encounters. For example, thinking positively about the situation is relatively stable and depends substantially on personality, whereas seeking social support is unstable and depends substantially on the social context.

- 5) Coping strategies change from one stage of a complex stressful encounter to another. If we lump together the stages in a complex encounter, we gain a false picture of the coping process.
- 6) Coping acts as a powerful mediator of emotional outcomes; positive outcomes are associated with some coping strategies, negative outcomes with others.
- 7) The utility of any coping pattern varies with the type of stressful encounter, the type of personality stressed, and the outcome modality studied (e.g. subjective well-being, social functioning or somatic health). What works in one context may be counterproductive in another (Lazarus, 1993, p. 9).

Recently, Lazarus has addressed the impact of emotions on coping. He has identified approximately fifteen emotions, nine of which are negative: anger, fright, anxiety, guilt, shame, sadness, envy, jealousy and disgust. These emotions are a product of trouble conditions of life and involve different threats or harms. He identified four positive emotions: happiness, pride, relief and love. The remaining three emotions of hope, compassion and gratitude are considered to be equivocal or mixed in valence (Lazarus, 1993). Lazarus takes the position that the particular emotion experienced depends on one's thoughts about an encounter and can be at a molar or molecular level of abstraction. At the molar or global level, Lazarus stresses that the relational meaning of an encounter is the person's sense of the harms and benefits in a particular person-environment relationship. Personality variables and environmental characteristics come together in this appraisal of relational meaning (Lazarus, 1993). This molar relational meaning can be broken into separate, molecular personality and environmental variables, just as problem-focused and emotion-focused coping can be separated into coping strategies.

Coping strategies are learned behaviors that can vary with situations and time, can change, and are deliberate, purposeful reactions to stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984;

Moos, 1976). Therefore, improved coping skills may increase the amount of stress an individual can successfully manage.

Cupp (1994) has demonstrated that adaptive coping skills correlate with high academic achievement, high standardized achievement score and better teacher ratings on social adjustment, implying that adaptive coping skills have a positive impact on success in school.

The importance of training individuals to cope is reflected by curriculum experts as they demand dynamic approaches encouraging student to learn about, adapt to, and change with the world in which they live (Pratt, 1980). These authorities acknowledge that the knowledge and tools of tomorrow's workplace have probably not been invented, just as the computer used to type this page was merely imagined years ago. Learning to master the tools of today may not provide job security in the future. In a similar manner, the responses to stress, or coping skills, of yesterday may not provide successful stress management in the future.

When responding to everyday stress, an individual may primary or secondary control coping. Hardy, Power and Jaedicke (1993) describe Band and Weisz's theory involving primary control coping as aimed at changing the objective condition or events while secondary control coping tries to maximize one's goodness of fit with current conditions. Primary control coping is similar to problem-solving reactions while secondary-control coping is similar to emotional coping. Ideally, the application of intellectual thought throughout the process of reacting to the stress would determine the most appropriate type of coping reaction. As individuals react to stressful situations, behavior related to problem-solving strategies can be considered adaptive solutions. These coping strategies include Seeks Assistance, Defines Problem, Plan Solution, and Executes Plan. Behavior related to more emotional responses can be considered maladaptive

solutions. These reactions include Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, Displacement, or Projection (Cupp, 1994).

Stern and Zevon (1990) examined specific coping responses of adolescents as a function of age, type of stressor and quality of family environment. The stressful events described by these adolescents fell into two general categories: "stressor related to school and/or work (32%), and stressors related to interpersonal and/or family problems (68%)" (Stern & Zevon, 1990, p.295). This study suggests that coping skills change with adolescent development. Younger adolescents tended to focus their coping strategies on affective processes rather than active, problem-oriented responses when dealing with family conflicts. Additionally, adolescents who reported a negative perception of the family environment generally used more emotionally-based coping strategies. A more positive perception of family climate related to the use of more problem-based coping strategies. Stern & Zevon (1990) referred to previous studies suggesting that the use of emotion-based coping strategies is associated with poorer adjustment.

However, Ryan-Wenger (1990) proposed a different perspective concerning avoidance or displacing behaviors. Although avoidance or displacing behaviors are considered emotional rather than problem solving and, therefore maladaptive, these behaviors may be appropriate strategies for some children in certain situations. When the stress comes from situations that cannot be changed by the child, such as familial fighting or problems with teachers, the child has very limited, if any, resources for solving the problem. In those cases, Ryan-Wenger declares the child's perceptions as the relevant base from which to determine which strategies are adaptive or maladaptive. If avoidant behavior provides relief from fighting or teacher-student conflict, the child utilizing the avoidance strategy could be demonstrating an adaptive coping behavior. Therefore, analysis of the adaptive-maladaptive dichotomy must be tempered by analysis of situation and environmental variables when appropriate.

Instruments Measuring Coping

Several instruments have been developed to measure coping skills, particularly in socio-emotional situations. These instruments range from those designed to measure in depth the coping utilized to deal with one situation to instruments designed to measure coping in a variety of situations. Some instruments were intended for use with adult populations while others are intended for use with students.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) developed the *Ways of Coping* (WOC) questionnaire to analyze coping strategies used in dealing with a stressful situation identified by the person using a checklist. The 66-items or 48 items in the revised version are answered in regard to one stressful incident. For example, Mishel and Sorenson (1993) utilized the WOC to factor analyze the coping mode and strategies of women with gynecological cancer. This analysis indicated that the WOC addressed two coping modes: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Within the problem-focused mode, four strategies were identified: Bargaining, Focus on the Positive, Social Support and Concentrated Efforts. The emotion-focused strategies included Wishful Thinking, Detachment and Acceptance. This study and one by Ben-Porath, Waller and Butcher (1991) suggest that not all items on the WOC are relevant across a variety of stressor situations. Ben-Porath et al., asked college students to rate items on the relevancy to the target situation and determine that the presence of items considered irrelevant may have masked situational effects on coping. The study by Mishel et al., found the factor structures for coping to differ radically between clinical and nonclinical populations and emphasized the importance of utilizing standardized measures in context and with populations similar to their original target group.

A study by Houser and Seligman (1991) indicated that the WOC measured differences in coping between parents of mentally retarded adolescents and parents of adolescents without mental retardation. Father of mentally retarded adolescents and non-mentally retarded adolescents were recruited by mail and sent packets including the WOC,

instructions and a stamped enveloped to return the materials. Of the 40 fathers of mentally retarded adolescents and 31 fathers of adolescents without mental retardation who responded, fathers of mentally retarded adolescents tended to use more emotion-focused coping strategies than fathers of adolescents without mental retardation. The authors indicated that these results support the theories that different kinds of coping are used in different situations and that more emotional coping is utilized when the individual senses a lack of control over the situation. This study also suggested that the disabled individual could be taught to assess the amount of control present in different situations and trained to use a variety of coping strategies in different situations.

Dise-Lewis (1988) developed the *Life Events and Coping Inventory* (LECI) to assess the experience of life stress and the use of coping behaviors in 12 to 14 year old children from a middle-class, predominantly white community. This instrument followed the transactional models of life stress which indicate that is an "individual cognitive event that varies as a function of life events or demands, personal resources or coping abilities, and the subjective appraisal of these two factors" (Dise-Lewis, 1988, p. 485). Dise-Lewis tried to develop an instrument that would describe stress from the child's perspective rather than from that of an adult. The children rated the 125 stressors presented in this study according to the degree of stress each situation would generate for them. The results indicated that death of a parent ranked as the most stressful event, followed by death of a close family member, parents' divorce, and parent being put in jail. Being retained in the same grade ranked ninth in this study, tied with someone close to you (like a friend) dying. It is noted in the study that the students in the sample were reflecting the norms of their experience in these rankings. The situation of something violent happening at school or in your neighborhood ranked 108th in this study, perhaps because the students had not had direct contact with acts of violence.

The data ranking these life events indicated four types of situations: traumatic or crisis events (i.e., death of a parent); routine, frequently occurring events (i.e., taking gym class); changes affecting family, peer and academic/school roles (i.e., school suspensions); and internally generated events or worries (i.e., concerns about competence, lying). The reactions to these events were determined to fit into categories labeled as Aggression, Stress recognition, Distraction, Self-destruction, and Endurance. Distraction and Endurance was the most highly endorsed reactions while Self-destruction was the least endorsed. This study found that as a group, females tended to assign higher ratings to the life events, endorse more stress recognition strategies and use more of these, and report more physical symptoms of stress than males did.

Halmhuber and Paris (1993) used Zeitlin's *The Coping Inventory* to examine coping difference between regular education, learning disabled and physically impaired students. The results of this teacher-completed scale indicated that learning disabled children demonstrated the least effective coping strategies by not seeking ways to accommodate environmental demands, demonstrating a limited range of strategies, and tending to be passive in situations requiring coping skills. Learning disabled students tended to attribute control to external sources while regular education students attributed control to internal sources. Physically handicapped students were as likely as regular education students to attribute control to internal sources. This study included parent responses to the CI. Parents of learning disabled students viewed their children as having some difficulty with academic subjects but did not acknowledge difficulty with social interactions or school adjustment. This description is in direct contrast to the results from teachers that indicated learning disabled students demonstrate difficulty coping with school situations.

Ryan-Wenger (1990) developed the *Schoolagers' Coping Strategies Inventory* (SCSI). This self-report instrument was developed from children's discussions identifying

the kinds of things they do when they feel bad, nervous or worried about something.

Ryan-Wenger describes coping style as inherent patterns of responding to stressors that are global traits evident in longitudinal studies and are persistent over time. In contrast, coping strategies are the actual behaviors that are used to cope with stress. These strategies are learned, vary over time and can be changed (Ryan-Wenger, 1990, p. 344). The SCSI measures the use of specific coping behaviors that sort into thirteen categories. The categories of Social Support, Avoidant, Emotional, Distracting and Cognitive included the majority of the behaviors. The remaining eight categories are Aggressive Motor, Physical Exercise, Isolating, Aggressive Verbal, Relaxation, Habitual Spiritual and Other (Ryan-Wenger, 1990, p.345). These components are not differentiated as emotion-focused or problem oriented. Data obtained using the SCSI suggests that eight and nine year-olds had higher frequency scores in a greater number of categories than ten, eleven and twelve year-olds. This finding implied that younger children experiment with a variety of coping strategies, while older children have settled on a fewer number of coping strategies that work for them.

The SCSI was with Zeitlin's (cited in Ryan-Wenger, 1990) *Coping Inventory* (CI) to establish construct validity. The CI measures coping behaviors in a forty-eight item instrument completed by a teacher who has observed the student (Cupp, 1994). The correlation between the SCSI and the CI was low. Ryan-Wenger (1990) contends that the CI measures coping style, that trait-like, personality variable that is consistent over time and situation and observed by others. According to Ryan-Wenger, the SCSI measures "the use and effectiveness of specific coping behaviors" (1990, p. 348) or coping strategies. She called for the development of other instruments to measure children's coping strategies and for further comparisons with the SCSI.

Causey and Debow(1992) used a self-report instrument to measure copings for children. Called the *Self-Report Coping Scale*, this instrument was based on the

approach/avoidance conceptualization of coping. The Approach Scale included both Seeking Social Support and Problem Solving. The Avoidance Scale consisted of Distancing and Emotional Reaction. Peers were asked to complete the scale describing how they thought specific students would cope in specific situation. The questionnaires were completed in groups with research assistants reading the questions and monitoring students' responses. This study indicated significant effects for gender. Girls using more problem solving and support-seeking coping than boys, while boys used more distancing and externalizing coping than girls.

Mantzucopoulos (1990) used the *Academic Coping Inventory* to measure the coping of elementary school children. This self-report instrument assessed problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies and generated descriptions of four coping dimensions: positive coping, projection coping, denial coping, and anxiety amplification. Students were divided into four groups based on their predominant coping style, with one of those groups containing students who described mixed coping strategies. The groups were then compared based on results of the *Self Perception Profile for Children*, *Attributes of Achievement Questionnaire*, and teacher ratings of behavior based on the *SNAP Hyperactivity Scale*. The results of these comparisons indicated that positive copers are more likely to have a higher sense of self-worth, think of themselves as being competent scholastic achievement, and express feeling positive and successful in peer relations.

These studies present a variety of methods of measuring children's coping. Some studies examined single situations described by the children while others rely on observations by parents or teachers. The majority of instruments used were designed for adult populations and used with children. The measurement of coping skills in children provides an opportunity for development of an instrument that is brief but effectively address children's coping in situations that children actually experience.

Recently an instrument was developed that utilized teacher-generated situations and teacher observations of coping strategies to measure the adaptive or maladaptive coping styles of elementary students (Cupp, 1994). Called the *Academic and Social Coping Inventory* (ASCI), this instrument measures Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping based on teacher descriptions of student behaviors. Teachers indicate how frequently each student utilizes each of four Adaptive Coping Strategies, (Seeks Assistance, Defines Problem, Plans Solution and Executes Plan), and four Maladaptive Coping Strategies, (Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, Displacement and Projection). The scores on each of these strategies combine to generate Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping Styles for both academic and social situations. The ASCI has proved psychometrically sound with excellent test-retest reliability (.80) and high correlation with Zeitlin's CI (.64 and .62 for ASCI Academic Score and ASCI Social Score compared to CI's Adaptive Behavior Index Score).

The ASCI has successfully discriminated differing coping styles in learning disabled (LD), seriously emotionally disturbed (SED), and gifted children when these students were compared to peers in regular education (Dickinson, Dawson, Bellar, Churchman, & Loy, 1993). One-way analysis of variance indicated significant differences between the mean scores of the different groups of students. In academic situations, regular education students utilized Defines Problem and Executes Plan strategies more frequently than LD or SED students. Regular education students utilized withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, and Displacement in academic situations more frequently than gifted students. Gifted students utilized Seeks Assistance more frequently than SED students, utilized Defines Problem more frequently than LD and SED students, and utilized Executes Plan more frequently than LD, SED and regular education students. LD students utilized Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, and Displacement strategies more frequently than gifted students. SED students utilized Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, and Projection strategies more frequently than LD, gifted, and regular education students. SED

students also utilized Displacement strategies more frequently than gifted and regular education students.

In social situations, gifted students utilized Seeks Assistance more than SED students. Gifted students also utilized Plans Solution and Executes Plan more frequently than LD, SED, and regular education students. Regular education students utilized Oppositional/Emotional strategies more than gifted students and Plans Solution and Executes Plan more frequently than SED students. LD students utilized Withdrawal and Oppositional/Emotional strategies more frequently than gifted students and utilized Executes Plan more frequently than SED students. SED students utilized Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, and Projection strategies more frequently than LD, gifted and regular education students and utilized Displacement more frequently than gifted and regular education students.

The psychometrically-sound ASCI has identified coping styles in special population. These uses imply that the ASCI addresses both the trait-like perspective of the CI on coping style and the learned-response approach of coping strategies measured by the SCSI.

Ryan-Wenger (1990) stated that a limitation of the SCSI is the lack of racial diversity in the sample used in its development and the lack of establishment of its psychometric properties. While the psychometric properties of the ASCI have been investigated, the same lack of racial diversity occurred in its sample population (Cupp, 1994).

Ethnicity

Awareness of Ethnicity

The neglect of ethnic diversity seems to be a tradition in the American society. Levine (1971) indicated that ethnicity was not considered to be influential in coping with daily life. Since scholars looked for assimilation in American culture, they found

homogeneity among the citizens instead of recognizing the ethnic diversity. Contending that ethnicity is an ignored element in the educational curricula, he challenged that, particularly in the schools, ethnicity could be used to strengthen and enrich national development. He contended that our nation would be well-served by children trained to recognize their own self-worth and heritage while maintaining a "curiosity, excitement, and affection for their neighbor's similarities and differences" (Levine, 1971, p. 28).

In 1977, Codianni reacted to a paper by Daniel Selakovich that claimed that ethnic studies should play no role in education. Codianni carefully described the role of ethnic studies in education, calling for schools to reflect the ethnic diversity of the nation. He suggested that schools must teach ethnic concerns to promote methodology for students to develop the skills for coping with a pluralistic society in this country. Codianni called for avoiding stereotyping members of ethnic groups but training teachers to address ethnic issues, utilizing effective multi-ethnic teaching materials, and presenting a comparative approach to ethnic studies.

Later Siskind (1981) described ethnic issues in providing mental health services. She contended that the environments in which minority children are reared, particularly American Indian, Asian, African American and Hispanic children, include "oppression as nonwhite members of a racist society" (Siskind, 1981, p. 31). She further stated that the choices available to the developing white child were still denied to the minority child because of overt and covert discrimination. She indicated several components that would improve the awareness of the impact of group identity as a source of adaptive skills in coping with discrimination. These components included looking for specific explanations for behavior within an ethnic group, respecting as individual's ethnic identity, and establishing conditions to enhance the power of ethnic groups to accomplish their own goal.

McGoldrick (1982) described the intertwining of family and ethnicity and the ludicrous nature of trying to ignore ethnicity while working with families. She emphasized that ethnicity provides a dynamic force in group identification, family dynamics and belief systems. Her description implies that the impact of ethnicity begins immediately after birth as the infant establishes itself with the family unit. Isabella and Belsky (1991) have amassed a growing body of evidence based on structured observations and interviews that infants develop a sense of security when the interactions with their primary caregiver are predictable and nurturing. Avoidant behaviors in infants appear to be the result of insensitive and intrusive maternal behaviors while resistant behaviors in infants may result from maternal underinvolvement and inconsistent interactions. If there are inherent differences in how mothers of different ethnic groups interact with their infants, there may be differences in how these infants cope as they mature. In the past, these potential ethnic differences were frequently ignored. McGoldrick (1982) quoted Levine as saying, "Ethnicity can be equated along with sex and death as a subject that touches off deep unconscious feelings in most people" (McGoldrick, 1982, p. 4). The ethnic norms internalized early in life continue to impact actions, decisions and attitudes throughout life.

Therefore, McGoldrick (1982) attacked the use of the medical model of "diagnosing" a problem and "curing" the problem within the setting of family therapy when the problem is a conflict between cultures. Bandura was reported (cited in Reynolds, Elliot, Gutkin, & Witt, 1984), to have applied the same dissatisfaction with use of the medical model in assessing and solving problems in the educational setting. Both sources encourage the use of an ecological approach that examines the multiple environmental components of a situation to determine possible solutions. These solutions must retain and utilize the strengths of the ecological system in place while addressing the situations viewed as problematic by each individual. Clinical mandates that determine problems and solutions

based on preset definitions of appropriate behavior, "standard" diagnosis followed by the "routine" cure, ignore the continued impact of cultural and ecological concerns.

While issues involving counseling strategies may seem far removed from the classroom, the reality is that education must address the totality of the individual being taught. Murphy (1993) states that teaching, learning and writing are a part of each person attempting these actions. Because of this relationship, he continues, each person as an individual must be considered before the processes of teaching, learning and writing can begin. He called for skills to be defined within the classroom walls and acknowledged such an attempt by the American Association of Higher Education. Murphy (1993) calls for a calculus-type invention to measure the dynamics of teaching. This system must account for the constant motion of the boundaries of education. He calls this the calculus of intimacy (Murphy, 1993). This perspective greatly increases the scope of the responsibility of education from instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic to involvement with the development of the entire child. According to an African American folk saying, it takes an entire village to raise a child. The inference of the calculus of intimacy is that the entire village is therefore the concern of education.

Klauke (1989) indicated that studying local patterns of economic and social characteristics has become crucial for administrators serving rapidly changing communities. She cautioned that both current patterns of cultural diversity, economics, family structure and educational level and patterns reflecting future migration are essential in planning systematic responses to students' needs. She stated that since school performance is linked to social conditions, advocates should call for a network of services including health education, housing, legal and transportation assistance for at-risk and low-achieving students. Examples of such networks include low-income housing, mass transit systems, health care programs, family counseling programs and child support services. Support for at-risk students also could include modification of administrative practices to provide

flexibility for homeless families, focus attention on low-achieving students, and provide a variety of teaching methods.

Bandura (cited in Reynolds, et. al., 1984), and Spiegel (1982) advocated the use of ecological paradigms to examine behavior. Bandura favors a three-way interaction among behavior, cognition and internal events in the individual and the external environment. Spiegel (1982) expanded the ecological model to include a circular interaction among the following:

1. Universe, including the natural, non-living world;
2. Soma, naming the anatomical body of the individual;
3. Psyche, meaning the cognition and problem solving of the individual;
4. Group, including the family of the individual;
5. Society, including the religious, education, political and governmental environment;
6. Culture, including the beliefs and values of the environment (Spiegel, 1982, in McGoldrick, et. al., 1982).

While Speigel's more complex model may initially seem like it merely muddies the water of the simpler version, denying the impact of unique cultural systems tragically reduces the opportunities to learn to cope within world-wide systems. Franklin and Moss (1988) used a quotation from the National Urban League at the end of World War II to summarize the importance of the United States awareness of ethnic connectedness.

The United States must hold to the elemental principles of cooperation within a family of diversified nations, none of which can escape the obligations of world responsibility. Back of all that is planned or achieved is the fact that henceforth it is ONE WORLD OR NONE. If America's role was to lead the world toward peace and international understanding, Negro Americans had a special function to perform in carrying forward the struggle for freedom at home, for the sake of America's

role, and abroad, for the sake of the survival of the world (Franklin & Moss, 1988, p.494).

Just as we encourage and train students to identify problems, seek assistance, plan solutions and implement plans, we must be willing to analyze modern problems within the framework of the cultural coping strategies of this diverse world.

Development of Ethnic Identity

Lerner (1989) indicated that "in relationships between dominant and subordinate groups, the subordinate group members always possess a far greater understanding of dominant group members and their culture than vice versa," (Lerner, 1989, p. 6). She continues that African Americans, for example, know far more about the rules and roles of the Caucasian culture and relationships than the Caucasian knows about the African American culture. Caucasians seem to lack a sensitivity to and a knowledge of the African American culture. Lerner also cautions that each of us uses the world through a different filter, producing as many different visions as there are people. Ethnicity is one of those many filters (Lerner, 1989).

Phinney (1989) reported that Erickson has expressed the opinion that minority youth may internalize the negative views of a dominant society and develop poor self-esteem and self-hatred. In contrast, Phinney reported that Tajifel (cited in Phinney, 1989), contends that minority youth must reject this negative view of society in order to establish their own identity. Several authors agree and summarize that a theory stating that ethnic self-identity must be established before an individual can achieve a personal identity. The stages of ethnic identity begin from learning one's ethnic label and the accompanying attributes and progressing toward understanding the importance of belonging to that group (Phinney, 1989). These stages are summarized as follows:

1. Diffuse: Little or no exploration of one's ethnicity and no clear understanding of the issues.

2. Foreclosed: Little or no exploration of ethnicity, but apparent clarity about one's own ethnicity. Feelings about one's ethnicity may be either positive or negative, depending on one's socialization experiences.
3. Moratorium: Evidence of exploration accompanied by some confusion about the meaning of one's own ethnicity.
4. Achieved: Evidence of exploration, accompanied by a clear, secure understanding and acceptance of one's own ethnicity (Phinney, 1989, p. 38).

This is a far different approach from the theory that dictates when in American one should do as Americans do and actively work toward cultural assimilation. Pai (1983), clearly described the conflict between acculturation and assimilation, stating that cultural differences represent the unique coping methods found in varied societies. He stress that it is not realistic to judge a person's way of coping by the standards of either the dominant or another minority culture. He also cautioned that inflexible adherence to an individual culture's historical behaviors when living in a radically different environment can be maladaptive and self-defeating.

Pai (1983) called for individual cultures to clearly define their norms, looking for points of agreement, disagreement and conflict with other cultures. He called for the majority culture to be more aware of the nuances of the minority cultures, and that the minority cultures begin to understand that their lives are linked to the ways that other people think. This is the process of acculturation.

Hale-Benson (1990) strongly stated that "Failure to perceive Black children in the context of their cultural experience has created the expectation that they are really white children in blackface (p. 201). She continues, "If Johnny cannot read, educators generally suggest that there is an inappropriate match between his level of development and the curriculum or instructional strategies. If Willie cannot read, the appropriateness of instruction is generally not questioned. The explanation offered is that he is either

genetically inferior or culturally deprived (p. 202).“ Her plea is for an in-depth analysis of the early childhood education and care-giving of Black children in the context of their culture. She considers educational strategies that meet that cultural milieu essential for the Black student to achieve educational outcomes equal to those of white students.

An example of the difficulties faced by black students in a white curriculum involves the development of language. Since an individual must generally speak a language before effectively reading that language, Black children are faced with learning to read a “second” language, “white” English. Hale-Benson (1990) describes Labov’s study that delineates the progression of learning non-standard English. He indicated that children learn the basic grammatical rules and lexicon of a language from their parents before reaching age five. Between the ages of five and twelve, while learning to read, students develop their group vernacular. Lockavitch (1995), in his work encouraging teachers to plan specific strategies for not-yet-readers beyond first grade acknowledges the important role this progression of language development can play in learning to read. He instructs teachers to teach reading by using books written with a standard and very structured grammatical and lexiconic pattern. He encourages the use of word that are readily familiar and used by the students in everyday life. Linguistic differences complicate the process of providing such opportunities for students.

Hale-Benson (1990) acknowledges that Lebox (cited in Hale-Benson, 1990) does not agree that linguistic differences cause school difficulty, alienation and failure. Instead, he suggested that linguistic differences are a measure of the degree to which a student has bought into (or out of) the games of school. Yes, students can chose to learn standard English in school and, perhaps, reap long-term benefits. However, students also have the choice of retaining the language spoken in their culture, perhaps as a part of learning and maintaining their ethnic identity and peer group acceptance.

Neither dominant nor minority cultures in America live in the same environment in which historical cultural norms were established. Are these cultural norms effective in the changed environment? Can a culture change its norms and maintain its identity? This dilemma reflects the contrast between innate coping styles and learned coping strategies. Are there cultural coping styles that limit the learning of specific coping strategies? Perhaps developing national respect for cultural diversity and similarity is the ultimate challenge of man's cognitive ability. This challenge fits the classic definitions of intelligence that include references to the ability to cope with changes in life as one distinct measure of intellectual ability (Sattler, 1988, p. 41).

Ethnic Differences in Coping Styles

In 1993, Fad and Ryser studied elementary school students who were rated by their teachers as successful or unsuccessful in the regular school environment. Students were assigned to these two groups based on the response of their regular education teacher's response to the following question: "In general, is this student functioning successfully in mainstream classes?" (Fad & Ryser, 1993, p. 27). The successful group was compared to the unsuccessful group in regard to demographic descriptors including sex, ethnicity, grade level and socio-economic status, and social behavioral variables measured by the *School Competency Behavior Rating Scale*, (SCBRS) developed by Fad and Ryser (1993). The SCBRS includes 60 positive statement describing specific behaviors in three domains. These domains are work habits, coping skills and peer relationships. Teachers rated each student on the 60 items using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*). The data analysis determined that there were significant differences between successful and unsuccessful students based on socio-economic status and social/behavioral variables including coping skills. The coping skills that correlated highly (correlation coefficient $<.80$) to successful functioning included accepting responsibility for behavior, coping appropriately when others are upset, coping acceptably when bossed, accepting not getting

your own way, and coping acceptably when someone takes something belonging to him/her. Although behavioral descriptions of "acceptable" coping were not presented, teacher observations were made by two different teachers and seemed consistent over time. The findings indicated that students who can cope when others are upset and accept responsibility, being bossed and not getting their own way, were viewed as functioning successfully. Fad and Ryser suggested that if teachers train students in these highly rated skills, teachers would judge them to be more capable of success and the students' chances of success would be enhanced.

Kochman, who compiled his data while teaching cultural awareness courses beginning in 1966, presents the view that African Americans and Caucasians abide by different rules governing verbal interactions. He contends that African Americans believe that each individual is expected to have an opinion concerning topics of interest. Secondly, within an discussion, especially if the discussion becomes argumentative, each individual will be sufficiently moved by the "impulse toward truth" to enter the debate (Kochman, 1981, p. 29). Kochman states that the African American culture allows greater freedom to assert and express themselves, especially the spontaneous expression of feelings, than does the Caucasian culture.

Levitt, Guacci and Levitt (1992) examined the impact of social support systems on the coping skills of African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic students. This study indicated that social support was related directly to achievement and indirectly to loneliness and self-concepts. These effects varied by age and ethnicity. General patterns presented in the data appeared to hold within ethnic subgroups. However, there were enough differences to encourage caution in generalizing the results to culturally diverse groups. The amount of stress generally decreased with age and the effects of support increased. That situation suggested that the ability to use extended support resources in coping with stress increased with age. This research suggested that some of the variation by ethnic

group may be due to the significantly different sources of support within the different ethnic groups.

Moore (1986) provided an example of ethnically different support systems, coping skills and the resulting impact of performance. She studied African American children that had been adopted into either Caucasian or African American middle class families. When she measured their intellectual development, the children adopted into African American families demonstrated normal scores. The children adopted into Caucasian families demonstrated scores nearly one standard deviation above the other subjects. When searching for possible causes for such a significant difference in intellectual development, Moore looked at the helping behaviors the adoptive mothers exhibited when attempting to solve a difficult cognitive task. Moore described Caucasian adoptive mothers as tending to release tension by joking, grinning and laughing. African American adoptive mothers tended to release tension by scowling, coughing and frowning. Caucasian adoptive mothers were also more likely to generate positive evaluations of their children's problem solving attempts. This study suggested that ethnicity in the home environment influenced the style of responding to the tasks on standardized tests of cognitive development. Moore's study provided an excellent example of the impact of ethnic coping style on academic and social interaction as measured by a standardized instrument.

Denham and Groot (1992) examined the relationship between mothers' emotional expressiveness and the social-emotional competence of their preschool children. They determined that mothers' expressions of emotions and their patterns of coping with emotional influence their children's expressions of emotions, understanding of emotions and coping with emotions in a social setting. Mothers who explained negative emotions had children who were judged to be more prosocial and socially competent (Denham & Gout, 1992, p. 99). This study and others suggest that the pairing of verbal rationale for distress with clear emotional cues encourages prosocial behavior, especially when the

mothers' description of distress arouses the child's attention, generating a causal connection between the actions and the consequences of those actions for others. The expression of anger by mothers was helpful in emotional development only when anger was infrequent and expressed in a rational manner. When children experienced fairly intense, frequent and clear expressions of inwardly negative emotions like anger and sadness, the children developed an understanding of emotional situations. At the same time, tension experienced by mothers related to negative child outcomes. These findings highlight the complex relationship between parental coping skills and social-emotional development of children.

Pinderhughes (1982) addressed the cultural impact on the expression of feelings. She described the difficulty that African American families sometimes have in expressing positive feelings. She stated that these positive feelings are sometimes unspoken while anxiety, sadness, anger and rage may be more easily released. However, even these negative emotions are sometimes internalized, possibly resulting in physical illness such as hypertension and heart problems. When anxious or angry feelings are released, according to Pinderhughes, tradition may dictate the emotions to be expressed either through passive or aggressive reactions. Her description resembles the avoidant and emotional reactions described as maladaptive coping skills.

Hardy, Power and Jaedicke (1993) suggest that high levels of parental support were associated with child coping. This study utilized various surveys of family environment and parenting style to assess level of parental support, structure and coping strategies of children. The parents who were very supportive of their children but maintained a low level of structure in the home had children who used a greater variety of coping strategies. More supportive parents had children who utilized more avoidant coping strategies in situations in which they lacked control. Parents who provided a high degree of structure had children who reported using fewer aggressive coping strategies.

Foster (1987) detailed the lifestyle characteristics of minority students surviving street corner culture in inner city environments. He defined behaviors that are indigenous to survival in the home culture but frequently misunderstood in the school environment. He indicated that language, dress, running a game, aggression, physical contact, putting another person down, putting on a front and acting dramatically or sweet-talking, then yelling to get a demand met can represent street survival skills. In addition to these conflicting behaviors, urban, lower-SES African American students may interpret and appraise teacher behaviors that differently due to cultural experiences.

For example, Kochman (1981) related the story of a teacher who observed two African American male students in a loud dispute over who would sit in one desk. The two high school students took menacing and confrontation positions but did not make physical contact. Both students were sent to the school's office for fighting. Kochman continued that several African American student approached the teacher at the end of the class, confronting her about the decision to send the young men to the office. Those students saw the actions as a verbal confrontation that would end with no further escalation. The teacher saw the actions as a "fight" that had begun with loud and angry behavior. Teachers may misunderstand or misinterpret behaviors, triggering fear and reactions or punishment that is not equivalent to the inappropriate behavior. Kochman contends that in the Caucasian community, threats are interpreted as an intention to act in the immediate future and a provocative action. The African American culture recognizes the existence of threatening behavior used to make an impression on others but not lead to violent actions. "Woofing" is a common example. When individuals squarely face each other, yelling threats or profanity, with a goal of instilling fear and respect rather than fighting, the actions are called "woofing." While demonstrations of woofing are frequently observed during professional basketball games, demonstrations observed in elementary classrooms frequently leave teacher with significant concerns regarding the emotional well-being of the

students involved. The teacher may foresee physical battles resulting in long-term suspensions from school and significantly reduced opportunities for success in the academic environment. The students may be mimicking the actions they saw on the television screen or street corner.

Foster (1987) gave an ultimate example of such misunderstanding and misinterpreting behaviors by quoting the story of Emmett Louis Till. As a young teenager in 1955, he visited Mississippi from Chicago. He was lynched for not knowing his place in regard to a white woman. Although this seems to be an archaic story, data indicates that African American males are over-represented in school suspensions and special education classes in our educational systems. Foster strongly suggested that everyone working with minority youth should be instructed in these differences in ethnic coping styles and be encouraged to accept these coping styles. The goals include the following: individualization, social acceptance of risk taking, challenge and adventure, and accommodations for different learning styles.

Peck, Fox, Veldman, Payne and Cisneros-Solis (1982) examined the effects of teacher and student entry characteristics on classroom behavior and gains made during a school year in achievement, attitude toward school, self-esteem and coping skills. The results indicated that student socio-economic status (SES) and ethnicity demonstrated significant effect on student outcomes. Specific teaching strategies had different impacts on different kinds of students, especially very low-achieving, low SES minority students or high-achieving, high-status students. The authors suggested that particular sub-groups of students be monitored continually for academic and social progress to determine if the educational strategies implemented are effective. The study suggests an interactive relationship among achievement, self-esteem, and coping, with each variable having a strong effect on the others. The study suggests that effective coping skills contribute to the enhancement of self-esteem and to success in academic performance, that positive self-

esteem provides the self-confidence, initiative, and persistence to engage in learning and acquiring effective coping skills, and the success in academic achievement leads to more positive self-esteem and enhances coping skills. In spite of this interaction of self-esteem, coping skills, and academic skills, this study emphasizes that students must have the prerequisite academic skills to learn material presented and gain from educational programming.

Smallman (1991) examined the impact of gender and ethnicity in athletes' responses to life events correlating to depression, anxiety, somatic discomfort and stress. All subjects had a similar number of stressful incidents, but African American and male athletes reported significantly higher aversiveness or oppositional behavior in response to these incidents.

This shrinking world has expanding requirements for cultural interactions on a daily basis. The Walt Disney film Cool Runnings (1993) presented an example of this phenomenon by telling the story of the Jamaican bobsled team as they prepare for Olympic competition. This energetic group of young men trained in the heat of Jamaica for this winter sport. When they reached the competition area, they were tempted to model their performance style after the teams with histories of success, like the Germans or the Swiss. When attempting to instantly adopt methods of coping that were dissimilar to their inherent coping style, the team met abject failure. The Jamaican crew determined that they could be only what they were—Jamaican. They proceeded to adapt their unique cultural style to the sport of bobsledding. This style included strategies or patterns of touching, talking, smiling and making eye contact that were familiar to their daily lives. The result of including these strategies in their bobsledding style, at least in this movie adaptation, was unmitigated success. The team determined that the word "quit" had no meaning for them. They faced the world with pride, power and a desire to win rather than trying to win the friendship of the teams with more "traditional" bobsledding style. This team applied

coping strategies that included their unique cultural style and demonstrated success in terms understood by the dominant cultures.

Summary

Coping is defined as the responses made to the daily challenges and changes in life. This ability to cope may reflect the ability to apply intelligence to adjust to changing life situations. Research has indicated that coping strategies can be measured using a survey instrument completed by classroom teachers. Existing research and anecdotal evidence suggests that there are differences in the coping styles of different ethnic groups and that these differences may contribute to academic and social success.

Historical research indicated a lack of ethnic input in the curriculum and teaching strategies present in school settings. All students were expected to perform according to the standards and customs of the majority culture. Current research encourages implementing diverse cultural experiences in the school setting and selecting curricula addressing the totality of life experience and adjustment. Urban school systems are expanding the use of cultural diversion to counter the increase of violence and poverty within their environments. This study investigates ethnicity as an ecological variable impacting coping skills observed in fourth- and fifth-grade students.

Statement of the Problem

Within the milieu of economic difficulty and rising violence among children, close examination of coping strategies and instruction in coping skills are essential elements for survival and improved school success. There is reason to believe that cultural differences exist in the use of coping strategies. This project explores these differences in coping styles between African American and Caucasian students in an urban setting. The two groups of students were selected from a population of similar economic level. The two groups contained similar numbers of boys and girls. The statistical procedure accounted for differences related to gender and academic achievement in reading and math. Using the

ASCI, adaptive and maladaptive coping styles and their component strategies were compared between the two groups.

Identifying the differences in coping strategies could increase the awareness of cultural diversity as well as provide a foundation for interpreting and teaching coping skills in a culturally diverse environment. In the same manner, identifying similarities in coping strategies could improve the awareness of cultural similarity or accommodation and provide a foundation for teaching the commonality of coping as a problem-solving process.

Hypotheses

This study compared the coping styles based on composite Academic Adaptive, Academic Maladaptive, Social Adaptive, and Social Maladaptive Coping Style scores and their component strategy scores from the ASCI as reported by teachers of African American and Caucasian fourth and fifth grade students. The hypotheses for this study include the following:

- 1) There will be no difference between the composite Adaptive Academic Coping Style demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.**
- 2) There will be no difference between the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.**
- 3) There will be no difference between the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Defines Problem as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.**
- 4) There will be no difference between the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.**

- 5) There will be no difference between the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Executes Plan as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.
- 6) There will be no difference between the composite Academic Maladaptive Coping Style demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.
- 7) There will be no difference between the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.
- 8) There will be no difference between the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.
- 9) There will be no difference between the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.
- 10) There will be no difference between the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Projection as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.
- 11) There will be no difference between the composite Social Adaptive Coping Style demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.
- 12) There will be no difference between the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.

13) There will be no difference between the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Defines Problem as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.

14) There will be no difference between the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.

15) There will be no difference between the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Executes Plan as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.

16) There will be no difference between the composite Social Maladaptive Coping Style as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.

17) There will be no difference between the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.

18) There will be no difference between the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.

19) There will be no difference between the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.

20) There will be no difference between the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Projection as demonstrated by groups of African American and Caucasian students as measured by the ASCI.

CHAPTER II

Method

Subjects

The subjects of this study were 126 fourth and fifth grade students from an urban community in the Southeastern United States. These students represented two ethnic groups--African American and Caucasian. The African American group contained 64 students; the Caucasian group contained 62 students. These students were selected to match the socio-economic stratification found in the participating schools

The selected city had a population of approximately 650,000 and was served by a single school system for both the city and the surrounding county. Although the system average for participation in the Federal Free Lunch Program was approximately 25%, students were recruited from schools that had at least 60% participation in the Federal Free Lunch Program. Of the 24 elementary schools in this system, seven schools were recruited to participate in this study. One school declined to participate due to a heavy activity schedule. The six participating schools had a total of thirty-seven fourth and fifth grade teachers. Twenty-eight teachers completed sets of five questionnaires. Ten questionnaires were discarded because students were not in grades four or five. Four questionnaires were discarded because students were Hispanic rather than Caucasian or African American.

For each subject, the following demographic information was collected: gender, age, grade, participation in the free lunch program, ethnicity and recent Tennessee Comprehensive Achievement Program (TCAP) normal curve equivalent scores in reading and math. Teachers were asked to verify that participating students were regular education students who had not been determined by an M-team to have special education needs, who did not take medication for hyperactivity, and who did not have an accommodation plan in effect based on a Section 504 handicapping condition.

Definitions

For this study, the following definitions were used:

Coping Style: Coping Style is defined as the composite adaptive and maladaptive descriptions of coping measured by the *Academic and Social Coping Inventory* (ASCI). These include: Adaptive Academic Coping, Maladaptive Academic Coping, Adaptive Social Coping and Maladaptive Social Coping.

Coping Strategies: Coping Strategies are defined as the reactions to specific stressful situations that students experience. The Adaptive Coping Strategies according to the ASCI include: Seeks Assistance, Defines Problem, Plans Solution, and Executes Plan. The Maladaptive Coping Strategies according to the ASCI include: Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, Displacement and Projection.

Regular education: Regular education is defined as students being served by the standard educational program. The description of a regular education student was restricted to students who had not met M-team criteria for receiving special education services, who did not take or were believed not to take medication for hyperactivity and who did not have a handicapping condition for which a Section 504 accommodation plan had been implemented. Teachers confirmed that students selected for this study met these criteria.

Ethnicity: Ethnicity is defined as race. Teachers indicated the race of each student. In the school system studied, parents indicate the race of their children when each child is registered. This information is included in the students' permanent record and included in the computer registration for each student. Response score sheets for standardized tests are printed and individualized by the research department of this school system. During the standardized testing procedure, each classroom teacher receives a score sheet with each student's name, birth date and ethnic registration preprinted on the form. Students are considered to be "Black," "White" or "Other" for the purposes of standardized testing. When teachers identified the ethnicity of students in their class for this study, they may

have used the race printed on the student's registration or they may have determined race by observation. Bi-racial students were included in the African American group. Students identified as Hispanic were not included in this study.

African American: A student was included in the African American group if that student was viewed as African American by the teacher. Teachers used the descriptors "Black" and "African American" for these students. Bi-racial students were included in this group.

Caucasian: A student was included in the Caucasian group if that student was viewed as Caucasian by the teacher. Teachers used the descriptors "White" and "European Americans" in reference to these students.

Socio-economic status (SES): Socio-economic status is defined as the social and economic level of the student's family. Common indicators of SES are parents' level of education or family income. For this study, SES was determined by whether a student participated in the Federal Free Lunch Program. If a student received either a free or reduced price lunch, the student was considered a participant in the Federal Free Lunch Program. This participation was confirmed by the student's classroom teacher.

Instrument

The *Academic and Social Coping Inventory* (ASCI) examines the coping styles of students in grades 1 through 12 (Cupp, 1994). This scale, designed for use in schools, includes 20 items equally divided between the two domains: Academic and Social. Academic coping includes students' reactions to stress in school work and achievement. Social coping includes students' reactions to stress in school-related social situations. Each item offers options describing eight distinct coping behaviors or strategies, ranging from reactions that vent emotions to reactions that solve the problem. The strategies that are considered adaptive or problem solving include the following:

Seeks Assistance: The student seeks help in solving the problem or preventing the problem from occurring again.

Defines Problem: The student seeks to clarify the problem, the causes or consequences.

Plans Solution: The student develops a plan for solving the problem or preventing the problem from occurring again.

Executes Plan: The student implements a systematic plan to solve the problem or avoid the problem in the future.

The strategies that are considered maladaptive or emotion-focused include the following:

Withdrawal: The student sits quietly or leaves the situation without addressing the problem in any manner.

Oppositional/Emotional: The student either openly refuses to deal with the problem or reacts in an emotional manner like crying. Teacher's sometimes indicated using this strategy to describe tantrum or aggressive behavior.

Displacement: The student begins to do something not related to the problem, like drawing a picture when academic work has been assigned.

Projection: The student blames others for the problem and refuses to acknowledge any responsibility for the problem or its solution.

The teachers completing the inventory responded to each of the eight behaviors according to a Likert-type scale with the following gradations: (1) never occurs, (2) seldom occurs, (3) occasionally occurs, (4) frequently occurs and (5) always occurs. The results provided composite Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping scores for the Academic and Social domains. Using these scores, the coping style of the student was described as adaptive if the student typically asks for help, defines the problem, develops a plan or follows the plan. The coping style was described as maladaptive if the student typically

withdraws, is oppositional or emotional, displaces his energies to another activity or projects blame to others for the situation (Cupp, 1994).

Test-retest reliability of the ASCI was .80 over a four week period, according to Cupp (1994). Internal consistency ranged from .42 to .98 for the coping scales. Concurrent validity considers whether an instrument measures the same constructs as a previously developed criterion instrument (Bauseel, 1986). The concurrent validity of the ASCI was determined by comparing its scores with those of Zeitlin's *Coping Inventory* (CI) (Cupp, 1994). These correlation studies indicated significant and strong coefficients for adaptive academic ($r = .62, p < .001$), and social coping ($r = .62, p < .001$), as well as maladaptive academic ($r = -.72, p < .001$), and social coping ($r = -.72, p < .001$).

The scores on the ASCI also were correlated with achievement scores and teacher ratings of academic and social skills. Comparisons with the *Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist* (PBIC) (Cupp, 1994), indicated a significant correlation ($r = .57, p < .001$), between maladaptive scores on the ASCI and scores on this measure of maladaptive behavior. These comparisons indicate good concurrent validity for the ASCI (Cupp, 1994).

Procedure

Approval of the Research Department of the county school system in which this study was completed was obtained with the condition that neither the school system nor the individual schools would be identified in the study. Following receipt of the system's approval, principals at selected schools were contacted and their consent obtained. After individual principals had given their permission, fourth and fifth grade teachers were asked to participate in this study. Individual teachers participated voluntarily. In most cases, the researcher met each teacher, explained the research and personally encouraged teachers to volunteer. In a few cases, principals volunteered to speak to individual teachers and encouraged participation. Follow-up notes and personal contacts encouraged participation.

This study included students in two ethnic categories. Data was collected for a total of 126 students, 64 of which were African American students and 62 of which were Caucasian students. The groups were stratified according to the percentage of participation in the Federal Free Lunch Program in the schools. Approximately 66% of each group participated in this lunch program. Classroom teachers randomly selected five regular education students from their classes and completed an ASCI questionnaire for each of these five students. For each set of five students, three or four participated in the Federal Free Lunch Program; one or two did not participate in the Federal Free Lunch Program. The number of students in each classroom that participated in the Federal Free Lunch Program determined the exact number of free lunch participants enrolled in that class.

For example, a class of twenty-eight students may have had twenty-five regular education students. Of these twenty-five students, assume that eighteen participated in the free lunch program and seven did not participate. The teacher numbered these students in his/her grade book using different colored numbers to represent type of lunch participation. Because these numbers indicated approximately 70% participation in the Federal Free Lunch Program, the teacher was asked to select four student who participated in the lunch program and one who did not. Using the random numbers provided, the teacher selected four students from the free lunch group and one student for the paid lunch group. The ethnic mix of students from each class was determined by the random selection process.

The names of the students were not recorded on the ASCI questionnaires. The students were assigned numbers in the order they were selected--1, 2, 3, 4 and 5--by their teacher. Only this teacher-designated number and demographic data was recorded on the ASCI. Although the researcher offered to record TCAP normal curve equivalent scores in reading and math according on a list of selected students and the number assigned by their teacher, most teachers recorded their own standardized scores. After the TCAP scores were recorded on the front of ASCI questionnaires, the lists of students were destroyed.

Students selected by the teachers for this study were not identified in any manner other than demographic data.

Teachers independently read the instructions for rating the students' coping skills. They were encouraged to rate the students on all twenty situations even though some situations may not have occurred during the school year. In situations that had not occurred, teachers were encouraged to rate the students in the manner the teacher believed the student would behave. Teachers were asked to read all items on the ASCI at least two weeks before they rated the students. Then teachers observed the students during the two week interval to determine how they coped with academic and social stress. Next the teachers recorded responses to the ASCI questions directly on the questionnaire. The participating teachers were not identified.

Completing the first ASCI took twenty minutes or more. Subsequent ASCI questionnaires took less time. Teachers were not required to complete all ASCI questionnaires at the same time. It was suggested to the teachers that the task be completed over a period of several days, e.g., completing one ASCI per evening for one week, resulting in the completion of the five questionnaires. Several teachers indicated that completing the questionnaires in close time proximity increased the speed with which they could complete the questionnaires. . The teachers returned the completed ASCI questionnaires to the researcher for analysis.

Data Analyses

In this study, the independent variables are the two groups being studied: African American group and Caucasian group. The dependent variables are the Academic and Social Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping Styles and Coping Strategies measured by the ASCI. Adaptive Strategies include: Defines Problem, Seeks Assistance, Plans Solution, Executes Plan. Maladaptive Strategies include: Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, Displacement and Projection. Therefore, the dependent variables include the following:

four Academic Adaptive Coping Strategies, four Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategies, four Social Adaptive Coping Strategies, four Social Maladaptive Coping Strategies, and the composite Coping Styles derived from these strategy scores. These dependent variables were compared between the two ethnic groups.

Using the SAS system (Littell, Freund, & Spector, 1991), initial Chi-square analysis determined that the groups were comparable in number of males and females and participation in the Federal Free Lunch Program. However, t-tests indicated that the groups were not comparable in standardized achievement test results. Therefore, analysis of covariance was used to control for the effects of the difference in math and reading scores as well as effects of gender reported in other studies (e.g., Causey & Dubow, 1992).

Research Questions

The following is a list of the specific research questions posed in this study.

- 1) Does the mean composite Academic Adaptive Coping Style Score from the ASCI differ by race?**
- 2) Does the mean score of the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance differ by race?**
- 3) Does the mean score of the Academic Adaptive Coping strategy of Defines Problem differ by race?**
- 4) Does the mean score of the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution differ by race?**
- 5) Does the mean score of the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Executes Plan differ by race?**
- 6) Does the mean composite Academic Maladaptive Coping Style Core from the ASCI differ by race?**

- 7) Does the mean score of the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal differ by race?
- 8) Does the mean score of the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional differ by race?
- 9) Does the mean score of the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement differ by race?
- 10) Does the mean score of the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Projection differ by race?
- 11) Does the mean composite Social Adaptive Coping Style Score from the ASCI differ by race?
- 12) Does the mean score of the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance differ by race?
- 13) Does the mean score of the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Defines Problem differ by race?
- 14) Does the mean score of the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution differ by race?
- 15) Does the mean score of the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Executes Plan differ by race?
- 16) Does the mean composite Social Maladaptive Coping Style score from the ASCI differ by race?
- 17) Does the mean score of the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal differ by race?
- 18) Does the mean score of the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional differ by race?
- 19) Does the mean score of the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement differ by race?

20) Does the mean score of the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Projection differ by race?

CHAPTER III

Results

Data Analysis

This study compared the Academic and Social Coping of a group of fourth and fifth grade African American students to a similar group of Caucasian students. The dependent variables compared for these two groups were the total Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping Styles in both academic and social situations as well as the four adaptive and four maladaptive Coping Strategies that are components of each of these styles. The Adaptive Coping Strategies included: Defines Problem, Seeks Assistance, Plans Solution and Executes Plan. The Maladaptive Coping Strategies included: Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, Displacement and Projection.

Chi-Square analysis and T-tests, calculated using the SAS system (Littell, Freund, & Spector, 1991), were used to determine if these groups of African American and Caucasian students differed in regard to socio-economic level, numbers of males and females, and achievement in reading and math. Socio-economic level, as determined by participation in the Federal Free Lunch Program, was comparable for the two groups, $X^2(1, N = 126) = 0.25, p > .05$. The numbers of males and females in each group was also comparable, $X^2(1, N = 126) = 0.526, p > .05$. However, reading and math achievement differed significantly between the African American and Caucasian groups. On the reading achievement tests, the Caucasian group scored significantly higher ($M = 51.56$) than did the African American group ($M = 38.45$), $t(109) = -4.0, p < .0001$. On the math achievement tests, the Caucasian group scored significantly higher ($M = 54.32$) than did the African American group ($M = 42.10$), $t(105.2) = -3.88, p < .0002$.

Analysis of covariance was used to control for the effects of this difference in math and reading scores as well as for the effects of sex reported in other studies (Causey &

Dubow, 1992). Means, standard deviations, adjusted means, and f values for each coping style and the component coping strategies are shown in Tables 1 through 4, located adjacent to the research questions. Because of the number of repeated analyses in this study, the Bonferroni correction for repeated analyses was used with a level of significance adjusted to .0025.

Research Question Analysis

1) Do the mean composite Academic Adaptive Coping Style Scores from the ASCI differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 1, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.34$) and the Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 2.74$) groups when examining Academic Adaptive Coping Style. The null hypothesis of no difference was accepted at the .0025 level. For Academic Adaptive Coping Style, race and math achievement accounted for less than 1% of the variance. Sex accounted for 5% of the variance, and reading achievement accounted for 4% of the variance.

2) Do the mean scores of the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 1, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.42$) and the Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 2.51$) groups when examining the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance. The null hypothesis of no difference was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance, race accounted for less than 1% of the variance. Reading and math achievement each accounted for 1% of the variance, and sex accounted for 6% of the variance.

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, adjusted means and *f* values for
Academic Adaptive Coping Style and Strategies

Type of Coping	Maximum possible	African American		Caucasian		<i>f</i> value
		Mean	Adjusted mean	Mean	Adjusted mean	
		(SD)		(SD)		
		N=64	n=58	N=62	n=53	
Academic Adaptive	5	2.4	2.34	2.8	2.74	0.57
		(1.2)		(1.10)		
Seeks Assistance	5	2.45	2.42	2.6	2.51	0.02
		(1.08)		(1.09)		
Defines Problem	5	2.47	2.42	2.88	2.82	0.71
		(1.10)		(1.10)		
Plans Solution	5	2.34	2.27	2.84	2.80	1.38
		(1.17)		(1.18)		
Executes Plan	5	2.36	2.29	2.88	2.84	1.06
		(1.22)		(1.23)		

Note: Style is in bold.

3) Do the mean scores of the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Defines Problem differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 1, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\underline{M} = 2.42$) and the Caucasian ($\underline{M} = 2.82$) groups when examining the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Defines Problem. The null hypothesis of no difference was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Defines Problem, math achievement accounted for less than 1% of the variance, race accounted for 1% of the variance, and sex and reading achievement each accounted for 5% of the variance.

4) Do the mean scores of the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 1, there was no significant difference was found between the African American ($\underline{M} = 2.27$) and Caucasian ($\underline{M} = 2.80$) groups when examining the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution. The null hypothesis of no difference was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution, race and math achievement accounted for 1% of the variance. reading achievement accounted for 4% of the variance, and sex accounted for 5% of the variance.

5) Do the mean scores of the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Executes Plan differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 1, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\underline{M} = 2.29$) and Caucasian ($\underline{M} = 2.84$) groups when examining the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of Executes Plan. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Academic Adaptive Coping Strategy of

Table 2
Means, standard deviations, adjusted means and *f* values for
Academic Maladaptive Coping Style and Strategies

Type of Coping	Maximum possible	African American		Caucasian		<i>f</i> value
		Mean	Adjusted Mean	Mean	Adjusted Mean	
		(SD)	mean	(SD)	mean	
		N=64	n=58	N=62	n=53	
Academic Maladaptive	5	2.07	2.11	1.84	1.76	3.45
		(.96)		(.81)		
Withdrawal	5	2.10	2.17	1.77	1.68	3.55
		(1.22)		(.82)		
Oppositional/Emotional	5	2.62	2.32	1.88	1.79	5.74
		(1.14)		(1.02)		
Displacement	5	1.91	1.90	1.79	1.70	1.38
		(.96)		(.86)		
Projection	5	2.03	2.06	1.93	1.86	1.06
		(1.01)		(.89)		

Note: Style is in **bold**.

Executes Plan, race and math achievement accounted for 1% of the variance, sex accounted for 5% of the variance, and reading achievement accounted for 6% of the variance.

6) Do the mean composite Academic Maladaptive Coping Style scores from the ASCI differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 2, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.07$) and Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 1.84$) groups when examining the Academic Maladaptive Coping Style. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Academic Maladaptive Coping Style, math achievement accounted for 2% of the variance, race and reading achievement each accounted for 3% of the variance, and sex accounted for 5% of the variance.

7) Do the mean scores of the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 2, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.17$) and Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 1.68$) groups when examining the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal, math achievement accounted for less than 1% of the variance, race and reading accounted for 3% of the variance, and sex accounted for 9% of the variance.

8) Do the mean scores of the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 2, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.32$) and Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 1.79$) groups when examining the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional, math achievement accounted for 2% of the

variance, reading achievement accounted for 3% of the variance, sex accounted for 4% of the variance, and race accounted for 5% of the variance.

9) Do the mean scores of the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 2, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M}$ = 1.90 and Caucasian ($\bar{M}$ = 1.70) groups when examining the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement, race and reading and math achievement each accounted for 1% of the variance, and sex accounted for 6% of the variance.

10) Do the mean scores of the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Projection differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 2, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M}$ = 2.06 and Caucasian ($\bar{M}$ = 1.86) groups when examining the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Projection. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Academic Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Projection, sex accounted for less than 1% of the variance, race accounted for 1% of the variance, and reading and math achievement each accounted for 6% of the variance.

11) Do the mean composite Social Adaptive Coping Style Scores from the ASCI differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 3, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M}$ = 2.02) and Caucasian ($\bar{M}$ = 2.60) groups when examining the composite Social Adaptive Coping Style. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Social Adaptive Coping Style, math achievement

Table 3
Means, standard deviations, adjusted means and *f* values for Social Adaptive Coping Style and Strategies

Type of Coping	Maximum possible	African American		Caucasian		<i>f</i> value
		Mean	Adjusted	Mean	Adjusted	
		(SD)	mean	(SD)	mean	
		N=64	n=58	N=62	n=53	
Social Adaptive	5	2.07	2.02	2.62	2.60	4.43
		(1.10)		(1.09)		
Seek Assistance	5	1.98	1.94	2.44	2.39	4.15
		(1.02)		(1.06)		
Defines Problem	5	2.08	2.03	2.65	2.62	4.47
		(1.05)		(1.15)		
Plans Solution	5	2.13	2.07	2.69	2.68	4.06
		(1.18)		(1.18)		
Executes Plan	5	2.10	2.04	2.70	2.71	3.89
		(1.25)		(1.17)		

Note: Style is in bold.

accounted for less than 1% of the variance, reading achievement accounted for 1% of the variance, and race and sex each accounted for 4% of the variance.

12) Do the mean scores of the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 3, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\underline{M} = 1.94$) and Caucasian ($\underline{M} = 2.39$) groups when examining the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Seeks Assistance, math and reading achievement accounted for less than 1% of the variance, race accounted for 4% of the variance, and sex accounted for 5% of the variance.

13) Do the mean scores of the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Defines Problem differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 3, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\underline{M} = 2.03$) and Caucasian ($\underline{M} = 2.62$) groups when examining the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Defines Problem. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Defines Problem, math achievement accounted for less than 1% of the variance, reading achievement accounted for 1% of the variance, sex accounted for 3% of the variance, and race accounted for 4% of the variance.

14) Do the mean scores of the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 3, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\underline{M} = 2.07$) and Caucasian ($\underline{M} = 2.68$) groups when examining the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Plans Solution, reading achievement accounted for less than 1% of the variance, math

achievement accounted for 1% of the variance, race accounted for 3% of the variance, and sex accounted for 4% of the variance.

15) Do the mean scores of the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Executes Plan differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 3, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.04$) and Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 2.71$) groups when examining the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Executes Plan. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .05 level. For the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Executes Plan, reading and math achievement accounted for 1% of the variance and race and sex accounted for 3% of the variance.

16) Do the mean composite Social Maladaptive Coping Style scores from the ASCI differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 4, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.26$) and Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 1.79$) groups when examining the composite Social Maladaptive Coping Style. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Social Maladaptive Coping Style, math achievement accounted for 2% of the variance, reading achievement accounted for 3% of the variance, and race and sex each accounted for 6% of the variance.

17) Do the mean scores of the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 4, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.11$) and Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 1.68$) groups when examining the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal, math achievement accounted for less than 1% of the variance, race accounted

Table 4
**Means, standard deviations, adjusted means and *f* values for Social
 Maladaptive Coping Style and Strategies**

Type of Coping	Maximum possible	African American		Caucasian		<i>f</i> value
		Mean	Adjusted	Mean	Adjusted	
		(SD)	mean	(SD)	mean	
		N=64	n=58	N=62	n=53	
Social Maladaptive	5	2.24	2.26	1.91	1.79	8.13
		(.87)		(.75)		
Withdrawal	5	2.07	2.11	1.82	1.68	2.48
		(1.09)		(.77)		
Oppositional/Emotional	5	2.48	2.53	1.99	1.84	*9.95
		(1.15)		(1.08)		
Displacement	5	1.95	1.93	1.86	1.76	1.31
		(.89)		(.82)		
Projection	5	2.44	2.47	1.99	1.90	*11.23
		(.92)		(.92)		

* $p < .0025$

Note: Style in **bold**.

for 2% of the variance, reading achievement accounted for 4% of the variance, and sex accounted for 9% of the variance.

18) Do the mean scores of the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 4, a significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.53$) and Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 1.84$) groups when examining the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional. The null hypothesis was rejected at the .0025 level. For the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Oppositional/Emotional, math achievement accounted for 3% of the variance, reading achievement and sex each accounted for 4% of the variance, and race accounted for 8% of the variance.

19) Do the mean scores of the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 4, no significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 1.93$) and Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 1.76$) groups when examining the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .05 level. For the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Displacement, reading and math achievement accounted for less than 1% of the variance, race accounted for 1% of the variance, and sex accounted for 7% of the variance.

20) Do the mean scores of the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Projection differ by race?

Using the analysis of covariance, as shown in Table 4, a significant difference was found between the African American ($\bar{M} = 2.47$) and Caucasian ($\bar{M} = 1.90$) groups when examining the Social Adaptive Coping Strategy of Projection. The null hypothesis was accepted at the .0025 level. For the Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Projection, sex

and reading achievement accounted for 4% of the variance, math achievement accounted for 7% of the variance, and race accounted for 8% of the variance.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

Summary

Research questions in this study examined the academic and social coping of a group of African American students and a group of Caucasian students. These were fourth and fifth grade students selected from elementary schools with over sixty percent participation in the Federal Free Lunch Program. Although the groups were similar in the numbers of boys and girls each contained, the data was analyzed to account for differences in coping due to gender as well as reading and math achievement. Teachers used the ASCI to rate these students on Academic and Social Coping.

Coping skills impact education because teachers may view students who accept responsibility and act appropriately as better students (Fad & Ryser, 1993). Therefore, the coping skills observed by the teacher may impact the teacher's perception of the achievement level of the students. However, the coping skills may differ due to cultural dynamics. Studies have indicated that increased cultural diversity throughout our world can no longer be ignored but must be acknowledged as impacting daily life. The historical perspective demanding loss of cultural identity when living in proximity to a dominant culture has been declared a deterrent to individual development. Instead of following the edict of "when in Rome, do as the Romans do," individuals are encouraged to absorb their own cultural identity to solidify their awareness of self.

This study examined Adaptive Coping and Maladaptive Coping in academic and social situations using the *Academic and Social Coping Inventory* (ASCI). Adaptive Coping consists of the utilizing the following strategies to solve a problem: Seeks Assistance, Defines Problem, Plans Solution and Executes Plan. Maladaptive Coping consists of the following strategies in reaction to a problem: Withdrawal, Oppositional/Emotional, Displacement and Projection.

The results indicated no significant differences in overall Academic or Social Adaptive or Maladaptive Coping Styles between the African American and Caucasian students by race. African American and Caucasian students demonstrated comparable Academic and Social Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping Styles.

When analyzing the Academic Coping Strategies, the components of the Academic Coping Styles, there were no significant differences between the groups. In the ten academic situations that were measured by the ASCI, African American students and Caucasian student demonstrated comparable use of coping strategies.

When analyzing the Social Coping Strategies, components of the Social Coping Styles, there were no significant differences in Social Adaptive Coping Strategies. In social situations, African American students and Caucasian students demonstrated comparable use of coping strategies. When analyzing the Maladaptive Social Coping Strategies, significant differences were found in the Maladaptive Social Coping Strategies of Oppositional/Emotional and Projection. African American students displayed more oppositional and/or emotional reactions and projected blame to someone or something else more frequently than Caucasian students. These results suggest more reactive behavior for African American students.

The results of this study indicate that the African American and Caucasian students utilize more similar coping styles in academic situations than in social situations. These finding suggest that the groups are similar in their use of adaptive strategies in academic situations. However, the increased utilization of oppositional and/or emotional reactions and projection by African American students in social situations parallels the opinions of Pinderhughes (1982) and Foster (1987) that suggest cultural differences in the expression of emotional responses.

Reasons for Differences

While there may be cultural differences in the use of coping strategies and styles, the reasons for the similarities and differences found in this study may rest with the methodology used. The generalized definition of low socio-economic status, teacher bias, and interaction effects may be reflected in this study to a greater amount than ethnic differences in coping.

Research suggests differences in coping based on race. This study indicated that African American students utilized oppositional or emotional and projection coping strategies more than comparable Caucasian students. This difference may be due to cultural differences between African American and Caucasian students.

Because this study utilized only participation in the Federal Free Lunch Program as to determine socio-economic status, these groups of students may represent a mix of single-parent families, families with two working parents in low paying jobs, children living with other relatives or in foster care, and homeless families. There may be a variety of educational level represented within these groups. If further data concerning family dynamics, economics, and education levels had been included in the demographic data, different analyses may have occurred.

Within the ASCI, questions regarding academic situations are grouped together and presented before the questions regarding social situations. This format may produce a teacher bias by requiring the teacher to consider the academic success of a student prior to considering social interactions. Counter balancing the administration of the academic and social situations or intermingling the academic and social situations may reduce this methodological difficulty.

This study resulted in the analysis of 20 research questions. Because the coping styles are composites of the coping strategies, there may be spurious overlap within these

analyses. This overlap and the interaction effects of multiple variables, including the variables in this study and those recommend for inclusion in further studies, indicate there may be multiple explanations for variability in the use of coping styles and strategies.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. These limitations include the small number of subjects, the lack of generalizability, the impact of possible rater cultural bias, and the difficulty in obtaining questionnaire responses and standardized test scores.

The sample studied in this research included 126 students. However, achievement scores were available for only 111 of these students. Therefore, the data used for the analysis of covariance came from the sample of 111 students. This is a relatively small number of students. There may be variability in this sample that would not be present in a larger sample.

This sample was selected from elementary schools with more that 60 percent of the student population on the Federal Free Lunch Program. This sample represented only the lower socio-economic level present in this school system. It is possible that the students from these lower SES families face stresses in home and family situations that are the result of their economic status or that the parents of these students model less successful coping on a daily basis, resulting in lower economic status. The increased level of stress or reduced exposure to a variety of coping strategies in the home environment may impact the ability of these students to cope with academic and social challenges. Therefore, the results of this research are not generalizable to other schools in the same school system or to schools in other communities. As previously noted, there may also be great variability within the groups selected for this study regarding family dynamics, economic level and educational levels.

The teacher responses to the ASCI represent perceptions of students' behavior and not actual observations in situations. Although reliability of this rating instrument has been

documented (Cupp, 1994), the cultural expectations of the teachers may have added an element of "self-fulfilling prophecy" and/or cultural interpretation of behavior to teacher responses to the questionnaire. A study establishing the interrater reliability of the ASCI is suggested utilizing video taped situations evaluated by several teachers. A study of interrater reliability would address the possibility of teacher bias in the appraisal of situations and use of coping strategies.

There was great difficulty in obtaining standardized achievement scores. Although Normal Curve Equivalent scores were requested, one teacher recorded scores followed by the "%ile" sign. Because the "%ile" was present, the researcher was able to adjust these scores accordingly. It is possible that other teachers recorded percentile scores but did not indicate that fact on their ASCI questionnaires. Therefore, it is possible that achievement data may be contaminated by inaccurately reported scores.

Implications

This study implies that there are more similarities than differences in coping between African American and Caucasian students. African American students demonstrated comparable Academic and Social Coping Styles compared to Caucasian students. When examining the component coping strategies for Academic Coping, there were no significant differences. When examining the component coping strategies for Social Coping, African American students demonstrated more Oppositional/Emotional and Projection strategies than Caucasian students.

In addition to the variance accounted for by race, there were significant differences in the Academic and Social Maladaptive Coping Strategy of Withdrawal accounted for by sex. In this study, male students utilized withdrawing from academic or social problems significantly more frequently than female students.

Based on these results, these groups of low socio-economic status African American and Caucasian students demonstrated similar academic coping with social coping

differing in the use of oppositional and emotional reactions and projecting blame. A gender difference in the use of withdrawing as a coping strategy was also suggested.

These results indicate suspected variances in coping skills accounted for by ethnic group and gender. However, there are methodological weaknesses in the study that may impact these results. It is essential that these results be considered in light of the confounding variables not considered in this study.

Further study is suggested regarding impact of cultural parenting styles on coping skills and the effectiveness of training students and parents in coping strategies. Community standards and examples of coping impact students as models of problem solving or emotional reaction to difficult situations. Increasing achievement levels for students correlates with increased confidence in coping. As the perspective of being able to use personal resources to solve problems increases, more adaptive coping is demonstrated. The challenge is to provide these opportunities for all students, their parents and communities.

References

References

- Bausell, R. B. (1986). A Practical Guide to Conducting Empirical Research. New York: Harper & Row.
- Ben-Porath, Y. S., Waller, N. G., Butcher, J. N. (1991). Assessment of coping: An empirical illustration of the problem of inapplicable items. Journal of Personality assessment. 57:1, 162-176.
- Causey, D. L., Dubow, E. F. (1992). Development of a self-report coping measure for elementary children. Journal of Clinical Child Psychology. 21:1, 47-59.
- Cheek, D. K. (1976). Assertive Black...Puzzled White. San Luis Obispo: Impact.
- Codianni, A. V. (1977, November). Reaction paper to "ethnicity and the schools." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Cincinnati, OH. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 150 061)
- Cupp, J. D. (1994). The relationship of academic and social coping to achievement and social adaptability. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville 1993) Dissertation Abstracts International. 55, 1170.
- Denham, S. A., & Grout, L. (1992). Mothers' emotional expressiveness and coping: Relations with preschool social-emotional competence. Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs. 118:1, 73-101.
- Dickinson, D. J., Dawson, M., Bellar, L., Churchman, L. & Loy, K. (1993). Academic and social coping of regular and special education students. Unpublished manuscript. University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
- Dise-Lewis, J. E. (1988). The life events and coping inventory: An assessment of stress in children. Psychosomatic Medicine. 50, 484-499.
- Fad, K. S. & Ryser, G. R. (1993). Social/behavioral variables related to success in general education. RASE: Remedial and Special Education, 14, 25-35.

- Fordham, S. (1985, December). Black students' school success: Coping with the "burden of 'acting white.'" Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 281 948)
- Foster, H. L. (1987, April). Education and bias related to violence. Presentation to the Governor's Task Force on Bias Related to Violence, Buffalo, NY. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 284 920)
- Franklin, J. H. & Moss, A. A., Jr. (1988). From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hale-Benson, J. (1990). Visions for children: African-American early childhood education program. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 5, 199-213.
- Halmhuber, N. L., Paris, S. G. (1993). Perceptions of competence and control and the use of coping strategies by children with disabilities. Learning Disability Quarterly, 16, 93-111.
- Hardy, D., Power, R., & Jaedicke, S. (1993). Examining the relation of parenting to children's coping with everyday stress. Child Development, 64, 1829-1841.
- Houser, R. & Seligman, M. (1991). Differences in coping strategies used by fathers of adolescents with disabilities and fathers of adolescents without disabilities. Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling, 22, 1, 7-10.
- Isabella, R. A. & Belsky, J. (1991). Interactional synchrony and the origins of infant-mother attachment: A replication study. Child Development, 62, 2, 373-384.
- Klauke, A. (1989). Coping with changing demographics. ERIC Digest Series Number EA45. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 315 865)
- Kochman, T. (1981). Black and White Styles in Conflict. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

- Lazarus, R. S., (1993). From psychological stress to the emotions: A history of changing outlooks. Annual Review of Psychology, 44, 1-21.
- Lazarus, R. S. & Folkman, S. (1984). Stress, appraisal and coping. New York: Springer.
- Lazarus, R. S. & Launier, R. (1978). Stress-related transactions between person and environment. In L. A. Pervin & Lewis, (Eds.), Perspectives in Interactional Psychology (pp. 287-327). New York: Plenum.
- Lerner, H. G. (1989). The Dance of Intimacy. New York: Harper & Row.
- Levine, I. M. (1971). Ethnicity and American education. Working Paper Series Number II. New York: American Jewish Community Institute on Pluralism and Group Identity. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 128 541)
- Levitt, M. J., Guacci, N., & Levitt, J. L. (1992, April). Stressful life events, social support, and achievement: A study of three grade levels in a multicultural environment. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 348 451)
- Lockavitch, J. (1995, February). How to reach the not-yet reader. Inservice presented for the Knox County Schools. Knoxville, TN.
- Mantzicopoulos, P. (1990). Coping with school failure: Characteristics of students employing successful and unsuccessful coping strategies. Psychology in the Schools, 27, 138-143.
- McGoldrick, M. (1982). Ethnicity and family therapy: An overview. in McGoldrick, M., Pearce, J. K., Giordano, J. (Ed.). Ethnicity and Family Therapy (pp. 3-30). New York: Guilford Press.
- McGoldrick, M., Pearce, J. K., Giordano, J., (Ed.) (1982). Ethnicity and Family Therapy. (pp.108-122). New York: Guilford Press.

- Mishel, M. H., Sorenson, D. S. (1993). Revision of the Ways of Coping Checklist for a clinical population. Western Journal of Nursing Research. 15:1, 59-74.
- Moore, E. G. (1986). Family socialization and the IQ test performance of traditionally and transracially adopted Black children. Developmental Psychology, 22, 317-326.
- Moos, R. (1976). Human Adaptation: Coping with Life Crises. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath.
- Murphy, R. J. (1993). The Calculus of Intimacy: A Teaching. Ann Arbor, MI: Cushing-Malloy.
- Pai, Y. (1983, April). When is a difference not a difference? Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Asian and Pacific American Education, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 231 889)
- Peck, R. P., Fox, R. B., Veldman, D. J., Payne, G. C., & Cisneros-Solis M. G. (1982). The interplay of teacher and student characteristics that affect Student learning, attitudes, and coping skills. Final report of the Teaching-Learning Interaction Study. Volumes I-III. Texas University, Austin. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 251 454)
- Phinney, J. S. (1989). Stages of ethnic identity development in minority group adolescents. Journal of Early Adolescence, 9, 34-49. (Presented at the Fifth Biennial Conference on Adolescent Research, Tucson, AZ)
- Pinderhughes, E. (1982). Afro-American Families and the Victim system in McGoldrick, M., Pearce, J. K., Giordano, J. (Ed.). Ethnicity and Family Therapy. (pp.108-122). New York: Guilford Press.
- Pratt, D. (1980). Curriculum: Design and Development. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
- Reynolds, C. R., Elliot, S. N., Gurkin, T. B., Witt, J. C. (1984). School Psychology: Essentials of Theory and Practice. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

- Ryan-Wenger, N. (1990). Development and psychometric properties of the schoolagers' coping strategies inventory. Nursing Research, 39:6. 344-349.
- Sattler, J. M. (1988). Assessment of Children. San Diego: Jerome M. Sattler.
- Siskind, J. A. (1981). Cross-cultural issues in mental health: Minority perspectives. Paper originally presented at the Annual Community-Clinical Workshop, Landham, MD, November, 1976. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 222 608)
- Smallman, E. and others. (1991). Ethnic and gender differences in student-athletes' responses to stressful life events. Journal of College Student Development, 32, 230-35.
- Speigel, J. (1982). An Ecological Model of Ethnic Families in M. McGoldrick, J. K. Pearce & J. Giordano (Eds.). Ethnicity and Family Therapy (pp. 31-51). New York: Guilford.
- Stern, M. & Zevon, M. A. (1990). Stress, coping, and family environment: The adolescent's response to naturally occurring stressors. Journal of Adolescent Research, 5:3, 290-305.
- Walt Disney Productions. (1993). Cool Runnings [Film]. Buena Vista, CA: Disney Productions.

Appendix

The Academic and Social Coping Inventory (ASCI)

Jann D. Cupp

Donald J. Dickinson

Purpose

This inventory is designed to assess school-based coping skills for children in grades 1-9. In order to be as practical as possible, the items and coping styles in this inventory are taken from actual classroom situations. The ASCI measures how well children cope with academic and social problems which they encounter in the schools. The ASCI provides information on the Academic and Social Coping of children, including four adaptive and four maladaptive styles. The ASCI can serve as a curriculum for teaching adaptive coping as each situation (item) can be used as a hypothetical scenario to directly teach effective coping. (See the ASCI handbook for specifics on teaching coping strategies.)

Instructions

1. Read the 20 ASCI situations a week or two before rating the students. Observe the students on the 20 situations to see how the children cope.
2. It should require no longer than 15 minutes to rate the first student and no more than 10 minutes for each of the remaining students. After rating the first student, you need read only the underlined portion of the situation to recall all the item. Doing this will save you time.
3. Please rate each item by indicating the extent to which the student engages in the specific coping behavior. Rate your responses on a scale of 1 to 5: 1 = never occurs, 2 = seldom occurs, 3 = occasionally occurs, 4 = frequently occurs, 5 = always occurs. Please note that the specific coping behaviors are only examples, and the students need only do "such things as" the indicated examples.

Example:

1. When/if the student makes a mistake, he/she:

- a. Isolates him/herself.
- b. Cries.
- c. Works on another task unrelated to the task at hand or laughs about it.
- d. Blames others.
- e. Asks for help with the problem or seeks support.
- f. Identifies, defines, or clarifies the problem.
- g. Investigates alternatives or tries new ideas to solve the problem.
- h. Follows through with the plan to solve the problem and changes plan when necessary.

Simply rate each blank 1-5. For example, Johnny never isolates himself, so choice a. is marked 1. He never cries or does anything unrelated, so choice b. and c. are also 1. He frequently blames others, so d. is marked 4. He seldom asks for help so this is marked 2 ... and so on. NOTE: If an entire item does not apply to the student at all, simply mark all items "never occurs" which is a rating of 1.

Code Number _____

Lunch Free Reduced Paid

This instrument may not be reproduced without written permission - April 1995.

TCAP NCE

date _____

Reading _____

Math _____

Grade _____

Age _____

Ethnicity _____

Sex _____

Remember: 1 = never occurs 2 = seldom occurs 3 = occasionally occurs 4 = frequently occurs 5 = always occurs

Academic Coping

1. When/if the student makes a low score, he/she does such things as:

- ☐ Withdraws, has nothing to do with others.
- ☐ Pouts, cries, throws temper tantrum, or refuses to do work.
- ☐ Works on another task completely unrelated to the problem (e.g., drawing instead of working math problems) or makes light of the situation.
- ☐ Blames others for his/her low score.
- ☐ Asks the teacher or peers to help find ways to improve performance on the task and/or seeks support.
- ☐ Asks what he/she did wrong.
- ☐ Develops such strategies as rereading, being prepared, or using reference material.
- ☐ Follows a plan he/she has developed to solve the problem and changes plan if necessary.

2. When/if student is asked to make an oral reading/presentation and is not successful because he/she is not prepared, he/she does such things as:

- ☐ Runs away or isolates him/herself.
- ☐ Cries, strikes out at peers, or makes angry statements.
- ☐ Performs some other task which has nothing to do with the oral presentation or jokes about it.
- ☐ States that his/her mistake was someone else's fault.
- ☐ Seeks advice from the teacher or peers on how he/she may improve his/her presentations in the future and/or seeks understanding.
- ☐ Asks what was wrong with the presentation.
- ☐ Considers other strategies such as note taking, practice, outlining, or focusing on the content of presentations and not on his/herself.
- ☐ Follow through with a plan for improving his/her future presentations and changes plan when appropriate.

3. When/if the student has a large amount of work to do in short period of time, he/she does such things as:

- ☐ Runs away from the task or becomes withdrawn and quiet.
- ☐ Acts angry, frightened, frustrated, refuses to work, or makes "smart" remarks.
- ☐ Starts working on a task/activity which has not been assigned or laughs it off.
- ☐ States that other student(s), teacher, or parents are keeping him/her from completing work on time.
- ☐ Asks the teacher or other students for ideas or assistance in completing the work on time and/or seeks support.
- ☐ Determines what has to be done and the time left to do it.
- ☐ Develops other strategies such as time management and/or developing priorities to meet the goal.
- ☐ Follows the steps of a plan to get the job done on time and corrects plan when necessary.

4. When/if faced with an assignment that requires a novel and creative effort, the student does such things as:

- ☐ Sits by him/herself without responding.
- ☐ Appears angry or frustrated.

- ☐ Begins tasks which are unrelated to the assignment or talks way out of assignment.
- ☐ States that someone else is keeping him/her from doing a good job or that instructions are not clear.
- ☐ Asks for advice or ideas on how to complete the assignment and/or encouragement.
- ☐ Asks for clarification of the assignment.
- ☐ Considers other strategies such as reference materials, ideas from others, or starts with a small step.
- ☐ Follows a plan to complete the tasks and changes strategy when plan does not work.

5. When/if the student is faced with an assignment that requires independent work, he/she does such things as:

- ☐ Withdraws from the task or daydreams.
- ☐ Cries or appears frightened, hesitant, or angry.
- ☐ Does something completely different or jokes about the situation.
- ☐ Accuses someone else of interference.
- ☐ Asks the teacher or others for advice on how best to approach the task alone and/or seeks encouragement.
- ☐ Identifies what must be done in order to work independently.
- ☐ Develops a strategy that allows the student to complete independent work (working away from others, avoiding distractions, etc.).
- ☐ Implements the plan for independent work and modifies when necessary.

6. When/if the student is faced with repeated failure (several assignments in a row, consistently low grades, etc.), he/she does such things as:

- ☐ Isolates him/herself from the rest of the class.
- ☐ Shows anger, frustration, or refuses to work.
- ☐ Works on tasks completely unrelated to assignments or makes the failure seem unimportant.
- ☐ Claims that others are at fault for his/her failure.
- ☐ Admits the problem and seeks advice for correcting the problem and/or seeks support.
- ☐ Determines what he/she did wrong.
- ☐ Develops strategies such as rereading, listing assignments, and checking work.
- ☐ Follows the plan designed to solve the problem and modifies when it fails.

7. When/if the student is confronted for failing to turn in homework, he/she does such things as:

- ☐ Avoids the teacher or peers.
- ☐ Cries or becomes angry.
- ☐ Does other work unrelated to the assignment or makes light of the situation.
- ☐ Makes up excuses (blames others, "the dog ate it," etc.).
- ☐ Seeks help from the teacher or others and/or encouragement.
- ☐ Identifies things that prevent him/her from doing homework.

Remember: 1 = never occurs 2 = seldom occurs 3 = occasionally occurs 4 = frequently occurs 5 = always occurs

- ___ Constructs such strategies as listing homework assignments, using reminders to keep track of homework, etc.
- ___ Follows through with a plan to solve the problem and corrects plan when necessary.

8. When/if the student receives criticism over an assignment from the teacher, he/she does such things as:

- ___ Goes off by him/herself, sits alone, and refuses to talk.
- ___ Becomes angry, acts hurt, cries, or throws a tantrum.
- ___ Ignores the teacher and continues working on an unrelated task and jokes about the criticism.
- ___ Blames others or the task for the problem.
- ___ Asks for suggestions from the teacher on how to improve and/or seeks sympathy.
- ___ Asks the teacher the reason for the criticism.
- ___ Plans to do such things as clarifying assignments, showing neater work, or turning work in on time.
- ___ Implements plan to avoid criticism and changes strategies when appropriate.

9. When/if the student is given an unexpected assignment, like a surprise test for which he/she is not prepared, he/she does such things as:

- ___ Withdraws, tries to avoid the test quietly.
- ___ Cries, throws a tantrum, or becomes hostile.
- ___ Performs some other task (e.g., sharpens pencil, tries to work on other assignment) or makes fun of the assignment.
- ___ States that he/she cannot comply due to outside interference or blames others.
- ___ Asks the teacher for advice on how to be ready for the unexpected assignment or test and/or seeks encouragement.
- ___ Asks teacher for clear instructions.
- ___ Develops a plan for completing the task, such as focusing on only the first question and not the full test or first locating a question he/she can answer.
- ___ Takes the test in a way that indicates a thought-out plan and modifies plan when not effective.

10. When/if the student is confronted with a task he/she does not understand, he/she does such things as:

- ___ Withdraws from the situation.
- ___ Cries or gets angry.
- ___ Tries to become involved in a different task or pokes fun at the value of the task.
- ___ Blames others for his/her own lack of understanding.
- ___ Asks teacher or peers for help in understanding the task and/or seeks compassion.
- ___ Focuses step-by-step on what the instructions say.
- ___ Develops a strategy for comprehending the task, like re-reading instructions, looking up definitions, etc.
- ___ Follows the plan he/she has devised and modifies when appropriate.

Social Coping

1. When/if the student fails to get his/her own way when sharing or playing, he/she does such things as:

- ___ Sulks, pouts, isolates him/herself, or refuses to participate.
- ___ Throws a tantrum, cries, whines, or argues.
- ___ Gets involved in something unrelated or different or makes

light of the situation.

- ___ Blames someone else for not being able to get his/her way.
- ___ Asks teacher or peers for alternative ways in which he/she may participate appropriately and/or seeks support.
- ___ Determines whether it is reasonable to have his/her own way in this situation.
- ___ Considers other alternatives to solve the problem, such as waiting turn, focusing on positive aspects of cooperation, etc.
- ___ Executes a plan to solve the problem and modifies plan when not effective.

2. When/if the student is not selected for an activity or game, he/she does such things as:

- ___ Becomes withdrawn and sits by him/herself.
- ___ Gets mad, breaks things, stomps, etc.
- ___ Performs some other task or laughs it off.
- ___ Tells others it is their fault he/she was not selected.
- ___ Asks teacher (or others) what he/she can do to be selected and/or seeks condolence.
- ___ Determines why he/she was not selected.
- ___ Develops alternatives for being selected next time such as raising hand, practicing the required skills, being nice to others, etc.
- ___ Follows through with ideas on improving chances of being selected or dealing with not being chosen and develop new plan when first plan is not effective.

3. When/if the student receives punishment in front of others, he/she does such things as:

- ___ Runs off, sulks away from others, or withdraws.
- ___ Shows anger, strikes out physically, or cries.
- ___ Does something that makes no sense, given the situation (laughs, combs hair, etc.) or engages in an unrelated activity.
- ___ Puts the blame on someone else (teachers, parents, peers, society, etc.).
- ___ Seeks teacher or student advice in preventing the situation from occurring again and/or seeks sympathy.
- ___ Clarifies why he/she received the punishment.
- ___ Considers strategies to prevent punishment by using self-talk, planning, and environmental cues to control behavior.
- ___ Follows plan in preventing the situation from occurring again and modifies plan when appropriate..

4. When/if the student is forced to work or play with other student(s) he/she clearly does not like, he/she does such things as:

- ___ Leaves the situation and goes off to be by him/herself.
- ___ Fusses, complains, insults others, or throws a tantrum.
- ___ Tries to perform some other task, associates with a different group, or makes the best of it by kidding others.
- ___ Makes excuses or accusations as to why he/she cannot work or play with the student or blames others.
- ___ Asks the teacher or peers for advice on how to handle this situation constructively and/or seeks support.
- ___ Verbalizes why he/she dislikes the other student and determines whether these dislikes have a factual basis.
- ___ Considers recognizing positive attributes of the student he/she

Go To Next Page >>>

Remember: 1= never occurs, 2= seldom occurs, 3= occasionally occurs, 4= frequently occurs, 5= always occurs

is forced to play with and considers how to deal with prejudices and to not make general statements about others, etc.

Follows through with a plan to deal with the problem, and uses new strategy when first strategy does not work.

5. When/if the student is placed in an embarrassing situation, such as trips or falls down in front of others, he/she usually does such things as:

Isolates him/herself from others, covers face, hides, etc.

Show anger or cries.

Says something or does something unrelated to the situation or laughs at him/herself.

Blames someone else for the event leading to the embarrassment.

Goes to the teacher or others to seek advice on how to handle embarrassment and/or seeks condolence.

Determines why he/she is embarrassed and if this is normal.

Develops a strategy to react without defensiveness or calling additional attention to the offense.

Follows through with such strategies and changes plan when appropriate.

6. When/if the student is called a name, teased, picked on by other student(s), or drawn into a fight, he/she does such things as:

Goes off by him/herself or avoids others.

Gets angry, strikes other students, cries, or pouts.

Performs some unrelated task (e.g., drawing, studying) or talk about other things.

Blames others for the teasing or fighting.

Asks the teacher for ideas to deal with the difficulty and/or seeks sympathy.

Seeks clarification as to why he/she is being picked on or teased.

Develops such strategies as being socially positive, remaining calm, asking the offender to stop, or getting others to help with conflict resolution.

Follows a plan to deal with the situation and uses new strategies when first one fails.

7. When/if the student is faced with an inconvenience, like noise in the lunchroom, loss of recess time, wait time for computer, or long lines, he/she does such things as:

Withdraws.

Gets extremely upset, acts angry, or cries.

Exhibits "silly" behavior, performs some task unrelated to the inconvenience or find humor in the situation.

Blames the teacher or others for the inconvenience.

Talks to others about the situation and gains ideas for dealing with the inconvenience like remaining calm, talking with the others, etc.

Finds out why the inconvenience has happened.

Develops a plan like starting earlier to avoid lines or asking teacher or principal for student input in solving problem etc.

Implements a plan designed to stop or prevent the inconvenience and modifies plan when necessary.

8. When/if the student gets his/her feelings hurt, or is exposed to and or disruptive experiences (such as an injury or death of a friend, unhappy life experiences, etc.) he/she does such things as:

Becomes withdrawn and self-isolated.

Seems inconsolable, cries excessively, or strikes out violently.

Acts as if it really does not matter, performs unrelated tasks or changes the subject.

Blames others (teachers, society, etc.) for the problem.

Seeks help in finding alternatives and advice for addressing the experience, such as talking with a counselor, etc. and/or seeks compassion.

Seeks help from others as to why the hurtful experiences are occurring.

Develops a plan to eliminate the hurtful or disruptive experience, etc.

Follows through with the plan to deal with the situation and modifies when necessary.

9. When/if the student has peer pressure to do something against the school rules, such as running in the hall, defacing school property, skipping class, using tobacco, etc. he/she:

Refuses to discuss the situation and retreats.

Becomes aggressive or belligerent.

Gets involved in another task or sidetracks the conversation.

Blames others (teacher, principal, etc.), for letting such things happen or blames unfair rules.

Asks parents, teacher, or others how to deal with peer pressure and/or seeks understanding.

Attempts to understand the situation by asking such things as "Why/how did they pressure me?"

Develops a plan to deal with peer pressure by saying "No" in a positive way or developing other friendships.

Follows the plan by doing such things as being positive, yet rejecting peer pressure, and uses new plan when necessary.

10. When/if the student is without friends, he/she does such things as:

Avoids the other students.

Insults, ridicules, or fights other students.

Performs an unrelated task or makes light of not having friends.

Blames others for the difficulty.

Asks peer or others how to deal with the lack of cooperation and/or seeks support.

Identifies whether or not the problem is with him/herself.

Identifies ways to approach students, making eye contact, sustaining conversation by asking questions, etc.

Follows through with the plan and modifies strategies when not effective.

End of Academic/Social Coping Inventory (Short Form)

Vita

Linda Jessie-Jones was born in Chicago, Illinois on May 27, 1948. She attended schools in the Chicago area, Rockford, Illinois, and Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin. She graduated from Forest View High School, Arlington Heights, Illinois, in 1966. She earned the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education in Home Economics Education from Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois in January, 1973. She earned the degree of Masters in Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee, in August 1988. She entered the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in August, 1988 and received the Doctor of Philosophy degree in May, 1996.

She is currently employed as a school psychologist for the Knox County Schools, Knoxville, Tennessee.