

## **THE EFFECT OF SELECTED INITIATIVE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ON THE SELF-CONCEPT OF YOUNG ADULTS AT A MULTICULTURAL INSTITUTION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigated the effect of selected initiative and cultural activities during an intervention programme on the self-concept of first year students at a multicultural tertiary institution. A self-concept scale based on the self-concept scale of Coopersmith (1967) and the Adolescent Sport Self-concept Scale of Vrey (1974) adapted by Paterson (1991) was administered during the various testing occasions of a pre-post-follow-up research design. Data were statistically analysed, where a t-test and a Duncan's multiple range test were applied to determine differences between the experimental group (n=127) and the control group (n=30), as well as between the various testing occasions. There was a significant difference ( $p < 0.01$ ) between the experimental and control group after the intervention programme. The findings of this study revealed a significant positive change ( $p < 0.01$ ) in the self-concept of the subjects.*

**Key words:** Young adults (first year students); Self-concept; Initiative activities; Cultural activities.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In 1994 the Durban College of Education changed from an all white Afrikaans-medium to a multicultural teachers training institution. Due to stereotyping and prejudices, which were still dormant, a great need arose to address the cultural diversity of the college. Diversity normally leads to cultural differences, which lead to conflict and can be responsible for poor academic achievements (Greyling, 1997).

A person's self-concept develops from observing his/her own behaviour, observing how others react to him/her and by comparing themselves socially (Van Aarde & Watson, 1994). Self-concept is also an important variable in academic achievement (Greyling, 1997) and in acquisition of coping behaviour that might enable a learner to thrive in an academic environment and social environment (De Klerk & Labuschagne, 1995). The ideas we hold of ourselves, the way we see ourselves, who we are and what we are comprise the self-concept and these ideas wield a strong influence on all that we do. Although this self-concept does not change so rapidly and tends to be fairly stable, Craft and Hogan (1985) believe that self-concept is a dynamic construct that can change and that it is something everybody can develop (Luiz, 1980).

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The main objective of the study was to determine if selected initiative and cultural activities would have a significant influence on the first years' self-concept. This is regarded as important since the fostering of a more positive self concept could in turn impact positively on the life, personal development and academic achievements of the students from this and other multicultural populations at similar tertiary institutions.

## **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

The subjects of the experimental group (N=127) were all students at the Durban College of Education. The group was comprised of black (n=24); white English-speaking (n=58); white Afrikaans-speaking (n=34) and Indian students (n=11). A control group, first year students from a similar neighbouring teachers' college (N=30), also completed the questionnaires at the various testing occasions, but did not follow the intervention programme. The data collected were computerised; a ttest statistic and a Duncan's multiple range test were applied to determine any significant differences.

### **The questionnaire and testing occasions**

A questionnaire, based on the self-concept scale of Coopersmith (1967) and the Sport Self-concept Scale of Vrey (1974) adapted by Paterson (1991) was administered. This variable was measured to establish attitude towards the "self" before the intervention programme, directly after and three months after that again. Although the activities of the intervention programme were not sport orientated (Paterson, 1991), they were still creative movement activities by nature.

The statements of the questionnaire were short and the subjects had to indicate their preferences by ticking the block corresponding to the statement and the preferred feeling/attitude towards that statement.

The pre-test was administered on the day of arrival at the college to determine the initial status of the subjects' self-concept. An intervention programme followed and the post-test was administered directly after the intervention programme. The follow-up test was administered three months later to determine the retention of the intervention programme and the influence of the daily college routine on the self-concept of the subjects.

### **The intervention programme**

The intervention programme was part of an orientation programme for the first year students at the Durban College of Education. The programme lasted five days and replaced the previous initiation programme (De Klerk & Labuschagne, 1995).

Social psychologists (Van Aarde & Watson, 1994) believe that the picture (schema) people have of themselves is a product of the social process. It results from and is changed by their interaction with other people. A person's self-concept develops from observing his or her own behaviour, observing how others react to him or her and by comparing themselves socially. Differences between the actual self (extant self), the desired self and how that person chooses to present him-/herself to others (presenting self) largely influence the way a person feels

about his or her self-concept. The researcher therefore decided on an intervention programme with activities where the subjects could interact with one another.

### ***Implementation of the programme***

The intervention programme was managed with the assistance of 10 members of the student council (SRC) of the Durban College of Education. The first session of the intervention programme (initiative activities) was presented on the second day of the orientation programme. The second session (dances) was presented on the third day and the third session (the role-play) followed the day thereafter. The researcher controlled the intervention programme through observation throughout the course of the programme and feedback sessions with the facilitators and presenters immediately after each activity.

### ***Aims and objectives of the programme***

According to Hope and Timmel (1991) people need assurance that they are really and truly accepted as they are. They also have to know that it is safe to say what they really think and feel in a group. The uniqueness of a person with his or her own experiences and insights needs to be recognised (Greyling, 1997). Unless there is a spirit of respect and acceptance, people will not be free to learn, to rethink their options, to change and grow, or to share their thoughts and feelings fully. Individuals need information about the issues that they consider as important in their lives. Group dynamics and interaction offer an opportunity for individuals to discuss these important issues.

Another prerequisite for good group interaction and functioning (Hope & Timmel, 1991; Halliday, 1999) is to set goals clearly. Unless the goals are clear to all, people become frustrated and will not be interested in or committed to carrying them out. Once the goals have been set, the group needs to make definite plans to reach these goals and carry out decisions. Specific people need to take responsibility to do specific tasks, and they should be accountable to the group.

Hope and Timmel (1991) pointed out that the majority of people find it difficult to express themselves to a large group of strangers, but it is also a rare individual who can go through life without needing to be an effective communicator, decision maker, or support person (Bunting, 1985). Robb and Leslie (n.d.) and Bunting (1985) asserted that participation in well-planned initiative programmes could lead to improvement in these areas.

There are many objectives that can be realised through participation in initiative activities. Some objectives are best suited for particular activities, while others are dependent upon the emphasis of the processing experience (Bunting, 1985). According to Bunting (1985) general objectives are the development of communication skills, decision-making skills, co-operation and group cohesion, an awareness of group process, conflict resolution techniques and leadership skills. The emphasis of this study was on group cohesion and co-operation as well as on an awareness of group dynamics.

Halliday (1999) stated that challenging activities are learning experiences in which student participation is coupled with group and individual critical reflection on the activity. The goal of this reflection is to gain insights that will change one's understanding and/or behaviour. Luckner and Nadler (1997) suggested several categories of challenge education activities such as:

- Games, which include "ice breaker" and "deinhibitiser" games designed to help students get to know themselves and to get to know one another, to have fun, take risks, and develop a willingness to appear inept in front of others.
- Trust exercises designed to build a sense of community, team support, and co-operation by providing opportunities for students to trust their physical and emotional safety to others.
- Communication activities. In order to successfully complete these activities, students need to use communication, co-operation and trial-and-error learning as part of the group problem-solving and decision-making process.

Halliday (1999), Schoel *et al.* (1989) and Bunting (1985) are all in agreement that an effective programme should foster a sense of belonging. The student should feel valued and accepted as part of the group. Co-operation, trust, and communication are the first prerequisites for the development of group cohesion that leads to a sense of belonging.

Secondly, such a programme should enhance feelings of worthiness. Participants should feel that their thoughts, ideas and contributions are worthwhile and valued by others. Co-operative games, problem-solving activities and initiative activities cannot be completed successfully without the contribution of everyone in the group.

Thirdly, the programme should foster recognition of uniqueness. In order to have a good self-concept and a high self-esteem, students need to recognise, respect and celebrate personal uniqueness (Wasserman, 1997). They should learn to view individual differences as strengths and not threats. They must be able to appreciate differences in others and value their own uniqueness.

Fourthly, the programme should foster the practising of virtue. This means one operates in accordance with an established moral code that is consistent with expectations of the culture (Gallahue, 1996).

Fifthly, the programme should increase perceived competence, which is based on the students' self-evaluation and perception of how well they accomplish a given task in comparison with others.

Such a programme encourages an acceptance of the self. Students show self-acceptance when they recognise and accept that they have weaknesses and limitations as well as strengths and abilities (Craft & Hogan, 1985). Students should feel competent and should experience freedom to fail within an emotionally safe environment.

In her investigation Katzenellenbogen (1989) found that exposure to a camp with recreational activities has potential to promote positive interpersonal relationships. She further found that tolerance towards racial groups showed high levels of submissiveness and low levels of aggressiveness. Her findings were similar to those of Luiz (1979, 1980).

Bunting (1985), as well as Robb and Leslie (n.d.), suggested that in order to achieve maximum progress toward selected objectives, the initiative activities must be properly sequenced. Sequencing means ordering the activities so they are progressively complex,

consequential, and educational. By beginning with easy, non-threatening problems a participant will be at ease and take part in the different activities. The group can become acquainted with one another, with the group process, communication styles, and potential problems.

### INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES AND SEQUENCING

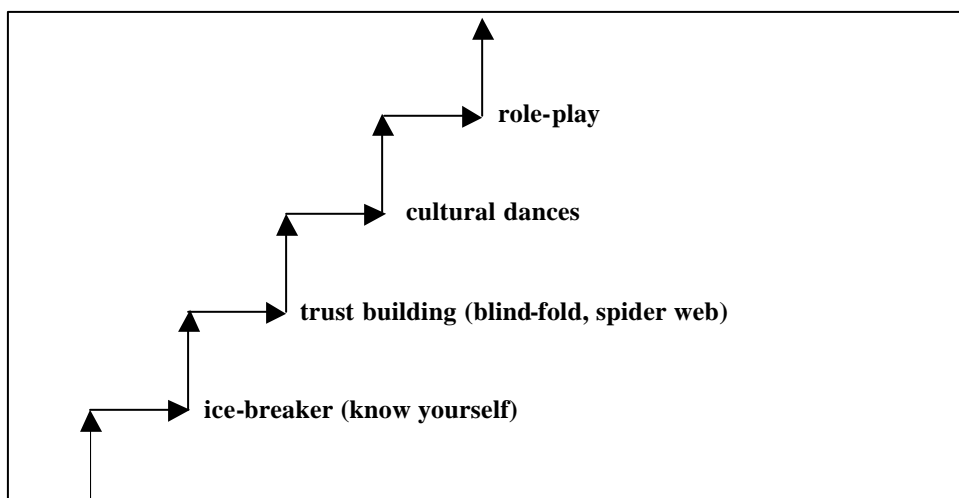


FIGURE 1. SEQUENCING OF INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

The activities for this intervention programme were specifically chosen with the objective of changing the attitudes of those subjects with a low self-concept. A prerequisite for success of the activities is the specific sequence in which they were presented. This programme was based on the sequential outdoor challenge model of Robb and Leslie (n.d.). The following sequence in which the activities of such a programme have to be conducted, has been prescribed by these authors:

- Goal setting
- Awareness of yourself and the people around you
- Trust
- Co-operation
- Problem solving
- Group challenge
- High adventure (which was not included in this programme)

The intervention programme started off with an "ice breaker" activity (*know yourselves*) where the subjects had the opportunity to take a closer look at themselves and how to present themselves verbally to others {*second level: awareness of yourself and the people around you of Robb and Leslie (n.d.)*}. This was followed by trust-building initiatives, problem-solving and co-operative activities, such as blindfold and spider web {*third level: trust and fourth level: problem solving of Robb and Leslie (n.d.)*}. Dance activities and role-play then

followed. During the dance activities (cultural dances), the subjects were socially challenged to interact with the participants from the other ethnic groups within the experimental group {*fourth level: problem solving of Robb and Leslie (n.d.)*}. The intervention programme was concluded with role-playing where the subjects, in conjunction with the rest of the group, had to recruit and present their talents to an audience {*fourth level: problem solving of Robb and Leslie (n.d.)*}. There was no *high adventure level* (see the sequential outdoor challenge model of Robb and Leslie (n.d.)), however, this role play in front an audience and on stage was for many subjects quite adventurous.

### **First session (initiative activities)**

The subjects were divided into 10 groups. There were seven groups of 13 subjects and three groups of 12 subjects. Each group was randomly selected, but was a representation of the diversity of the total group as far as possible.

#### **1. The know yourself activity**

The participants have to find an object to represent his/her personality. Normally it is easier for the participants to find some objects from nature with which to identify and to help with the expressing and verbalising of their feelings and of ideas about themselves.

The aim of this exercise was to facilitate communication skills and trust by introducing themselves and by sharing some personal feelings and ideas with the members of the group. Each group functioned separately (Robb & Leslie, n.d.).

The subjects went with their group leader (SRC members) to the College's hockey field where this session was presented. They were given five minutes to find the object with which they could identify best. Each subject was then given an opportunity to explain why that specific object was a representation of her or his personality. This activity lasted 30 minutes.

#### **2. The trust walk**

During the *trust walk* the participants work in pairs. Participants have a free choice of partner. One of them is blindfolded, while the partner has the task of leading the blindfolded person along a pathway with minor obstacles by means of oral communication only. Thereafter they change places for the return journey.

The main goal of the trust walk was to build trust in someone else, getting to know that person and learning to communicate with that person. Robb & Leslie (n.d.) argued that it is important for individuals to trust one-another before they will understand and accept one-another.

The *trust walk* activity was presented immediately after the *know yourself* activity. This activity was presented exactly as it is described.

#### **3. The spider web**

The participants have to go through a web-like structure one by one. The openings in the web must be of different sizes and shapes and at different heights. Each opening may only be used once. The aim of this activity is for the whole group to go through the web without touching the string at all. Participants are allowed to help one another.

The goal of this activity was to foster appropriate interaction and awareness of personal skills. Another goal of the activity was to point out the role each member of the group has to fulfil for the group to succeed in its goal. This activity is based on problem solving, leadership, co-operation and interaction, communication and on facilitating the acceptance of others' ideas (Robb & Leslie, n.d.; Hope & Timmel, 1991). The *spider-web* and *trust walk* activities were presented simultaneously. This section lasted an hour.

### **Debriefing and conclusion**

After the activities the facilitators organised a debriefing session during which the subjects had the opportunity to verbalise their feelings and experiences during the activities. Another debriefing session with the researcher was thereafter organised for all the first years. The goal was to give the subjects an opportunity to speak with confidence in front of a larger group (Bunting, 1985) and to tell the members of the group about their experiences during the activities. This activity lasted 45 minutes.

Some of the subjects started off being very shy to talk about themselves and take part in the group planning and discussions. This problem could have been caused by the language barrier encountered by most of the black subjects. During the execution of the activities the subjects participated enthusiastically and a jovial spirit prevailed.

### **Second Session (dances)**

It was decided to use three different dances (an Indian dance, gumboot dance and the cha-cha) from the various cultures. The aim of this exercise was to foster a social interaction amongst the subjects and to develop mutual respect by giving the subjects some insight into the different cultures.

To support the choice of dance activity, a brief literature review was done. Rogers (1941) said that the educational values of dance are physical development, social development (good manners, politeness, courtesy) and sympathy. They are all vital prerequisites for joy in social interaction (Katzenellenbogen, 1986 & 1993). These values imply active concern for the self-respect and continuing happiness of others. They can also be a powerful tool in developing co-operation and generosity, mental and cultural development (Damon, 1995).

Biehler and Snowman (1993) pointed out that a student's performance and self-concept can be significantly improved by allowing students to demonstrate specific movement skills from their own cultures. Hankin (1997) and Muzil (1999) recommended culturally-based, student-centred programmes. Moss (2000), however, suggested that multicultural dance involves more than teaching dances from other cultures. It also involves incorporating the interests and skills that students from other ethnic groups (even other countries) bring to a class.

The total experimental group was divided into three smaller groups, each a representation of the cultural diversity of the total population at the College. The three different groups went to three different venues where they learnt the background history and a few movement skills of the different dances. Three experienced dancers, senior students at the College from the various culture groups, acted as dance instructors.

The three dances took place simultaneously. Each dance lasted 20 minutes with a six-minute interval. All three groups had a chance to participate in all three dances.

### ***Debriefing and conclusion***

At the conclusion of the session, a debriefing was held. During the debriefing the subjects had to talk about their feelings and experiences of the different aspects of the dances, such as the music, rhythm, outfits and the interaction with the other students while sharing the same area and space. This debriefing session was reported verbally and was facilitated and observed by the researcher himself.

The subjects enjoyed the gumboot dance and cha-cha very much. They did not enjoy the Indian dance that much, but were very interested in learning about the differences in culture, dance styles, music and dress codes. Interaction between male and female and between the different ethnic groups was mostly spontaneous. The male Indian subjects, however, exhibited some dislike of the dances in which they were involved. They did, however, enjoy the gumboot dance.

### **Third session (role-play)**

According to Taylor (1991) the aims of role-play and drama are to foster communication; to develop a sense of aesthetic understanding; to explore human emotions; to gain confidence in their own abilities; to learn to respect and depend on others where necessary; to appreciate the values and attitudes of their own and other communities. The aim behind this specific role-play was to foster the development of various group dynamic skills (Taylor 1991). Skills such as planning, brainstorming to determine specific talents, the ordering of ideas and imagining of alternatives; interaction with one another, communication skills; leadership skills, performing with others (people from other ethnic groups) and in front of an audience, were of utmost importance to present a good stage production. This session lasted two hours.

The experimental group was again divided into 10 different, smaller groups. The same rules as in the first session applied to ensure that each group was representative of the total population of the College. The different groups were instructed to create a play with a given theme. The subjects had to determine specific talents within the group and create this play around their talents. They had 40 minutes to plan, recruit talent amongst themselves and prepare. Each group was granted 15 minutes to perform in front of a small audience.

### ***Debriefing and conclusion***

During this debriefing session the subjects had the opportunity to discuss their feelings and emotions about their counterparts' input during the performances. Secondly, they had the opportunity to tell any group member of their choice about the effect of something positive as well as something negative that had arisen from the session. The subjects also had to tell the person of his/her choice what influence his/her attitude had had on the dynamics of the group. Thirdly, they had to verbalise their concept about themselves as an individual and their purpose in the multicultural life at the Durban College of Education. The facilitator of each group and the researcher, who moved from group to group, supervised the debriefing session.

Immediately following each activity, debriefing occurred. Halliday (1999) is in agreement with Roux (1995) and Robb and Leslie (n.d.) that it is essential to create an opportunity for a debriefing session after every activity, because it is through the group verbalisation activity that the subjects have the opportunity to discuss, deal with, and to understand the different emotions experienced by themselves and by the other group members.



In general all the subjects participated enthusiastically and there was enough opportunity and time for maximum self-expression. At first some of the subjects seemed to be shy or intimidated and for some language was a problem. The male Indian subjects, however, had problems with the fact that they had been placed in separate groups and were arrogant at times.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Both the experimental group (N=127) and the control group (N=30) completed the same questionnaire which was administered at the pre-test, post-test and follow-up-test. The results regarding self-concept will be discussed with reference to all three testing occasions (see Table 1).

### **The self-concept: Status of data at the various testing occasions**

The initial mean scores of all the ethnic groups within the experimental group ranged from 55.3 to 62.9 (pre-test total mean score: 56.2) (see Table 1). At the post-test the mean scores ranged from 64.8 to 71.9 (post-test total mean score: 65.8) and at the follow-up-test the mean scores ranged from 61.5 to 73.4 (follow-up-test total mean score: 63.1). All the initial scores fell within the *no comment* category on the questionnaire and at the post-test all the scores moved into the *positive* category. The initial mean scores of the control group ranged from 47.8 to 60.0 (pre-test total mean score: 55.8). The mean scores measured throughout the other testing occasions were almost unchanged.

The variation as measured by the standard deviation at the pre-test was very small for the male Indian group, very wide for the black male group at the post-test and again very small for the white female group within the control group. There is no scientific explanation for this phenomenon, but one can speculate that it may be due to the way people form their perceptions about other people.

***TABLE 1. SELF-CONCEPT: STATUS DATA (MEAN & SD) AT TESTING OCCASIONS FOR EXPERIMENTAL (N=127) AND CONTROL GROUP (N=30)***

GROUPINGS (N)	PRE-TEST				POST-TEST				FOLLOW-UP-TEST			
	Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Black</b> TG (24/10)	55.3	5.69	49.8	6.37	67.7	4.21	54.8	7.02	62.9	4.17	54.4	5.62
<b>Indian</b> TG (11/ 8)	60.7	8.51	59.5	3.46	70.0	4.80	59.1	6.15	70.0	5.66	59.4	5.68
<b>White</b> TG (92/12)	55.9	8.06	58.3	6.31	65.1	6.49	60.5	5.49	62.3	4.93	55.9	3.75
<b>White-Afr.-speaking</b> TG (34/ -)	56.7	7.80	NA	NA	65.8	4.95	NA	NA	62.4	3.83	NA	NA
<b>White-Eng.-speaking</b> TG (58/ -)	55.5	8.24	NA	NA	64.7	7.24	NA	NA	62.2	5.50	NA	NA
<b>TOTAL GROUP (127/30)</b>	<b>56.2</b>	<b>7.78</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>7.02</b>	<b>65.8</b>	<b>6.16</b>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>6.50</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>5.29</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>5.18</b>
<b>TOTAL GROUP (157)</b>	<b>Mean</b>		<b>SD</b>		<b>Mean</b>		<b>SD</b>		<b>Mean</b>		<b>SD</b>	
	56.1		7.62		64.5		6.92		61.8		5.88	

Note: Subjects (N) for experimental and control groups appear in parentheses in the first column..  
NA = not applicable

**Differences between means at testing occasions for the total group and ethnic groupings**

After the intervention programme there was a significant improvement ( $p < 0.01$ ) in the self-concept of all the ethnic groups within the experimental group. With the exception of the Indian group, there was also a significant decline ( $p < 0.01$ ) from the post-test to the follow-up-test (see Table 2). The mean scores recorded at the follow-up-test were still significantly higher ( $p < 0.01$ ) than the scores recorded at the pre-test. The mean score of the total control group improved significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) from the pre-test to the post-test and declined significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) from the post-test to the follow-up-test. As can be seen from the results in Table 2, there was no significant difference between the pre-test and the follow-up-test.

These results prove that retention weakened in both cases. The self-concept of the subjects within the experimental group, however, was still significantly improved after the three-month period than that of the subjects within the control group. It can therefore be concluded that the intervention programme not only had a positive influence on the self-concept of the subjects within the experimental group during the initiative period, but that the positive change was sustained over the three-month period.

**TABLE 2. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS AT TESTING OCCASIONS WITHIN EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS FOR TOTAL GROUP AND ETHNIC GROUPINGS**

GROUPINGS (n)	SELF-CONCEPT		
	PRE vs POST	PRE vs P-P	POST vs P-P
<b>TOTAL GROUP (157)</b>	Improved **	P-P higher **	Declined **
<b>EXPERIMENTAL GROUP</b>			
<b>Total Group (127)</b>	Improved **	P-P higher **	Declined **
Black Group (24)	Improved **	P-P higher **	Declined **
Indian Group (11)	Improved **	P-P higher **	ND
White Group (92)	Improved **	P-P higher **	Declined **
White-Afr. Gr. (34)	Improved **	P-P higher **	Declined **
White-Eng. Gr. (54)	Improved **	P-P higher **	Declined **
<b>CONTROL GROUP</b>			
<b>Total Group (30)</b>	Improved *	ND	Declined *
Black Group (10)	Improved *	P-P higher *	ND
Indian Group (8)	ND	ND	ND
White Group (12)	ND	ND	ND

ND: No difference P-P = follow-up-test Significance: \*\*= $p < 0.01$ ; \*= $p < 0.05$

**Differences between the cultural groups**

Results recorded by the pre-test showed that initially there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the black, white English-speaking and the white Afrikaans-speaking groups within the experimental group (see Table 3). The Indian group, however, recorded a significantly higher mean ( $p < 0.05$ ) than the white English-speaking and the white

Afrikaans-speaking group. The results of the post-test after the intervention programme showed no significant difference between the black group and the other ethnic groups. Although there was no significant difference recorded at the post-test between the means of the Indian and the black group, the mean of the Indian group was significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) than that of the white Afrikaans-speaking and the white English groups. Similar results were also evident at the follow-up-test administered three months after the intervention programme. It can therefore be concluded that there were no differences between the different cultural groups regarding their self-concept after the intervention programme. The very positive self-concept of the Indian group before the intervention programme was very evident.

**TABLE 3. TOTAL GROUP (N=157): DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS OF THREE RACE GROUPS AT EACH TESTING OCCASION**

<b>VARIABLES RETESTING OCCASIONS</b>	<b>BLACK GROUP (n=34)</b>	<b>INDIAN GROUP (n=19)</b>	<b>WHITE GROUP (n=104)</b>
<b>SELF-CONCEPT</b>			
PRE-test	ND between means of BG & WG	*Higher mean than WG & BG	ND between means of WG & BG
POST-test	ND	ND	ND
FOLLOW-UP-test	ND between means of BG & WG	*Higher mean than WG & BG	ND between means of WG & BG

\* = Significant ( $p < 0.05$ )      ND = No significant differences

BG = Black Group

IG = Indian Group

WG = White Group

***Differences between means of the experimental and control groups at each testing occasion***

According to the results in Table 4, it was evident that, with the exception of the black group, there was no significant difference between the self-concept of the experimental and the self-concept of the control group at the pre-test. A significant difference ( $p < 0.01$ ) was, however, evident after the intervention programme (post-test) for the total group. The difference in self-concept for the different groups was also significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The same results were evident after the three-month period (follow-up test).

A positive change in the self-concept of the subjects within the experimental group as well as the control group was evident after the first week at the new institution. The change in self-concept was, however, more significant for the subjects within the experimental group due to the intervention programme. No retention was evident for the self-concept of the subjects within the control group. However, despite the decline in self-concept, retention was evident in the self-concept of the experimental group.

TABLE 4. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS OF EXPERIMENTAL VS CONTROL GROUP AT EACH TESTING

Behavioural variables according to groupings	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP vs CONTROL GROUP		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Follow-up
<b>TOTAL GROUP (127/30)</b> Self-concept	ND	**Exp. group higher mean	**Exp. group higher mean
<b>BLACK GROUP (24/10)</b> Self-concept	*Exp. group higher mean	*Exp. group higher mean	*Exp. group higher mean
<b>INDIAN GROUP (11/8)</b> Self-concept	ND	*Exp. group higher mean	*Exp. group higher mean
<b>WHITE GROUP (92/12)</b> Self-concept	ND	*Exp. group higher mean	*Exp. group higher mean

Note: Subjects (n) for experimental and control groups appear in parentheses in the first column.

ND: No difference

Significance: \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ; \* =  $p < 0.05$

## CONCLUSION

Self-concept and self-confidence are essential for students who would like to perform well at higher education institutions. A positive self-concept is something everyone can develop (Luiz, 1980). Low self-concept precludes anxiety and fear which could lead to bad academic performance. At first some of the subjects seemed to be shy or intimidated. For some of them language was a problem. The black group started off with a low self-concept, but experienced a significant improvement after the intervention programme. This low self-concept could be due to the lack of confidence and language skills.

Due to the significant changes shown in results, it can be concluded that the intervention programme had a positive influence on the self-concept of these subjects and that retention for the experimental group was still evident after the three-month period. There are, however, many changes and adaptations to be made to suit the needs and requirements of other institutions that would wish to use similar programmes. In the light of recent developments regarding initiative programmes at tertiary institutions countrywide, this study can be regarded as a timely and relevant study. The dynamic interaction of energetic facilitators is however essential and the facilitators should come from leadership positions in student bodies to create more interaction within the student community.

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