

Research Summary

Summary Title	
The problem with self esteem	
Authors	
Paul C. Vitz	
Publication	
Date Published	
January 1995	
Publisher	
Catholic Educator's Resource Centre	
Source URL	
Category	Subcategory
Student support	Student wellbeing
Abstract	
<p>This paper discusses the problems with the concept of 'self-esteem' and its relationship to student outcomes. Vitz claims that there is no evidence that self-esteem reliably causes anything. A study in mathematical skills which compared students in eight different countries ranked American students the lowest in mathematical competence and Korean students the highest. The researchers also asked students to rate how good they were at maths and American students ranged highest in self-judged ability whilst Koreans ranked lowest. Mathematical self-esteem had an inverse relation to mathematical accomplishment.</p> <p>Vitz challenges the notion that by giving students happy faces for all their homework just because it was handed in – or giving them trophies for just being on a team is flattery only and encourages narcissistic behaviour.</p> <p>This paper provides an alternative view to the notion of raising students' self-esteem will lead to improved educational outcomes.</p>	
Research Summary number	
RS0019	