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# The Use of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory for Australian 16-Year-Olds

Ken Ross

In the ACER Survey Section the major current study is the IEA Population II Follow-up Project. This is a continuation of the IEA Science Project (see Comber and Keeves, 1973). The follow-up project was started in 1971 to investigate the occupational and educational decisions made at age 16 by members of the original (1970) sample of 14 year-old (Population II) students.

The Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (SEI) was included in the battery of tests and attitude scales administered to those members of the original sample who were still at school in April 1972 (referred to as students) and was included in the mail questionnaire sent to those members who had left school by April 1972 (the leavers).

The SEI was developed as a scale for obtaining subjective responses to a series of statements designed to assess self-esteem. Since the SEI was developed for use with 10 to 12 year-olds it was important to investigate the internal structure of the SEI when used with 16 year-olds. Details of the findings of this examination of the SEI are given in the IEA (Australia) Report No. 1 by K. N. Ross.

Coopersmith viewed self-esteem as a many-faceted personality characteristic which may vary according to differences in age, sex, life experi-

ences and aptitudes. He defined self-esteem as the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself (Coopersmith, 1967: 4-5).

The full version of the SEI is a 58-item inventory which consists of 50 items designed to measure aspects of self-esteem and eight items which form a lie scale. To complete the SEI the respondent marks each item as 'like me' or 'unlike me'.

The basic 50 items in the SEI are concerned with the subject's self-attitudes in four areas: peers, parents, school and personal interests. The total self-esteem score is the sum of the scores on these 50 items (Coopersmith, 1967: 10).

The study by Ross used the technique of factor analysis to examine the internal structure of the SEI when it was administered to Australian 16 year-olds. The analyses carried out showed that for both the students and the leavers there was a strong first factor, which supports

the use of a total score for the 50 items in the scale. From the analysis it was also found that the 50 item scale contained three consistent eight-item subscales which were congruent with three areas mentioned by Coopersmith: peers, parents and school. The items within each of these subscales and the total scale were found to have acceptable indices of discrimination. The Kuder-Richardson formula 20 values for these scales exhibited satisfactorily high values for both 16 year-olds at school and 16 year-olds who had left school.

The appendices of the report by Ross (1974) contain means, standard deviations and frequency distributions of the total scale and subscales for students and leavers (separately for males and females) for each of the six Australian states.

## References

- Comber, L. C. and Keeves, J. P. 1973. *Science education in nineteen countries*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell/New York: Wiley-Halsted.
- Coopersmith, S. 1967. *The antecedents of self-esteem*. San Francisco. Freeman.
- Ross, K. N. 1974. *An examination of the internal structure of the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory for Australian 16-year-olds*. Hawthorn: ACER. IEA (Australia) Report 1974: 1.





# NZCER

## Overseas Research Organizations — (First of a series)

Of all the research institutions overseas, the NZCER is perhaps most like the ACER in its charter and composition. Established by means of a Carnegie Corporation of New York grant in 1933 (the ACER having been funded likewise in 1930), it is also like ACER, independent of other institutions. Its functions are

'(a) to foster the study of and research into, educational and other like matters, and to prepare and publish such reports on these matters as may in its opinion be necessary or of value to teachers and other persons;

(b) to furnish information, advice, and assistance to persons and organizations concerned with education and other similar features.'

These aims are defined by the *New Zealand Council for Educational Research Act, 1972* (revised) which makes provision for an annual grant and specifies a Council of up to nine members, one appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Minister of Education, six appointed by an Electoral College consisting of 125 members (certain persons *ex officio*, others nominated by various educational bodies, and persons who are authors of reports published by the Council), as well as up to two co-opted members. (By comparison the ACER has a council of fifteen members, six of whom represent the State Institutes for Educational Research, one a representative of the conference of Directors-General of Education, one representing the Australian Department of Education, and seven co-opted members. Both NZCER and ACER have an Executive Committee elected from within the membership of the Council.)

The present Chairman of NZCER is F. W. Holmes, Professor of Money, Banking and Finance of Victoria University of Wellington; the Director is Mr. John E. Watson and Dr. Warwick B. Elly is Assistant

Director. Staff in 1973-74 comprised some 31 research, library, administrative and secretarial personnel with a total salary bill of \$163,357. Expenditures associated with the NZCER programme, other than salaries, amounted to approximately \$73,000 of which over \$12,000 was spent on staff travel. The latter indicates a good deal of mobility on the part of Research personnel and this is reflected in the extent to which the NZCER staff and their work is known throughout both the North and South Islands of New Zealand, and indeed in neighbouring islands of the Pacific area.

NZCER income in 1973-74 amounted to \$261,933. Apart from the N.Z. Government grant—the main source noted above—other monies were derived mainly from a surplus on trading activities (approximately \$10,000), special contracts and donations, gifts and special grants. The trading surplus was derived from income on the sale of books and tests amounting to \$89,109. (Like ACER the NZCER has essentially a non-profit trading activity aimed at disseminating its own books and research monographs and those of a number of sister research organizations abroad, as well as a wide range of tests which would not otherwise be readily available to test users. Unlike ACER it does not act as a distributor for kits of learning materials.) That part of NZCER income derived from donations and gifts has increased seven-fold since 1960 and although more than half comes from foundations set up by the McKenzie family (some of which is employed in financing a J. R. McKenzie Fellowship each year), the balance represents a growing community recognition of the role of the Council.

NZCER has over 50 titles in its *Research Series* ranging over such areas as 'Thinking in the Classroom', 'Development of the N.Z.

Primary School Curriculum: 1877-1970', and 'Maori Mothers and Pre-School Education', and more than 20 *Studies in Education* which include such topics as 'Helping Our Deaf Children', 'External Examinations and Internal Assessment' and 'Caring for Intellectually Handicapped Children'. Notable in the field of test publication are the NZCER Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension (and both have been standardized by the ACER for use in Australia), Listening Comprehension and Mathematics. (All of these tests are supplied free of charge to primary and intermediate schools through the Department of Education and secondary schools and independent schools can obtain them for a fee.) At present the Test Development Division is working on a set of study skills tests. Other tests published by NZCER include Otis Tests of Mental Ability, an Oral Word Reading Test and standardizations of the ACER Silent Reading and Arithmetic Tests. Like ACER, the NZCER acts as representative of major test publishing organizations in the distribution of tests to a diverse group of users (around 3,000 in 1973-74). A Test Advisory Officer was recently appointed to advise teachers and others on the use of tests and other forms of assessment. As at ACER, this over-all testing service is a complex operation but one which attracts much appreciative comment.

The NZCER Research Division has a wide range of projects under way. It has a full-time research officer on early childhood education concerned with survey research, longitudinal studies, and programme developments and evaluation. This is seen as continuing a long standing involvement by NZCER in the pre-school area, and shortly the Council will publish an analysis of existing provisions for pre-school education prepared by Dr. W. D. Barney, a



senior lecturer in education at the University of Auckland. The report is entitled 'Who Gets to Pre-School?' Apart from this general area of research interest the Council has a small unit undertaking research on Maori schooling involving socio-linguistic mapping and disseminating information and items of interest to persons or institutions involved in Maori education. Other resources are channelled into a variety of language arts projects and other areas such as a review of Music education in N.Z., surveys of professional and vocational training and historical studies of the administration of education embracing reports such as 'Maori Schools in a Changing Society' by T. M. Beaglehole and J. M. Barrington, and 'Guidance Services in New Zealand Education' by Ralph Winterbourn (only recently published). The research staff are involved in servicing a wide range of requests for assistance from individuals and public bodies on questions of research design, statistical analysis and computer technology, and it seems the number of such calls is growing.

A further facet of NZCER's influence in education is its Research Information Services which provides reviews of research on such topics as vocational training (e.g. for the Society for Research on Women) or provision of information to individual enquirers on such wide ranging matters as innovation in schools, school community-relations, or life-long education. An ambitious project aimed particularly at providing teachers with information about research has been the preparation and publication of *Set 74*—a packaged series of pamphlets and materials concerning Research and Development in New Zealand and such topical issues as 'Learning through Discussion'; these are provided free of charge to all schools.

Although hampered by relatively meagre resources, the NZCER like ACER has over the years engaged in a great variety of research services which reflect its independence and national standing.

## Bougainville: A Case Study

*Bougainville: A Case Study* is the first published kit to result from a number of research and development projects on social change being carried out at ACER.

This set of learning materials is for use with students in the 16-19 year age group. The basic theme of the kit is that of the analysis of situations involving cultural and social change; focusing on the conflict which arose on Bougainville with the development of the CRA copper mine. A major aim of the material is to lead students not only into an understanding of the cultural conflict on Bougainville, but also to gain an appreciation of conflict situations in their own environment. Students should therefore become aware of the many and diverse elements that make up a culture and its value systems, and the effect of outside influence and change on these systems.

*Bougainville: A Case Study* has involved a number of ACER staff members during its development. The kit in its present form involved the work of B. M. Bullivant, R. T. Fitzgerald, and Judith Crosher.

The components of the learning kit are as follows:

One copy each of the two teachers texts:

- **TEACHERS GUIDE:** provides an outline of the aims of the kit; an introduction to the anthropological and sociological concepts associated with the study of social and cultural change; ethnographic data (supplementary to that provided in the Data Book) on the Nasioi, who have been most affected by the copper mining.
- **THE STUDY OF CULTURAL CHANGE: A CLASSROOM APPROACH:** gives an introduction to some of the main concepts of cultural anthropology of use not only for *Bougainville: A Case Study*, but also for the study of other small communities or cultures specified in many social studies, geography and history courses.

The students texts are:

- **DATA BOOK:** (20 copies); provides a summary of the events which took place in 1969, and a sequel on the implications of CRA's first profits announced in 1974; pictorial and written data on the traditional way of life of the people and the effect the introduction of the copper mine has had on it; many newspaper clippings, press releases and photographs relating to these events.

- **SOURCE BOOK** (20 copies); contains transcripts of the cassette 'Missionaries Discuss Life on Bougainville' and 'An Aropa Valley Land Dispute'; a transcript of the ABC film 'Bougainville—Scratching the Surface'; a facsimile of a Parliamentary speech by the Hon. C. E. Barnes, on 'Bougainville Copper Development'; and brief comments on the twenty colour slides.
- **STUDENT ACTIVITY BOOK:** One copy of this expendable student work book is included in the kit for teacher information; class requirements of this book can be ordered separately from ACER as can additional copies of the other books in the kit should they be required. The *Student Activity Book* provides a sequence of learning activities keyed in particular to the *Data Book* and assists students in examining many of the key elements involved in this conflict situation. It encourages them to make their own judgements in terms of the evidence presented and their own individual viewpoints. The student is also encouraged to think outside this particular case study and to consider in general, points of view, attitudes, and to adopt a set of values relating to, the overall theme of the effects of cultural and social change.
- **CASSETTE:** 'Missionaries Discuss Life on Bougainville', gives the student not only an idea of the attitudes of Europeans working among the indigenes, but also the effect of European attitudes on the native way of life; 'An Aropa Valley Land Dispute' is a simulation of an argument which occurred between a group of Nasioi over land tenure, and gives the student an insight into the complicated system of land tenure which exists on Bougainville and has been the cause of much tension and misunderstanding, particularly with the coming of the copper mine.
- **COLOUR SLIDES:** The twenty slides show a variety of geographical, cultural, and industrial development aspects of the main copper mining area and related coastal town.
- **FILM:** A 16mm black and white film produced in Bougainville by the ABC Four Corners team at the time of the original dispute in 1969, entitled 'Bougainville—Scratching the Surface'.



# Annual Meeting Of Council

The Annual Meeting of the Council was held at ACER on 7 and 8 November. The President (Dr S. A. Rayner) was in the Chair. He welcomed two new members—Dr G. Ramsey (Torrens CAE) as a co-opted member, and Mr J. Liddlelow representing the Western Australian Institute. Mr. J. Barton of Western Australia represented the Conference of Directors-General and Mr A. P. Anderson the Australian Department of Education.

Amongst the matters under consideration were ACER's policy in research and development in testing, and the revision of ACER's Memorandum and Articles.

The discussions on testing followed a survey made for the Council in 1973 by one of its members, Mr G. D. Bradshaw of the University of Melbourne School of Education. This covered the needs, particularly but not solely for tests, of the guidance and counselling services operating in Australia, as well as some more general needs. A number of both specific and general needs were identified, on some of which ACER staff have been working for some time, e.g. on a check list at school beginner level, both to assess the level of a child's development at that time, and to try to identify children 'at risk'.

ACER does not have the resources in staff and time at present available to do all that is asked for, and needed. It will be exploring therefore both the possibility of putting more of its own resources into servicing its own tests and developing new ones. It hopes also to collaborate with others around Australia to develop new tests—to make available more generally tests already in use in particular places but not widely known or used elsewhere, and to modify, adapt or make available unchanged some of the new tests appearing both in Australia and overseas.

# Advisory Services

The Advisory Services section at ACER is divided into two parts sharing an Advisory Services Library (test library). Education Advisory Services staff assist teachers, teacher educators and individual professional people to find tests and educational materials suitable for their work. Psychological Advisory Services assists psychologists mainly but also researchers needing help with selecting instruments for projects. Both parts of Advisory Services co-operate closely so that the best possible assistance is given to enquirers, for in many cases needs overlap the relatively artificial boundaries established to help day to day operations. The services of Advisory staff are available on a national basis. Through mail enquiries and publications, we serve teachers from all parts of Australia (and some overseas).

The Advisory Services Library consists of a comprehensive collection of tests which are divided on the broad basis of whether they are psychological or educational. There is a small collection of books and reports which relate to tests in the collection. These books and reports are available on loan, as are the tests. There is a collection of resource material (pamphlets, publishers' catalogues, etc., *about tests, materials, books and equipment*), and a collection of educational materials. The resource collection of information materials and the educational materials are for staff reference and study at ACER but they are also used by visiting teachers, students of education and others in the field of education. Clients with the necessary qualifications are welcome to work in the test library, to borrow materials or consult with Advisory staff. It is advisable to make an appointment for visits since the test library is staffed on a part-time basis only and Advisory staff have many commitments.

ACER evaluates some educational materials, particularly tests and

materials published as kits. We try to maintain a complete coverage of tests but restrict our attention in other materials to those which have a clear research basis and show evidence of an empirical pre-publication evaluation (validation). We are interested in programs which are research based and which have gone through appropriate research and development stages. The findings of our test evaluations result in citation in the *Bulletin for Psychologists* and in some cases in cataloguing in either or both the *ACER Educational Catalogue* and *ACER Psychological Catalogue*. At present, materials evaluations are used as the basis for 'on demand' advice about materials on the market. We plan to produce *Advisory Service Bulletins* on various topics including materials evaluations but will restrict our attention to specific areas.

## NEW ACER TITLES

- Quarterly Review of Australian Education* Vol. 6 No. 4, 'Finance for Education in Australia: an Analysis' by Patsy Segall and R. T. Fitzgerald (\$2).
- Australian Education Review* Vol. 7 No. 1 and 2 (formerly the *Quarterly Review of Australian Education*), 'School and Neighbourhood: A Case Study' by R. T. Fitzgerald, P. W. Musgrave and D. W. Pettit (\$3).
- Home Environment and School Study Reports: 1974.*
- 1974: 1 'Can Teachers Make a Difference?' by J. P. Keeves.
- 1974: 2 'Some Attitude Scales for Educational Research Purposes' by J. P. Keeves.
- 1974: 3 'The Detection of Configural and Curvilinear Relationships' by J. P. Keeves.
- 1974: 4 'The Home, the School and Achievement in Mathematics and Science' by J. P. Keeves.
- 1974: 5 'The Performance Cycle: Motivation and Attention as Mediating Variables in School Performance' by J. P. Keeves.
- IEA (Australia) Reports: 1974 Series*
- 1974: 1 'An examination of the internal structure of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory for Australian 16-year-olds' by K. N. Ross (50c).
- 1974: 2 'The effects of the conditions of learning in the schools on educational achievement' by J. P. Keeves (50c).
- 1974: 3 'Implications of the results of the IEA Science Project for the teaching of science in Australia' by M. J. Rosier (50c).