

# Low self-concept in poor readers: Prevalence, heterogeneity, and risk

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# Poor readers

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

People who have unusual difficulty learning to read

Reading scores below the average range for age

Various names

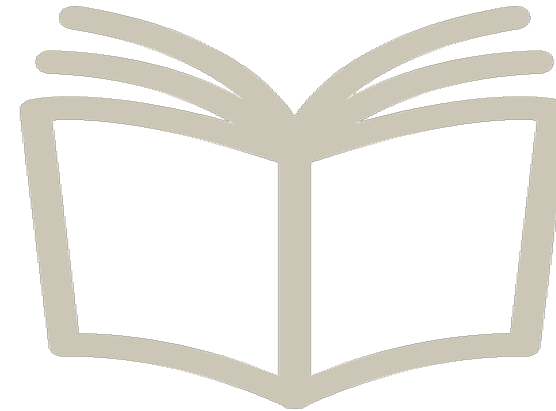
dyslexia

developmental dyslexia

reading disability

reading impairment

poor reading



# Poor readers

## EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Increased risk for

anxiety

depression

self-esteem

self-concept



# Poor readers

## SELF-CONCEPT

Self-concept can be defined as a person's view of or himself

Formed through experience and social interactions

Different domains

academic

gender

home

social

"Most boys and girls are  
different from me"

"Boys and girls like to play  
with me"

Typically measured using questionnaires

# Poor readers

## EVIDENCE FOR POOR SELF CONCEPT

Studies	Evidence	No Evidence
Taylor et al., 2010		Total Standard Score
Terras et al., 2009	Scholastic Competence	Global Self-Esteem + Social Acceptance + Athletic Competence + Physical Appearance + Behavioural Conduct
Morgan et al., 2008	Confidence In Reading + Difficulty with Reading + Attitudes toward reading	
Bull, 2007	Reading Self Concept Myself as Learner	
Snowling et al., 2007	Scholastic Competence	Social Competence + Athletic Competence
Alexander-Passe, 2006	Total Self Esteem + General Self Esteem + Social Self Esteem + Academic Self Esteem	Social Self Esteem + Academic Self Esteem + Parental Self Esteem
Polychroni et al., 2006	Reading-Spelling + Writing + Math + School Satisfaction + General Ability + Total	Practical
Martinez et al., 2004	Sense of Inadequacy	Social Stress + Anxiety + Depression + Interpersonal Relations + Self-Esteem + Attitude To School + Attitude To Teachers + Sensation Seeking + Atypicality + Locus Of Control + Somatization
Lau & Chan, 2003	Self Efficacy + Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic motivation + Social motivation + Ability Attribution + Effort Attribution + Strategy Attribution + External Attribution
Humphrey & Mullins, 2002	Physical Ability + Physical Appearance + General School + Total Non-Academic + Total Academic + Total Self	Physical Ability + Physical Appearance + Peer Relations + Parent Relations + Reading + Math + General School + Total Non-Academic + Total Academic + Total Self
Humphrey, 2002	Reading Ability + Spelling Ability + Writing Ability + Intelligence + English Ability + Neatness + Popularity + Importance	Reading Ability + Spelling Ability + Writing Ability + Intelligence + Neatness + Popularity + Importance
Frederickson & Jacobs, 2001	Scholastic competence	Social Acceptance + Athletic Competence + Physical Appearance + Behavioural Conduct + Global Self Worth
Riddick et al., 1999	General + Total	Social + Personal + Lie
Westervelt et al., 1998	Reading + Overall school + Physical abilities	Math + Appearance + Peer Relations + Parental Relations + General Self
Boetsch et al., 1996	General intellectual ability + Reading Competence + Writing Competence + Spelling Competence + Math Competence + Physical Appearance	Job Competence + Adequate Provider + Intimate Relationships + Global Self-Worth
Boetsch et al., 1996	Global Self Worth + Intellectual Ability + Reading Competence + Writing Competence + Spelling Competence + Math Competence	Social Acceptance + Athletic Competence + Behavioural Conduct + Physical Appearance
Boetsch et al., 1996	Global Self Worth + Intellectual Ability + Reading Competence + Spelling Competence + Behavioural Conduct + Physical Appearance	Writing Competence + Math Competence + Social Acceptance + Athletic Competence +
Boetsch et al., 1996	Global Self Worth + Intellectual Ability + Reading Competence + Writing Competence + Spelling Competence + Social Acceptance + Behavioural Conduct	Math Competence + Athletic Competence + Physical Appearance
Maughan & Hagell, 1996		Global self esteem
Casey et al., 1992	Scholastic Competence	Social Acceptance + Athletic Competence + Physical Appearance + Behavioural Conduct + Global Self-Worth
Thomson & Hartley, 1980	School/Academic + Home/Parent + Overall Self-Esteem	General Self + Social Self/Peers + Lie Score
Murray, 1978	Overall Score + Intellectual and School Status	Physical Appearance Attributes + Happiness And Satisfaction + Freedom From Anxiety + Behavioural Adjustment + Popularity
Black, 1974	Overall Score	
Rosenthal, 1973	Total Score	
Andrews, 1971	Self as hostile + Self as non-conforming	Self as striving for success + Self as tense + Self as socially adequate + Physical and psychological self + Self as conforming

# Poor readers

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN SELF-CONCEPT

Some studies have found association between poor reading and low self-concept but some have not

Some studies have found association between poor reading and some types of low self-concept but not others

Red flag for heterogeneity

We know poor readers differ in their pattern of reading impairment, spoken language, and attention

We know that we have yet to find a single impairment in every poor reader

It is therefore highly unlikely (if not impossible) that all poor readers have low self-concept

But no study has investigated individual differences in self-concept in poor readers

Which types of poor readers have low self-concept?

# Study

## METHODS

### Poor readers

N = 77

9- to 12-years-old

Poor reading accuracy

3:1 (boys:girls)

### Reading

reading accuracy

reading fluency

reading comprehension

### Spoken language

phonological processing

receptive vocabulary

expressive vocabulary

### Attention

inattention

hyperactivity

### Self concept

academic

general

home

social

"Boys and girls like to play  
with me"



# Study

## RESULTS 1

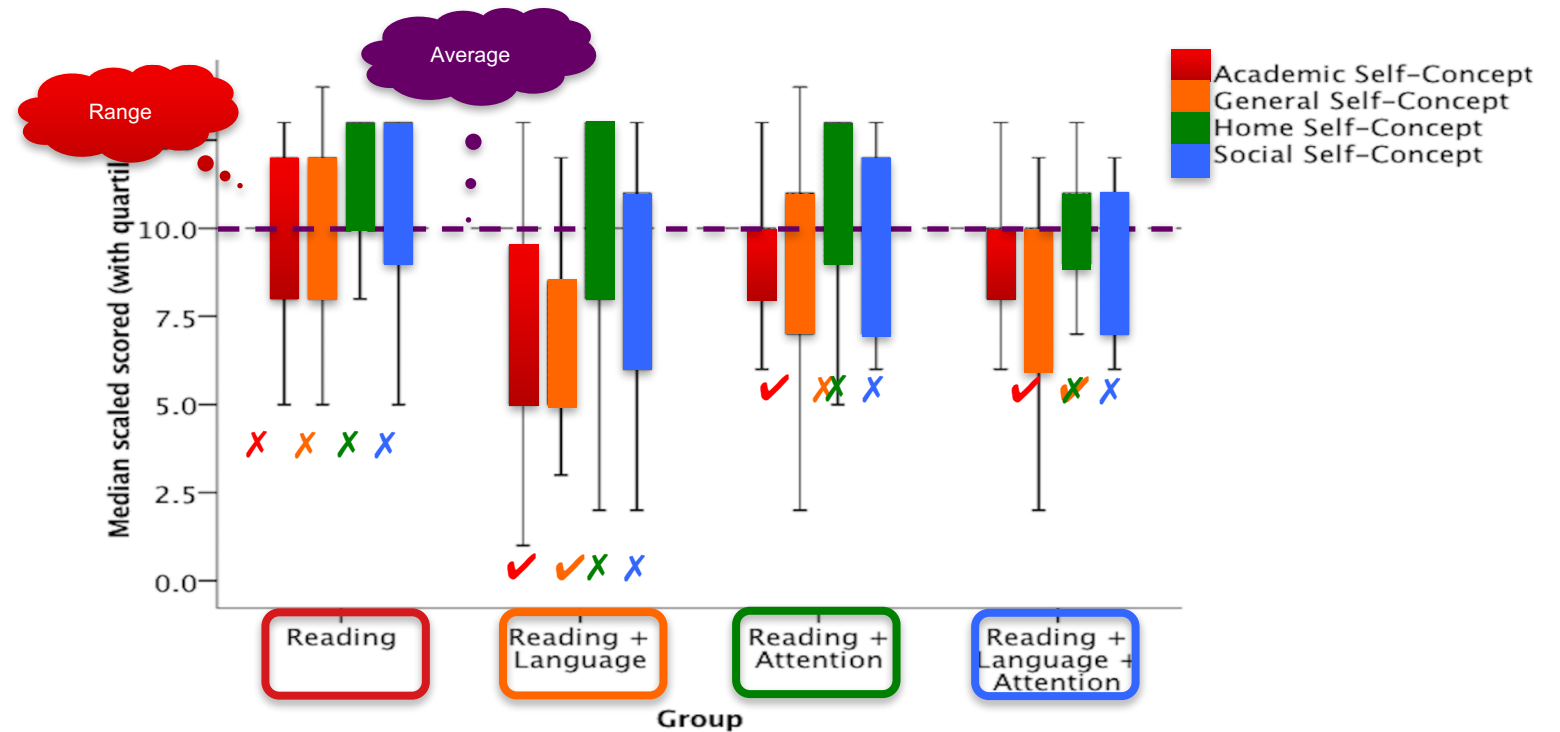
Type of self-concept	% in typical population
Academic ***	16
General ***	16
Home	16
Social	16



# Study

## RESULTS 2

Type of poor reader	#
With poor language	24
With poor attention	14
With poor language + attention	13
With neither	25



# Study

## CONCLUSIONS

Poor reading on its own not associated with reliable risk of poor self-concept

Poor reading + poor language **or** poor attention associated with reliable risk of poor self-concept

Poor reading + poor language associated with reliable risk of poor general self-concept

### Theory

Cumulative risk model

Single risk factor (poor reading) increases chance of impairment but to significant level when paired with another risk factor

### Clinical Practice

May be important to assess and treat poor self-concept in poor readers, particularly those with concomitant problems in spoken language and attention

"Most boys and girls are better at doing things than me"

with my school