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Julia Schwent Noack

Not Just “Nerd Camp”: The Influence of Association with Gifted Peers in a Non-Evaluative Residential Setting on Adolescent Self-Concept, Self-Esteem, and Social Ease

By

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Much research on gifted adolescents focuses on their self-concept, self-esteem, and psychological well-being and, often, the impact of in-school gifted programs on these components of self. This study, in contrast, addresses the influence of summer gifted programs as a potentially unique and dissimilar venue in which self-evaluations may be shaped. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of social comparisons, reflected appraisals, and presentations of self, I predict that association with gifted peers at camp will positively influence the global and social self-concept and self-esteem of gifted adolescents, as well as their perceived social skills. I also predict that campers will not experience the negative influence on academic self-esteem often found to occur in adolescents participating in school gifted programs. To test these predictions, I conducted a longitudinal survey on 58 gifted students attending a two-week residential summer gifted program and in-depth interviews with 30 campers. Quantitative survey data from established measures of self-concept and self-esteem are compared to campers' accounts of their experiences during and after camp. Quantitative results show that increases in self-esteem and social confidence are greatest for campers who are in the youngest age group, attending camp for the first time, or who initially come to camp with fairly low perceived self-esteem and social skills, although these changes are small. In contrast, data from the interviews show that the majority of participants, regardless of age and years of attendance, report substantial improvements in their self-evaluations and social confidence as a result of attending camp.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Cathryn Johnson, Dr. Irene Browne, and Dr. Karen Hegtvedt for the assistance and insight they provided in the writing and editing of this paper. I especially wish to express my gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Johnson, for her guidance and encouragement throughout the research and writing process.

Finally, I wish to thank my friends, my family, and especially my husband, Jon, for their continued love, support, and humor, which motivated me day by day.

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Introduction

"Here it's just so much easier, cause you don't have to impress anybody and you don't have to be anything but the first thing that comes into your head . . . and it took me awhile to realize that when I came here, cause most the time I'd hold myself back and kind of dumb myself down for people at school. Even when I was in elementary school and I would be smart, I would dumb myself down cause when I said stuff like that people would be like, 'Well that was weird.' Like they didn't know how to respond. And so, I don't know… I didn't say anything. And then I came here and people would say things, I would think them and they would say them at the same time. And I was like- oh my gosh- I thought that! But I never would have said it. So now it's cool to know that it's okay to do stuff like that, and just be who you are, just who you feel like being at the moment, not just who you think you should be around people. Cause the people here are like you, kinda. . . . I think my camp experience . . . validated my suspicions that I could show who I really was, and everything I can do all the time, and still be accepted. This also led to feeling infinitely more comfortable with myself."

-- Angie, a 15- year-old girl, at the end of her final session of camp

Previous research shows that children and adolescents of above-average intellectual ability, commonly called "gifted" students, may experience emotional and social difficulty and isolation from their peers as a result of "feeling different," that is, having different thoughts, interests, and ways of expressing themselves than their non-gifted peers (Gross 1998; McMillan and Loveland 1984; Schneider 1987; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). As a result of these potential difficulties they may feel socially inferior and uncomfortable (Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). They may also try to "dumb themselves down" or hide their intelligence in order to gain acceptance (Gross 1998). This act of "passing" for something that they are not may make the gifted individual feel negatively about him or herself and also experience guilt and anxiety about being discovered (Goffman 1959). Stereotypical perceptions and negative labeling processes by peers, who may perceive gifted students to be socially unattractive, isolated, eccentric, snobbish, or physically meek, might contribute to these feelings (Coleman 1985; McLeod

and Cropley 1989; Roedell 1986; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). Indeed, some clinical studies show that gifted individuals may experience not only isolation, dysfunctional social relationships, and negative emotions towards peers and themselves (Schneider 1987; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999), but also more serious psychological and physiological illnesses. Eating disorders, depression, and suicidal tendencies can result from a combination of social isolation and the highly competitive and perfectionist tendencies often present in gifted individuals (Dixon and Scheckel 1996; Garner 1991).[1]

These findings suggest that gifted children and adolescents might benefit socially and emotionally from increased interaction with gifted peers, which might decrease their feelings of isolation or "being different." Empirical evidence, however, indicates that tracking into high ability groups or participation in school programs for the gifted can have a negative influence on individuals' self-concept, academic self-esteem, and perceptions of being labeled gifted (Chan 1988; Coleman and Fults 1985; Cornell et al. 1992; Feldhusen et al. 1990; Fults 1980; Gallagher 1965; Hoge and Renzulli 1993; Karnes and Wherry 1981; Kulik and Kulik 1992; Marsh et al. 1995; Rodgers 1979; Stopper 1978; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). Other studies show no significant positive or negative effect on global and social self-esteem (Chan 1988; Marsh et al. 1995; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). This past research, however, focuses solely on the effects of participation in within-school gifted programs. No known research has focused on non-

[1]High performance expectations of parents and teachers, combined with a personal desire to succeed, may lead gifted individuals to develop these competitive and perfectionist tendencies (Dixon and Scheckel 1996; Garner 1991). For further discussion of the relationship between giftedness and eating disorders, see Dally, Gomez, and Isaacs (1979) and Touyz, Beaumont, and Johnstone (1986). For further discussion of the relationship between giftedness and depression or suicide, see Fleith (1998) and Hayes and Sloat (1990).

evaluative[2] summer residential programs for the gifted. These summer camps may have different consequences for gifted adolescents than in-school programs.

While in-school gifted programs give students an opportunity to challenge themselves academically and to interact with like-gifted peers, they normally do not isolate students completely from their non-gifted peers, who often continue to make up the largest part of the gifted individual's social circle. Any emotional or social benefit that gifted students may gain from associating with gifted peers in these programs may be mitigated if the students continue to feel isolated from or unaccepted by a majority of their peers. These programs are also focused heavily on the academic, and many students receive grades or assessments of their performance within school gifted programs. The processes at work within this type of program may be distinct from those at work in non-evaluative summer residential gifted programs for two reasons: 1) the residential camp setting isolates campers from non-gifted peers and allows gifted peers exclusive influence on the individual's self-evaluations; and 2) campers are not graded or evaluated based on their academic performance and therefore may be less likely to feel competitive or to compare their academic abilities to the academic abilities of their peers.

I address the following research questions: How, why, and to what extent does association with gifted peers in a non-evaluative summer gifted program affect the perceived self-esteem, social abilities, and self-confidence of gifted adolescents?[3] Do they relate differently to peers at school and at camp? Do they feel that camp has an

[2] By non-evaluative, I mean that classes and assignments are ungraded and no tests or assessments are used to gauge campers' knowledge or mastery of the subject matter.

[3] While there is some debate over the definition of giftedness in the literature (for example, as to whether the term only applies to advanced academic abilities or special talents in artistic areas as well), for the purposes of this study I will define "gifted" as anyone who has met the admission criteria established by the summer gifted camp being examined.

impact on how they see themselves or relate to others? If so, do they feel that this impact will persist over time?

This study is especially relevant and important at this time due to repeated cutbacks in state funding in recent years to summer gifted programs in the state where the camp in this study is located and elsewhere in the United States (National 2007). Considerable research has been done on the assessment of gifted individuals' self-concept, self-esteem, and psychological well-being, as well as the impact of social comparisons within school gifted programs on students' self-esteem. This research has yielded mixed results. My study differs from previous research in the following ways. First, unlike most studies in this area, I explore gifted adolescents' experiences in non-evaluative summer residential gifted camps rather than in school gifted programs. Second, most studies on gifted children and the influence of gifted programs focus primarily on the theory of social comparisons (Festinger 1954). In contrast, I take a symbolic interactionist approach to better understand how the camp experience affects self-concept, self-esteem, and social ease (the skill and level of comfort and confidence with which one interacts with peers and makes friends).[4] In addition to considering Festinger's (1954) work on social comparisons, I draw on the concepts of the looking glass self and reflected appraisals (Cooley 1902), as well as Goffman's (1959) work on presentations of self, to help guide me in assessing the processes at work for the youth attending summer camps for the gifted.

Finally, most previous research uses quantitative analyses to assess self perceptions of self-esteem among gifted individuals. I go beyond using only quantitative

[4] I use the term "social ease" throughout this paper to refer to an individual's perceived social abilities and social self-confidence.

methodology by employing a mixed method approach that includes a longitudinal survey and in-depth interviews. Specifically, I collected data over three points in time from 58 gifted adolescents attending a summer gifted program on the campus of a Midwestern university. I did this by developing and mailing questionnaires that employed established measures as well as original questions. I also conducted in-depth interviews with a subsample of 30 campers. These interviews allowed me to probe for underlying processes that operate at these camps and to compare students' perceptions of their experiences at camp to the quantitative analysis results.

Below I discuss the literature on self-concepts and self-esteem, the theories of social comparisons (Festinger 1954), the looking glass self and reflected appraisals (Cooley 1902), and Goffman's (1959) work on presentations of self. I explain how these theories may be used to make predictions about the influence of non-evaluative summer residential gifted programs on the global self-esteem, social self-esteem, and social ease of gifted adolescents. I then describe the setting, sample, and research methods used to test these predictions. Finally, I present my findings, comparing the quantitative results to the patterns that emerged from analysis of the in-depth interviews. I discuss the implications of this study for our understanding of gifted adolescents' self-concepts and self-esteem, as well as for gifted education.

Theoretical Background and Predictions

Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

The terms self-concept and self-esteem are often used interchangeably in the literature (Chu 2002; Gecas 1982; Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton 1976). Hoelter (1985) and Watkins and Dhawan (1989), however, define self-concept as "…someone's

perception about him/herself, without involving judgment of worth" while self-esteem "…pertains more to self-evaluation than self-description" (Chu 2002: 104). Gecas (1982) makes a similar distinction:

> An elementary but useful distinction is between the content of self-conceptions (e.g. identities) and self-evaluations (e.g. self-esteem). Identity focuses on the meanings comprising the self as an object, gives structure and content to self-concept, and anchors the self to social systems. Self-esteem deals with the evaluative and emotional dimensions of the self-concept. (P. 4)

According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, the self-concept, or the individual's idea of himself or thoughts "having reference to himself as an object" (Rosenberg 1979), is formed as a consequence of the individual's experience and interactions with the environment or society in which he lives (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Cooley 1902; Kelly 1973; Mead 1934; Shavelson et al. 1976). As described above, self-esteem is the evaluative aspect of this self-concept, or the degree to which one feels positively or negatively about his or her perception of self (Eliott 1986; Gecas 1982; Shavelson et al. 1976). Following these definitions, for the purpose of this paper, the term self-concept will be used to refer to the individual's perception, concept, or idea of self, while self-esteem will refer to the individual's *evaluation* of that self-concept.

Shavelson et al. (1976) state that the self-concept is multifaceted and hierarchical. They suggest that the various facets of the self-concept reflect the categorical components of one's self-view held by the individual and often shared by others. Regarding the hierarchical aspect of self-concept, Shavelson et al. suggest that the general or "global" self-concept is the zenith or high point and that it can be broken down into sub-

components such as the academic self-concept or social self-concept. Other facets may include areas such as work, family, physical attractiveness, and artistic or athletic ability. Each of these refers to the idea of self within the specified domain (Shavelson et al. 1976).

It follows that self-esteem is also multifaceted and may differ across the various components of self-concept. The individual's evaluation of a specific component of the self-concept is referred to as domain-specific self-esteem (Chu 2002; Rosenberg et al. 1995). For example, an individual may have one conception of her academic ability, interests, and standing relative to her peers. This is her academic self-concept. If she feels positively towards her academic self-concept, then she will have high academic self-esteem, but if she feels negatively towards her academic self-concept, she will have low academic self-esteem.[5] The extent to which global self-esteem is affected by any domain-specific subcomponent "depends on the value placed on achievement in that area by the child [Harter 1986]" (Hoge and Renzulli 1993: 451). For example, if the individual places a higher value on academic ability than social skills, an increase in academic self-esteem would likely also result in higher global self-esteem.

Rice (1990) argues that the study of adolescent self-concept and self-esteem is a crucial step if one wishes to gain an understanding of the individual youth's psychology and development. In any age group, positive self-concept and self-esteem are widely regarded as correlates of positive adjustment and psychological health (Bee and Mitchell 1984; Chan and Lee 1993; Pope, McHale, and Craighead 1988; Weiner 1982). Adolescence is an especially interesting stage for the study of self-concept and self-

[5] To fully understand an individual's view and evaluation of self, a global view is insufficient. I will be looking at not only global self-esteem, but domain-specific self-esteem as well, particularly academic self-esteem and social self-esteem.

esteem because it is often perceived as a tumultuous time period in the life of most individuals. It is characterized by biological, social, and psychological transitions that may significantly alter the individual's perception of self and surroundings (Compas 1987). In addition to the physical and hormonal changes brought on by the onset of puberty, adolescents must adjust to the social and emotional changes that accompany the transition from childhood to young adulthood and from middle school to high school. DuBois et al. (1998) claim that self-esteem among children and adolescents may be derived from feelings of self-worth and personal satisfaction based on experiences in school and with their families. Harter (1993), however, suggests other possible bases for adolescent self-esteem, including peer-relationships (or popularity) and attributes that are valued by peer culture, such as athletic prowess and physical attractiveness. During the teenage years, individuals begin to look more to their peers and less to their parents to determine the "cool" way to dress, speak, and act. As a result, interpersonal relationships with peers become increasingly important to the development and enhancement of one's social self-concept during this time (Coleman 1961; Elkind 1980).

It is also during this stage that individuals begin to face and become aware for the first time of a number of other potentially emotionally taxing life tasks. These include "the development of an autonomous sense of self, establishing a differentiated and realistic self-concept, gaining acceptance by one's peers, and becoming integrated into a meaningful social network [Compas, Malcarne, and Fondacaro 1988; Tannenbaum 1983]" (Zeidner and Schleyer 1999: 688). According to Erikson (1968) and Harter (1986), as children mature into the adolescent stage, self-concept becomes more abstract and differentiated, allowing more complex forms of self-representation to develop. In

other words, at this time of life, individuals begin to make clear distinctions in the ways they view and evaluate different facets or components of themselves (such as scholastic competence, athletic ability, and social acceptance) as well as the way they present themselves and are viewed in different contexts (Harter 1986).

Empirical research comparing the self-concepts and self-esteem of gifted adolescents and average adolescents has yielded mixed results. As discussed by Neihart (1999), a review of the literature reveals some studies that find no differences between the global or social self-concepts of gifted and non-gifted students (Bracken 1980; Hoge and McSheffrey 1991; Hoge and Renzulli 1993; Maddux, Scheiber, and Bass 1982; Tong and Yewchuk 1996; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999), other studies that find gifted students to have higher global or social self-concepts (Ablard 1997; Chan 1988; Colangelo and Pfleger 1978; Janos, Fung, and Robinson 1985; Milgram and Milgram 1976), and still others that find lower global or social self-concepts for gifted students than non-gifted students (Coleman and Fults 1982; Forsyth 1987; Lea-Wood and Clunies-Ross 1995).[6]

As might be expected, a majority of studies find that gifted students tend to have more positive academic self-concepts than their average ability peers (Hoge and Renzulli 1993; Marsh 1987; Marsh and Parker 1984; Schwarzer and Jerusalem 1989; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). However, previous research also shows that gifted students who participate in school programs for the academically gifted or who are tracked into high-ability groups at school tend to have lower academic self-esteem than other similarly gifted students their age (Chan 1988; Cornell et al.1992; Fults 1980; Gallagher 1965;

[6] Neihart (1999) suggests the differences in findings may be due, in part, to variation in measures of self-concept and self-esteem used or analyzed by the studies above.

Hoge and Renzulli 1993; Kulik and Kulik 1992; Marsh et al. 1995; Rodgers 1979; Stopper 1978; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). Still other studies report that gifted students in full-time segregated gifted classes have lower academic self-esteem than gifted students in part-time gifted programs (Chan 1988; Coleman and Fults 1985; Feldhusen et al. 1990; Karnes and Wherry 1981). The findings on this topic are not completely consistent, however, as Brody and Benbow (1987), Goldring (1988), and Kulik and Kulik (1991) found no discernable difference between academic self-esteem of gifted students in regular classes and those in special gifted classes.

Below I will discuss a number of theories that relate to different forms of self-esteem, including academic, social and global self-esteem. These theories guide my predictions of how each of these components of self will change within individual campers over time. Specifically, the first three theories I consider guide my predictions of how each component of self-esteem will change during the time participants spend at camp (that is, between Time One and Time Two of my survey). The last theory I consider guides my final prediction, which pertains to changes in individual self-esteem after campers have left camp and returned to school for one semester (between Time Two and Time Three of my survey).

Social Comparisons

Past research shows that the academic self-concept is largely shaped through social comparisons within the school or classroom peer group (Marsh and Parker 1984; Schwarzer and Jerusalem 1989; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparisons suggests that all humans possess an inner drive to evaluate their opinions and abilities and to be accurate in these evaluations. In the absence of objective,

non-social standards or means of measurement, individuals evaluate their attributes by comparing them to the attributes of others. Turner (1975) suggests that social comparison theorists build on social interactionist theories, stating, "To Berger's (1966) statement that 'the individual realizes himself in society,' the corollary is being added that the individual evaluates himself in society" (p. 8).

According to Zeidner and Schleyer (1999), "Students compare their own attributes and attainments . . . with those of other students within their own reference group (e.g., immediate class, school track, school environment) and use this relativisitic impression as one basis for forming their self-perceptions and reaching conclusions about their academic and social status [Festinger 1954; Marsh 1987; Schwarzer and Jerusalem 1989]" (p. 689). It is not surprising, then, that empirical studies (described above) generally show that gifted students have more positive academic self-concepts than their average ability peers, "to the extent that high levels of ability are translated into actual accomplishments" (Hoge and Renzulli 1993: 16). The theory of social comparisons also provides an explanation for evidence suggesting that participation in school gifted programs results in lower academic self-esteem (Chan 1988; Coleman and Fults 1985; Cornell et al. 1992; Feldhusen et al. 1990; Fults 1980; Gallagher 1965; Hoge and Renzulli 1993; Karnes and Wherry 1981; Kulik and Kulik 1992; Marsh et al. 1995; Rodgers 1979; Stopper 1978; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). Gifted individuals may feel less positively about their own academic ability when they realize that there are many other people their age with similar academic ability (Plucker and Stocking 2001).

Given the considerable evidence that participation in school gifted programs exerts a negative influence on academic self-esteem, it is possible that social comparisons

at camp will also result in deflated academic self-esteem. However, I predict that social comparisons of academic ability will not be as important in the camp setting as in gifted programs at school because of the non-evaluative nature of classes at camp. Students' class performance and mastery of course material at camp is not graded or measured in any way. I suggest that this provides a less competitive setting than the average school environment and that social comparisons of academic ability will be less salient as a result. Following this line of reasoning, I predict that:

> *Prediction 1:* Attending a summer gifted camp and associating with gifted peers in a non-evaluative setting will have no significant influence on academic self-esteem.

The Looking Glass Self and Reflected Appraisals

Self-concept and self-esteem may also be shaped through the processes of the looking glass self and reflected appraisals (Cooley 1902). According to Cooley (1902), an individual's identity is shaped, in part, by the internalization of that individual's perception of how others view him (Felson 1985). This happens through a three step process. First, an individual imagines how he appears to other people. Second, the individual imagines how other people judge that appearance. Finally, the individual develops some sort of self-feeling or self-concept, "such as pride or mortification," from this process (Cooley 1902: 171). Scholars suggest that the appraisals of others have more influence over an individual's self-appraisals when that person is in a state of uncertainty (Backman, Secord, and Pierce 1963; Felson 1985; Israel 1956; Khanna 2004). The fact that adolescence is a time of transformation and uncertainty suggests that reflected appraisals may play an especially important role in the individual's sense of self at this time.

Similar to social comparisons, the role of reflected appraisals may also be more important under circumstances where there are no clear criteria or objective feedback that one can use to evaluate oneself (Felson 1985). While gifted students have some objective feedback in the form of grades and test scores to recognize their intelligence and shape their academic self-concept, such clear criteria for the social self-concept do not exist. Felson (1985) also claims that reflected appraisals are likely to have a greater influence on self-evaluations of attributes which are defined in terms of the reactions or perceptions of others. He offers physical attractiveness and popularity as examples. The social self-concept, which encompasses peer relationships, perceived popularity, and social ease, is likely to be evaluated almost exclusively in terms of the reactions of other people to the individual and, therefore, to be especially susceptible to the reflected appraisal process.

The theories of social comparisons, the looking glass self, and reflected appraisals all emphasize the influence of an individual's interactions with others on the development of self-concept and self-esteem. The logic of social comparisons suggests that one would only suffer from low social self-esteem if she perceived that her social standing and ability was less, on average, than that of her peers. The logic of the looking glass self and reflected appraisals suggests this same person would suffer from low social self-esteem if she felt her social skills and manner of social interaction were not well received by others. For the gifted adolescent, the processes described by these theories may affect the academic self-concept differently than the social self-concept.

For example, the gifted child "may notice, even at an early age, that the other children in her pre-school cannot yet read or count, that their vocabulary is more restricted, and that the games they like are the kind of thing *she* liked a year or so before"

(Gross 1998: 3). Thus, gifted children and adolescents easily ascertain their cognitive advantage over their average ability peers, not only through "objective" measurements such as standardized tests, but also through social comparisons. They may be told or may overhear comments that they are special or above average. Also, their intellectual curiosity or academic performance may be rewarded with good grades or praise from adults, including family members and teachers (Gross 1998), allowing them to realize that their academic talents are valued by others. This positive feedback is likely to lead them to believe that others judge their academic self positively. Following the logic of reflected appraisals, the positive feeling towards this component of self-concept is then internalized, resulting in the positive academic self-esteem found by the many studies described above.

The feedback they receive from their peers regarding their social self-concept, however, may not be as positive. In fact, research shows that peers often do not appreciate the unique abilities and intellect of gifted adolescents. Peers may resent the differences between them or simply not understand or identify with the gifted adolescent's interests and forms of expression (Gross 1998; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999). For example, the child or adolescent that "speaks above the heads" of his peers or expresses a love of reading or science, an interest in current affairs, or a preference for intellectually challenging games, may not receive a positive response from his peers. Tolan (1987) offers an illustration of the way that chronological discrepancies between peers may affect the gifted child at a young age:

> A gifted six-year-old first grader may have reached the level of development (normally reached between the ages of eight and nine) at which she especially

> likes games with complex rules. She plays the simpler games the other six-year-olds like to play on the playground, and then she suggests that they play one of her favorites. The other children refuse. How does she interpret this rejection? Seldom with a sense that she is better than they. She is more likely to think, 'They don't like me.' And it is a very short step from 'they don't like me' to 'I'm not likable.' (P. 185)

According to Gross (1998), child and adolescent peers may be unlikely to reward or appreciate the gifted child's advanced stage of learning, development, or thinking, as peer culture more likely "rewards social and ideological conformity" and "values a comfortable and non-threatening mediocrity" (p. 2). The gifted child or adolescent's intellectual curiosity or interests in topics outside of popular peer culture may be rejected using derogatory labels such as "nerdy," "geeky," or "bookworm." Following the theory of reflected appraisals, gifted individuals are likely to imagine that others perceive their social selves (or the way they present themselves in social contexts) negatively, which they then internalize. Felson (1985) asserts that "According to the reflected-appraisal process, children's perceptions of how well liked they are should be an important determinant of self-esteem" (p. 72).

If it is true then, as I suggest, that gifted individuals may not feel as well-liked or accepted by their school peer group as by their gifted camp peer group, the reflected appraisal process would result in higher social self-esteem at camp than at school. The theory of social comparisons would make a similar prediction relating to social self-esteem. If a gifted student compared himself to a school peer group and felt that his interests, forms of expression, and interpersonal skills were different or less desirable

than those of his peers, he would judge his social self negatively (Gross 1998). If in the summer camp setting he found instead a reference group with interests, forms of expression, and interpersonal skills more like his own, his opinion of his social self would improve. Therefore, I predict:

> *Prediction 2a:* Attending a summer gifted camp and associating with gifted peers in a non-evaluative setting will have a positive influence on social self-esteem.

One dimension of campers' social self-esteem that I expect will be especially affected by improved reflected appraisals and social comparisons at camp is that of social ease, or the campers' perceived skills and confidence in social interactions (a concept which I will discuss further below). This leads to the prediction:

> *Prediction 2b*: Attending a summer gifted camp and associating with gifted peers in a non-evaluative setting will have a positive influence on social ease.

In addition to being shaped by social comparisons and reflected appraisals, the self-concept may be affected by dominant cultural norms and expectations and the individual's desire to conform to these norms and expectations in order to "fit in." Indeed, a central tenet of Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparisons is the "similarity hypothesis", which suggests that people prefer to compare themselves to others who are similar to them in abilities or opinions. This need for similar comparison results in pressures toward uniformity in groups, which can manifest itself in peer pressure and pressure from within to conform or appear to be like everyone else. Goffman's (1959) work on presentations of self can help us understand how this desire may influence the self-concept and self-esteem of gifted adolescents.

Goffman's Presentations of Self

Erving Goffman (1959) uses the metaphor of a theatrical drama to describe the way people (actors) present themselves, or perform, in social interactions (the setting or stage). He references James's (1890) assertion that individuals have as many social selves as they have distinct groups with whom they interact. People are likely, when possible, to present themselves in a favorable light. Goffman says, "When the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society . . . in which it occurs" (p. 35). These socially accepted values and expectations can be likened to Mead's "generalized other" (1934), or the perceived attitudes of an entire group or community. The reflected appraisals of other individuals are closely related to the generalized other, as dominant cultural norms and expectations at times influence the way that individuals form evaluations of their peers (Felson 1985).

Gifted adolescents are dealing with a number of generalized others and different "roles" or presentations of self. As discussed above, parents, teachers, and other adults most likely complement and reward their advanced academic abilities, while many peers may react negatively to their differences. Gross (1998) provides another illustration:

> Emma, in seventh grade, was deeply moved by a television program about the Czechoslovakian struggle for freedom from the U.S.S.R. She lay awake most of the night and the next morning she started, haltingly, to describe to some of the other girls in her class the pain and bewilderment of the Czechoslovakian women. The other girls looked her up and down, raised their eyebrows, and ostentatiously walked away. Emma realized her mistake, and the next day she engaged the girls

> in a spirited conversation about clothes and make-up. They accepted her back, with relief. She was wearing the right mask. (P. 7)

Gifted individuals may put on a performance or present themselves as someone more typical or "normal," someone who is more like their peers than they actually are. According to Gross (1998), "To be valued within a peer culture which values conformity, gifted young people may mask their giftedness and develop alternative identities which are perceived as more socially acceptable" (p. 1).

In an interview with Gross (1998), Darren (age 10) relayed the story of an incident in which his gang of friends was tormenting a stray dog on the playground in the presence of a group of young, impressionable five and six-year olds. He feared confronting them with the moral implications of their behavior because he knew that to do so would be to "lose face" and destroy his self-presentation as they knew it. In the end, he lied that the teacher was coming, causing the young truants to release the dog and scatter. He expressed that he felt tired of the constant deception in his presentation of self. Gross (1998) tells his reaction to the incident:

> The longer I fool them, the more they're going to resent it when they find out, but you've got to have mates and there's nobody round here who's anything like me, so they're all I've got. . . . It's getting to the stage that I'm beginning to dislike myself. I don't really approve of telling lies and I'm having to tell them all the time. I'm even telling lies about myself to myself. I'm going to end up not knowing who I really am. (P. 8)

For gifted students who are not fortunate enough to find a group of friends with whom they can be themselves, staging a performance that they know to be false may be

the only way they feel they can find companionship. Several empirical studies show that gifted students may actively deny their giftedness (Swiatek 1995) or even downplay their in-class academic performance (Gross 1993). This may have negative consequences for the individual's sense of identity and self-esteem. In his discussion of performances, Goffman (1959) notes that maintaining an impression that an individual knows to be false may cause the performer anxiety and fear of disclosure. Furthermore, the knowledge that they are "dummying themselves down" for their peers may lead to a negative self-evaluation because they do not feel they can be themselves or because they are "living a lie."

This downplaying of their intelligence and purposeful misrepresentation of self in order to fit in with the dominant culture around them fits with Goffman's (1963) description of "passing," or performances in which individuals with somewhat threatening or undesirable identities present themselves or allow themselves to be perceived by others as someone they are not (Goffman 1963; Renfrow 2004). Renfrow (2004) makes a distinction between "passing along highly stigmatized identities," such as the ones focused on by Goffman,[7] and "everyday passing across less threatening ones" (p. 485). The latter more accurately describes the passing of gifted individuals for more average ones, as their academic ability and intelligence are most often rewarded within certain contexts. However, if their misrepresentation were to be exposed, the individuals would still risk rejection from their established peer group. He provides the following quote as an example:

[7] Goffman's work (1963) focused on passing across highly stigmatized boundaries such as race, gender, or sexual transgressions.

> This particular incident occurred back in high school. I was also carrying a 3.94 grade point average and enrolled in 2 A.P. [advanced placement] courses along with being in an upper-level math class. The thing is that none of my friends really knew about any of that—me being smart. To complicate matters for me, being African American automatically brings about stereotypes of inferior intelligence. Around my friends I would, in a sense, "dumb" myself down not to stand out. None of my friends were in my advanced courses and I never spoke of them. When grades were issued I never spoke in detail of them. (P. 498)

Renfrow (2004) argues that most forms of passing may be emotionally costly, stating that "In general, those who initiated crossing social boundaries 'felt bad' and 'uncomfortable' or were 'bothered' by the experience… these reflections suggest that proactive everyday passing leads to [negative] inwardly directed responses" (p. 500).

I predict that for gifted individuals who have felt the need to try to pass as a "typical" teenager at school, a residential summer gifted camp may provide an escape from this need to perform. At camp, when these gifted individuals are surrounded by similarly gifted peers, they may feel they are allowed a chance to just "be themselves." They can stop dummying themselves down, downplaying their intelligence, or hiding their interests. Also, they may receive positive feedback (or positive reflected appraisals) from their peers for the differences that they have long tried to keep concealed and acceptance for "who they really are." The summer camp setting is unique because in many cases individuals go to camp not knowing anyone. They are free, then, to completely discard the self-presentations that they have worked to maintain in their regular school settings, with no fear of people perceiving or objecting to the discrepancies

between their school self and camp self. If, as I suggest, the camp setting allows individuals to stop performing or wearing a mask, this would relieve fear of discovery and guilt over self-misrepresentation (Goffman 1959, 1963; Renfrow 2004). This should further boost these campers' social self-esteem and social ease, as well as improve their feelings about their global self-concepts. Therefore, I predict:

> *Prediction 3:* Attending a summer gifted camp and associating with gifted peers in a non-evaluative setting will result in an increase in global self-esteem.[8]

"Reservoir of Self-Esteem": Effects Over Time

A final prediction concerning the permanence of any influence that campers may experience on their self-esteem is based on Cast and Burke's (2002) theory of self-esteem. They liken self-esteem to a "reservoir of energy" which "can be built up, but when used, it is lost" (p. 1043). They state that "When individuals are unable to verify their identities, the self-esteem produced by previous successful efforts at self-verification 'buffers' or protects individuals from the distress associated with a lack of self-verification" (p. 1043). After repeated or persistent problems in self-verification, the reservoir of self-esteem may be completely depleted. This theory has interesting implications for studying the long-term effects of summer gifted camps on gifted adolescent self-esteem. It suggests that if my prediction is correct that camp will positively affect the gifted adolescent's social and global self-concepts, the adolescent will then return to school with a higher reservoir of self-esteem. However, subsequent challenges from their peer group to their positive view of their social and global selves

[8] It should be noted here that Predictions 2a and 3 are closely related, insofar as an increase in the subcomponent of social self-esteem can be expected to result in a corresponding increase in global self-esteem.

will gradually begin to deplete this reservoir. Following this theory, I predict the following:

> *Prediction 4:* After returning to their normal school setting, study participants will begin to lose any gains they have experienced in social self-esteem, social ease, and global self-esteem.

Methods

The Setting

To test my predictions, I recruited study participants during the summer months of 2006 through a private summer residential camp for gifted adolescents, located in the Midwest. I chose a residential summer camp for the gifted because I wished to explore the influence of associating with like-gifted peers in a non-graded, non-evaluative setting, and more specifically, in a setting that isolated the individuals from their normal peer group. I had access to the particular camp chosen, which I will call "Camp Caliber,"[9] through the ready cooperation of camp administrators, who I knew from a summer spent as a residential assistant, or camp counselor, at the camp several years prior. Before that, I attended the camp as a camper for three summers in the 1990's.

Camp Caliber sends recruitment materials to gifted program teachers at public and private schools around the state and to participants in the Duke University Talent Identification Program.[10] However, camp administrators say that the majority of their advertisement is done through word of mouth. The camp admits students if they meet any one of three criteria based on IQ, standardized test scores, or previous enrollment in school gifted programs. Students who meet these criteria are accepted, and their parents pay for their enrollment. At the time of data collection, the tuition and residential fee for

[9] A pseudonym has been chosen to protect the confidentiality of the camp and all study participants.
[10] The Duke University TIP program operates in 16 states and offers academically advanced students in the seventh grade the opportunity to take the ACT or SAT college entrance exam.

the two week camp session was $825, although a limited number of scholarships were available on the basis of financial need. Students may attend camp a total of four summers. They range from rising 7th graders to rising sophomores in high school (age range 11-15 years). A total of 132 residential students attended the two sessions of camp in 2006. Non-residential students were excluded from the study for reasons explained below.

Camp Caliber is advertised as an opportunity for gifted students to explore and learn about a variety of academic topics and to interact with their peers in a nurturing and fun environment. During the day, students take non-graded, non-evaluated courses that they select according to their interests (classes normally not offered in schools such as web design, crime scene investigation, digital photography, medieval history, international culture and cuisine, the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, videography and media productions, and spelunking). Students live in the residential buildings of a university, and they spend their afternoons and weekends participating in cultural and recreational events facilitated by camp staff. They also have a substantial amount of free time (usually several hours a day) in which they are free to socialize and entertain themselves on the university campus (they have access to the library, recreation hall, gym, and pool).

The Sample: Participant Recruitment and Selection

To distribute my study materials, I mailed study packets through the camp administrative office to the family of every child enrolled in the residential program of the camp at the beginning of summer, prior to the start of camp. Non-residential campers were excluded from the study because of the relatively limited amount of time they spent

on campus socializing with other campers and because of the possibility of continued exposure to their regular peer group during the time of the camp. The packets contained a recruitment/explanatory letter, a parental consent form, a separate child assent form, a parent questionnaire, and a Time One (T1) child questionnaire. An addressed, stamped envelope was provided for the return of all materials (consent form, assent form, and completed questionnaires). The consent and assent forms fully explained the research project and requested the voluntary participation of parent and child. For the purpose of confidentiality, matching identification numbers were placed on all materials in each study packet, and participants' names were separated from the data during the data entry process.

A total of 58 families returned the study materials and consented to participate, yielding a response rate of 44%, a rate slightly higher than that obtained in a study using similar methods of mailing surveys to summer camp participants (Lee 1998). Similar to the problems faced in that study, recruitment and follow-up efforts were limited due to the short amount of time available between the completion of enrollments and the beginning of camp. These constraints were compounded by the young age of participants and the necessity of requiring signed consent from both the respondent and the respondent's parent or guardian.

Distributing surveys by mail carries a danger of bias, with more highly educated individuals and those with a greater interest in the study topic being more likely to respond (Singer 1978, Singleton et al. 1998). We might assume that individuals who have chosen to return to camp for several summers, as many of the older campers have, possess a greater interest in the camp and benefits of the camp than do their younger

counterparts who are attending for the first time. Among child participants, more campers in the higher grade levels responded to the survey than campers in the lower grade levels. However, the grade level distribution within my sample closely approximates the grade level distribution of the overall camp population.

(Tables 1 and 2 Here)

I do not have information about the education level of campers' parents if they did not participate in the study, and therefore I can make no comparison between study participants and the overall camp population. However, the education level distribution of the children's primary caregivers does vary somewhat: 18 (31%) of these caregivers had a two year degree or less, 24 (41%) had a bachelor's degree, and 15 (26%) had a masters or doctorate degree.

I sent a second child questionnaire (T2) within a week of the final day of camp to each of the families that returned completed packets with appropriate consent forms, and all but nine of the original participants completed and returned the T2 questionnaire, yielding an attrition rate of 16%. The following December, I sent a final follow-up child questionnaire (T3) to all of the original 58 participants. At Time Three, six individuals failed to return the questionnaire, yielding an attrition rate of 10%. Some participants completed and returned the T3 questionnaire although they did not return the T2 questionnaire. Only two participants (3%) failed to return both T2 and T3. A total of twelve of the original 58 participants failed to return either the T2 or T3 child questionnaires; for an overall attrition rate of 21%. Data from these respondents were kept in analyses wherever possible and dropped only when calculating change in variables between two time points. From the larger sample of participants who

completed questionnaires, a sub-sample of 30 individuals was also selected for in-depth interviews. This process is described further below.

My recruitment efforts yielded a slightly higher ratio of females to males than was present in the overall population. Of the 58 study participants, 37 (64%) were female, and 21 (36%) were male. The age range of subjects matched the age range of the entire camp population (11-15 years). Ten study participants (17%) were about to enter their 7th grade year in school, 12 (21%) were entering 8th grade, 18 (31%) were entering 9th grade, and 18 (31%) were entering 10th grade. These percentages can be compared to the overall camp population in Tables 1 and 2. Fifty-three study participants were enrolled in public schools (91%). Four other campers (7%) attended private schools, and one camper was homeschooled.[11] The majority of the participants identified themselves as Caucasian, with the exception of one African American camper and one camper identifying herself as both Native American and Caucasian. Two campers also stated that they were of Hispanic or Spanish origin. Due to the limited amount of racial variance in my sample, this variable was not included in my analyses.

My sample, then, consists of all campers who agreed, along with their parents, to participate in the study. The sample is meant to be an illustrative rather than a representative sample, and findings cannot be generalized beyond the sample itself.

Quantitative Measures

In the parent questionnaire, I asked about family background characteristics, including parental education, occupation, and income, as well as questions about the

[11] Given the lack of variation in my sample, it is not surprising that additional quantitative analyses did not show school type to be a significant predictor of the effects of camp attendance on the dependent variables. Only three interview participants attended private schools, and I was unable to discern any patterns of differences between their responses and the responses of campers attending public schools.

child's school and past participation in programs for the gifted (see Appendix A for full parent questionnaire).

The child questionnaire, Time One, requested demographic information (age, grade level, gender, race) and contained questions about the child's school, interactions with peers at school, and past participation in programs for the gifted.[12] As discussed above, examining domain-specific self-esteem in conjunction with global self-esteem is important for gifted adolescents because the evidence largely indicates that gifted students have higher academic self-esteem than average ability students, but the results for global and social self-esteem are mixed and therefore inconclusive. To that end, the child questionnaires at Time One, Time Two, and Time Three contained established measures of global self-esteem and domain-specific self-esteem, as well as questions designed to measure social ease (discussed further below). In addition, the Time Two questionnaire contained a few open-ended questions about how they enjoyed their camp experience, how camp may have changed them, if and how they planned to keep in contact with camp peers, and if they planned to return to camp the following summer. The Time Three questionnaire also asked about the extent to which they had kept in touch with camp peers, whether or not they planned to return to camp the following summer, and how camp had influenced or changed them and their perceptions of what it means to be "gifted." The entire Time One child questionnaire can be seen in Appendix B. Time Two and Time Three open-ended questions can be seen in Appendix C.

All items relating to self-esteem and social ease were measured on a four point

[12] I anticipated that individuals' previous, regular exposure to similar gifted peers within their home environment might influence the effect of interaction with gifted peers at camp. To assess this possibility, I asked respondents in separate items how many of their classmates, friends at school, and peers from extracurricular activities "do you feel are about as smart as you are?" None of these variables were significant in quantitative analyses.

Likert scale. Respondents were asked to respond to statements by selecting either "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Agree," or "Strongly Agree." This followed the design of the original authors of two of the measures incorporated into the questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) and the Self-Esteem Questionnaire, or SEQ (DuBois et al. 1996).

I used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) to measure global self-esteem. This 10-item measure is very commonly used in the literature and has high reliability and validity (Wickline 2003). Examples of items from the Rosenberg scale include: "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself," "At times, I think I am no good at all," "I am able to do things as well as most other people," "I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others," "I wish I could have more respect for myself," and "I take a positive attitude toward myself."

I used a shortened version of the Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Dubois et al. 1996) to measure area-specific self-esteem in "each primary context of early adolescent development," including peer relations, family, and school, as well as "2 additional salient domains of experience for this age group" (p. 543), sports/athletics and body image.[13] I chose the 28 item SEQSF (Self-Esteem Questionnaire Short Form) instead of the original 42 item SEQ to maintain a more manageable length for the overall child questionnaires. The SEQSF contains four items for each of the five domains listed above, as well as eight items regarding global self-esteem. Of particular interest are questions tapping into peer relations (social self-esteem) and school performance

[13] Area-specific self-esteem relating to family, athletics, and body image will not be a focus of this paper. Because much attention has been given in the literature to the importance of body image to adolescent female self-esteem, I ran paired sample t-tests to see if there was significant change over time within my sample in female self-esteem in the body image domain. There was no significant change.

(academic self-esteem). Social self-esteem items included the following statements: "I have as many close friends as I would like to have," "I am as well liked by other kids as I want to be," "I feel good about how well I get along with other kids," "I feel OK about how much other kids like doing things with me," Academic self-esteem items included the following statements: "I am as good a student as I would like to be," "I am doing as well on schoolwork as I would like to," "I get grades that are good enough for me," and "I feel OK about how good of a student I am." Preliminary research shows good factorial validity and internal scale reliability for the SEQSF (DuBois 2006).

The inclusion of peer relations and perceived popularity within the social self-concept, and the fact that self-evaluations in these areas may differ between distinct peer groups, makes the quantitative measurement of the social self-concept challenging. If, for example, a person perceived herself to be singularly unpopular in her school environment, but felt that she was accepted and had friends in the camp environment, which would get the most weight while answering questions about "peer relationships?" Because participants might reflect upon the school peer group or the camp peer group when answering questions in the social self-esteem scale, I wished to create an additional scale focusing solely on a third dimension of the social self-concept: social ease. As described above, I conceptualized social ease as the individual's perceived skills and level of comfort and confidence with which they meet people, make friends, and interact with others. I suspected that this measure might more accurately capture any positive influence of the identity processes (reflected appraisals and social comparisons) occurring at camp.

To this end, I asked 20 questions designed to measure social ease, or confidence in social situations. I developed several of these questions, while others were taken from the literature.[14] A number of pre-existing questions were modified slightly to make them more age appropriate or to create a better mixture of positively and negatively worded questions. To determine which of these items best measured the concept of social ease, I conducted a Principal Components Analysis on the social ease items at each of the three time points.[15] Six of the 20 items had factor loadings above .6 for each time point, and I created a Social Ease Scale consisting of these items. The scale consists of the following statements: "I am comfortable just being myself when I meet new people," "I worry because I don't always fit in well with people my age" (Schott 2001), "I often feel nervous even in casual get-togethers with people my own age" (Leary 1983), "I wish I had more confidence when interacting with others" (Leary 1983), "I often feel left out of conversations that others have at school" (Schott 2001), and "When confronted by a group of people I don't know, my first reaction is always one of shyness and nervousness" (de Charms and Rosenbaum 1960). The six items show good internal scale reliability at T1 (Cronbach's alpha= .85), T2 (Cronbach's alpha= .85), and T3 (Cronbach's alpha= .83).

Qualitative Measures: Interviews

In addition to my interest in whether or not gifted adolescents' self-esteem and social ease are changed or influenced by their exposure to like-gifted peers in a non-

[14] I drew upon the Interaction Anxiousness Scale (Leary 1983), the Relational Self-Concept Scale (Schott 2001), and generalized self-confidence questions (de Charms and Rosenbaum 1960).

[15] The factor analysis proceeded in two stages. I included all 20 items in the original principal component analysis at each time point. I then deleted items from each time point that had a factor loading below .5 and ran the factor analyses a second time. The six items included in the final Social Ease Scale had a factor loading above .6 at each of the three time points in the second stage of factor analysis.

evaluative setting, I also wished to gain a more in-depth understanding of the experiences of adolescents who attend summer gifted camps. Specifically, I explore the process through which these potential changes may occur and the meaning that these experiences have for these individuals. This kind of rich, detailed, and descriptive information about complex processes and meaning cannot be measured by quantitative, structured survey questions (Lofland et al. 2006; Weiss 1994). In-depth interviews allowed me to ask open-ended questions about the experiences of these adolescents and the impact of summer gifted camp on their self-esteem and social ease according to their own perceptions and phrased in their own words. Analyzing these interviews allowed me to be open to the emergence of patterns and themes in the perceptions of campers that were not captured in the quantitative data. This was especially important given my familiarity with the research setting (Lofland et al. 2006). Some of these themes were ones that I did not consider while constructing my questionnaires and interview guide. In addition, I am able to compare the quantitative data from study questionnaires to the qualitative data obtained through interviews in order to see how well the results match and tell complimentary stories.

In selecting a sub-sample for interviews from the 58 study participants, I maximized diversity by stratifying by age and gender and randomly selecting equal numbers of boys and girls from the youngest age group, attending for the first time, and the oldest age group, who had attended for a number of years. This sampling strategy was followed to the extent that was possible. However, due to circumstances beyond my control (smaller number of male participants, a few participants who agreed to complete questionnaires but did not wish to be interviewed, and the necessity of disrupting the

camp schedule as little as possible, which might, for example, prohibit me from interviewing a child who had not yet finished packing to go home), unequal numbers of boys compared to girls and experienced compared to inexperienced campers were included in the final interview subsample. The characteristics of my interview subsample can be seen in Table 3.

(Table 3 Here)

All interviews were conducted during scheduled free time within the final four days of each camp session at a time and location agreed upon by the child and camp staff. Locations were selected on the basis of other activities currently underway, with the intention of not interfering with camp activities. They were normally in a quiet section of a public place, where both parties could be seen but not heard by others, and included a corner of the recreation hall, residential hall floor lobbies, an outdoor picnic space, and the staff office. The interviews ranged in length from 15 minutes to an hour. Interviews were tape-recorded, but some notes were taken during the course of the interview so that I could refer back to them easily if I wished to ask follow-up questions. Interviews were later transcribed, and the confidentiality of respondents was protected by assigning pseudonyms to each individual. Identifying information was then removed from all forms and transcripts, and only identification numbers and pseudonyms were used during the data analysis and within this paper.

Interviews began with some basic questions about where the student was from, how they heard about camp, and what made them want to attend. Students were also asked questions about what being “gifted” means to them, how they feel about the term “gifted”, how they perceive significant others feel about the term, and whether or not

camp had changed their feelings about their academic abilities or being gifted. They were also asked to compare their peer group at camp with their peer group at school in terms of how they felt they fit in with each group, the degree to which they felt they could be themselves with each group, and the differences in the way they imagined themselves to be perceived by their peers in each group (reflected appraisals). They were asked about the camp experience, and if (and how) they felt the experience changed them, the way they viewed themselves, and the way they interacted with others. Other questions attempted to assess the degree to which they felt they had changed as a result of camp and the internalization of the reflected appraisals they had received and the social comparisons they experienced. Finally I asked them to speculate about the experience of returning home, keeping in touch with people from camp, and whether they would return to camp the following summer. For the full interview guide, see Appendix D.

Using the qualitative data management program, MaxQDA, I analyzed interview transcripts through inductive coding techniques (Miles and Huberman 1994). I created coding categories based on the dependent variables from my quantitative measures, social ease and self-esteem, and additional topics from my interview guide. New coding categories were created as new themes emerged from the data. Individual transcripts were revisited several times throughout the coding process as these new themes emerged. Following several rounds of coding, I was able to collapse certain codes into fewer categories to achieve a more abstract, organized, and concise final coding scheme (Miles and Huberman 1994).

My past relationship to Camp Caliber facilitated my entry into the research site, gave me a helpful base of knowledge of the camp setting, and seemed to provide a

connection with interview participants, who appeared to be put at ease somewhat at the beginning of the interview after I disclosed my status as a former camper and residential assistant. It is possible that the knowledge produced researcher effects on the data by limiting the detail of accounts offered by participants or by hampering my ability to ask more probing questions. However, it is also possible that participants opened up more to me than they would have to a complete "outsider" (Lofland et al. 2006). In disclosing this information, I hoped to make the adolescents more comfortable talking openly about themselves and their experiences as a gifted adolescent at school and at camp.

Results

Quantitative Analyses

T-Test Comparisons

To test for the statistical significance of changes in global self-esteem, social self-esteem, academic self-esteem, and social ease over time, I ran paired sample t-tests to compare the means of each dependent variable. I used Time One as a baseline measure, comparing the means of Time One with Time Two and then Time One with Time Three. Although the pattern of changes in means is in the direction I predicted for the entire sample (see Table 4), the t-tests revealed that none of the changes in means between time points were statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level.

(Table 4 Here)

I then separated the sample into boys and girls and looked again at the dependent variable means. As can be seen in Table 5, at Time One, boys had higher average scores than girls for all self-esteem and social ease measures. This is consistent with past studies that found lower self-esteem in adolescent females than adolescent males (Cairns et al. 1990; Chubb and Fertman 1997; Eccles et al. 1989; Labouvie et al. 1990;

Nottelmann 1987; Rosenberg and Simmons 1975; Simmons and Rosenberg 1975; Wigfield et al. 1991). I repeated the paired sample t-tests described above for each gender group, again comparing the mean value for each dependent variable at Time One with Time Two and then at Time One with Time Three. Among boys, the only statistically significant t-test result was the decrease between mean social self-esteem at T1 (M= 12.62) and T3 (M= 11.32) (t[18]= 2.6, p= .018). Because there is very little difference between male social self-esteem at T1 and T2, the drop after returning to school at T3 was likely due more to experiences at school than at camp. Among females, there is a marginally significant increase between mean academic self-esteem at T1 (M= 11.38) and T3 (M= 12.42) (t[32]= -1.87, p= .071). Again, this cannot be interpreted as having any relationship to processes occurring at camp. The increase in female SEQSF global self-esteem scores between T1 (M=23.68) and T2 (M= 24.97) was also marginally significant (t[30]= -1.78, p= .086), offering weak support for Prediction 3. Overall, however, the t-tests did not indicate that gender mattered significantly for changes in self-esteem and social ease among study participants.

(Table 5 Here)

Next, I divided my sample into groups by grade level and examined the influence of grade level (and by proxy, age) on change in the dependent variables over time. Table 6 shows self-esteem and social ease means at each point in time for study participants entering seventh, eighth, ninth, or tenth grade the following fall. For rising seventh graders, t-tests showed a significant increase between Rosenberg global self-esteem means at T1 (M= 28.8) and T2 (M= 31.44) (t[8]= -2.40, p= .043), providing some support for Prediction 3. The increase in social ease means was also significant between

T1 (M= 16) and T2 (M= 17.67) (t[8]= -2.71, p= .027) and between T2 and T3 (M= 19.5) (t[7]= -2.50, p= .041) for this group. The increase between T1 and T2 supports Prediction 2b, while the continued increase in social ease once students returned to school provides evidence against Prediction 4. For rising eighth graders, social self-esteem was significantly lower at T3 (M= 10.08) than at T1 (M= 11.58) (t[11]= 3.20, p= .008), however, the increase between T1 and T2 was not statistically significant. The increase in SEQSF global self-esteem scores between T1 (M= 25.33) and T2 (M= 27.2) was also significant for this age group (t[9]= -2.86, p= .019), providing further support for Prediction 3.

T-tests revealed no statistically significant changes in dependent variable means for rising ninth graders. For rising tenth graders, the increase in academic self-esteem between T1 (M= 12) and T3 (M= 13.13) was marginally significant (t[14]= -1.90, p= .078). The increase in social ease between T1 (M= 16.44) and T3 (M= 16.87) was also significant for this age group (t[14]= -2.30, p= .037), although the difference between the means at these two points in time was only .43 points. These results indicate that the influence of associating with gifted peers in the camp setting on self-esteem and social ease may be more significant for younger campers than for older campers. An alternative explanation is that older campers are likely to have already attended camp for several summers and therefore experienced any gains or losses in self-esteem and social ease resulting from camp prior to Time One of this study.

(Table 6 Here)

To examine the possible influence of the number of years campers have attended camp, I separated my sample into two groups: campers attending camp for the first time

and campers who were in at least their second summer of attendance. Dependent variable means at each time point for these two groups can be seen in Table 7. The paired sample t-test results indicate that camp is indeed having the greatest influence on campers in their first year of attendance. For this group, the increase between T1 (M= 31.24) and T2 (M= 33.1) in global self-esteem as measured by the Rosenberg scale is statistically significant (t[19]= -2.70, p= .014). The increase in social ease between T1 (M= 17.4) and T2 (M= 18.4) was also significant (t[19]= -2.27, p= .035). In addition, the increase between T1 (M= 24.4) and T2 (M= 25.85) in the SEQSF measure of global self-esteem is marginally significant (t[19]= -1.83, p= .083). These results support Predictions 2b and 3. Among non-first time campers, only the increase in academic self-esteem between T1 (M= 11.39) and T3 (M= 12.1) reaches marginal significance (t[29]= -1.88, p= .070).

(Table 7 Here)

Following Prediction 1, in all the sets of t-tests that I conducted there was no significant change in academic self-esteem between T1 and T2 for any group.

Minimums and Maximums

A simple visual comparison of the minimum and maximum scores of the dependent variables at each time point (see Table 8) reveals some additional support for my predictions and suggests that the processes occurring at camp may have the biggest impact on students who come to camp initially with relatively low self-esteem and social ease.

Minimum global self-esteem scores on the Rosenberg and SEQSF scales both increase substantially between Time One and Time Two, supporting Prediction 3.

Between Time Two and Time Three the minimum Rosenberg global self-esteem score decreases slightly, and the minimum SEQSF global self-esteem score does not change. This evidence provides mixed support for Prediction 4, which suggested that increases in self-esteem experienced between T1 and T2 would begin to disappear between T2 and T3. Contrary to Prediction 2a, the minimum score on the SEQSF Social Self-Esteem scale is lower at Time Two and Time Three than it is at Time One. The minimum score on the Social Ease scale, however, increases between T1 and T2, and then decreases at T3 without dropping below the original T1 value. This pattern in social ease minimum scores supports Predictions 2b and 4. The minimum score on the SEQSF Academic Self-Esteem scale remains constant across time at the low point of the possible scale range. This follows Prediction 1, which suggested that academic self-esteem would not be significantly influenced by the experience of associating with gifted peers in a non-evaluative summer camp setting.

Maximum scores for all dependent variables are at the high point of the possible scale ranges and remain constant across time. This indicates that some campers come to Camp Caliber with very high global, academic, and social self-esteem and social ease. If any increases in their self-esteem or social ease occur during their time at camp or during the months between camp and December, the scales are unable to measure this change due to a ceiling effect.

(Table 8 Here)

Limitations

Two things should be noted regarding the limited statistical significance found by the paired sample t-tests. First, the small sample size (n=58) may be partly responsible

for the fact that none of the differences between time points in dependent variable means were statistically significant for the entire sample.

Second, some scholars suggest that self-concept and self-esteem are traits that remain relatively stable over time (Brack, Orr, and Ingersoll 1988; Burke and Cast 1997; Cast and Burke 2002; Chubb and Fertman 1997; Demo 1992; Harter 1998; Rosenberg 1965; Savin-Williams and Demo 1984; Wylie 1979), on a level comparable to intelligence and personality (see Trezesniewski, Donnellan, and Robbins 2003 for a review). Other scholars, however, suggest that self-esteem can fluctuate based on environment and reference group (Conley 1984; Leary and Baumeister 2000; Rosenberg, Schooler, and Schoenbach 1989) and that small influences on self-concept and self-esteem accumulate over time (Cast and Burke 2002). It is possible that the short amount of time spent at camp was not enough to allow for significant accumulation. Also, the quantitative measures that I chose to incorporate into my questionnaires may not have been optimal for capturing changes over a short time period. Trzesniewski et al. (2003) found that the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, in particular, tends to be more stable over time than other commonly used measures of self-esteem.[16] The fact that rising seventh graders and first time campers showed significant change in global self-esteem on the Rosenberg Scale, despite its relative stability over time, strengthens the evidence in support of my predictions.

Qualitative Analyses

While the quantitative results did not show Camp Caliber having a large effect on any of the dependent variables, the qualitative results tell a different story. Thirty in-

[16] The stability of the SEQSF over time was not investigated in this study.

depth interviews and open-ended questionnaire items from the entire sample at Time Two and Time Three revealed that camp participants reported little change to their academic self-esteem while the majority indicated that attending camp had a strong, positive influence on their global and social self-evaluations, their perceived skills and confidence in social interactions, and their feelings about "being gifted". During analysis of interview data, several themes emerged which indicated that the processes described by the theories of social comparisons, the looking glass self and reflected appraisals, and presentations of self may affect gifted adolescents differently at camp than at school. Below I will present these themes, describing how they illuminate the processes at work for gifted adolescents who attend Camp Caliber and discussing how these adolescents perceive that camp has affected their self-concept, self-esteem, and social ease.

Academic Self-Esteem and Perceptions of Giftedness

Academic Self-Esteem: Interview participants were asked if camp changed in any way how they felt about their academic abilities and being gifted. Paralleling the results from quantitative analyses, few respondents reported any change, positive or negative, to their academic self-esteem. Only 10% of campers (3) suggested that they felt more negative about their own academic abilities after being around gifted peers at camp.

> ***Interviewer:*** *Do you feel more or less positive, or the same, about your academic abilities since you've come here?*
> **Shannon:** More or less the same. If anything a little worse because I've seen people who are much smarter than me, and I'm like, "Oh wow, they're so smart. I should work hard and try to get as good as them." But I never do, because I'm lazy.

> ***Interviewer:*** *Do you feel more or less positive about your academic abilities after coming to camp? Or you can say the same?*
> **Amanda:** I guess kind of the same cause here, since they don't grade us, it doesn't really seem like as big of a deal, like how you do academically. Like just the other day in my law school class I felt really dumb, cause two of the kids in

> my class started talking about ACT scores, and I've never taken the ACT, I've only taken the SAT, but I still felt really dumb, cause they were like- "oh yeah I got like a 30," and I was like "oh my gosh." So um, that kind of made me feel dumb, cause even though I've never taken it, like I went to this [other gifted] camp right before coming here . . . and there everyone had taken the ACT or SAT, and you to have like a certain score just to get into the camp. . . . So like, my friends there would all tell me that they had gotten like, a 24 or something, and then I come here, and my friends are like- oh yeah, I got like a 27, 30, whatever, and I'm like, "oh my gosh, you must be really smart", cause I just went to "smart kids camp" and they didn't do that well.

Only two campers made statements that seemed to indicate a clear possible increase in academic self-esteem.

> **Emily:** Usually I think I'm just this kid who's in gifted [class], but now I'm this kid who's in gifted [class] and knows more stuff than I think I do.

> ***Interviewer:*** *Do you feel more or less positive, or the same, about your academic abilities since you've come to camp?*
> **John:** I feel positive. I've learned that I've done really well.

None of the additional non-interview study participants mentioned a negative or positive impact on their academic self-esteem when answering open-ended items on the Time Two or Time Three questionnaires.

The fact that so few campers felt that attending Camp Caliber negatively affected their academic self-esteem contrasts with previous findings that participation in school gifted programs negatively influences academic self-esteem (Chan 1988; Coleman and Fults 1985; Cornell et al. 1992; Feldhusen et al. 1990; Fults 1980; Gallagher 1965; Hoge and Renzulli 1993; Karnes and Wherry 1981; Marsh et al. 1995; Rodgers 1979; Stopper 1978; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999) and suggests that the academic social comparisons operating within school gifted programs might not occur to the same degree in the non-evaluative camp setting. The small and approximately equal number of campers who experienced any change in academic self-esteem, whether positive or negative, supports

Prediction 1, which stated that associating with gifted peers at a non-evaluative summer residential program would have no significant influence on academic self-esteem.

Perceptions of Giftedness: An interesting theme emerged from other responses to questions about changes in campers' feelings about their academic abilities and being gifted. Rather than saying they considered themselves more or less intelligent or capable as a result of attending camp (academic self-esteem), most campers' responses focused on how they felt about their exceptional intelligence and being included in the "gifted" category (perceptions of giftedness). For example, two of the three campers who perceived a negative impact on their academic self-esteem also suggested that camp had positively influenced their feelings about being gifted, making it seem "more normal."

> ***Interviewer:*** *So has camp changed the way you feel about being gifted?*
> **Amanda:** Um, I think it's more normal, and that… I see like how other people make it into like…not a big deal. And even if I can't get my friends to think that, I still think that it's not that big of a deal. And so I guess it's just kind of changed my view like that- like I don't think of it as a big issue.

> ***Interviewer:*** *Has camp changed the way you feel about being gifted?*
> **Diana:** I don't feel like I'm one of the only ones anymore. I saw that there were a lot of kids here, so I know I can't be the only one, and tons of kids have already gone on from here.
> ***Interviewer:*** *Do you feel more or less positive about your academic abilities since coming here? Or the same*?
> **Diana:** Well, I feel a bit negative, because like I said I like to show off a bit, and I do. And it will probably get hard after I'm done showing off, I'll fall back on the thought that, "Oh my gosh, I'm not the only one in the world that knows this. Stupid me."
> ***Interviewer:*** *Do you feel like seeing these other gifted kids has made you feel, you said you also felt like you're not alone though. So does that make you feel good or bad?*
> **Diana:** I'm glad I'm not the only one. That makes me feel better.

Many campers who said they felt "better" about their academic abilities seemed to confound their evaluations of their abilities with their feelings about "being gifted,"

suggesting that they felt better about their academic abilities *because* they felt more normal or accepted after camp. For example:

> ***Interviewer:*** *Has [camp] made you feel more or less positive about your academic abilities?*
> **Ray:** Oh, definitely positive.
> ***Interviewer:*** *Why is that?*
> **Ray:** Well it makes me feel good that there are other people who can do it too.

Furthermore, with the exception of the two responses noted in the Academic Self-Esteem section above, a number of respondents who indicated that they felt better or more positively about their academic abilities offered no further elaboration. They did not say directly that they now think they are smarter or better students or that they are more satisfied with their grades or school performance. Given that they did not mention any specific dimension of academic ability, I did not feel justified in classifying these responses as statements referring to academic self-esteem.

The theme of improved perceptions of giftedness, however, emerged in a majority of interviews. A total of 70% of participants (21), agreed with the sentiment that camp gave them a more positive outlook on "being gifted." They said that they felt "happier" or "more accepting" of their abilities and being gifted, that being gifted did not equate with being "geeky," or that camp helped them to feel they were more normal. For example:

> **Jessica:** I used to feel being gifted was just being smart…was wearing suspenders and glasses and being smart. But now you come to camp and you realize, there's so many more people that can look like you and talk like you that are gifted. So I think of gifted more as, it can be anybody or anyone… and it's something you should embrace and be proud of, now that I think of camp. Before it was something that should kind of be hidden or you'd look like [Steve] Urkell, which was not good at all (laughs).
>
> ***Interviewer:*** *Has camp changed the way you feel about being gifted?*

> **Scarlett:** Actually it has. Because like most of the gifted people here are not like SUPER smart, like E= MC squared times Pi or something. . . . Like SUPER smart. The weird creepy people, but I see now that they're actually, like… cool.
> ***Interviewer:*** *Okay. So do you feel more or less positive about your giftedness-your academic abilities?*
> **Scarlett:** I feel positive about it now. More than I did.

Interestingly, similar to the patterns in self-esteem and social ease found by quantitative analyses, younger campers were slightly more likely than older campers to fall into this category. Seventy-nine percent of younger campers compared to 56% of older campers claimed improved self-perceptions of giftedness. About one third (8) of the 27 additional non-interview study participants who returned the T2 or T3 questionnaires also said they "felt better" about being gifted after camp.

Thirty percent of interview participants (9) felt that camp had no effect on their academic self-esteem or their perceptions of giftedness. For example, when asked, "Has camp changed the way you feel about being gifted?" they responded:

> **Paul:** Not really. I never resented being gifted, and I never was in your face about it. I am who I am, and I can't change that.

> **Robert:** Um, no not really. Since I go to [a gifted program through school] and it's kind of the same. Like a lot of the stuff we work on there . . . there's a thing called PGD, and it's Personal Group Dynamics. And we talk about a lot of stuff like what does being gifted mean to you, so I'm kind of used to the questions like that.

> **Caitlin:** Well, no because I was already okay with it. None of my friends really cared. They didn't treat me differently than anyone else.

The increased positive perceptions of giftedness experienced by most campers, however, may result in part from one of the objectives of Camp Caliber faculty and staff, which is to encourage a positive attitude towards "giftedness" or to teach adolescents that "being gifted is cool." It is noteworthy that so many campers "felt better" about being

gifted after attending camp because this provides a contrast to Zeidner and Schleyer's (1999) finding that participation in within-school gifted programs led to more negative self-perceptions of giftedness.

Camp vs. School: Reflected Appraisals and Presentations of Self

Interview participants were asked to compare the camp setting to school in terms of how well they "fit in" with each peer group. Their responses, as well as the additional themes that emerged from their answers to these questions, provide insight into the influence of reflected appraisals and presentations of self for these individuals. Unlike the quantitative results, the youths' accounts indicate that their camp experiences do aid in viewing themselves and their social interactions more positively.

When asked to compare how well they fit in with peers at school compared to peers at camp, 63% of participants (19) said they felt they fit in better at camp. Thirty percent (9) said they fit in equally well in both settings, and only 7% (2) said they felt they fit in better at school. Both campers who said they fit in better at school were attending camp for the first time, and both stated that they felt they fit in better at school because they had known their school peers longer. Older campers, who were usually attending camp for the third or fourth summer, were more likely than younger campers to claim they fit in better at camp than at school. Twelve of the nineteen participants who indicated they fit in better at camp were in the older age group. Comparing response percentages for the older and younger age categories, 75% of older campers said they fit in better at camp, while only 50% of younger campers made the same claim. This could be due to a selection bias, with campers who have had a more positive experience or who have been more strongly impacted by camp being more likely to return for subsequent

summers. Another possibility is that the campers' positive feelings about Camp Caliber increase with each summer they attend. Girls were also slightly more likely than boys to indicate they fit in better at camp than at school, with 67% of girls compared to only 56% of boys falling into this category.

Campers expressed four reasons why they felt they fit in better at camp than at school: the ability to be themselves, passing at school, feeling accepted, and perceptions of similarity.

"Being myself": Fifty-seven percent (17) of interview participants felt they could be themselves more at camp than at school, with patterns along age and gender lines that paralleled responses about "fitting in." Sixty-nine percent of older campers compared to 43% of younger campers and 67% of girls compared to 33% of boys fell into this category. Forty percent of respondents (12) said they felt they could be themselves in equal amounts at both places. Only one camper, a female entering the 10th grade, said she felt she could be herself more at school than at camp, and her response held an interesting caveat:

> **Anna:** I guess I'm more myself at school because of camp. I don't know why. It just made me different. I have no idea why. Just… I'm not shy anymore. See I probably wouldn't do this, two years ago.
> ***Interviewer:*** *You wouldn't what… sit and talk?*
> **Anna:** No. (laughs). I think a lot of people are like that. Cause you notice from the beginning of camp they hardly say anything, and by [the end], they just come up to you and talk. Even if they're really shy and it's their first year to ever be away from home or whatever.
> ***Interviewer:*** *And you think camp does that?*
> **Anna:** Yeah. (laughs)
> ***Interviewer:*** *How?*
> **Anna:** It has magical powers! (laughs)
> ***Interviewer:*** *(laughs) So how do you think it changed you that way?*
> **Anna:** I don't know. I just… maybe I just felt less weird because there's other people similar to me, somewhere.

Two other campers who claimed they could be themselves equally at school and at camp also qualified their statement:

> **Landon:** It's just I feel that myself here is more widely accepted than myself at school.
>
> **Paul:** The people [at camp] are all nice and accepting of who you are. You don't have to change for them.
> ***Interviewer:*** *But you said you don't do that anyway, right?*
> **Paul:** I don't do that anyway though. But it's kind of nice to not get made fun of just because of who you are.

Forty-three percent of the interviewed campers (13) reported that they could be "the real me" or their "true self" at camp:

> **Jimmy:** Well I still think it's not like I have to change my personality at school, you know, too much. It's just that I don't bring out certain things. But yeah, here I am…totally free.
>
> **Lexi:** Camp Caliber is the place to be the person that you want to be, not the person that everyone thinks that you should be. And so I get to be whoever I want to be here, which is great. And I get to be my true self here, which is really incredible to be able to say, you know, anything I need to, and everyone's accepted me anyway.

Of the 27 additional study participants who were not interviewed but who returned the Time Two or Time Three questionnaire, 26% (7) also reported that they could be their true selves at camp when asked open ended questions such as: "Were there things you liked about Camp Caliber? If yes, what were they?" and "Did you feel that you changed in any way because of your camp experience?" The feeling that one can "be one's self" or even "one's true self" at camp is likely to improve these campers' overall opinion about themselves, as will be discussed further below. Furthermore, this feeling may relieve the emotional stress, guilt, and anxiety that may accompany a false presentation of self (Goffman 1959, 1963; Renfrow 2004) such as the one that some campers suggested they present in the school setting.

Passing: When referring to school, almost one third of campers (9) brought up that they sometimes felt they had to hide their academic abilities, interests, or true personalities in order to fit in. They try to "pass" for a non-gifted student at school or for someone with more average interests for a person their age. This act of passing or presenting a false self can have possible deleterious effects on one's emotional state and evaluations of self (Goffman 1959, 1963; Renfrow 2004). Five campers said they hold back and do not raise their hand when they know the answer or have something to contribute to class discussions. Six campers said they "try not to act smart," "dumb [themselves] down," or "try to act normal."

> **Jessica:** I don't really talk about anything that has to do with politics or anything else at school. Because they just wouldn't listen or care. . . . It's kind of all a game I guess, within our school. (laughs) You say the wrong thing, and you'll be put in the wrong crowd. People take you differently. They make a reputation about you as being snotty or like a smart aleck or always want to be right or something, when you actually just want to voice your opinion and have people talk back to you about it. But it doesn't seem to work that way, so if you just watch what you say and don't talk about anything that makes you sound smart, then you're good. . . . They know I'm smart. I try not to… (laughs) be smart I guess, around them. I try to just act like everybody else.
> ***Interviewer:*** *You try to act like you're not smart?*
> **Jessica:** Yeah, almost. I mean it just kinda hampers a lot of stuff in school or with friends. If you act smart, I mean, like I said, it's kind of a shunned thing. So I just try to act dumb. If I have anything to say, sometimes I just won't say it. If there's opinions I want to say or if there's anything I want to talk about, I just don't. Which is okay, I mean… to a certain point. But sometimes, I don't know, it kind of makes me sad. Cause there's a lot of stuff I really want to say but I just can't say.

In addition to resisting discussion of certain "smart" topics with peers at school, three students indicated that they felt pressured to pretend to share similar interests with others in order to fit in:

> **Diana:** The thing is, usually when I'm not around gifted students I don't act like I am. I act like, I try not to act like everybody else at school, but I try to act… kind of normal. Meaning, I don't know everything, I'm not a show-off, I'm not a

genius. Which I'm not, but… And it sometimes gets hard because I'm not interested in other things like everybody else is interested in, like bands, movie stars, that stuff. I just don't pay attention to that. And I don't know if it comes with being gifted or not.

Angie: I always wanted to be normal. Like in elementary school I mean, I liked being smart kind of, but… okay an example: I won every spelling bee from 1st grade until 5th I think. And it's not just our school, you go on and you have to go through the brackets and everything, and I won all of them, I have like a million trophies. And in 5th grade I passed all the preliminaries, and I was like- I don't want to do it. Because I just didn't like being the one- oh Angie's going to win the spelling bee. Stuff like that. Everybody thought, everybody knew that I was going to be the one that won stuff. And I hated it. . . . So in middle school and high school I started, I think I tried to just act like everybody else kinda and not make being smart what people knew about me, but after I did it and people knew me more like just an average kind of person, I guess, I hated it. (laughs) …Um, well I stopped trying hard in class and trying to show off for my teachers, trying to show off for my class because they weren't impressed with it anymore. Well, I don't know if they were or not actually, I just felt like I was being nerdy, so I didn't want to do it anymore. And I started like talking to guys or whatever, you know, just doing average middle school girl things, things that I thought everybody else was doing, like my friends that weren't in gifted or stuff like that. . . . I did get into more of a, like a stereotypical middle school girl.
Interviewer: *Do you feel like that's really who you were during that stage, or do you feel like you were acting like somebody…?*
Angie: I think it was just a different side of me that I always… I mean, I wasn't ever "the nerd" in my grade. I was smart, but I was still social, I had friends. . . . I wasn't like an outcast or anything, but I still felt like people saw me as the smart one. And I just wanted to be normal. I didn't want to be seen for something different.

When asked to elaborate on why they felt they should downplay their intelligence among friends or pretend to have certain interests, Angie's fear of being viewed as "the smart kid," was shared by three other campers, who stated that they did not wish to be stereotyped, judged, or teased. One camper revealed that he often does not answer questions in class because he has a fear of getting the answer wrong in front of others, which would be incongruent with the view that his classmates have of him as being gifted. A total of 23% (7) mentioned a similar fear of being teased for poor grades or

wrong answers even though they are "the smart kid," although they did not explicitly say that they avoid answering questions in class.

Acceptance: A third theme, which can be seen in the comments of Landon and Lexi, above, was that of feeling more accepted at camp than at school. Eighty-three percent of campers (25) stated the opinion, without being asked to compare their two peer groups on these traits, that people at camp were more accepting, understanding, supportive, or nicer than people at school. Ninety-four percent of older campers fell into this category, compared to 71% of younger campers.

> **Angie:** I think that the people here are much more comfortable with themselves and their own interests and values while people at school would be quicker to conform to the others. . . . And I think it might just be the way people are at camp, to accept people because they feel accepted. And when you go back to school in the fall you don't feel like that as much because everyone isn't like that and everyone's not accepting of you. Cause they're like, "You're different. I'm different than you." And it's more of a clique thing. And camp… obviously anywhere you're going to separate into groups of friends, but everyone accepts each other even if they are different. So I think a lot of us, when we go back to school, change. We just don't act the same as we do here. Cause you're more open and you're more comfortable with yourself because you don't think that people… even now when I am okay with saying things that come into my head and… even in a regular conversation with someone, I'm more comfortable with it here, cause I know I'll get a response other than "What?" or *pause* or something like that. And I feel most people here feel that way too.

More than one third of additional questionnaire respondents (10) also stated that people at camp were accepting, mentioned they got "total acceptance at camp," or said they felt a real "sense of belonging" at camp. Six respondents (four interview participants and two non-interview participants) even indicated that people at camp "were like family." Four campers expressed the opinion that the atmosphere of acceptance at camp might occur because open-mindedness and an ability to see past stereotypes often accompanies intelligence.

> **Ella:** Smart people just tend to be more…TEND to be more… accepting towards differences, and they kinda understand that you're that way cause you just are. And they can't really do anything about it. . . . I think smart people kinda tend to see… a little more past stereotypes.
>
> **Amelia:** [Here] they don't care if you're different, because they know that everybody's different, that there really is no normal person. And they accept that fact. I fit in a lot better here than I do at school because at school I'm just the weird, smart girl that should know all the answers. And here I'm just like one of the people who wants to learn and wants to like, have fun and learn at the same time.

"They're like me": The final theme that emerged to explain why campers perceive that they fit in better at camp than at school was the impression that they were more similar to camp peers than school peers. Comparing the two peer groups, some respondents suggested that they may fit in better and feel more accepted and able to be themselves at camp because they relate better to camp peers and share with them common past experiences, interests, and forms of expression:

> **Lexi:** I think that people here are really friendly to other people just because you want to like other people like you.
>
> **Landon:** Well here, I mean, everyone accepts everyone because they can relate.
>
> **Jimmy:** They are more accepting, and they just don't have to accept as much because we're more similar.

Seventy-seven percent of interview participants (23) stated that people at camp "have personalities similar to mine," "relate better to me," or "are just like me."

> ***Interviewer:*** *Okay, so you feel like you act more like yourself here…?*
> **Mary:** Yeah. Because I have to be on my guard at school. So I don't… I mean I hate to sound like a hypocrite saying I don't want to fit in, but I kind of do just cause I don't want to be thought of as the weird kid.
> ***Interviewer:*** *So why do you feel like you don't have to be on your guard as much here?*
> **Mary:** Because I'm like everybody else. They get the fact that… to them my… this is normal. I'm not weird.
>
> ***Interviewer:*** *So what about camp sounded like it might be fun for you?*

Penelope: Just a bunch of people that were… like me. And some of the kids [at school]… are just… they don't get it. They don't get how my brain works, why I say the things I do sometimes. . . . they're always like, "Oh my gosh Penelope, the things you say are SO RANDOM. It doesn't make any sense." (false laugh) And the way that I jump from one topic to another, they don't always quite follow. . . . [But here] they can follow jumps like that, and things that I always do-subconsciously they do those things too. Like we were talking the other day, me and one of my friends here, sometimes when I'm walking down the sidewalk I count the number of steps for each little square, and I try to make it the same, and whenever I screw up I get really angry at myself. And she was like, "Oh my gosh, I do that too!"

Interviewer: *You said you think being around other gifted kids is good for you; why is it good for you?*
Anna: Um. . . . maybe cause you understand more about yourself, maybe. Because they're like you and you can kind of see maybe how other people might see you, first impression, they're someone similar.

Seven of these campers went on to speculate that other campers had been through similar things as them, and therefore understood them better:

Interviewer: *So what was special about the people [at camp]?*
Caitlin: I don't know. They just… can relate to you I guess. And you can relate to them. . . . Like, pretty much the same thing that's happening at school with you is happening at school with them and you have the same kind of people in your school that you don't like, because they're mean, and stuff like that.

Jessica: Because I feel not just that they are gifted but that they know, they've been in my boat. They know exactly what's going on.

Lexi: I guess there's like this special bond between everyone here knowing that we've all gone through the same things. We've all, you know, thought the same thoughts, but we all get to come here and just be really good friends. . . . I guess because you know that they're going to accept you no matter what, and you can say whatever you want. You can say what's on your heart and everyone is just going to be like, "I understand," you know, "I completely understand," which is really, really comforting. . . . I think because we're all SO much alike, but we're so different. And we all really, I think every single one of us comes and we're like, "I don't know who you are but I really want to be your friend because you've gone through the same things and you're gifted too, so I think we share that common bond, and that's really nice.

Fifty percent of campers (15) suggested that people at camp were similar to them because they shared their interests (music genres, movies, reading, learning) more than people at school.

> **Ariana:** Usually people that aren't smart don't really like learning sometimes. But people here like history and stuff, and most of the people at my school like P.E. and recess.
> ***Interviewer:*** *Has it been kind of nice to be around other people that…*
> **Ariana:** Yeah. Like, they like the same thing… like I enjoy learning at my school but most people don't. But people here are like, "Let's study!" (laughs)

> **Ivy:** I'm teased a little bit [at school] because, you know, I'm different. . . . I don't know. It's maybe because I'm always reading all the time. Like every moment when I'm not doing something else I'm reading. I read the oddest books too, I read like fantasy books, I read Star Wars Books, I read all sorts of things. And it's all like wow, you know. Or I'm helping out in the library because I just like that. . . .
> ***Interviewer:*** *So they tease you about that, about reading a lot and stuff like that?*
> **Ivy:** Yeah that, and just the way you dress. Some people are just really obsessed with that, and I just think that's kind of silly.
> ***Interviewer:*** *And people here don't tease you about the same things, about reading all the time?*
> **Ivy:** (laughs) Nah. Cause a lot of other people are.

> **Jimmy:** Like, I like the same music and movies and stuff as pretty much everybody here, and pretty much nobody back at school. . . . Like alternative rock is my preferred genre. And it's like… I can just talk about my favorite band with people here. Pretty much anybody… I can kind of safely assume that they're going to like the same thing. At home I don't really do that cause… a lot of the people I hang out with like older rock and heavy metal and such.
> ***Interviewer:*** *Yeah. So you feel like you can talk about your interests and activities and stuff with people here easier?*
> **Jimmy:** Yeah. . . . um, because there is less chance that somebody will go, "I hate that kind of music," and such. I don't know. We all have… maybe we all have the Monty Python gene somewhere. (laughs)
> ***Interviewer:*** *(laughing) The Monty Python gene? What do you mean by that?*
> **Jimmy:** Everybody here likes Monty Python, if you haven't noticed.
> ***Interviewer:*** *Well that's pretty cool. People at school don't like Monty Python?*
> **Jimmy:** Not as much.
> ***Interviewer:*** *Why do you think people here like Monty Python and people at school don't?*
> **Jimmy:** I don't know. It's subtle. It's ironic. . . . I don't want to say it's above other people, but… I'm going to… cause it is.

> **Ella:** It's just like- hey they're smart too. They're not really that different from you. They're just as intelligent as you are. They just kind of look a different way or do somethin' a little different. Smart people (laughs)… smart people, they just sometimes have the same interests, like band and choir and what not. It's like everybody kind of, underneath, are very, very similar. And just kind of everybody gets along because they're all so similar.

Forty-seven percent (14) said they appreciated people at camp because they were "more on my level" in terms of vocabulary, understanding jokes, and being able to have intelligent debates or discussion.

> **Miriam:** The people here, whenever I talk about stuff, they always understand what I'm talking about. The people at school, um… usually I have to explain to them. Like I told this one joke, and they had no clue what the word "procrastinate" meant, so I had to explain that, and then they started laughing like five minutes after I told the joke. And people here, I told them that same joke, and they just laughed right away because they knew what it meant. It's just… people here just understand people better (laughs), they just understand me better. And people at school, I have to explain everything. It's kind of annoying.

> **Elizabeth:** I think that when you're having conversations with other gifted people they might understand what you're saying a little bit better, and so it makes it easier to communicate with them and get to know them sooner, and be closer to them than you would with other people.

Overall, a total of 93% of campers (28) indicated that people at camp were more similar to them than people at school. This included 86% of younger participants and 100% of older participants. Seventeen of these campers were coded in more than one of the categories described above (similar personalities, relating better, similar interests, being on the same level, etc.):

> **Amanda:** I don't know, I feel like I really, really relate to people here, really well. And um, I don't know, sometimes like my friends at school, they think that stuff about me is really weird, and people here don't think it's weird at all. They're like, "Oh yeah, me too!" So um, I think I relate to people here, like maybe better than I do at home, and maybe it's just because I feel so much closer to people here, but I think that like, having similar interests makes you closer. So I guess it's kind of like, back and forth. I don't know.
> ***Interviewer:*** *So what do you feel like people here get about you or share in common with you that people at school don't?*

> **Amanda:** Um, smart jokes. Like if you make a joke and you have to know something to actually get what you're talking about, my friends at home will be like, "What? I don't get that." And I have to explain it to them and they don't think it's funny. People here are like, "Haha! Yeah!" and they laugh. And um… other stuff too. Just like in general, people here are more similar because like we've all been labeled as gifted and so- like I was saying sometimes it's kind of weird with other people at home, but it's not weird here cause it's kind of a big joke. Cause none of us really think that we're incredibly smart and gifted. We're like- yeah maybe I'm kind of smart and gifted, but I don't know.

An additional three non-interview participants stated that camp peers were similar to them when answering open-ended questionnaire items. The fact that the majority of campers felt they fit in better at camp than at school and were more accepted by and similar to their camp peers supports the suggestion that these gifted adolescents perceive more positive reflected appraisals at camp than at school.

Global Self-Esteem, Social Self-Esteem, and Social Ease

According to the perceptions of campers, how did this increase in positive reflective appraisals, sense of acceptance, and ability to be themselves actually affect their global self-esteem, social self-esteem and social ease? Although they were not asked a specific question about the camp's impact on their self-esteem, [17] 50% of interview participants (15), all female, mentioned an increase in self-esteem, said they felt "better" or "more accepting" of themselves, or said they felt more confident being themselves after camp. Older campers were slightly more likely than younger campers to describe an increase in self-esteem, with 56% of older campers falling into this category, compared to 43% of younger campers. Thirty percent of the 27 additional

[17] Interview questions were typically kept as open-ended as possible to allow for a variety of responses and to avoid being too leading. Campers brought up increases in self-esteem and social ease when asked questions such as: "Do you think that you have changed in any way because of your camp experience?", "Has your camp experience changed the way you view or think of yourself?", and "Has camp influenced the way you feel about yourself overall?"

campers (8) who returned the T2 or T3 questionnaires made similar statements.[18] All of these campers were also female, with the exception of one.

> **Anna:** [Camp] made me less self-conscious, and more . . . accepting of who I am. Cause I'm stuck like this anyway, so might as well get used to it. (laughs)
>
> **Lexi:** I think [camp has] given me more self-esteem because people here, you know, like me and everything, and it's made me feel better about myself knowing that I still have those people at Camp Caliber.
>
> ***Interviewer:*** *What do you think it will be like to go back to the people at school after hanging out with people here?*
> **Scarlett:** It has given me courage. Hardcore courage. So I feel better about myself now.
>
> ***Interviewer:*** *So has camp changed the way you see yourself or think of your personality in any way?*
> **Angie:** Um, yeah. It made me accept it more. I mean… because everyone else here is… I just know how amazing I think they are. And it makes me want to really show them that I can be… to them what they are to me. . . . cause it's such a good thing when I'm around these people, and they don't even know it, you know? It's just the way that they are and that's good enough. And that's a nice thing, it's a really refreshing feeling.
>
> ***Heather:** Every year I come back to school changed—and always for the better. This year I gained more confidence in myself and in BEING myself.
>
> ***Tiffany:** I felt better about who I am and felt more open. [Camp] left me happy.

Eighty-three percent of interview participants (25), with no discernable age or gender patterns, mentioned an increase in social ease as a result of attending camp. Anyone mentioning increased skill or confidence when interacting with others, meeting new people, or making friends fell into this category. An additional 41% (11) of the 27 non-interview study participants who returned T2 or T3 questionnaires also suggested their social skills or confidence had increased after attending camp.

[18] Responses with asterisks, below, are open-ended questionnaire item responses from study participants who were not interviewed.

Amelia: Um, yeah, [camp] helped me to realize that like, new people aren't scary most of the time. Like, cause I used to be really, really shy, and I used to think that… I used to be really scared that people wouldn't like me. And then I wouldn't try to make new friends. . . . [Camp] just made me feel better about meeting people. It made me feel like, "Hey some people are weird like me too! That's really awesome!" And so I try to meet new people a lot more now. And I'm not really shy about it anymore. I used to be just like, "Hi." And now I'm just like, "Hi, how are you? I'm Amelia…" and all that stuff. And I'm more open with new people than I was before. I introduce myself now. Because before I'd just be like, "Hi," and then I'd run away because they'd give me a weird look sometimes, and I'd be scared.

Interviewer: *Do you feel like you've changed in any way from your time at camp?*
Shannon: I know I have because I'm speaking out more in school and making more friends. And I hang out with the friends I have more. Before I came to Camp Caliber I never talked to my friends outside of school, but now I instant message people. . . . I go over to people's houses, go to parties and stuff. . . . I guess it's made me more outgoing because I've been accepted now and so I know it can happen. (laughs) I don't know, it's just a great experience.

Jimmy: Maybe [camp] makes me a little more socially confident. . . . I think, especially in the first few years, I knew how to talk to people a lot better after I came back.
Interviewer: *How do you think camp helped you with that?*
Jimmy: Um, a chance to practice. I think that's it. Because these are all people that… I like them and they like me, and I can say whatever I want to them. And I learned from that.

Interviewer: *Do you think you've changed in any way because of coming to camp?*
Mary: I'll probably be more, like, wanting to be in more social situations, finding more people at school who are like me. . . . It's basically a matter of asserting myself just to meet people, because I usually sit in a corner by myself.
Interviewer: *So would you say camp has made you more confident then?*
Mary: Yeah.
Interviewer: *And how do you feel like camp has done that?*
Mary: Well I mean, I'm with people who are more like me. I can assert myself to people and not be thought of as some weird kid who's just trying to be with the popular people.
Interviewer: *Okay. Has camp changed the way you feel about yourself?*
Mary: I feel better about myself actually. I mean, in a socially kind of situation. Cause I really don't think my social skills are that good, and here they're actually decent, decent and average as opposed to completely lack thereof.

Mary's statement that her social skills are "decent and average" at camp suggests that both social comparisons and reflected appraisals may be operating to boost the social self-esteem and social ease of some campers. Either she feels better about her own social skills because she sees that the social skills of other campers are no different or no better than her own, or she feels that camp peers approve of her social skills more than school peers because she has achieved a greater level of comfort and success in social interactions at camp. Overall, the qualitative data seems to offer strong support for Predictions 2a, 2b, and 3, which suggested that associating with gifted peers in a non-evaluative summer residential camp setting would have a positive influence on social-self esteem, social ease, and global self-esteem.

Going Home: Looking Forward While at Camp and Evaluations at Time Three

Interview participants who indicated that associating with peers at camp improved their self-concept, self-esteem, or social ease were asked: "How do you think that the changes you mentioned will play out once you return to your home and school?" Responses were fairly optimistic, with 50% (15) saying they hoped or believed the changes would "stick" once they returned to school:

> **Mary:** Hopefully they will stick because that would be a very good thing… meet new people, find some more friends . . .
>
> **Anna:** Probably [the changes will stay], because I'm not going to go back to being, like, shy and introverted anymore.
>
> **Shannon:** It's not like something that's made a huge profound impact on your life is going to just disappear. It might be significantly less than it is here, but it'll still be there.

Like Shannon, four other interview participants (for a total of 5 or 17%) expressed a fear or belief that the changes might start to disappear once they left Camp Caliber:

> **Jessica:** That's what I'm really worried about. I'm afraid I'll forget about camp and never be able . . . I'm afraid that I'm gonna go back to conformed Jessica and go back to all the things that I didn't really want to be before. But I hope, I hope I can stay that way.
>
> **Angie:** It's like a plateau point during the school year, and then camp is like a time when you go up a little bit . . . and you're kind of at a higher plateau, but you go back and . . . it's like two steps forward and one step back going back to school because there's nothing to keep you going or challenge you. . . . You can't just do it yourself just cause you're gifted and you can think that way, cause there are other people in your school that influence you whether you want them to or they're trying to or not. It's just your environment.
>
> **Jake:** It's about a month, I think, until my school starts. So the experience is gonna kind of slow down and… I'm gonna lose the feeling of being around other gifted people.

While the quantitative data seem to show, in a comparison of means over time, that any gains in self-esteem and social ease did begin to disappear once the campers return to school, many respondents still felt that camp had a positive influence on them when they filled out the Time Three questionnaire the following winter. Of the 52 study participants who returned the final questionnaire, 27% (14) mentioned an improved perception of giftedness at T3. Twenty-one percent (11) claimed at Time Three that attending Camp Caliber increased their self-esteem, and 31% (16) said that it improved their skills and confidence in social interactions. Overall, a total of 52% (27) of study participants who returned the T3 questionnaire expressed in responses to open-ended questions that camp had a positive influence on their perceptions of giftedness, self-esteem, or social ease. Only one T3 respondent, a non-interview participant, directly stated that the changes he experienced at camp disappeared once he returned to school.

Overall, the qualitative data suggest that the camp's positive influence on these aspects of self-perceptions persisted into the school year for at least some participants. This is evidence against Prediction 4, which suggested that gains in self-esteem and

social ease experienced at camp would begin to disappear once campers returned to school. It is impossible to know, however, if these study participants perceived their feelings about giftedness, self-esteem, and social ease to be just as high at Time Three as at the end of camp, or if some decline did occur. On the whole, it appears that the results concerning Prediction 4 are mixed and no firm conclusions can be reached.

Conclusion

Results from quantitative analyses indicate that the largest gains in global and social self-concept and self-esteem, as well as social ease, occur in the youngest age group of campers, campers in their first year of attendance, and in individuals who come to camp with deficits in these components of self. These changes in the quantitative measures, however, are small. In interviews and open-ended questionnaire items, campers of all ages expressed the belief that their perceptions of giftedness and social self-esteem had improved, along with their skills and confidence in social situations, as a result of attending Camp Caliber. Also, trends in the quantitative data supported the prediction that gains in these areas would begin to disappear once campers returned to their home and school environment, despite hopeful conjectures to the contrary expressed during interviews. In responses made to open-ended questionnaire items at Time Three, however, a number of campers continued to express the opinion that camp had beneficially impacted their views and evaluations of self, as well as their social ease in interactions.

In addition, contrary to some findings that point to a negative influence on academic self-esteem due to social comparisons made with other gifted youth in school gifted programs (Chan 1988; Coleman and Fults 1985; Cornell et al. 1992; Feldhusen et

al. 1990; Fults 1980; Gallagher 1965; Hoge and Renzulli 1993; Karnes and Wherry 1981; Kulik and Kulik 1992; Marsh et al. 1995; Rodgers 1979; Stopper 1978; Zeidner and Schleyer 1999), my study found little change in academic self-esteem after attending a non-evaluative summer camp. Social comparisons of academic abilities appear to occur less frequently or carry less weight in a non-evaluative summer camp setting than in school gifted programs. Importantly, however, among gifted peers at camp, social comparisons of interests, forms of expression, and interpersonal skills contribute to more positive social and global self-evaluations and increased social ease.

Within the social environment of exclusively gifted peers, campers also experienced more positive reflected appraisals than they receive in their school environment. Campers felt they fit in better and were more able to be themselves at camp where they perceived their peers to be more accepting and more similar to them than their peers at school. Some campers felt they were able to take off the "masks" they believe they must wear in order to fit in and be accepted at school. Release from false presentations of self, as well as positive reflected appraisals, may have contributed to improved self-evaluations and social ease. The isolating and non-evaluative environment of camp seems to allow gifted peers unique influence on these components of self, making it a setting that merits further study. Although gains in individuals' "reservoir" of self-esteem and social ease (Cast and Burke 2002) did appear to begin to fade once study participants left the isolated camp setting, it is possible that these gains could accumulate with repeated exposures to like-peer groups. Furthermore, most Time Three measurements of the dependent variables still reflected higher scores than measurements at Time One.

Because final data collection for this study occurred only five or six[19] months after the conclusion of camp, it is left to future research to determine whether gains in self-esteem and social ease would completely disappear with the passage of more time.

Limitations and Future Directions

By registering to attend a summer gifted program such as Camp Caliber, the adolescent participants in my study, or their parents, have to some degree acknowledged the "gifted" label or identity. Adolescents who have previously rejected this label or who feel a strong emotional conflict over being identified as "gifted" are less likely to choose to spend their summer attending a gifted camp. My sample therefore has an inherent selection bias because it is likely to include only gifted adolescents who have accepted that they are "gifted." A valuable future extension of this study would include a comparison group of similar composition with adolescents who have been identified as gifted but who do not choose to attend this kind of summer camp.

There are additional limitations in my sample that could be addressed by future research. As described above, study participants were recruited from a single, private, summer camp for gifted adolescents, located on a Midwestern university campus. The majority of campers who attend Camp Caliber come from the state where the camp is located or surrounding states. The camp population is relatively homogenous in terms of school type and race, and although some need-based scholarships are available, most campers come from families with enough expendable income to pay for their camp experience. Because the sample is not representative of the total population of gifted adolescents, findings cannot be generalized beyond the sample itself. Our knowledge of the influence of association with gifted peers in non-evaluative, residential camp settings could be increased by future work

[19] The final time point fell five months after camp for Session I study participants, and six months after camp for Session II study participants.

which might compare the experiences of gifted adolescents at camps in a variety of locations or from a wider variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Other comparison studies could be done to examine the differences between the camp experiences of publicly and privately schooled gifted students or between Caucasian and racial minority gifted adolescents. Furthermore, while the results of this study show change over time in self-esteem and social ease to be significant for certain categories of participants, the small sample size may have reduced the power of statistical tests and the likelihood of detecting additional statistically significant relationships. Future studies employing quantitative methods should attempt to increase the number of study participants, either by further developing recruitment and follow-up procedures or by choosing to study multiple camps or camps with larger populations.

The variation in measurements and patterns of change over time in global, social, and academic self-esteem indicates the importance of considering specific domains of self as well as global self-concept and self-esteem in future studies on gifted adolescents. Future scholars may also wish to consider the use of self-esteem scales developed specifically to measure changes in components of self-esteem over short periods of time (Heatherton and Polivy 1991). My findings also point to the benefit of going beyond the strictly quantitative approach used by many related studies. By allowing interview participants to express their experiences and feelings in their own words, this study found perceptions of positive, and sometimes powerful, influences on self-evaluations that were not fully captured by quantitative measures. More researchers should consider using qualitative or mixed methods when studying this population in order to gain a more accurate and complete understanding of the processes of self-development that are at work.

Cast and Burke's (2002) "reservoir of self-esteem" concept has interesting theoretical implications for studying the long-term effects of summer gifted camps on adolescents. In particular, it would be interesting to consider the ways in which these adolescents may try to maintain gains in their self-esteem reservoir. Given that self-esteem may act as a "self-motive," as people have a tendency to "behave in ways that maintain or increase positive evaluations of the self" (Cast and Burke 2002: 1042; Kaplan 1975; Tesser 1988) the adolescents may try to "hold on" to their ties with the camp community in order to refill their reservoir of self-esteem. I would predict that individuals for whom camp had a greater positive impact on self-esteem would make a greater effort to maintain their connection to the camp community, perhaps through on-line communities, email, and planning visits or reunions. Furthermore, they would likely feel a greater need or desire to return to camp the following summer. On the Time Three questionnaire, I asked campers if they had kept in touch with friends from camp, and if so, how many friends they were in touch with and what modes of communication they used to maintain contact with them. Future analyses could examine the relationship between these attempts at maintaining contact with the camp community and changes in self-esteem between T2 and T3. However, in order to best study this aspect of the camp experience, additional qualitative data, such as interviews or journal entries between T2 and T3, would be more appropriate.

Another possible avenue for future research stems from past findings indicating that gifted individuals who are highly creative are at a higher risk for low self-esteem and developmental problems than other gifted individuals. Dauber and Benbow (1990) and Swiatek (1995) found that verbally gifted individuals reported lower popularity, peer

acceptance, and feelings of importance than their mathematically gifted counterparts. Clinical studies show similarities between the thought processes of manic, psychotic, and highly creative people (Andreasen 1988; Jamison 1993; Richards 1981; Rothenberg 1990), and other studies have noted greater rates of depression, mood disorders, and suicide among creatively gifted adults, particularly writers and visual artists (Prentky 1980; Rothenberg 1990; Rothenberg and Burkhardt 1984). Little work has been done to see if these trends hold true for adolescents as well. Summer camps designed specifically for highly gifted, artistic individuals offer an opportunity to study the impact of social comparisons, the looking glass self and reflected appraisals, and presentations of self on the self-concept, self-esteem, and social ease of highly creative, gifted adolescents.

The finding that social comparisons between gifted adolescents do not lead to a drop in academic or global self-esteem within a non-evaluative camp environment but in fact may improve perceptions of giftedness and other components of self has implications for the field of gifted education. Scholars within this field may wish to compare non-evaluative and evaluative in-school gifted programs to see if programs that do not grade or assess students academically lead to decreases in academic self-esteem to the same degree as evaluative programs. Of course, when considering possible policy changes, the comparative academic benefits of both types of programs should also be considered.

The strong and positive impact that camp was perceived to have on the self-concept, self-esteem, and social development of the majority of gifted adolescents in my study suggests not only the importance of continued research on the influence of summer gifted programs for these individuals, but also the value of continued investment in developing these programs and making them available to gifted adolescents, particularly those who may struggle in these areas.

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Tables

Table 1: Entire Camp Population- Gender and Grade Level for Upcoming School Year

	Male	**Female**	
7th	14	7	21 (16%)
8th	17	14	31 (23%)
9th	19	19	38 (29%)
10th	13	29	42 (32%)
Total	63 boys (48%)	69 girls (52%)	**Total of 132 campers**

Table 2: Survey Respondents' Gender and Grade Level for Upcoming School Year

	Male	**Female**	
7th	4	6	10 (17%)
8th	6	6	12 (21%)
9th	8	10	18 (31%)
10th	3	15	18 (31%)
Total	21 boys (36%)	37 girls (64%)	**Total of 58 respondents**

Table 3: Interviewees' Gender and Grade Entering in the Fall Following Camp

	Male	**Female**	
7th or 8th- attending for 1st time	6	8	14 (47%)
10th- in 3rd or 4th year of attendance	3	13	16 (53%)
Total	9 (30%)	21 (70%)	**Total of 30 interviews**

Table 4: Total Sample- Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem (Possible Range 10-40)	31.17 (6.63)	32.46 (5.49)	31.33 (5.29)
SEQSF Global Self-Esteem (Possible Range 8-32)	24.59 (5.50)	25.65 (4.09)	24.81 (4.44)
SEQ SF Social Self-Esteem (Possible Range 4-16)	11.62 (2.69)	11.88 (2.59)	11.31 (2.31)
SEQSF Academic Self-Esteem (Possible Range 4-16)	11.72 (3.42)	12.04 (3.36)	12.35 (3.11)
Social Ease (Possible Range 6-24)	16.95 (3.70)	17.54 (3.63)	17.19 (3.57)

Table 5: Comparison by Gender- Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables

		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem	**Males**	32.43 (6.74)	34.11 (4.74)	31.84 (4.94)
	Females	30.46 (6.56)	31.47 (5.74)	31.03 (5.54)
SEQSF Global Self-Esteem	**Males**	26.19 (4.60)	26.83 (3.62)	25.05 (4.02)
	Females	23.68 (5.81)	24.97 (4.25)	24.67 (4.71)
SEQSF Social Self-Esteem	**Males**	12.62 (2.22)	12.61 (2.23)	11.32 (2.11)
	Females	11.05 (2.79)	11.43 (2.73)	11.30 (2.44)
SEQSF Academic Self-Esteem	**Males**	12.33 (2.94)	12.94 (2.10)	12.21 (3.15)
	Females	11.38 (3.66)	11.52 (3.85)	12.42 (3.12)
Social Ease	**Males**	18.19 (3.40)	19.22 (2.76)	18.32 (3.13)
	Females	16.24 (3.72)	16.53 (3.75)	16.55 (3.69)

Table 6: Comparison by Grade Level- Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables

		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem	**7th grade**	28.80 (7.80)	31.44 (6.17)	32.50 (5.01)
	8th grade	33.33 (5.77)	33.60 (6.40)	32.08 (6.83)
	9th grade	30.44 (6.77)	31.67 (3.96)	29.76 (4.44)
	10th grade	31.78 (6.36)	33.14 (6.11)	31.87 (5.08)
SEQSF Global Self-Esteem	**7th grade**	23.40 (7.38)	24.78 (4.49)	26.25 (4.33)
	8th grade	25.33 (5.10)	27.20 (4.05)	25.00 (5.44)
	9th grade	24.61 (4.88)	24.93 (2.99)	23.65 (3.90)
	10th grade	24.72 (5.54)	25.87 (4.85)	25.20 (4.31)
SEQSF Social Self-Esteem	**7th grade**	11.50 (3.21)	11.89 (2.98)	12.38 (1.60)
	8th grade	11.58 (2.87)	12.22 (2.68)	10.08 (2.81)
	9th grade	11.56 (2.09)	11.93 (1.58)	11.35 (1.69)
	10th grade	11.78 (3.00)	11.60 (3.27)	11.67 (2.55)
SEQSF Academic Self-Esteem	**7th grade**	12.80 (3.22)	12.56 (3.09)	12.63 (3.02)
	8th grade	12.83 (3.61)	13.00 (4.14)	13.33 (3.39)
	9th grade	10.11 (2.30)	11.07 (2.15)	10.82 (2.38)
	10th grade	12.00 (3.96)	12.07 (3.97)	13.13 (3.27)

Table 6 Continued

SEQSF Social Ease	**7th grade**	16.00 (4.59)	17.67 (4.53)	19.50 (3.12)
	8th grade	18.00 (4.35)	18.00 (4.19)	16.92 (4.46)
	9th grade	17.28 (3.48)	17.33 (2.79)	16.59 (3.32)
	10th grade	16.44 (2.96)	17.36 (3.75)	16.87 (3.11)

Table 7: Comparison of First Time Campers Compared to Non-First Time Campers-Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables

		Time 1	**Time 2**	**Time 3**
Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem	**First Time**	31.24 (6.81)	33.10 (5.71)	32.05 (5.30)
	Non-First Time	31.12 (6.60)	32.00 (5.38)	30.80 (5.31)
SEQSF Global Self-Esteem	**First Time**	24.40 (5.91)	25.85 (4.39)	25.64 (3.85)
	Non-First Time	24.73 (5.25)	25.52 (3.94)	24.20 (4.80)
SEQSF Social Self-Esteem	**First Time**	11.68 (2.64)	12.10 (2.45)	11.32 (2.17)
	Non-First Time	11.58 (2.76)	11.71 (2.72)	11.30 (2.44)
SEQSF Academic Self-Esteem	**First Time**	12.16 (3.06)	12.70 (2.92)	12.68 (2.83)
	Non-First Time	11.39 (3.68)	11.59 (3.61)	12.10 (3.32)
Social Ease	**First Time**	17.40 (4.18)	18.40 (3.73)	17.91 (3.68)
	Non-First Time	16.61 (3.32)	16.93 (3.48)	16.67 (3.46)

Table 8: Minimums and Maximums of All Dependent Variables at Each Time Point

Dependent variables T1	Minimum	Maximum
Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem	11	40
SEQSF Global Self-Esteem	8	32
SEQSF Social Self-Esteem	6	16
SEQSF Academic Self-Esteem	4	16
Social Ease 6 item scale	6	24
Dependent variables T2		
Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem	21	40
SEQSF Global Self-Esteem	15	32
SEQSF Social Self-Esteem	4	16
SEQSF Academic Self-Esteem	4	16
Social Ease 6 item scale	9	24
Dependent variables T3		
Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem	19	40
SEQSF Global Self-Esteem	15	32
SEQSF Social Self-Esteem	4	16
SEQSF Academic Self-Esteem	4	16
Social Ease 6 item scale	7	24

APPENDIX A ID# _ _-_ _ _

PARENT/ PRIMARY CAREGIVER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete these questions about your child who will be attending Camp Caliber and your family. This form should be completed by an adult who is the primary caregiver of the child.

1. What is your relationship to this child? ***Please check the one best answer***

□ a. mother □ b. father □ c. grandparent □ d. foster parent □ e. other: ***Specify***: _____

2a. Is this your child's first time attending Camp Caliber? (yes/no) _____

2b. Why did your child wish to attend Camp Caliber, and/or why did you wish for your child to attend?

_____

_____

_____

3. Including this summer, how many summers will your child have attended Camp Caliber? _____

4a. Has your child previously attended Camp Caliber Junior? (yes/no)

_____

4b. If you answered yes to 4a above, how many summers, in total, did he or she attend this program? _____

5. To your knowledge, does your child's school offer an in-school program for the academically gifted? (yes/no) _____

6a. Is your child currently, or was your child in the past, involved in an in-school program for the academically gifted? ***Please circle only one.***

a. Yes, my child is currently involved in an in-school gifted program.
b. My child is not currently involved in an in-school gifted program, but he/she was in the past
c. No, my child has never been involved in an in-school gifted program.

6b. If you answered A or B to the question above, how many academic years, in total, has your child been enrolled in an in-school gifted program? _____

6c. Please describe the nature of this program. (For example, approximately how much time per week does/did the child spend in the program? Is/was the program limited to your child's grade level, or was it a mixed-age program?) _____

6d. Do you think this program is/was beneficial to your child? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7a. Other than in-school gifted programs or Camp Caliber summer programs, has your child ever participated in any other camps or enrichment programs for the academically gifted? (yes/no) _____

7b. If you answered yes to 7a above, please describe the nature and duration of these program(s).

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Would you say that your child's school is located in (***Please circle only one)***:

a. an urban or city setting?

b. the suburbs?

c. a rural or small town setting?

9. What type of school does your child attend? (***Please circle only one)***:

a. Public

b. Private

c. My child is home schooled.

10a. About how many students are in your child's grade level? _____

10b. About how many students are in your child's school building? _____

11. What is your highest level of education? ***Please check one***.

- □ a. Eighth grade or less
- □ b. Some high school but no diploma
- □ c. High school diploma or equivalent
- □ d. Some college but no degree
- □ e. High school diploma or equivalent, plus technical training or certificate
- □ f. AA, AS, two-year degree
- □ g. Bachelor's degree
- □ h. Master's degree
- □ i. Doctoral degree (e.g., M.D., J.D., Ph.D.)
- □ j. Other: ***Specify***:_____ _____

12. What is your occupation? (If retired, your occupation prior to retirement.)

_____

13. What is your current job title?

_____

14. If there is a second parent or guardian living in this household, what is his or her highest level of education? ***Please check one***.

- □ a. Eighth grade or less
- □ b. Some high school but no diploma
- □ c. High school diploma or equivalent
- □ d. Some college but no degree
- □ e. High school diploma or equivalent, plus technical training or certificate
- □ f. AA, AS, two-year degree
- □ g. Bachelor's degree
- □ h. Master's degree
- □ i. Doctoral degree (e.g., M.D., J.D., Ph.D.)
- □ j. Other: ***Specify***:_____ _____
- □ k. No second parent/guardian in household

15. What is the occupation of the second parent or guardian living in this household? (If retired, occupation prior to retirement.) ***If no second parent or guardian lives in this household, please skip to question 17.***

_____

16. What is his or her current job title?

_____

17. If the child has regular contact with a parent who does not live in this household, what is his or her highest level of education? ***Please check one***.

- □ a. Eighth grade or less
- □ b. Some high school but no diploma
- □ c. High school diploma or equivalent
- □ d. Some college but no degree
- □ e. High school diploma or equivalent, plus technical training or certificate
- □ f. AA, AS, two-year degree
- □ g. Bachelor's degree
- □ h. Master's degree
- □ i. Doctoral degree (e.g., M.D., J.D., Ph.D.)
- □ j. Other: ***Specify***:_____ _____
- □ k. Not applicable.

18. What is the occupation of the parent not living in this household? (If retired, occupation prior to retirement.) ***If not applicable, please skip to question 18.***

_____

19. What is his or her current job title?

_____

20a. In studies like this, households are sometimes grouped according to income. What was the total income of all persons in your household over the past year, including salaries or other earnings, interest, retirement, and so on for all household members? ***Please check one.***

- □ a. $5,000 or less
- □ b. $5,001-$10,000
- □ c. $10,001 – 15,000
- □ d. $15,001 – $20,000
- □ e. $20,001 – $25,000
- □ f. $25,001 – $30,000
- □ g. $30,001 – $35,000
- □ h. $35,001 – $40,000
- □ i $40,001 – $50,000
- □ j. $50,001 – $75,000
- □ k. $75,001 – $100,000
- □ l. $100,001 – $200,000
- □ m. $200,001 or more

You will not be asked to complete another questionnaire for this study in the future. However, your child will be mailed a second questionnaire this summer, following Camp Caliber, and a final follow-up questionnaire in December. Thank you again for your time and participation!

APPENDIX B ID# _ _-_ _ _

CHILD QUESTIONNAIRE **TIME ONE**

1. How old are you? _____

2. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) _____

2. What sex are you? (Circle One) Male / Female

3. What is your race? ***Check all that apply.*** (If you are of more than one race, you may choose more than one.)

white _____

black or African American _____

Asian or Pacific Islander _____

American Indian or Native American _____

other (please specify) _____

4. Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin? (yes/no) _____

5. What grade will you be entering in the fall? _____

6. Is this your first time attending Camp Caliber? (yes/no) _____

7. Including this summer, how many summers will you have attended Camp Caliber?

_____

8a. Have you previously attended Camp Caliber Junior? (yes/no)

_____

8b. If you answered yes to 8a above, how many summers, in total, did you attend this program? _____

9. To your knowledge, does your school offer an in-school program for the academically gifted? (yes/no) _____

10a. Are you currently, or were you in the past, involved in an in-school program for the academically gifted? ***Please circle only one.***

d. Yes, I am currently involved in an in-school gifted program.

e. I am not currently involved in an in-school gifted program, but I was in the past.

f. No, I have never been involved in an in-school gifted program.

10b. If you answered A or B to the question above, how many academic years, in total, have you been enrolled in an in-school gifted program? _____

10c. Please describe what your in-school gifted program is or was like. (How often did you attend the program? How much time did you spend in the program every week? Did you miss regular classes? Were other students in the program your age, or did they come from different grade-levels?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

10d. Did you enjoy being in this program? Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

11a. Other than in-school gifted programs or Camp Caliber summer programs, have you ever participated in any other camps or enrichment programs for the academically gifted? (yes/no) _____

11b. If you answered yes to 11a above, please describe the nature and duration of these program(s).

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Would you say that your school is located in (***Please circle only one)***:

    a. an urban setting (within a city)?

    b. the suburbs?

    c. a rural setting (not in or near a city)?

13. What type of school do you attend? (***Please circle only one***)

    a. Public

    b. Private

    c. I am home schooled.

14a. How many of your **classmates** at school do you feel are about as smart as you are? ***Please circle only one.***

    a. None

    b. Very few

    c. About half

    d. Most (more than half)

    e. All

14b. How many of your **friends** at school do you feel are about as smart as you are? ***Please circle only one.***

    a. None

    b. Very few

    c. About half

    d. Most (more than half)

    e. All

15a. Do you regularly (on a weekly basis) interact with a peer group outside of school (such as a church youth group, an athletic team, an online community or another club or activity?) (yes/no) _____ ***(If no, please skip the rest of the questions numbered 15 and go directly to the page with Instructions at the top.)*** If yes, please describe. If there is more than one group, please list the ***three*** that are most important to you.

1._____

2._____

3._____

15b. For ***the first group*** you listed in 15a, about how much time do you spend each week with this group? _____ How many of people in this group do you feel are more or less as smart as you are? ***Please circle only one.***

a. None
b. Very few
c. About half
d. Most (more than half)
e. All

15c. For ***the second group*** you listed in 15a, about how much time do you spend each week with this group? _____ How many of people in this group do you feel are more or less as smart as you are? ***Please circle only one.***

a. None
b. Very few
c. About half
d. Most (more than half)
e. All

15b. For ***the third group*** you listed in 15a, about how much time do you spend each week with this group? _____ How many of people in this group do you feel are more or less as smart as you are? ***Please circle only one.***

a. None
b. Very few
c. About half
d. Most (more than half)
e. All

INSTRUCTIONS: ***This next set of questions asks how you feel about yourself. For each question, choose the one answer that best describes how YOU feel about yourself. There are no right or wrong answers -- just give your HONEST opinion. Put a check mark in the appropriate box for each question.***

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am very concerned with how people will react to me when they first begin to get to know me.	❑	❑	❑	❑
2. I am not very good at the kinds of things people my age think are important.	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. It doesn't bother me to have to enter a room where other people have already gathered and are talking.	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. I worry because I don't always fit in well with people my age.	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. I am comfortable just being myself when I meet new people.	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. I often feel nervous even in casual get-togethers with people my own age.	❑	❑	❑	❑
7. I feel confident expressing my thoughts or interests in front of others.	❑	❑	❑	❑
8. I usually feel uncomfortable when I am in a group of people I don't know.	❑	❑	❑	❑
9. I wish I had more confidence when interacting with others.	❑	❑	❑	❑
10. I think that people my age like me for who I really am.	❑	❑	❑	❑
11. I sometimes feel tense when talking to people around my age if I don't know them very well.	❑	❑	❑	❑
12. I watch carefully for signs of rejection from others.	❑	❑	❑	❑
13. I usually feel relaxed around other people, even people who are quite different from me.	❑	❑	❑	❑

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. I often feel left out of conversations that others have at school.	❑	❑	❑	❑
15. When confronted by a group of people I don't know, my first reaction is always one of shyness and nervousness.	❑	❑	❑	❑
16. I feel I need to "put on an act" sometimes in order to make friends or fit in.	❑	❑	❑	❑
17. When in a group, I rarely express an opinion for fear of being thought ridiculous.	❑	❑	❑	❑
18. I feel comfortable when meeting or getting to know others.	❑	❑	❑	❑
19. I don't make a very favorable first impression on people my own age.	❑	❑	❑	❑
20. I don't spend much time worrying about what people think of me.	❑	❑	❑	❑
21. I have as many close friends as I would like to have.	❑	❑	❑	❑
22. I am as good a student as I would like to be.	❑	❑	❑	❑
23. I feel OK about how important I am to my family.	❑	❑	❑	❑
24. I am happy with the way I look.	❑	❑	❑	❑

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
25. I feel OK about how well I do when I participate in sports/physical activities.	❑	❑	❑	❑
26. I am happy with myself as a person.	❑	❑	❑	❑
27. I am as well liked by other kids as I want to be.	❑	❑	❑	❑
28. I am doing as well on schoolwork as I would like to.	❑	❑	❑	❑
29. I get along as well as I'd like to with my family.	❑	❑	❑	❑
30. I like my body just the way it is.	❑	❑	❑	❑
31. I feel OK about how well I do when I participate in sports/physical activities.	❑	❑	❑	❑
32. I am the kind of person I want to be.	❑	❑	❑	❑
33. I feel good about how well I get along with other kids.	❑	❑	❑	❑
34. I get grades that are good enough for me.	❑	❑	❑	❑
35. My family pays enough attention to me.	❑	❑	❑	❑
36. I feel good about my height and weight.	❑	❑	❑	❑
37. I am happy about how many different kinds of sports/physical activities I am good at.	❑	❑	❑	❑
	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
38. I am as good a person as I want to be.	❑	❑	❑	❑
39. I feel OK about how much other kids like doing things with me.	❑	❑	❑	❑
40. I feel OK about how good of a student I am.	❑	❑	❑	❑
41. I am happy about how much my family likes me.	❑	❑	❑	❑
42. I wish I looked a lot different.	❑	❑	❑	❑
43. I participate in as many different kinds of sports/physical activities as I want to.	❑	❑	❑	❑
44. I wish I had more to be proud of.	❑	❑	❑	❑
45. I am happy with the way I can do most things.	❑	❑	❑	❑
46. I sometimes think I am a failure (a "loser").	❑	❑	❑	❑
47. I often feel ashamed of myself.	❑	❑	❑	❑
48. I like being just the way I am.	❑	❑	❑	❑

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
49. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	❑	❑	❑	❑
50. At times, I think I am no good at all.	❑	❑	❑	❑
51. I feel that I have a number of good qualities	❑	❑	❑	❑
52. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	❑	❑	❑	❑
53. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	❑	❑	❑	❑
54. I certainly feel useless at times.	❑	❑	❑	❑
55. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	❑	❑	❑	❑
56. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	❑	❑	❑	❑
57. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	❑	❑	❑	❑
58. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	❑	❑	❑	❑

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. A second questionnaire will be mailed to your home this summer, immediately following the end of Camp Caliber, and a final follow-up questionnaire will be mailed to your home in December. Thanks again for your time and participation!

APPENDIX C ID# _ _-_ _

CHILD QUESTIONAIRE **TIME TWO**

1. Were there things that you liked about Camp Caliber? If yes, what were they?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Were there things that you did not like about Camp Caliber? If yes, what were they?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you feel that you acted differently at Camp Caliber than you do at home or at school? If yes, in what way? _____

_____

_____

4. Do you think that you have changed in any way because of your camp experience? If yes, in what way? _____

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you think that you will keep in touch with people you befriended at Camp Caliber? (yes/no) _____ If yes, how do you plan to keep in touch with them?

_____

6. Do you think that you will return to Camp Caliber next year? (yes/no) _____

ID# _ _-_ _ _

CHILD QUESTIONAIRE **TIME THREE**

1. Since summer, have you tried to keep in contact with friends that you made from Camp Caliber? (y/n) ____ If yes, how many Camp Caliber friends do you regularly communicate with? _____ How often have you communicated with these friends, and how (email, chat, telephone, letters, in-person visits etc.)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. After returning home and to school from Camp Caliber, did you feel that you had changed in any way because of your camp experience? If yes, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Did your camp experience change your opinion about what it means to be "gifted"? If yes, how? _____

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you think that you will return to Camp Caliber next year? (y/n) _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D INTERVIEW GUIDE

Background: First, I'd like to ask you a few background questions:

- Where are you from?
- Could you describe your school to me? Is it big or small? Is it in a city, a suburb, or a small town? Is it private or public?
- How did you hear about Summerscape originally?
- What made you want to come?
- Can you tell me a little bit about what you've been doing while at camp?

***Giftedness*:** I'd like to ask you a few questions about how you feel about being called "gifted."

- Summerscape is a summer program designed for gifted students. Do you see yourself as "gifted"?
- What does being "gifted" mean to you?
- How do you feel about being called gifted? Why?
- Do you think your parents see you as gifted? How do you think your parents feel about you being labeled as "gifted"?
- Do you have brothers and sisters? (If yes) Do you think they see you as gifted? How do you think they feel about you being labeled as "gifted"?
- Do you think your teachers see you as gifted? How do you think your teachers at school feel about you being labeled as "gifted"?
- Do you think your classmates see you as gifted? How do you think your classmates at school feel about you being labeled as gifted"?
- Do you think that some of your classmates at school are also gifted? (If yes) Would you say that many of classmates are more or less as smart as you, or just a few?
- Do you think that any of your close friends at school are gifted?

Peer Group: Now I am going to ask you some question about your relationships with peers, or people your own age at school and at Summerscape.

- How do you feel you fit in with your classmates at school?
- Do you feel that you can be yourself around your classmates in general? Do you feel that you can be yourself around your group of friends?

- In what ways are your classmates at school similar to the people you have met/befriended at camp, in terms of interests, activities or values? In what ways are they different?
- Do you think that kids in your school view you differently than kids at camp? Do you think that your group of friends at school view you differently than kids at camp?
- Do you feel that you can be yourself around the other people at camp? How do you feel you fit in with others at camp?
- Is it important/beneficial to you to have the chance to interact with other "gifted" people your age? Why or why not?

***Camp Experience*:**

- Was the camp experience what you expected? (This question may be followed with a number of follow-up questions to get them to explain their answer and assess what aspects did or did not meet their expectations).
- What are some positive things about your experience at Summerscape? Can you tell me about any negative things about your camp experience?
- Do you think that you have changed in any way because of your camp experience?
- Has your camp experience changed the way that you view/ think of yourself?

***Self-Esteem*:**

- Has camp influenced the way you feel about being "gifted"? (If yes) Do you feel more or less positive about your academic abilities because of camp? (Follow-up questions may be asked to get them to explain the reasons for their answer.)
- Has camp influenced the way you see yourself/feel about yourself overall?

Speculation for the future:

- What do you think it will be like to return to school? What do you think it will it be like to return to your to your group of friends at home and at school?
- (If they have indicated that the camp experience has changed them)- How do you think that the changes you mentioned will play out once you return to your home and school?
- Do you think that you will keep in touch with people you have met at camp?
- Do you think that you will return next year?