

VARIATIONS IN TEACHERS' REINFORCEMENT  
STYLE AND IMITATIVE  
BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN DIFFERING  
IN PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS  
AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

CSEIP Technical Report No. 2, February, 1967  
University of California, Los Angeles

## Abstract

The purpose of this investigation was to study the effects of variations in reinforcement style of a teacher upon imitative behavior and preferences of children differing in personality traits and social background. The children in the experimental group viewed two films, one depicting a "Positive" teacher, consistently rewarding correct responses; the other depicting a "Negative" teacher, consistently criticizing incorrect responses. Each teacher displayed distinctive incidental behaviors, the child's imitation of which constituted the major dependent variable. The results indicated that children from economically advantaged backgrounds imitated the Positive teacher significantly more often than the Negative teacher and showed significantly more imitation than did the Disadvantaged children. A positive relationship between dependency and imitative behavior was confirmed for the advantaged group. The findings indicated that preference for a teacher was unrelated to imitation of that teacher.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 16

While the teacher is working with one group at the front of the room, the other children are doing arithmetic problems at their desks. Paul has a question. He looks around at what the other children are doing. He then goes up to the teacher and stands beside her until she turns to him. He apologizes for interrupting and asks how many problems they are supposed to do. After she tells him what is required, he goes back to his seat and finished his work.

16a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

16b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

16c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

16d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

16e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 15

When it is time for the arithmetic test, Jean gets out her scratch paper, two sharpened pencils, and an eraser. When the class is told to begin, she starts to work the problems, taking them in order from the first to the last. Jean then checks the problems carefully. When she finds an answer which she wants to change, she erases it neatly. Although she has not finished checking when the teacher calls "time," she stops at once and hands in her paper.

15a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
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15b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

15c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

15d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

15e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 14

The teacher asks the children to write sentences using the new words which they have been studying. Laura is thinking of ideas for her sentences. She decides that it would be more fun to write a paragraph on one topic than to put each word into a separate sentence. When she can't think of a way to fit in one of the words, she leaves it out. She makes several changes in her paper before turning it in, crossing out words and writing the corrections above them.

14a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

14b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

14c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

14d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

14e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 13

The class is beginning a project on farming. The teacher has explained that the harvest season is always in the fall. Jack waves his hand wildly. Although the teacher does not call on him, Jack jumps up and says, "That is not true, because in California where I live fruits and vegetables are ripe many times a year." Bill runs to the side of the room to get a book on California. He gives it to the teacher and goes back to his seat.

13a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

13b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

13c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

13d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

13e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 12

The children are studying Indians. The teacher asks for the names of some Indian tribes. Nancy is sitting quietly at her desk. The teacher calls on her. Nancy says hesitantly, "Are the Sioux and Mojaves tribes?" The teacher asks her in what section of the country they lived. "I think in the North," she says, checking to see whether the others agree. The teacher tells her to get a book on Indians from the shelf and look it up. Susie goes to the book shelf and gets the book.

12a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

12b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

12c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

12d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

12e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 11

After recess Bob dashed into the classroom. He makes a half-hearted attempt to tidy up by brushing his tousled hair out of his eyes and partially tucking in his shirt. The teacher distributes paper and instructs the class to write a composition about a pet. Bob talks to his neighbor until the teacher reminds him to get to work. He looks around for his paper, which has fallen on the floor. Bob brushes it off and uses it. He quickly dashes off a humorous story about a pet otter.

11a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

11b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

11c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

11d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

11e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 10

Joe is assigned to collect the Valentine cards. He follows the teacher's instructions carefully and starts looking for a box. He wants to use the red box but is urged to pick a larger one, which he then uses. He puts all of the boys' cards on one side and all of the girls' on the other side. When he has collected all the cards, he calls up the children row by row, seat by seat, one at a time, until all the cards have been distributed.

10a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

10b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

10c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

10d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

10e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 9

The teacher has told the children that crunchy fresh vegetables such as carrots and cucumbers should be washed and peeled before serving. Sue shakes her head, saying no. She raises her hand, but since the teacher does not call on her she says loudly, "That isn't right, my mother gives us carrots and cucumbers with peels and they are good that way. I bet the recipe book tells you that too." She takes the cookbook, turns to the section on fresh vegetables, and shows it to the teacher.

9a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

9b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

9c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

9d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

9e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 8

The children are learning how to handle and feed hamsters. The teacher asks David to help take them out of the cages for their food. Although David thinks it will be messy, he agrees to help. After putting on a lab coat, he gets some newspaper and covers the floor with it. He lines up the food dishes in front of the cages and carefully pours the food. He closes the food container tightly and returns it to the shelf. David follows the teacher's directions precisely in feeding each hamster.

8a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

8b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

8c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

8d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

8e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 7

Judy is absorbed in her painting project. Her hair ribbon is untied, and there is paint on her face and hands. Several crumpled pieces of paper are on the floor, and some of the paint has been spilled. Although the teacher admires Judy's painting, she is surprised that it is a landscape rather than the family picture which was assigned. Judy says that she didn't think the subject mattered. When the bell rings, she starts to leave the room, and has to be reminded to come back to clean up.

7a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

7b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

7c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

7d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

7e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 6

The class has been assigned a composition to be written at home. Anne runs to the front of the room and states, "Here is my composition; I did it this morning before school. Now I don't have anything to do tonight, right?" When the teacher asks her if she is sure that the spelling and punctuation are correct, Anne says positively that they are. She gives the teacher her paper and goes back to her desk quite pleased with herself.

6a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

6b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

6c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

6d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

6e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 5

While the children are studying their history lesson, the teacher is writing some questions on the blackboard. Betty does not understand a passage in the book she is reading. She quietly goes toward where the teacher is standing and looks at her for a few minutes. When the teacher asks Betty whether she has a question, Betty says she is sorry to disturb her, but she is not sure about something in the book. After the teacher explains the passage to her, Betty completes the reading.

5a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

5b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

5c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

5d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

5e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 4

During a discussion on how the pioneers crossed the country in the winter, the teacher asks in what parts of the country the winters are cold. When she calls on Bill, he says quietly, "I think it is cold in Washington D.C. where my grandmother lives. Is that right?" The teacher asks where Washington D.C. is located. "I think it's in the East," he says, looking around to see whether everyone agrees. The teacher tells him to check it on the map. He gets up and points out Washington D.C.

4a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

4b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

4c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

4d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

4e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 3

The teacher assigns a set of arithmetic problems which the children are to do at home and turn in the next day. Jim raises his hand, waving a paper, and announces, "I've already finished these problems. I did all of them yesterday. I guess that means that I don't have any homework for tomorrow." When the teacher asks him if he is sure that his work is correct, he insists that it is. Jim hands in his paper and sits back, smiling proudly.

3a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

3b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

3c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

3d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

3e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 2

The teacher asks the class how many remembered to bring a bar of soap for carving animals. Ruth is one of the pupils who remembered. Before beginning to carve, Ruth covers her desk with paper and lays out her materials. She spends fifteen minutes sketching a rabbit, half an hour carving it, and fifteen minutes cleaning up and putting away the materials. While carving, she carefully follows the teacher's instructions for using the tools. When she has finished her work, she helps the teacher pick up newspapers and soap chips.

2a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

2b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

2c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

2d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

2e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably below average	below average	somewhat below average	somewhat above average	above average	considerably above average
----------------------------------	------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------	----------------------------------

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Situation 1

Steve is working on a model for the space project. He decides to make a space capsule and works out a design for it. While he works he scatters glue, wood, and nails on the floor. When he can't find a piece of wood the right shape, he re-designs part of his model. When he catches his shirt on a nail, he pulls it loose carelessly. Although there is always a ten-minute cleanup period after a work project, Steve continues working on his model until the final bell rings.

1a. How intelligent (bright) do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

1b. What grades do you think this child usually gets?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

1c. How generous do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

1d. How popular do you think this child is?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

1e. In comparison to other children how much would you like to have this child in your class?

considerably	below	somewhat	somewhat	above	considerably
below	average	below	above	average	above
average		average	average		average

## SITUATIONS

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year Male Female

### INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages you will find some paragraphs describing children who have been observed in 3rd and 4th grade classrooms. You are asked to read these incidents and to give your opinions about some characteristics of the child described in each situation. The characteristics you are to rate are given immediately following each situation. Please mark the space describing your judgement.

Work quickly and in each case give your first impression. Some judgements may be difficult to make, but do the best you can.

#### Important

1. There are five parts (a-e) for each situation. Be sure you make a judgement for each.
2. Place your check mark in the middle of the spaces, not the boundaries.

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_   
This Not This

3. Never put more than one check mark for any one rating.
4. Be sure to complete each part of each situation. When you are finished please hand in your materials. If you have any questions please ask.

We would like to thank you very much for so generously giving your time to participate in this study. It is important to have the cooperation of people such as yourselves to conduct research in this very important area.