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Exploring the Connections between Streaming and Student's Self-Theories in an Ontario Elementary and Secondary Setting

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The purpose of the study was to explore the nature of the intersection between streaming and two self-theories or self-beliefs, namely Bandura's (1997) concept of self-efficacy and Dweck's (2006) theory of growth mindset. A sample of 178 elementary (Grade 6 to 8) students and 166 secondary students in both the academic and applied course pathways from the same Ontario community were selected to participate. Self-theories of participants were measured using Mindsetworks.com mindset survey and the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (SEQ-C) survey which was subdivided into measures of academic, social, emotional self-efficacy. SPSS software was used to analyze the results using both deferential and inferential statistics. The data analysis demonstrated secondary school academic students have significantly more positive self-theories compared to their applied pathway peers. Further analysis comparing elementary to their secondary peers with the same gender and course pathway indicated that academic boys have no significant differences, academic girls demonstrated lower mindset and emotional self-efficacy, applied girls showed a large effect size drop in emotional self-efficacy and applied boys demonstrated a drop in all self-theories except for social self-efficacy. The findings of this study demonstrate the importance that educational stakeholders consider how streaming, gender, and other environmental influences shape the development of students' self-theories.