are encouraged to view intelligence as a malleable quality that can be cultivated, rather than a fixed capacity one either does or does not possess (J. Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002; Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003).

C. Disidentification and Disengagement

Ultimately, stereotype threat can lead minority students to disengage from educational pursuits and disidentify with academic achievement (Pronin et al., 2004; Schmader, Major, & Gamrzw, 2001; C. M. Steele, 1997). Disidentification occurs when students no longer care about doing well in school. In effect, they no longer base their feelings of self-worth on their academic performance. Disidentification can also lead people to belittle the importance of education and disparage those who continue to strive for academic excellence. Peer pressure being what it is, these attitudes can affect entire communities, leading scores of children to devalue the importance of education and disengage from educational pursuits.

A study by Osborne (1995) illustrates the nature of these effects. Osborne examined the correlation between self-esteem and academic performance in European American and African American students as they made the transition from middle school to high school. The left-hand panel of Figure 10.12 shows the results for the European American students. Grade level had little effect here. In contrast, the right-hand panel of Figure 10.12 shows a different effect for African American students. As they made the transition to high school, their self-esteem became increasingly

![Figure 10.12](ch10_351-392_5/12/05 7:58 PM Page 384 Nishant-16 Nishant-16:Desktop Folder:Chandan 05/12/05:GQ342:)

**FIGURE 10.12**
Disidentification among African American Students

The left-hand panel shows that, among European American students, the correlation between grade point average (GPA) and self-esteem remained constant from 8th grade to 10th grade. The right-hand panel shows that, among African American students, the correlation declined, especially among African American males. These finding suggest that African American students disidentify with educational attainments as they get older.