

NASET's HOW TO Series

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How To Foster Resiliency, Perseverance and a Sense of Accomplishment in your Students

Introduction

Confident children seem to share certain characteristics. In their relationships with both teachers and parents, they show in many ways that they are empowered, hopeful, autonomous, resilient, and secure. They are also accomplished, receive recognition for their accomplishments, and persevere even when things don't go as they would like. Finally, for the most part they genuinely seem to enjoy life, both at school and at home. The ideas described here, if practiced in the classroom, will help students enjoy the environment they are in and believe in themselves as they never have before. The building of confidence in your students should be a process rather than a hit and miss approach. The following suggestions will enhance the factors in the human condition that lead to a sense of self-worth and overall confidence.

Remember, confidence is based on actual successful experiences, not just telling a student that he or she is intelligent, creative etc. so providing these opportunities will be crucial. The main goals in building confidence are to provide tasks and an environment that results in sense of completion and a sense of accomplishment.

Resiliency

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from unsuccessful experiences and maintain a perspective that requires the student to think about what needs to be done to change the outcome the next time. A student with high resiliency who fails a test is likely to be willing to look at the factors that contributed to his lack of success, then try again. Resiliency is an important component of self confidence and success.

Students who lack resiliency:

- Give up easily
- Have low frustration tolerances
- Pout
- Become stubborn and withdrawn when confronted with frustration
- Sees everything as negative
- Becomes blame oriented
- Becomes self deprecating
- Classroom practices to enhance resiliency
- Provide repeated successful experiences even if the task or job being given was given and successfully completed several times before
- Provide students with the opportunity to correct their work to master concepts and improve their grades

- Give student the opportunity to drop their lowest grade so that one bad score does not destroy his/her motivation
- Teach the child to set realistic attainable goals

Accomplishment

A feeling of accomplishment is the sense that you have brought something about by your own efforts. Confidence is the belief that one's behavior will, for the most part, lead to successful completion of tasks or projects. In Positive Restructuring this sense of accomplishment is enhanced by assigning work that will ensure student's success.

Feeling a sense of accomplishment does not mean that a task or assignment must be completed in its entirety. A child can feel good about him or herself because he/she was able to find a specific answer to part of an assignment, persevered in his/her work, or gave it his/her best effort.

A sense of accomplishment provides closure, a necessary factor in believing in one's ability and one's capacity to be successful.

Children who lack a sense of accomplishment will:

- Procrastinate
- Avoid
- Give up very easily on a task
- See every task as too hard
- Classroom practices to enhance a sense of accomplishment
- Have parents check homework every night so that all assignment are complete when the child comes to school
- Provide tasks, in whatever form possible, that allow for the highest chance of accomplishment and closure
- Provide assignments, projects, tasks in such a way as to control successful outcomes
- Have students use a step by step approach to tasks and assignments so that they can feel successful at the completion of every step
- Provide sufficient time for students to complete work or extra time for students who need it. Remember a sense of accomplishment is the key
- Give students a checklist of work they have completed rather than lists of work they need to complete.

Recognition

Everyone needs to be recognized-to receive special notice or attention. Parents normally provide much of a child's need for recognition. However, teachers are a very close second to parents when it comes to a child's desire to please and be recognized for performance and effort. Without recognition, students may lose their desire to try, believing that no one cares what they do. Recognition enhances motivation, especially intrinsic motivation-that is, choosing to do an activity not for external rewards but for the internal satisfaction derived from the activity itself. Although recognition is an extrinsic or external reward, over time it becomes internalized.

Children who do not feel a sense of recognition will:

- Crave attention at inappropriate times
- Use spot light behaviors i.e. class clown to derive negative recognition
- May exhibit frequent visits to the nurse
- Put down other students who are getting recognition in positive ways

- Find negative ways to gain recognition i.e., bully
- Classroom practices that enhance a feeling of recognition
- Provide frequent verbal or written validation (e.g. “Thanks for helping Billy yesterday, Good job in keeping your desk neat)
- Give spontaneous notes of praise and leave them on the student’s desk
- Write positive notes and letters to parents
- Go to students with complements rather than them always feeling they have to do something to get recognition
- Share a student’s success outside of school with the class
- Have a positive recognition day where everyone gets to share nice things they have done

Perseverance

Perseverance means to pursue a goal in the face of difficulty, discouragement, frustration, or opposition. Continuing when the going is rough means that students have built enough confidence to have internalized the belief that there is a direct relationship between effort and achievement. Once students have internalized this belief, they are less frustrated and more resilient, solution oriented, willing to take chances and be goal oriented.

Children who lack perseverance will:

- Give up easily
- Throw tantrums or pout when frustrated
- Verbally beat themselves up
- Be resistant to new activities

Classroom practices to enhance perseverance:

- Provide rewards for trying
- Recognize sustained effort
- Break down long term assignments into manageable steps
- Have students work in teams to have a sense of group accomplishment and help each other through hard times
- Give rewards at several steps along the way to enhance the desire to stick with something to the end

In conclusion, you have the power to provide a wonderful environment where children can grow, learn, and most of all feel great about themselves and their ability. Confidence does not happen by chance, and your role, especially in today’s society is so very crucial in determining the outcome of a child’s self-worth and feelings about his/her future.