Confidence

In order for a student to overcome academic challenges that are presented throughout a student's tenure in school, that student must have a high degree of confidence. Often, when students lack confidence with class material, test-taking skills, and also in social situations, it is easier to give up rather than forge ahead. So what can we do in our classrooms to strengthen this Resilience skill?

Academic

There are many things that can be done to help boost a child's confidence with class material:

“Think-Pair-Share” / Elbow Partner is a simple classroom strategy where a teacher allows students a couple minutes to think about a response and discuss it with a partner to gain confidence in their thoughts.

Gradual Release is a lesson structure that guides students towards independence through first activating prior knowledge, modeling by a teacher, then guided practice, and finally independent practice.

Think Time before calling on students will allow more students in the class the ability to think through a response and feel more confident to participate.

“No Opt Out” is a strategy from Doug Lemov’s Teach Like a Champion. The strategy builds students’ confidence through a teacher call-and-response method that does not allow for an “I don’t know” response. If a student responds to a teacher question with “I don’t know,” the teacher calls on another student to answer the question. The student who did not answer is then asked to repeat the correct response.

Quarterly Awards Ceremonies honor and acknowledge students who work hard. Recognizing that hard work can maintain and increase classroom confidence.

Student of the Week/Month can be awarded to students on a regular basis. Try honoring those students who may not typically receive honors when staff notices hard work or improved effort. You may also choose to have them speak about themselves and bring in some “artifacts” to share with their peers about their experiences.

Test-taking

Testing time can be a very stressful situation for many students. What can be done to help reduce test anxiety?

“Test Chunking” is where a teacher or test administrator breaks a test into smaller parts—or simply only gives a student or students part of a test at one time. This can help some students focus and reduce the anxiety they feel when presented with a long or bulky test at one time.

Test-Prep Bellringers can be put in place as a classroom routine where a quick activity is projected or on a whiteboard as students walk in. This quick “Do Now” activity can be formatted in the same fashion as a test to prepare students for a specific test format.

Test Preparation Tips like “process of elimination,” getting a good night’s sleep, eating a healthy breakfast, etc. can be displayed on posters in classrooms and around the school. They could also be included in school newsletters sent home to parents.

Social

Many students have a fear of looking bad in front of their peers. It takes a lot of social confidence to feel like a student can try and fail at something in front of their classmates. Some may face ridicule or even be a victim of bullying if not taught the skills to cope socially. What can we do?

Author’s Chair is an activity, or a classroom routine, where students share a piece of writing of their choice with their classmates and receive feedback. It is often a good idea to have students only focus on positive feedback when this activity is introduced, so confidence can build.

Student-Led Mini-Lessons can be very effective. When you notice a student excelling in a certain skill being taught, have them teach their peers. This can lead to other students wanting to excel and lead their own mini-lesson.

Extra-Curricular

Activities or Clubs should be encouraged for as many students as possible. These can be great opportunities for students to succeed or even discover a skill set they never knew they possessed.