

The Power of Mindset

Nurturing Student Engagement, Motivation,
and Resilience in Students

Handbook of Research on Student Engagement
Brooks, Brooks & Goldstein

The Power of Mindset

- “The mindsets that educators hold about the basic components of motivation and engagement will determine their expectations, teaching practices, and relationships with students”

John's story

Characteristics of Motivated Students

1. To perceive the teacher as a supportive adult.
2. To believe that whether they learn as students is based in great part on their own motivation, persistence, and effort.
3. To recognize that making mistakes and not immediately comprehending certain concepts or materials are part of the learning process.

Characteristics of Motivated Students

4. To have a clear understanding of their learning strengths and learning vulnerabilities.
5. To treat classmates with respect and avoid teasing or bullying, recognizing that such behaviors work against a positive school climate and adversely affect the learning of all students.

The Mindset of Resilient Children

(Outlook and Skills associated with a “Resilient Mindset”)

1. To be able to set realistic goals and expectations for oneself.
2. To believe that they have the ability to solve problems and make thoughtful decisions.
3. To rely on effective coping strategies that promote growth and are not self-defeating.
4. To be aware of and not deny their weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

The Mindset of Resilient Children

(Outlook and Skills associated with a “Resilient Mindset”)

5. To recognize, enjoy, and engage in their story points and talents.
6. To possess a self-concept that is filled with images of strength and competence.
7. To feel comfortable relating with others and to rely on effective interpersonal skills with peers and adults.
8. To believe that there is a purpose to their existence, that they are making a positive difference in the lives of others.
9. To define the aspects of their lives over which they have control.

Factors that Motivate Children

A Preschool Example

School Climate

Factors which Impact Student Engagement

1. Interactions between and among students and staff are respectful, collegial and warm.
2. There is an atmosphere of mutual accountability to each other and the larger school community.
3. Signs of positive community and a sense of belonging permeate the school.
4. Students take leadership roles in representing and “owning” the school.

School Climate

Factors which Impact Student Engagement

5. The physical space is clean and safe.
6. Regular forum structures, and interactions acknowledge and celebrate school and individual success.
7. The school actively involves and engages family and community members in the life of the school.
8. The school promotes and supports student activism by helping students engage in community change.

The Mindset of Effective Educators

The following assumptions and beliefs have been proven to profoundly influence student motivation, engagement and resilience:

1. To appreciate that you have a lifelong impact on students.
2. To believe that the level of motivation and learning that occurs in the classroom and the behavior exhibited by students has as much, if not more, to do with the influence of teachers than what students might bring into the situation.
3. To believe that all students yearn to be successful and if a student is not learning, we must adapt our teaching style and/or instructional materials to meet student needs.

The following assumptions and beliefs have been proven to profoundly influence student motivation, engagement and resilience:

4. To believe that attending to the social-emotional needs of students is a significant feature of effective teaching that enriches learning.
5. To recognize that if educators are to relate effectively to students, they must be willing to perceive the world through the eyes of the student and consider the ways in which students view them.
6. To appreciate that the foundation for successful learning and a safe, secure classroom climate is the relationship we forge with students.

The following assumptions and beliefs have been proven to profoundly influence student motivation, engagement and resilience:

7. To recognize that students will be motivated and engaged when they feel a sense of ownership or autonomy for their learning.

8. To recognize that disciplinary practices should reinforce self-discipline, a behavior associated with resilience.

9. To realize that one of the greatest obstacles to learning is the fear of making mistakes and feeling embarrassed or humiliated.

The following assumptions and beliefs have been proven to profoundly influence student motivation, engagement and resilience:

10. To subscribe to a strength-based model, through which we (teachers, parents, students) identify and reinforce each student's "island of competence".

11 To develop and maintain positive, respectful relationships with colleagues and parents.