

LEARNING MATTERS



Stretch, Support, Share, Innovate

Newsletter: *Resilience*

INNOVATE Resilience

Resilience is the strength not to give up in the face of challenge. Resilient learners have the resourcefulness to take learning forwards and carry it through to the end. It also encompasses the ability to bounce back from negative experiences. It's no surprise therefore that Angela Duckworth's Ted Talk on Grit (http://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance) has had over 6 million viewers. So how do we get those students who are not so good at bouncing back to start?

1. Ask students to think of the challenge that they are facing. Use the Open Coaching questions to help them take ownership of their challenge:

1. Where is the issue on a scale of 1 – 10?
2. How important will this be in 6 months?
3. Is my response appropriate and effective?
4. How can I influence or improve the situation?
5. What can I learn from this?
6. What can I do differently next time?
7. What can I find that's positive in this situation?
8. Who else can support me?
9. What other resources do I have?
10. Have I perceived the problem from different viewpoints?
11. Where is the issue on a scale of 1 – 10 now?

Even better, print these out on a display so students know how to help themselves.

2. Before we can make progress we need to have self-esteem. If we have higher self-esteem, we can be more resilient. Help your students develop higher self-esteem by trying the parrot technique:

The Poisoned Parrot

Imagine you're given a parrot. This parrot is just a parrot - it doesn't have any knowledge, wisdom or insight. It's bird-brained after all. It recites things 'parrot fashion' – without any understanding or comprehension. It's a parrot. However, this particular parrot is a poisoned and poisonous parrot. It's been specifically trained to be unhelpful to you, continuously commenting on you and your life, in a way that constantly puts you down, criticising you. For example, the bus gets stuck in a traffic jam, and you arrive at school 5 minutes late. The parrot sits there saying: "There you go again. Late. You just can't manage to get there on time can you. So stupid. If you'd left the house and got the earlier bus you'd have arrived with loads of time to spare and your form tutor would be happy. But you? No way. Just can't do it. Useless. Waste of space. Absolutely pathetic!"

How long would you put up with this abuse before throwing a towel over the cage, or getting rid of the parrot? We can often put up with the thoughts from this internal bully for far too long. We can learn to use the antidote: notice that 'parrot' – and cover the cage. "There's that parrot again - I don't have to listen to it", and go and do something else. Put your focus of attention elsewhere.

Be persistent in your practice! Eventually this poisoned parrot will tire of the towel, tire of you not responding. You'll notice it less and less. It might just give up its poison as your antidote overcomes it, or perhaps fly off to wherever poisoned parrots go. (Vivyan 2009 - adapted from 'The Malevolent Parrot' source unknown)



3. Maxi and Mini: Maximise the Great and Minimise the Bad



Ask students to remember that to stay on the right track they have to keep seeing all the great things they have done so far.

"Maxi is great. Think of something you have done this week that you are proud of and take a photo of it in your head. Now enlarge or maxi it so it is big and bright like watching a film at the cinema. Focus on it and see your success. Hear all the noises and colours of the event. What are the good things people are saying to you...how good do you feel?"

Mini the bad tries to stop you remembering all your successes. So, whenever a negative picture comes into your head, gradually minimise it and make it smaller and smaller so it soon becomes so small that it ceases to exist. This paves the way for Maxi to appear!"

SUPPORTING Resilience

- Resilient students are those who adapt well, despite experiencing adversity in their lives. This may include barriers to their learning such as ASD, ADHD and dyslexia.
- Families, schools, and communities have a profound influence upon a student's ability to be persistent, overcome obstacles, and develop hope for their future.
- When students are influenced by caring adults with high expectations for their success, they are more likely to withstand negative pressures and become responsible adults.

So How Can We Encourage Resilience with SEND students?

10 ideas include:

Respect and Demonstrate Kindness Towards All Students

Students should be greeted by name as often as possible, especially at the beginning of each school day. We need to display interest in students through thoughtful words and a pleasant demeanour.



Promote a Sense of Belonging and Ownership in the School

Students can participate in their school by helping in the classrooms, doing errands for their teacher, working as crossing guards, being peer mediators, picking up trash, tutoring younger or special needs children, or contributing in other areas. After-school involvement in arts and crafts, drama, sports teams, clubs and activities can also increase school bonding.

Recognise and Believe in Each Student's Worth

Challenge students to do their best and express confidence in their ability to do many things well. Make expectations clear and encourage perseverance and critical thinking. When students express original thoughts or unique points of view, acknowledge their ideas.

Accentuate Cooperation Rather Than Competition

Structure environments so that students feel safe, secure, and ready to learn. Acknowledge individual improvement, rather than emphasize who is smartest, fastest, or most talented. Give recognition

freely and compliment individual and team effort.

Teach Social Interaction Skills

Empathy, communication, and responsiveness need to be modelled and stressed. Be aware of and prevent teasing, gossiping, excluding, or other bullying behaviours. Have the students role play friendship and assertiveness skills; be careful to choose students who will model the behaviours you want to reinforce.

Teach Problem-Solving Skills

To foster self-awareness and self-control have the students practise using the following steps:

1. Ask: What is the problem? What can I do?
2. Make a list of ideas.
3. Decide which one to try and try it.
4. Ask: Did it work?
5. If not, ask: What will I do now?

Foster Leadership Skills and Good Will

Provide opportunities for students to discuss their ideas and make decisions regarding classroom activities. Establish a student council or other organization that acknowledge interests and concerns and promote character development. Increase kindness throughout the school by having students and staff write down observed caring behaviours. Acknowledge the identified students.

Help Students Discover Their Strengths and Talents

Provide time for students to imagine themselves doing something outstanding and worthwhile. After they set goals for themselves, discuss ways to reach their goals, and brainstorm choices they may need to make.

Model Tenacity, Emotional Maturity, and Healthy Attitudes

Be organized, consistent and use appropriate coping skills. Be genuine and avoid embarrassing or using sarcasm with a student.

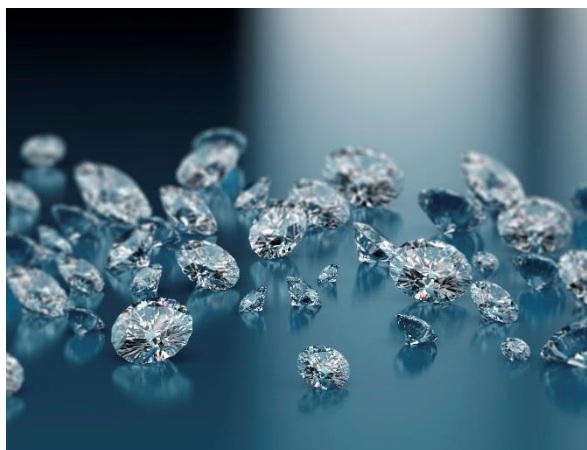
Involve Parents to Foster a Bonding, Nurturing Parent-Child Relationship

Help parents see that they are their child's most important teachers, and that as role models they need to spend quality time teaching, training and exhibiting those habits and values they want their child to have.

SHARE Resilience

A technique for highlighting resilience (Mrs Hughes, Maths)

"I only ever gave a resilience grade to A level maths students in homework, it really does prompt them to keep trying the same problem until they're exhausted!"



Useful Links

ABC model of resilience

(<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~eap/abcstress2.pdf>)

No Pressure, No Diamonds

(<https://medium.com/@kotlersteven/no-pressure-no-diamonds-everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-grit-more-9abb6a57d6c1#.6vqvfcw5v>)

Carol Dweck animation (<http://everyball.net/carol-dweck-animated-coaches-parents-teachers-really-worth-a-listen-to-this>)

STRETCH Resilience

For the more able students who have experienced a lot of success in their studies either across the board or in one particular subject area, there can be a risk of establishing a fixed mind-set. They view themselves as 'clever' or 'good' at a particular subject and become afraid of failing, as this could jeopardise their image of themselves. Students in this position become challenge averse and no longer perceive stretching work as an opportunity to learn but as an opportunity to fail.

It is our responsibility to encourage a growth mind-set, praising method and effort and not focusing just on attainment. In her article 'growing places' in *Teach Secondary* Alexis Shea outlines some simple changes to language that can help students view perseverance and effort as more important to their achievement than natural talent.

It is also our responsibility to provide challenge to all learners. Avoid limiting the ability of pupils to succeed by restricting them to 'what they need to know for the course' or only directing extension tasks to a small pre-determined cohort of students. Pupils who have never struggled or had to attempt more than one strategy to complete a task will not know how to deal with this situation when it eventually occurs.

Fixed	Growth	Why?
'Well done, you're such a clever boy'	'Well done, you tried very hard at that'	The praise is rewarded for effort, reinforcing the message that effort is a good thing.
'He's so talented'	'He has become so talented'	The focus is on the process, not the end point recognising the time it takes to develop.
'He's a gifted musician'	'She's worked hard to develop to such a high level'	This doesn't imply that she was simply born with a gift.
'The more able Maths pupils'	'The pupils who have become more skilled at maths'	'More able' means comparing pupils to each other, rather than focusing on the progress of each pupil compared to their own previous attempts. The word skill tends to be thought of in terms of developing a skill over time, rather than something with which people are born.
'He's a bright lad'	'He's good at English because he's been encouraged to read from a young age'	Here it is important to be specific about what exactly the 'bright' is referring to, and you could highlight <i>why</i> they've become good at it.
'He's got the potential to run for England'	'If he works at it he might be able to develop and run for England'	Growth mind-set is not trying to suggest that everyone is born the same; however, no matter what attributes you are born with, you will only develop them through effort.
'I'm not very good at...'	'I've never put much effort into...'	This highlights that it's a choice to become better or worse at things.
'I can't spell'	'I can't spell well yet.'	The word 'yet' shows that it's possible to improve.