

TEACHER STRATEGIES FOR Non-Cognitive Abilities

While teachers may have little direct influence on student COGNITIVE ABILITIES (especially significant deficits), the way teachers communicate and structure learning experiences can have significant impacts on NON-COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES. Non-cognitive strategies typically involve teacher support statements in the areas of: goal setting, task instructions, feedback, praise, and reinforcement. Below are some examples for each non-cognitive area.

AREA	NON-COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES	SUPPORTIVE TEACHER STATEMENTS
BELIEFS	OPEN MINDSET - The extent to which the student believes that abilities can change and where each individual has the potential to continue to grow and develop (growth mindset). In contrast, the student believes that abilities are fixed and cannot change (fixed mindset). In a growth mindset, learning is most important; the student continues to work hard after failure. In a fixed mindset, looking smart is most important; the student tends to give up after failure.	Reinforce that the brain is very powerful - it wants to learn, grow, and develop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Keep going, exploring and learning - don’t hold it back – say you can, believe and you will” • “You may not get it the first time, but you <u>will</u> learn some of it, and with practice you will learn it all” • “Most successful people had set backs along the way” • “We are all learning, growing, and changing ... even me”
	ACADEMIC EFFICACY - The belief in oneself to work hard, learn difficult class work, and master challenging concepts, tasks and skills.	Set enabling milestone or progress goals (not just endstate goals) and show where students have learned something before <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You’ve done it before, I know you can do it again. It just takes time and practice to master something” • “If you start your thinking about the problem in this way...it will help you with structuring up the assignment”
	EFFORT-OUTCOME BELIEFS - The degree to which the student believes that effort and a preparedness to work hard leads to positive outcomes in school subjects, regardless of one’s talent or ability.	It is not enough that students put in effort, they need to be reassured (believe) that effort will bring better learning, greater knowledge, and higher skill level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Effort + Challenge (at the edge of your competency) = Improvement</i> • <i>Small improvements each day = Big improvements and success over time</i> • “Effort yields results, effort makes the difference” • “What first steps will lead you to the outcome?”

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MOTIVATION	TASK MASTERY GOAL - Where learning itself, understanding concepts, curiosity, joy of learning and mastering skills are the motivational drivers.	<p>Highly effective students are interested in knowing about the world and topics in school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What did you find interesting about that <topic> or <point>?” • “Try to find a way to make learning interesting. The more interesting it is to you the easier and more effective will be your learning”
	PERFORMANCE COMPARISON GOAL - Where the will to learn is driven by comparison of self to others, where success is defined by being a better performer than other students.	<p>Comparing results and achievements amongst students is a way to set goals for students and raise motivation, however, PLEASE DO NOT over use this form of motivation because over time it will defocus the student from learning itself and task mastery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It is best to interested in learning first, outcomes second” • “It okay to learn from others, but not to compare yourself against others and take it too personally” • “Use your own last performance and effort as your benchmark for improvement”
	PERFORMANCE AVOIDANCE GOAL - A motivational drive to avoid being viewed by others as incompetent or stupid, thereby limiting ones exposure to tasks where the student is unsure of their success.	<p>Some students may be primarily motivated to achieve academic grades to prove to themselves and others that they are not incompetent. This suggests that learning itself is not that important to them. So it is best to move to task mastery as an instructional approach to reduce their emphasis on avoidance motivation overtime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Effective students are interested to learn from, but not really worried about, whether they make mistakes, errors, or have trouble understanding new material” • “Learning not whether you look smart or stupid, it is about what you learn. Remember that students learn in different ways to each other” • “If you don’t try, you automatically fail. Where’s the fun in that?”

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ACTION	LEARNING FOCUS - The extent that the student perceives learning itself as motivating, enjoys learning new things, likes to be challenged by difficult school work, and recognises the benefits of making mistakes during the learning task.	Focus students on learning as a process, not an event or an outcome. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “See... learning can be fun” • “You are learning all the time – from how to walk, talk, and ride a bike, right up to using a computer and driving a car. When you start these things they’re not easy, but everyone I know eventually learns how to do them” • “It is common that students sometimes find new material difficult. In fact, when it becomes harder to learn, you’re actually on the edge of accelerating your learning. Pushing through difficult stuff will turbo boost your learning”
	EFFORT - The willingness to put effort into, and work hard at, learning new material, completing assignments and preparing for exams.	Effort is the most important step in learning. Nothing will come, no benefits can be realised without effort. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Try, Try Again” Poem by T. H. Palmer • “Keeping going, never give up” • “You’ll find that effort is easier to maintain when you take small breaks”
	EMOTIONAL CONTROL - Being able to approach and respond to learning new material and school work in a calm and focused way in the presence of difficulties. Being able to control emotional responses and worrisome thoughts so as to not get distracted or sidetracked when difficulties arise.	Helping students to be aware of their emotional reactions to learning and to work with them is important for ongoing learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If you feel uncertain about new material, just slow down a little but keep focused on what you need to learn”. • “Keep calm and carry on” • “Stop, close your eyes, 10 deep breaths, try again”
	PERSISTENCE - Being able to persist and show resilience when experiencing confusion or frustration associated with learning material, a lack of interest in a school topic, boring or tedious subjects, and difficult or complex school work.	The students you can persist in the presence of difficulty, feeling bored or experience low energy will learn the attitude and skill of persistence, which is key for sustained effort when learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I could see the task was hard for you, and that you wanted to give up, but you stuck at it and look how far you’ve progressed” • “Football wasn’t easy for Tim Cahill and science wasn’t easy for Thomas Edison. They had a passion and put in tons of effort.” • “Keep going and you will get to the next step”