Fall Down 7 Times, Get Up 8: Raising and Teaching Self-motivated Learners

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SELF-EFFICACY INFLUENCES

- The choices we make
- The effort we put forth (how hard we try)
- Our perseverance (how long we persist when we confront obstacles)
- Our resilience (how quickly we recover from failure or setbacks)

Albert Bandura (1925 –) popularized the term self-efficacy. He defines it as the part of our "self-system" that helps us to evaluate our performance. Perceived self-efficacy refers to one's impression of what one is capable of doing. This comes from a variety of sources, such as personal accomplishments and failures, seeing others who are similar to oneself, and verbal persuasion.

Verbal persuasion may temporarily convince people that they should try or avoid some task, but in the final analysis it is one's direct or vicarious experience with success or failure that will most strongly influence one's self-efficacy. For example, a teacher may "fire-up" her students before a standardized test by telling the kids how great they are, but the enthusiasm will be short-lived if the test is completely beyond their ability or their perceived beliefs that they can actually do well.

People with high-perceived self-efficacy try more, accomplish more, and persist longer at a task than people with low perceived self-efficacy. Bandura speculates that this is because people with high-perceived self-efficacy tend to feel they have more control over their environment and, therefore, experience less uncertainty.
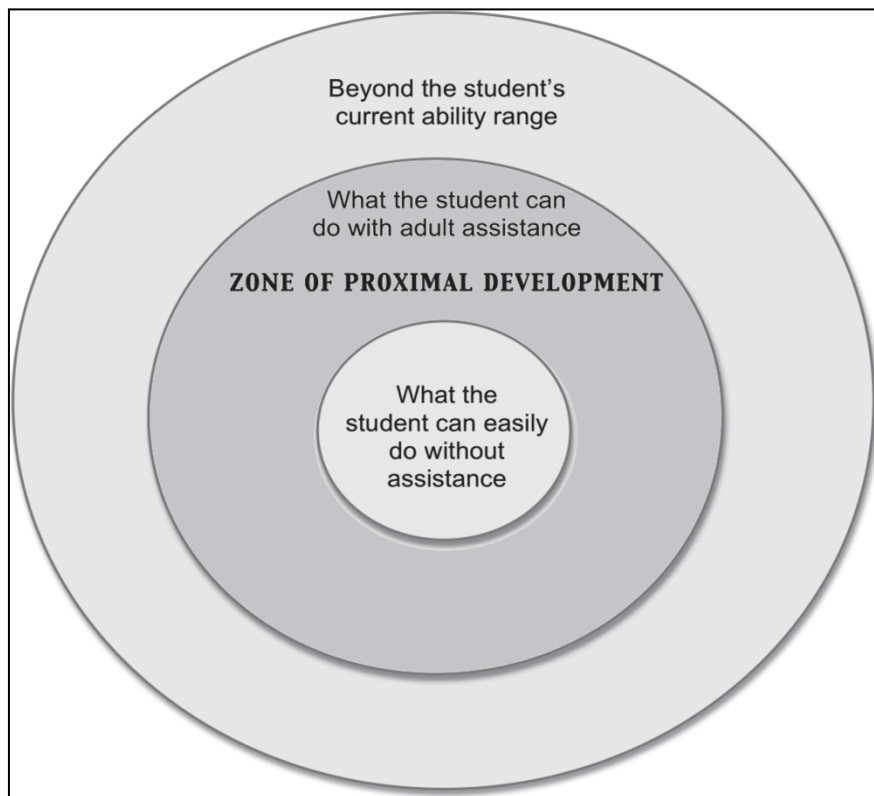
Learned Helplessness

Uncontrollable bad events → Perceived lack of control → Generalized helpless behavior
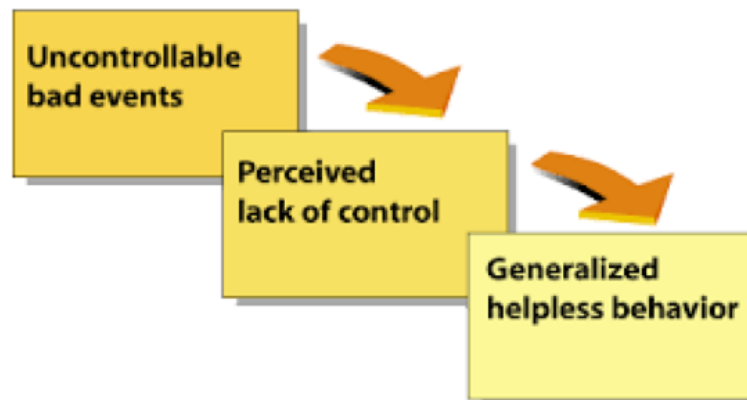
STRATEGIES TO COMBAT LEARN HELPLESSNESS

1. Help students understand that everyone has problems, fears, failures, and self–doubt. Share stories about people like those who have overcome similar or even harsher circumstances.

2. Help learners attribute their success or lack of it to internal rather than external causes and show them how they have power over the results.

3. Treat students' successes as though they are normal, not an isolated example or a fluke.

4. Help learners seek alternate paths to success when they encounter a roadblock or setback.

5. Help students learn the difference between hard work and strategic effort.

6. Continually reinforce the idea that the students can work on things within their control, like effort and choices, and they can always control those parts of her life.

7. Concentrate on improvement rather than on a finite goal. Give continual feedback on progress toward the goal.

8. Keep the learner operating in the zone of proximal development. Tasks that are too easy or too difficult will squash motivation.

9. Help students understand that intelligence and talent are not permanent entities. They can be incrementally improved in everyone.

10. Use feedback that is specific, constructive, and task specific.

Beyond the student's
current ability range

What the student can
do with adult assistance

ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

What the
student can easily
do without
assistance

Zone of Proximal Development...ZPD

Zone of Proximal Development, an idea developed by Lev Vygotsky over one hundred years ago, seeks to define the process through which students effectively learn in cooperation with a teacher.

A student's Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD, is defined as the student's range of ability with and without assistance from a teacher or a more capable peer. On one end of the range is the student's ability level without assistance. On the other end of the range is the student's ability level with assistance.

The teacher should act as a scaffold, providing the minimum support necessary for a student to succeed. The idea is to assist without denying the student's need to build their own foundation. The challenge for the teacher, then, is to find the optimal balance between supporting the student and pushing the student to act independently. To effectively scaffold the student, the teacher should stay one step ahead of the student, always challenging him or her to reach beyond his or her current ability level. However, if instruction falls outside of the zone (above or below a student's ZPD), no growth will occur.

SCAFFOLDING INSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

Teachers can use many proven effective teaching strategies including the following:

1. Assessing accurately where the learner is in knowledge and experience.

2. Relating content to what the learner already knows or can do.

3. Giving examples of the desired outcome and/or showing the learner what the task is as opposed to what it is not.

4. Breaking the larger outcome into smaller, achievable tasks with chances for feedback along the way.

5. Giving students a chance to orally elaborate ("think out loud") their problem-solving techniques.

6. Using appropriate verbal clues and prompts to assist students in accessing stored knowledge.

7. Recognizing specific vocabulary that emerges from the exploration of the unit (emphasizing its meaning within the context of the lesson).

8. Regularly asking students to hypothesize or predict what is going to happen next.

9. Giving students time and opportunity to explore deeper meanings and/or to relate the newly acquired knowledge to their lives.

10. Providing time for students to debrief their learning journey and review what worked best for them.

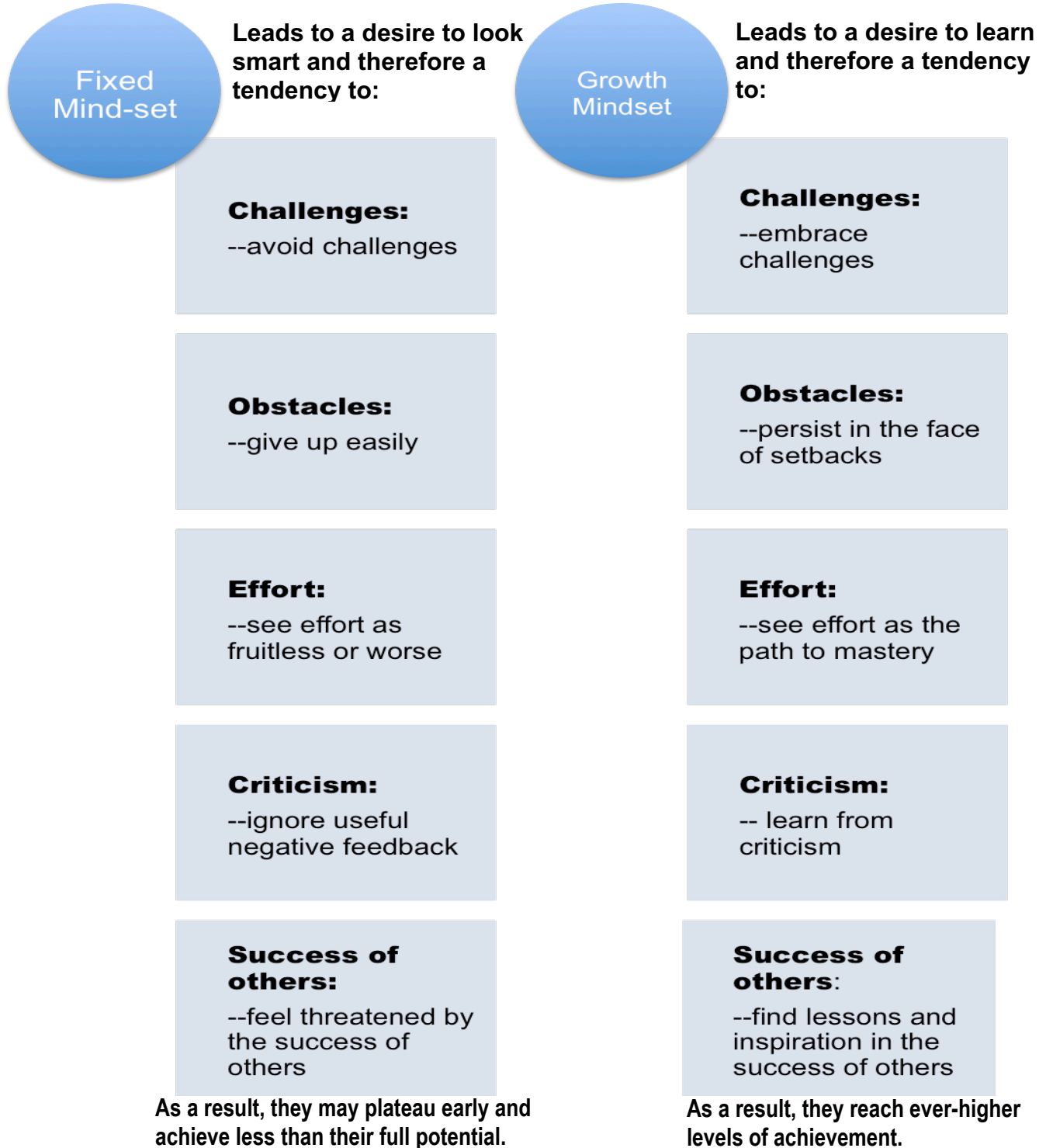*--Debbie Silver, Fall Down 7 Times, Get Up 8: Teaching Kids to Succeed, 2012.*
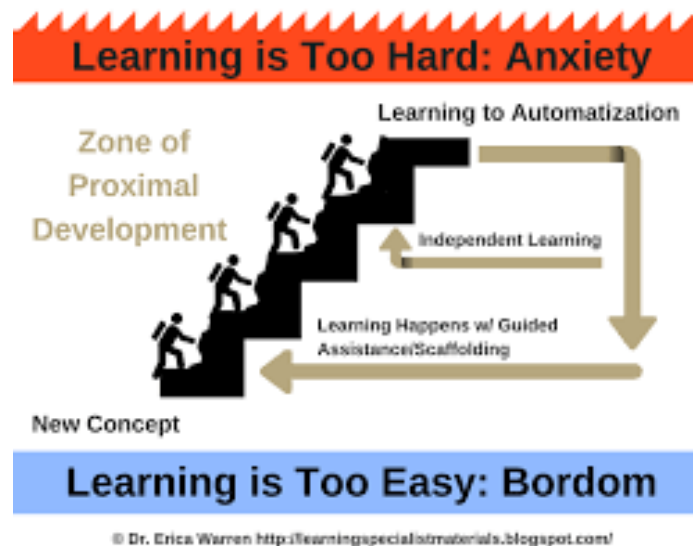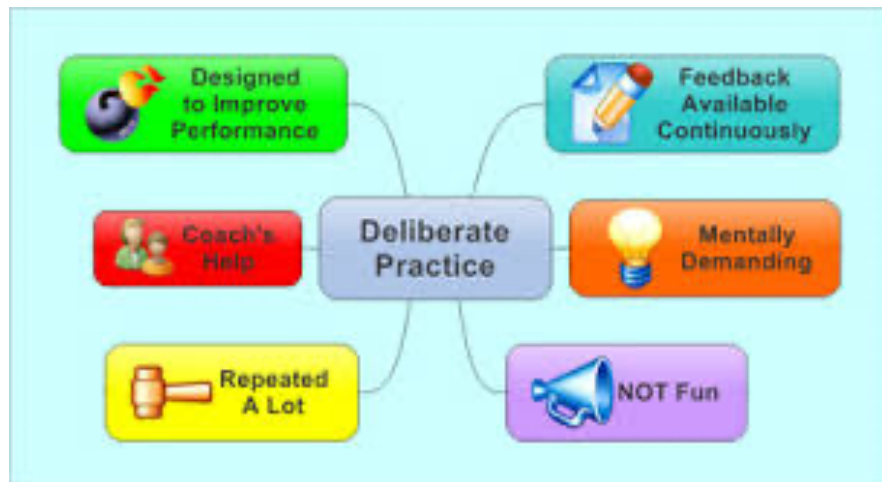
STEPS IN DELIBERATE PRACTICE

■ Remember that deliberate practice has one objective: to improve performance. "People who play tennis once a week for years don't get any better if they do the same thing each time," Ericsson has said. "Deliberate practice is about changing your performance, setting new goals and straining yourself to reach a bit higher each time."

■ Repeat, repeat, repeat. Repetition matters. Basketball greats don't shoot ten free throws at the end of team practice; they shoot five hundred.

■ Seek constant, critical feedback. If you don't know how you're doing, you won't know what to improve.

■ Focus ruthlessly on where you need help. While many of us work on what we're already good at, says Ericsson, "those who get better work on their weaknesses."

■ Prepare for the process to be mentally and physically exhausting. That's why so few people commit to it, but that's why it works.

(Pink, 2009, p. 159)

Implicit Personality Theory

Fixed Mind-set

Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to:

Challenges:
--avoid challenges

Obstacles:
--give up easily

Effort:
--see effort as fruitless or worse

Criticism:
--ignore useful negative feedback

Success of others:
--feel threatened by the success of others

As a result, they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.

Growth Mindset

Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to:

Challenges:
--embrace challenges

Obstacles:
--persist in the face of setbacks

Effort:
--see effort as the path to mastery

Criticism:
-- learn from criticism

Success of others:
--find lessons and inspiration in the success of others

As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement.

Attribution Theory

- Task Difficulty
- Luck
- Innate Ability or Talent
- Effort

External (Controlled by other than Self)
- Task Difficulty
- Luck
- Innate Ability or Talent

Internal (Controlled by Self)
- Effort

LIST OF RELATED CITATIONS
Fall Down 7 Times, Get Up 8: Teaching Kids to Be Self-Motivated K-12
PRESENTED BY DR. DEBBIE SILVER

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