

How can improve self-efficacy: An overview

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Abstract

This article suggests practical solutions to improve the self-efficacy of learners. By determining the beliefs a person holds regarding his or her power to affect situations, it is strongly influence both the power a person actually has to face challenges competently and the choices a person is most likely to make. Children's beliefs about their ability to master a situation are influenced by what they hear from their teachers, parents, coaches, and friends. Children who receive strong messages that they have the skills and capabilities to handle a situation are more likely to put in greater effort and to persist in the face of setback. This article present strategies such as using peers as role models, teaching specific learning strategies, presenting the students with options and choices, communicating recent success, and more. These tactics can strengthen learners' beliefs in their academic abilities and increase their willingness to engage in academic tasks.

Keywords: Level of self-efficacy, self-efficacy theory, environment, academic performance etc.

Introduction

Self-efficacy is the strength of one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals. It is the optimistic self-belief in our competence or chances of successfully accomplishing a task and producing a good result. Self-efficacy is defined as the personal judgment about one's capabilities to adopt certain behaviors' and actions in order to accomplish certain objectives and expected outcomes (Bandura 1997 ^[6]; Hoy & Miskel, 2001) ^[10]. Self-efficacy beliefs in their capabilities, they persist more in their efforts. The construct of perceived Self-efficacy reflects an optimistic self-belief (Schwarzer, 1992) ^[12]. Self-efficacy affects every area of human endeavor. By determining the beliefs a person holds regarding his or her power to affect situations, it is strongly influence both the power a person actually has to face challenges competently and the choices a person is most likely to make. These affects are particularly apparent, and compelling, with regard to behaviors affecting health. Self-efficacy can also influence your goals, actions and success or failure in life. If your self-efficacy in an area is much lower than your ability, you will never challenge yourself or improve. In your self-efficacy in an area is much higher than your ability, you will set goals that are too high, fail and possibly quiet. The ideal self-efficacy is slightly above a one's ability high enough to be challenging while still being realistic. Self-efficacy plays an important role in determining our chances for success; we need to play special attention to self-efficacy when setting goals to make sure that our efficacy beliefs are in line with our aims and workings against them.

Levels of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy begins in early childhood as children different variety of experiences, tasks and situations. However, a growth of self-efficacy not ends during adolescence but continues to evolve throughout life as per peoples, new experiences, and understanding.

According to (Bandura, 1991) ^[4]: There are two levels of self-efficacy:-

1. A low level of self-efficacy
2. A high level of self-efficacy

A Low Level of Self-Efficacy

- Avoid challenging tasks
- Believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities.
- Focus on personal feelings and negative outcomes.
- Quickly lose confidence in personal abilities (Bandura, 1994) ^[5]

A High Level of Self-Efficacy

- Views challenging problems as tasks to be mastered.
- Develop deeper interest in activities in which the participate.
- Form a stronger sense of commitment to their interests and activities.
- Recover quickly from setbacks and disappointments.

The Interaction of Self-Efficacy with the Environment

According to Bandura (1997) ^[6], two levels of efficacy and two types of environment (responsive and unresponsive) to produce the four predictive variables:

1. High level response (Success) - A person with a high level of self-efficacy in a responsive environment will be successful. Their positive attitude towards their in coupled with environment change promotes success and improve term motivation.
2. Low level response (Depression) - A person with a low level of self-efficacy in an unresponsive environment may fall into a depressed state. They know the environment change but their luck of belief in their own abilities stops them from and success ding.
3. Low level unresponsive (Apathy and helpless) – A person with low self-efficacy and an unresponsive environment

will feel helpless and concede that all efforts are pointless thus causing them to be completely inactive.

4. High level unresponsive (Change of course) –A person with self-efficacy in an unresponsive environment will either increase the towards change or decide they need to change their goals.

Self-Efficacy Theory

i) Social Learning Theory

People learned through observing other's behavior, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors (Bandura, 1977) ^[2]. This theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.

Necessary conditions for effective social learning theory:

- **Attention:** various factors increases or decrease the amount of attention paid. Includes distinctiveness, affective valence, prevalence, complexity and functional value.
- **Retention:** remembering what you paid attention to. Such as symbolic coding, mental images, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal and motor rehearsal.
- **Reproduction:** reproducing the image including physical capabilities, and self-observation of reproduction.
- **Motivation:** having a good reason to imitate which includes motives such as past (traditional behaviorism), promised (imagined incentives) and vicarious (seeing and recalling the reinforced model).

Bandura believed in "reciprocal determinism" that is, the world and a person's behavior cause each other, while behaviorism essentially states that one's environment causes one's behavior (Bandura, 1986) ^[3].

ii) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

This theory developed by Albert Bandura during his research work at Stanford University from 1953 to 2010. This theory focuses on how and what people learn by observing others and how it may or may not impart their behaviors. The unique feature of SCT is the emphasis on social influence and internal social environment. The theory takes into account a person's past experiences, which factor into whether behavioral action will occur. These past experiences influences reinforcements, expectation, and expectancies, all of which shape whether a person will engage in a specific behavior and the reason why a person engages in that behavior. Bandura focused on cognitive factors such as beliefs, self-perceptions, and expectations, his theory is now called social cognitive theory. SCT expands social learning theory to include cognitive theory.

iii) Self-Concept Theory

This theory explains that it is how we think of ourselves and how we should think, behave and act out our various life roles. It is the totality of our beliefs, preferences, opinions and attitudes organized in systematic manners, towards our personal existence. It is based on three assumptions such like that:

- Self-concept is learned
- Self-concept is organized
- Self-concept is dynamic

iv) Attribution Theory

It is concerned with how and why ordinary people explain

events as they do. According to (Fike, & Taylor 1991) ^[7]: "Attribution theory deals with how the social perceive uses information to arrive at causal examinations for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a causal judgment".

Self -Efficacy and Academic Performance Outcomes

Self-efficacy theory states that the combination between the four factors of developing self-efficacy and three assessment processes used to interpret self-efficacy will determine the level of self-efficacy which directly affects the performance outcomes. The three assessment processes for self-efficacy are following:

i) Analysis of Task Requirements

This is the amount of an individual's determination that a student has to do whatever it takes to complete a task (Gist & Mitchell, 1992) ^[9].

- Student belief to accomplish the task
- How much time and effort is dedicated to the course work
- The quality of notes that are taken

ii) Attributional Analysis of Experience

This is the personal perception and understanding that a student has in regards to why they accomplished a specific performance level occurred (Gist & Mitchell, 1992).

- Was there enough time put into completing the task at hand- Did the time spent or lack thereof affects the outcome?
- Was there enough energy put into completing the task at hand- Did the student do minimal work or go above and behind to get the end result?
- Was there enough communication between student and professor if there were questions and/or concerns regarding the materials- Did asking or not asking affect the outcome?

iii) Assessment of Personal and Situational Resources

This is the student's consideration of personal and situational factors that may affect their education. Personal factors can include such things as skill level and available effort. Situational factors can include factors such as competing demands (Gist & Mitchell, 1992).

Strategies of Self-Efficacy for Students

According to Furstenberg and Rounds, (1995) ^[8]: There are following strategies of self-efficacy. Teachers can use strategies to build self-efficacy in various ways.

- a) Performance accomplishments
- b) Vicarious experience
- c) Direct persuasion by others.
- d) Emotional arousal

i) Performance accomplishments

Performance accomplishments are the most influential strategies. When students have experienced academic success, they are more likely to believe they can succeed again in the future. These are known as performance accomplishments. Success tends to raise self-suffices and failure tends to lower it. Past experience of successes are attributed to unchanging factors such as personal ability on a manageable level of task difficulty.

ii) Vicarious experience

This strategies exposure to the efforts, success and failure of other. Observing a peer succeed at a task can strengthen beliefs in one's own abilities.

iii) Direct persuasion by others

Children's beliefs about their ability to master a situation are influenced by what they hear from their teachers, parents, coaches, and friends. Children who receive strong messages that they have the skills and capabilities to handle a situation are more likely to put in greater effort and to persist in the face of setback

iv) Emotional arousal

Students respond to their thoughts, feelings, and physiological states when they work on a task, and their beliefs are affected by these thoughts, feelings, and conditions.

Self-Efficacy can be enhance of Childhood

Just as adults can help to teach children the skill of optimism, which can help children to develop self-efficacy in different way given below.

i) Replace the negative thoughts

We can teach children to identify and challenge negative thoughts that undermine their belief in their ability to master a task. Adults can teach children and youth to challenge negative thinking by helping them to first identify the negative thought and then to use evidence to prove why the negative thought is inaccurate. Replace the negative thought with a positive, truthful idea.

ii) Setting goal

Teaching children how to set realistic goals and strategies for persisting in achieving those goals when they encounter obstacles helps them to experience greater mastery in life. Helping children to increase their pathways thinking (thinking that helps identify or create many paths to a goal) and agency thinking (thinking that helps keep motivation up while pursuing a goal) helps them experience greater hope and more success in achieving the goal.

iii) Positive self-perceptions

We can increase self-efficacy by teaching youth to identify successes and to accurately assess their contribution. For example, parents or teachers can work with children to keep a "success journal" in which they record successes and list the skills, talents, and strategies that they used to bring about the positive outcome. This not only helps children build positive self-perceptions, but it also creates positive emotion, which in turn leads to more creative thinking and enhanced problem solving.

iv) Provide opportunities to control their environment

Give children opportunities to control their environment. Creating opportunities for children to make decisions use and practice their skills, and try different paths to achieve their goals will help build self-efficacy. This requires genuinely knowing the child's strengths and being able to link those to their goals.

Task for Improving Self-Efficacy

According to Margolis and McCable (2006) ^[11]:

- **Using average tasks:** If the task is too easy will be boring or embarrassing and may communicate the felling that the teacher doubts their abilities; a too-difficult task will re-enforce low self-efficacy. The target for difficulty is slightly above the student's current ability level.
- **Using peer models:** Students can learn by watching a peer succeed at a task, peers may be drown from groups as defined by gender, ethnicity, social circles, interests, achievement level, clothing, or age.
- **Teach specific learning strategies:** Give students a concrete plan of attack for working on an assignment, rather than simply turning them loose. This may apply to overall study skills, such as preparing for an exam, or to a specific assignment or project.
- **Capitalize on student' interests:** Tie the course material or concepts to students' interest such as support, pop culture, movies or technology.
- **Allow students to make their own choices:** Set up some areas of the course that allows students to make their own decision, such as with flexible grading, assignment options or self-determined due dates.
- **Encourage students to try:** Give them consistent, credible and specific encouragement, such as "you can do this. We've set up an outline for how to write a lab report and a schedule for what to do each week-now follow the plan and you will be successful."
- **Feedback:** Giving praise and encouragement is very important, however it must be credible. Use praise when earned and avoid hyperbole. When giving feedback on student performance, compare to past performances by the same student, don't make comparison between students.
- **Encourage accurate attribution:** Help students understand that they don't fails because they're dumb, they fail because they didn't follow instructions, they didn't spend enough time on the task, or they did not follow through on the learning strategy.
- **Identify strength:** Identify a strength or skill that your child can use to cope with the situation or to help things turn out better in the future. The more we practice self-efficacy enhancers, the easier they will become.

Conclusion

Research has shown that self-efficacy beliefs are the self-perceptions that individual's hold about their capabilities. These beliefs of personal competence provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. Self-efficacy beliefs also help to determine how much effort people will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will be in the face of adverse situations. People with a strong sense of personal competence approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. They set challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them, heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure, and recover their sense of efficacy more quickly after setbacks. High self-efficacy helps create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks. Moreover, students with higher sense of self-efficacy monitor their progress more

frequently, seek help more often, and engage in strategies to regulate their own efforts. Student's self-beliefs and their motivation in academic setting are closely connected. Students can be motivated from internal and external sources. Intrinsic motivation refers to internal drive that causes an activity or a task to be associated with the experience of personal pleasure or interest. When people are intrinsically motivated, they have a genuine desire for the activity itself and enjoy it or find it fun. Self-efficacy is also a critical determinant of how individuals regulate their own thinking and behavior. Particularly in psychology and education, self-efficacy has proven to be a more consistent predictor of behavioral outcomes than have motivational variables. Finally, it can be concluded that self-efficacy beliefs will influence how people think, feels, motivate themselves, and act.

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