



Spring 2021

*The Power of a Positive
Classroom: Part 1_Mindset and
Relationships*

NOTES



The Power of a Positive Classroom: Part 1_Mindset and Relationships

SESSION GOALS

Identify strategies for maintaining a positive mindset.

Identify strategies for building strong teacher-student relationships.

BREAKOUT ROOMS: SELF-REFLECT

Discuss the following questions:

1. What do you remember most about your own school experiences?
2. What is your most pleasant school-related memory?
3. What is your least pleasant school-related memory?

VIDEO NOTES: "TEACHERS ARE SUPERHEROES"

THE POWER OF A POSITIVE MINDSET

Article Notes: "7 Steps to Achieve a Positive Mindset"

Reflect and Plan

VIDEO NOTES: "THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS"

THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

**Research Notes: How to Build
Relationships with Students**

Reflect and Plan

BREAKOUT ROOMS: STRATEGY SHARE

Discuss the following questions:

- 1. Which techniques did you research?**
- 2. What did you learn about the techniques?**
- 3. How will you use the techniques in your traditional and/or virtual classroom?**
- 4. What more would you like to learn about the techniques?**

7 Practical Tips to Achieve a Positive Mindset

By Larry Alton

The “power of positive thinking” is a popular concept, and sometimes it can feel a little cliché. But the physical and mental benefits of positive thinking have been demonstrated by multiple scientific studies. A positive mindset can give you more confidence, improve your mood, and even reduce the likelihood of developing conditions such as hypertension, depression and other stress-related disorders.

All this sounds great, but what does the “power of positive thinking” really mean?

You can define positive thinking as positive imagery, positive self-talk or general optimism, but these are all still general, ambiguous concepts. If you want to be effective in thinking and being more positive, you’ll need concrete examples to help you through the process.

1. Start the day with positive affirmation.

How you start the morning sets the tone for the rest of the day. Have you ever woken up late, panicked, and then felt like nothing good happened the rest of the day? This is likely because you started out the day with a negative emotion and a pessimistic view that carried into every other event you experienced. Instead of letting this dominate you, start your day with positive affirmations. Talk to yourself in the mirror, even if you feel silly, with statements like, “Today will be a good day” or “I’m going to be awesome today.” You’ll be amazed how much your day improves.

2. Focus on the good things, however small.

Almost invariably, you’re going to encounter obstacles throughout the day—there’s no such thing as a perfect day. When you encounter such a challenge, focus on the benefits, no matter how slight or unimportant they seem. For example, if you get stuck in traffic, think about how you now have time to listen to the rest of your favorite podcast. If the store is out of the food you want to prepare, think about the thrill of trying something new.

3. Find humor in bad situations.

Allow yourself to experience humor in even the darkest or most trying situations. Remind yourself that this situation will probably make for a good story later and try to crack a joke about it. Say you’re laid off; imagine the most absurd way you could spend your last day, or the most ridiculous job you could pursue next—like kangaroo handler or bubblegum sculptor.

4. Turn failures into lessons.

You aren't perfect. You're going to make mistakes and experience failure in multiple contexts, at multiple jobs and with multiple people. Instead of focusing on how you failed, think about what you're going to do next time—turn your failure into a lesson. Conceptualize this in concrete rules. For example, you could come up with three new rules for managing projects as a result.

5. Transform negative self-talk into positive self-talk.

Negative self-talk can creep up easily and is often hard to notice. You might think I'm so bad at this or I shouldn't have tried that. But these thoughts turn into internalized feelings and might cement your conceptions of yourself. When you catch yourself doing this, stop and replace those negative messages with positive ones. For example, I'm so bad at this becomes Once I get more practice, I'll be way better at this. I shouldn't have tried becomes That didn't work out as planned—maybe next time.

6. Focus on the present.

I'm talking about the present—not today, not this hour, only this exact moment. You might be getting chewed out by your boss, but what in this exact moment is happening that's so bad? Forget the comment he made five minutes ago. Forget what he might say five minutes from now. Focus on this one, individual moment. In most situations, you'll find it's not as bad as you imagine it to be. Most sources of negativity stem from a memory of a recent event or the exaggerated imagination of a potential future event. Stay in the present moment.

7. Find positive friends, mentors and co-workers.

When you surround yourself with positive people, you'll hear positive outlooks, positive stories and positive affirmations. Their positive words will sink in and affect your own line of thinking, which then affects your words and similarly contributes to the group. Finding positive people to fill up your life can be difficult, but you need to eliminate the negativity in your life before it consumes you. Do what you can to improve the positivity of others, and let their positivity affect you the same way.

Almost anybody in any situation can apply these lessons to their own lives and increase their positive attitude. As you might imagine, positive thinking offers compounding returns, so the more often you practice it, the greater benefits you'll realize.

Strategies for Teachers to Develop Positive Relationships With Students

By Derrick Meador

The best teachers are capable of maximizing the learning potential of each student in their class. They understand that the key to unlocking student potential is by developing positive, respectful relationships with their students beginning on the first day of the school year. Building a trusting relationship with your students can be both challenging and time-consuming. Great teachers become masters at it in time. They will tell you that developing solid relationships with your students is paramount in fostering academic success.

It is essential that you earn your students' trust early on in the year. A trusting classroom with mutual respect is a thriving classroom complete with active, engaging learning opportunities. Some teachers are more natural at building and sustaining positive relationships with their students than others. However, most teachers can overcome a deficiency in this area by implementing a few simple strategies into their classroom on a daily basis. Here are some strategies to try.

Provide Structure

Most kids respond positively to having structure in their classroom. It makes them feel safe and leads to increased learning. Teachers who lack structure not only lose valuable instructional time but often never gain the respect of their students. It is essential that teachers set the tone early by establishing clear expectations and practicing class procedures. It is equally critical that students see that you follow through when boundaries are overstepped. Finally, a structured classroom is one with minimal downtime. Each day should be loaded with engaging learning activities with little to no downtime.

Teach With Enthusiasm and Passion

Students will respond positively when a teacher is enthusiastic and passionate about the content she is teaching. Excitement is contagious. When a teacher introduces new content enthusiastically, students will buy in. They will get just as excited as the teacher, thus translating to increased learning. Exuberance will rub off on the students in your classroom when you are passionate about the content you teach. If you are not excited, why should your students be excited?

Have a Positive Attitude

Everyone has terrible days including teachers. Everyone goes through personal trials that can be difficult to handle. It is essential that your personal issues do not interfere with your ability

to teach. Teachers should approach their class each day with a positive attitude. Positivity is transcending.

If the teacher is positive, the students will generally be positive. No one likes to be around someone who is always negative. Students will in time resent a teacher who is always negative. However, they will run through a wall for a teacher is positive and continuously offering praise.

Incorporate Humor into Lessons

Teaching and learning should not be boring. Most people love to laugh. Teachers should incorporate humor into their daily lessons. This may involve sharing an appropriate joke related to the content you will be teaching that day. It may be getting into character and donning a silly costume for a lesson. It may be laughing at yourself when you make a silly mistake. Humor comes in several forms and students will respond to it. They will enjoy coming to your class because they love to laugh and learn.

Make Learning Fun

Learning should be fun and exciting. Nobody wants to spend time in a classroom where lecturing and note-taking are the norms. Students love creative, engaging lessons that grab their attention and allow them to take ownership of the learning process. Students enjoy hands-on, kinesthetic learning activities where they can learn by doing. They are enthusiastic about technology-based lessons that are both active and visual.

Use Student Interests to Your Advantage

Every student has a passion for something. Teachers should use these interests and passions to their advantage by incorporating them into their lessons. Student surveys are a fantastic way to measure these interests. Once you know what your class is interested in, you have to find creative ways to integrate it into your lessons. Teachers who take the time to do this will see increased participation, higher involvement and an overall increase in learning. Students will appreciate the extra effort you have made to include their interest in the learning process.

Incorporate Story Telling into Lessons

Everyone loves a compelling story. Stories allow students to make real-life connections to the concepts that they are learning. Telling stories to introduce or reinforce concepts bring those concepts to life. It takes the monotony out of learning rote facts. It keeps students interested in learning. It is especially powerful when you can tell a personal story related to a concept being taught. A good story will allow students to make connections that they may not have made otherwise.

Show an Interest in Their Lives Outside of School

Your students have lives away from your classroom. Talk to them about their interests and extracurricular activities that they participate in. Take an interest in their interests even if you do not share the same passion. Attend a few ball games or extracurricular activities to show your support. Encourage your students to take their passions and interests and turn them into a career. Finally, be considerate when assigning homework. Think about the extracurricular activities occurring on that particular day and try not to overburden your students.

Treat Them With Respect

Your students will never respect you if you do not respect them. You should never yell, use sarcasm, single a student out, or attempt to embarrass them. Those things will lead to a loss of respect from the entire class. Teachers should handle situations professionally. You should deal with problems individually, in a respectful, yet direct and authoritative manner. Teachers must treat each student the same. You cannot play favorites. The same set of rules must apply to all students. It is also vital that a teacher is fair and consistent when dealing with students.

Go the Extra Mile

Some students need teachers who will go that extra mile to ensure that they are successful. Some teachers provide extra tutoring on their own time before and/or after school for struggling students. They put together extra work packets, communicate with parents more frequently and take a genuine interest in the well-being of the student. Going the extra mile may mean donating clothing, shoes, food or other household goods that a family needs to survive. It may be continuing to work with a student even after he is no longer in your classroom. It is about recognizing and assisting in meeting student needs inside and outside of the classroom.