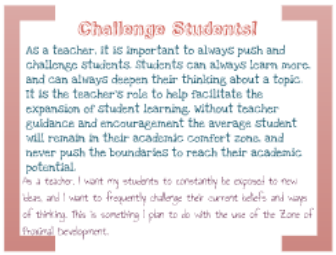

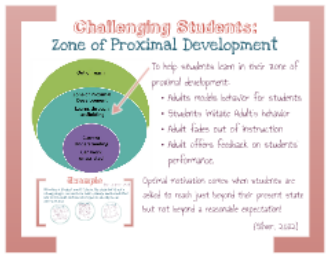

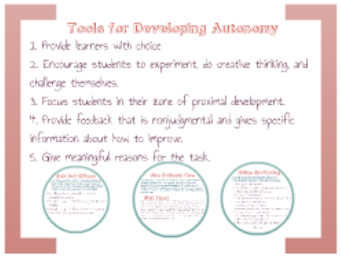

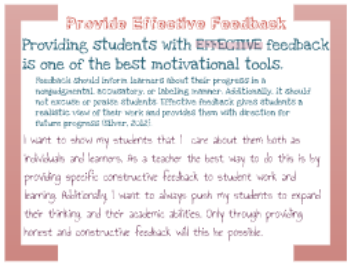

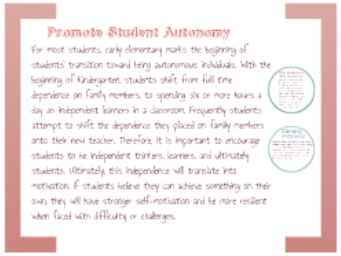

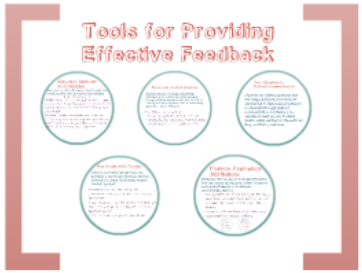

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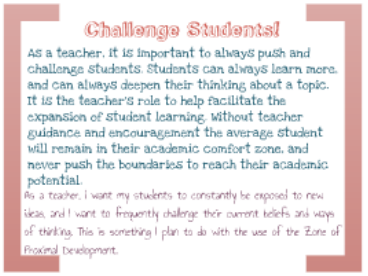

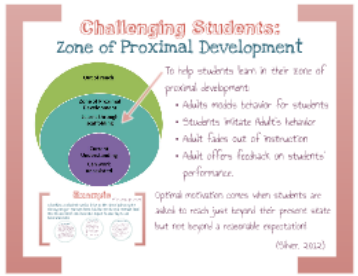

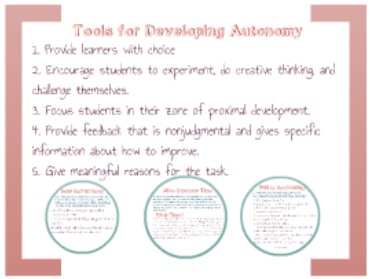

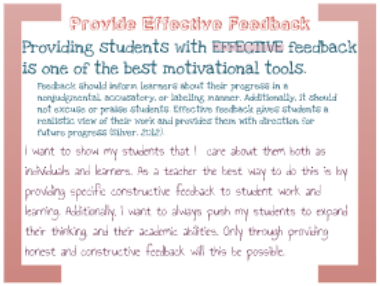

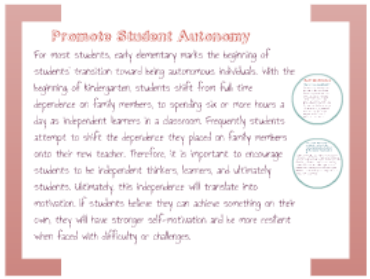

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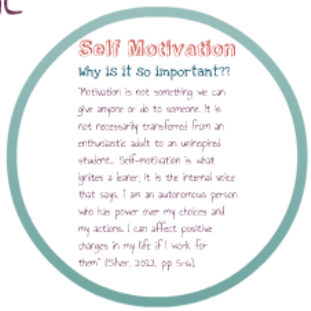
For Early Elementary Education

Promote Student Autonomy

For most students, early elementary marks the beginning of students' transition toward being autonomous individuals. With the beginning of kindergarten, students shift from full time dependence on family members, to spending six or more hours a day as independent learners in a classroom. Frequently students attempt to shift the dependence they placed on family members onto their new teacher. Therefore, it is important to encourage students to be independent thinkers, learners, and ultimately students. Ultimately, this independence will translate into motivation. If students believe they can achieve something on their own, they will have stronger self-motivation and be more resilient when faced with difficulty or challenges.



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Self Motivation

Why is it so important??

"Motivation is not something we can give anyone or do to someone. It is not necessarily transferred from an enthusiastic adult to an uninspired student... Self-motivation is what ignites a leaner; it is the internal voice that says, 'I am an autonomous person who has power over my choices and my actions. I can affect positive changes in my life if I work for them'" (Silver, 2012, pp 5-6).

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"The optimal state of self-motivation resides in the learner and must be fostered by the teacher" (Silver, 2012, p. 6)

Students are naturally curious and have an innate intrinsic motivation to explore, discover, and ultimately learn. I strongly believe that too frequently students' internal curiosity is extinguished in schools. As a teacher, I want to build off students' intrinsic curiosity and help it flourish and grow. I believe that this can be done by first helping students to develop a sense of autonomy.

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Tools for Developing Autonomy

1. Provide learners with choice
2. Encourage students to experiment, do creative thinking, and challenge themselves.
3. Focus students in their zone of proximal development.
4. Provide feedback that is nonjudgmental and gives specific information about how to improve.
5. Give meaningful reasons for the task.

Build Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy is the extent to which an individual believes she is able to perform a given task. Self-efficacy is unrelated to actual ability, but instead focuses on an individual's perceived abilities.

- Self efficacy affects an individual's choices, effort, perseverance, and resilience.
- The higher the sense of self-efficacy, the greater the intrinsic motivation.
- Individuals with high self-efficacy are better able to quickly recover from failure and setbacks (Silver, 2012).

Give Students Time

In helping to promote autonomy, it is important to give students adequate response time. For example, when asking students questions, if a teacher frequently jumps in at the first sign of student uncertainty, students will learn to become dependent on the teacher and turn to him whenever something is challenging (learned helplessness!).

Wait Time!

students are usually given very little time to respond to questions. Giving students three to seven seconds to answer questions results in an increase in (1) length of student responses, (2) the number of unsolicited responses, (3) the frequency of students questions, (4) the number of responses from less-capable students, (5) student-to-student responses, (6) the incident of speculative responses. Additionally, when students still do not respond after seven seconds, do not move on to another student! Instead, provide cues, prompts, and further questions to help clarify the answer (Silver, 2012).

Utilize Scaffolding

provide incremental stepping stones to help students progress with their learning.

Scaffolding Instruction Guidelines:

1. Accurately assess student's knowledge and experience base
2. Relate content to learner's knowledge base
3. Demonstrate desired outcome
4. Break outcome into smaller achievable tasks and provide feedback
5. Allow students to "think out loud"
6. Use verbal cues to assist students
7. Emphasize vocabulary within the context of the lesson/ unit
8. Ask students to predict next outcome
9. Give students the opportunity for deep exploration and help students connect knowledge to their lives
10. Allow students to debrief and review their learning

(Silver, 2012)

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Challenge Students!

As a teacher, it is important to always push and challenge students. Students can always learn more, and can always deepen their thinking about a topic. It is the teacher's role to help facilitate the expansion of student learning. Without teacher guidance and encouragement the average student will remain in their academic comfort zone, and never push the boundaries to reach their academic potential.

As a teacher, I want my students to constantly be exposed to new ideas, and I want to frequently challenge their current beliefs and ways of thinking. This is something I plan to do with the use of the Zone of Proximal Development.

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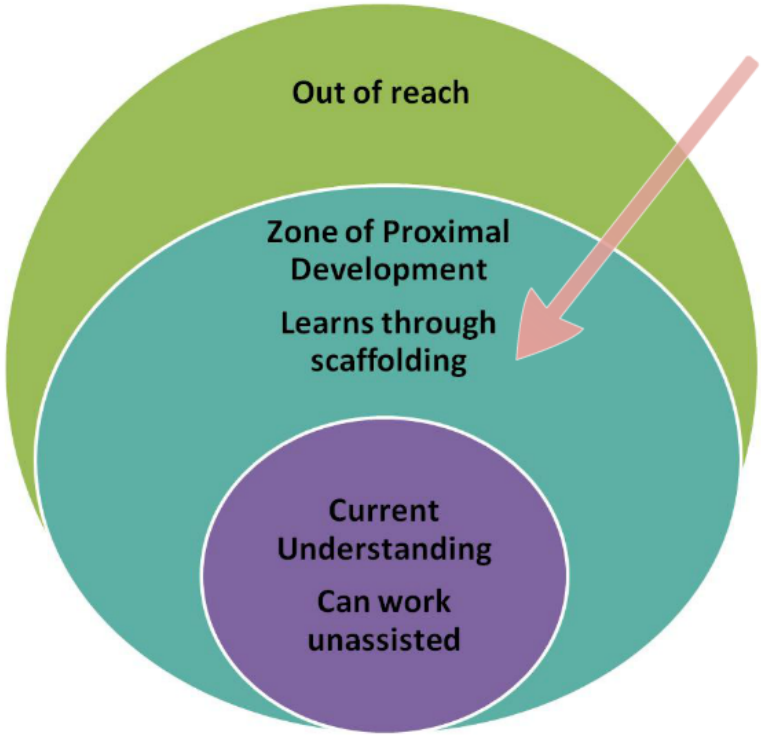
Challenging Students:
Zone of Proximal Development



To help students learn in their zone of proximal development:

- Adults models behavior for students
- Students imitate Adult's behavior
- Adult fades out of instruction
- Adult offers feedback on students' performance.

Example

(Silver, 2012, pp. 28-29)

Situation: A student wants to be in the choir but is not a strong singer. She has been told by family and friends that she is excellent, and now she hopes to one day be on American Idol.

Optimal motivation comes when students are asked to reach just beyond their present state but not beyond a reasonable expectation!

(Silver, 2012)

Prezi

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Beyond ZPD

The choir director invites Sola to audition for the choir. The judges score her performance and post the results publicly. Sola's name is last on the list with the lowest points. The choir director tells Sola she should consider another avocation more suited to her strengths.

Not Enough ZPD

The choir director does not want to hurt Sola's feelings so he invites her to sing in the choir. When others make fun of her, the teacher tells them to be nice. She makes Sola her special assistant director to avoid having her sing.

Appropriate ZPD

The choir director meets privately with Sola to see if she is willing to put in the extra hours of practice it will take for her to be in choir. She helps Sola detect the shortcomings in her performance compared to her peers. They develop a plan of action for Sola to meet her goals. The director givers her feedback about her growth and gradually gives her more technically difficult assignments.

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Provide Effective Feedback

Providing students with EFFECTIVE feedback is one of the best motivational tools.

> Feedback should inform learners about their progress in a nonjudgmental, accusatory, or labeling manner. Additionally, it should not excuse or praise students. Effective feedback gives students a realistic view of their work and provides them with direction for future progress (Silver, 2012).

I want to show my students that I care about them both as individuals and learners. As a teacher the best way to do this is by providing specific constructive feedback to student work and learning. Additionally, I want to always push my students to expand their thinking, and their academic abilities. Only through providing honest and constructive feedback will this be possible.

Prezi

Tools for Providing Effective Feedback

Empower Students- Don't Entitle!

Make sure feedback is empowering students and not filling them with an entitlement mentality.

Example (Silver, 2012, p. 13):

Entitling: "You are all in the top math group, and this test is going to be a piece of cake for you. I know you are all going to make me proud by scoring higher than anyone in the state! Let me hear you say it. I am thumb-body!"

Empowering: "You have shown tremendous growth in your math reasoning strategies this year. You have practiced some of the exact kinds of problems in class and successfully solved them. Just take your time and use the skills you have already mastered."

Encourage Growth Mindsets

Students with growth mindsets believe that "intelligence is malleable and can be developed through education and hard work. Their focus is on learning and improving rather than on maintaining appearance" (Silver, 2012, p. 81).

Growth Mindsets can be developed by:

- Not praising students for their abilities or 'intelligence'
- Giving feedback that focuses on how students can improve
- Giving feedback that is honest, specific, and helpful

Pay Attention to Indirect Communication

Students are always listening and watching Adults and teachers. Be careful not to send mixed messages to students through indirect communication. Additionally, be careful of what you say to other adults within earshot of students, as they most likely will hear.

Use Praise with Caution

External motivators (praise) have the potential to undermine students' intrinsic motivation to learn. Avoid using phrases such as "good job!"

Alternative to "Good Job!" (Silver, 2012, p. 108)

1. Say nothing - praise can call attention to something that does not need it.
2. Say what you saw - "you went the extra mile in helping your friend." "Wow, you've got this room looking like a professional housekeeper was here."
3. Talk less, ask more - Ask questions about the work

Promote Appropriate Attributions

Attribution Theory: How an individual attributes their successes and failures - either to learner controlled attributes or to external uncontrollable factors.

- providing students with feedback that suggests their work is due to innate talent or luck (factors out of the control of the student), the student's role in the success/failure is diminished.
- Properly used, attribution theory can help students accept responsibility for their successes and failures.

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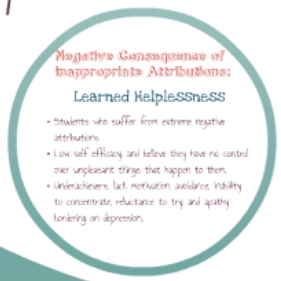

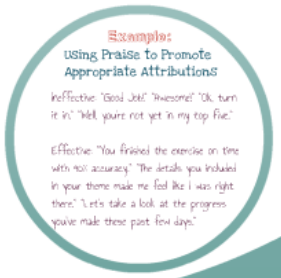

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Negative Consequence of inappropriate Attributions:

Learned Helplessness

- Students who suffer from extreme negative attributions
- Low self efficacy, and believe they have no control over unpleasant things that happen to them.
- Underachievers, lack motivation, avoidance, inability to concentrate, reluctance to try, and apathy bordering on depression.

Prezi

Example:

Using Praise to Promote Appropriate Attributions

Ineffective: "Good Job!" "Awesome!" "Ok, turn it in." "Well, you're not yet in my top five."

Effective: "You finished the exercise on time with 90% accuracy." "The details you included in your theme made me feel like I was right there." "Let's take a look at the progress you've made these past few days."

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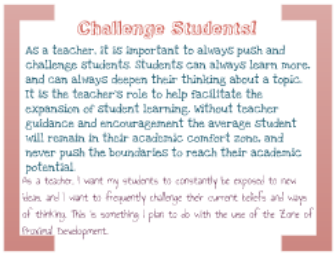

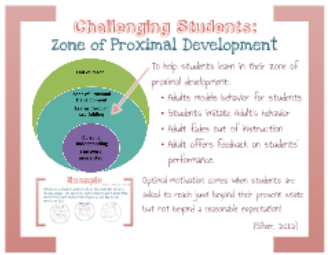

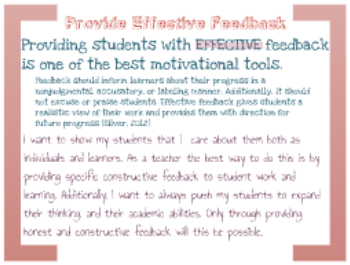

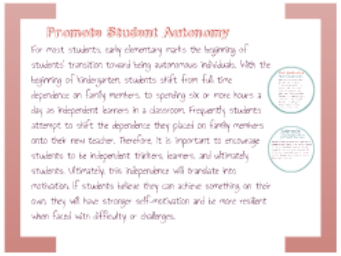

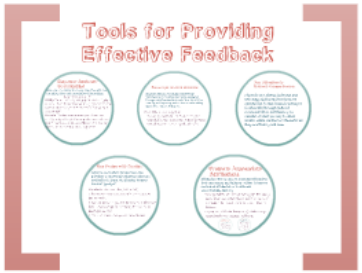

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