

**50 Ways to Convince Students
They Can Grow Their Ability and Get Smarter
or
*How to do Attribution Retraining***

Verbal behaviors and teacher choice of language in daily interaction:

1. Calling on students
2. Responses to student answers
 - Sticking
3. Giving help
4. Changing attitudes towards with errors
5. Giving tasks and assignments
6. Feedback according to criteria for success with encouragement and precise diagnostic guidance
7. Positive framing of re-teaching
8. Tenacity when students don't meet expectations: pursuit and continued call for high level performance
9. Pushback on fixed mindset language and student helplessness

THESE 8 ARE HOW WE

DO ATTRIBUTION

RETRAINING: "IT'S EFFORT,

NOT INNATE ABILITY"

Regular classroom mechanisms for **generating student agency**:

10. Frequent quizzes and a flow of data to students
11. Student Self-Corrections/Self-Scoring
12. Student Error Analysis
13. Regular Re-teaching,
14. Required Retakes and Re-do's w/ Highest Grade
15. Cooperative Learning Protocols and teaching of group skills
16. Student feedback to teacher on pace or need for clarification
17. Reward System for Effective Effort and Gains
18. Extra help
19. Student goal setting

Daily **instructional strategies** from "clarity:"

20. Communicating objectives in student friendly language and unpacking them with students
21. Clear and accessible criteria for success, developed with students
22. Exemplars of products that meet criteria for success
23. Checking for Understanding
24. Making Students' Thinking Visible
25. Frequent Student Summarizing

*All Observable
in Classrooms*



Explicitly teaching students:

26. Effective Effort Behaviors
27. Student Self-evaluation of Effective Effort
28. Learning Study and Other Strategies of Successful Students
29. Attribution Theory & Brain Research

Opportunities for choice and voice

30. Stop my teaching
31. Student generated questions
32. Negotiating the rules of the classroom game.
33. Teaching students the “principles of learning”
34. Learning Style
35. Non-reports
36. Culturally relevant lessons
37. Student-led parent conferences

School-wide policies and practices for:

38. Hiring teachers
39. Assignment of teachers
40. Personalizing knowledge of and contact with students
41. Scheduling
42. Grouping
43. Content-focused teams that examine student work in relation to their teaching
44. Reward system for academic effort and gains
45. Push, support, and extra help (Hierarchy of Intervention)

Programs that enable students to value school and form a peer culture that supports academic effort:

46. Quality after-school programs and extra-curricula activities
47. Building identity and pride in belonging to the school
48. Creating a vision of a better life attainable through learning the things school teaches
49. Forming an image of successful people who look like them and value education
50. Building relations with parents through home visits and focus on how to help



We do not, however, take on any of these 50 places with commitment unless we conceive of our job description in a certain way.

The Bottom Line of “Effort Based Ability”

The ability to do something competently—anything—mathematics, racecar driving, dancing, public speaking—is primarily determined by *effective effort* and your belief that you can get proficient at it. “Smart is something you can get.” The bell curve of ability is wrong. Even what we call “intelligence” is malleable.

Thus our work as educators, in fact a major part of it for some students, is:

- 1) to ***convince*** them they can grow their ability at academics
- 2) to ***show*** them how and
- 3) to ***motivate*** them to want to.

“My job is to give students belief, confidence, tools, and desire.”

- Give students the belief that effort can grow the ability to do well at academics. (“Smart is something you can get.”)
- Help them develop the confidence that they already have enough brain power to do rigorous work at high standards if they learn effective effort.
- Teach them the tools for exerting effective effort.
- Get them to care enough to want to.



1. *Identify which script conveys positive expectations and which negative expectations.*
2. *Analyze which words or phrases support your conclusions and explaining the effect of these words.*

SCRIPT 1

STUDENT: I can't do number 4.

TEACHER: What part don't you understand?

STUDENT: I just can't do it.

TEACHER: Well, I know you can do part of it, because you've done the first three problems correctly. The fourth problem is similar but just a little harder. You start out the same, but then you have to do one extra step. Review the first three problems, and then start number 4 again and see if you can figure it out. I'll come by your desk in a few minutes to see how you're doing.

SCRIPT 2

STUDENT: I can't do number 4.

TEACHER: You can't? Why not?

STUDENT: I just can't do it.

TEACHER: Don't say you can't do it. We never say we can't do it. Did you try hard?

STUDENT: Yes, but I can't do it.

TEACHER: Well, you did the first three problems. Maybe if you went back and worked a little longer you could do the fourth problem too. Why don't you work at it a little more and see what happens?

