Internal Locus of Control and Resilient Students

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September 17, 2014
Definition: **Resilient** students are those who, despite hardships and risk factors, bounce back and succeed in school (Howard & Johnson, 2000; Patterson, 2001; in Richardson, Morgan, Fleener, 2006).
Six Characteristics of Resilient Students

1. Use their time well
2. Have clear, long-term goals
3. Possess an *internal locus of control*
4. Have been positively influenced by teachers, believing they can succeed
5. Come from dysfunctional home but do not attribute failure to them
6. One person (usually a teacher or a mother) was significant in helping them
Definition: **Locus of control** refers to the extent to which individuals believe they can control events affecting them.

**Internal Locus of Control**

**Vs.**

**External Locus of Control**
External Locus of Control

- The teacher doesn’t like me.
- I am unlucky.
- It is fate, chance, etc.
- I don’t have enough money.
- I am stupid.
- This is too hard.
- I’m too short.
Internal Locus of Control

• If I work hard, I can do it.
• If I put the time in, it will pay off.
• If I believe it, I can achieve it.
• I accept responsibility for the consequences of my own behavior.
Factors and Their Influence on Resilient At-Risk Students

*Use instructional strategies that promote an internal locus of control*
*Help students set long-term goals (focus forward and not on immediate gratification)*
*Encourage volunteerism and extracurricular activities*
*Use cooperative grouping*
*Develop strong, positive relationships*
*Have high expectations but not impossible standards*
Reinforcing Internally Controlled Behaviors
Strategies that Foster Self-Direction and Internal Motivations

* Pre and Post Test Questions/Study Habits (Writing)
* Internal-External Journal (Writing)
* Blame List (Writing)
* Decision Making Activities
* DR-TA Activity (Directed Reading-Thinking Activity) (Stauffer, 1969)
* GATOR – questions in the Affective Domain (Gaining Acceptance Toward Reading)
Pre and Post Test Questions to Build Internal Locus of Control

Pre Test
1. How did you study for this test? (reread, flash cards, study buddy, etc.)
2. How much time did you spend studying?
3. What grade do you think you will get on this test?

Post Test
1. What level of difficulty was this test?
2. Did you study what was on the test?

After Grading
1. Do you think your grade reflects how much effort you put forth in studying for this test?
2. Does your grade reflect what you really know about this topic?
3. What might you do differently next time to improve your score? (spend more time, try a different study tactic, etc.)
Internal-External Journal and Blame List Writing Activities

*Have students record in a journal events that happen to them and explain if they were orchestrated or controlled by someone other than themselves.
*List positive and negative events that happen to them and are they their own fault or the fault of others.
*Variation: Use fictional characters to assign blame.
DR-TA Activity (Directed Reading-Thinking Activity) (Stauffer, 1969)

*Purpose: To help students understand that each segment of text can help them figure out the next segment

*Three Steps
  - Predicting
  - Reading
  - Proving

*Fiction or Nonfiction DR-TA

1. Preview/Preread: Study title, subtitles, pictures, charts, maps, graphs, summary or conclusion, end of chapter questions)
2. Close book and make hypothesis: What is known after previewing? What do we need to learn? What do you think will happen? Why do you think that? For nonfiction students can write questions that they would like answered in the text.
3. Verifying: Read to find out if predictions are correct. Read to answer nonfiction questions.
4. Reflecting: Defend inferences by referring to text. Did you find the answers to your questions? Find out what we still need to know.
Questions and responses based on “feeling”
Examples:
• How did that make you feel?
• Why is this lesson important?
• Why is this chapter important?

Language Arts
How did you feel about the main character? Would you have done or not done what the character did?

Science
How do you feel about today’s weather? Can weather affect your mood? What if there were never any change of seasons? Describe what your feelings would be.

Social Studies
How would your life be different if the south had won the Civil War? Describe your feelings. How do you feel about ISIS?

Math
How do you feel about negative numbers? What do you think about the statistics on skateboard safety?
“Internally controlled students make greater gains in achievement in general, in reading achievement, and in classroom adjustment.”

(Borman & Overman, 2004; Culver & Morgan, 1977; Moore, 2006)
Do you control your destiny or are you controlled by it?

What is your locus of control? Take this free online test from Psychology Today to find out.

http://psychologytoday.tests.psychtests.com/take_test.php?idRegTest=1317