

BUILDING LEARNERS' CONFIDENCE IN MATHEMATICS

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Learners who are unconfident in their mathematics skills tend to distrust their skills and avoid answering problems in front of the class. These learners are simple to identify since they avoid eye contact and keep their heads lowered when you ask them a question. When you ask them to describe how they came up with a solution, they are uncertain of their responses and hesitant. It is crucial that children develop their mathematical confidence.

Here are some teaching strategies that will help to improve learners' math confidence.

PRAISE EFFORT

Praise students for their effort rather than their knowledge or success in finding the correct answer. The phrase "You are smart!" This leads students to believe that math skills are predetermined by innate intelligence: "I knew you'd get this problem right." Instead, the importance of emphasizing to learners that their commitment to learning will determine how successful they are in math. Say something like, "Great job putting a lot of effort into this math problem. Limit empty or general praise, such as "Good job," as fractions can be challenging. However, you will succeed if you persevere.

LISTEN AND ACKNOWLEDGE

Ask your learner how they solved a problem and listen to their answers, without correcting their mistakes. Use this as an avenue to assess their understanding of the topic.

SET MATH GOALS

Make your learners set their own goals in mathematics. As the school year progresses, these goals will help your learners to see how much they have learned in math. Track learners' progress towards meeting these goals to make their growth possible.

WORDS MATTER

Take caution while describing your personal math-related experiences. Avoid telling pupils you are awful at math, even if it is not your favorite subject. The opinions of a teacher are quickly internalized and adopted by students. Similarly, refrain from telling a pupil that "they are just not a math student" as this implies that they were not born with a mathematical mind and provides a justification for not working hard to understand the topic. Instead, emphasize to children that everyone can improve their arithmetic skills with effort and a commitment to continuous learning.

USE OPEN-ENDED PROBLEMS

Give math activities that do not have one just one right or wrong answer. This enables them to approach the activities from various angles. When discussing the problem with the class, have your learners share how they solved the problem. Reiterate how math is dynamic and permits many ways of thinking while praising the fact that each of them approached the problem in a different way. Also, emphasize that getting the right answer is not only the goal but rather developing mathematical skills as students go through the process of solving the problem is the goal.

References:

<https://luminouslearning.com/blogs/sped-math/build-math-confidence>