

Resources by Skill: Perseverance

The Importance of Perseverance

Farrington et al. (2012) found that throughout the literature, academic perseverance is related to academic performance, perseverant behaviors are malleable and can be taught, and that perseverance is affected by classroom contexts. Some ways that classroom context may affect student perseverance include:

- Influences on students' academic mindsets (e.g. context causes student to not persist because student believes his or her efforts will be futile), and
- Opportunities to learn strategies that help students be more effective in their learning and more academically engaged

The authors also emphasize the relationship between learning strategies, such as time management, and perseverance. However, there is unfortunately little research providing guidance on specific practices that can change a students' perseverance.

Perseverance has also been linked to work habits, task persistence, and math achievement (**Vandell et al., 2007**), and higher education attainment, higher undergraduate GPAs, and fewer career changes (**Duckworth et al., 2010**).

Many researchers equate perseverance with resilience. Resilience occurs when a person experiences risk or adversity that normally would lead to negative outcomes, but is able to maintain normal or above normal functioning despite the stressor (**Windle, 2011**). However, there continuous debate about a good definition for resilience, because resilience may look different for different developmental stages (**Masten and Obradovic, 2006**).

Cultivating Perseverance

Bowes et al. (2010) studied the effect of familial "warmth" on resilience to bullying in late elementary school, and found that both maternal and sibling warmth, as well as atmosphere at home, helped children to respond resiliently to bullying. These results indicate that caring adults and peers can impact youth's resilience to adversity, and also underscore the importance of engaging the family in youth development.

Farrington et al. (2012) discusses strategies for teaching academic perseverance in a classroom. Direct instruction, most often used in students with identified behavioral disabilities, has unfortunately not been proven effective in the long-term. However, perseverance may also be taught by changing the *context* in which students operate: by supporting positive academic mindsets and helping students develop effective learning strategies, students' perseverant behavior may be affected. Instructors should:

- Show students the value of their work,

- Make students feel they are capable of succeeding,
- Cultivate a growth mindset in students, and
- Teach specific learning strategies so that students have the tools they need to complete a task.

Works Cited

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