

Addressing social and emotional barriers to success



Attendance

- What makes a pupil attend a lesson/revision session and stay in the room?



Motivation and Effort


If the issue is effort, 'must try harder' doesn't always cut it...

- What might make a pupil struggle to put in the effort required?




Why might a pupil invest effort?


1. To do better than their peers
2. To avoid doing worse than others
3. Their intrinsic interest in the task
4. To improve their performance




They'll only invest effort if their chances of success are high



They will only keep going as long as their interest lasts



They'll only put the effort in if they believe that this is within their control



Locus of control

- Some children and young people may be demotivated in their learning and have an external locus of control, which suggests **they feel powerless** to change their learning outcomes.
- Not all children have an internal locus control and they need a high level of support to believe that they can affect change and effort can be effective.
- **Firstly, the pupil needs to be given sufficient support to be able to achieve more successfully. The second stage is to teach them to attribute this newfound success to the effort, skills and strategies they have been applying.**



Attribution of success

- Ideas around attribution link to the **perceived cause** of the initial outcome
- Attributions do not directly motivate behaviour but they are interpreted into meaningful responses (which can then be acted upon)
- Ideas link to three concepts:
 - **Locus** – whether the perceived cause is internal or external
 - **Stability** – whether the perceived cause is likely to change
 - **Controllability** – whether the perceived cause is within the learner's control



For example

- External locus – disrupted teaching, illness, school closure
- Internal locus – lack of attention

- Stable (unlikely to change) – class set, teacher
- Unstable (changeable) – range of revision classes available

- Controllable – student has a choice of which group
- Uncontrollable – student is assigned to a group

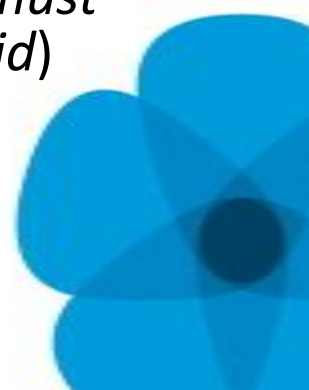
Students often perceive

- Bad luck = external, unstable and uncontrollable
- Personal effort = internal, changeable and controllable



Attribution errors

- Ignoring the situation and external factors – attributing a single event to internal qualities *I did well in that mock because I'm brilliant – I can always wing it (but actually we had just done that question in class); I did badly in that mock because I'm hopeless at English (even though my mum and my brother had covid so I'd been self-isolating for two weeks before the exam so I missed the prep for that question)*
- Self-serving bias: ascribing success to internal causes (*I am brilliant at this*) and failure to external factors (*my teacher hates me*)
- Self-damaging bias: ascribing success to external factors (*it must have been a fluke*) and failure to internal causes (*I'm so stupid*)



Changing attribution – creating a clearer perception of control

Ensure pupils have a proper understanding of what 'effort' means

Clarifying the strategies that a task needs – demystifying success

Get pupils to say what they *did* that contributed to their success

Get pupils to identify the strategies that others used that worked

Provide models of constructive attributions linked to effort and strategies

Use praise in relation to strategies used, including persistence

Get peers to explain the coping strategies they use during tasks

Provide examples of how 'abilities' can be improved

Metacognition – understanding what learning looks and feels like in practice

Exemplify memory, comprehension and over-learning strategies

Give feedback that is linked to internal factors within the pupil's control

Students with low self-esteem

- Withdrawn
- Quiet
- Shy
- Afraid to talk about their ideas in case they get it wrong

- Shows off, boasts and brags
- Loud and arrogant
- Disruptive
- Needs to be first

- Constantly seeking approval and reassurance from others
- Smiling/joking people pleaser
- Over compliant
- Easily led

- Rigid and authoritarian
- Perfectionist
- Critical of others
- Driven
- Obsessive
- Collapses if not the best

Low self-esteem – self-talk

If I just keep quiet, maybe no one will notice me at all...

I will show them how much I am worth...

If everyone likes me and shows me approval then I must be okay...

How I perform determines how much I am worth. If I do not succeed, I am worthless...

Supporting pupils' sense of self and self-esteem

- keep expectations high
- value attempts that pupils make (but not in an over-the-top manner – use a look or discreet comment)
- identify what pupils *can* do and when they are behaving positively
- use positive humour
- avoid comparisons
- give pupils ‘helper’ roles and value their contribution



Managing emotions and self-regulation

- Help pupils who are struggling to recognise their emotions – name the feeling and tell them the clues you have spotted ‘You’re looking puzzled and you’re starting to tap the table – are you starting to worry about this?’ ‘I think you might be feeling... as I noticed....’
- Remain calm and focused on the task in hand (e.g. if a pupil has punched a wall before coming into the classroom, offer an ice pack for bruised knuckles, give a few minutes and then explain the task, give a few minutes, check in and support a plan for steps in the task, give a few minutes...etc.)



Adapting teaching for pupils' emotions and self-regulation

- How can we adapt our approach to address our pupils' social and emotional barriers to learning and improve their motivation?
- How far *should* we adapt for this?
- Who needs these adaptations the most?

