Foster A Growth Mindset in Children Using Two Books: "Beautiful Oops" by Barney Saltzberg and "Stickley Makes a Mistake: A Frog's Guide to Trying Again" by Brenda S. Miles

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Abstract

This article provides early childhood educators and parents information on the importance of teaching students about growth mindset. Assisting children at a young age about how their mistakes can help them grow is necessary so they can view setbacks as opportunities to accomplish goals.   Through using read alouds, early educators to help young children make personal connections to the characters and the theme of the story. Through the read alouds connected to growth mindset, the educator can promote discussion, provide writing opportunities, and help students develop personal goals.

Introduction

Growth mindset is important to develop at a young age so children can begin looking at challenges as opportunities instead of obstacles. Children with a growth mindset "interpret setbacks, challenges, and effort as effective approaches to improving their ability, intelligence, and experience" (Zeng, Hou, Peng, 2016, p. 2). Assisting children at a young age that they can take their mistakes to become resilient people is necessary, so they do not develop a fixed mindset or feel defeated or a sense of failure at something they wanted to accomplish. Children who perceive effort as important are said to have a growth mindset (Hochanadel & Finamore, 2015). When children develop a growth mindset along with passion to persevere, it promotes goal setting and achieving those goals.

There are many children's books connected to developing a growth mindset. Using read alouds connected to growth mindset provides students the opportunity to connect to the story or character. Using read alouds allows the students to gain an understanding that stories can relate

to their own lives (Reading Recovery, 2019). Providing children the opportunity to make these personal connections allows them to reflect and in return it is more meaningful.

Summary of "Beautiful Oops"

In the book, "Beautiful Oops," the author, Barney Saltzberg tells a story that it is okay to make mistakes. This simple picture book is filled with colorful artwork sharing a story of that when a person makes a mistake, the picture is still beautiful. His message is to help children understand that sometimes the mistakes may end up being beautiful creations. Children can learn from their mistakes and become resilient learners.

Summary of "Stickley Makes a Mistake: A Frog's Guide to Trying Again"

This story is about a frog named Stickley who wanted to be perfect. When Stickley would make a mistake, he would proclaim, "Oh No!" Stickley would not try again because he feared making mistakes. With the help from his grandpa, Stickley learns that making mistakes is actually a good thing. Stickley learns to hop up and try again.

Using Discussions to Promote Conversations on Resiliency

"Beautiful Oops" and "Stickley Makes a Mistake: A Frog's Guide to Trying Again**"** are both simple read alouds, but the meaning of the stories is powerful for children. "Resilience—or whether students respond positively to challenges—is crucial for success in school and in life' (Yeager & Dweck, 2012, p. 1). Saltzberg's message of sharing that mistakes are okay to make connects to helping young children understand the importance of resiliency. Additionally, Miles' message about trying again makes children mentally stronger because they are more willing to take risks in their learning and personal goals. These two read aloud books allow for personal one-on-one discussions or a classroom discussion of sharing personal mistakes in school and outside of school.

Questions for Discussion

When promoting discussions centered around growth mindset using these two books, it is important to consider questions that children can connect with to help them reflect on their personal experiences. The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (2016) stated it is important to connect questions which connect to their personal lives. Using these two books to promote discussion opens the door for children to use their schema. Questions focused on assisting children to understand the importance of making mistakes helps them become resilient and develop a growth mindset. Example of questions include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Have your ever made a mistake? If so, did you become frustrated, upset, or sad?
2. How do the authors of the books help you understand that mistakes are okay?
3. How can you use your mistakes to work towards a goal?
4. Did the frog remind you of yourself when it comes to making mistakes?
5. In "Beautiful Oops," what did you learn about yourself?
6. How can you use your mistakes to learn about yourself?

These open-ended questions can be asked one-on-one or in small groups to provide the children opportunities to share their thoughts in a safe environment. Promoting discussion in small groups allows those children who are hesitant in speaking in a large group an opportunity to take risks and share their voices.

Goal Setting Connection

Children at a young age can create goals connected to their academic learning or personal lives. Communicating with children that mistakes and failures coincide with growth is important. Children can use these mistakes and create a goal for self-improvement. As explained by Schunk (1990),

> As learners work on tasks, they observe their own performances and evaluate their own progress. Self-efficacy and goal setting are affected by self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction. When students perceive satisfactory goal progress, they feel capable of improving their skills; goal attainment, coupled with high self-efficacy, leads students to set new challenging goals. (p. 71)

Further, in a study completed by Ames and Archer (1988), they found that students who set goals and work towards those goals possess a growth mindset, especially true when teachers focused on mastering goals in the classroom. In a sense, the adult is coaching and supporting children with their goals, but ultimately setting the goal and the plan to achieve the goal is the responsibility of each child. A goal planning template is provided (Appendix A). This planning sheet allows for students to write and illustrate their thoughts connected to their goal.

Writing Connection

Using these two children's books opens an opportunity for children to write their own books about making mistakes and how they overcome their mistakes in school and everyday life. They can write their own "Beautiful Oops" or their personal guide to overcoming obstacles, barriers, or mistakes. Writing is an important part of the academic curriculum. Writing can take on the form of telling a story through pictures and words. Polisena (n.d) stated, "Introducing and practicing writing with engaging activities in elementary school, can foster confidence and a lifelong love of writing" (para 1). Providing children a purpose for writing with a meaningful connection allows them to share their story with other children and adults in the home and at school.

Summary

Developing a growth mindset at an early age can help students use their setbacks and challenges as opportunities to achieve academic and personal goals. Burns (2006) stated that children enjoy sharing what they read. When the educator reads books focused on growth mindset along with asking questions to promote discussion, the children are learning to make connections to develop a growth mindset. Children should be given the opportunity to share their thoughts, write about what they are thinking, and develop goals to work towards an area they want to improve and overcome. Dweck (2008) affirmed that educators can successfully teach children to develop a

growth mindset. Providing opportunities in the classroom to do this can increase engagement and performance.

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Appendix A

Goal Setting Template for Children

I am great at:	A challenge I have is:
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

I want to improve on:

_____

_____

_____

_____

I will achieve my goal by:	**Dates to check in on my goal:**
_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____