

8 Ways to Build Student Stamina

Article By: Norene Wiesen

Now that March Break is behind us, students may find that they are starting to lose the excitement they once felt about going to school. The following article, by Norene Wiesen, offers some helpful suggests for both parents and teachers to help teach learners the valuable skill of persistence.

How to teach persistence

One of our main goals as educators should be teaching student's persistence in the classroom, since it's an important part of setting up learners to succeed. Students who have mastered persistence are able to work through challenges, deal constructively with failures and adversity, and achieve the goals they have set for themselves.

It's a lot like running a marathon. The runners who make it to the finish line are the ones who persist in showing up for practices and trainings, learn to anticipate slumps and pace themselves, engage in positive self-talk during tough times, take steps to effectively prevent and treat injuries, and adjust expectations to fit reality – even if “finishing” means having to crawl the last mile.

Like a runner who has not trained to run longer distances, learners can't persist in their learning if they haven't developed the stamina they need to keep going when things get tough. Teaching persistence depends on first developing student stamina as a way of conditioning learners to handle sustained effort.

To help learners build stamina and persistence, it's important to create the right learning environment:

Help Learners Develop a Growth Mindset

Learners need to know that they have the ability to grow and change, and that effort is the key. Praise them when they focus their efforts toward specific, clearly defined goals. When you say things like, “Those extra 10 minutes of reading each day are paying off – you are decoding unfamiliar words much more easily now,” you help learners make the connection between effort and achievement. The goal is for learners to become intrinsically motivated to engage in effortful learning now and in the future.



8 Ways to Build Student Stamina...cont.

Push a Little Bit – and Know When Enough is Enough

Sometimes learners just need a little bit of encouragement to get past a hurdle. A few supportive words, like, “Think of how good you will feel when you finish those last two addition problems and you know you did the whole worksheet all by yourself!” can make all the difference. On the other hand, a learner may need to know that it’s okay to take a break and come back to a particular task when he’s feeling less frustrated. In that case, it’s important that the learner really does come back and complete the work to get the experience that he truly can “do more” when he persists.

Model Persistence

Most learners love to hear personal stories from their teachers. Telling your learners about your weekend plumbing project that didn’t go as planned – and how you got through it and completed it – is a great way to help learners see that everyone feels like giving up sometimes. It also models for them how to overcome those feelings and reach a goal – without coming off as preachy.

Teach Positive Self-Talk

Some learners need a lot of help knowing what to say to themselves to stay motivated. If a learner’s typical internal dialogue consists of statements like, “This is too hard,” or “I don’t know how to do this,” it may come as a revelation to discover that there are other options. Giving learners specific wording, like, “I know I can do this if I keep at it,” or, “If I’m really stuck I can ask a friend or my teacher for help,” can begin to change the way they think and act when faced with a challenge.

Expect More

Let learners know that you have high expectations and that you have confidence that each and every one of them can meet those expectations. Be sure they have access to the tools they need to be successful, and that they know how to use them.

Make the Most of Technology

Online tools like the Fast ForWord program can help learners make the connection between effort and achievement. The Fast ForWord program gradually builds learner stamina for enduring increasing degrees of cognitive load. The exercises develop reading and language skills at the same time as they boost memory, attention, processing, and sequencing ability. It gives learners immediate feedback on their performance and automatically adjusts the difficulty level for just the right degree of challenge. Fun reward animations help learners see when they have achieved a goal to help them stay motivated.

Call Out the Brain

It’s never too early – or too late – to teach your students about how the brain learns. Introduce the concept of brain plasticity– the idea that the brain changes in response to how it’s used – as a way of reinforcing the idea that learning is achieved through focused, sustained effort. Help them understand that every brain is capable of making dramatic changes and leaps in learning.

Repeat, Repeat, Repeat

Students learn persistence in the same way that they learn sight words or multiplication tables – through repetition. Strategies like modeling persistence, connecting effort to achievement, and pushing students to do a little more than they think they can aren’t a one-time deal. But when repeated over time, the cumulative effect will likely be increased stamina, improved persistence, and intrinsic motivation for ever greater learning.

Reference: Wiesen, Norene. 8 Ways to Build Student Stamina (January 2014). Retrieved on March 28, 2017, from <http://www.scilearn.com/blog/teaching-persistence-how-to-build-student-stamina>

Poems at Home – April is National Poetry Month!

Article by: Reading Rockets

National Poetry Month is a time to celebrate poets, rhymes, rhythm, and word choices that make poetry fun for kids. Sharing poetry with kids is a great way to highlight language. Poems include humor, interesting words, tongue twisters and alliteration (the same consonant sound at the beginning of each word). Choral reading of poems, where more than one reads the same thing at the same time, and several rereading of the same poem also builds fluency.

How to plan a family poetry jam

Start with playful, rhyming poetry about topics that are familiar to your child like animals, food, and bedtime. Nursery rhymes and Mother Goose collections are early favorites.

Read the poetry aloud slowly. Emphasize the sound of the words and the rhymes. Read dramatically to emphasize the breaks and phrasing of the poem. Have fun with the colorful language and word play.

Reread the poem several times. Many popular poets for kids (for example Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelutsky) have several of their poems online. These can be printed and used for rereading. Favorite ones can be arranged into a family poetry notebook.

Once a poem is familiar to your child, take turns reading! First you read one line or one stanza, and have your child read the next. See if you can do that while maintaining the rhythm of the poem.

Plan your own family poetry jam. Have each member of the family choose and practice a favorite poem to share with the family. Set aside special times to celebrate poetry by having each person share their poem.

While April is National Poetry month, there's enough excellent poetry for kids to share all year long. Ask your local librarian for help finding poetry collections that are a good fit for your child.

Reference: *Poems at Home* (2010). Retrieved on March 28 2017, from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/poems-home>

Inspirational Quotes – Issue # 66

Edited by: Vicary Parkin

Throughout history, society has been influenced and shaped by the many great contributions made by individuals with learning disabilities. These people demonstrate the strength and perseverance to be true to themselves and strive for their full potential. We hope their words inspire and motivate you to reach for your true potential.

"I just have to work a lot slower. It comes a lot slower. But good learning takes a long time," he says. "To really learn something, you have to keep doing it until it appears effortless. So it takes time." – Tony Bennett, Singer/songwriter

Tony Bennett is a legendary American singer. First discovered in 1949, he has had a successful career in the music industry spanning over 5 decades. Bennett has always had difficulty with reading, and finds that patience has been the key to his success. Along with his successful career in the music industry, Bennett is also an accomplished painter and the founder of the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts in New York.

Bennett holds the record for oldest living artist to have an album on the Billboard 200 chart.

Reference: Tony Bennett Says He Never Felt Better. (2006) Retrieved Online: March 28, 2017. <http://www.dys-add.com/resources/Famous/TonyBennett.pdf>

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We hope you have enjoyed this month's issue of the LD Edge Newsletter and that you are looking forward to the next issue.



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If we give them an edge...
They may give us one!