



MERCER
UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR
ENGAGED LEARNING

CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM

Praising Effort Over Outcome to Build Positive Self-Image

Image source: Highlights

Confidence is How We Feel About *What We Can Do*

- Self-confidence is the feeling we have when we know that we can accomplish a task, and it determines how we react when faced with new challenges and experiences.
- Kids with high self-confidence will tackle most skills or tasks without worry about failure.
- Watch this video from Sesame Street to see how they talk to kids about confidence. Pay attention to the language used in the video that you might like to adopt when working with your students.



If the video does not play, click this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctNg0DgMa-o>



Self-Esteem is How We Feel About *Who We Are*

- Self-esteem is the overall feeling of self-worth that we have of ourselves. It's how we appraise ourselves, and the value we offer the world. Believe it or not, it's entirely possible for someone to be self-confident in what they do but still feel profoundly insecure or shameful about themselves as a person.
- Self-esteem is forged early in childhood, when kids gain new experiences and learn their capabilities as they learn new skills.
- Even though we can have high self-confidence and still have low self-esteem, kids who have low self-confidence will likely develop low self-esteem as well.



Praising Effort Over Outcome Can Shift Kid's Mindsets

This 13-minute video from social psychologist Andrew Luttrell provides an overview of psychology research by Carol Dweck.

The research shows that praising someone for working hard is better than praising them for their ability.



If the video does not play, click this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SH0Ho0FNd8>



Reflecting on Praising Effort Over Outcome

- What is your biggest takeaway from this video?
- Take a moment to reflect on how your confidence and self-esteem are shaped by the kinds of praise you receive. What types of praise do you respond well to, and why? How are your feelings of confidence and self-worth impacted?
- What values about learning and self-esteem do you want to instill in your students? Think back to the ways you praise your students in tutoring sessions. What kinds of things do you say? How do those things reinforce the values you want to teach? What kinds of things do you want to be more intentional about saying in the future?

