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# Fostering Self-Efficacy in Adult Learners

## 2023 COABE Atlanta: Session Two

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**Kevin Johnson**



# Fostering Positive Self-Efficacy in Adult Learners

Takeaways from the 2023 COABE National Conference



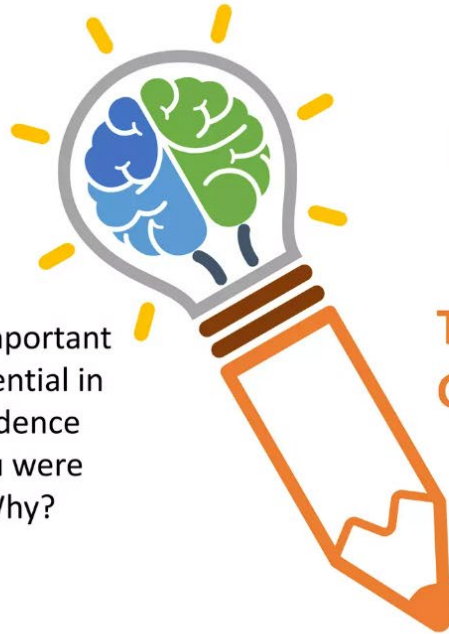
# The Value of Mentorship

## REFLECTION

Can you identify an important person who was influential in developing your confidence as a student while you were in school? Who and Why?

MENTORS

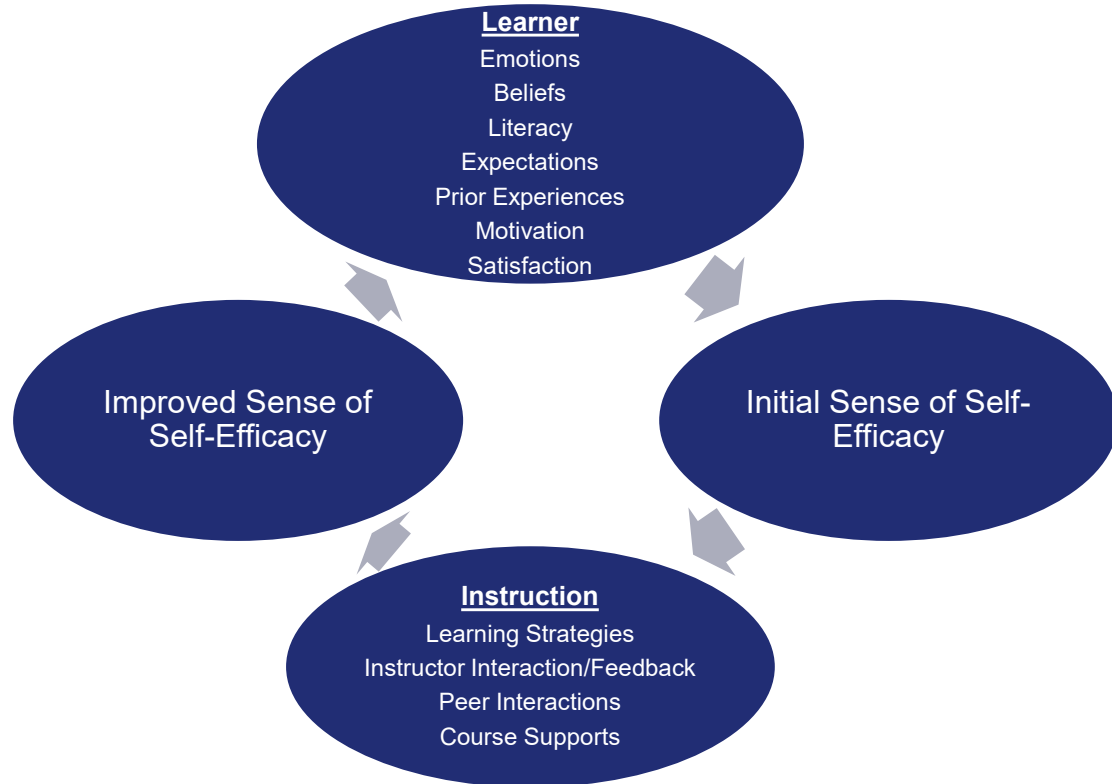
THOSE WHO HAVE  
GONE BEFORE



Source: Presentation on “Adult Learners with Confidence: Engagement for Academic Self-efficacy,” presented during a 2019 event conducted by the Lilly Conference on College Teaching.

# What is Self-Efficacy?

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his/her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1997).



# Why is it Important for Adult Learners?

- Affects motivation
- Determines level of participation
- Helps students struggle through difficulties
- Helps students cope with their “fight or flight” responses
- Increases student retention and success



# What Affects Self-Efficacy?

- Limited success completing educational goals
- Anxiety
- Trauma
- Unfamiliar surroundings
- Culture shock
- Limited abilities to communicate

# Ways to Promote Self-Efficacy

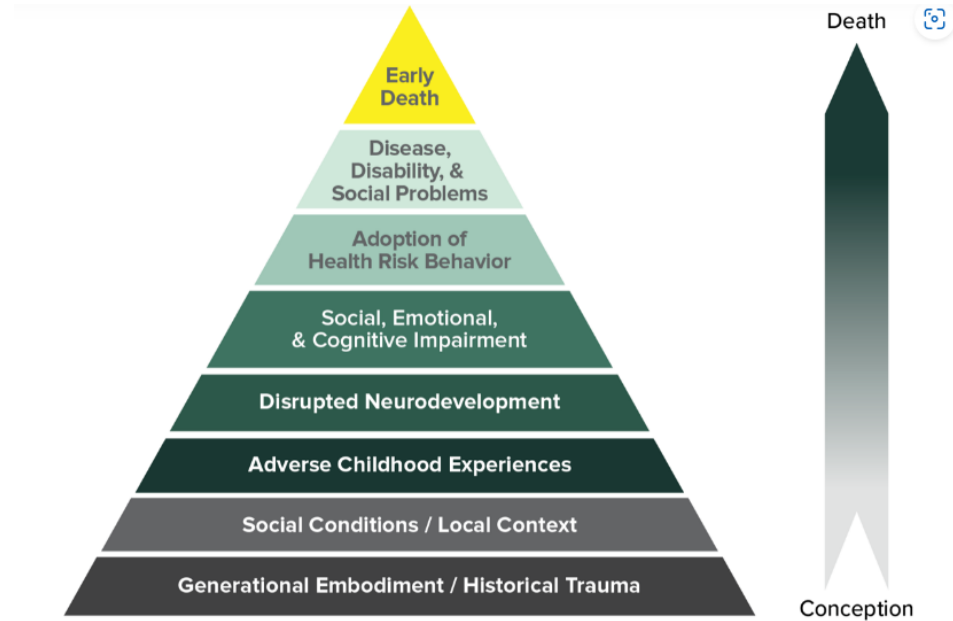


- Recognizing trauma
- Providing a safe educational environment
- Developing a growth mindset
- Positive Affirmations
- Differentiated Instruction



# Recognizing Trauma

- **Community violence**
- **Childhood trauma**
- **Domestic violence**
- **Educational trauma**
- **Refugee trauma**



Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences can influence health and well-being throughout the lifespan if not adequately buffered by protective factors.

Source: NIH-National Library of Medicine



# Creating A Judgement Free Environment

- Allow for opinions to be expressed
- Encourage differences
- Develop a sense of community within the classroom
- Respect boundaries
- Acknowledge participation
- Encourage effort

# Recognizing Trauma (Example Scenario)

Maria is 32 years old and a U.S. Citizen. She recently moved from her home town of San Antonio, Texas. Her husband serves on active duty in the U.S. Airforce and they were recently transferred to the local Airforce base located in your county. She is very well read, articulate and very knowledgeable in algebra and geometry. She quit school in the eleventh grade because she was expecting a child and needed to find full-time employment. After attending your class for one month, she confided in you that her mother, who passed away recently, was not a U.S. citizen and lived in San Antonio illegally for Maria's entire life.

1. What are possible traumas that Maria may be dealing with?
2. How can you help Maria better adjust to your classroom routine?
3. What are some personal goals you might make related to instilling a positive sense of self-efficacy within Maria?

# Recognizing Trauma (Breakout Session)

- Move to your assigned breakout room for  
**11-13 minutes**
- Introduce yourselves within the breakout room.
- Read your group's assigned scenario.
- Discuss and answer questions from the graphic organizer included with the scenario.

**What does a student's  
past trauma have to do  
with me as a teacher?**



# Growth Mindset

- **Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset**
- **Remove “can’t” from the classroom.**
- **Teach students to say “not yet.”**
- **Mistakes are good.**
- **If we are struggling, we are improving.**

# Using Affirmations

## What is an affirmation?

“The practice of intentionally noticing and admiring the uniqueness of culturally and linguistically diverse students. It includes seeing the positive elements of an individual...” (Zaretta Hammond, 2015)



# Why do Affirmations Need to be Intentional?

- To improve self-confidence
- Build self-esteem
- Develop a positive/growth mindset towards learning
- Students must believe in their strengths.
- Create a glass is half full mentality within the classroom

# Why is Affirmation a Positive Change Agent?

- Students come with a fight or flight mentality.
- Anything that triggers this feeling provides an excuse to give up.
- Affirmations help build the confidence required to break the “dropout” cycle.

# Affirmations Exercise Example (Affirmations Cards)

<b>Roadblocks are learning opportunities</b>	<b>I am grateful that I can go back to school</b>	<b>I am excited that my potential is limitless</b>	<b>I am capable</b>	<b>I am taking positive steps to advance my goals</b>	<b>I can do anything if I put my mind to it</b>
<b>My ability to learn is improving everyday</b>	<b>It is okay to ask for help</b>	<b>I'm excited to learn something new every day</b>	<b>I can meet my goals</b>	<b>I am focusing on positive thoughts</b>	<b>I am not my mistakes</b>
<b>If I fall I will get right back up</b>	<b>I can do this</b>	<b>I can create change</b>	<b>I can learn from situations that make me feel challenged</b>	<b>I am grateful for my support system</b>	<b>I am not going to let negative thoughts control me</b>

# Affirmations Exercise Example (Affirmations Cards)

## Whole Group Exercises

### Option 1

- At the start of each class, a student can choose a card, read it, and the students discuss it.
- This activity is a good way to start the class.

### Option 2

- The instructor can choose the card, write the affirmation on the board, have the students read it, and connect with it.
- That affirmation will resonate with some or all of them.
- Let the students repeat the affirmation 3-5 times at the beginning and the end of the class.

# Differentiated Instruction

## What is differentiated instruction?

Tailored instruction to meet each student's individual needs.

### Learner Differences

Millennials

Gen Z/Centennials

Silents

Baby Boomers

Gen Xers



# What Should We Differentiate?

## Differentiated Learning

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graph TD; A[Differentiated Learning] --> B[Content]; A --> C[Process]; A --> D[Product]; A --> E[Effect];
```

### Content

- Adapting content to:
- Students' Interests
  - Age
  - Academic Readiness
  - Language proficiency

### Process

- Individualized
- Pairing
- Small groups
- Whole groups

### Product

- Visual
- Written
- Oral presentation
- Graphic organizers
- Hands-on projects

### Effect

- Safe Environment
- Students are free to make mistakes
- Students feel accepted
- Positive feedback

# Review/Takeaways

- Self-Efficacy increases retention and success
- Trauma can affect confidence
- Growth mindset and affirmations can set a positive tone
- Differentiated instructions provides a more personal focus

# Questions?

## The Professional Development Facilitator Network

