

The Role of a Teacher

The teacher's role is crucial in creating an environment that leads students to success. This is accomplished by modeling and by-assisting students in developing attainable goals, providing consistent feedback, and eliciting self-evaluative information concerning performance. A structured, purposeful approach is vital to the process of self-regulation and REMEDIATION.

Students with reading difficulties must learn to apply self-regulating skills steadily and consistently in attempting increasingly challenging and sometimes stressful assignments. Teachers must help students gain confidence in attempting more difficult tasks.

Immediate success is essential for students who have a history of difficulty or failure. However, these students gradually learn to struggle with adversity and to overcome their problems, even if they do encounter occasional failure.

Eventually, students learn that their difficulty or failure may be more attributable to a lack of effort than to a lack of ability or to external factors. Research on learned helplessness indicates that, with few exceptions, more difficulties result from students' lack of effort than from their lack of ability. Thus, the issue is not whether teachers can always prevent adversity or stress but how they can help students cope when it occurs.

Teachers need to work with students in the following ways:

- Students need to identify their maladaptive stress reactions to and develop more strategies -such as goal setting, incentives, and self-monitoring- to deal with problems. Only then can they experience success.
- Students need to be shown how to apply the necessary skills to complete assignments successfully. This means more than mastering isolated skills; it means developing the necessary self-control to study and process written information for purposes of taking tests, making oral and written reports, and contributing to class discussions.
- This includes helping them overcome their fear or anger toward a subject by identifying and reinforcing purposeful activities, mastering incremental learning steps, and establishing a schedule for accomplishing the work.