



CONFIDENCE, AND SELF-ESTEEM

Why Students Don't Have It,
and What They Can Do to Get It

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As adults, we like to be in control, organizing and managing our lives without the stress and anxiety of being scattered and overwhelmed. Even when we juggle many commitments such as home, work and community, we do best when we are able to handle our many responsibilities.

How is this different for students? It's not. It's exactly the same.

When students know how to manage school, extracurricular activities, their social lives and family obligations, they are able to build self-esteem and confidence — essential characteristics that will carry them well through school and throughout their lives.

Most middle and high school students, if asked, would like to see themselves as focused and confident, engaged in classroom discussions, well-prepared for classes, tests and projects, organized, able to synthesize information and retain it, and ultimately see the results of their work reflected positively in test scores and overall grades.

For some students, that's a tall order if they don't know how to prioritize and organize themselves.

As a consequence, their schoolwork hangs over them like a dark shadow. Students that feel overwhelmed and unprepared can disengage from school, causing them to fall increasingly behind in their work, making it difficult, if not impossible, to catch up.

"The most effective students are those who know how to organize and manage their time and take good notes," says Alan Joseph, guidance counselor at Trinity Catholic High School, in Stamford. "While ineffective students have a tendency to procrastinate, or hold off on school-related assignments, effective students realize that there is plenty of time in the day to do school-related work and to enjoy themselves. It is a common misconception that there is not enough time in the day to do both."

A student's lack of confidence can create a ripple effect, impacting not only the student, but also the



**THE SEVEN MOST EFFECTIVE SKILLS OF CONFIDENT STUDENTS.
WHAT TEACHERS SAY:**

1. The ability to focus
2. Smart and consistent use of a planner
3. The discipline to organize and prioritize
4. Astute note-taking skills
5. Good homework strategies
6. Active learning techniques
7. Self-assessment for constant improvement

student's family, peer group, teachers and the classroom environment.

Concerns over grades and a student's studying can create tension at home, deteriorating family relationships. Feelings of inadequacy can cause poor judgment in social behavior. Students that are not prepared or engaged in class can cause a teacher to redirect attention away from content instruction as they re-teach essential skills, causing a loss to the entire class.

It is easy to understand how a student who doesn't feel good about their worth as a student, sometimes develops resentment toward school, parents and their teachers.

When students know how to study, they feel great about them-

IS YOUR STUDENT PREPARED FOR CONFIDENCE AT SCHOOL?

ASK YOURSELF:

- » Does my child know how to study effectively?
- » Does my child work on homework into the small hours of the night?
- » Are my child's grades as strong as could be?
- » Does my student know how to manage time and prioritize assignments?
- » Is my child reaching his or her full academic potential?

selves and their work. They can gain confidence and achieve even small successes if they learn to organize themselves, prioritize, and build on what they learn. When students know how to take good notes when reading and in class, they will achieve a greater level of understanding, longer retention of the material, and do better on tests.

Riding the wave to good skills can start with something as simple as students using a planner to help organize work and their time, reviewing one's mistakes on a quiz to be prepared for an upcoming test, or self-advocating for oneself. Small changes in a student's study practice can yield big returns in grades, self-esteem and confidence. •



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