



Childhood Education

INNOVATIONS

May/June 2019

Questioning the creativity craze

Supporting self-efficacy

A unique resource for
reflecting on community

Immersive storytelling

Kids on Earth learning tool

Global citizenship in a
polarized world

Smarter school organization

Pioneering nursery in Jordan

Innovation in teacher induction

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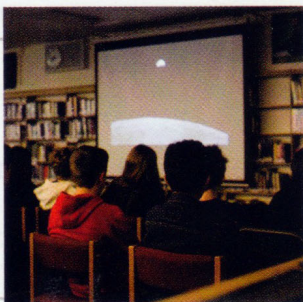
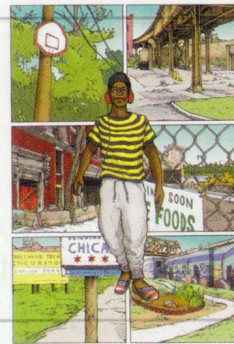
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Our Cover Image:

This issue's cover represents our belief that the child should be at the center of all our creative efforts to innovate and transform education. We celebrate the many individuals and organizations around the world that are exploring and inventing and will continue to present those ideas and advancements here in the pages of *Childhood Education: Innovations*.



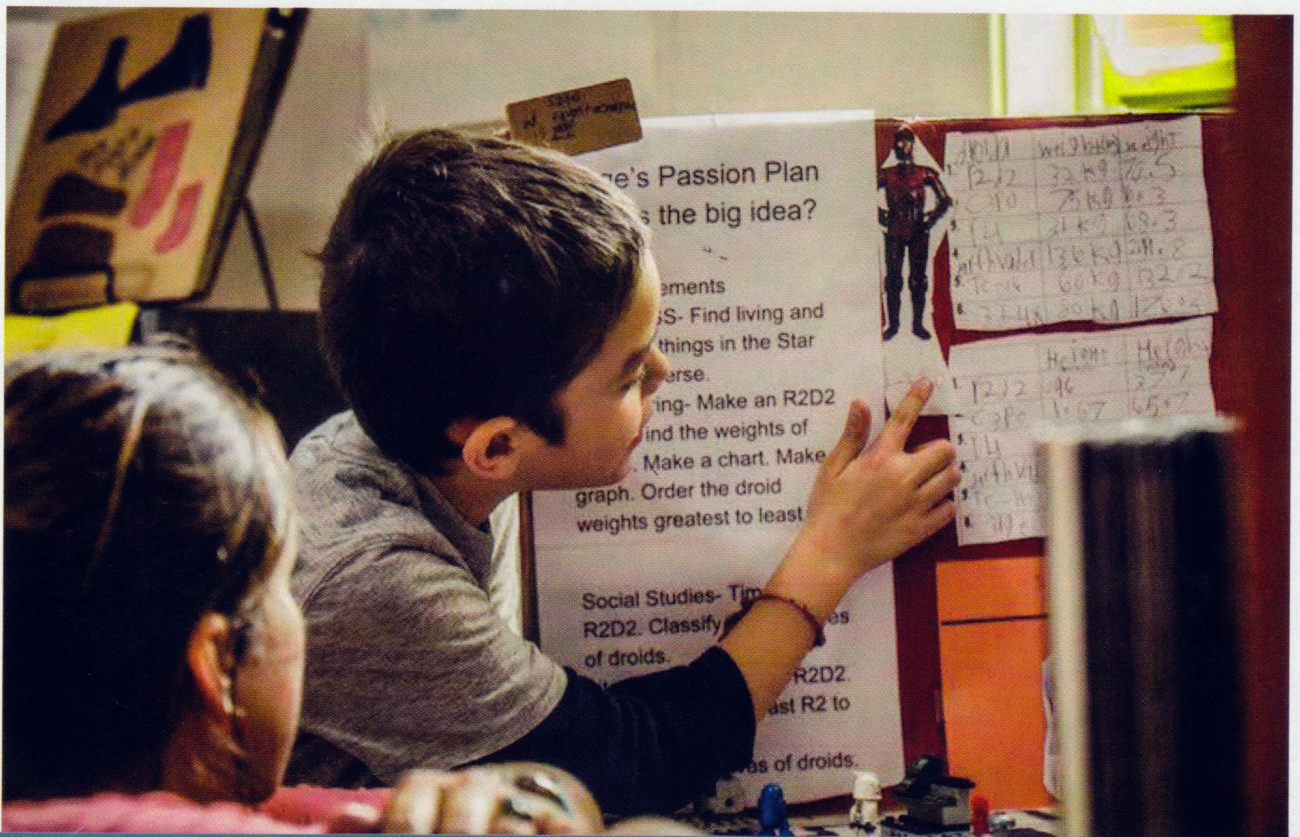
Self-Efficacy

The pillar of social-emotional growth at MUSE School

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MUSE School, California

GET MUSED

Some of the most effective innovations in education have allowed fundamental changes to how individual students are being taught and assessed. Personalized learning models tailor learning to individual needs, accommodating students with diverse learning styles.



Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of being successful in performing a task or managing a situation using openness, resourcefulness, and persistence to achieve a specific outcome. As a quote often attributed to Henry Ford says, “Whether you think you can or think you can’t, you are usually right.” A child with high self-efficacy believes they have the skills to help them steer through life and reach their goals. Perhaps most important, self-efficacy is about learning how to persevere when one encounters failure or hardship. At MUSE School, teachers encourage goal setting, challenge negative thoughts, and provide opportunities for celebrating the process, instead of rescuing students experiencing difficulty or simply celebrating the end product. Students at MUSE use ORP—openness, resourcefulness, and persistence—and are empowered to take ownership over their learning, environment, and social interactions. ORP is taught to all students at MUSE, beginning with our youngest, at 2 years old, and continuing to the graduating seniors embarking on their adult life.

MUSE School teachers identified nine overarching developmental spectrums in regard to a student’s self-efficacy:

- Perspective vs. tunnel vision
- Open to others’ ideas vs. negatively defending one’s own position
- Forward failing vs. backwards failing
- Connecting with a variety of personalities vs. sticking with like-minded peers
- Effective conflict resolution vs. ineffective conflict resolution
- Collaboration vs. competition
- Self and community empowerment vs. self and community control
- Solution oriented vs. problem focused
- Honest feedback vs. avoiding feedback.

Each of these nine spectrums is addressed in the new MUSE Blueprint. While all are important and visible throughout all MUSE classrooms, our team has focused on three of our most important spectrums to highlight below: effective conflict resolution, forward failing, and an ability to be solution oriented.



Each of these aspects of self-efficacy has had a visible, immediate impact on MUSE School and our students' lives.

Effective Conflict Resolution: Compassionate Confrontations in the Elementary School

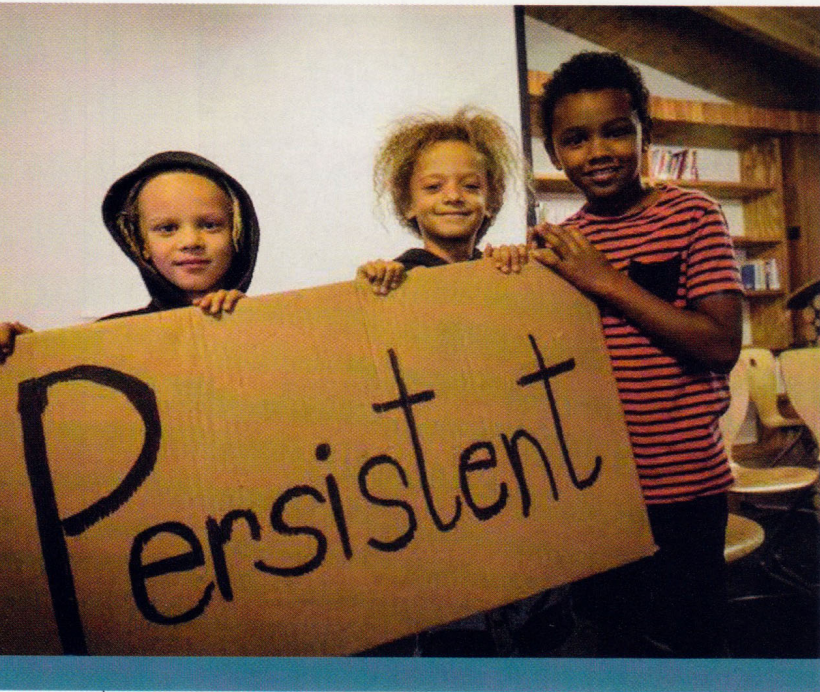
Compassionate confrontation is a tool that all MUSE students, age 2 to 18 years, utilize when sharing feelings, thoughts, and beliefs with parents, teachers, and peers. The compassionate confrontation script reads:

"When you [insert hurtful action], I thought, felt or believed [insert perception] because [reasoning for confrontation]. Next time, I would prefer [suggested behavioral adjustment]. I am prepared to [result of inaction related to this confrontation]."

In the elementary department, compassionate confrontation allows students to check in with one another with confidence. A miscommunication on the playground, a perceived unkind comment, or an

uncomfortable interaction can be addressed in a way that both the child sharing and the child receiving can feel heard and respond in a positive way. It is important to note each compassionate confrontation does not require a response. The goal is to encourage healthy sharing when a student feels wronged; often, understanding that person's perspective is all that is needed to resolve conflict.

For example, one student was feeling very frustrated about being excluded by older students on the soccer field. This student had set goals for himself to work on his soccer skills each day during recess, but felt he was unable to learn and work on his goals because while he was physically on the field during games he felt he never received the ball. Several days in a row, he made the teacher aware of this problem. During MUSORY, a time in which students focus on self-efficacy and Process Communication Model skills each day, the teacher encouraged the student to use the compassionate confrontation to explain to his older classmates how he felt. The student



seemed receptive; on his own, he emailed the other students and invited them to sit down for a compassionate confrontation. The student used the script he had learned and was able to explain to his classmates why he was hurt without allowing heavy emotions to color the conversation. The older students heard him and they were able to come to a shared agreement on times in which the older students would play their games, and other times in which the younger kids played so that all students were able to play in games at their own skill level.

This student used compassionate confrontation perfectly. After deciding to confront his classmates, he used the script to write down everything he wanted to say in order to prevent emotional response. We encourage students and adults alike to write their script in order to have a strong foundation for a conversation and prevent the “emotional freestyling” that may happen without a plan. This also allows students the opportunity to focus on why they are actually upset. For my student, this meant chiseling down his complaints to a single identifiable issue (“soccer field time is not fairly divided”), rather than simply complaining, “I’m not getting to play.” The older students

previously felt that he was getting to play, but did not understand how and why he felt excluded until the compassionate confrontation.

The compassionate confrontation approach has revolutionized conflict resolution at MUSE School. Our students use the compassionate confrontation script with each other as well as with their teachers. Teachers use the script with their colleagues, administrators, and parents. Compassionate confrontation gives the members of our community a consistent, strong voice for sharing their feelings with others and allows others to respond in a healthy way that leads to a better environment for everyone.

Forward Failing: Accountability for Middle School Students

Middle school and high school students are held accountable for their actions and encouraged to take responsibility rather than shifting the blame onto their teachers, their parents, or their peers. We learn that the only thing we can control is ourselves. For example, one student gave his teacher every reason in the book as to why he didn’t finish his exit problems in math: it’s too hard, it’s too confusing, the teacher was going too fast, and nothing made sense, etc. With 8 more minutes until lunch, his face was full of blame and he was making it clear that this was *the teacher’s* problem, not *his* problem. His teacher acknowledged his frustrations and said, “So tell me what you can do to make this happen and still be on time to lunch.” He admitted that he was wasting a lot of time and that he never actually asked for my help, followed by the magic words, “Will you help me now?” She helped him as he chose to delay going to lunch for a few minutes until he was done. There was no power struggle because the teacher was able to help him recognize his own responsibility in the situation and take charge.

MUSE teens consistently discuss what it means to have a “growth mindset” as they come to understand that “failure” is a part of progress. It’s not realistic to think we will never fail.

Instead, we recognize that perseverance is what matters most. Teachers look at *how* a student arrived at an answer in math, for example, and praise the process, the thinking, and the strategies demonstrated. Even if mistakes are made, allowing students to find their own errors and use their own intuition is part of the learning process. We celebrate collaboration and resourcefulness, not just speed and accuracy.

Young adults are trying to decide who they are, versus who their parents are, who their friends are, or who they “should” be. MUSE encourages students to challenge outdated assumptions rather than accepting tradition blindly. Students learn to actively listen to each other, to be skeptics, and to think, feel, reflect, and react based on their own perceptions.

Soon, students learn to think, “Hmm, I wonder why that didn’t work” as opposed to thinking, “I’m a failure.” When the emphasis is placed on the process, rather than the individual, it is much easier to pick yourself up

and try again. This is what we mean by forward failing, rather than backward failing.

Ability to Be Solution Oriented: Problem Solving in the Classroom in the Early Childhood Department

In the early childhood classroom, social-emotional learning takes precedence as students learn how to navigate their feelings and communicate effectively with their peers. It’s no secret that these young learners can be impulsive, have temperamental natures, and can sometimes be downright stubborn when attempting to get what they want. Encouraging students to work collaboratively or think creatively to solve their own problems takes center stage as teachers support students through their daily routines in the classroom.

One 4-year-old student in the early kindergarten classroom seemed to be having an especially hard time navigating how to play with her peers during free play time. While she was eager to join in dramatic play activities,





she would quickly become frustrated when the story line didn't follow exactly what she had in mind. She would melt down into tears and run to the teacher with recounts of her troubles; "I want to be the Mommy, but Ella says she's the Mommy already and she won't let me be it too!!!"

It was important for her teacher to support the student through these conflicts, while also encouraging her growth in self-efficacy. In order to empower students as they progress toward solution-oriented resolutions, we rely on our MUSE philosophy of encouraging our students to be open, resourceful, and persistent. In this case, the teacher began challenging her student to find solutions, using this language: "I understand that you really want to be the Mommy in this game. Could you be open to playing another character for a while and then switching after 5 minutes?" In other conflicts, the teacher would encourage the student to be resourceful as she sought solutions for her problems:

Student: "I want to be a magic fairy, but Sarah is playing with the fairy wand right now!"

Teacher: "I understand that is probably frustrating. I wonder if we could be resourceful and look around the room to find things we could build our own fairy wand with!"

Student: "I could glue some popsicle sticks together and color them?"

The teacher also encouraged the student to

be persistent in asking for exactly what she wanted. Sometimes persistence means having the patience to wait your turn if what you desire isn't readily available.

Although it would be easy for teachers to solve problems by placing themselves in the middle of a conflict and forcing a compromise between two students, very little would then be gained in terms of the students' social-emotional growth. By equipping them with the tools necessary to be self-efficacious by using their ability to be open, resourceful, and persistent, we give early childhood students a sense of power over their own interactions. Watching the pride they have in themselves when they come up with a clever solution to their problems is far more rewarding than avoiding conflict through separation or forced compromises.

Conclusion

Through daily reminders to be open, resourceful, and persistent, all students at MUSE are gaining control over their own self-efficacy. Supporting students through compassionate confrontations, allowing them a safe space to fail forward, and encouraging creative thinking in coming up with solutions to problems are all ways self-efficacy is alive and thriving in the MUSE classroom. Through our creation of clear and measurable self-efficacy milestones, both students and parents alike are gaining a better understanding of how children are growing their social-emotional skills.

Self-Efficacy Toolkit From Transforming Education

www.transformingeducation.org/self-efficacy-toolkit/

This free toolkit provides educators with a variety of resources and strategies to support the development of students' self-efficacy. **The toolkit includes:**

- Information on what self-efficacy is and why it matters
- An animated short video about self-efficacy
- A video in which students describe what self-efficacy looks like in their everyday lives
- Strategies teachers can integrate into their practice at all grade levels
- A facilitator's guide (including an abbreviated guide for a 45-minute session).

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