

## **SOCIAL INNOVATIONS EDUBYTE 6 2020, INTERMEDIATE PHASE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMES BUILDING CONFIDENCE**



Independent evaluations have found that learners at PEP Academy – an afternoon programme for Grade 4-5 learners - improved academically. But as importantly, learners developed confidence, independence and a positive attitude to learning.

### **Let's look more closely at confidence**

75% of PEP Academy alumni have said that the afternoon classes helped them to be more confident at school.

Buhle: “Now as I speak, I am confident. I used to be shy before, now I can stand up and speak in front of people with confidence.”

Quade: “The programme gave me that boost of energy and confidence I always needed. Now I am not so shy or boxed in when being interviewed for a job. I don't doubt myself at all.”

Lona: “Before the programme people would ask me why I was so shy. Now I have the confidence to speak to people and not be scared.”

### **Why is confidence an important part of learning?**

Confidence and success are interlinked. It is only if a learner believes that she can succeed, that she will succeed. In the early years of schooling, teachers have enormous influence to build up or break down the confidence of a child.

In the words of Ameera Khan from Potchefstroom, one of the country's top primary school English teachers: “You have these kids in front of you. You can make them. You can also totally break them.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ameera was interviewed for the book *Where Light Shines Through* by Kimon Phitidis

## Here are some tips to help learners in your class build their confidence

1. **Set goals together for your class:** While the teacher may have goals – often, learners don't know what the goal of the lesson are and have no input into how that goal can be achieved. Set learning goals with your class; talk about how you are going to get there; track progress along the way; if things don't work out – assess what you need to do as a group; when you achieve the goal as a class – celebrate success!
2. **Assessment for learning:** There is a big difference between assessment of learning and assessment for learning.
  - a. Give a child immediate feedback after an exercise, help her see and understand where she went wrong. Timing is important. If you walk around the class checking work and give feedback while learners are doing the task or as they finish, a child's approach will be fresh in her mind and the feedback will help in the moment. If you only give feedback the following week, her mind has moved onto other things, and much of the learning opportunity that comes with the feedback has been lost.
  - b. When you have marked a formal assessment or exercise, give the whole class feedback. Show where many went wrong and ask a child who did well to come up and demonstrate to his peers. Use the assessment and feedback as a teaching and learning opportunity, rather than treating it as an administrative exercise.
3. **Truly see each child:** The comments you make in a child's workbook are important. Avoid just ticks and crosses as you hurry through your marking load. Think about feedback that shows that you recognize each child. Use these comments to build a relationship with the child. Let's look at an example:

Children are asked to write a paragraph about an important person in their lives. Buhle writes about her mother and all the beautiful things she does to make Buhle feel special. Think about which teacher comment will make Buhle feel seen and heard, so building her relationship with the teacher and building her confidence.

Comment 1: Watch your spelling

Comment 2: Well done

Comment 3: What a wonderful mother you have, thanks for sharing! (at the same time, the teacher could underline or show words that have been misspelled if it was appropriate)