



BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

“Children with confidence are more willing to take risks, try new things, and persist in the face of failure — all essential ingredients for success.”

Dr. Michele Borba, educational psychologist and author of UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this action research project was to explore whether targeted daily activities can raise self-esteem in Year 3 children and, in turn, increase their confidence and academic engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem plays a foundational role in a child’s personal and academic development. When children view themselves positively, they are more likely to take risks, persist through challenges, and engage in learning.

As psychologist Nathaniel Branden asserts,

"Self-esteem is the single most powerful force in our ability to achieve, to learn, and to grow."

With this in mind, the aim of this research was to investigate the impact of four distinct self-esteem interventions on a Year 3 class, with the hypothesis that increased self-esteem would promote greater classroom confidence and participation.

METHODOLOGY



Glimmers Journal

Children answered three daily prompts such as: "Tell me one thing you found fun today."

"Who do you admire and why?"

"I am proud of myself because..."

This activity aimed to foster gratitude and reflection on positive experiences.

Participants

The project was conducted over four weeks with a Year 3 class of 24 students. The class was divided into four groups of six, selected non-randomly based on the teacher’s judgment of which activity would best suit each child’s needs.

Mini Targets

Children were given two small, achievable daily goals (e.g., “Drink 2 bottles of water” or “Complete a challenge question in maths”). This encouraged a sense of accomplishment and progress.



Why I Am Amazing Reflection

Children completed the sentence starters:

“I am amazing because I am...”

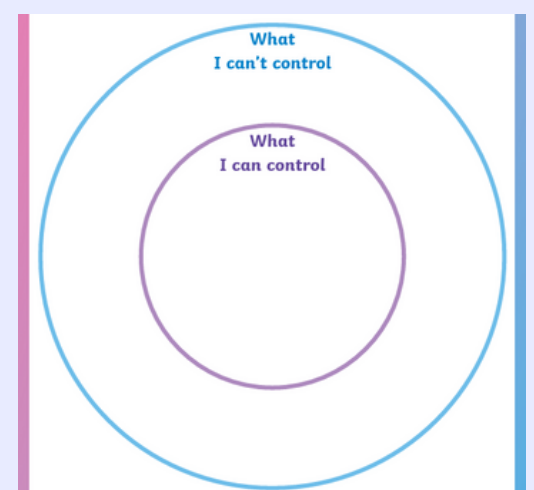
“I have...”

“I can...”

This focused on affirming personal strengths and fostering self-worth.

Things I Can/Can't Control Bullseye

Children added events from their day to a visual bullseye, identifying what was within or beyond their control. This supported emotional regulation and self-awareness.



Measurement

A simple self-esteem quiz was completed by all children at the beginning and end of the 4-week cycle. Observational notes and pupil voice were also collected to assess impact.

RESULTS



Quantitative data showed that **96%** of the class demonstrated an increase in self-esteem by the end of the intervention. Group-specific improvements were as follows:

Glimmers Journal Group:

- Increased from **89%** to **95%**

- Child quote: “I like the glimmers journal, as it makes me happy. We can think about the good things from our day.”

Mini Targets Group:

- Increased from **87%** to **95%**

- Child quote: “Because they're small targets, we can finish them easily. When we do big targets, we can't finish them.”

Why I Am Amazing Group:

- Increased from **85%** to **96%**

- Child quote: “If I'm not feeling great, I can look at the sheet.”

- This group scored the highest and reported the most enjoyment.

Things I Can/Can't Control Group:

- Increased from **89%** to **96%**

- Child quote: “I enjoy expressing my thoughts.”

Qualitative observations indicated that students became more **engaged**, **willing** to raise their hands, take academic **risks**, and **share** their ideas—behaviours associated with increased confidence.

CONCLUSION

The results suggest that short, daily self-esteem interventions can have a positive effect on children's self-perception, confidence, and academic participation. The activities encouraged reflection, emotional awareness, and goal setting. Importantly, children enjoyed the tasks and reported feeling more positive and resilient.

Strengths:

- The activities were simple, accessible, and enjoyable for the children.
- Pupils became more aware of their own progress and achievements.
- There was observable improvement in classroom engagement and confidence.

Challenges:

- Allocating time during the school day to complete activities consistently.
- The intervention could be made more tailored for older children or for specific needs, such as subject-related self-esteem (e.g., in maths or writing).

Next Steps:

- Introduce the most successful activities into our Wellbeing Wednesday sessions.
- Let the children lead on which area of self-esteem they would like the most help in and target specific areas.

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