

# Academic Resilience and Reading: Building Successful Readers

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In order to foster early reading success among young students, teachers should consider literacy skills and socioemotional development in concert.

As she prepares for parent conferences, second-grade teacher Ms. Warren (all teacher and student names are pseudonyms) considers her students' growth from August to December. She notes that two students, Donte and Walter, had nearly identical scores on the year's initial reading screening—placing them at the primer level. However, four months later, Donte is reading firmly at the second-grade level, while Walter has made slower progress and is reading at about the late first-grade level. The two boys started at the beginning of the school year in the same reading group, but even by October, Donte's progress had outpaced Walter's, and when Ms. Warren reorganized groups, she moved Donte to a more challenging group. She revisits the subtest results in the initial screening for clues that may clarify their disparate progress but finds no explanation.

Ms. Warren's anecdotal records of their behaviors in reading class, however, do reveal a potential explanation. Her notes from September document Walter's chronic mumbling in his oral reading that seems intentional—to conceal potential miscues. On another day, when pressed to read more audibly, he resisted her requests to independently try to decode unknown words. In contrast, her notes about Donte reveal that he approaches reading group with enthusiasm and confidence. He frequently asked to read "harder" books, and when reading aloud, he added much expression to the base text. Ms. Warren

concludes that these personality differences appear to be propelling Donte forward with his risk-taking approach while, in turn, Walter's anxiety seems to limit his growth. She undertakes the goal of more carefully observing Walter and her other struggling readers for indications of resilient thinking. She also sets the goal of helping all of her students increase their self-efficacy.

When considering the question "What factors in preschool are most important for predicting later reading success?" teachers will likely cite alphabetical knowledge and phonological awareness. Much research indicates that these skills are indeed critical to the early reading process, but another important set of contributing factors—the personality factors—are often overlooked. We maintain that language and alphabet skills are a necessary—but insufficient—condition for early reading success. When directly comparing the contributions of personality traits to phonological awareness in predicting kindergarten students' reading success, recent evidence shows that personality traits may be more important (Niemi & Poskiparta, 2002). We do not intend to minimize the contribution of phonological awareness in early reading, but rather, we advocate that literacy skills and socioemotional development should be considered in concert. To this end, Johnston (2005) recently advocated that future literacy screenings should include measures to assess resiliency and self-efficacious beliefs. While academic resiliency "cannot provide the skills required to succeed...it can provide the effort and persistence required to obtain those skills and use them effectively" (Pajares, 2005, p. 345).

In the following section, we summarize current research to provide a theoretical basis for the role of socioemotional development in reading. Next, via vignettes from a second-grade classroom, we identify six key principles for promoting students' self-efficacy

within literacy instruction and give examples of practical implementation. We expect that teachers will recognize many of these techniques as part of their daily repertoire or as only minor adjustments to their current practices. Our goal is to reinforce such quality teaching by providing explicit rationale for these practices, as well as to encourage reflective thinking regarding how to further facilitate emotional competencies within existing literacy curriculum.

## Summary of Underlying Research

### Why Should Reading Teachers Care About Developing Socioemotional Skills?

Learning to read English is an inherently challenging and nonintuitive process, particularly due to persistent exceptions to phonics rules (e.g., “ea” in *neat* vs. *sweat* vs. *great* vs. *caveat*). Even with the coaching of skilled teachers, novice readers encounter stumbling blocks on every page and therefore need academic resilience to keep trying in the face of multiple failures (Waxman, Gray, & Padron, 2003). Such academically resilient children are driven by their own goal of mastery, which leads to persistence. To understand the academically resilient mind-set and how to foster such attitudes in other learners, we must understand the intricate interplay of student factors and classroom factors. Student factors include both (a) temperament and (b) beliefs about themselves as learners, and these are described within the next sections.

### Aren't You Born With Your Temperament?

At the most fundamental level, temperament refers to early individual differences in acting and reacting to the environment and is linked to later development of personality (Kagan, 1994; Rothbart, 2007). It is obvious to most teachers that learners enter classrooms with unique temperaments. However, less obvious but also important is recognizing that the early individual differences in temperament do not guarantee future successes or struggles: Early individual differences can be accentuated or attenuated over time depending on the environment (Rothbart & Bates, 2006), including interactions with teachers and classmates (Hughes & Kwok, 2006; Liew, Chen, & Hughes,

2008). The capacity for fostering academic resilience serves as the motivation for this article. Current evidence indicates that time spent developing early socioemotional skills boosts students' future success in literacy (Duncan et al., 2007; Raver & Knitzer, 2002; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). Unfortunately, teachers typically receive little preparation about individual differences in students' socioemotional development (Cleary, in press).

### How Does Temperament Affect Academic Resilience?

An academically resilient student needs to have a good deal of self-regulation to maintain a positive attitude, especially during frustrating moments of a school day. Even in young children, components of self-regulation can be recognized and include effortful control and ego-resiliency. A student with effortful control (i.e., self-control) can control her impulses. For example, a student waiting for her turn exhibits effortful control. Ego-resiliency means flexibly using control. Therefore an ego-resilient student understands that he needs to exert more self-control during reading group than lunch (Block & Block, 1980). These two traits both emphasize flexibility and will and are the basis for having self-regulation, which, again, contributes to academic resiliency.

### How Do Self-Beliefs Affect Academic Resilience?

In addition to temperament characteristics, learners' beliefs about themselves, particularly self-efficacy, contribute to their self-regulated learning and achievement (see Denissen, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2007; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Pajares, 1996; Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Self-efficacy means having the belief that one's efforts can bring about desired goals (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). Students with self-efficacy are



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therefore more persistent or, in other words, resilient, in the face of learning challenges. Because many of these psychological terms are interrelated and potentially confusing, see our glossary of socioemotional terms (Table 1) for further clarification.

### **How Do These Socioemotional Skills Work Together to Contribute to Literacy Skills?**

To foster self-regulated learning in schools, teachers must recognize that students' temperaments differ from students' self-beliefs, and both factors contribute to achievement in different ways. A recent empirical

study shed some light on the connections between these traits because both effortful control and self-efficacy beliefs were studied together. Liew, McTigue, Barrois, and Hughes (in press) found that, even when IQ scores were taken into account, effortful control at first grade contributed to both academic self-efficacy beliefs at second grade and literacy achievement at third grade. This study adds to a growing body of research (e.g., Blair & Razza, 2007; Duncan et al., 2007; McClelland et al., 2007) that demonstrates that early school efforts to help develop such skills in children benefit their future academic resilience and achievement.

**Table 1**  
**Glossary of Socioemotional Terms**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>School example</b>
Temperament	Innate behavioral style or predisposition	A child demonstrates an impulsive temperament when she launches into a task without hearing directions.
Effortful control	An aspect of temperament that is the ability to inhibit a dominant response (Rothbart & Bates, 2006)	A child is displaying effortful control when she suppresses the urge to shout out an answer and instead raises her hand.
Ego-resiliency	An aspect of temperament that is the ability to modify one's level of control according to the situation (Block & Block, 1980; Letzring, Block, & Funder, 2005)	A child with ego-resiliency can be quiet and focused during silent reading but boisterous and exuberant during recess.
Self-regulated learning	An approach to a learning task involving forethought, performance control, and self-reflection (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007)	Before beginning a new book, a child would have a purpose for reading the book—selecting the perfect dog, for example—and approach the book with that goal.
Self-efficacy	A belief that one's actions can produce the results that they desire (Pajares, 2005)	A young reader demonstrates self-efficacy when she believes that by using reading strategies she can handle a difficult book.
Self-esteem	A person's emotional reactions to their own accomplishments (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003)	A student feels good after successfully reading a difficult book.
Academic resilience	The attitude of not giving up in challenging situations because of the belief that effort and challenge lead to success more than ability (Dweck, 1999)	When given a choice, a resilient student would select a more challenging book and demonstrate persistence during the reading process.

## **What Implications Does the Research Have for Literacy Instruction?**

Oftentimes, problems with reading, motivation, and self-regulation are linked. For example, school psychologists recently rated reading deficits as the most common referral problem, followed by self-regulation and motivation problems such as task or homework completion, conduct and violent behaviors, and academic motivation (Cleary, in press). Unfortunately, even school psychologists reported having little training or expertise in the procedures for assessing self-regulation and motivation in students, and teachers receive even less information (Cleary, in press). To effectively help all students become successful readers, a holistic approach to literacy instruction that nurtures socioemotional skills in addition to language skills may be most effective. In the next sections, we propose principles and practices of literacy instruction that foster socioemotional development.

## **Applying the Knowledge to Practice**

Through short glimpses of Ms. Warren's second-grade classroom, the following principles are introduced and enacted: (a) acceptance, (b) assessment, (c) modeling practices, (d) feedback, (e) goal setting, and (f) self-evaluation.

### **8:35—Morning Meeting**

Tuesday morning. Ms. Warren is holding a ball of purple yarn while the circle of students, convened in their morning meeting arrangement, wonders expectedly about the yarn. "Today," she explains, "we will be doing a new greeting—a spiderweb greeting!" and details the procedure. The students enthusiastically roll the ball of yarn across the circle, one at a time, while greeting the receiving classmate by name. When students remark at how their circle is indeed looking like a spiderweb, Ms. Warren proposes the idea that the web represents the personal connections within their class. Next, after every student is greeted, they reverse the yarn-rolling process in a backward greeting. (This involves much giggling as the yarn gets misrouted and tangled). During this time, Ms. Warren notes students' moods and observes an overall uplift in positive spirit due to the greeting game.

Then two students, who had signed up previously, each share a personal story. Adriana shares about the distress of losing her tooth while biting into a taco the previous night and then almost swallowing it! Naturally, this elicits many questions and Adriana selects two classmates to ask their questions. At this point, many other children desperately want to share their tooth-loss stories, too; however, Ms. Warren explains that although there is not enough time now, these sound like some exciting topics for their daily journal writing so to be sure to hold onto them. The morning meeting continues in its usual pattern involving a short group-building activity and ends with a student reading aloud the daily letter posted from Ms. Warren, which outlines the day's plan. By 8:55 the students are sharpening their pencils for journal writing.

*Students take risks and become more involved in classroom activities when they rate their learning environments as warm.*

### **Principle 1: Creating an Environment With Acceptance and Warmth**

A safe environment is more than a pleasant place to be; a safe environment fosters academic achievement because it encourages students' engagement and, therefore, self-direction in their learning. Students take risks and become more involved in classroom activities when they rate their learning environments as warm (Birch & Ladd, 1997).

### **Supporting Practice: Morning Meetings**

The traditional model of classroom management is often based on behavioral management. As an alternative, using relationships as a basis for classroom management can be a more effective style and also creates a warm climate (Pianta, 1999). One specific practice to reach this goal, modeled by Ms. Warren, is the use of morning meetings. The forum of class meetings can establish an environment that values interpersonal connections and a sense of classroom pride. (Table 2 describes the morning meeting format, and Table 3 lists resources for implementing morning meetings.)

**Table 2**  
**General Morning Meeting Guidelines**

Plan	Rationale	What it looks like
Greeting	Allows students to have friendly interactions with students outside of immediate friend groups and practice respectful greetings Every student is greeted by name daily	Students practice making eye contact, giving a “high five” while saying, “Good morning, _____ (classmate’s name).”
Sharing	Helps develop an atmosphere of considerate communication and practices skills of speaking to a group	Two students sign up to share an event in their lives and then can each choose two other students to pose questions.
Group activity	Builds a class repertoire of songs, games, and poems that encourages active participation and a sense of a class identity	Students play a fast-paced, cumulative, rhythm game called Category Snap in which they snap out a sequence of sounds and then call out an item for the named category.
News and announcements	Provides a written welcome, a predictable structure, and a transition from morning meeting to academic class activity	A volunteer reads aloud a class letter from the teacher detailing the plan for the day and reviews the previous day’s learning.

This routine is an essential practice of the Responsive Classroom (RC) approach, an intervention designed to bolster children’s academic, social, and emotional growth by integrating such types of learning. Seven essential principles underlie the RC approach including the view that social interaction facilitates cognitive growth and that teachers can nurture empathy, assertion, cooperation, and other

social skills (Northeast Foundation for Children [NEFC], 2007). Specific RC practices emerge from these principles, notably (a) morning meeting, (b) rules and proactive discipline, where consequences for problem behaviors follow logically from misdeeds and rely on positive teacher–child relationships, and (c) a shift in teacher language, where teachers learn to comment descriptively on children’s effort and learning processes, not only products (NEFC, 2007). The purpose is to create classroom environments conducive to learning and to emphasize social and emotional skills as immediate goals that contribute to academic achievement. Students in classrooms using the RC approach exhibit increased growth in reading and math (Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007).

**Table 3**  
**Resources for Implementing Morning Meetings**

<p><a href="http://www.responsiveclassroom.org">www.responsiveclassroom.org</a>            Charney, R. (1992). <i>Teaching children to care</i>. Greenfield, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.            Correa-Connolly, M. (2004). <i>99 activities and greetings</i>. Greenfield, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.            Kriete, R. (2002). <i>The morning meeting book</i>. Greenfield, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.</p>
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### 9:00—Journaling

During journal writing time, Ms. Warren observes selected students—three per day—so that she attends to each child every two weeks. Carrying a clipboard and sticky notes, she takes anecdotal records, which



she will add to her files. During parent conferences, she uses these notes to give concrete examples of student progress in academic and socioemotional areas. A checklist also attached to the clipboard reminds Ms. Warren of particular behaviors associated with self-efficacy. She notes evidence of *self-monitoring* when Donte returns to his Monday's writing, rereads it, crosses out some words, and then adds on to it. In contrast, she records with concern that Walter demonstrates avoidant behavior, rather than *engagement*, and uses the majority of his journal time going to the bathroom, sharpening a frequently breaking pencil, and repeatedly searching in his desk. At the next table, she observes *help seeking* as Caroline asks her neighbor for spelling help with "tooth fairy."

### **Principle 2: Literacy Assessment Should Include Measures of Academic Resilience**

While there are few formal tools for relating personality assessments to reading instruction, there are informal methods to collect such information. Namely, structured observations during literacy instruction and during storybook reading can provide invaluable information. Key features to observe and consider are (a) engagement and participation levels, (b) self-monitoring, and (c) inquiries for help. The checklist in Figure 1 can guide such teacher observations.

Engagement and self-efficacy are often interrelated because of the common root of persistence. If an individual believes in her ability to achieve, she will continue to persist rather than avoid a hard task, and during journal writing Donte and Walter demonstrate markedly different levels of persistence. Engagement can be observed in many forms, including verbal and nonverbal (Sipe, 2002). Resilient students, operating on the premise that learning derives from effort, will also be more likely to monitor their learning than just relying on teacher reactions (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003) and this can be easily observed in writing and in oral reading. Without prompting from the teacher, Donte noticed areas of need in his writing and revised accordingly. Contrary to popular beliefs, students with high academic self-efficacy, such as Caroline, are *more* likely to ask for help because they are not fearful that other students will label them as incapable (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). Finally, although these dimensions can be considered distinct,

they are typically interrelated as a pattern of behavior. For example, students that ask for help generally also show persistence and motivation (Marchand & Skinner, 2007).

### **9:30—Social Studies**

After journal writing, Ms. Warren's class begins social studies. Ms. Warren starts with a read-aloud of *When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson* by Pam Muñoz Ryan as part of a text set on the Civil Rights movement. Throughout the read-aloud she uses "think-alouds" to demonstrate her reactions to the biography: outrage, pride, sadness. Students also feel empowered to voice their reactions and respond to one another. In addition to connecting with the story, Ms. Warren also models when she needs a comprehension "fix-up." For example, after Ms. Warren reads the phrase, "to hold on to the memory of every opulent note," she pauses and says, "Hmm...I wonder what *opulent* means. I've heard it before, but I can't remember it. Let me reread that whole paragraph and look for a clue." When her modeled approach does not clarify the meaning, she notes that "Sometimes one strategy doesn't work out, so that's why we need a whole toolbox of fix-up strategies." She questions her students, "What else can you do when you don't know a word? What other tools do we have?" This type of discussion allows peers to learn from one another.

Also, Ms. Warren's thoughtful choice of a biography, regarding Marian Anderson's overwhelming success in singing despite resistance from certain Americans holding racist attitudes, provides a rich opportunity for the class to discuss the traits of determination and optimism. Marian herself represents a model of socioemotional strength.

### **Principle 3: Use Direct Modeling to Promote Literacy and Self-Efficacy**

Modeling, the process of observing and patterning one's thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors after an exemplar (Schunk, 1987), represents both a principle and practice that literacy teachers can employ to support resilience in student thinking.

When engaged in modeling, a teacher gives concrete explanations and demonstrations to show students how to use a new skill (Schunk, 2003; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007). In addition to modeling for

**Figure 1**  
**Teacher Checklist of Academic Resilient Behaviors in Literacy**

Engagement
<input type="checkbox"/> Eager for reading and writing time
<input type="checkbox"/> Needs only occasional teacher redirection to stay on task
<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys read-alouds and reacts to the book (nonverbally or verbally)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other evidence:
Self-monitoring
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes meaning-changing errors and tries to self-correct during oral reading
<input type="checkbox"/> Rereads own writing and can identify parts that may confuse another reader
<input type="checkbox"/> Other evidence:
Help-seeking
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses class resources (e.g., dictionary, Internet) for help
<input type="checkbox"/> Asks other students or adults for clarification when confused
<input type="checkbox"/> Other evidence:

thinking strategies, teachers should also model coping strategies (Walker, 2003). Teachers can model mistakes while reading and then provide a plan for recovery from mistakes, like Ms. Warren when encountering the word *opulent*. This gives students the concepts that even teachers can make mistakes and learn from such opportunities (Pajares, 2005). Peer modeling can be a more effective means of raising student self-efficacy than even teacher–student modeling (Schunk, 2003), and Ms. Warren capitalized on this by asking students for their fix-up strategies rather than demonstrating them in solo.

### 10:30—Guided Reading

During guided reading today, Ms. Warren begins with her group that is reading at a late first-grade level. As the students are whisper-reading *All About Bats* by Jennifer Jacobson, she listens to individual students and gives immediate responses. To Walter, she emphasizes, “I noticed that you caught and fixed a mistake all by yourself. The first time you read that sentence you said *wigs* instead of *wings*, but then you stopped because that didn’t make sense. Did you think, ‘Bats don’t have wigs?’” (Walter nods yes.) Ms. Warren continues, “*Wig* and *wing* only have one let-

ter different, so you are being a very careful reader who is thinking about the meaning!”

To Angel, she notes a miscue that Angel does not catch and guides her to it, “Look back at that word (points to *clinging*). You got the first part—“cl”—right. But the word isn’t *clapping*. Let’s look at the next sound.” She continues to give feedback to all of the students as the reading occurs. Finally, at the end of reading the text, Ms. Warren points out the specific improvements between yesterday’s and today’s reading of the book and commends them on how their careful practice is making them more skillful readers every day.

### Principle 4: Effective Feedback Should Be Specific and Accurate and Emphasize Effort

While modeling is helpful in raising student self-efficacy, modeling without effective feedback is somewhat incomplete. Additionally, the medium of feedback, teacher language, is a powerful and pervasive tool. Part of the power of teacher talk lies in its subtlety, as seemingly small adjustments by the speaker can reap significant consequences for the listener (Johnston, 2004). We advocate three features of

effective teacher response: (1) specific, (2) accurate, and (3) emphasizing effort or process.

*Specific* feedback should provide information that is indicative of the student’s performance on a certain skill rather than the generic “good job.” In the example above, Ms. Warren focuses her emphasis on how Walter is exhibiting self-monitoring. This practice can help young readers better identify what is making them successful. Moreover, the specific nature of feedback affords the student the opportunity to take control of his or her own learning as opposed to relying on teacher feedback alone for progress monitoring (Johnston, 2005).

*Accurate* feedback provides students with judgments that comment not only on their present performance but also on the entire learning process for students. In contrast to accurate feedback, unmerited positive feedback creates a false perception of ability (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). When Ms. Warren points out Angel’s miscues, she provides correction while focusing exactly on the correct and incorrect features.

Finally, through feedback teachers can attribute growth to *effort* (Pajares, 2005). For example, Ms. Warren attributes success to effort, not an innate ability, by telling the group that practice leads to skill. For more examples of effective teacher talk and additional resources, see Tables 4 and 5.

### 1:00—Writer’s Workshop

In the afternoon, Ms. Warren’s class engages in writer’s workshop time. The current writing assignment is a book jacket or newspaper review about a favorite book. To help ensure that writer’s workshop is a time of individual growth and creativity, Ms. Warren

has incorporated short (5-minute) conferences with each student to set goals for writing that are specific, intentional, and can be attained in the time frame. In addition, she does a “Status of the Class” check-in (Atwell, 1998) for students to voice their daily individual writing goals as a means to track progress and focus attention. During the check-in, Billy states that he will use three descriptive words in his writing. Ms. Warren responds enthusiastically and suggests that he add that goal to his writer’s checklist. Ms. Warren has constructed a general writer’s checklist for content and mechanics based on the minilesson and has left space for the input of individual goals. The writer’s checklist is then used as a guide and gauge for her students during the writing process.

### Principle 5: Goal Setting

Effective and accurate feedback also helps students set appropriate goals. Schunk (2003) contended that “goals are integral components of motivation and learning” (p. 163) and should be set with (a) specificity, (b) proximity, and (c) difficulty in mind if students are to experience raised self-efficacy. This effort can be channeled into individualized goal setting.

A *specific* goal is individualized and targeted on learning a certain skill or completing a particular task. Similar to effective feedback, the achievement of specific goals is more likely to raise self-efficacy because they are much easier to evaluate than a general goal (i.e., “Do your best”; Schunk, 2003). For example, Billy’s writing often lacks descriptive words. Ms. Warren knows Billy is capable of including such words because he participates actively and accurately during minilessons; however, she has not seen much of this transfer to his writing. Therefore

**Table 4**  
**Teacher-Talk**

Restating feedback for effectiveness		
Instead of...	Try...	Why?
I’m proud of you.	You must be proud of yourself because you worked very hard revising your story.	Emphasizes effort and intrinsic motivation
You are so smart!	I can tell that you practiced your spelling words every day and now you can spell 9/10 of them.	More accurate, specific, and emphasizes effort
Good idea!	Wow! You put yourself in the character’s situation and figured out how he may feel.	Specific



**Table 5**  
**Recommended Sources for Further Reading**

- Denton, P. (2007). *The power of our words: Teacher language that helps children learn*. Greenfield, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.
- Faber, A., & Mazlish, E. (1995). *How to talk so kids can learn*. New York: Firehouse.
- Johnston, P.H. (2004). *Choice words: How our language affects children's learning*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

one of Billy's current writing goals (which they decided upon in a recent conference) is that he will include more descriptive words. From that conversation, he sets the specific goal of three words today. Daily goals, with short *proximity*, are useful because those that are accomplished quickly, including those within a matter of minutes, result in "greater motivation and higher self-efficacy" (Schunk, 2003). Finally, it is important to think about setting goals that are at the appropriate level of *difficulty*—not too easy or too hard for a student to attain. In the example, although Ms. Warren knows that using descriptive language has been challenging for Billy, she is confident that he can attain his present goal because the essence of the assignment asks students to give a descriptive review of their favorite book.

### 1:45—Writer's Workshop Continued

In writer's workshop, it is important for teachers to provide students with opportunities to evaluate their work (Atwell, 1998). In addition to teacher–student writing conferences and the writing goals checklist, Ms. Warren asks her students to complete a self-evaluation sheet after each writing assignment. This self-evaluation sheet requires students to reflect on and respond to such questions as "What goals did you accomplish during this writing assignment?" "What was your favorite sentence or sentences in this writing assignment?" and "Is there something that you wish you had done differently?" Today, after students complete their self-evaluation sheet, individual students voluntarily share their personal successes.

### Principle 6: Literacy Teachers Should Promote Self-Evaluation

As a natural extension on goal setting, teachers should strive for students to become self-evaluators of their

literacy progress. The evaluation process should also reflect their progress toward their specific goals. According to Pajares (2005), "without the capability to self-reflect, human beings would be reactive souls without the capacity for self-improvement" (p. 363). Instructional activities that require students to set specific goals and monitor their progress will help facilitate self-evaluation. An emphasis on external comparisons (e.g., standardized tests) fosters the viewpoint that there are good students and poor students, depending on how one falls on the normal distribution (Johnston, 2005). By tracking progress and emphasizing effort and growth, all students (not just those above the 50th percentile on normed tests) can experience self-efficacy in their literacy.

## Final Thoughts

Through this work, we aspire to direct attention on the socioemotional aspects of teaching reading and provide ideas on how to address this issue within a classroom. Because socioemotional learning influences academic achievement, specifically in reading, it is imperative to consider all aspects of students' development (cognitive, language, social, emotional) in synchrony. We feel that, rather than the implementation of additional programs to discretely address socioemotional issues, literacy instruction is already replete with authentic opportunities for teachers to foster the growth of academic resilience.

The vignettes of Ms. Warren exemplify the reflective teacher who capitalizes on such opportunities. As we can stand in awe and learn from such teachers, Johnston (2004) eloquently observed,

The most humbling part of observing accomplished teachers is seeing the subtle ways in which they build emotionally and relationally healthy learning communities—intellectual environments that produce not mere technical competence, but caring, secure, actively literate human beings. Observing these teachers accomplish both goals convinced me that the two achievements are not completely at odds. (p. 2)

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