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Human nature has always put itself in groups. Whether it is by race, religion, sex, ect., everyone belongs to multiple groups. These groups are then stereotyped to have certain characteristics. When members of these groups start to fulfill these stereotypes, it is known as stereotype threat (Steele, 1995). Students, from the start of kindergarten, are often susceptible to stereotype threat. Whether it's telling a group of third graders that it is OK and expected that the girls will score lower on a math test because women have trouble with math or nonwhite students being told they are more likely to get lower grades, a lot of stereotype threats can lower the success a student has. However, with different styles of positive psychology, students will have a better chance not conform to stereotype threats and become more successful at achieving their goals. To see how stereotype threats can be countered, the different types of positive psychology will be looked at.

One type of positive psychology is gratitude. Gratitude is when one highlights the positive things and emotions in their life (Emmons, 2010). This affected negative stereotype threats because it will cause one to focus on the good things in life rather than being put down by stereotypes. If one is put down by a stereotype threat, gratitude will help that person have a higher self worth. Since stereotype threats often limits a person, high self worth can counter that and even cause that person to have more confidence to go against a stereotype they are experiencing. Often kids in school are faced with different stereotype threats, which will make them less confident and become victims to the stereotype threats. If kids were to focus on gratitude and what makes them feel good, they will have more confidence and be less likely to become victims of the stereotypes they are facing.

One way that schools can help students experience gratitude, especially in the early years, is to require them to keep a journal about positive things in their lives. This will help students to think about good things and emotions daily. This will also help students who might have trouble with focusing on the good things by making the educator aware that the student is struggling with realizing good things in their life. With this practice of gratitude, students are likely to make thinking of good things in their life a routine that they will forever do.

Another type of positive psychology is grit and resilience. Grit is the "perseverance and passion for long-term goals" (Duckworth, 2007). When people set goals for themselves, they will often shoot for the stars and will fall short of their goal. However, when someone has grit, they will be more likely to get back up and shoot for their goals again. When people set goals for themselves, especially students, they will set high achievement goals and stereotype threats will often become barriers for the students to overcome.

Schools can help schools become resilient and to have grit by encouraging them to go after their goals. Often students will be told that a goal of theirs is unrealistic and unobtainable. Even though that may be true, when students are told this, it becomes a barrier. If educators teach students to continue to go after their goals even though they may experience hardship, it will teach them how to become

resilient and to have grit. The students will be likely to carry this over to their adult lives, which will help them to persevere through tough times in their lives.

The third type of positive psychology that can be used to counter the effects of stereotype threats is hope. Hope, according to positive psychologist Rick Snyder, is “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (2000). Hope can be used to help counter stereotype threats because if a student wants to achieve something that a stereotype might otherwise say is not possible, then hope will help them plan to achieve that very thing. This is important when students are faced with stereotypes that might tell them not to go after their goals.

Hope can be taught in classrooms by having students make both short-term and long-term goals. On top of creating these goals, educators can help them find a way or process that will help the students get to that goal. When students practice goal setting and planning steps to achieve that goal, they are more likely to achieve that goal. Also, when students learn this in early educational years, they will be likely to bring this into other aspects of their lives.

Even though the topic of stereotype threats often lead to negative things, this is not always true. There can be stereotype threats that are positive and will help students achieve. If a stereotype for a certain group is something that is good or positive, then students will be more successful at achieving that positive thing. Educators need to be able to tell the difference between negative and positive stereotype threats. Even though stereotypes are not true and should never be preached, it is more important to focus on the negative ones. Educators need to help students, by using the different positive psychology types to help students overcome stereotypes they are faced with.

Stereotype threats are huge inside the classroom and can have lasting effects on students outside the classroom and for the rest of their lives. Grouping people into categories is inevitable with our human nature, but creating stereotypes are not. With the use of positive psychology in the early years of schooling, students will be able to overcome the stereotypes that they are faced with. Through gratitude, students will have the confidence to go against stereotypes they possess. With resilience and grit, students will be able to overcome stereotypes even when they fall victims to them. Lastly, with hope, students will be able to hope for things that stereotypes might put against them.

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