

Learning & Teaching Expo 2018

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Tomorrow's Learning Today

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Whole Person Education

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Failure Is Essential for Students' Success



Students experience failure when they accomplish a series of challenges

Failure teaches success. This is why Asbury Methodist Primary School launched the Failure Week learning campaign to help students embrace failure and turn it into motivation to succeed.

Over the years, the education community have explored with students issues of 'how to succeed', 'how to stay positive', 'how to get rid of negativity', etc. 'It seems that the concept of 'how to experience failure' is neglected in classroom teaching,' said Mr Ted Yim Tin-lok, Senior Teacher, Asbury Methodist Primary School.

'Our failures are what make us succeed,' emphasised Mr Yim. 'Therefore, we want to provide opportunities for our students to learn from their mistakes and failures, and experience how failures empower them to succeed instead of breaking them apart.'

Teachers, the Biggest Challenge

Mr Yim said the biggest challenge of launching the Failure Week was teachers' reluctance.

It was a brand new idea as teachers were used to inculcate a positive mindset into students. It was hard for them to take the initiative and share their grief in their lives with students. They were also worried about hurting their own dignity and reputation.

'The Failure Week would never succeed if we could not change the teachers' mindset,' said Mr Yim. 'How could you ask your students to embrace failure if you could not do the same?'

Teach through Movies

The Failure Week, which lasted for four days, began with students watching a movie related to failure, said Ms Sharon

Lam Chau-ha, representative of the Methodist Centre for Quality Life Education.

'It is an ideal way to arouse students' learning interest. By experiencing failure together with the movie characters, students are touched and they start to understand what failure really means, how a person feels if he / she has failed, and what can be done to tackle the problems.'

Students are not the only ones who are positively influenced through this activity; so are teachers.

'Of course they were moved by the films. More importantly, they were impressed by the feedback from the students who actively shared their ideas and opinions,' said Sharon.

Teachers, the Role Models

The second day of the Failure Week was all about sharing. To let students understand that failure is prevalent, the school principal and many other teachers shared their experience of failing. Some teachers even talked about the issues with their families and friends.

'This kind of sincerity enhanced the bonding, and strengthened the trust between teachers and students. Students were then more willing to share their feelings and emotions,' said Sharon. 'They were also encouraged to share their failure with their peers.'

Experiencing Failure

On the third day, students were required to accomplish a series of challenges prepared by the teachers. Since some of the tasks were really challenging, it was inevitable for students to experience failure.

According to Mr Yim, the focus of this activity was not on the result but the process.

'It was expected that some students were not willing to attempt the more difficult tasks, as they were afraid of failure,' said Mr

Yim. 'Yet we teachers kept encouraging them to try, and told them it would not matter even if they failed. All they needed to do was to do their best, learn from the mistakes and improve themselves. Eventually, they would succeed.'

Growth Mindset, Affective Education, Whole Person Development

On the final day of the Failure Week, teachers and students joined together and reviewed what they had experienced and learnt.

Mr Eddie Lam Tak-yuk, Principal of Asbury Methodist Primary School, said the Failure Week aimed to instil a Growth Mindset into students, so that they can embrace both challenges and failure, and to achieve their goals with persistence.

Building these characters is crucial to students' whole person development, Mr Lam remarked.

'Education has changed and it no longer focuses only on delivering knowledge to students. We should also facilitate their whole person development,' said Mr Lam. 'Affective education is currently one of our emphases.'

The success of affective education, however, does not depend on just one or two learning campaigns or projects. According to Mr Lam, the education process should be sustainable and extendable, so that students could practise what they have learnt in their daily life and solve problems with the skills they have acquired.

'We don't do gimmicks. We must only do what is beneficial to our students and teachers,' said Mr Lam. 'If you ask me what our future plan for affective education is, we are open to any possibilities. We will not limit ourselves, and will take suitable actions in accordance with our students' needs in different areas.'



From left to right: Ms Sharon Lam Chau-ha (Representative of the Methodist Centre for Quality Life Education), Mr Eddie Lam Tak-yuk (Principal), Mr Ted Yim Tin-lok (Senior Teacher), Asbury Methodist Primary School