

PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION

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During the 1950's , psychologist Solomon Asch conducted a series of experiments in order to demonstrate the power of conformity in groups. In Asch's experiments , students were told that the purpose of the experiment was to test one's visual abilities (vision test). There was a group of participants who knew the real purpose of the experiment but they pretended to be participants. At first , the group was given two images .One was an image of three lines of varying length and the other was an image of one line which matched the length of one of the lines in the first image .The participants had to give their answers aloud .The real participant always answered last. At the beginning the participants (assistants) , gave correct answers , but after a while they started giving incorrect answers to see if this would affect what the real participant said . Amazingly , 75 percent of the participants went along with the rest of the group at least one time. The question is why ? Why did the participants conform?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyDDyT1IDhA>

Conformity is the tendency to change our opinion , behavior or perception in ways that are consistent with group norms. The biggest positive of conformity is acceptance. When we conform , people will be more willing to accept us because of the fact that we are falling in line with what they expect of us .As far as students are concerned, they generally conform so as not to run the risk of being ostracized by their peers. On the other hand , students who conform are not able to grow as much and show all that they are capable of. And that is mostly due to the fact that when everyone is expected to be the "same" they often lose a sense of themselves . In other words , conformity can force a person to be someone they are not and consequently a person who constantly suppresses a really important part of their self in hopes of conforming can not only harm

themselves psychologically , but also cause irreparable damage to their personalities . Children that belong in this category and usually tend to conform , are children who do not trust themselves and simultaneously feel unconfident to express their opinion , making the possibility of participating in classroom activities a very difficult task for teachers.

The problem is children's lack of self-esteem contributing to their need to conform. In most cases , students conform to blend in and go unnoticed .If we could implement programs to teach kids self-esteem then lack of individuality would no longer be an issue. Teachers are those to help children see their uniqueness and appreciate themselves . The more confident the students feel the more they will participate in classroom activities and express themselves without being afraid that anyone is going to laugh at them or make fun of them . It is a teacher's (demanding) task to encourage children and create a climate where all students are welcome and accepted for their unique abilities. Additionally , as the most crucial reason that students conform is the fear of being marginalized , teachers should first and foremost indicate that failing is a part of learning. Nobody was born knowing everything ! Educators have to urge students to participate in classroom activities by indicating that failing is not something they should be ashamed as it gradually leads to knowledge acquisition via personal effort and exploration . That is why teachers are obliged to break things down into small enough chunks that allow children to succeed most of the time and fail some time , so as to be make it easier for them to gradually overcome their fears. Most children blossom when challenges are broken into manageable tasks especially when this , is accompanied by rewarding. Even the smallest improvements have to be rewarded!

Another vital thing to consider is that making contact with unconfident students on a regular basis helps keep them connected. To be more specific , it does not need to do much as a question or smile can make such a big difference. Apart from this ,when it comes to classroom tasks, a teacher can increase a hesitant ' s student self-esteem by making them feel like they are making a contribution to classroom activities on the one hand , and finding a reason to have

them interact with others , and in this case with their fellow classmates .That is to say , an instructor can have a student take a survey of other students for instance , requiring that the students go up and interact with other children in class in a teacher assigned role. The trick is to match the level of social interaction of a task with the tolerance level of each child.

In addition , most hesitant students crave attention and have the need to be awarded. Children want to feel special .By posting their work for example in prominent places into the class can be a big boost to their self-esteem , just as commenting on their accomplishment in front of the class can also make a huge difference.

I would like to finish my essay with a famous quote of John F. Kennedy:

