



Why is STUDENT AGENCY important ?

Many educators and learning scientists suggest that for students to build more academic confidence, it is crucial for teachers and parents to step back when learning gets hard and to be explicit that the challenge offers its rewards. (*Learning the Right Way to Struggle* by Jenny Anderson, NYTimes, 4/2022)

“The answer isn’t taking away challenge, it’s giving more tools to deal with challenge,” said Carol Dweck, a professor of psychology at Stanford University, an expert on construction learning mind-sets. She suggests instead of saying “kids are too fragile” and refraining from difficult tasks, we need to help children visualize ways to push through by asking for help and stepping up the effort.

Hence, student agency comes into play. Conceptualized by Albert Bandura in social cognitive theory, agency “enables people to play a part in their self-development, adaptation and self-renewal with changing times.” (Bandura 2001)

Mark Twain’s IB PYP students take initiative, express their interests and wonderings, make choices and are aware of their learning goals. Our teachers recognize students’ capabilities through listening respecting and responding to their ideas. They make thoughtful considerations and decisions with an emphasis on relationships, dialogue and respect for each other. (IB 2020)

Questions? Contact kathleen Blakeslee, KBLAKESL@houstonisd.org