

Building Brave Learners

An Educator's Guide to Literature-Based Self-Regulation



Using Children's Literature to Support Self-Regulation, Confidence, and Resilience



Children's literature offers meaningful opportunities to help students recognize emotions, practice self-regulation strategies, and develop confidence when facing challenges. This flexible, low-cost, evidence-informed instructional approach combines engaging stories, guided discussion, explicit strategy instruction, and opportunities for students to practice and apply what they learn. Designed for elementary classrooms, school libraries, counseling settings, and other educational environments.

Bringing the Framework to Life Through Children's Literature

Use this five-step instructional framework with an age-appropriate picture book featuring a character navigating worry, frustration, uncertainty, courage, or perseverance.



STEP 1 — SELECT THE STORY

Choose a book featuring a meaningful challenge or obstacle. During the read-aloud, invite students to notice the character's actions, words, and expressions.



STEP 2 — CONNECT TO FEELINGS

Explore the character's emotional experience. Ask, "What might the character be feeling?" and "What clues help us understand?" Invite connections without requiring students to share personal experiences.



STEP 3 — MODEL A STRATEGY

Introduce one practical self-regulation, coping, or problem-solving strategy related to the character's challenge. Demonstrate how and when it might be used.



STEP 4 — PRACTICE TOGETHER

Guide students through the strategy using modeling, visual supports, movement, or role-play. Offer opportunities to participate in ways that meet individual needs.



STEP 5 — REINFORCE THE SKILL

Ask students when the strategy might be helpful. Encourage them to identify a realistic situation and practice choosing an appropriate response.



The essential connection:

Move beyond discussing how characters feel. Help students practice what they can do when facing similar challenges.



2. Featured Example: Beaugard's Brave Leap

Exploring Worry, Courage, and the Stronger-Than Voice



Read and Connect

Read *Beaugard's Brave Leap*, inviting students to notice Beaugard's worries and the challenge he faces. Discuss: "What is Beaugard feeling?" and "What helps him find the courage to try?"



Introduce the Stronger-Than Voice

Explain that the Stronger-Than Voice is the encouraging thing that allows us to face challenges and moments that are . Model a statement such as: "This is hard, but I can take one small step."



Teach and Practice the 3-3-3 Strategy

Following the story, introduce the accompanying 3-3-3 strategy bookmark. Guide students to see three things around them. Hear three different sounds. Move three parts of their body. Breathe: Take a slow, comfortable breath. Practice together, then invite the student to try the strategy independently or with support.



Reflect and Apply

Ask: "When might your Stronger-Than Voice help you?" and "When could you use the 3-3-3 strategy?" Students may respond through discussion, drawing, gestures, or role-play.



3. Adapting the Framework to Other Books



Identify a challenge – select a meaningful situation involving courage, frustration, uncertainty, perseverance, or problem-solving.



Examine the Response – discuss the characters' responses and what alternative choices or supports might be helpful.



Connect the story to one practical skill, such as grounding, positive self-talk, asking for help, taking a break, or developing a plan.



Plan for Application – Include one opportunity for guided practice and one question to encourage students to apply the skill beyond the story.



The strategy should match the developmental needs of students' current instructional objectives not every story requires the same opening tool.

4. Checking Student Learning



Recognize – can students identify an emotion or challenge experienced by the character?



Demonstrate – can students practice the introduced strategy with guidance?



Apply – Can students identify a situation in which the strategy might be helpful?

Students may demonstrate understanding through verbal responses, gestures, drawings, role-play, or guided practice. These are informal instructional checks, not validated outcome measures.

5. Extending the Learning



Display visual reminders – make strategy cards, bookmarks, or other visual supports available in learning environments.



Connect the strategy to future stories, classroom discussions, and everyday learning challenges.



Collaborate across settings – encourage educators, support staff, and families to use consistent language with resilient strategies.



Encourage student ownership – help students recognize when a strategy might be useful, and practice selecting tools that support their individual needs.

6. About the Framework and Author

Developed by Rosie Basketl, OTD, OTR/L, children's author and educator, this framework draws on occupational therapy, child development, and educational practice. Through her finding 'The Stronger-Than-Voice' children's book series and interactive educational programs, Rosie helps children discover practical strategies for navigating challenges with courage, confidence, and resilience.



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