



THE PERFECTIONISTIC STUDENT





Understanding our own tendencies

Sarene and I discussed perfectionism before I started researching how to help students.



Identifying the perfectionistic student

- 1 Is the student unwilling to participate in class for fear of getting an answer wrong?
- 2 Does the student avoid homework because he or she feels like it can't be done right without you?
- 3 Does the student seem dissatisfied with his or her work when others find theirs acceptable?
- 4 Does the student work slowly in order to be excessively neat and avoid mistakes?
- 5 Does the student start over repeatedly?



Perfectionism is abuse of the
highest order.

-Anne Wilson Schaefer, author



What we can do

to help frustration, getting stuck,
just plain old anxiety

1

Help students be calmer about getting things wrong, making mistakes or getting lower grades.

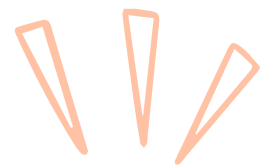
- * Commend mistakes during class time, like their way of thinking
- * Talk to the class about why mistakes are good, like making us think harder, try harder, giving us another opportunity to do something again
- * Tell students that making mistakes means you can ask for help, which is good for our relationships
- * Point out when you make mistakes

2

Help students practice non-perfectionistic behavior.

- * Create activities around behavior (a game of doing "fast work" instead of "right work")
- * Praise non-perfectionistic behavior
- * Don't cater to the perfectionistic student.
(rule to stop homework after X minutes)

Anxiety Refusal Mode



Empathize

Tell the student, "I'm sorry you are so worried right now. That must feel awful."



Take a breath.

Encourage a breath, a water break, or distract with something like, "I know this is stressful. Let's think about something else for a minute."



Take small steps, then time's up.

"We can change it later, but just do this one small part."
--and--
clarifying a stopping point.





Focus on progress, not
perfection.

-Bill Phillips, fitness entrepreneur



THANK YOU!

