



Faculty of Education

Certificate Programme for Paraprofessionals in Teaching (1 year programme)

1.0 Rationale

This one year certificate course is a direct response of the University College of the Cayman Islands to the Government's strategic plan measure 10, National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands (Report October 3rd 2005). Strategic measure 10 calls for the development and implementation of teacher education and training in the Cayman Islands and high quality teacher professional development programmes. This response is consistent with the mission of the University College of the Cayman Islands which is to contribute to Caymanian society by advancing knowledge.

The certificate course is a job preparatory course designed to equip the paraprofessionals to function effectively in the classroom. The programme introduces students to the teaching-learning dynamics and the skills necessary to operate effectively within a range of school settings. The programme also focuses on the improvement of skills in English Language (Communication Skills), mathematics (Numeracy Skills) and ICT (Computer Workshops). The three courses addressing these competencies will be completed at the first year Associate Degree level.

The paraprofessional in teaching has many responsibilities which may include observing and reporting pupils' progress; working with individuals or small groups; assisting in the preparation of instructional materials and facilitating the integration of special needs students in the regular classroom. Additionally, the paraprofessional assists in adapting or modifying educational materials and programmes to match the cognitive levels of students with special needs.

The programme has been developed to provide prospective Teacher Aides with an understanding of their roles and functions and to help them develop the competencies necessary for functioning effectively.

ED 008: Enhancing children's self-esteem

Course Description

This course highlights the importance of a positive self-esteem and suggests strategies to promote its development in students. It offers practical information on appropriate strategies to help develop children's social-emotional behaviours.

Objectives

1. Identify and discuss the contributions of high self-esteem to social, emotional and intellectual growth
2. Identify activities that would contribute to the development of high self esteem among children.

CONTENT

Self-esteem is a major key to success in life. The development of a positive self-concept or healthy self-esteem is extremely important to the happiness and success of children and teenagers.

How children feel about themselves, is one of our greatest responsibilities and one of our biggest challenges. People who have a positive sense of self feel they have something worthwhile to contribute and a sense of internal worth. They are able to venture out into the world, work toward attaining their goals and welcome life with anticipation and pleasure. This self-concept begins to develop very early in life. Consequently a child's early experiences with his parents and early caregivers begin to sow the seeds for the development of a positive self-concept / self worth. Experiences in school should serve to further enhance the development of a positive self concept or in some cases begin to build a positive self concept.

The following are some statements used to describe self-esteem

- holding a positive opinion of one's self;
- feeling worthwhile and worthy of love;
- liking, accepting and respecting one's self.
- Common to most definitions of self-esteem is the degree to which one values oneself.
- Additionally, self-esteem is discussed in terms of the level of one's self-esteem (high versus low) rather than if one has self-esteem.

Self esteem is the collection of beliefs or feelings that we have about ourselves, or our "self-perceptions". How we define ourselves influences our motivations, attitudes and behaviors and affect emotional adjustment.

Healthy self esteem is a child's armor against the challenges of the world. Children who feel good about themselves have an easier time handling conflicts and resisting negative pressures. They are also willing to pursue new academic challenges and feel comfortable in new social settings.

A Three Factor Definition of Self-Esteem

Schindler (____) proposes that there is no irrefutable way to define self-esteem. He proposes that the definition should be derived from examining the fundamental traits with which they correlate. These traits fall in three categories, locus of control; one's sense of belonging and acceptance; and one's self of competence or self-efficacy.

Activities that focus on the promotion of positive self esteem should therefore focus around

- Helping students to analyse situations, and make decisions that promote positive behaviour on their part. That is they must be able to control/ refrain from negative behaviours, resist negative influences of peers, behave in socially accepted ways.
- Learning to treat oneself and others with respect and identifying and practising traits that reflect this. Learning to interact socially with others.
- Helping one to develop and master intellectual skills necessary for facilitating cognitive growth. Students must experience success in their intellectual tasks so that they feel confident in their ability to learn and are willing to pursue new learning.

Self-esteem is generally defined and established during childhood. It is molded and shaped by the words, actions and behaviors that are directed toward children by their parents and loved ones. Healthy self-esteem will have a child approach life more positively, while low self-esteem will have the child more withdrawn, anxious and even frustrated, and no matter which a child has it will no doubt follow on to adulthood. Here's how to positively develop a child's self-esteem.

Teachers cannot give students self-esteem. However they can provide opportunities that result in children and teenagers feeling capable, confident and self-assured.

The following are some suggestions for activities with children.

- Help children set short- and long-term goals, discussing milestones they can use to gauge their growth and smaller successes, before the long-term goals are achieved.
- Be specific in drawing attention to small accomplishments, and helping children see how they lead to larger successes.
- Avoid hollow praise. Telling children that they've done well when they know they haven't can make some feel distrustful and suspicious of any positive feedback.
- If a child is unsuccessful, talk with him about how he approached the task, what he felt he did well and what he will work on for next time.
- Build on each child's strengths through **cooperative learning activities** that allow individuals to have a part in the group's success.
- Encourage friendships with other children who have a "can-do" attitude, and provide experiences that allow each child to be the "expert".
- By focusing on helping children accomplish the things that are important to them, teachers and parents can build self-efficacy, which in turn, will develop a healthy.

ASSIGNMENTS ND CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS

In groups identify, discuss and list a set of strategies that teachers can adopt in order to help students develop a healthy self esteem.

Identify and list some signs that may indicate a child has a
Positive self concept
Negative self concept

Identify and discuss strategies students can use to help themselves to cope with students who display behaviours (e.g. bullying) that result from a negative self-concept.

Describe and list ways in which you can work with parents to help students develop a positive self esteem.

Each student (enrolled in EDU 408) should assess his personal characteristics, determine the nature of his self-esteem and plan activities to raise the level of his self esteem.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Healthy self-esteem is a child's armor against the challenges of the world. Kids who feel good about themselves seem to have an easier time handling conflicts and resisting negative pressures. They tend to smile more readily and enjoy life. These kids are realistic and generally optimistic.

In contrast, kids with low self-esteem can find challenges to be sources of major anxiety and frustration. Those who think poorly of themselves have a hard time finding solutions to problems. If given to self-critical thoughts such as "I'm no good" or "I can't do anything right," they may become passive, withdrawn, or depressed. Faced with a new challenge, their immediate response is "I can't."

Here's how you can play important role in promoting healthy self-esteem in your child.

What Is Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem is the collection of beliefs or feelings we have about ourselves, our "self-perceptions." How we define ourselves influences our motivations, attitudes, and behaviors and affects our emotional adjustment.

Patterns of self-esteem start very early in life. For example, a toddler who reaches a milestone experiences a sense of accomplishment that bolsters self-esteem. Learning to roll over after dozens of unsuccessful attempts teaches a baby a "can-do" attitude.

The concept of success following persistence starts early. As kids try, fail, try again, fail again, and then finally succeed, they develop ideas about their own capabilities. At the same time, they're creating a self-concept based on interactions with other people. This is why parental involvement is key to helping kids form accurate, healthy self-perceptions.

Self-esteem also can be defined as feelings of capability combined with feelings of being loved. A child who is happy with an achievement but does not feel loved may eventually experience low self-esteem. Likewise, a child who feels loved but is hesitant about his or her own abilities can also end up with low self-esteem. Healthy self-esteem comes when the right balance is reached.

Signs of Unhealthy and Healthy Self-Esteem

Self-esteem fluctuates as kids grow. It's frequently changed and fine-tuned, because it is affected by a child's experiences and new perceptions. So it helps to be aware of the signs of both healthy and unhealthy self-esteem.

Kids with low self-esteem may not want to try new things, and may frequently speak negatively about themselves: "I'm stupid," "I'll never learn how to do this," or "What's the point? Nobody cares about me anyway." They may exhibit a low tolerance for frustration, giving up easily or waiting for somebody else to take over. They tend to be overly critical of and easily disappointed in themselves. Kids with low self-esteem see temporary setbacks as permanent, intolerable conditions, and a sense of pessimism predominates.

Kids with healthy self-esteem tend to enjoy interacting with others. They're comfortable in social settings and enjoy group activities as well as independent pursuits. When challenges arise, they can work toward finding solutions and voice discontent without belittling themselves or others. For example, rather than

saying, "I'm an idiot," a child with healthy self-esteem says, "I don't understand this." They know their strengths and weaknesses, and accept them. A sense of optimism prevails.

How Parents Can Help

How can a parent help to foster healthy self-esteem in a child? These tips can make a big difference:

Watch what you say. Kids are very sensitive to parents' words. Remember to praise your child not only for a job well done, but also for effort. But be truthful. For example, if your child doesn't make the soccer team, avoid saying something like, "Well, next time you'll work harder and make it." Instead, try "Well, you didn't make the team, but I'm really proud of the effort you put into it." Reward effort and completion instead of outcome.

Be a positive role model. If you're excessively harsh on yourself, pessimistic, or unrealistic about your abilities and limitations, your child may eventually mirror you. Nurture your own self-esteem, and your child will have a great role model.

Identify and redirect your child's inaccurate beliefs. It's important for parents to identify kids' irrational beliefs about themselves, whether they're about perfection, attractiveness, ability, or anything else. Helping kids set more accurate standards and be more realistic in evaluating themselves will help them have a healthy self-concept. Inaccurate perceptions of self can take root and become reality to kids. For example, a child who does very well in school but struggles with math may say, "I can't do math. I'm a bad student." Not only is this a false generalization, it's also a belief that will set the child up for failure. Encourage kids to see a situation in its true light. A helpful response might be: "You are a good student. You do great in school. Math is just a subject that you need to spend more time on. We'll work on it together."

Be spontaneous and affectionate. Your love will go a long way to boost your child's self-esteem. Give hugs and tell kids you're proud of them. Pop a note in your child's lunchbox that reads, "I think you're terrific!" Give praise frequently and honestly, without overdoing it. Kids can tell whether something comes from the heart.

Give positive, accurate feedback. Comments like "You always work yourself up into such a frenzy!" will make kids feel like they have no control over their outbursts. A better statement is, "You were really mad at your brother. But I appreciate that you didn't yell at him or hit him." This acknowledges a child's feelings, rewards the choice made, and encourages the child to make the right choice again next time.

Create a safe, loving home environment. Kids who don't feel safe or are abused at home will suffer immensely from low self-esteem. A child who is exposed to parents who fight and argue repeatedly may become depressed and withdrawn. Also watch for signs of abuse by others, problems in school, trouble with peers, and other factors that may affect kids' self-esteem. Deal with these issues sensitively but swiftly. And always remember to respect your kids.

Help kids become involved in constructive experiences. Activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition are especially helpful in fostering self-esteem. For example, mentoring programs in which an older child helps a younger one learn to read can do wonders for both kids.

Finding Professional Help

If you suspect your child has low self-esteem, consider professional help. Family and child counselors can work to uncover underlying issues that prevent a child from feeling good about himself or herself.

Therapy can help kids learn to view themselves and the world positively. When kids see themselves in a more realistic light, they can accept who they truly are.

With a little help, every child can develop healthy self-esteem for a happier, more fulfilling life.

Reviewed by: [David V. Sheslow, PhD](#)

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Creating a Psychology of Success in the Classroom: Enhancing Academic Achievement by Systematically Promoting Student Self-Esteem

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Introduction

Over four decades of research has shown a clear relationship between levels of self-esteem and academic achievement (Auer, 1992; Benham, 1993; Klein & Keller, 1990; Joseph, 1992; Rennie, 1991; Solley & Stagner, 1956). While this relationship may be well documented, it has not been shown to have widely or systematically informed practice. I propose that examining self-esteem through the lens of two epistemological constructs can provide the classroom teacher with a set of powerful tools to promote self-esteem in his or her students. First, I offer an operationalized definition of self-esteem. Utilizing three well established behavioral correlates, locus of control, belonging, and self-efficacy, the concept of self-esteem can be treated in a very practical manner. Second, I propose that self-esteem be examined as a manufactured construct. By this I mean that we as teachers manufacture the self-esteem of our students to a large extent by what we say, our daily practice, and the way we assess, instruct, and manage our classes. In other words, every one of us acts as a teacher either promotes or detracts from our students' self-esteem.

Competing Definitions of Self-Esteem

There are several definitions of self-esteem in the literature and being used in our schools. They appear to be describing the same thing, but often refer to very different realities. For example, a student who reports feeling good about him or herself is said to have high self-esteem. But is this expression of self-pride a true indication of his or her deep-seated unconscious beliefs, or is it masking a sense of inadequacy? Likewise, when a student seems self-critical, is this an expression of self-doubt or of high expectations of his or her performance? Self-esteem or the lack of it can often be manifest in similar ways.

Many criticize the encouragement of self-esteem as an academic goal (Baumeister, 1996; Lerner, 1996). Such critiques are concerned that when self-esteem promotion is pursued in terms of making students "feel good" about themselves, this misapplication can lead to indiscriminate praise and the assumption that one should protect his or her students from failure. These theorists suggest that students who feel good and are satisfied with their work do not necessarily achieve or develop habits that lead to success. These criticisms are justified. There is little evidence that students who are indiscriminately praised and protected from failure do in fact develop genuine self-esteem.

I would like to make a distinction here between genuine self-esteem versus narcissism or self-aggrandizement. Katz (1993) suggests that there is a clear difference

between the two. Genuine self-esteem has little to do with the feelings reported by students. In fact, feelings have very little to do with self-esteem at all. Self-esteem could best be described as a set of unconscious self-beliefs, formed over a lifetime, reflecting our perceptions of our abilities, our lovability, and how we attribute causality for the events in our lives. These unconscious self-perceptions have been burned, often deeply, into our very being and therefore can only be altered by significant and repeated new experiences that recondition our hearts and minds.

A Three Factor Definition of Self-Esteem

While there may be no single irrefutable way to define self-esteem, I propose a definition derived from examining the fundamental traits with which it has been found to correlate. These traits seem to fall into three categories: first, one's locus of control; second, one's sense of belonging and acceptance; and third, one's sense of competence or self-efficacy. These traits are interrelated, but can be examined as independent factors.

An internal locus of control can be defined as the belief that one is the author of his or her own fate. It is in contrast to an orientation that views cause as an external factor, in which life "happens to us." An internal locus of control comes from having a causal understanding of behavior and effect. It is learned from freely making choices and taking responsibility for the consequences of those choices. Through responsible action and accountability for those actions, the young person learns to attribute the cause of success or failure internally. Consequently, he or she feels a sense of power and responsibility and is able learn from his or her life experience.

Research has drawn a strong relationship between levels of student self-esteem and sense of an internal locus of control (Fitch, 1970; Hagborg, 1996; Klein & Keller, 1990; Sheridan, 1991). Moreover, studies have shown repeatedly that students with higher degrees of internal locus of control demonstrate higher levels of achievement (Auer, 1992; Bar-Tal & Bar-Zohar, 1977, Tanksley, 1993; Wang & Stiles, 1976). In fact, having high levels of internal locus of control has been shown to be an even more significant variable than intelligence or socioeconomic status (Haborg, 1996).

A sense of belonging and acceptance is essential to a young person's mental health and ability to trust and take risks (Inderbitzen & Clark, 1986). Without the experience of acceptance and a feeling of belonging, the student is unable to love and accept him or herself. In an environment where there is emotional support and a minimum of destructive criticism, students feel empowered to take risks, express themselves, and persist in the face of difficulty (Sarokon, 1986).

Research has shown a relationship between a sense of belonging and acceptance and self-esteem (Davis & Peck, 1992; Katz, 1993; Washiwotok, 1993). Again, building a sense of classroom belonging and the sense of self- and peer-acceptance has been shown to promote higher achievement (Dembrowsky, 1990; Rhoades & McCabe, 1992; Washiwotok, 1993).

A sense of self-efficacy could be defined as one's belief in his or her competence in a given domain. We know that when we feel competent we try harder and more readily trust ourselves in the process. Contrary to popular opinion, self-efficacy does not come from complements or being spared failure. Self-efficacy comes from evidence. Bandura (1977) speaks of self-efficacy as the degree of expectancy that one will successfully perform a desired task. When a young person obtains sensory feedback that

he or she succeeded in a given task or has demonstrated a talent, he or she will be confident in applying that ability in the future. In contrast, the braggart or the show-off displays a lack of confidence in that he needs to prove to himself and others that there is reason to view his actions as acceptable or worthy, compensating for unconscious self-doubts. In situations where a student feels a sense of confidence, his or her unconscious has concrete images that support that student's ability and therefore he or she has no need to show-off.

Research shows clearly that those with high levels of self-efficacy have correspondingly high degrees of self-esteem (Bandura, 1977; Clariana, 1993; Frazier & Paulson, 1992; Klien & Keller, 1990; Rennie, 1991; Tanksley, 1993). Moreover, self-efficacy is related to attributions of an internal locus of control (Auer, 1990; Sheridan, 1991) and positively correlated with academic achievement (Auer, 1990; Bandura, 1977; Rennie, 1991).

Operationalizing the idea of self-esteem defined by these three factors not only provides a practical definition, but also provides a means of distinguishing authentic self-esteem from narcissism. In this paradigm, self-esteem is best determined within the domain of behavior. Teachers using these criteria can readily evaluate student levels of self-esteem. Additionally, this definition provides students with a useful tool to reflect on their own personal growth.

Promoting Self-Esteem as “Good Teaching”

Given a definition of self-esteem that is based on locus of control, belonging and self-efficacy, practical applications become more effectively directed. Instead of focusing on making students feel good, or making them feel that everything they do is great, teachers can systematically address these three needs within the student, focusing on long-term results.

Promoting self-esteem could in many ways be defined as “good teaching.” Good teachers learn that students who feel empowered and in control achieve more. Good teachers learn that a class achieves more when a certain environment is created from purposeful classroom orchestration. Good teachers realize that they can only be considered “good teachers” insofar as they find ways to get students to perform and care about quality. In fact, it could be said that there is really no way to be a good teacher without promoting self-esteem, and if one is promoting self-esteem, it will lead to effective teaching practices. Yet, too often many of our practices destroy the foundations of self-esteem without our knowing it. These practices may be “working” on some level, but in essence they are working against our ability to teach and our students' ability to achieve long-term growth.

For the past few years I have given this three-factor definition to my instructional methods and classroom assessment methods students. I ask them to come up with teacher behaviors that they think would promote each of these three factors. It takes them a little while to adjust to thinking of teaching in these terms, but once they do they develop long lists of instructional, managerial and assessment practices that would by definition promote self-esteem. As a result of assigning this exercise, I have discovered two things. First, the lists from class to class are very similar, and the contents of these lists are most often consistent with what the research has suggested. Second, the items the students generate are things that they have intuitively felt were effective. They also

reported being surprised having seen teachers in the field readily using pedagogy that they felt to be undermining the self-esteem of students, when it would seem to be no more trouble to use self-esteem promoting practices. However, as with most ineffective pedagogy, these practices have long been practiced, and “work” to some degree in the short-term. I would have to agree with those who suggest the root of this seemingly institutionalized problem is that we as teachers do not examine our teaching within the framework of student development or needs, but instead with a mind set primarily concerned with our personal convenience or curricular demands.

Promoting Self-esteem Through Practice

Given the research and theoretical support for approaching self-esteem development within the framework of a three-factor definition, the question then follows, “How can we instruct in a manner that promotes high levels of self-esteem?” The following section offers a brief description of a few of the instructional strategies that have been shown to promote self-esteem in each of the three areas.

Locus of Control

Instructional behaviors that promote an internal locus of control are rooted in developing a clear understanding of cause and effect. Students need to see that their achievement is directly related to their behavior, especially their level of effort. A requisite to seeing this relationship is providing students with choices and expecting accountability for those choices. The following is a list of practices that have been found to promote students’ internal locus of control.

1. *Assess the process* and other student-owned behaviors. Students do not often have control over their ability, but they do have 100% control over the degree to which they apply themselves. When we assess the process, we manufacture a success psychology.
2. *Give students voice and ownership* of classroom rules and consequences. Then when students break rules, follow through with consistently applied *consequences* (while avoiding punishments).
3. Create an environment *free of the need for excuses*. Begin by never asking for them.
4. *Teach problem-solving* skills, and cultivate an expectancy that, in your class, students take responsibility for working through problems individually or in groups.
5. *Give choices*, and then expect *accountability* for those choices.
6. *Use behavioral contracts* with students who need an education in cause and effect.

Belonging and Acceptance

The climate of the classroom can, on the one hand, create a sense of hostility and fear, or, on the other hand, a sense of comfort and support. “Gravity” leads students toward what could be characterized as a “Lord of the Flies” set of interaction patterns, characterized by the strong oppressing the weak and the popular oppressing the unpopular. The climate we create is no accident. It is a product of the behaviors that we accept and model, how we assess and manage, and our attitudes and values that inevitably creates the “socially constructed reality” in our classes. The following is a list of practices that have been found to promote a sense of acceptance and belonging within a class.

1. *Use cooperative structures* where interdependence and inter-reliance are unavoidable.
2. *Use assigned roles*, assigned grouping, and rotation of grouping in your cooperative work. Students need to work with and rely on each member of the class, not just their friends.
3. Do not accept “put downs” in any form, especially negative self-talk.

4. Demand and model *positive interactions and human respect* 100% of the time.
5. Competition is great for games, but *never force students to compete* for “real” rewards (i.e., your love, grades, status, privileges, or any tangible rewards).
6. *Appreciate differences* and recognize the unique gifts of each of your student.
7. *Be real*, approachable, caring and a validator of feelings.

Sense of Self-Efficacy:

A sense of self-efficacy comes from evidence that confirms that we have done something well. We cannot fool our students’ senses. No matter how much praise or how many speeches telling them “they can do it,” their unconscious will believe only one source of information -- their experience. The following is a list of some practices that promote a sense of competence and self-efficacy in students.

1. Use a clear *system of feedback* providing “knowledge of their results.” Students need to know specifically what it is that they did well when they succeed and what they did incorrectly when they are struggling to succeed.
2. *Assess what is most important.* What you assess on a daily basis defines your classroom concept of “success.” Complete the following sentence, “If I could only assess _____, I would have a better class.”
3. *Assess using a clear criterion* referenced system. Give students clear targets (i.e., purposeful outcomes) to shoot for that stand still (i.e., rubrics) and relate to their progress.
4. *Have high expectations* for your students and catch them being good. Do not accept low self-estimations, especially in the areas of effort and process. All students are capable of total effort, and total effort in the process leads to excellent product outcomes.
5. Find ways to *make the students the teacher* (i.e., peer tutoring, writing partners, leadership of daily activities, jigsaw instruction, etc.).

Conclusion

We create a “socially constructed reality” in our classes by what we do and say and what we instruct our students to do and say. That reality has a profound influence on our students. In the short-term, the fruits of creating a psychology of success in students are often difficult to see, but over time, practices that promote self- esteem will produce more successful, hard working, risk taking, ambitious, respectful, and self-directed students. Whether our goal is educating mentally healthy and functional students or students who perform well academically, we cannot afford not to make self-esteem development a primary focus. Talented people will not always succeed in life, but people with genuinely high self-esteems will find ways to.

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PROMOTING POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM: MARKING PAPERS

GRADES K-12

Many of the things teachers do to promote, or inhibit, positive self-esteem, comes from unintended actions. There are obvious things teachers do, such as who is called on in the class, who's papers are posted on the bulletin boards...but there are less obvious things that are done; actions which directly affect the students positive self-esteem. The most frequent area where this is the case is with marking student papers.

The following are some quick tips which any teacher can immediately use in improving the positive self-esteem in the classroom:

1. **NEVER GRADE IN RED INK.** Red is a "negative" color. Think: stop signs and lights, warning labels, poisen, etc. Our society has conditioned us to immediately view red as something negative. Subconsciously, (and often conscientiously), a paper that is handed back full of red marks tells the student that he or she is a "dummy". A "self-fulfilling prophesy" often results with these students!
2. **USE GREEN OR BLUE INK.** Green, on the other hand, is a "positive" color, as is blue to a lesser extent. When green is used, corrections, or markings, become more of a "constructive criticism" type of comment.
3. **USE A SLASH "/" RATHER THAN AN "X" WHEN MARKING A WRONG ANSWER.** Again, for the same reasons one does not use red ink. The "X" is a negative symbol.
4. **MARK NUMBER RIGHT OUT OF THE TOTAL, VERSUS MINUS THE NUMBER WRONG.** Do you accentuate the positive, or the negative? 2/20 still looks better than -18.

Also be aware of cultural differences. For instance, NEVER write a Korean student's name using red ink (even if it's a friendly note to the child). In the Korean culture, writing someone's name in red is a sign of death! Korean parents are often horrified when papers come home with their child's name written in red!

submitted by

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