

Chapter 7

Self Efficacy

Self efficacy is defined by Miltiadau (1999), when he quotes Bandura (1986): as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance" (p. 391).

What this means to the fire service learning culture is that the more developed our individual self efficacy becomes, the better we can judge our ability to succeed in difficult subject domains. Miltiadau (1999) quotes Bandura 1993: when he writes that individuals with high self-efficacy "heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure" (p. 144). Self efficacy has been studied and is considered a strong indicator of individual success.

Mindfulness & Perceived Self Efficacy (PSE); Factors that are influenced by PSE :

Goal Setting for the Learning Culture

Performance Goals: According to Miltiadau (1999), if a person consistently sets "performance" based goals they are trying to evade negative consequences from educators or peers that their performance or education is inadequate. This attribute or choice of goal setting eventually leads to an inability to retain the information since the goal is to perform for others, not learn the new material to apply in novel situations.

Learning Goals: If a person believes through a strong PSE view of themselves that they can learn new and difficult subjects, and retain this for use in novel situations, then the setting of "learning goals" toward that end are much more effective. Since learning is the goal, the goal can only be achieved by the retention of the material, no

matter what other's think of the student. Learning goals are what the Learning Culture teachers/instructors/facilitators should encourage of themselves, and their students. It's through these learning goals, and assessing learning outcomes, that PSE is enhanced.

Commitment: PSE can influence our ability to commit to just about anything in life, especially education. If we have a weak or moderate view of our abilities, based upon past successes and failures, then we may only commit to low road type activities and educational opportunities.

If we work to improve, through "mindful" application, our PSE then we will progress to the utilization of our potential through higher road activities and educational opportunities.

Context of Choice

Depending upon the context of the choice, whether it be a job, a class, or recreation activity, a person will approach each with a predetermined PSE in place. This PSE will most likely be different for each different subject area.

An example, is my PSE as a Fire Captain for Poudre Fire Authority, which is developed for that context. While Instructing in Mexico, it is a different PSE that guides me, based upon that context. My abilities to perform multiple activities from many contexts during the same time period are from a separate PSE. PSE is an introspective method to assess our internal belief that we will succeed, based on our abilities to sustain effort during difficult environments.

Willingness to Risk

Assessing a person's ability to "risk" is based on their PSE. The Learning Culture that supports collaborative learning may well be able to enhance individual PSE. I found no specific research available to clearly draw this conclusion, but much of Miltiadau's and Bandura's research supports this conclusion.

Education

For an individual to choose strong educational paths, utilizing difficult topics and practice, they would have to believe they could be competitive. If their life experience, education, peer feedback, educator feedback, parental instruction and feedback, and introspective feedback has been relatively positive then one could expect to find a high PSE as the foundation of their motivation.