

I would like to begin this contribution by stating that it is based on my own personal reflections after a teaching career spanning more than 40 years. My starting point is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The Esteem Needs are shown on level four of this pyramid, and in our students, the importance of the development of self-esteem must be emphasized.

How do students learn to believe in themselves as people, and as successful students? My answer to this is positive feedback. Teachers play a significant role here. In the correction of work such as an assignment which students have laboriously prepared, a system of numerical marking is necessary. If a model answer can be prepared, say with eight identifiable points, the teacher who gives a mark of six out of eight, can easily show the student which points they omitted, or needed to further clarify.

In this manner, the student then has a clear picture of how they can improve their work. This shows the struggling student the way forward. For the more successful student, it shows them how to increase their numerical score even further. This support and system of numerical marking and feedback across all subjects has been shown to encourage self-esteem in the student. In particular my experience is with international students, who are very keen to improve their score and enter university here in Queensland. The numerical marking system, and the inclusion of assignments, tests, and exams are vital. Marks need to specifically show where the student is going wrong.

To encourage a better system of education for our young people, it needs to be stated that every child deserves the same opportunity to learn. Whether the child is born into a poor family or a wealthy one, each child needs opportunities to increase their belief in themselves as people, and as students. Some questions we could ponder are:

1. Are our high school teachers being given enough time in their working day to give support to each student?
2. Do our beginning teachers know how to do this?
3. Do the feedback systems which apply to international students apply across the general high school population?
4. If not, why not?

The Queensland community is now aware that international students fare very well in their preparation for university, and during their tertiary studies. I would encourage a study into this, as there is much to learn and this knowledge could benefit our local students.