

# Academic Empowerment

## Your Coherent Minute

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Academic empowerment is a goal all teachers and administrators strive to establish for their students. They want them to be self-confident, to have the ability to emotionally self-regulate, to perform optimally at their best free of stress and anxiety. Or, at least to have the tools and techniques to assist them in achieving the above conditions. However, for many of us that isn't the case. Students

There seems to be a growing trend of students lacking the ability to emotionally self-regulate. When anyone is under stress for whatever reason, they cannot perform optimally. We have physiology systems to protect us in stress situations, but it is a survival mechanism, a response that promotes survivability but inhibits cognitive function. Many of us have



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suffer from many types of anxiety in school and the outcomes can have serious consequences. In the Child Mind® Institute's 2016 Children's Mental Health Report we learn that 1 out of 5 students are tagged with a “mental health” problem. Further, the “zero tolerance” policy found in districts focuses on mandatory punishment for certain behaviors which target children with impulse or emotion regulation control problems which are often caused by mental health disorders.

probably experienced this while taking a test. We survived the test, but could not think of the answers to save our life. Stress does not promote optimal cognitive function in fact it reduces our ability to think or act rationally.



## Learn more about

The Child Mind® Institute by following the link:

<https://childmind.org/>

Remember this as you begin to enter the midterm testing cycle and your next set of report cards come due, or as you begin conversations about the 3-8 testing cycle rapidly approaching. Make yourself aware of the stress and stressors around you. Is it in conversations with colleagues and staff members? Are you seeing more troubled students? Are you writing and dealing with more referrals? Where is it happening? As a Project BLEND Scholar, within your career you will be dealing more and more with these challenges as they become more and more pervasive in our educational institutions. Over the next two weeks watch for stress that you bear witness

to, from colleagues, from students, from administration, from family and from friends. By reading this Coherent Minute and becoming aware of stress, your Reticular Activating System has been activated to be more sensitive to watching for the stressors. Make a conscious attempt to note where you see, hear, or feel stress around you, and from what individuals or situations, it emanates. Remember you have the tools and techniques to help. I'll close with a graphic that shows the results of a four-month training study with 140 high school students. I've included the graph and the talking points as an attachment, "What HeartMath Can Do For Students". The

experiment demonstrated how the HRV Baseline changed over time and shifted towards a more coherent pattern when practiced coherence over several weeks. The students became more resilient as a result.

I'm also providing a few informational resources as you look forward to providing academic empowering initiatives for your students and staff. Know that I can be available if you would like a presentation to staff or students.

Remember, you are a gift, be that beacon of light to help support those around you.

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