



Optimistic Thinking

Find Your Anchor

Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

There are certain environments that elicit negative emotions for us. Maybe a certain classroom reminds us of a time we were embarrassed in class. Maybe when you see a red car it reminds you of a time you were in an accident, and it makes you feel scared. But what if instead of tying places or objects to negative memories, we start tying them to positive ones? When you find a place or an object and “anchor” a memory to it, it starts to elicit a positive connection in our brain about that place or that thing. For example, maybe you have a funny memory with a sibling tied to a black cat. Now every time you see a black cat you are reminded of that funny memory, no matter where it is, that cat becomes a memory anchor! Let’s try and find more anchors in our environments to help build up our positive thoughts!

Key Takeaways:

- Students will work on being aware of their surroundings.
- Students will find tangible things in their environments that bring them joy.
- Students will create positive connections with their school or out-of-school time environment.
- Students will increase their positive attitudes towards school.

Duration + Materials:

- 15 Minutes

Key Vocabulary:

- **Elicit-** Evoke or draw out from someone in reaction to one’s own actions or questions.
- **Anchor-** Secure firmly in a position.



Activity:

1. Teachers can use the guiding language to introduce the idea of memory anchors.
2. Teachers can share their environmental memory anchors with their student.
 - a. For example, “This stapler on my desk always reminds me of a time I accidentally stapled my shirt to a test and when I stood up the test was stuck to my sleeve. I did not realize until I got into the hallway, and someone stopped me to tell me! That memory always makes me laugh, even when I am grading papers.”
3. Give the student a moment to access their surroundings and think of some different anchors they can use.
 - a. Allow your student a few moments to draw a picture of their anchor in a notebook or planner, to preserve and remind them of what it is.
4. Use the discussion questions to have a guided discussion around the benefits of having memory anchors.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did anything immediately jump out to you as a memory anchor?
2. Do you find it easier to remember negative memories or positive ones and why?
3. What is a positive memory you have in this classroom?
4. If you found it hard to find a memory anchor, what do you think would make it easier?
5. Do you have memory anchors at home or in other places?

Reinforcement Activities:

1. Be aware of times that lend themselves to “memory anchors” and point them out to students.
2. Be sure to display student work and art in your classroom, as these lend themselves easily to positive memories.