

Grow Your Academic Resilience

Q. Does an Academic Resilience session impact students' confidence in dealing with feedback?

Background:

In early 2020, we developed the **Grow Your Academic Resilience session** to introduce students to mindset theory (Dweck, 2006) and ways to help build resilience through reflection and goal setting. One of the main aims was to encourage greater student autonomy – particularly in relation to **how students engage with their academic feedback**. Talking about academic resilience allowed us the opportunity to discuss what hinders academic development and to focus on ways in which this might be made more manageable.

Themes identified from our research:

Our research identified four key themes which impacted on students' confidence in dealing with their academic feedback. These four themes were:

1. Understanding feedback
2. Emotional response to feedback
3. Benefits to feedback
4. Student autonomy and feedback

What students told us about their experiences of academic feedback...

1. Understanding feedback

"I feel like some feedback is vague and focuses on errors, rather than explaining how it is wrong and how to improve"

"Sometimes the feedback is not specific enough to improve"

"Sometimes academic feedback [...] lacks clear direction"



2. Emotional response to feedback

"[I have a] fear of not being good enough"

"Sometimes academic feedback can be disheartening ..."

"It helps me to know how to improve next time, and any positive points are usually a small confidence boost"

3. Benefits to feedback

"So long as it is constructive, it is a useful tool"

"[...] I see it as a chance to learn from mistakes and improve"

"Most feedback is given to allow you to improve your work, even if it doesn't sound positive it allows you to know what to work on"

4. Student autonomy and feedback

"I am now more aware of what I can do, but still need to go out and do it"

"I understand my own ways of working/ limitations and strengths"

"If I give myself targets from concise feedback I can improve my work, rather than just knowing what to do, I could actually do it"

How we conducted our research:

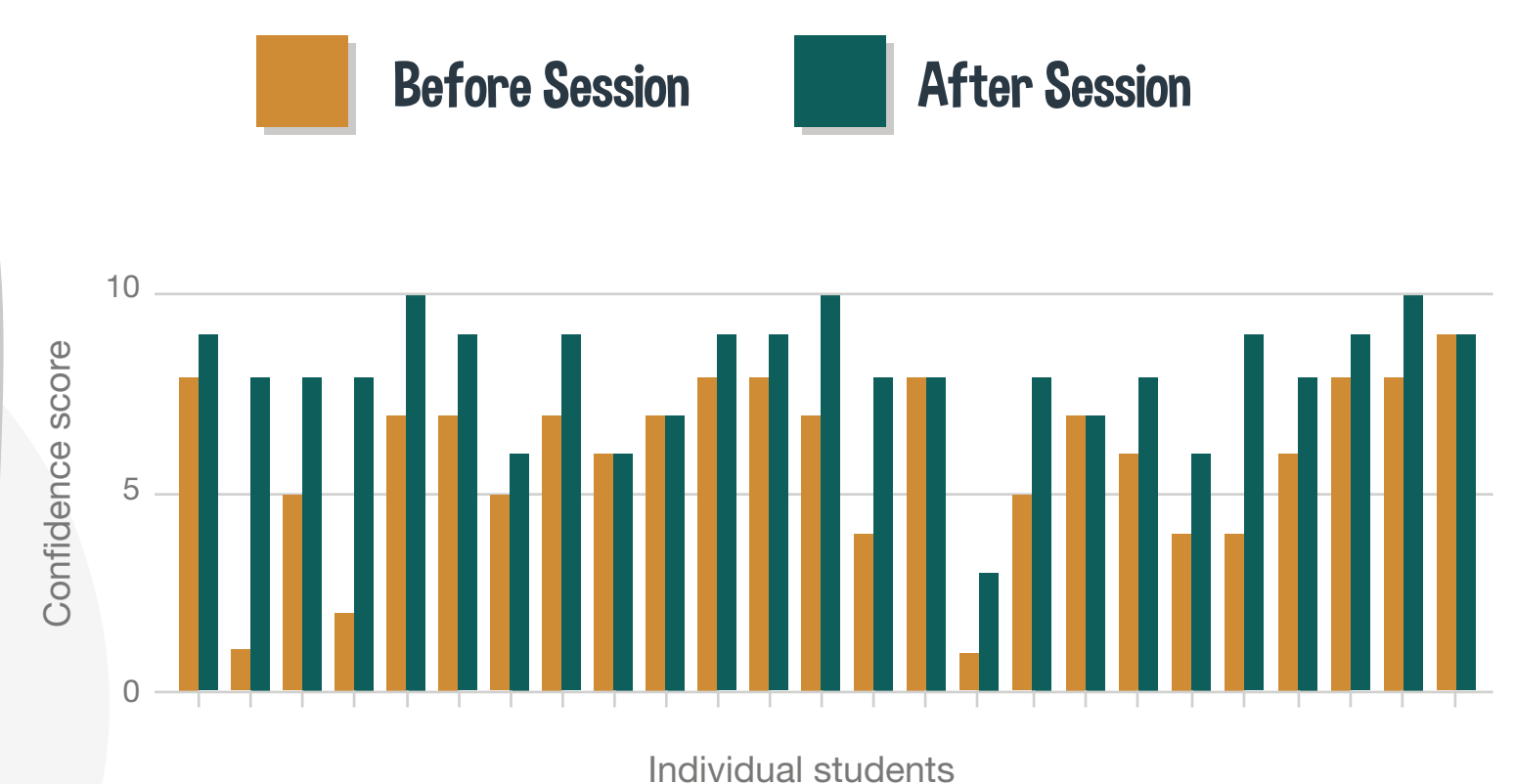
Two EHU module groups were identified to take part in the research project, with a total of 26 participants undertaking the **Academic Resilience sessions**. Students were provided with questionnaires to complete which sought qualitative and quantitative responses.

Students were asked to rate how confident they felt about their own academic resilience, using the sliding scale below. Students responded to this question before and after the **Grow Your Academic Resilience session**.



Findings from our research:

Graph showing individual students' confidence scores both before and after the session...



Positive change in average confidence scores...



Our findings and recommendations:

Our research suggested that attending a **Grow Your Academic Resilience workshop** increased students' confidence levels in how they dealt with their academic feedback. However, it is important to acknowledge that tools associated with Growth Mindset (Dweck, 2006) and Grit (Duckworth, 2017) are not without limitations, or criticism and that there is a limit to what can be 'taught' during a one-hour session.

Whilst we are confident in our approach that anything is better than nothing; an awareness of mindset and how to approach challenges, setbacks and goals can only be a good thing when aiming to build academic resilience. We are keen to investigate this further with a larger student population over the course of an entire student journey.

References

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