SRAENE
Sexual Risk Avoidance Education
National Evaluation

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Tip Sheet

OPRE Report No. #2023-306

Four-Part Written Praise

Co-Regulation Strategies Tip Sheet

Four-Part Written Praise helps create a safe environment where students feel seen, appreciated, and supported in their efforts to learn and grow. The four parts of writing a praise note are: (1) make it personal by using the student's name; (2) praise a specific behavior, effort, or skill; (3) focus your description on a student's effort, accomplishment, or use of a self-regulation skill rather than their natural ability or appearance; and (4) connect the student's action to the bigger picture of the class as a whole or their future.

Jot it down. It can be difficult to remember what behaviors to praise if you write praise notes after class or near the end of your class sessions. Develop a mechanism to recall positive behavior, like using the margins of your class roster to jot down a brief note when you observe a student engaging in praiseworthy action.

Be creative. Written praise doesn't have to take the form of handwritten notes on cards. Identify creative ways to write praise, such as text messages, sticky notes, postcards, bulletin boards, or an appreciation box. Consider incorporating praise notes into the classroom culture by explaining the purpose of the notes during the first class, including the strategy in your group agreements, and encouraging students to praise each other, either in notes or verbally.

Leverage class time. Praise notes don't have to be lengthy. Consider using times during class—like when students are watching a video or doing an activity—to quickly write a four-part praise note.

Document it. Consider keeping copies of your written praises or developing a list of topics to draw on when writing praise notes. These materials can be helpful to reference as you write new notes. Keep track of which students have received notes throughout the semester to ensure coverage and avoid repetition.

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