

- Avoid words like “brilliant”, “genius”, “gifted”
 - Don’t even say how *brilliant* Elizabeth Anscombe is
- Don’t tell anecdotes designed to illustrate how *naturally gifted* someone is
- Praise students for their effort and achievement, not for their inherent talent
 - “You worked so hard on this philosophy paper, and did a terrific job; you should be really proud of your achievement”
 - Not: “You have a real talent for philosophy”

Practical Suggestions for Educators



- Explicitly emphasize to students the importance of working hard at the subject
 - No need to be subtle!
- Tackle ability beliefs head-on:
 - Say “some people think success at philosophy is a matter of natural talent, but really the main thing is sustained effort”
- Don’t comfort students by saying things like:
 - “It’s ok, not everyone is a math person”
 - “You have so many other talents, it’s alright that math isn’t one of them”

Practical Suggestions for Educators



- Have an open conversation about these different ways of thinking about abilities
- Share personal anecdotes about overcoming struggles
 - With students, but *also with colleagues*
 - Remember the problem isn't just with student perception, but with the whole culture
- Challenge people who emphasize raw brilliance
- Start a conversation from the top down
 - Senior academics need to be the first to stand up and say just how much 'blood, sweat, and tears' it took to get us here

Practical Suggestions for Educators

