

3.1 EMOTIONAL AWARENESS, REGULATION AND COMMUNICATION

3.1.1 Emotional Mirror (Think-Pair-Share)

Brief description, and rules of the implementation of the learning activity

This Think-Pair-Share adaptation focuses on children mimicking, identifying, and discussing emotions with partners, helping them both recognize feelings and connect them to personal experiences. This activity works best in a quiet, well-lit room with space for students to work in pairs. Chairs can be arranged in two facing rows or scattered pairs around the room. This simple but powerful partner activity develops emotional awareness and empathy. One child expresses an emotion (verbally or through facial/body cues), and their partner mirrors it back and describes what they think the other is feeling.

Skill focus

Primary Skill Focus

- Emotional awareness, regulation and communication

Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus

- Empathy
- Valuing people and nature

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	10 to 25 children (pairs or small groups)	30 minutes

Proposed step by step implementation of the learning activity

1. Each child draws an emotion card (or the teacher assigns one). They silently act out the emotion in front of their partner, using only facial expressions and body language.
2. The partner guesses the emotion and asks, "When do you feel this way?" The acting child shares a personal example.
3. Each pair shares one example or discovery with the whole group, highlighting the variety of emotional experiences.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: This activity works best in a quiet, well-lit room with space for students to work in pairs. Chairs can be arranged in two facing rows or scattered pairs around the room. A calm and focused atmosphere will support better observation and emotional recognition.

Outdoor: If done outside, choose a quiet area like a covered patio, shaded courtyard, or grassy space with little distraction. Pairs should sit or stand facing each other, slightly apart from other groups. Avoid windy or overly bright environments that may affect visibility or concentration.

How does this learning activity develop this particular skill?

This simple but powerful partner activity develops emotional awareness and empathy. One child expresses an emotion (verbally or through facial/body cues), and their partner mirrors it back and describes what they think the other is feeling.

The process strengthens:

- Emotional expression and decoding,
- Non-verbal communication awareness,
- Empathetic feedback and verbal articulation.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of this activity, students will:

- Recognize and express emotions non-verbally
- Build emotional vocabulary
- Connect emotions to personal experience
- Be better at describing feelings to others.

Suggested use, and practical subject-related examples

This activity can be used in small groups or pairs to foster emotional recognition and communication. It is particularly effective at the start of the day or after emotionally intense activities (e.g., after recess or a conflict). Children take turns mimicking a feeling, while their partner guesses the emotion and asks a follow-up question like “When do you feel that way?” or “What helps you when you feel that emotion?”

Here are some concrete examples:

Example 1 – Step-by-step (Sadness)

- Child A slouches their shoulders, looks down, and sighs quietly.
- Child B observes and guesses: “Are you feeling sad?”
- Child A responds: “Yes.”
- Child B follows up: “When do you feel sad?”
- Child A answers: “When my best friend is absent from school.”

Example 2 – Joy:

A child jumps lightly, smiles wide, and claps. Their partner says, “You’re happy!” The child says, “Yes, I feel that way when we have art class.”

Example 3 – Frustration:

A child crosses their arms, furrows their brow, and lets out a short “Ugh!” sound. Their partner guesses: “Frustrated?” and asks, “What makes you feel that way?” The child replies, “When I can’t finish a puzzle.”

Example 4 – Shyness:

A child hides their face slightly and shrinks their posture. The partner says, “Are you feeling shy?” and the child replies, “Yes, when I meet someone new.”

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Emotion cards
- Optional mirrors for practice

Guiding questions

- Is it easy or hard to show emotions with your face?
- How do emotions look different on different people?
- What emotion do you think your partner is showing right now?
- How can you tell how they're feeling without words?
- Does your partner's face remind you of a feeling you've had before?
- What happens in your body when you mirror this emotion?
- How do you feel when you see someone reflect your expression back to you?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge:** Some children might exaggerate emotions into cartoonish expressions.
Tip: The teacher should encourage real-life accuracy by asking, "How would your face really look if you felt scared?"

Difficulty level tailoring

Teachers can tailor the learning activity to three difficulty levels to meet students' needs.

- **Beginner learners (6-7 years old):** focus on broad, easily recognized emotions.
- **Advanced learners (8-9 years old):** include more nuanced feelings like embarrassment.
- **Expert learners (9-10 years old):** introduce emotion combinations (nervous-excited).

Debriefing and Reflection questions

- Did you learn anything about your own feelings?
- Was it easy or hard to recognize the emotion you were mirroring?
- What did you learn about how emotions show up in faces and bodies?
- How did it feel when someone mirrored your emotion back to you?
- Did your partner interpret your emotion the way you intended?
- How can being a good observer help us be more empathetic friends?