

3.9.3 Gallery walk

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

This is an interactive learning method where students walk around in small groups, station by station (posters, drawings, tasks) placed in different parts of the classroom. As they circulate through the classroom, they observe their peers' ideas and leave constructive feedback using notes, drawings, or symbols. The activity encourages appreciation of diverse perspectives. By engaging with multiple viewpoints, children learn that different opinions can coexist and that every contribution has value. This technique is good for getting children out of their desks, forcing them to connect and speak to each other, and teaching them to value others' work/ideas in a visual, playful way, while making learning visible, social, and engaging.

Skill focus

- **Primary Skill Focus**
 - Valuing People and Nature
- **Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus**
 - Connectedness
 - Critical thinking
 - Emotional regulation

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old students	Whole class in 3-4 small groups	25-30 minutes

Proposed step by step implementation of the learning activity

1. **Preparation (teacher):** Create five - six questions or prompts about the current topic of study and write each one on a piece of chart paper/create a poster. Give the posters to the small groups and ask them to answer the question on the poster, or fill/draw on the poster according to the question.
2. **Creation:** Students create a piece of work in small groups of 3-4 based on the teacher's prompt (e.g., a story illustration, a short environmental study poster). Hang or place the posters made by the students in various places around the classroom to create the stations. Images, or quotes may also be used.
3. **Walk:** Students start walking in groups of 3-4. They spend 3-5 minutes at each station.
4. **Group discussion and Feedback:** Students read or look at the work of the other groups, read the feedback from previous groups, discuss it, and leave their reflection on a post-it (depending on age and writing skills, this can also be a drawing, or using pictures/icons). Any student can have their own separate opinion.

In this process, besides listening to each other and forming a common opinion, it is an important "civic" skill to understand, accept, and respect another person's opinion. It is also important for children to learn that they can have a different opinion and that they can share it safely.

5. **Return:** Everyone goes back to their own work and reads the feedback they received.
6. **Whole-class discussion and debriefing:** Discussing the experiences based on the debriefing questions.

Rules in primary school:

- We talk quietly in the "gallery," whispering to each other in our small groups, like in a real museum.
- Inside the group, we pay attention to each other's thoughts and try to understand what is meaning.
- We approach every displayed piece of work with respect.
- It would be great if we are able to agree together on what we want to leave as feedback as a group. But is it not a must.
- Everyone in the group can have a separate opinion, which the other members of the group must respect. This separate opinion is also placed on the poster as feedback.
- We move forward in the given direction when the teacher gives the signal.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

It is useful to move the desks to the centre of the room (forming a large island or U-shape) to create a wide, clear "walking corridor" along the walls. Secure the 5-6 stations (posters) at a safe distance from each other on the walls, so the groups of 3-4 students can stand around them comfortably and talk quietly without disturbing the children working at the next station.

How does this learning activity develop this particular skill?

The method develops connectedness by giving children physical space and time to interact with each other during lessons (which accounts for the majority of school time), not just during breaks. They do not just sit at their own desks but see and feel that they are part of a larger community.

Valuing people is built in most effectively through the rule that they must listen to each other within the group, agree on a common message, and at the same time, respect separate opinions. respect differing opinions. When they see that a different idea can also be legitimately included on the poster without causing any harm, they learn that difference is not a defect, but a value.

The Gallery Walk organically teaches children the basics of democratic participation, which is a very important part of the valuing people skill, and vice versa. Since every group's or individual's work is displayed equally in the room, children experience equality. Everyone has the right to their own opinion, to "vote" (stick a post-it), and to express their thoughts. They learn that every voice matters in a community, decisions (feedback) must be made together, but the minority opinion (separate opinion) also has a right to exist and a visible place in the system.

For a 6–7-year-old child (first or second grader), speaking in front of the whole class is often scary, which makes shy children stay quiet. However, the "walking" micro-community of 3-4 students gives them a safe, low-risk safety environment. In this close, private space, even the shyest child is braver to share

their ideas with their peers. If the group accepts and jointly posts their idea on the poster, it gives them confidence for speaking in larger communities later on.

In summary, the technique clearly develops mainly the valuing people skill but also the connectedness.

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

1. Understanding level: By using the technique regularly and consciously, we want to achieve that:
 - they consider their classmates' thoughts valuable.
 - children think and act in a way that learn that approach different from their own should not be rejected but rather viewed as a source of inspiration.
 - understand to react constructively to others' thoughts and actions without causing hurt.
 - understand that there can be several correct answers, feelings, or thoughts regarding a problem (or the topic of a poster)
 - they understand that a difference of opinion is a natural thing.
2. Behaviour level:
 - they learn to listen patiently to another person without interrupting.
 - they dare to stand up for their own opinion, even if it differs from the majority.
 - they are able to react to their peers' work in a constructive, encouraging, and respectful way.

Suggested use, and practical subject-related examples

1. Mathematics:
 - Topic: Solving a more complex verb-based exercise or representing a number (e.g., 12) in as many different ways as possible (using a drawing, addition, multiplication, or sticks).
 - Gallery Walk: The walking groups examine the reasoning behind the others' work. They can write a solution on a Post-it note that is missing from the original poster, or mark a star next to the mathematical step they consider the cleverest.
2. Science:
 - Topic: Designing a simple experiment (e.g., what happens when we put a bean in the dark?) or drawing and comparing the life cycles of a flower, tree, or animal.
 - Gallery walk: The children examine the others' hypotheses (assumptions) or drawings. On the sticky notes, they can leave a "Did you know?" fact about the topic or ask the creators a scientific question.
3. Environmental Studies:
 - Topic: Sustainability and environmental protection. Creating posters about how we can conserve water or what we can do to reduce waste at school.
 - Gallery walk: Students can make "pledges" on others' posters. If they see a good idea (e.g., using a water bottle instead of a plastic bottle), they can draw a tick on a post-it notes to indicate that they are committing to it as well.

4. Language and literacy:

- Topic: Making up an alternative ending to a story read together, or drawing a "mind map" of a main character.
- Gallery Walk: The students read the others' story endings. As feedback, they can write down which part was the funniest or most exciting or suggest a new character for the story.

5. Visual and arts:

- Topic: A "real" exhibition of artwork made with a specific technique (e.g., watercolour, collage).
- Gallery Walk: Classic art critique tailored for children. The rule is that they have to find a specific detail they like. For example: "You mixed a very nice blue colour for the sky!" or "The shape you drew there is great!".

6. Health and physical education:

- Topic: The groups have to plan a short, 3-station obstacle course or a morning warmup exercise on paper.
- Gallery Walk: The walking groups go through the others' courses "in their minds". They can write (or draw with a stick figure) an extra challenge or a new warmup exercise on the post-it to add to it.

7. Tinkering:

- Topic: Building an object, bridge, or toy from recycled materials (e.g., paper rolls, boxes). The built 3D prototypes (models) themselves are placed at the stations.
- Gallery Walk: Students walk around and examine the others' structures. The feedback focuses on improvement: "I think your bridge would be even stronger if you put a... under it" or "It would look even better if you coloured the...".

8. Class teacher's lesson:

- Topic: Emotion regulation. There is the name of an emotion at each station (Anger, Sadness, Joy, Fear).
- Gallery Walk: The small groups have to discuss and write/draw on a note: "What helps you calm down when you feel this?". (This is a great place for separate opinions to show up and be respected).

Materials and tools needed for implementation

- A3 or A4 paper for the artwork.
- Post-it (sticky) note pads in different colours.
- Pencils, coloured markers.
- Blu-tack for attaching to the walls.
- Specific materials needed for the subject activities (e.g., printed math problems, short texts, experiment tools).

Guiding questions

- What's the most interesting thing you found at this station?
- Has everyone in your group shared what came to mind when they saw the poster?
- Is there anyone who sees this issue differently than the others? How can we display his or her thoughts so that they are clearly visible?
- What positive message or symbol could you leave on this project that would make you happy?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge:** There are too much pushing and chaos during the walk.
Tip: Set up a strict one-way route, and introduce an agreed quiet signal (e.g., a small bell, or the teacher raises their hand).
- **Challenge:** The noise level rises in the room, small group whispering turns into shouting.
Tip: Use background music! Tell them the rule: "People speak quietly in a museum. If you can no longer hear the soft music over your own voices, it means you are too loud".
- **Challenge:** Children leave negative, hurtful, or teasing messages for each other.
Tip: Introduce the "Only leave what you would be happy to get" rule. Prepare approved positive symbols in advance (e.g., heart = I really like it, star = nice colours).
- **Challenge:** A louder student in the group dominates the others, and only their opinion gets on the note.
Tip: Assign roles within the groups! Have someone be the "Questioner" whose job is to ask before moving on: "Peter, you haven't spoken yet, what do you think about this?".
- **Challenge:** Students are afraid to share their separate opinion because they are worried about their group mates' reaction.
Tip: Introduce the concept of the "Separate Opinion Note" (e.g., the pink post-it). Tell them that a group is really clever if they can stick a pink note too, because it means they can think in many different ways. Praise those who stand up for their own idea.
- **Challenge:** Arriving at a station, students feel the groups before them have already written everything down and they have no new ideas.
Tip: Allow them not to write a new one in this case, but to find one of the existing post-its they strongly agree with and draw a star or a checkmark next to it. This also lets them practice valuing others' thoughts.
- **Challenge:** Hanging up the work takes too much time away from the lesson.
Tip: Make it part of the task: children should find an empty spot in the room and secure their own work with the blue-tack provided).

Difficulty level tailoring

Teachers can tailor the Gallery Walks to three difficulty levels to meet students' needs.

- **Beginner learners (6-7 years old):** (Grades 1-2): The children can barely read or write yet. They mainly draw on the posters. The groups do not write text feedback, but stick tiny, pre-cut symbols (e.g., smiley face, lightbulb for a smart idea). A separate opinion means if someone in the 3-person group wants to stick a different kind of sticker than the available pre-cut symbols or draw something else next to the poster.

- **Advanced learners (8-9 years old):** (Grade 3): Students express themselves with shorter sentences. They can write a shared, agreed-upon compliment phrase (1-2 words) next to the poster. The group is able to handle sticking two different post-its at the station: one they agreed on, and one with a team member's separate opinion.
- **Expert learners (9–10 years old):** (Grade 4): The children can read and understand the feedback left by previous groups. They can debate and argue within the small group. They can explain their separate opinion in text form (e.g., "We think differently because...") and also leave questions for the original creators of the poster.

Debriefing and Reflection questions

1. On connectedness:

- How did you feel when you saw that all the class's work is out on the wall together?
- What did it feel like to return to your own station (poster) and see how much the others added to it?
- Did you feel during the walk that even though you were in small groups, the whole class was still working together, and everyone's mark is on the walls?
- Did you feel like you are part of a big team?

2. On valuing people:

- What did you learn today from your peers' work and opinions?
- Was there a situation in your small group when someone had a different opinion, and how did you handle that?
- How did you manage to discuss this peacefully and write it on the note?
- What good or surprising idea did you learn today from a classmate that you wouldn't have thought of yourself?