

### 3.5.3 Say and show

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

It is a growth mindset development activity. The children learn how to give authentic and credible (expressed through words and body language – said and shown) positive and supportive feedback on their peers' work (e.g., drawings, math problems, reading out loud, etc.) that praises the effort and process and suggests strategies for improvement in case of mistakes.

The children work in pairs or small groups: they praise each other's work or suggest improvements. The teacher will role-model, teach, provide a framework, and guide the process, and at the end, a joint discussion will help with reflection.

#### Skill focus

- **Primary Skill Focus**
  - Resilience
- **Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus**
  - Emotional awareness, regulation, and communication
  - Empathy
  - Creativity
  - Valuing people and nature

| Age group     | Student number | Duration     |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| 6 + years old | class size     | 5-10 minutes |

#### Proposed step by step implementation of the learning activity

##### Initially - instruction:

The teacher teaches and practices the process. They make sure that everyone understands the difference between praising the process and praising the person. They make it a habit to listen to and thank each other for feedback.

The teacher will role-model, teach, provide a framework, and guide the process,

A brief discussion about what it means to praise well and how to phrase it appropriately if something needs to be improved.

The teacher (if necessary) gives two examples:

- positive praise,
- and supportive, constructive feedback.

At the end, a joint discussion will help with reflection.

### If the children already know what to do:

During the lesson, the teacher regularly gives the children the opportunity to evaluate each other's work (drawings, answers, classwork at the end of the lesson, solving math problems, etc.). The teacher stops the lesson at a point where the children can give feedback.

1. The teacher stops the lesson and asks the children to give feedback. For example, the children receive each other's drawings, then:
  - first, they give positive feedback, praise
  - then they make a supportive comment (if necessary) in the manner they have learned, to help make improvements.
2. While giving feedback, the children also pay attention to ensuring that their body language—such as eye contact, friendly facial expressions, and open posture—supports and underpins what they are saying
3. Collectively, they briefly discuss how it felt to give and receive feedback, how they were able to support what they were saying with body language, and what they found easy or difficult about the process. (in the case of the non-experienced children it has to be done right after the feedback, in the case of the advanced children it could be at the end of the lesson)

### Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Can be done indoors or outdoors. Does not require any special room layout.

### How does this learning activity develop this particular skill?

This learning activity is an important growth mindset development activity and provides a basis for children to think about their own and their peers' performance in an open and developable way. In the long term, this develops children's problem-solving skills, creativity, cognitive flexibility, and in total, their resilience, i.e., their ability to "bounce back" in the face of failure (academic or otherwise) and other difficulties. In the process, children regularly praise each other's work in terms of effort and process and offer suggestions for improvement. In the process, children regularly praise each other's work in terms of effort and process and offer suggestions for improvement. Praising their own and others' work and efforts develops a mindset (themselves and others) that they are capable of progressing, adapting, and successfully managing unexpected circumstances, setbacks, and difficulties. This learning activity helps children in a safe, guided way to:

- experience, learn, and practice evaluating and "praising" the efforts, specific work strategies ("process praise") and results of others and themselves, rather than praising their good qualities ("person praise");
- see the success in the work process and not in their personal qualities and skills.
- develop the awareness that they can directly influence their successes and failures through their own efforts, and that they are able to overcome problems in the case of failure;
- develop an understanding that failures arise from the process/activity and can be corrected
- experience that difficulties and failings are opportunities for development, and react flexibly to supportive criticism;
- develop their perseverance, cognitive flexibility, and resilience, and learn that challenges and failures are learning opportunities, not a personal failure.

All of these contribute to the development of resilient individual characteristics: children will be able to cope with stress, conflicts, and changes in later life with greater confidence, balance, and flexibility.

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

As a result of completing this task, students will:

- be able to evaluate their peers' work independently in a positive and stimulating way, emphasizing the process and effort;
- be able to formulate development/ bounce-back strategies for others and themselves (with the help of teachers if necessary) at their own level;
- be able to view their own failures as opportunities for development and accept constructive criticism flexibly;
- be able to give feedback in a way that's coherent with their words and body language;
- be able to listen to and accept others' opinions in an understanding way (active listening)
- be able to give supportive feedback, i.e., communicate in a supportive way about others' work
- be able to build supportive, collaborative relationships and accept support and help when needed.

## Suggested use, and practical subject-related examples

The activity is widely applicable and can be easily adapted to different lessons.

Classroom applications:

- Visual culture: giving brief, specific praise for each other's drawings and making subtle suggestions.
- Language and literature: evaluating compositions, stories, or reading of short texts with a few positive comments and a suggestion for improvement.
- Techniques and design: quick feedback on finished projects (what went well, what could be improved).
- Environmental science: giving simple, supportive feedback after group posters or presentations.
- Math: brief evaluation of solutions ("it was a good idea to try it this way," "you could try something else").

Extracurricular/social applications

- In class community-building situations where the goal is to strengthen a positive atmosphere. For example: sitting in a circle, each child praises the person sitting next to them for a small thing ("I liked that you helped your classmate today").
- At the end of project work, to acknowledge each other's contributions. For example: groups briefly highlight one strength each ("You helped a lot with your ideas").
- In short daily routines, such as morning or evening circles. At the end of the day, one child praises a classmate in one sentence for something they noticed that day.
- Any other school or community achievement.

## Materials and tools needed for implementation

Student work (drawings, writings, creations, posters, or any other work or task that can be evaluated)

Optional: A board or shared space where the class can collect good examples of positive feedback (e.g., a "praise wall") – optional

## Guiding questions

- What do you find most interesting or creative about your classmate's work?
- What do you do to do this task well? Can we say this in a way that helps your classmate improve?
- Do you think your partner did better this time than last time? How could we praise them for this?
- What did you notice about how your classmate worked? (e.g., they tried hard, tried a new solution, spent a lot of time on one detail)

## Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge:** Children tend to give overly general praise ("it's pretty").  
**Tip:** The teacher should give examples of specific feedback or help them formulate it. "Tell me exactly what you liked! The colours? The shapes? The idea?"
- **Challenge:** A child makes overly critical, negative comments.  
**Tip:** It is worth helping to reframe the criticism in a supportive way: "What could you suggest while remaining kind?"
- **Challenge:** A debate arises about the feedback.  
**Tip:** It is the teacher's job to guide the conversation back to the rules: "Remember: one thing you liked and one thing that helps."
- **Challenge:** The group has difficulty keeping the conversation on track.  
**Tip:** It is advisable to agree on a time frame in advance: 1 minute for praise, 1 minute for suggestions, 1 minute for summary.
- **Challenge:** The body language of the speaking student is not consistent with what they are saying (for example, they praise but turn away or grimace).  
**Tip:** The other children can be involved: "What advice would you give to make body language more friendly?" A short brainstorming session can help.
- **Challenge:** The child praises the person ("you are very clever") rather than the performance.  
**Tip:** The teacher can gently guide the child: "Can you tell me exactly what went well? The colouring? The details?" This way, the child learns to focus on performance.
- **Challenge:** The child compares the performance to another child's during feedback.  
**Tip:** It is very important not to leave room for comparisons to others! Neither positive nor negative. Always measure performance against themselves and help the child giving praise to see the progress. E.g., multiplication was faster now than a few days ago. The learning was worth it!

## Difficulty level tailoring

- **Beginners (6-7 years old):** – Learners with low resilience: The goal of the activity: the children should feel safe giving feedback, practice giving positive praise and helpful suggestions. The teacher gives specific examples of how to praise or make suggestions about their peers' work. The children give short, simple feedback (for example, they highlight one thing they like or make a small suggestion), and the teacher continuously supports their efforts. Feedback is brief and positive, and the teacher helps with appropriate wording, and prompt guiding questions. If a classmate gives critical feedback, or if a child cannot find the right words to express praise, or if a classmate does not accept their suggestion, the teacher provides encouraging feedback. The teacher continuously provides role models and praises the students more than usual in an appropriate manner. In this way, a "culture of praise" and learning from mistake climate is developed in the class.
- **Advanced learners (8-9 years old):** – Learners with moderate resilience: The aim of the activity is to encourage independent ideas for coping strategies, practice constructive feedback, reinforce the feeling of playing an active role in success, and deal with failure in a resilient way. The children give feedback based on their own experiences and ideas, and the teacher only helps with encouraging questions when necessary ("What would you highlight in your partner's work?", "How could you say what else could be added?"). Feedback can be more detailed, covering several points, and children encourage each other. The teacher helps them reflect on their feelings and solutions ("How did you feel when your partner thought differently? What could help you to keep trying?"). The activity promotes the expression of children's independent ideas, listening to each other, flexible adaptation, and the safe practice of giving feedback.
- **Experts (9-10 years old):** – Learners with high resilience: The aim of the activity is to promote conscious cooperation, creative problem solving, independent practice of giving and receiving feedback, and independent planning of coping strategies. Children independently develop feedback for more complex works and, if necessary, help their peers in the process of coping strategies. Feedback may include praise, suggestions, and questions that encourage their peers to think („Why did you think that? How could the picture be even more colourful?"). Children experience individual failure and develop solutions consciously: if their feedback misses the mark, they try again in a different way, and if they receive negative feedback on their own work, they try to think through possible changes. The teacher only helps when necessary. They actively follow the process, but the focus is on reflection and reinforcement of the process ("It's valuable that you worked together and shared your opinions, even if not all suggestions were accepted immediately").

## Debriefing and Reflection questions

- Why is it important for everyone to have the opportunity to express their opinion?
- How did you feel when your classmate praised your work?
- How did you feel when your classmate said something about your work that you didn't like? Was it easy or difficult for you to listen to that?
- What helped you respond to your partner's work in a supportive way?
- Why is it important to be open to feedback from others?
- What will you take away from what your partner said?
- How did you feel when you thanked them for their feedback?