

Perfectionism - Intermediate High

Positive Psychology Learning Outcomes: Students will recognize the value of mistakes in language learning, identify the three types of perfectionism, identify ways to combat perfectionism, and create goals to respond to mistakes positively as a class. Language Learning Outcomes: Students will listen for specific information, actively participate in conversations through proper responses, and narrate/describe in past tense a personal experience.

Lesson Information

Positive Psychology Learning Outcomes

Students will...

1. Recognize the value of mistakes in language learning
2. Identify the three types of perfectionism
3. Identify ways to combat perfectionism
4. Create goals to respond to mistakes positively as a class

Language Learning Outcomes

Students will...

1. listen for specific information.
2. actively participate in conversations through proper responses.
3. narrate/describe in past tense a personal experience.

Materials Needed

- [Perfectionism Slides](#)
- [The Perils of Perfectionism](#)
- [Perfectionism vs Doing Things Well.pdf](#)
- [Failure - Meet the Robinsons - Keep Moving Forward](#)
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Homework: [Measure of Perfectionism.pdf](#)

Overview

Everyone makes mistakes in life, especially when learning something new. However, some of us have high expectations of ourselves, want to be perfect, and not allow mistakes in our lives. Although aiming high can motivate and push us, it may sometimes pull us back. Making mistakes is important for language learning; without mistakes, we do not notice what we still lack and how we can improve. Therefore, while we are on this language-learning path, we must learn to accept our mistakes and know that wanting to be perfect is a dangerous goal.

Activate Background Knowledge

Spot the Difference Game:

- Show students the two pictures of the Eiffel Tower ([Link](#)).
- Give them one minute to study the pictures and see how many of the five differences they can spot.
- At the end of the minute, discuss the differences and see if students were able to identify all five differences in the pictures.
- There are more pictures [HERE](#) if you want to do more.

If they focused close enough on the individual elements of the images, students were probably able to successfully find most, if not all, of the differences in these pictures. Ask students the following questions:

- During the one minute you were looking for differences in the pictures, did you notice the beauty of the picture?
- Did you think of a time when you may have visited the Eiffel Tower or about possibly visiting in the future?
- Did you think about what you know about the history or significance of the structure?

Explain to students that while we are very focused on getting things done perfectly and not making any mistakes, we may lose sight of a better picture. That's why it is ok to make mistakes. When we are not too focused on doing things perfectly, we learn to appreciate things more.

Activity 1: Listening/Speaking

No one likes mistakes, but we all make mistakes learning a language. How can we remove the thought of wanting to do things perfectly?

Watch the following video. Have students pay attention and write down the

- three types of perfectionism and
- the three tips to help combat perfectionism

[The Perils of Perfectionism](#)

<https://edtechbooks.org/-EWe>

After watching the video, have students discuss the following questions with a partner.

- What are the three types of perfectionism?
- What are the three tips to help combat perfectionism?
- Which type of perfectionism are you most prone to?
- Can you think of examples of each of the three types of perfectionism?
- What are some ways you use to combat harmful perfectionism?

Activity 2: Speaking

Have students work in small groups (3-4 students) and give each group a handout [Perfectionism vs Doing Things Well.pdf](#). Complete the following task as a group.

- Read each of the statements and decide which type of perfectionism it is.
- What are some ways that were mentioned in [The Perils of Perfectionism](#) that can help combat these thoughts?

Once partners/groups have had a chance to complete the activity, review the answers as a class.

- Activity taken from: <https://edtechbooks.org/-jLTv>

While there are many different ways we can use to fight against perfectionism, one is to be “resilient,” which means “not giving up after failing.” When we fail, we keep going.

Activity 3: Listening/Speaking

As we mentioned before, mistakes are essential in language learning. Explain to students that perfectionism (wanting and working toward being perfect) is especially dangerous in language learning. Ask students to list negative effects of perfectionism at school in pairs or in groups of three.

Then, introduce the following ways in which perfectionism can bring you down (retrieved from: <https://edtechbooks.org/-BRIB>).

- Unrealistic goals
 - Perfectionists tend to set goals that are too high, which makes them fail.
- Procrastination
 - Perfectionism often leads to procrastination. You feel like you can't start a project until you've looked up more sources, interviewed more people, and come up with the greatest introduction of all time. The pressure of making things perfect keeps you from getting started.
- Depression and anxiety
 - Research shows that perfectionism fuels mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.
- Toxic thinking
 - All or nothing thinking
 - Seeing only the bad or the mistake in a situation
 - Focusing too much on the outcome instead of the process

Show the clip below from the movie "Meet the Robinsons." Some background information about this clip is that Lewis has been working on a new invention to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and is about to show his family. Unfortunately, it fails. Before watching the clip, ask students to predict what the movie would be about by answering the following questions:

- What do you think Lewis' family said when his invention exploded?
- What does it mean to keep moving forward?

[Failure - Meet the Robinsons - Keep Moving Forward](#)

<https://youtu.be/V3UqEps1r5E>

After watching the video, ask them to respond to the following questions with the same group.

- What did they say when Lewis's invention exploded?
- What does it mean to keep moving forward?
- Do you think Lewis would behave differently if his family did not react to his mistake this way? Why or why not?
- In what ways can mistakes and failure be beneficial?
- Describe a time when you learned from a mistake and became better.
- How can taking risks and not being afraid to fail to help you be a better language learner?

Activity 4: Listening

In our classroom, we should be celebrating mistakes. Encouraging others/yourself when they/you make mistakes is a “mindful” way to fight perfectionism. You don’t need to feel embarrassed if you say the wrong thing.

- Have you ever been encouraged to keep going after making a mistake or failing? How did you feel?
- How can we celebrate each other's mistakes in class?

We can now set some class goals together for how the teacher/students will respond when another student makes a mistake (e.g. don’t laugh, say encouraging phrases, “good job!” “it’s ok to make a mistake,” etc.)

Activity 5: Listening/Speaking

Play the 4 minute *Good Morning, I Love You* video with guided meditation.

<https://youtu.be/CqxNevDwMM4>

Have students join the meditation practice as they watch. Encourage students to focus and practice self-compassion rather than perfectionism as they participate.

Homework

Measure your perfectionism in [Measure of Perfectionism.pdf](#).

Research at least three highly successful people who failed before succeeding. What were they trying to accomplish? What and how many mistakes did they make before succeeding? What had they learned throughout the process? How can learning more about these people help you cope with your perfectionism? Be prepared to share the stories of these people with the class.

Follow-Up

Tuesday:

Report on the three highly successful people they have done research on with the class.

Wednesday:

Discussion question: An ancient Chinese proverb says, "Failure is the mother of success." What does this quote mean to you? Think of an experience where you would not have succeeded without the mistakes you made before. Describe that experience to a partner.

Thursday:

Follow up on the students' experience on responding to their friends or classmates' mistakes.

- How did you feel when you responded positively to others' mistakes?
- How did your classmates feel when you gave them a positive response?
- Have you also seen a change in accepting your own mistakes?



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