

Perfectionism - Intermediate Low

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 about 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 about a personal experience.

Materials Needed

- [Failure - Meet the Robinsons - Keep Moving Forward](#)
- [Ease Perfectionism: Managing Our Own High Expectations](#)

Overview

Perfectionism is having unrealistic expectations and thinking and feeling negatively when those expectations are not met. In other words, perfectionism is like a toxic game of Spot the Difference. We may compare ourselves to a picture of how we think we should be and identify all the ways we fail to measure up. This way of thinking is dangerous and destructive. Tell students that today we will talk about perfectionism.

Activate Background Knowledge

Ask students to discuss the following questions with a partner. Before they begin to discuss, model possible answers for students.

- Describe a big mistake you made in the past. Think about the following questions as you brainstorm your answer.
 - **When, why, and where** did the mistake happen?
 - **How** did the incident start? **Who** was/were involved?
 - **What** happened? **What** result(s) did the mistake have? **What** did you learn from this mistake?
- *Ex. In my elementary school, we did in-class speed math competitions once per month. I had never lost in this competition. This time, as usual, I was the first one to complete. However, since I was careless, the numeral number 6 looked like a 0 on my paper. My teacher marked that wrong despite my effort of explaining to her that it was 6. She let the second student win that competition. That was the first time I lost in a math competition.*
 - Have you ever repeated this mistake?
- *Ex. No, I now make sure all my answers are neatly written.*
 - Share with the class that many will say no because of “fear of embarrassment.”
 - Define the word *embarrassment* (noun).
- *Ex. a feeling of self-consciousness, shame, or awkwardness.*
- Explain the different forms of the following words.
 - *Embarrassed* (adj): *Ex. feeling or showing embarrassment.*
 - *Embarrassing* (adj): *Ex. causing embarrassment.*

Explain to students that being aware of our mistakes and accepting them can help us improve our language abilities.

Activity 1: Speaking

Everyone makes mistakes learning a language. Sometimes mistakes can make us feel embarrassed, but it's good to look at our mistakes positively instead of negatively. Read the following statement with your students:

"Making mistakes is the best way to learn a language because it's the best way to learn, period." (Lyons, 2018, para. 3) [Link](#)

After reading the statement, ask students to discuss the following questions with a partner. Focus on how mistakes help you learn and grow as you think of these mistakes.

- Do mistakes help you learn?
- Think of mistakes you have made while speaking English.
- How do you feel when you make mistakes?
- Can the other person still understand you when you make mistakes?
- How do other people respond to your mistakes?
- What do you learn from mistakes?

Activity 2: Speaking

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>).

- Impossible goals
 - Perfectionists tend to set goals that are too high, which makes them fail.
- Delaying or postponing to do something
 - 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.
- Making you feel sad and nervous
 - Research shows that perfectionism fuels mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.
- Negative 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

Activity 3: Listening

Show the clip "Ease Perfectionism: Managing Our Own High Expectations." Before watching the clip, ask students to brainstorm ways we can fight against perfectionism. List the methods on the board.

[Ease Perfectionism: Managing Our Own High Expectations](#)

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

Ask students to see if the list mentioned by Dora matches with theirs on the board. Emphasize that one way to fight against perfectionism is to be "resilient," which means "not giving up after failing." When we fail, we keep going.

Activity 4: Listening/Speaking

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?

Activity 5: Speaking

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.)

Homework

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? 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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