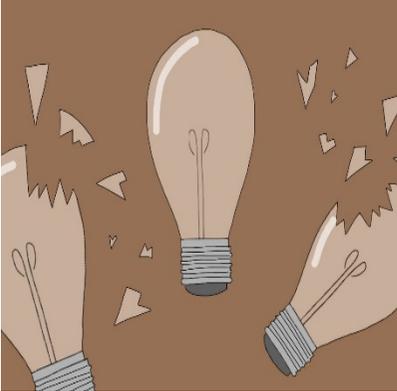


| Level up Mindsets | What is it? | Application of this activity | How does it help learners to make progress? | Teacher reflections from this activity |
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| Process Praise |  | <p>Praising children for their ability is damaging. That is the conclusion to be drawn from the work of Professor Carol Dweck on mindsets. She argues that praising children for being 'clever' or 'intelligent' does not signpost the reasons why learners succeed or how to improve. Instead her research proposes that teachers should use descriptive praise. Descriptive praise is probably the most powerful teaching tool. It involves describing accurately back to a learner what you have seen them doing and explaining to them how they will benefit from the action they took.</p> | <p>Instead of saying to a learner 'your work is fantastic' replace it with 'You managed to put all the full stops at the right place in the sentences. That makes it easier for the reader to understand your story.' Being clear on why learners are being praised helps them to be much more focused about what they need to do more of, to make further progress. As one English teacher noted in horror, she was praising learners for the quantity of their writing rather than its quality!</p> | <p><i>Why not conduct a praise audit in your classroom?</i></p> <p><i>How often is praise from adults in the classroom 'ability' focussed?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent are learners clear about why they are being praised?</i></p> <p><i>Do the rewards systems in your class make clear to learners why they have been rewarded?</i></p> |
| No grade marking |  | <p>Grading work was an area that experts such as Professors Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam found to be a barrier to assessment for learning. Another study by Professor Ruth Butler identified that learning gains were greatest for learners when presented with only comments for completed work as opposed to marks only or a combination of marks and comments. Giving learners grades on their work effectively blinds them from the improvements that they can still make.</p> | <p>When learners get graded work, they tend to ignore developmental advice from their teacher and instead seek to use their grades to compare themselves with their peers in the class. Forcing learners to focus on the developmental advice is crucial to them to become focused on improving rather than comparing themselves to others.</p> | <p><i>Take a pile of exercise books from your class. Have a flick through. Do your learners act on the written feedback you give? Or do you find yourself writing the same comments repeatedly?</i></p> <p><i>Why not experiment by giving back assessed work without grades and give learners the task of improving their work using your comments?</i></p> |

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| <p>Failing heroes</p> |  | <p>Learners often perceive that people who are experts such as famous sports people or musicians were born brilliant. They have got where they are through their innate talent and ability. Some learners think that we teachers are the same! They don't see the many hours of practice, the importance of listening to and acting on feedback and the importance of good teaching as the true real reasons behind the achievement of high levels of performance. Making learners aware of the importance of persistence, practice, and acting on feedback is crucial to developing growth mindsets.</p> | <p>Showing learners how even experts in different fields failed, had setbacks and learnt from them can be powerful. For example, one teacher in a primary school in Liverpool showed her class a picture of Everton and England footballer Leighton Baines and a quote from him 'I wasn't even the best player in my youth team.' She then challenged the class to identify what Baines had done to help him go from this point to playing for England. The class then reflected on how learning to be an international footballer was like learning in school.</p> | <p><i>Who are the heroes of your learners? How can you use their learning journey to help learners see the importance of persistence?</i></p> <p><i>How can you share your own mistakes and setbacks to help learners see the importance of learning from feedback?</i></p> <p><i>Malcolm Gladwell in his book Outliers estimated that it takes 10,000 hours to develop world class performance. How many of our learners realise this?</i></p> |
| <p>Celebrating mistakes</p> |  | <p>As Thomas Edison once famously said about his many attempts to invent the light bulb. "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Create ways learners can celebrate mistakes. This may include a section in the back of the book / folder / learning log where they reflect on the mistake. Look for this and reward it as vital learning process. Award merits/stars for the best mistake of the week (and share some mistakes of your own to show your humility).</p> | <p>Mistakes are crucial to learning. The chances are that if a learner gets everything right first time then the level of challenge is too low. Some learners are fearful of starting work until they get re-assurance that what they are going to do is correct. When they make a mistake, a crucial and recognisable learning point has been reached. For many this is the time they feel a sense of failure and employ defensive strategies. But we can train learners to think about mistakes differently.</p> | <p><i>How willing are your learners to offer answers when they aren't sure if they are right?</i></p> <p><i>Do they feel inhibited for fear of derision from their peers?</i></p> <p><i>One teacher we work with shares examples of his own work and challenges learners to 'spot the teacher mistakes'. How can you model how great it is to make mistakes?</i></p> |

Learners with a fixed mindset wants to 'look smart' even if it means not learning a thing in the process. For them, each task is a challenge to their self-image, and each setback becomes a personal threat. So they avoid the sorts of experiences necessary to grow and flourish in any endeavour. By contrast, learners with a growth mindset take necessary risks and regard mistakes as a chance to learn.

The ideas within this 4by4 come from teachers who have gone through the Outstanding Teaching Intervention (OTI). To find out more about OTI or our other courses contact us at www.malit.org.uk