



### Workshop goals:

- Downplay mistakes and the child's fear of doing something wrong.
- Understand that mistakes are part of the learning process.
- Encourage trying it several times over and give timely feedback.

### Take-home message for the children:

- The brain learns by trial-and-error.
- Mistakes are as informative, and useful, as successes for our brain.
- Each essay is a small risk taking and promotes my learning.
- The more curious to learn and understand I am, the more progress I will make.

### Theoretical background for the teacher:

The brain learns by trial-and-error. Mistakes are as informative, and useful, as successes for our brain. We learn by trial -and-error and by correcting those errors. If you do this in class openly and often, it can help students to slowly overcome their inner hurdles. Downplaying a mistake encourages students to take risks more often, which will stimulate their progress.

Mistakes are biologically programmed to be uncomfortable, so that you don't make them again. Making a negative judgement worse (mistake = fault, bad!) is not only useless but counter-productive, increasing the risk of students avoiding learning. It's more helpful to welcome mistakes as an expected part of the learning process and make students aware of their mistakes when they are making them. They should then be corrected as soon as possible. That is why it is so important to provide answer sheets right after exams and encourage self-correction.

Instead of focusing on what isn't working, students need more to know what they should do next in order to succeed the next step. *"And what should I do now?"*. This is part of a positive approach of motivation and symbolic reward (words of encouragement and desire to advance).

## Outline of the workshop and suggested activities

### Adjust and adapt according to childrens' age

Children are welcomed

Presentation of goals to children

Watching video with children

**Discussion:** guide the children to discuss what they have seen and what they remember 20 to 30 min.

Questions about the film to introduce the subject to the children:

1. What happened?
2. What do the characters feel?
3. What do they think?
4. How do they react?
5. What do they do?

## Activities – Workshop 9

### Is it bad to make mistakes?

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#### Mistakes: How do I feel? (cf worksheet 9A)

10 to 15 mins

When it comes to mistakes and learning, even teachers have different reactions: Either they feel stressed by it, or they open themselves to discovery and exploration. By inviting the children to imagine being in Ms Sandal's class, they become aware of the emotions they and the others are experiencing, the thoughts they are entertaining and what consequences they might have on their learning process.

They can complete the proposed worksheets either orally or in writing, after which they can be hung up in the classroom.

#### The learning ladder (cf worksheet 9B)

10 mins

The metaphor of the learning ladder aims to downplay making mistakes, encouraging the children to progress in their learning in whatever subject or skill. You can make notes on this worksheet and use it as a tool for a student's personal progress.

#### Learning: A little brain exercise (cf worksheet 9C)

20 mins

This little brain exercise is suitable for older children (9 to 12 years old). Start out by offering your students to complete tables 1 through 4. Order is important, because it allows them to start with the most automated binary statements: "Success is good. / Mistakes are bad." Gradually, the exercise engages the children in reflection to bring more nuance and relativity. They will better understand the role of error as part of the learning process.

You can encourage your students to come up with as many ideas as possible to complete the table, even if the ideas are a bit out there. Humour helps us take a step back from the more difficult emotions and helps us turn towards our adaptive intelligence, the famous SuperCortex.

#### The tale of the six blind men and the elephant (cf worksheet 9D)

20 to 30 mins

This Indian tale invites us to reflect and debate on what are mistakes and what is actually the truth. Every blind man has his own "vision" of what an elephant is. They all learn from the others' perceptions.

## Conclusion

Activities can be concluded with reflection time with the children: what do you remember, what have you understood...?

Ask the children to make a decision that they will then present to the group.

Each child makes a decision: "I decide to...", "I will..."