FOSTERING STUDENT'S SELF-ESTEEM = SUCCESS IN EDUCATION AND LIFE
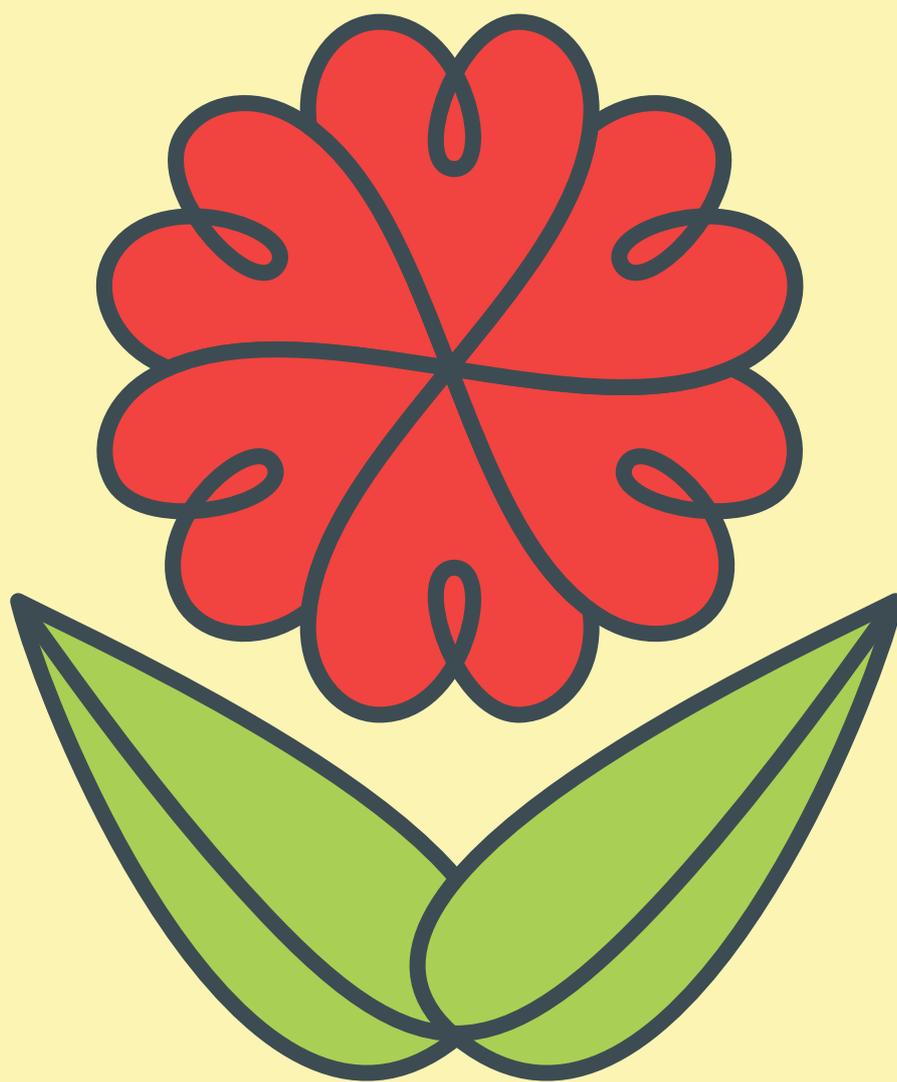
THE METHODOLOGY

This methodology "Fostering Student's Self-Esteem = Success in Education and Life" have been developed in the framework of the project "HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM – *Developing Healthy Self-Esteem in Students through Self-Knowledge by Applying Innovative Tools and Methods in the Educational Process*", co-financed by the European Union under the Erasmus+ programme, project No. 2024-2-LT01-KA210-SCH-000295335 by project partnership, which consist of:

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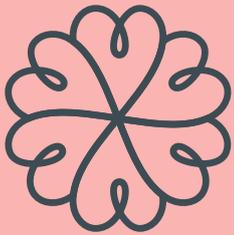
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Dětská school (Czech Republic)

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CONTENT

GLOSSARY

Affirmations

Positive, intentional statements used to reinforce self-worth, shift mindset, and support emotional well-being.

Communication competence

The ability to express oneself clearly and respectfully, listen actively, and build constructive interpersonal relationships.

Constructive criticism

Feedback aimed at helping someone improve by focusing on specific behaviour or actions rather than personal traits.

Critical thinking

The ability to objectively evaluate information, identify biases, assess arguments, and make reasoned decisions.

Emotional awareness

The ability to identify, label, and understand one's emotional experiences and their sources.

Emotional intelligence

The capacity to recognise, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others in a constructive way.

Emotional well-being

A state of emotional balance in which a person feels safe, supported, and able to manage everyday challenges and social connections positively.

Empathy

The ability to understand, feel, and respond to the emotions and experiences of others with care and respect.

Internal dialogue

The ongoing stream of thoughts and self-talk that influences a person's emotional state, motivation, and self-perception.

Motivation

The internal or external drive that encourages a person to pursue goals, learn, or change behaviour.

Negative thoughts

Automatic, often unhelpful or distorted beliefs about oneself, others, or the world that can undermine confidence and emotional stability.

Positive thinking

A mindset that emphasises strengths, solutions, and opportunities rather than focusing on problems or limitations.

Psychological resilience

The mental and emotional strength to cope with stress, overcome setbacks, and return to a stable state of functioning.

Resilience

The capacity to recover from difficulties, adapt to change, and maintain emotional balance in the face of adversity.

Self-awareness

The ability to recognise one's own thoughts, emotions, behaviour, and values and understand their influence on decisions and relationships.

Self-confidence

The belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish tasks based on past experience and self-knowledge.

Self-esteem

A person's internal sense of self-worth and value, including the belief in one's right to be accepted and one's ability to cope and contribute.

**Self-reflection**

The process of analysing and learning from one's own thoughts, behaviour, and experiences to foster personal growth.

Social skills

A set of abilities that facilitate effective interaction, cooperation, conflict resolution, and relationship building.

Subconscious

The part of the mind that operates below conscious awareness, influencing thoughts, feelings, and behaviour.
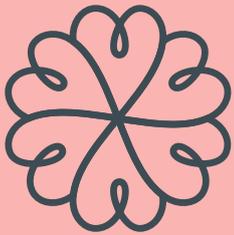
INTRODUCTION AND THEORY

In today's education system, there is an increasing emphasis on the need to balance academic achievement with the development of students' personalities. While learning outcomes and progress remain important, a growing perspective asserts that educating young people should involve not only the transmission of knowledge but also the nurturing of emotional well-being, self-awareness, and self-esteem. This integrated approach strengthens students' inner motivation, confidence, and self-awareness – laying a solid foundation for future academic success and social maturity.

This methodological material provides self-reflection methods, practical tools, and techniques to help teachers integrate principles of social and emotional learning into their educational practises. These approaches are directed toward students' inner world, encouraging self-reflection, emotional awareness, goal-setting, value clarification, constructive communication, and self-confidence.

The methods fall into three main categories:

- **Self-reflection methods** (e.g., Balance wheel, Scale, Bird's eye view, Characters on different chairs, Seven-step journey, Sandwich method) help develop reflective thinking and promote awareness of personal experiences, thoughts, and behavioural patterns.

- **Practical tools** (e.g., Affirmations, Value map, Self-esteem portrait, Supportive sentence starters) – enhance emotional literacy and positive thinking, help build self-confidence and foster an inner sense of safety.

- **Techniques for enhancing emotional well-being and health** (e.g., Thought reframing, Four signs of potential, When in doubt) promote mindfulness, support the recognition of inner strength, help manage stress, and foster resilience.

Thus, the potential of modern education lies not in opposing academic knowledge and emotional development but in harmonising the two – using modern, practical, and accessible methods to support both teachers and students in the learning process.

The importance of self-esteem and its role in student development

Self-esteem is an internal sense of one's worth, abilities, and right to be accepted. It is closely tied to how people perceive themselves, trust their own strength, make decisions, build relationships, and respond to failure. Self-esteem is a core component of personality development, influencing emotional well-being, behaviour, and ultimately – life direction.

While self-esteem begins forming early in life, adolescence is a particularly sensitive period for its strengthening or weakening. Students in grades 5-8 begin to reflect more deeply on themselves, considering their values, strengths, aspirations, emotions, and motivations. During this stage, reflective consciousness starts to emerge – the ability to observe, evaluate, and understand oneself (Erikson, 1968; Bronson, 2000). This self-knowledge is not only a key social and emotional skill but the basis for a resilient and self-confident personality alike.

Research shows that strong self-esteem supports greater stress resilience, courage in facing challenges, persistence in the face of setbacks, and healthy relationships with others (Harter, 1999; Marsh, 2005). Students with higher self-esteem tend to trust themselves more, participate more actively in

learning, take risks without fear of failure, and engage in social interaction. They demonstrate higher intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and emotional stability (Zimmerman, 2002).

On the other hand, low self-esteem can lead to withdrawal, self-criticism, fear of rejection or misunderstanding. These students often experience anxiety, feel unsafe in social settings, and may face emotional difficulties.

Benefits for students:

- *Strengthened self-confidence and sense of self-worth.*
- *Enhanced ability to cope with emotional challenges.*
- *Increased motivation to learn and participate actively.*
- *Improved ability to express themselves and take initiative.*
- *Better social interactions and relationship-building skills.*

Therefore, schools need to provide not only academic but also emotionally safe and inclusive environments – ones that respect and nurture each child's uniqueness and right to be themselves. A respectful, inclusive, and reflective learning culture fosters students' growth into confident and well-rounded individuals – an investment that benefits their learning, relationships, and overall quality of life (OECD, 2015).

Emotional well-being: the foundation of successful learning

Students' emotional state has a direct impact on their academic performance. Studies show that students who feel emotionally safe and supported are more focused, more engaged in the learning process, and achieve better results. When emotional well-being is neglected, even the most capable students may encounter learning difficulties. A modern school should care not only about academic outcomes but also about students' psychological well-being – this is essential for holistic education.

The role of teachers and specialists in fostering self-esteem and emotional health

Teachers and school specialists shape the emotional environment in which students learn, grow, and form relationships. Their communication style, attitude toward students, and efforts to understand and support them have a lasting impact on students' self-esteem and emotional well-being. Respect, sincerity, and attention not only to achievements but also to effort help students believe in their abilities and strengthen their motivation and confidence.

The teacher often becomes one of the most important adult figures in a student's life. Their behaviour, communication, and values influence not only the student's approach to learning but also to themselves. Patience, openness, and the ability to create a safe space allow each student to feel valued and accepted.

Benefits for Teachers:

- *Deeper emotional connection and mutual trust with students.*
- *Greater effectiveness in supporting student motivation and well-being.*
- *Clearer strategies for recognising and responding to students' emotional needs.*
- *Increased professional resilience through reflective practice.*
- *A more positive and cooperative classroom atmosphere.*

Investing in teachers' emotional competencies, ensuring access to specialists, and consciously cultivating an emotionally supportive school climate should be a priority for every modern school.

Coaching methods, tools, and techniques in the learning process

Coaching is increasingly being embraced in education – not just as a managerial or personal development tool but also as an effective method for helping teachers nurture students' self-esteem, responsibility, and intrinsic motivation. In the educational context, coaching is applied through specific methods, tools, and techniques that foster a culture of feedback, empowerment, and positive growth.

Integrating coaching into the learning process can drive meaningful change. Schools that adopt coaching methods tend to foster supportive cultures where students learn not only academic content but also essential life skills.

SELF-ANALYSIS
METHODS
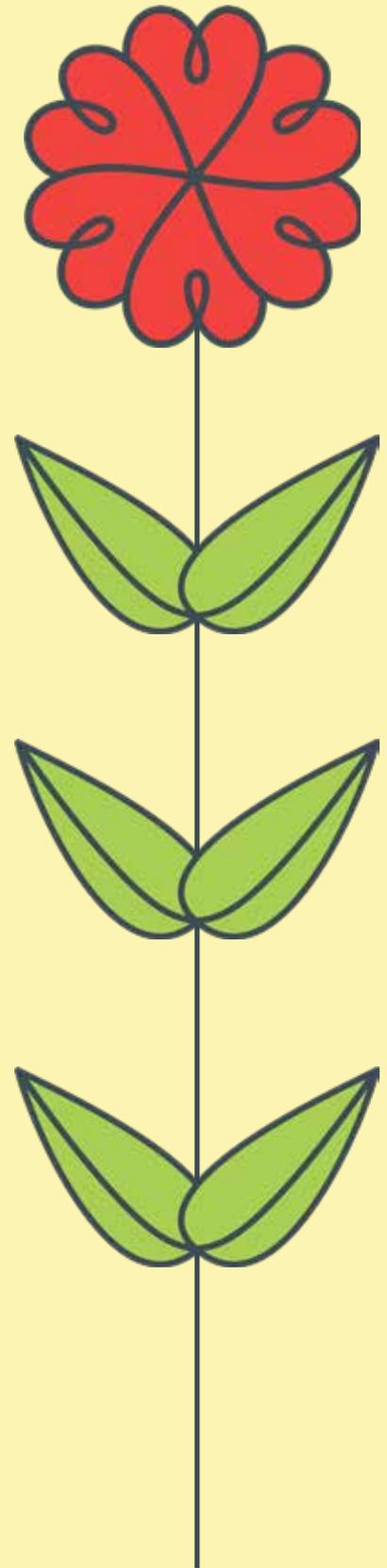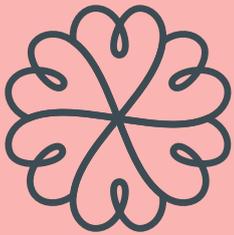
THE BALANCE WHEEL

SELF-ASSESSMENT, SELF-AWARENESS, DECISION-MAKING

This method helps students recognise their strengths and weaknesses, assess their progress, and find a balance between different aspects of their lives.

The balance wheel in an English lesson – one student's story

I'm Lukas, an eighth-grader, and at this moment I'm in my English class. Today, the teacher introduces a new topic – The balance wheel. I'm curious because this is something new and unknown. She explains that this activity will help us assess different areas of our lives and see where we are strong and where we can improve.

The teacher hands out printed templates of the balance wheel. They resemble circles divided into sections with numbers ranging from 1 (in the centre) to 10 (at the edge). Each section represents an essential aspect of life: Family, School, Friends, Health, Free Time, and so on.

She says:

"Be honest with yourselves. This is not a test; it's a way to reflect on your life and understand what you need to improve. Take a moment and think about each category before giving yourself a score."

I take my pen and start marking my scores:

- Family – 7. My relationship with my parents is good, but I feel like I could talk to them more.
- School – 6. I don't always keep up with homework, but I try.
- Friends – 8. My friends are very important to me, and I feel supported by them.
- Health – 5. I could eat healthier and be more physically active.
- Free Time – 4. I hardly have any time for myself, as school and extracurricular activities take up most of my schedule.

When I finish marking my scores, I connect the dots with a line. My wheel looks… uneven. Very uneven. The teacher explains that the rounder the wheel, the more balanced our lives are.

Then she asks:

"What surprised you about your wheel?"

I realise that I don't give myself enough time to relax. My studies and social life seem fine, but my well-being and rest are not.

"Which area would you like to improve first?"

Probably Free Time. If I had more free time, I could take better care of my health and feel better overall.

Finally, the teacher says:

💬 *"Think of one small step you can take this week to improve that area."*

I decide that instead of constantly checking my phone before bed, I will try reading a book or simply resting for at least 30 minutes a day.

The lesson ends, but I keep thinking about my wheel. None of us has a perfectly round balance wheel – and that's okay. But now I know where I can improve, and I have a clear first step.

> *The balance wheel is a powerful tool for self-assessment, enabling students to evaluate various aspects of their learning and personal development. Traditionally used to analyse life balance, this method can also serve as an effective educational tool for self-reflection, progress tracking, and skill enhancement. It helps students clearly identify their strengths and areas for improvement while fostering independence and awareness.*

How to use this method in lessons

Choosing a topic	The teacher or students decide what to analyse (e.g., study habits, subject knowledge, emotional well-being).
Creating the Balance Wheel	The wheel is divided into several categories, which students rate on a scale of 1 to 10 or 1 to 5.
Self-assessment and analysis	Students mark their ratings and visually identify areas that need more effort and those in which they excel. A rating of 1 indicates significant room for improvement, while a rating of 10 indicates complete satisfaction with the current situation, results, knowledge, or behaviour.
Setting goals	Based on their analysis, students create an action plan to improve specific areas.
Periodic review	The method is repeated at regular intervals to assess progress.

Examples for different Subjects	
Literature (Native language)	Writing skills, text comprehension, grammar, creativity, and public speaking.
History	Historical periods, analytical skills, understanding of cause-and-effect relationships, and research abilities.
Foreign languages	Grammar, vocabulary, speaking skills, listening comprehension, and writing.
Physical education	Endurance, flexibility, coordination, teamwork, and knowledge of a healthy lifestyle.

Life Balance Wheel for Students
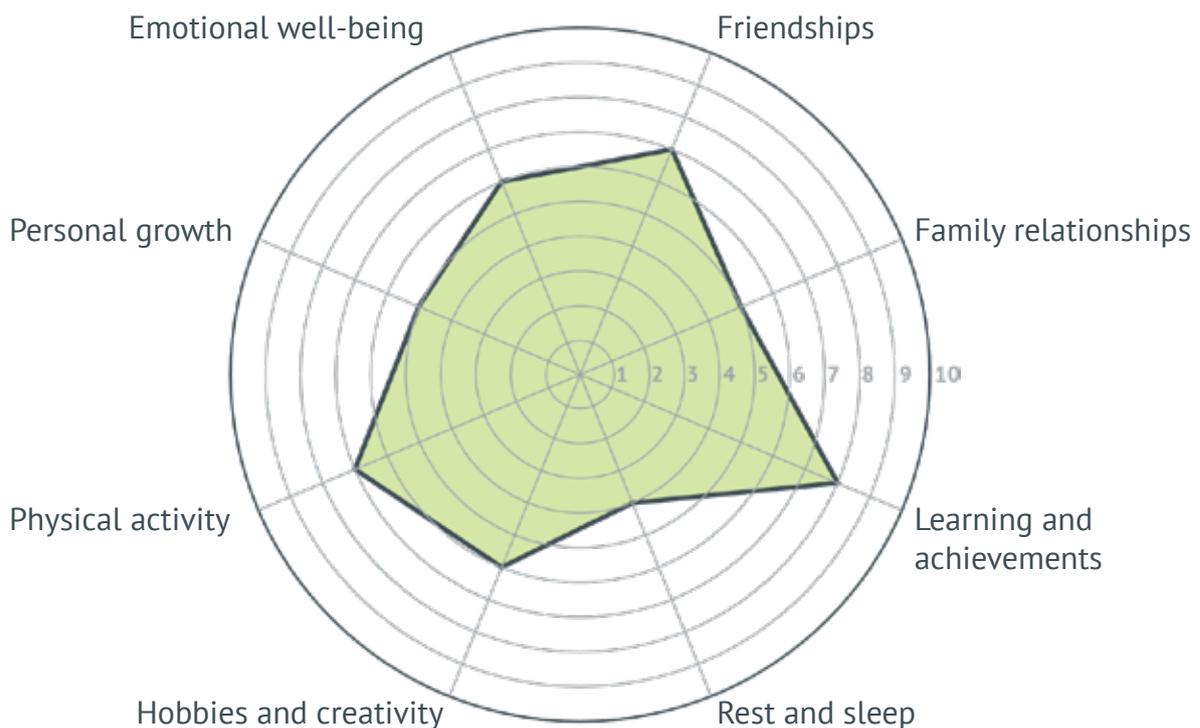
Fig. 1. Life Balance Wheel

This method also helps teachers identify areas where students need additional support. It encourages both academic and personal growth. The goal is not to have a *perfect* wheel where all numbers are 5 or 10, but rather to create a smoother, more balanced shape, even if the scores vary.

For example, if your rest and sleep score is 4, your family relationships score is 5, and your personal growth score is also 5, it may be a sign that these areas require a bit more attention. Try to spend more time resting, being with your family, and focusing on your personal development. Raising these scores to at least 6 or 7 will help make your life balance wheel more rounded, allowing you to feel better and happier. Even small changes can help you feel more balanced and confident.

Reflective questions for The balance wheel method

Self-reflection helps students understand why some areas are stronger while others require more attention.

1. Why did I give this area that specific score?
2. Why NOT a lower score? What skills or experiences do I already have in this area?
3. Why ONLY this score? What is missing, and what do I still need to learn?
4. Who or what contributes most to my well-being in this area?
5. What small changes could I make to increase my score by at least one point?
6. What would an ideal situation in this area look like, and how can I work towards it?
7. Which area requires my attention the most at the moment?
8. How can my strong areas help me improve my weaker ones?
9. What one priority will I focus on this month to improve my balance?
10. How will I know I've made progress? What would be the signs of improvement?

Guiding questions based on score ranges

If your score is 8–10:
- What am I doing to keep this area strong?
- How can I maintain this strength in the future?
- Are there ways to further enjoy or enhance this area?

If your score is 5–7:
- What actions could I take to increase my satisfaction in this area?
- Are my goals in this area clear and realistic?
- What small daily habits could help me improve?

If your score is 0–4 (weak area):
- What is holding me back from progress in this area?
- What is one small step I can take today to improve it?
- Are there any beliefs or fears stopping me from making changes?
- What advice would I give to a friend in the same situation – and how can I apply it to myself?

These reflective questions help students make the most of the balance wheel method. They can be adapted depending on the topic, students' age, experience, or personal needs.
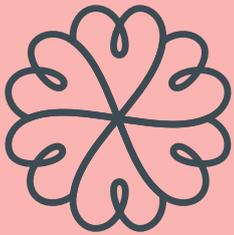
SCALE

SELF-REFLECTION, SELF-ASSESSMENT, REASONING

> *The scale allows students to evaluate their feelings, progress, or attitude on a specific topic, teaching them to justify their choices.*

The scale method in History lesson

Today, history teacher Rasa starts her lesson in an unusual way.

Instead of introducing the topic directly, she draws a horizontal scale from 1 to 10 on the board and writes a question:

💬 *"How well do you feel you understand the Golden Age?"*

The students look at the board and start thinking.

The teacher continues:

💬 *"Before we dive into the topic, I'd like each of you to reflect on how you would rate your current knowledge about the Golden Age. Choose a number from 1 to 10, where 1 means you know nothing and 10 means you understand it perfectly."*

Students write down their self-assessments in their notebooks, and a few brave ones immediately share their ratings with the class.

Most students rate themselves between 3 and 6, while some give just a 2 or even a 1.

The lesson begins.

The teacher presents the key features of the Golden Age.

After the main part of the lesson, the teacher returns to the scale:

💬 *"Now, assess yourselves again – how much do you understand the Golden Age now? Has your score increased? If so, why? What information helped you understand the topic better?"*

The students compare their previous scores with the new ones.

Most of them notice that their scores have increased by at least two or three points.

The teacher asks:

💬 *"Are there still topics that remain unclear to you? What questions do you still have?"*

Finally, the teacher gives an assignment:

Each student writes one sentence about something new they learned today and one action they can take to further deepen their understanding.

Conclusion:

The teacher is pleased that by the end of the lesson, the students not only gained more knowledge but also reflected on their learning process.

The scale method helped them visually track their progress, and it provided the teacher with insight into where further clarification might be needed.

> *The Scale method can become a valuable part of the lesson, promoting student reflection, engagement, and conscious learning.*

How to use this method in lessons	
Preparation	**Choose a goal:** Decide what you want to assess – students' emotional state, attitudes, learning achievements, or reflection after the lesson.
	Prepare the scale: The scale can range from 1 to 5 or 1 to 10, where 1 represents the lowest level (e.g., *"I don't understand at all"* or *"I feel very bad"*), and the highest number represents the highest level (e.g., *"I understand perfectly"* or *"I feel very good"*).
Using the scale	**Ask a question:** Pose a question for students to self-assess, such as:
	– *How did I feel during today's lesson?*
	– *How well did I understand today's topic?*
	– *How do I evaluate my effort on the task?*
	Self-assessment: Students assess themselves using the scale, writing the number in their notebooks or on the classroom board (anonymously or publicly, depending on the topic).
	Discussion and reflection: After the self-assessment, discuss with students:
	– *Why did they choose a particular number?*
	– *What would need to happen for them to rate themselves a 10?*
	– *What could they do to improve their score next time?*
Reflection and action plan	**Reflection:** Ask students to reflect on their self-assessment and write a few sentences about their feelings, experiences, or areas for improvement.
	Goal setting: Encourage students to set one small goal for how they can improve their self-assessment next time (e.g., *"I will take part more in discussions," "I will dedicate more time to homework"*).

Examples for different subjects	
Literature (Native language)	**Goal:** To assess understanding of the read text After reading the text, ask students to evaluate: **How well did I understand this text?** (1 – did not understand, 10 – completely understood) If most students rate themselves low, you can analyse the complex parts together.
Mathematics	**Goal:** To assess task performance After completing the task, students assess: **How well did I understand how to solve this task?** For students who rate themselves low, additional tasks or explanations can be provided.
Chemistry	**Goal:** To assess prior knowledge *"How confident do I feel about understanding the topic of acids and bases?"* (1 – I don't understand at all, 10 – I understand it very well). **Benefit:** The teacher can assess how well-prepared the class is for the topic, and students can identify their current level of understanding.
Physical Education	**Goal:** Personal effort and well-being After physical activity, students assess: **How can I assess my progress during this training?** This helps them understand their physical readiness and level of motivation.

Conclusion

The scale method is a simple, easily adaptable, and highly effective tool that helps students assess their emotional state, learning process, and personal progress. Teachers can flexibly integrate it into various lessons. Using this method fosters skills such as self-awareness, reflection, responsibility, and goal-setting.
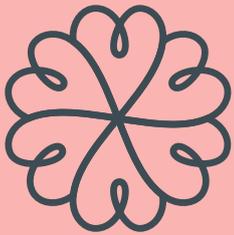
BIRD'S EYE VIEW METHOD

AWARENESS, SELF-REFLECTION, ABILITY TO CHANGE

This is a reflective method that allows students to view their experiences from the outside, from above – as an observer or a best friend. Detached from emotions and judgments, students can see not only challenges but also their strengths, gain a more objective understanding of themselves, and recognise more opportunities. It is an invitation to shift perspectives – not just asking, "What did I feel?" but also "What would I see if I observed myself?" or "What would I advise a friend in this situation?".

Justė's story lesson

I'm Justė, an 8th-grade student. During ethics class, the teacher suggests we look at ourselves… from a bird's-eye view. It sounds strange but interesting. She says:

"Try to imagine that you're no longer yourself but a bird flying over the class. You are the observer. How does the situation look from above? What do you notice?"

I was given a sheet with questions but decided to try something different – to imagine myself as if I were someone else. Or even that bird observing Justė – me.

"What does this situation look like from the outside? What does the observer see?"

I think to myself: I see a girl trying hard, but glancing at others – is she going to look foolish? I see how she corrects her answer three times, even though the first one was correct.

"What good things did she do?"

She listens. She thinks. She tries. Even though she's unsure, she stays honest.

"What was holding her back?"

Her doubts. She often thinks others know better.

"What could she do differently?"

She could sometimes trust what she already knows. And see herself not as someone who always makes mistakes, but as someone who is learning.

When the teacher asked what we noticed, I replied:

> *"I noticed that from the outside, everything looks gentler, more fair. I am too hard on myself."*

That day, I took away one thought: sometimes it's worth looking at yourself from above – when you look from a distance, you see more.

> *This is a self-awareness and reflection method that helps students look at situations or experiences more broadly and evaluate them both emotionally and practically. It works in various lessons as a tool to encourage self-awareness, reflective learning, and decision-making.*

How to use this method in lessons	
Choosing a topic	The teacher or students choose a situation to analyse "from above" – it could be a lesson activity, collaboration, personal experience, emotional reaction, or event.
Introduction and presentation of the method	The "Bird's eye view" idea is briefly introduced: *"Imagine you are the observer – a bird flying over this situation. You see not only yourself but the entire context: people, circumstances, decisions. What can you notice from this perspective?"*
Reflection questions from the observer's perspective	Students reflect on the situation not directly from their own viewpoint but as if they were outsiders – as if advising a friend or watching a film: • *"How would this situation look to an observer from above – what is the overall flow, mood, relationships?"* • *"What would the observer think the person (me) did well?"* • *"What would they notice about the obstacles that hindered success?"* • *"What would the observer advise doing differently to improve next time?"*
Reflection forms	• Individual reflection: students write answers from the observer's perspective (*"He/She looked…"; "The observer would notice…"*) • Reflection in pairs or groups: students share insights as if advising a friend. • Group reflection: the class shares common observations, avoiding personal judgments.
Setting goals	Based on the observer's insights, students identify one special, small step they would like to try implementing next time.
Consistent application	The "Bird's eye view" method can be used continuously – after major projects, lessons, tense situations, or group activities. It helps develop not only reflection but also emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-regulation.

Examples for different subjects

Ethics Class	**Topic:** Conflict situation in class. **Reflection:** • *"What would the observer notice about the progression of this conflict?"* • *"How would my reaction appear from the outside?"* • *"What would the observer advise to do differently for the situation to be resolved peacefully?"*
Language class	**Topic:** Public speaking or writing an essay. **Reflection:** • *"How would my speech/essay look to someone sitting beside me, not me?"* • *"What could be praised from the outside?"* • *"Which parts could be clearer, stronger?"*
Science (Nature/Biology/ Chemistry)	**Topic:** Experiment or research. **Reflection:** • *"How would the observer evaluate my experiment planning and execution?"* • *"What would be noticed from the outside about the logic of my research process?"* • *"What could be improved based on the observer's insights?"*
Geography/History	**Topic:** Group project, discussion, or presentation. **Reflection:** • *"How would someone who was not part of this project evaluate it?"* • *"How would our team dynamics appear from the outside?"* • *"What would the observer notice about my contribution, strengths, and areas for improvement?"*
Art/Music/Technology	**Topic:** Creative work or performance. **Reflection:** • *"How would someone who has never seen my work or performance evaluate it?"* • *"What emotions would they notice?"* • *"What advice would they give to make the work even more powerful or polished?"*

Conclusion

The "Bird's eye view" method helps students look at themselves and situations from an external per-spective – as if through the eyes of an observer. It is easily and effectively applied to self-awareness, emotional challenges, conflict resolution, and stuck situations, as well as to reflection on academic subjects and assessing learning progress.
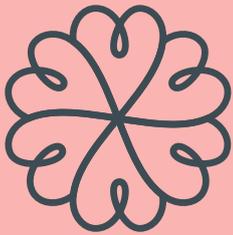
DIFFERENT CHAIRS METHOD

EMPATHY SOCIAL SKILLS PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

An interactive and creative approach that enables students to view situations from multiple perspectives, thereby fostering their emotional intelligence, empathy, and critical thinking. This method is based on principles of drama pedagogy and perspective-shifting techniques. Each chair represents a distinct character with a unique perspective, set of emotions, or values. By sitting in different chairs, students assume these character roles, engaging in discussions, exploring issues, and reflecting on experiences from various standpoints.

Class hour - The uniqueness and importance of every individual in society

Teacher Lina begins the lesson unconventionally – she arranges five chairs in the classroom, each representing a different personality type or life experience. She introduces them to the students:

"The Visionary" – a person with big ideas and dreams.

"The Rational Thinker" – someone who relies on logic and facts.

"The Empath" – sensitive, always willing to help others.

"The Pragmatist" – focused on practical solutions.

"The Artist" – creative, sees the world through beauty and emotion.

"Each of us is different, but we are all needed. Let's try to see the world through the eyes of these characters and understand why each one matters," the teacher says.

Students take turns sitting in different chairs and discussing the situation:

"The town needs to create a new space for young people. How would each character view this issue?"

The Visionary: *"It should be a place where youth can discover their talents and shape future ideas."*

The Rational Thinker: *"It's important to assess the costs and whether funding is available."*

The Empath: *"This space must be accessible to everyone, especially those who feel excluded."*

The Pragmatist: *"We could start with a small project and expand it over time."*

The Artist: *"It should be colourful and inspiring – with art studios and live performances!"*

At the end of the lesson, students reflect:

"What did this experience teach us about differences in people? Have we understood that we all matter?"

Students share:

"I realised that not everyone thinks like me – and that's okay, because we complement each other."

"It was interesting to step into another mindset and understand that no perspective is completely right or wrong."

> *This activity helps students see that each person is unique and important in society. There is no single correct way to think or solve problems – it is our differences that help us grow, learn from one another, and build a stronger community.*

How to use this method in lessons	
Preparation	**Choose a topic or issue:** Select a relevant theme or problem to explore with students (e.g., bullying, friendship, responsibility, decision-making). **Prepare the chairs:** Arrange several chairs in the classroom – each representing a character with a specific viewpoint or emotional state. **Create the characters:** Attach cards with character descriptions to each chair.
Implementation	**Introduce the characters:** Explain that each chair represents a character with a unique perspective and feelings. **Role-play:** Students take turns sitting in each chair and stepping into the character's role. **Reflection:** After the discussion, engage students with these questions: • *How did it feel to embody different characters?* • *Did your opinion change after seeing the situation from other perspectives?* • *What new things did you learn about yourself and others?*

Examples for different subjects	
Class hour – friendship and bullying	**Topic:** *"How should we act when we see bullying?"* **Characters:** • The Brave One – always speaks up for truth, unafraid to defend others. • The Bystander – sees everything but fears intervening. • The Advisor – offers ways to solve the problem. • The Victim – scared, feels unsafe. **Goal:** Foster empathy and critical thinking about social situations involving bullying.
Literature class	**Topic:** *"Character motives and viewpoints"* **Characters:** Create chairs labeled with key characters from a literary work. **Goal:** Help students understand character motivations and personalities, and analyse their behaviour and perspectives.
Biology	**Situation:** C*onflict between three friends* **Characters:** • Ema – sensitive, responsible, quick to take offence. • Tadas – the class clown, often speaks without thinking. • Austėja – the mediator, but sometimes gets lost between friends. **Conflict in a biology class:** All three agreed to work together on a group project. However, Tadas failed to send his part on time, and Ema received a note from the teacher. She got angry and publicly called Tadas irresponsible, stating she no longer wanted to work with him. Tadas felt hurt, and Austėja was unsure how to act – she didn't want to lose their friendship but was afraid to intervene. **Students** take turns sitting in each of the three characters "chairs" and try to express how each friend feels, what they're thinking, and what they hope for from others. **Reflection questions:** • What did we learn about the situation? • How would our behaviour change if we were in their shoes? This scenario helps students: • Identify emotions • Develop empathy • Seek peaceful solutions

Parents-Teachers-Students meeting	**Situation:** A student frequently arrives at school unprepared. The teacher feels it disrupts learning, parents are upset, and the student feels misunderstood.
	Implementation:
	Three character chairs:
	• The Student – feels tired, overwhelmed, and unable to focus.
	• The Teacher – responsible for class progress and wants to help but faces obstacles.
	• The Parent – worried about the child's future, sometimes feels helpless or uninformed.
	Role-play:
	Each participant sits in a different "chair" and speaks from that role's perspective.
	Examples:
	• Teacher in student's chair: *"It's hard to find time. When I don't understand something, I feel stupid – so I don't even start."*
	• Parent in teacher's chair: *"I'm trying to support the whole class, but feel like my efforts go unnoticed."*
	Reflection:
	• What did we hear and understand about each other?
	• How does our perspective shift when we speak from another's role?
	• What can each person do differently?
	Results:
	• Reduced tension
	• A sense of shared purpose and mutual understanding
	• New, creative solutions emerge (e.g., creating a support plan, more frequent communication, or flexible task formats)

Conclusion

The "Different chairs, Different characters" method is an effective, creative, and interactive tool for helping students develop empathy, critical thinking, and social skills. By stepping into different perspectives, students not only learn to understand others but also grow into responsible, thoughtful, and emotionally aware individuals.

This method is particularly recommended for class hours, conflict resolution situations, and ethics or life skills lessons. While it may be harder to integrate into specific academic subjects (such as math or science), creative teachers can successfully adapt it within their subject area to foster reflection, collaboration, and appreciation of diverse viewpoints.
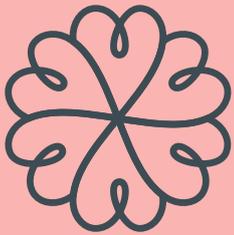
THE SEVEN-STEP JOURNEY

GOAL SETTING, REFLECTION, RESPONSIBILITY

> *"The seven-step journey"* is a structured method of reflection and self-exploration that helps students systematically consider their experiences, emotions, goals, and personal development. It can be used for reflecting on learning processes and fostering individual growth.

Personal example: Tadas' journey – self-assessment after a math test

Math teacher Jurgita unusually begins her lesson – she writes on the board:

"The seven-step journey – today we'll take it together."

She explains to the students that this journey will help them view themselves from a distance, understanding what they experienced, how they felt, what they faced, and what they can change. Each student receives a sheet with seven questions.

Tadas, a seventh grader, hesitates at first. It's not easy for him to talk about himself. But he decides to give it a try.

Tadas' Seven Steps:

Experience:

"I remember feeling very anxious during the math test. I was sure I didn't know anything."

Emotions:

"I felt bad – anxious, scared, ashamed that others knew more than I did."

Reaction:

"Before the test, I pretended everything was fine. I didn't talk to anyone about it."

Lessons:

"I realised that staying silent doesn't help. It would've been easier if I had talked to the teacher or asked for help."

Achievements:

"Although I thought I'd completely fail, I still got a 7. That's more than I expected."

Challenges:

"I really lacked self-confidence. And cramming at the last minute only made the stress worse."

Actions:

"Next time I'll try to prepare gradually and not be afraid to ask questions. Maybe I'll even schedule an extra consultation."

After the written part, the teacher invites students to share their insights voluntarily.

The teacher ends the lesson:

💬 *"This journey is not about perfection, but about growth. The more we understand ourselves, the more we can change."*

> *This story demonstrates that "The seven-step journey" is not just a theoretical method, but also a highly practical and sensitive tool that helps students understand themselves, develop awareness, change habits, and strengthen their internal motivation. The most important thing is to create a safe atmosphere where every student feels comfortable opening up without fear of judgment.*

How to use this method in lessons

|	
Preparation	**Choose a topic:** Select a topic to reflect on with students, such as learning experiences, emotional moments, social situations, or personal achievements. **Structure:** Use the seven-step format: Experience: *What did I experience?* (Describe the situation or event) Emotions: *How did I feel?* (Identify and analyse emotions) Reaction: *How did I respond?* (Reflect on behaviour) Lessons: *What did I learn?* (Draw conclusions and insights) Achievements: *What did I accomplish?* (Evaluate positive aspects) Challenges: *What difficulties did I face?* (Analyse problem areas) Actions: *What will I do differently next time?* (Set goals and plan changes).
Implementation	**Introduce the steps:** Explain the structure to students and describe how each step helps them reflect on and plan for improvement. **Written reflection:** Encourage students to write individual answers to each question. **Group discussion:** After the individual work, organise small group discussions for students to share insights (if they wish). **Reflection circle:** Discuss as a whole class what students learned about themselves, what they want to improve, and what actions they plan to take. **Individual action plans:** Each student formulates a personal action plan based on the final step – *"What will I do differently next time?".*

Examples for different subjects	
Foreign language	**Topic:** *"How did I do speaking English in front of the class?"* **Goal:** Help students overcome fear and build confidence in language skills. **Reflection:** Students discuss their emotions, preparation process, successes, and what they would change next time.
Chemistry class	**Topic:** *"How did I perform during the lab experiment?"* **Goal:** Reflect on practical learning, teamwork, and applying theoretical knowledge. **Reflection:** Students describe what they did, how they felt during the experiment, what challenges they faced, and what they learned.
Physical Education	**Topic:** *"How did I feel during the physical challenge?"* **Goal:** Reflect on effort, emotional and physical challenges, and strengthen motivation. **Reflection:** Students write about the activity, their emotions, challenges faced, and potential improvements.
Mathematics	**Topic:** *"My journey solving a difficult problem"* **Goal:** Recognise learning challenges and strengths and foster perseverance. **Reflection:** Students describe a moment of difficulty, how they approached it, what helped, and what they'd do differently next time.

Conclusion

The "Seven-step journey" method offers students a clear, structured path to achieve their personal, academic, or social goals. This approach fosters responsibility for one's actions, encourages perseverance, and promotes self-reflection. It helps students understand that change is a process, not a one-time action. By following this model, learners develop skills in planning and self-assessment and – most importantly – build confidence in their ability to reach meaningful outcomes.
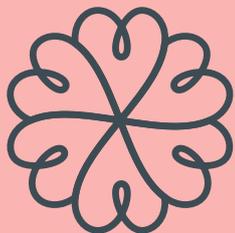
SANDWICH METHOD

GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK, CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM REFLECTION

This method helps students develop critical thinking and learn how to give respectful feedback.

The sandwich method in Chemistry lesson

After the test, students are given a task to evaluate their performance using the **Sandwich method:**

"Name three things about your test result:

1. *What went well?*
2. *What could you improve?*
3. *What positive qualities did you notice in yourself while doing the tasks?"*

Students write their reflections in their notebooks.

One student writes:

"I did well solving chemical equations. However, I should review the properties of acids and bases more. Still, I'm happy that I stayed calm and didn't give up even when the task seemed difficult."

After the reflection, students share their thoughts with a partner, and the teacher summarises, emphasising learning progress and opportunities for improvement.

The "Sandwich method" is a structured way of giving feedback that helps students receive constructive comments while maintaining a positive attitude and motivation to improve.

The method is called the "Sandwich method" because the feedback is delivered in layers: a positive comment (the "bread"), followed by constructive criticism (the "filling"), and finished with another positive remark or encouragement (the "bread").

This method helps students accept criticism more easily, as it is embedded between positive messages. It encourages them to feel valued and motivated to grow.

How to use this method in lessons

|	
Choosing the topic and task	The sandwich method can be used to provide feedback on written assignments, projects, group presentations, or any other activity where students can reflect and improve.
Explaining the structure	Introduce the structure of the Sandwich Method to the students: Positive comment *("bread") – What did you do well?* Constructive criticism *("filling") – What could you improve?* Positive conclusion *("bread")* – Encouragement or identification of a strength.
Providing examples	Start by giving examples of how to formulate positive comments and constructive criticism. For example: *"I liked how clearly you expressed your ideas (positive comment), but it would be even better if you included more examples (criticism). Still, the structure of your presentation was very logical and easy to follow (positive conclusion)."*
Application of the method	**Individual or group work:** Students can use this method to assess their own work or that of their classmates. **Written or verbal feedback:** Feedback can be given in writing (e.g., on a reflection sheet) or orally (e.g., during a discussion). **Teacher feedback:** Teachers are also encouraged to regularly use this method when giving feedback on students' work.

Examples for different subjects	
History Lesson	**Group Project** **Topic:** *"Presentation of Medieval Cities"* **Objective:** To encourage students to reflect on the group work process and develop critical thinking skills. **Task:** After the group presentations, students evaluate the work of other groups using the Sandwich Method. **Example:** **Positive comment:** *"Your slides were very informative and aesthetically presented."* **Constructive criticism:** *"It would be even better if you spoke more in your own words instead of reading from the slides."* **Positive conclusion:** *"But your teamwork was very smooth— you collaborated really well!".*
Class meeting	**Self-assessment – developing reflection skills** **Topic:** *"How did I do this week?"* **Objective:** To encourage students to reflect on their learning process and develop self-awareness. **Task:** Students write a reflection on their learning achievements and challenges using the structure of the Sandwich Method. **Example:** **Positive comment:** *"I did really well on my math assignments."* **Constructive criticism:** *"However, I should dedicate more time to preparing for tests."* **Positive conclusion:** *"I'm glad I didn't lose motivation and kept putting in effort!".*

Conclusion

The "Sandwich method" is an effective feedback tool that helps students feel valued and motivated to improve. Teachers can flexibly integrate it into various lessons.

PRACTICAL
TOOLS
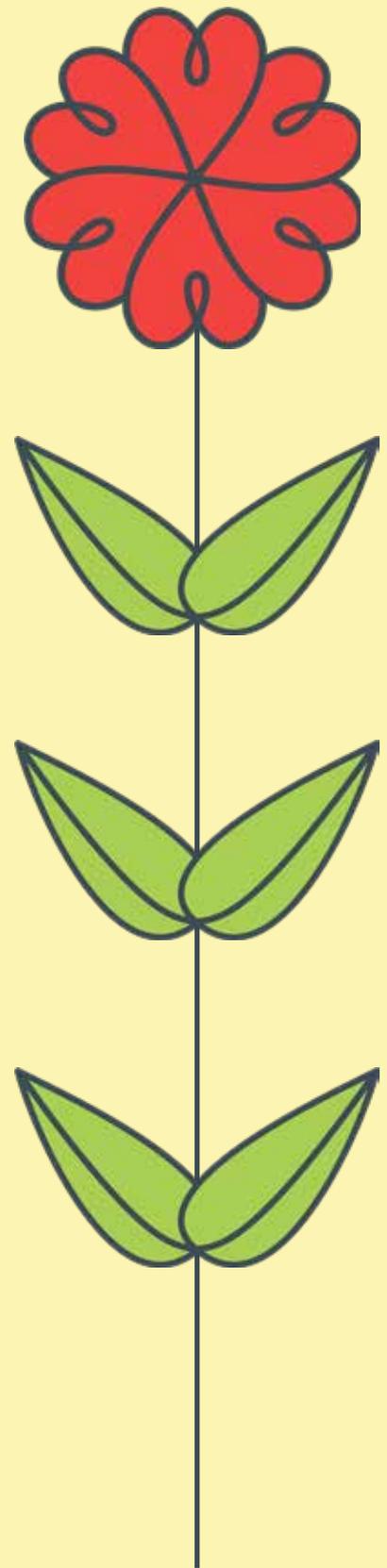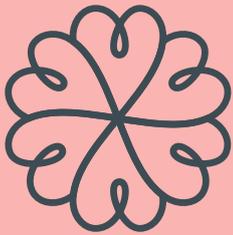
AFFIRMATIONS

SELF-AWARENESS, EMPATHY, SOCIAL SKILLS, CONFIDENCE

Affirmations are positive statements that we repeat to ourselves to strengthen self-confidence, change thinking and support positive emotions. Affirmations work on the principle of autosuggestion – by regularly repeating positive sentences, we influence our subconscious and gradually change the way we think about ourselves and the world. They help us overcome negative thoughts, eliminate fear and strengthen our belief in our abilities.

How do affirmations work?

1. *Repetition strengthens the brain –* Regularly repeating affirmations creates new neural connections that help transform negative thought patterns into positive ones.
2. *They increase self-confidence –* For example, the affirmation *"I am good enough the way I am"* can help children better accept themselves.
3. *They support motivation and perseverance –* Affirmations such as *"I learn and grow every day"* motivate for further development.
4. *Reduce stress and anxiety –* Regular use of affirmations helps to calm the mind and focus on the present moment.

How to use affirmations correctly?

- *Formulate them in the present tense –* *"I am strong and I can do this"*, not *"I will be stronger someday"*.
- *Repeat them regularly* – For example, in the morning after waking up or at night before going to bed**.**
- *Use positive words –* Focus on what you want to achieve, not what you want to get rid of.
- *Say them out loud or write them down –* This strengthens the effect of affirmations.

Affirmations are a great tool not only for adults but also for children – they help them build healthy self-esteem, cultivate a positive attitude towards learning, and foster good relationships with others.

How to use this tool in lessons

1. Morning circle or start of the lesson	**When?** Every morning or at the beginning of the lesson (short-term) **How?** Create a short ritual where each student says an affirmation out loud or writes it on a piece of paper. Gradually involve students in creating their own affirmations. Use affirmation cards from which students can choose. **Example activity:** Start each day with the sentence: *"Today I feel…"* and let students complete it with a positive thought (e.g., *"strong, curious, ready to learn"*). After a week or month, each student selects their favourite affirmation and explains why they chose it. **Example affirmations:** *"Every day, I can learn something new."* *"My mistakes are part of my growth."* *"Every task is an opportunity to show what I can do.".*
2. Affirmations on the classroom bulletin board or in a special corner	**When?** Throughout the school year (long-term) **How?** Create a *"Wall of Positive Thoughts"* where affirmations are visible to everyone. Let students add new affirmations to the board themselves. Regularly change the affirmations—perhaps every month with a different theme (such as self-confidence, respect, courage, teamwork, etc.). **Example activity:** Each student writes one affirmation on a card and adds it to the bulletin board. During the week, each student selects one affirmation that resonates with them and explains why it holds meaning. Create themed affirmations, e.g., *"What should I tell myself before a test?"* or *"How can I help myself when I am afraid of speaking in front of the class?"* **Example affirmations:** *"My voice matters."* *"Each of us is unique and valuable."* *"I trust in my abilities.".*

| 3. Affirmations for managing stress and anxiety	**When?** Before a test, presentation, or other stressful situation
	How?
	Before a test, spend 2-3 minutes doing a breathing exercise combined with affirmations.
	Ask students to write a short encouraging affirmation on the margin of their test paper.
	Before presentations, encourage students to repeat a confidence-boosting affirmation to themselves.
	Example activity:
	At the beginning of the week, students choose an affirmation to use in stressful situations.
	Each student creates their own *"stress-relief card"* with an affirmation they can keep in their pencil case.
	After a test or presentation, have students reflect on whether affirmations helped them.
	Example affirmations:
	"I have what it takes to handle this task."
	"I prepared as best as I could."
	"One result does not define me.".
4. Class rituals and affirmations	**When?** At the end of the week or month
	How?
	Reflect on achievements and progress together using affirmations.
	Choose a *"Weekly affirmation"* and write it on the board or on a piece of paper that students can take home.
	Have students pair up and share an affirmation with each other that they find fitting.
	Example activity:
	Every Friday, students create an affirmation that represents their week.
	Have a short sharing session: *"What did I learn this week?"* and connect it with affirmations.
	Create a class affirmation that represents the group spirit (e.g., *"Together, we are stronger."*).
	Example affirmations:
	"This week, I showed that I can overcome challenges."
	"We learn and grow together."
	"Everyone in this class has something valuable to offer.".

5. Affirmations during group work	**When?** During teamwork activities **How?** Each group selects an affirmation before starting their work to encourage collaboration. After completing the task, each team member shares something they did well. Reflection at the end: *"How did affirmations help us?".* **Example activity:** Before starting group work, each team draws a card with an affirmation and tries to embody it during the activity. After the activity, team members give each other positive feedback using affirmations. **Example affirmations:** *"We listen to each other and respect different opinions."* *"Together, we achieve more."* *"Every idea is valuable.".*
6. Personal affirmations on the desk or in a journal	**When?** At any time during the day, when a student needs encouragement **How?** Each student can choose an affirmation and place it on their desk or in their notebook. Use affirmations as part of self-reflection—students can write down how they feel and how affirmations help them. **Example activity:** Once a week, each student selects an affirmation to write at the beginning of a notebook page. Give students affirmation slips they can randomly pick. **Example affirmations:** *"I believe in my ability to learn."* *"I am patient and learn at my own pace."* *"Every day, I move forward.".*

Conclusion

Affirmations are a powerful and flexible tool that can be integrated across various school subjects to foster emotional resilience, motivation, and a positive classroom environment. Whether students are solving equations, writing essays, working in teams, or preparing for a test, affirmations help them recognise their strengths, manage challenges, and support one another. When used intentionally, affirmations do more than boost morale—they foster a culture of respect, self-confidence, and ongoing growth.
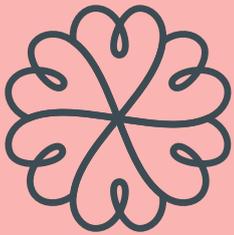
POSITIVE INVENTORY

SELF-AWARENESS, RESILIENCE, EMPATHY

A Positive inventory is a brief, daily reflection where you list things that went well, made you happy, or for which you're grateful. It's like making a list of your small wins, good moments, or personal strengths for the day.

It can include things like:

"I helped a friend today."

"I answered a tough question in math."

"I was kind even when I was frustrated."

"I played fairly during recess."

"I didn't give up when something was hard."

It doesn't have to be big or perfect—just **genuine.**

How to use this tool in lessons

Activity title: daily Positive Inventory

Objective:

To help students develop self-awareness, build self-esteem, and cultivate a positive mindset by reflecting on daily personal successes and moments of gratitude.

Age group:

10–16 (adjustable for younger or older students)

Duration:

10–15 minutes daily or 2–3 times per week

1. Step-by-step instructions:	Explain the concept of a ***Positive Inventory***: *"A positive inventory is a short daily reflection where you write down things that went well, made you happy, or that you're grateful for. It helps you notice your strengths, appreciate good moments, and feel more confident."* Provide examples: • *"I helped a friend today."* • *"I was kind even when I was frustrated."* **Emphasise**: It doesn't have to be perfect or big – just honest and positive.
2.Reflection time (5–10 minutes)	Ask students to quietly reflect and write 3-5 things that: • They did well today. • Made them feel proud or happy. • Show kindness, effort, or resilience. **Prompts to guide them**: • *What made me smile today?* • *When did I try my best?* • *Did I help someone or show kindness?* • *What am I grateful for today?*

|	
Extension activities:	**A. Weekly wrap-up** At the end of each week, have students: • Highlight their favourite positive moment. • Reflect on what they learned about themselves. **B. Positivity wall** Create a classroom display where students can post anonymous positive statements or wins for the week. **C. Themed inventories** Occasionally give a theme, e.g.: • "Kindness inventory" • "Gratitude inventory" • "Resilience inventory" **D. Peer appreciation** Once a week, include a prompt: *"Write one positive thing you noticed about someone else today."*

Conclusion

The Positive inventory activity is a simple yet powerful way to help students develop self-awareness, build confidence, and recognise the value of everyday actions. By regularly reflecting on their strengths, efforts, and moments of gratitude, students cultivate a more optimistic mindset and strengthen their emotional resilience. Over time, this habit fosters personal growth, a sense of accomplishment, and a more supportive classroom environment where positivity is acknowledged and shared.
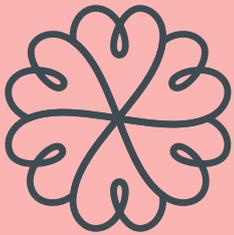
CARDS

SELF-AWARENESS, RESILIENCE, EMPATHY

The "Cards" method is a powerful and flexible tool for supporting personal growth, emotional awareness, and values education. The set of cards features a range of positive qualities such as courage, empathy, responsibility, and creativity, each accompanied by a simple, relatable statement that brings the concept to life for children and adolescents.

When and how to use the method

Best used:

- At the beginning of the school year—*to build trust and help students get to know each other.*
- During class meetings or group activities—*to encourage reflection on values and behavior.*
- After conflicts or challenging situations—*to shift focus to positive qualities and solutions.*
- In personal development or ethics lessons—*as part of discussions on character, emotions, or values.*
- Before transitions or exams—*to help students reflect on their strengths and build confidence.*

Implementation tips:

The cards can be used in a variety of settings – from group discussions and circle time to individual reflection or one-on-one support. They help young people identify their strengths, share experiences, and connect their behaviour to positive qualities in a supportive environment. The cards also provide teachers with a gentle entry point into topics such as emotional literacy, resilience, and community values.

How to use this tool in lessons

Activity: Value Circle for students 12–16 years old

Goal: Build emotional intelligence and empathy, promote self-esteem, foster a supportive classroom environment

Time allowance: 30–45 minutes

Tools:

- A deck of value cards (each with a positive trait or strength, e.g. "I am a good listener", "I like helping others", "I am creative", "I try hard even when it's difficult")• Markers, crayons, glue
- Enough for each student to receive 2–3 cards (you can reuse cards or allow duplicates)• Cards with different values (e.g. kindness, courage, friendship, honesty, freedom, success, joy, family, helping others)

1. Introductory reflection (10 min) – What are values?	Briefly explain that everyone has different strengths and values, and today's activity will help them recognise these in themselves and others.
2. Distribute cards (5 min)	Give each student 2–3 value cards. Instruct them to read the statements quietly and choose **one** that best describes themselves.
3. Personal reflection (5 min)	Ask students to think about a **real example** of when they demonstrated this quality. • For example if a student chose "I am helpful", they might recall helping a friend study for a test.
4. Pair share or small groups (5–10 minutes)	Students share their chosen value and the example with a partner or in small groups of 3–4.
5. Value Circle (10–15 minutes)	Everyone sits in a circle. • One by one, students **read aloud** the card they chose and share their story briefly (optional if someone doesn't want to). • Then, they **give a** card to another student in the circle that represents a strength they have noticed in that student. • They **explain why** they chose it: "I'm giving you the 'Good Team Player' card because you always make sure everyone is included in group work."
6. Debrief (5 minutes)	Reflect with the class: • How did it feel to choose a value? • How did it feel to receive one from someone else? • Why is it important to recognise each other's strengths?

Conclusion

They help young people identify their strengths, share experiences, and connect their behaviour to positive qualities in a supportive environment. The cards also provide teachers with a gentle entry point into topics such as emotional literacy, resilience, and community values.

SELF-CONFIDENCE
I believe in myself and I stand by my word

COURAGE
I am not afraid to try new things

PATIENCE
I know that some things need time

SELF-DISCIPLINE
I can concentrate and finish what I start

HUMILITY
I accept my mistakes and learn from them

KINDNESS
I try to help others

HONESTY
I tell the truth even if it is hard sometimes

RESPECT
I listen to others and value their opinions

EMPATHY
I try to understand how others feel

FRIENDSHIP
I am a good friend and I can rely on my friends

FAMILY
My family is important to me

TEAMWORK
I can work with others as a team

JUSTICE
I want people to be judged fairly

RESPONSIBILITY
I fulfill my duties and take care of my things

TOLERANCE
I respect people even when they are different from me

LEARNING
I like learning new things

CREATIVITY

I like coming up
with new ideas

FREEDOM

I want to choose
my own way

DETERMINATION

I work on what I enjoy and
what I want to achieve

CURIOSITY

I want to explore
and ask questions

JOY

I enjoy small things
in my life

HEALTH
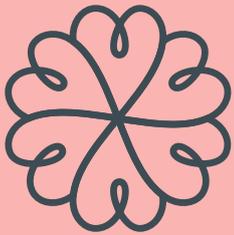
I want to take care of
my body and my mind

NATURE

I care about environ-
mental protection

GENEROSITY

I like giving to others
when they need it

VALUE MAP

SELF-AWARENESS, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

A Value map helps students explore how their personal values influence choices, actions, and behaviour in real-life and academic contexts.

It usually includes:

- A situation or dilemma in the centre
- Branches for:
    - Choices/actions
    - People involved
    - Values in conflict
    - Consequences
    - Your personal reflection

How to use this tool in lessons

Activity: Value map for children 11-15 years old

Goal: To help children become aware of their values, understand their meaning and connect them to everyday life.

**Time allowance**: 60 minutes

Tools:

- Large A3 or A4 paper
- Markers, crayons, glue
- Magazine clippings, stickers, photos
- Cards with different values (e.g. kindness, courage, friendship, honesty, freedom, success, joy, family, helping others)

1. Introductory reflection (10 min) – *What are values?*	Explain to children what **values** are:
	• Values are what is important to us in life. They influence our decisions, relationships and behaviour.
	• **Example**: Imagine that you have a magic amulet that shows what is most valuable to you. What would be written on it?
	💡 **Tip**: *Ask your children:*
	   • *What values are most important to you?*
	   • *How do your values manifest in your life?*

2. Personal values selection (15 min)	Each child is given cards with different values. First, they look at them and choose the 5 that best describe them. Then, they narrow down the selection to the 3 main values that are most important to them. 💡**Alternative**: *If you don't have cards, write the values on the board and let the children copy them.*
3. Value map creation (20 min)	Children draw a tree, an island map, a journey through life or another symbol on a large piece of paper. In the centre (tree trunk, the heart of the island…), they write their 3 key values. They can draw or stick pictures around them that symbolise their values. They can add short sentences: *"Friendship means I can rely on others."* 💡**Alternative**: *Instead of drawing, children can create a collage of clippings or use digital tools (Canva, Jamboard).*
4. Sharing and reflection (15 min)	Children can briefly present their Value Maps. Encourage them with questions: – *How do your values manifest themselves in everyday life?* – *What situations have shown you that these values are important?* – *What would the world be like if everyone lived by your values?* 💡**Tip**: *If children are shy, they can write anonymously about why they chose the values, and the teacher reads their responses.*

Conclusion

The "Value map" activity helps children explore and express what truly matters to them. By identifying their core values and reflecting on how these values influence their lives, students not only develop greater self-awareness but also learn to appreciate the diversity of values in others. This activity promotes thoughtful dialogue, empathy, and a sense of responsibility, empowering young people to live more consciously and confidently in alignment with their values.
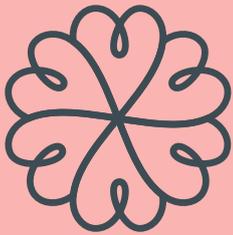
SELF-ESTEEM PICTURE

SELF-AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION SKILLS, CRITICAL THINKING, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The "Self-esteem picture" is a creative and reflective activity designed to support children's self-confidence and personal growth. Through artistic expression, students create a personalised visual collage using their photo, self-portrait, affirmations, and symbolic images that represent their strengths and positive qualities. The method combines individual reflection, group sharing, and guided discussion, helping children to develop self-awareness, resilience, and emotional expression. By turning abstract self-esteem concepts into tangible artwork, the activity becomes a powerful and lasting reminder of each child's unique value.

How to use the method correctly

1. *Create a safe and respectful atmosphere*

   Emphasise that this is a personal activity and there are no *"wrong"* answers or drawings. Everyone's picture is unique.

2. *Guide with open-ended questions*

   Avoid leading or evaluative questions. Focus on discovery, not performance.

3. *Encourage autonomy*

   Let students choose their style – some may prefer drawing, while others may prefer cutting images from magazines.

4. *Respect different comfort levels*

   Not every student will want to share out loud – offer alternatives like anonymous writing or pair sharing.

5. *Use affirmations intentionally*

   Help students craft meaningful affirmations in the present tense (e.g., *"I am creative"* rather than *"I want to be creative"*).

How to use this tool in lessons – Lesson plan

Objective: To help children become more aware of their strengths, appreciate their unique qualities and support their self-confidence through creative expression.

Time allocation: 60 minutes

Materials:

- White A3 or A4 cardboard
- Coloured paper, markers, crayons
- Old magazines, glue, scissors
- Mirror (optional)
- Photos of the children (they can bring their own or you can print them)

| Activity sequence:	**Warm-up reflection (10 min)** – *Who am I really?*
	☞ Ask your children questions to think about:
	• *What qualities do I like about myself?*
	• *What achievements make me proud?*
	• *What makes me special?*
	💡 **Tip**: *If children are shy, they can first write the questions anonymously on a piece of paper and share them with the group.*
	Creating the basis of the picture (10 min)
	• Everyone takes a piece of cardboard or paper.
	• They place their photo in the centre, draw a self-portrait or cut out a silhouette.
	• They leave enough space around themselves to add text and symbols.
	Symbolism & strengthening words (15 min)
	• Children look for pictures and words in magazines that describe them.
	• They can write positive affirmations or their own captions (e.g. *"I am creative", "I can cheer others up"*).
	• They can also represent certain things symbolically (e.g. a lion as a symbol of courage, a key as a symbol of new opportunities).
	Personal sharing (15 min)
	• Anyone who wants to can briefly present their creation.
	• Everyone chooses one thing they are most proud of.
	💡 **Alternative**: *If children do not want to speak publicly, they can anonymously write on a piece of paper what they like most about their picture, and the lecturer will read it.*
	Reflection & conclusion (10 min)
	💬 Discussion:
	• *How did it feel to create a picture of themselves?*
	• *What new things did you learn about yourself?*
	• *How can this picture help you when you feel insecure?*
	💡 **Tip**: *Children can hang the picture at home to remind themselves of their strengths.*

Conclusion

This method promotes emotional intelligence, self-awareness, artistic expression, and resilience. By guiding students to visualise their "best self", the activity helps them build inner confidence in a way that is engaging, personal, and lasting. It is ideal for SEL programmes, school counselling sessions, or classroom well-being activities.
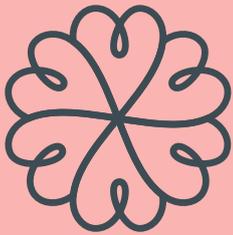
SUPPORTING SENTENCES

SELF-AWARENESS, SOCIAL SKILLS, SELF-MOTIVATION

This method uses guided self-reflection and positive reinforcement to help students build self-esteem and emotional resilience. Through structured prompts, students identify their strengths, recall proud moments, express self-affirming thoughts, and consider acts of kindness. It encourages personal growth, confidence, and social awareness in a supportive and engaging way.

When and how to use the method

Best used:

- At the beginning of the school year (to build group dynamics and self-confidence)
- After a difficult period (e.g. post-exams, illness, bullying incidents)
- During personal development or anti-bullying programmes
- As part of mental health awareness weeks or well-being days
- In one-on-one sessions with school counsellors or support staff

Implementation tips:

- Create a safe, calm environment where students feel comfortable sharing (if they want to).
- Allow time for silent individual work, followed by optional group sharing or pair discussions.
- Encourage students to keep their worksheets to reflect on later.
- Use soft background music, mirrors, or visual aids to enrich the experience.

How to use this tool in lessons

Worksheet: boosting self-esteem!

You are unique! Everyone has something they are good at and something that makes them special. This worksheet will help you recognise your strengths and boost your confidence!

1. What am I good at?	Write down at least three things you are good at (it can be anything, like drawing, sports, listening to friends, math…) _____ _____ _____

2. My proud moments	Can you remember a moment when you felt really proud of yourself? What happened, and how did you feel? Write a short story: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Worksheet: boosting self-esteem!

You are unique! Everyone has something they are good at and something that makes them special. This worksheet will help you recognise your strengths and boost your confidence!

3. Positive thoughts	Look in the mirror and say something nice to yourself. If you can't think of anything, try completing one of these sentences: _"I am good at _____."_ _"I like myself because _____."_ _"I am amazing because _____."_
4. My superpowers	If you had to choose three "superpowers" that you have, what would they be? _____ _____ _____

Worksheet: boosting self-esteem!

You are unique! Everyone has something they are good at and something that makes them special. This worksheet will help you recognise your strengths and boost your confidence!

5. Acts of kindness	Confidence grows when we help others and do good things. _How can you help someone today or make them happy?_ Write down at least one idea: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

| 6. Confidence pledge	I promise to believe in myself, speak kindly to myself, and not be afraid to try new things. **Signature:** _____

Conclusion

This method is a low-prep, high-impact activity that supports students' emotional and personal development in an inclusive and creative way. It helps create a more supportive classroom environment and prepares students to face challenges with confidence and kindness.

TECHNIQUES

FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM, EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, AND HEALTH
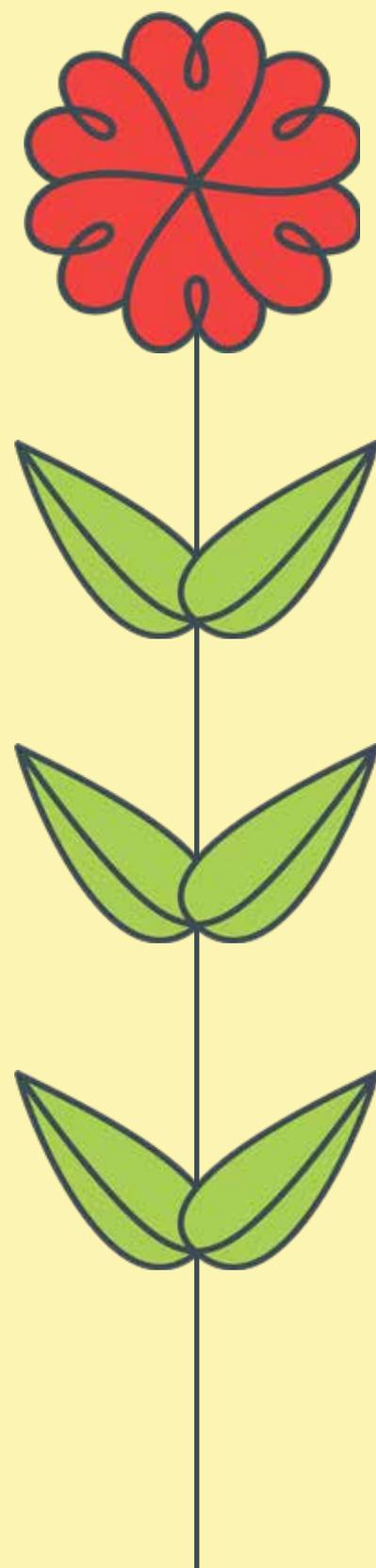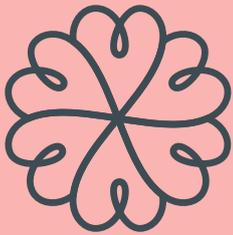
THOUGHT SHIFTING

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS, POSITIVE THINKING, SELF-REFLECTION

> *Students often experience stress related to academic performance, peer interactions, or other social situations. "Thought shifting" is a technique that helps identify negative, anxiety-inducing or stressful thoughts and replace them with more positive, constructive alternatives. This method is based on principles of cognitive behavioural therapy and is especially effective in developing healthy self-esteem, emotional well-being, and psychological resilience.*

Literature lesson: "How I overcome challenges"

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher notices a few students sighing, and one student – Gustas – quietly says:

💬 *"I'll fail again. Everyone writes better than me."*

The teacher responds:

💬 *"Today, we'll try a simple but powerful method – thought shifting. Did you know that the way we think affects how we feel and what we do?"*

She draws a triangle on the board:

Thought → Emotion → Action

Then, she gives an example:

💬 *"If I think, 'I won't be able to write,' I feel fear and might not even start. But if I tell myself, 'I'll write as well as I can – and that matters,' I feel calmer and can begin."*

Students receive a worksheet with three questions:
- What thought comes to mind when you think about writing?
- What feeling do you associate with this thought?
- If the thought is negative, what positive alternative could you think of instead?

Gustas' response:

💬 *Thought: "I'll write the worst in class."*

💬 *Feelings: Sadness, fear.*

💬 *New thought: "I can try my best, and writing improves with practice."*

After writing, students share how their thoughts influenced their feelings and ability to write.

Gustas:

"When I told myself it's important just to try, it was easier to start. I wrote more than usual."

Teacher:

"Great! The more we replace negative thoughts with encouraging ones, the better we'll feel and learn."

How to use this method in lessons	
Preparation	**Explaining thoughts and emotions**: The teacher explains how our thoughts influence emotions and behaviour. For example: *"If we believe we'll fail a test, we feel anxious and tense. But if we believe we'll do our best, we feel confident and curious."* **Discussing automatic thoughts**: Students are introduced to the concept of automatic thoughts – spontaneous, often negative thoughts that appear in specific situations.
Implementation	**Identifying negative thoughts**: Students learn to recognise their negative thoughts, such as *"I can't do this", "I don't understand anything",* and *"Others are better than me."* **Using self-questioning**: Students are encouraged to ask themselves questions like: • Is this thought based on facts or just fear? • Is there evidence that contradicts this thought? • What would I tell a friend who thought this way? **Shifting thoughts**: Students practice replacing negative thoughts with more balanced alternatives. For example, *"I'll fail"* becomes *"I'll do my best, and even failure is a learning opportunity."*
Reflection and Practice	**Reflection task**: Students write about situations where they felt anxious or stressed and how they managed to shift their thoughts. **Group discussions**: The class can discuss common negative thoughts and strategies to reframe them.

Examples for different subjects

Literature	**Topic**: "I can achieve my goals" **Task**: Before writing, students identify any negative thoughts (e.g., *"I can't write a good essay")* and reframe them positively (e.g., *"I'll try my best – that's enough"*). **Reflection**: After writing, have them discuss how shifting thoughts helped them overcome fear and difficulty.
Mathematics	**Topic**: *"My thoughts about Math"* **Task**: After a test, students write down the negative thoughts they had before or after the test *("I'll definitely fail")* and reframe them positively *("I did my best, and that's what counts")*. **Discussion**: Explore how different thoughts affect emotions and motivation.
Class hour	**Topic**: *"How to manage stress before exams"* **Task**: Students describe situations where they feel stressed (e.g., before a test), identify the negative thoughts, and work in groups to find more positive alternatives. **Reflection**: Students share how their emotional state changed after shifting their thoughts.

Conclusion

"Thought shifting" is an effective technique that helps students manage their emotions, overcome negative thinking patterns, and develop healthy self-esteem. This method can be successfully integrated across subjects and everyday learning, supporting students' emotional well-being and motivation.
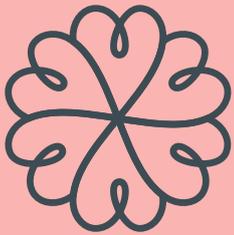
4 SIGNS THAT REVEAL POTENTIAL

SELF-AWARENESS, RECOGNITION OF STRENGTHS, MOTIVATION

This is a technique that helps students recognise situations in which they feel strong, motivated, and successful.

4 signs that reveal potential in English lesson

Topic: What is my talent in language learning?

Teacher Laura begins the lesson with a discussion:

"Have you ever noticed that some activities feel easier or more enjoyable than others? Today we'll look for signs that might help you discover your strengths in learning English."

It is important to identify and name these aspects:

1. **Enjoyment** – *When do you feel joy while learning?*
2. **Engagement** – *What activities make time fly because you're so focused?*
3. **Ease** – *What comes to you naturally, with little effort?*
4. **Recognition** – *What do you often receive positive feedback for?*

Task: Students reflect on their experiences in English class and fill in a table by marking activities that correspond to these four signs.

- *Some realise they enjoy writing stories (**Enjoyment**),*
- *Others find they lose track of time while speaking English (**Engagement**),*
- *Some notice they memorise new words effortlessly (**Ease**),*
- *And others are proud to receive compliments for their pronunciation (**Recognition**).*

After the activity, students share their insights in small groups. The teacher encourages reflection:

"How can these signs help you understand where your greatest potential lies in language learning? How can you further develop your strengths?"

The "4 signs that reveal potential" method helps students identify and understand their strengths and talents by encouraging them to reflect on themselves. It fosters motivation and boosts students' confidence in their abilities, enabling them to recognise what they excel at. This method also promotes the intentional development of their potential by guiding students to choose activities that align with their strengths, ultimately helping them grow both academically and personally.

How to use this method in lessons	
Preparation	The teacher explains that everyone has strengths and talents that can be revealed through different activities.
Introduce the 4 signs	1. **Enjoyment** – Activities that bring joy and make students feel happy. 2. **Engagement** – Activities where students feel so involved they forget about time. 3. **Ease** – Activities that feel natural and lead to success without much effort. 4. **Recognition** – Activities for which students receive praise and acknowledgement from others.
Implementation	**Reflection:** Students think about their own experiences and write down activities where they noticed the four signs: enjoyment, engagement, ease, and recognition. **Discussion:** This can be done in groups, individually, publicly, or privately—discussing when they feel happiest, most engaged, successful, or recognised. **Strengths Map:** Students draw their own *"strengths map"* by highlighting activities that align with the four signs. **Teacher Feedback:** The teacher takes the time to discuss students' strengths and ways to develop them further.
Application of the method	**Individual or group work:** Students can use this method to assess their own work or that of their classmates. **Written or verbal feedback:** Feedback can be given in writing (e.g., on a reflection sheet) or orally (e.g., during a discussion). **Teacher feedback:** Teachers are also encouraged to regularly use this method when giving feedback on students' work.
Regular practice	It is recommended to use this technique regularly across various subjects, helping students build the habit of recognising and nurturing their strengths.

Examples for different subjects	
Language lesson	**Creative writing** **Topic:** "*My strengths and talents*" **Objective:** Encourage students to recognise their personal strengths. **Task:** Students write a creative essay about an activity that brings them joy, in which they feel confident, find easy, and are praised for. **Reflection:** After writing, students discuss how these activities reveal their strengths.
Art class	**Self-discovery collage** **Topic:** "*My talents and strengths*" **Objective:** Help students visually express their personal strengths. **Task:** Students create a collage using magazine clippings that represent their hobbies, talents, and activities in which they feel strong. **Reflection:** Each student presents their collage, highlighting their strengths.
Math Class	**Discovering strength through challenges** **Topic:** "*What did I learn from a difficult task?*" **Objective:** Help students realise that even challenging tasks can reveal their strengths. **Task:** Students select a complex math problem. After solving it, they reflect on what they did best, which parts they were engaged in, and what felt easy—even if the overall task was challenging (e.g., they quickly understood a pattern, found creative solutions, remained persistent, or noticed calculation errors that others missed). **Reflection:** Students discuss their strengths with peers, emphasising how even struggles can reveal unique abilities—if they don't give up and look for what they're good at.

Conclusion:

The "4 signs that reveal potential" is a valuable technique that helps students better understand their strengths, build healthy self-esteem, and increase motivation. It can be successfully integrated into a variety of lessons, fostering emotional well-being and personal growth.
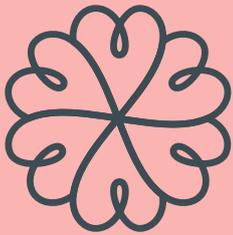
WHEN IN DOUBT

SELF-CONFIDENCE, CRITICAL THINKING, REFLECTION

"When in doubt" is a technique that helps students identify and overcome self-esteem crises, self-doubt, and internal uncertainty. It encourages students to reflect on their thoughts, recognise their fears and anxieties, and find rational solutions that strengthen self-confidence and reduce the fear of failure.

Personal experience

I remember one day very clearly. I had to present in front of the whole class. It was a completely ordinary presentation – but inside me, a storm was brewing: *"What if I forget something?"*, *"What if I mess up?"*, *"Everyone will laugh..."*

I stood behind the door, thinking, 'Should I say I'm feeling unwell and leave?' It felt very real. But then I thought – *what if I can actually do it?* Not perfectly, but at least give it a try.

A couple of minutes later, I was already standing in front of the class. My voice was shaking, but I gave the presentation. And you know what? It turned out quite well.

Since then, I've learned one thing: doubts never fully go away. But I can choose how I talk to them.

|	How to use this method in lessons
Preparation	**Explaining doubt and self-worth:** The teacher introduces the idea that doubting oneself or feeling fear is normal. However, it is important to recognise and reframe negative thoughts into supportive and motivating ones, as they have a significant impact on our self-esteem. **Presenting the technique:** Students are shown how this method will help them analyse their doubts, name their fears, and discover ways to overcome them. They're told that once they internalise this technique, they can use it independently whenever doubts, fears, or insecurities arise about themselves, their abilities, or goals. The method follows a **4-step model**: 1. **Identify the doubts:** Notice and name your negative thoughts. 2. **Analyse the fears:** Think about where these fears come from and what triggers them. 3. **Look for facts:** Assess whether your fears are grounded in reality and look for evidence that contradicts the negative beliefs. 4. **Reframe the thoughts:** Replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations or rational solutions.
Implementation	**Reflection and writing:** Students write down or express doubts and fears related to academic performance, social interactions, or personal traits. **Doubt analysis:** The teacher helps students explore the causes of these doubts and determine whether they are based on fact. **Fact-finding:** Students seek proof that contradicts their fears (e.g., recalling successful experiences or positive feedback). **Thought transformation:** Students learn how to replace negative thoughts with encouraging ones. For example: *"I can't do this"* → *"I'll try and learn from the experience."*
Reflection and practice *(extended version)*	**Reflection task:** After the activity, students reflect on how they felt and how their perspective on doubt may have changed. **Teacher feedback:** The teacher discusses the students' experiences and helps them better understand their internal dialogue. **Ongoing practice:** This method can be used regularly to promote self-awareness and strengthen self-esteem.

Examples for different subjects

Literature	**Topic:** *Fear of expressing ideas in writing* **Task:** • Before writing an essay, students identify their doubts: *"No one will like it", "I'm not good at writing."* • Practice reframing thoughts: → *"It will be bad"* → *"This is only the first draft – everything can be improved."* **Extra task:** After writing – reflect: *"What went well after all?"*
History	**Topic:** *Fear of speaking in discussions* **Task:** • Students prepare for a discussion about a historical event. Before speaking, they name their doubts: *"I might say something stupid", "Others know more than me."* • Reframe the thought: → *"Others know more"* → *"I can share what I know – and learn from others."* **Reflection:** *How did they feel after sharing their opinion? Was it worth trying?*
Science/Biology/ Physics	**Topic:** *Fear of failing during experiments* **Task:** • Before starting a lab, students write down their fears: *"I'll mess up", "I don't know how to use the equipment."* • Class discussion: are mistakes a failure – or a part of learning? Positive thought: → *"I'm afraid to fail"* → *"Mistakes are part of science – many discoveries came from them."*

Mathematics	**Topic:** *Doubts about solving problems*
	Task:
	• Students write down thoughts that arise when solving new or complex problems, e.g., *"I'll make mistakes", "I'm too slow", or "I'm not good at this."*
	• Then they analyse if these thoughts are true: have they solved similar tasks before?
	• Next to each negative thought, they write a reframed, positive one:
	→ *"I'm too slow"* → *"Everyone works at their own pace. If I take time, I'll understand."*
	Reflection: *How did their attitude change after reframing their thoughts?*
Art/Music/Technology	**Topic:** *Doubts about creativity*
	Task:
	• Before starting a creative task, students reflect: what's holding them back? *"I can't draw", "Others are better."*
	• Analyse: is this really true? Recall situations when their work was appreciated.
	• Reframe:
	→ *"I'm not creative enough"* → *"Creativity has no rules – it's my personal expression."*

Conclusion

The "When in doubt" technique helps students understand and work through their doubts, replacing negative thoughts with constructive and supportive beliefs. This strengthens self-confidence and promotes healthy self-esteem. The method supports students' emotional well-being and can be successfully integrated across different subjects and learning activities.
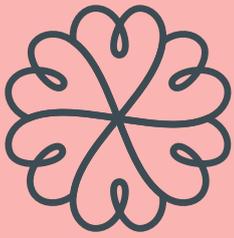
Dear student,

This short survey gives us a glimpse into how you feel in your daily life: at school, at home, with friends, or when you are on your own.

There are no right or wrong answers – simply pick the option that best describes how things are for you.

Your thoughts are very important to us, so please answer honestly and feel free to be open. All responses are completely anonymous, and nobody will know who gave which answers.

Thank you for taking part and helping us create a kinder, more supportive school together!

1. If your friend asked you what the word "self-esteem" means, would you be able to explain it?

◯ Yes, I clearly understand what high self-esteem means.

◯ I understand a little, but I couldn't explain it properly.

◯ No, I couldn't explain it, as I don't know what high self-esteem looks like.

◯ Other (please specify) _____

2. Do you feel confident in yourself?

◯ Yes, I always feel confident.

◯ I often feel confident.

◯ I feel neither confident nor unconfident.

◯ I often don't feel confident.

◯ I never feel confident.

3. Do you know how to improve your self-esteem, increase your confidence, or help yourself when you feel sad or nervous?

◯ Yes, I know several methods and I use them.

◯ Yes, I know there are methods, but I don't use them.

◯ No, I don't know anything about this.

4. Which of the personal development tools below do you know and maybe use by yourself?

	I know and use it	I know it, but don't use it	I don't know anything about this tool
Affirmations			
Positive inventory			
Cards			
Other (please specify)			

5. Please read each statement carefully and decide how much you agree or disagree with it.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Overall, I am satisfied with who I am.					
I often compare myself to others and feel less good than them.					
I recognise that I have many good qualities.					
I feel that I am good enough just the way I am.					
I respect myself as a person.					
I believe I can learn things that seem difficult at first.					
It is not too difficult for me to ask for help when I need it.					
I feel comfortable sharing my ideas in class or group activities.					
When I solve problems or make decisions, I trust my own thinking.					
I feel confident when I speak and share my opinions.					
I usually feel positive and ready to learn when I arrive at lessons.					
I feel accepted and included by my classmates.					
I often feel sad or very anxious.					
On most days, I feel happy.					
I have activities that help me relax and feel calm.					
I feel I have someone I can talk to when things feel difficult.					
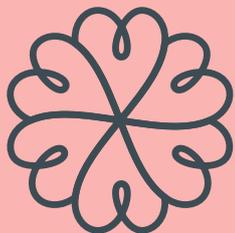
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