

PRAISING THE PROCESS

Carol Dweck's research revealed that the way in which young people are praised will make a significant difference to their mindset and beliefs about their ability. Mindset is the attitude they adopt towards their capacity for growth, praise for being 'clever' or 'talented' reinforces a fixed mindset and can cap potential. Praise for persistence, effort, organisation, listening, trying different strategies or staying focused on a task reinforces the growth mindset - we must praise the process of learning.

The Do's...

Notice students' good efforts and strategies and praise them.

Be specific about the praised behaviours, reinforce this behaviour with your feedback.

Use praise to link the outcomes of an assignment to students' efforts.

Talk explicitly and in detail about the strategies a student has used. Comment on which strategies were helpful and which were not.

Ask a student to explain his or her work to you.

The Don'ts...

Offer praise for trivial accomplishments or weak efforts.

Inflate praise, particularly for students with low self-esteem.

Let students feel ashamed of difficulty, instead treat as an opportunity for learning.

Say, "You're really clever" in response to good work. Instead, praise the work done (e.g. "Your argument is very clear." or "Your homework is very accurate.").

Comfort students who struggle by saying that not everyone can be good at everything.



"If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. That way, their children don't have to be slaves of praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence." - Carol Dweck