

Gratitude wall

Dimension: Positivity

Sub-dimension(s): Self-esteem / Satisfaction

Strategy type: Class / Whole-KS2

Description: On a daily basis, children write down something they are grateful for.

Outcome: Children have improved self-esteem and satisfaction with life at school.

Objective

To increase children's satisfaction with life and improve their self-esteem through regular reflection on positive aspects of their experiences.

Resources needed

Display board or noticeboard, brightly coloured pieces of paper / sticky notes

Background

This is a simple but highly effective activity that can be built into the daily routine of the class. Research by Froh *et al.* (2008) has shown that self-esteem and wellbeing can be boosted by the act of writing down and reflecting on what children are grateful for, or what has gone well that day. Typically this is done over a couple of weeks, but there is no reason not to continue this for longer periods of time.

Description of strategy

We suggest creating a gratitude wall in the classroom or corridor, maybe as a display / noticeboard. Make sure that there is plenty of space to fill. Introduce the idea of the gratitude wall by discussing, possibly during a school assembly, what it means to be grateful. Following this, explain that you have created a gratitude wall where everyone can put notes about what they are particularly glad about. Each day, ask children to take a moment to write down one thing they are really grateful for, or (if it is towards the end of the school day) one thing that they feel has gone really well that day. The notes can be about anything – they don't have to be linked to school work or events. Encourage children to think of more than one if they have lots of ideas, but make sure everyone contributes at least one note each day, no matter how small the child may think it is. Make an event of the children putting their notes on the wall and celebrate their reflections.

Aim to fill the wall over time with layers of brightly coloured notes. Once a week, talk about the wall with the children and identify some highlights. Encourage the adults in the classroom to participate too. During parents' evenings, ask children to encourage their parents to contribute to the gratitude wall.

What would success look like?

Children adopt a daily practice of identifying what has gone well or something they feel good about. They maintain a positive perception of school experiences.