



Learning Mindset Lesson: Mistakes are Good

Summary

Students are given a message saying that mistakes are valuable.

Group Size: Whole class (Reinforce with small group, if necessary)

Length: Approximately 25 minutes

Lesson Preparation:

- Watch the teacher video - available [here](#).
- Prepare student video - available [here](#).
- Print *Mistakes are Good* – Worksheet ([download](#)) OR just a blank sheet of paper – one copy for each student.
- Prepare *Mistakes are Good PowerPoint* ([download](#)) – to show the class.
- Access to a whiteboard
- *Optional:* Print *Mistakes are Good – Posters* in A4 colour ([download](#)) – one copy for the classroom

Learning Intention

This activity helps students to:

- Learn that when you make a mistake, your brain grows
- Appreciate that mistakes are valuable, even when they cause frustration

After the Lesson

Follow-up may include reinforcing this message until it becomes part of students' thinking.

- It may be helpful to re-play the *Mistakes are Good* – Video to the whole class as a reminder after a few weeks.
- The best way to reinforce is finding those “teachable moments”:
 - When you come across a mistake (particularly a conceptual error, rather than a computational error), celebrate it. Smile, comment positively or draw (positive) attention from other students. One way to do this is to place it on a “Mistakes Board” in the classroom.
 - Find every opportunity you can to utter these (and similar) phrases in class:
 - *When you make a mistake, your brain grows.*
 - *Mistakes are a good thing.*
 - *When you make a mistake, it's okay to feel frustrated. But you should also feel smart.*
 - *Mistakes are normal.*
 - *Getting stuck is a normal part of learning maths*
 - *Mistakes are proof you're trying.*
 - If you hear a student echoing one of those sentiments in their own language, reinforce with praise or sharing more broadly with other students. Maybe consider how to reinforce and celebrate this mindset on an ongoing basis.

Note: It is important for students to understand this mindset around mistakes is beyond a beginning of the year activity, especially when they're faced with particular challenges. It's worthwhile considering how to facilitate and find opportunities to refresh and reinforce this mindset throughout the year. Some students might need more time and support to shift their internal/external thoughts and feelings and that's okay!

Time	What the teacher is doing	What students are doing
5 mins	<p>Tell the class: <i>"People have done research to work something out: How many people are born smart enough to succeed and thrive in maths in school?"</i></p> <p>Display the multiple-choice options from Slide 2 of the <i>Mistakes a Good</i> PowerPoint.</p> <p>Have a raise-of-hands vote for the correct option. Get students to <u>close their eyes</u> while voting. Don't reveal the correct answer yet. Comment that you'll come back to reveal the answer later.</p>	<p>Consider the question the teacher has posed.</p> <p>Vote with eyes closed.</p>
5 mins	<p>Lead a quick class discussion around how students feel about making mistakes in maths. PowerPoint slides 3 and 4 can be used to facilitate this.</p>	<p>Participate in a class discussion.</p>
5 mins	<p>Hand out <i>Mistakes are Good – Worksheet</i> to each student (or just a blank sheet of paper) and share, <i>"This sheet of paper represents your brain."</i></p> <p>Give the class instructions for this activity using Slides 5 to 8 of the PowerPoint.</p> <p>As students are tracing in their lines, circulate the room and use reinforcing language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>When you make a mistake, your brain grows.</i> ● <i>Mistakes are a good thing.</i> ● <i>When you make a mistake, it's okay to feel frustrated. But you should also feel smart.</i> ● <i>Mistakes are normal.</i> ● <i>Getting stuck is a normal part of learning maths.</i> ● <i>Mistakes are proof you're trying.</i> <p><i>Optional:</i> Ask students if they've heard any similar sayings or comments.</p>	<p>Participate in class activity by reflecting on your thoughts and tracing the lines.</p> <p>Listen to the teacher's language and think about your own learning.</p>
5 mins	<p>Lead a Think-Pair-Share using Slides 9 to 11 of the PowerPoint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider prompting with these two examples as part of the class discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Touching a hot stove-top. You learn straight away not to do that again. The mistake is all it took to do the learning. ○ Playing mini-golf. Each time you hit the ball, your brain automatically learns how to make the next shot better, even if you completely miss your target. <p><i>Optional:</i> Any students who share get to put up one of the posters in the room.</p>	<p>Participate in a Think-Pair-Share about a time you discovered something new from a mistake.</p> <p>Share these stories as a class.</p>
5 mins	<p>Let students re-vote on the initial multiple choice question with their eyes still closed.</p> <p>Usually, almost the whole class votes option E. While all hands are up and eyes are closed, ask students to open their eyes. That 'big reveal' can be a great moment with everyone smiling.</p> <p>Note: Be ready to note down any students who don't vote "option E – 100%"; as they may need further follow-up to reinforce this mindset.</p>	<p>Think about the lesson and class discussion, then re-vote with your eyes closed.</p>