

9- Declarative versus imperative language

- Comment
- Declaration
- Prediction
- Reflection

Declarative language does not elicit, require or demand a physical or verbal response but rather declarative language invites a response.

- Directives/commands
- Prompts
- Questions
- Requests

It elicits a response of some kind. It limits the opportunity for students to think for themselves, make choices and problem solve on their own.

Why Declarative language?

Using declarative language can make a huge difference in the student's ability to share experiences and memories; become better observers (read the room); problem solve; develop their critical thinking skills; understand perspective; and communicate on a more meaningful level.

Examples of Declarative language

- I'm wondering where your shoes are
- I'm wondering where your pencil is
- Oh my, I don't want you to trip on your shoelaces
- Your books might fall out of your bag
- I notice your calendar did not make it to your bin
- I see books out on the table
- I heard your friend say that he would like to borrow your scissors
- If you don't sit with your feet on the ground, you may hurt yourself
- I'm thinking you may be safer if you sit with your bottom on the chair
- I notice that you haven't started your work
- I notice that you really like sharpening your pencil often
- I notice all the students are lining up
- I am so happy to see everyone working
- I see the other students are packing up their belongings
- I see the other students getting ready for recess
- It makes me so happy when I see my friends working quietly at their desks
- Oh geez, I made a mistake, that's ok
- It looks like you are having a hard time
- Oh that's loud, it hurts my ears
- I'm finding it hard to hear you when you are shouting
- I think we need more time, we aren't ready just yet
- It must be frustrating when our friends don't follow the rules
- I wonder if taking a break might be the best choice
- I wouldn't want you to have to miss...
- I wonder if we can be flexible and move on
- Counting to 10 makes me feel so much better
- I notice that your friend wants a turn
- I think going for a walk is a good option
- I wonder what we can do so that we can both be happy
- I wonder what we can do so that you can stay in the class
- I notice you are standing very close to...
- I forgot why you don't want to...
- It's ok to be mad, but it is not ok to yell at me

10- Emotion coaching

1- Label:

This helps the child start to identify their emotions and feel seen and heard by you. Expressing your curiosity helps you figure out exactly what the child is feeling (sad, mad, angry, frustrated, embarrassed) before moving forward to coach them through the feeling.

Sample:

- I see you are feeling...
- I notice you are (clenching your hands, frowning, getting hyper)...
- I hear you saying...
- Tell me more about what you are feeling.
- It sounds like you are feeling _____, is this correct?

2- Empathize and validate:

Empathizing is reflecting and experiencing another person's emotions, or put another way, imagining you are the child and reacting with their emotions and past experiences. This also means putting aside your own feelings, judgments, reactions and experiences.

Sample:

- It's normal to feel _____ when this happens.
- I would feel that way too if this happened to me.
- I understand why you feel this way.

3- Set limits:

Clarify for the child that although the feeling is perfectly valid and understandable, not all behaviours triggered by the feeling are acceptable.

Sample:

- It's okay to feel _____, but it's not okay to _____
- It's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to punch, hit, kick, scream.
- It's okay to feel embarrassed, but it's not okay to make fun of other people.
- It's okay to feel nervous, but it's not okay to lie about what happened.

Emotion coaching

Declaire, J. & Gottman, J. (1997). The Heart of Parenting: How to Raise an Emotionally Intelligent Child. New York: Simon & Schuster.

John Gottman –Emotion Coaching
<https://emotioncoaching.gottman.com>
<https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/>

4- Problem solve:

Prompt the child to think of options. The best ideas come from children themselves, when they explore the problem from their own perspective and knowledge.

Sample:

- Looking back now, what would you do differently?
- How could you handle it differently next time?
- What are two other ways of solving the problem?

5- Coach a skill:

If the child is unable to think of any possible solutions, explore with them what they might have done differently

Sample:

Something that I know works with other kids or for myself is ____, would this be something we can work on together?

- Asking for help
- Talking to someone I trust
- Taking a break
- Go outside
- Doing relaxation activities (mindfulness, deep breathing, drawing)
- Doing something physical and repetitive (walk, jumping jacks, push-ups, running)

When to use Emotion Coaching?

Emotion coaching can be used to de-escalate a situation before it develops into a crisis.

Also use this approach to debrief with the child after a crisis has occurred.

Example: Student loses his glove during recess, does not come in when the bell rings.

5 STEPS:

- 1) Label: I see that you are worried that your glove is missing
- 2) Validate: I would be worried too if I didn't know where my glove was.
- 3) Set limits: It is ok to be worried and want to look for your glove but it is not ok to ignore the bell.
- 4) Problem solve: At our next recess, I will go out with you to look for your glove.
- 5) Coach a skill: Next time you are worried about not having your gloves, you can come see me or next time you take your gloves off, perhaps you can put them in your pocket...