

July
2025

How
practitioners use
positive framing
language when
interacting with
students



FWTA3



Introduction

Welcome!

Research Focus:

How educators use **positive framing language** when interacting with learners.

Definition:

Positive framing language involves using words or non-verbal cues to convey messages in a constructive, encouraging, and empowering manner.

(Kuang & Bicchieri, 2024)



Why use positive framing language?

Positive Framing in the Classroom

- Positive framing language is widely recognised as an effective **classroom management tool**, often leading to **increased student engagement**.

(Sutherland, 2000)

- While not explicitly named in the **Teaching Standards**, the use of clear and effective communication is a core professional expectation for educators.



Theory

Theoretical Foundation: Positive framing language & engagement

- **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs** (1943) highlights the importance of a **positive learning environment** in supporting student engagement.
- Positive environments foster **strong student-teacher relationships**, which help students feel safe, supported, and ready to learn.
- These relationships contribute to **higher levels of on-task behavior** and engagement (*Košir & Habe, 2013*).



Surrounding literature

The Power of Language in Education

- While **positive language** supports student growth and engagement, **negative language and sanctions** can harm student well-being (*Olivier et al., 2021*).
- This dual impact highlights the **critical importance** of how educators choose to communicate with students.



Research methods

Methodology

- This research used lessons **observations** and follow up **semi-structured interviews** with teaching staff.
- Participants included **three experienced SEND teachers**, selected for their ability to provide **rigorous, experience-based insights**.



Observations

	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D
Positive verbal	30	20	29
Positive non-verbal	10	7	
Positive Makaton sign.	6		
Negative verbal	3	4	2
Negative non-verbal	2		
Negative Makaton sign	3		
Neutral verbal	5	5	
Neutral non-verbal	7	4	3

Findings

Key Themes from Interviews & Questionnaires

1. Importance of Relationships

- All participants emphasized strong student–teacher relationships.
- Positive relationships: → *Enhance learning* → *Build trust* → *Increase engagement and participation*

2. Need for Communication Feedback

- Mixed views on feedback: → One felt CPD was sufficient
→ Others wanted more feedback to:
 - Improve practice
 - Identify areas for growth
 - Enhance skills

3. Challenges of Positive Communication

- Difficult in certain contexts: → During challenging behavior
→ When staff feel stressed or frustrated



Impact

For Students

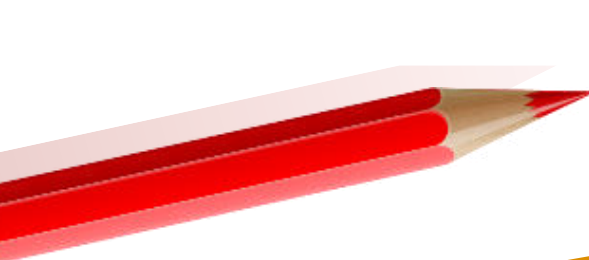
- Positive language boosts engagement & motivation
 - Builds stronger, more trusting relationships
 - Creates a supportive classroom climate

For Practitioners

- Lack of regular feedback limits reflective growth
- Feedback enables strategy development during challenging behaviours
 - Encourages consistent use of positive framing language

For Schools

- Enhances overall teaching quality and student outcomes



Thank You for
listening, any
questions?

Thank You!

Lyndsey Wenden



References

- Košir, K and Habe, K, 2013. Analysis of Learning Environment Factors Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. *Revija za elementarno izobraževanje*, 6(2–3), pp.173–191.
- Kuang, J. and Bicchieri, C., 2024. How language framing shapes the perception of social norms. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, p.101886.
- Olivier, E. et al., 2021. Need-supportive teaching and student engagement in the classroom: Comparing the additive, synergistic, and global contributions. *Learning and instruction*, 71, pp.101389-. 10.1016/j.learninstruc.2020.101389.
- Sutherland, K.S., 2000. *Effects of self-evaluation on rates of teacher behaviors in classrooms for students with emotional and behavioral disorders*. Vanderbilt University.