

Giving Effective Praise

Research Recommendations

Correct responses had to be encouraging, positive, and indicate acknowledgement of the student's focus on the learning process. Table 1 below highlights some sample tutor responses to a struggling student in both scenarios with an explanation of the reasoning behind the coding of "correct" and "incorrect" responses.

Criteria:

Praise should be:

- perceived as sincere, earned, and truthful.
- specific by giving details of what the student did well.
- immediate with praise given right after the student action.
- authentic and is not repeated often, such as "great job" which loses meaning and becomes predictable.
- focused on the learning process, not ability

Tutor responses must follow some, but not all the above. To receive full credit they cannot just say "great job" and praise with no specific reasoning. They need to be praised for effort or the process AND be positive and encouraging. Examples below:

PREDICT RESPONSES:

Correct (1): Tutor responses should be positive, specific, and encouraging, focusing on the learning process rather than just ability. Praise must acknowledge the student's effort, perseverance, or progress and should be sincere and authentic.

Incorrect (0): Generic praise such as "great job" or "well done" without details about what the student did well, or praise that lacks focus on the process, is considered incorrect. Responses must go beyond generic comments to acknowledge specific student actions and efforts.

Tutor response	Reasoning	Correct (1) or Incorrect (0)?
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"You did a great job on that problem. Well done."	The response is positive and sincere, however, does not focus on the process or praise specific student actions	0
"Good job! Why don't we try solving a few more problems so that you feel confident about these questions?"	The response is positive and encouraging, however, it is not praising the student for persevering it is merely implying the more problems you do the more confident you become. This could be a partial credit problem but for consistency it is incorrect.	0
"It was difficult but you persevered and succeeded. Such grit is an important life skill and I'm proud of what you accomplished and you should be proud, too."	The response is positive, sincere, and praises the student for persevering and acknowledges the students for working hard and the process of learning.	1
"You have done a good job so far. It is normal to feel challenged at this stage. Keep going."	This response is slightly nuanced in that there is little emphasis on positivity and uses the generic "good job" phrase, however, it focuses on persevering despite being challenged.	1

Explained Responses:

Rubric

Explained responses for giving effective praise

Key: focusing on the student learning process and their learning effort (perseverance, hard work paying off, keep insisting etc.)

Correct (1): The tutor's response demonstrates an understanding of the importance of focusing on specific details of what the student did well and focusing on the learning process

Incorrect (0): The tutor responses focus on the student's learning outcomes over effort/process, or are not related to praise.

Tutor response	Correct (1) or Incorrect (0)?
It is sincere and positive.	0
Carla will be more motivated and confident to continue completing her homework.	0
It's important to praise the effort, rather than "smartness" since intelligence is often seen as an immutable trait. Learning takes effort, and it's that effort that you want them to repeat, so that's what you should praise.	1
Encouraging progress through effort is the most beneficial approach. Growth mindset should be encouraged.	1
It shows you have noticed how much she has worked and you are willing to work on it together.	1
Because she is feeling a self-worth and not a weak student.	0