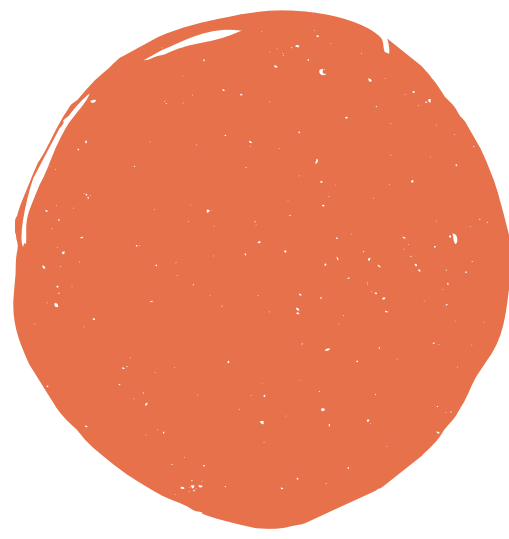


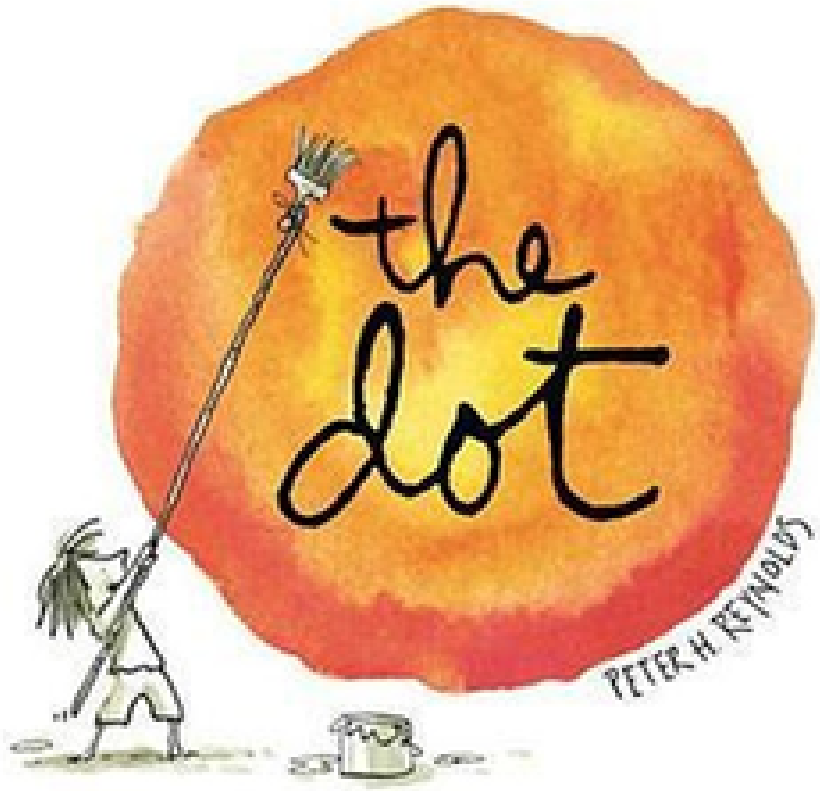
Developing Resilience and Creativity:

a series of lessons based on *The Dot* by
Peter H Reynolds





About The Dot



Her teacher smiled. "Just make a mark and see where it takes you."

Art class is over, but Vashti is sitting glued to her chair in front of a blank piece of paper. The words of her teacher are a gentle invitation to express herself. But Vashti can't draw - she's no artist. To prove her point, Vashti jabs at a blank sheet of paper to make an unremarkable and angry mark. "There!" she says.

That one little dot marks the beginning of Vashti's journey of surprise and self-discovery. That special moment is the core of Peter H. Reynolds's delicate fable about the creative spirit in all of us.

The Dot is the first in Peter H Reynold's 'creatrilogy', three books that celebrate the power of original thinking. It's also a great depiction of the power of resilience and growth mindset. It shows what we can achieve when we don't give up and instead try approaching a challenge in different ways. The Dot even has its own celebration day- International Dot Day- which encourages schools across the world to celebrate creativity, courage and collaboration. Find out more about this at <http://www.thedotclub.org/dotday/>

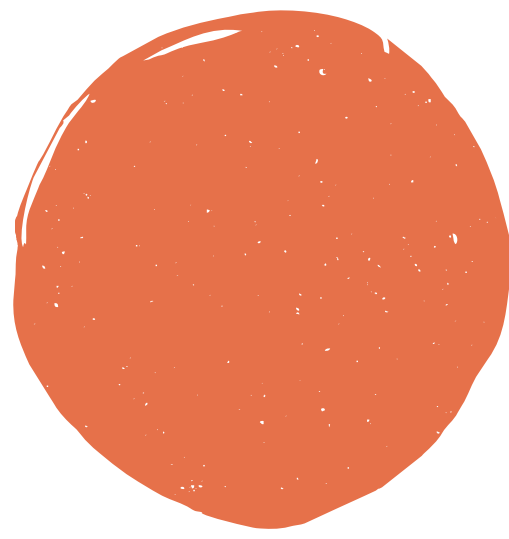
You can find a video of The Dot on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5mGeR4AQdM>

About This Planning

This planning provides ideas that could be adapted for use through the whole primary age range. At its heart is the concept of resilience and the impact that this can have on our mental health and emotional wellbeing. It also includes lots of opportunity for creativity expression and exploration. The idea is that this plan could be used to help children transition back into attending school.

As The Dot is a book that is suitable for the whole primary age range, this planning has been designed to be adaptable for use across the age-range. This would mean that it could be used as part of a whole school scheme of work or to help different year groups transition back into being in school. For this reason, the plan isn't overly prescriptive. Rather than lessons, they are separated by themes- each giving a range of "jumping off" points that you can pick and choose from. You could spend one lesson on a theme or explore the theme over a sequence of lessons.





Objectives and Possible Outcomes

THEME 1: Vashti's Feelings

Objectives: How to recognise and name different feelings (H11- KS1*)

To recognise that feelings can change over time and range in intensity (H17- KS2*)

Outcomes:

Written descriptions of how your body feels when you experience feelings

Portraits of people experiencing different emotions

Graph showing how Vashti's feelings change throughout the book

THEME 2: Finding Things Difficult and Bouncing Back

Objectives: How to manage when finding things difficult (H24- KS1*)

About how to manage setbacks/perceived failures, including how to re-frame unhelpful thinking (H29- KS2*) (H29- KS2*)

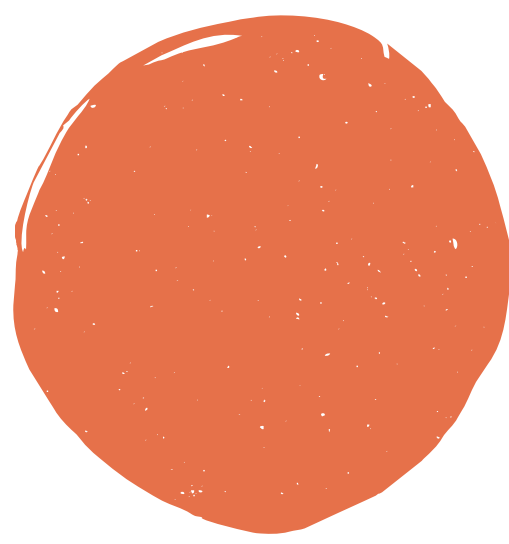
Outcomes: Examples of how negative self-talk can be re-framed to be more positive

THEME 3: Our Own Dots

Objectives: To explore a range of artwork and have a critical response

To experiment with mark-making and different media to create a piece of dot-based artwork

Outcomes: Dot-based artworks



Vashti's Feelings

Objectives:

How to recognise and name different feelings (H11- KS1*)

To recognise that feelings can change over time and range in intensity (H17- KS2*)

Resources:

A copy of The Dot by Peter H Reynolds (or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5mGeR4AQdM>)

Likes, Dislikes, Puzzles, Patterns grid

Emotion words handouts

Emotions Graph sheet

Introducing the Text

Look at the cover and discuss the title/image. What do you think it will be about? Why is she painting a dot? What do you notice about the method she's using? Why might she be doing this?

Look at the blurb. Have you ever felt that you just can't do something? What makes you feel like this? What's it like when you have to do something that you feel you can't do in class?

Read the book- predicting what may happen and encouraging brief comments on the story (first impressions of text, summarising what's happening).

Once you've read through the text once, you could choose to use a Likes, Dislikes, Puzzles and Patterns grid to help children develop their thoughts on the text and to support an initial discussion about your feelings about the text.

Focusing on Thoughts

Focusing on the first image in the book (with Vashti "glued to her chair"). Encourage the children to describe how Vashti is sitting and to re-enact this moment. What is her body doing? How about her facial expressions? What may she be thinking? Choose children to come to life out of their "frozen picture" re-enactment and explain (in role as Vashti) how they are feeling. Children could record these thoughts on speech bubbles for an informal writing activity.

Focusing on Feelings

Explain to the children that you are going to focus on how Vashti feels at different points during the text. Use text clues (e.g. phrases like "glued to her chair") plus Vashti's body language and facial expressions and colour based clues in the artwork (i.e. the red surrounding Vashti when she slams down her pen) to develop a range of feelings words to describe her emotions. Alternatively, you could use the prepared words provided in the resources and support children to match the most appropriate words to each part of the story. You may also want to use an emotion wheel- examples of these are available on https://padlet.com/jholder_llp/emotions

Choose words from the collection you've curated and experiment with using body/facial expressions to create an image of someone who is experiencing this emotion. How does your face/body change? How else would you feel if you were angry/frustrated/annoyed? You could encourage the children to create a written description of how their body feels for a chosen emotion or you could create portraits that depict these feelings.

Plotting Vashti's Emotions

Look at how Vashti's emotions change throughout the text. Work together to create a graph that demonstrates how Vashti's feelings alter as the story progresses. Provide children with grid axis and ask them to mark points on the x axis and label them with the key moments in the text- e.g. Vashti feels that she can't draw; Vashti slams her pen into the paper; the teacher puts the picture on the wall.

Ask the children to choose the emotion words that they feel best capture how Vashti feels in the book and to place them into a type of scale (increasing in intensity, perhaps) and add to the y axis. Use this to plot a graph showing how Vashti's feelings change. Use this to discuss what makes Vashti's emotions change so strongly.

Rounding Up

Look at the end of the story where the boy tells Vashti that he'd like to be as good as art as her. How does he feel? He also thought he wasn't a good artist, like Vashti did earlier in the story. Are his emotions similar to hers? How are they different? Talk about how emotional response is personal and although we may go through similar experiences or have similar thoughts, we won't feel exactly the same as our friends.

LIKES <i>What elements of the book did you like? Why?</i>	DISLIKES <i>What elements of the book didn't you like? Why?</i>
PUZZLES <i>What confused you? What would you like to know more about? What questions do you have?</i>	PATTERNS/CONNECTIONS <i>Are there any patterns you notice within the text? Can you notice any connections to other texts? How could you relate the book to real life?</i>

Based on Aidan Chamber's Tell Me: Children, Reading and Talk

Emotion words



upset



frustrated



annoyed



angry



calm



excited

Emotion words

angry

furious

frustrated

calm

annoyed

happy

excited

elated

confused

curious

disappointed

overwhelmed

worried

confident

peaceful

shocked

inadequate

grateful

embarrassed

determined

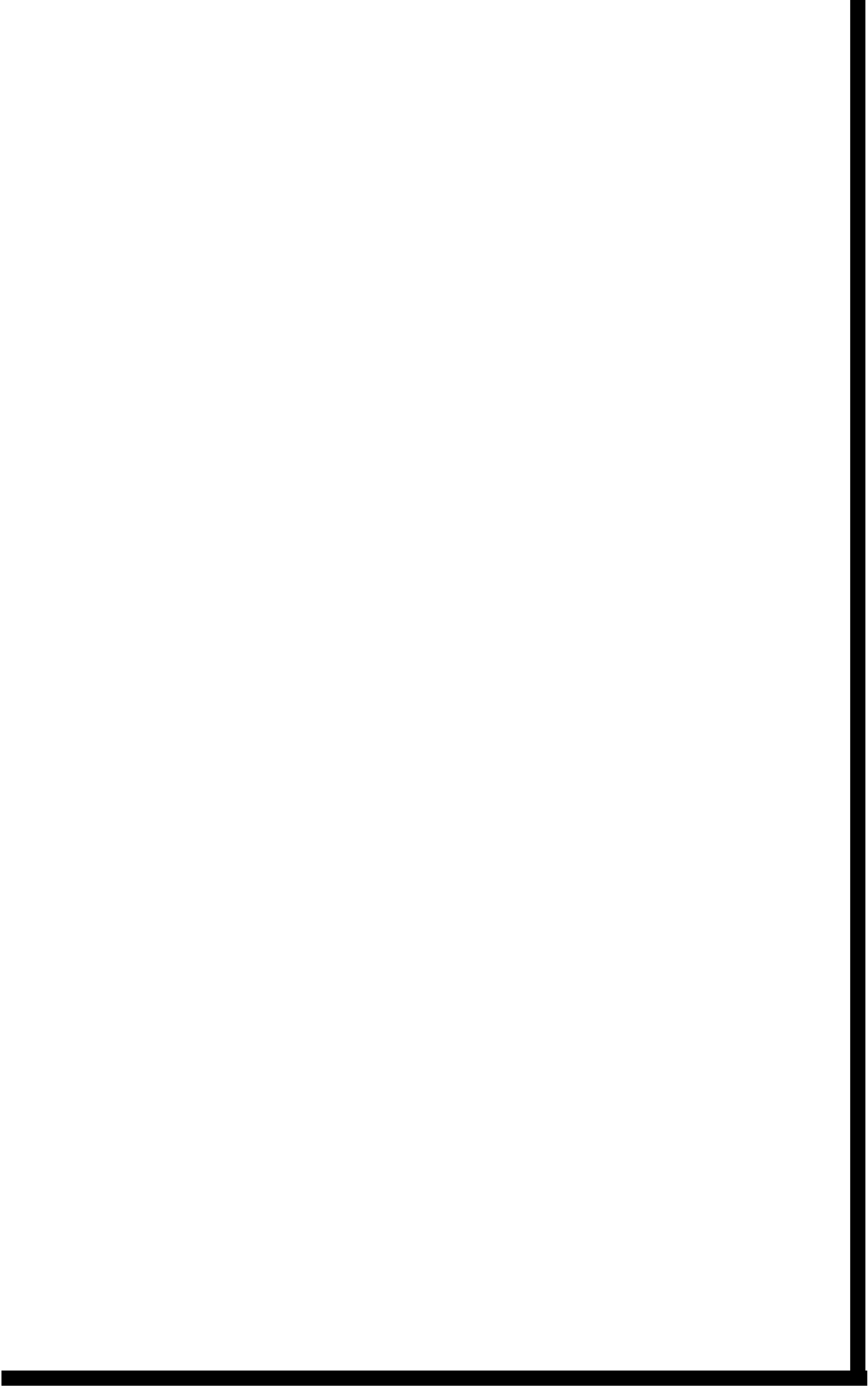
helpful

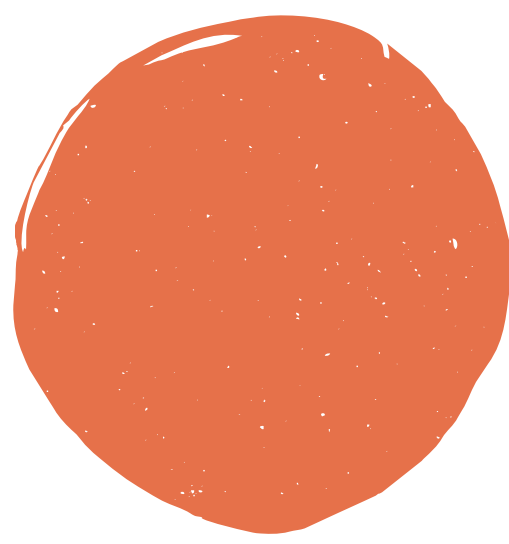
scared

bored

sad

Vashti's feelings during 'The Dot' by Peter H Reynolds





Finding Things Difficult and Bouncing Back

Objectives:

How to manage when finding things difficult (H24- KS1*)

About how to manage setbacks/perceived failures, including how to re-frame unhelpful thinking (H29- KS2*) (H29- KS2*)

Resources:

A copy of The Dot by Peter H Reynolds (or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5mGeR4AQdM>)

Reframing Our Thoughts worksheets

<https://www.liverpoolcamhs.com/aces/resilience-framework/>

Revisiting the Text

Ask the children to summarise the story of 'The Dot' (either verbal or written on mini whiteboards). What are the most important parts of the story? Is there a 'moral' or 'message' within the book? What might this message be?

Further Exploring Vashti's Feelings

Look back to the beginning of the book (you could also use the graphs created as part of 'Theme 1' to help with this). What causes Vashti to feel so much frustration and anger? Explore the idea that Vashti's anger has stemmed from her feeling that she isn't good at art. Why might Vashti feel like this? Talk about how she might be comparing herself to other children in the class. You could use drama techniques such as thought-tapping or hot-seating to explore this.

"I just CAN'T draw!"

Look at what Vashti says to her teacher- "I just CAN'T draw!" Is it true? Often, we make sweeping statements like this- I can't draw, I can't sing, I can't dance. What do we mean when we say these statements? We all CAN draw, sing or dance... it's just that we don't think we can do it well. What do you think that Vashti is worried about? Encourage the children to think of and mindmap reasons why Vashti might feel that she's not good at drawing. Why might she find it hard? Look at these reasons and discuss why reasons like this stop us from having a go.

What Happens Next

Ask the children to explain how Vashti goes from having nothing on her sheet of paper to creating a whole exhibition. What drives her to realise that she can draw? What's the key factor that gets her to have a go? Look at what the teacher does. How does this inspire Vashti to create more dots? Why does this work so well?

How Vashti's Thoughts Change

On the board, display how Vashti's thoughts change:

"I just CAN'T draw!"

"Well, maybe I can't draw, but I CAN sign my name."

"Hmmp! I can make a better dot than THAT!"

"If I can make little dots, I can make BIG dots, too."

Ask the children to discuss, in pairs or small groups, what they notice about what she says and how her attitude to drawing changes. Show that she's started to focus less on what she CAN'T do and instead has looked at what she CAN do.

Reframing Our Thoughts

Talk about how at the beginning of the story Vashti is using "negative self-talk". She's focusing on what she can't do. Show examples of negative ways of thinking about our abilities (see resources). Look at an example of how to re-frame this in a more positive way. Ask the children to look at the other statements and to try re-framing these.

Self-Reflection

Allow time for the children to think about the types of tasks/activities/situations that they find hard. What types of negative self-talk do they use in these situations? How could they reframe these thoughts? The children could create "positive self-talk" cards giving examples of useful ways to support themselves through difficult situations. Explain the brain is like a super-computer and by practicing positive self-talk we are re-programming it to help us to achieve more and feel better.

Resilience

Show the word 'resilience' on the board. Do the children know what this word means? Discuss together what they think it means (based on prior experience or learning).

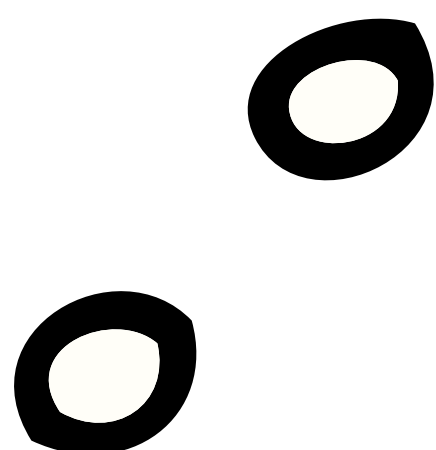
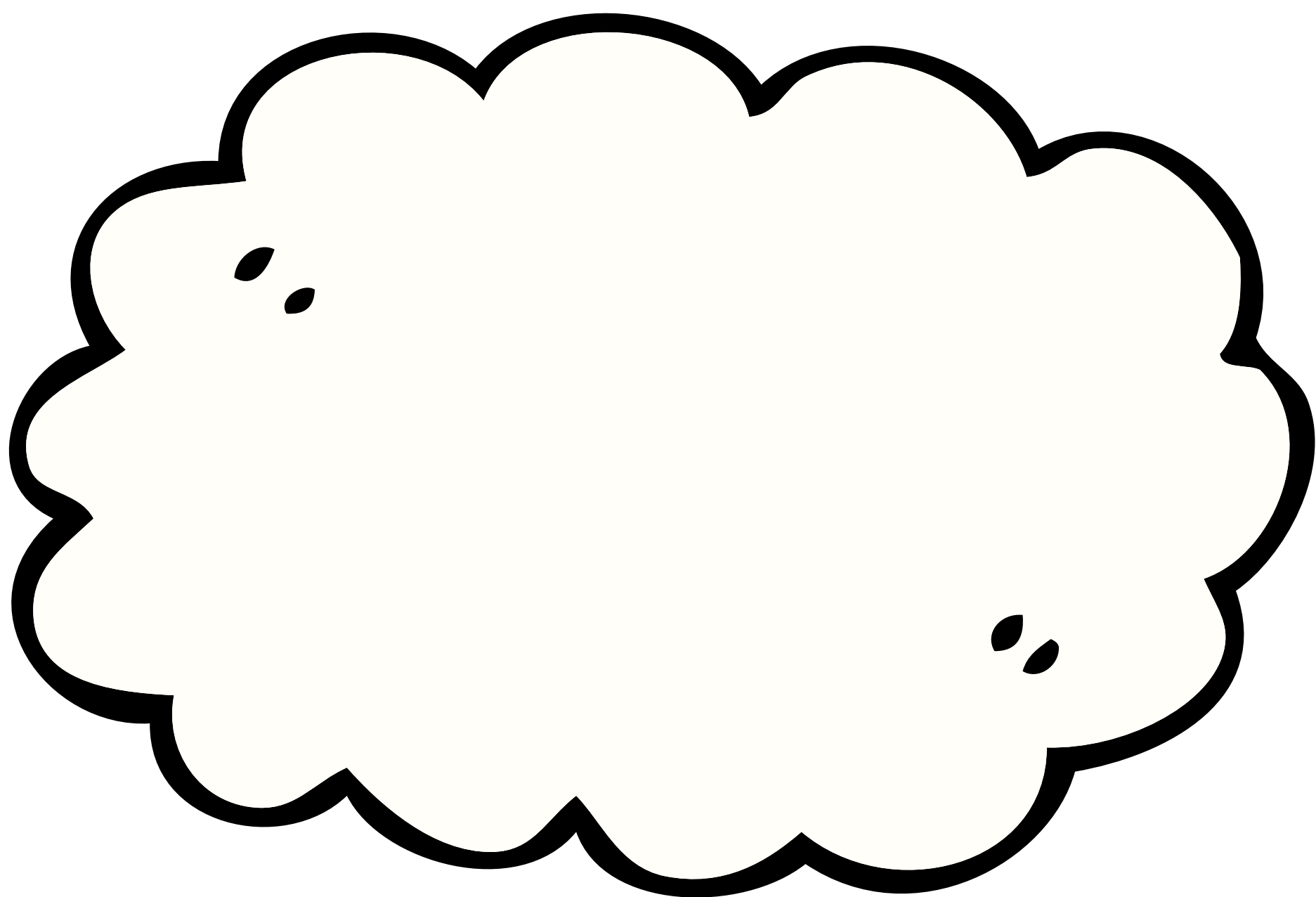
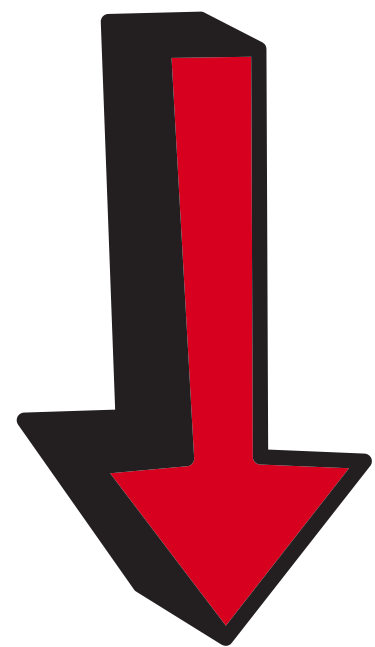
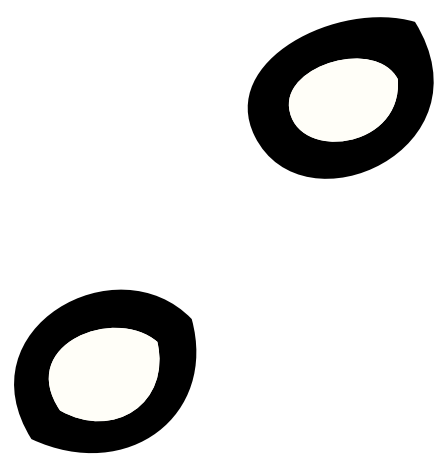
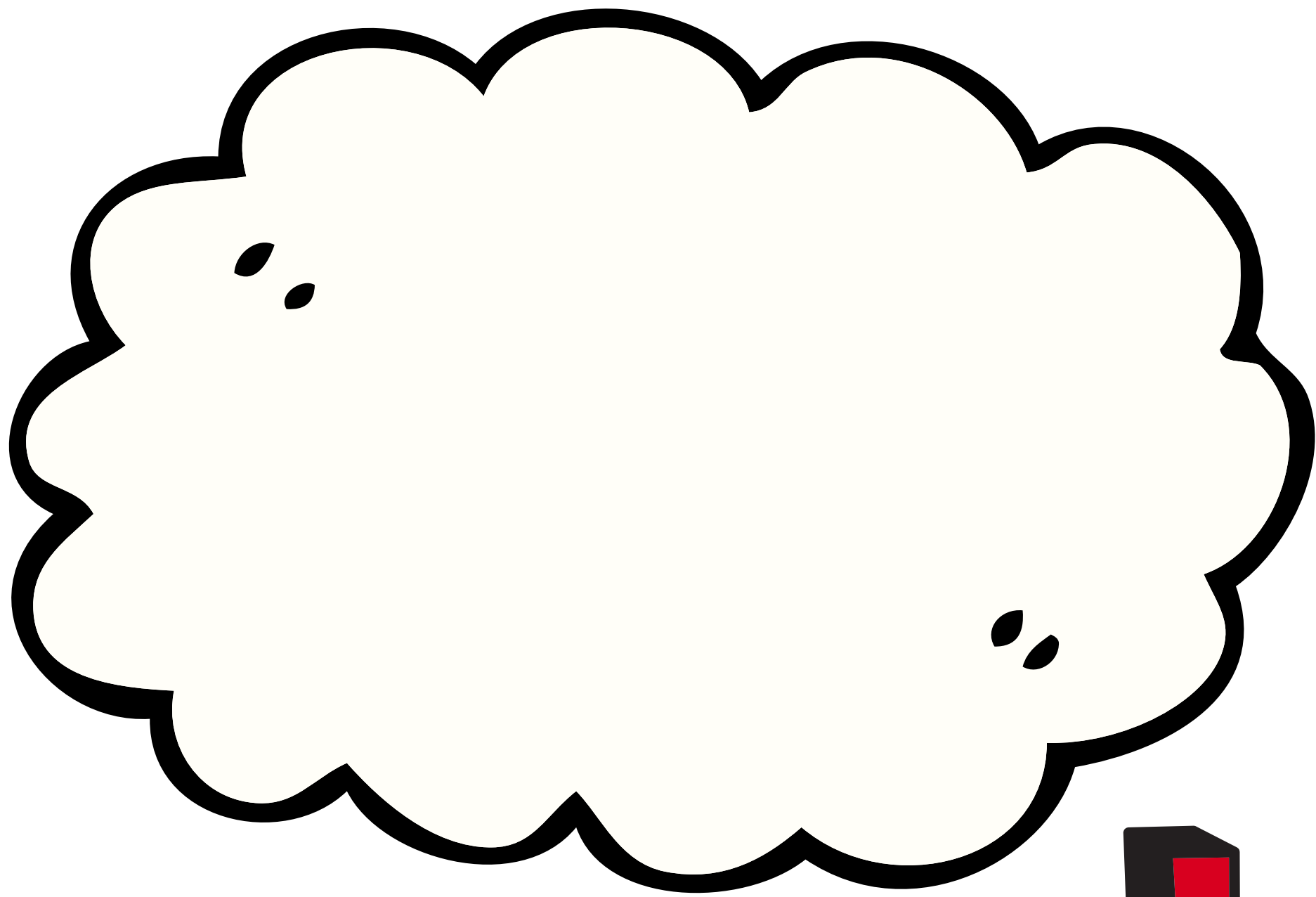
Explain that resilience refers to our ability to bounce back when things are hard. If we are resilient, we are able to realise that something is hard and then pick ourselves up and try again/start over again. Ask the children to discuss whether they think that Vashti is resilient in the book? Why do they think this?

Look together at the Resilience Framework and start to explore what we need in order to be resilient. What aspects do you spot in the story of The Dot?

Rounding Up

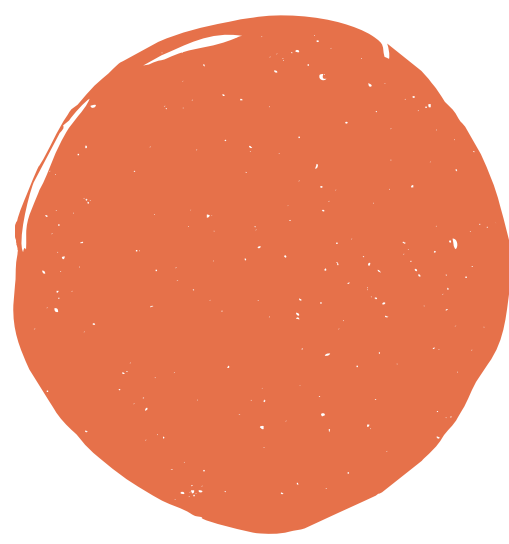
Look at the end of the book. How does Vashti guide the little boy in re-framing his thoughts? You could choose to ask the children to create a story, drama or series of pictures to show what happens next.

Reframing Our Thoughts



Reframing Our Thoughts

INSTEAD OF.....	TRY THINKING....
I'm not good at this	
I give up	
It's good enough	
I can't make this any better	
This is too hard	
I made a mistake	
I just can't do this	
I'll never be that smart	
Plan A didn't work	
My friend can do it	



Our Own Dots

Objectives:

To explore a range of artwork and have a critical response

To experiment with mark-making and different media to create a piece of dot-based artwork

Resources:

A copy of The Dot by Peter H Reynolds (or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5mGeR4AQdM>)

Art supplies

Examples of dot-based artwork (see examples below)

"A Polar Bear in a Snowstorm"

Provide the children with a piece of A4 and ask them to create something on it. Allow time for the children to create an artistic response (it's also good if adults in the room have a go too). After drawing, allow some time for self-reflection. Explain that you gave no suggestions of what they should draw. Did the children like this? Did any of them find this hard? Being creative off the top of our head is not always easy. Turning a blank piece of paper into "art" or "writing" can be intimidating if we're not sure what to create. Talk about Vashti's teacher's advice of "just making a mark"- does this help?

Vashti's Dots

Look back through the story and identify the different ways that Vashti creates dots- different colours, different sizes, using negative space, series of dots. Allow time for the children to experiment with creating their own dots. How can you use the same art materials to create different effects? Look at use of colour, mark-making and negative space to create dot based art. Share the work and discuss how the children felt whilst creating their artwork. Did they enjoy it? Did they find any parts hard or stressful? How did they move past the difficult parts?

Artistic Response

Look at a range of examples of artworks that feature dots:

Damien Hirst's Spot paintings: <http://www.damienhirst.com/texts1/series/spots>

Roy Lichtenstein- Explosion: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/lichtenstein-explosion-p01796>

Aboriginal Art in Australia: <https://www.aboriginal-art-australia.com/aboriginal-art-library/the-story-of-aboriginal-art/>

Allow time for the children to explore the artwork. You could use the likes/dislikes/puzzles/patterns grid from Theme 1 to explore their feelings about the different works.

Creating With Dots

Allow time for the children to create their own work that uses dots to create a pattern or image. Reflect afterwards how they felt when they were creating their art. How did their bodies feel? Discuss how art and crafts can make us feel calm and how some people use this as part of their self-care routine.

Rounding Up

Allow time for the pupils to reflect on this sequence of work. What have they enjoyed? What did they find hard? What have they learnt from this and how will they put it into practice in the future?