
Suggestions for Mindset Matters Intervention Discussion

1. Have the students read an article or watch a mindset video or both (I use 'New study yields instructive results on how mindset affects learning') and complete the Mindset Matters worksheet after their first rounds of exams.
2. Instruct them to read the article, complete the worksheet and be ready to discuss their ideas during the next class meeting.
3. As the instructor, read the article and complete the worksheet EVERY TIME you do this lesson. It will allow you to share your personal meanings and experiences with a fixed and growth mindset which makes it easier for the students to talk about them. If you are not willing to be vulnerable your students will not be willing to be vulnerable.
4. Be sure that you do not present the mindsets as 'right' and 'wrong,' this can create defensiveness. Try and present it as an opportunity.
5. Overall this needs to be a positive, encouraging lesson. There will be several people that are failing for the first time and/or confronting the fact that they have a very fixed mindset.
6. Start class by having them discuss with a partner their definitions for fixed and growth mindset (the first two questions on the worksheet). Give them about 90 seconds.
7. Call on students randomly and get several 'definitions' of fixed and growth mindset. Write these down so everyone can see. Do not allow students to say 'My definition was basically the same,' force them to say it in their own words. If it has not come up, be sure to somehow work in that how people view effort and their ability to increase their intelligence is at the core of these definitions. Here is a good time to talk about how many people believe in a growth mindset for athletics and physical abilities but not for their brains.
8. It is a good idea to not just emphasize effort but the KIND of effort is really important.
9. Once there are several examples of how students are thinking about the two mindsets tell the students to do the following: 'In one sentence, describe to your neighbor the difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.' Give them 45 seconds. Call on students randomly and have them share their sentence. Share your own sentence after they are done.
10. Have students compare with each other their tables about how people with look/sound/act with a fixed and growth mindset, also have them add one thing to each table. Give them 2-3 minutes. Call on students randomly to fill in the table on the board or on the document camera. This is also a point where a student might really start advocating that a fixed mindset is a good thing. Think about how you are going to respond to this.
11. Have them discuss the first question on the back page for 2-3 minutes. Share your memories. I usually share something that I had a fixed mindset about and something that I have a growth mindset about. This is a good time to mention to students that you can change your mindset from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. My typical example is that I used to find it really difficult to take constructive criticism but have recognized this and am making a very conscious effort to accept criticism and not get defensive about it. Again, make yourself vulnerable, if you don't then it is not likely that they will be able to. Ask for volunteers to share their memories, if no one volunteers choose someone to get the ball rolling that you think can handle it. Be sure to give them the option to back out, some students are really uncomfortable talking about this topic.
12. Do the same process for the second question. This is a good time to mention that your mindset can change from topic to topic. I share that I have almost always had a growth mindset about mathematics but used to have a very fixed mindset about writing. This meant that I avoided writing, so I never practiced writing, so I never improved my writing and my aversion created a self-fulfilling prophecy.
13. If time permits do something similar for the other questions but save the last question until the end. Start with yourself and tell you students something that you are working on or are going to work on to have more of a growth mindset. Go around the room and have each person declare to the world what they are going to do to have more a growth mindset.
14. Finally, mention that part of the article mentioned that Stanford students realized that they were not good at college yet but that they were willing to become better students and knew that it was going to be a process. This also comes up in the video.

MINDSET QUOTES

‘I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost more than 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.’

–Michael Jordan

‘If people only knew how hard I work to gain my mastery, it wouldn’t seem so wonderful at all.’

–Michelangelo, Italian sculptor, painter, architect, poet and engineer

‘Work, work, work, is the main thing.’

– Abraham Lincoln

‘If you have made mistakes ... there is always another chance for you ... you may have a fresh start any moment you choose, for this thing we call “failure” is not the falling down, but the staying down.’

– Mary Pickford

‘When you improve a little each day, eventually big things occur. . . Not tomorrow, not the next day, but eventually a big gain is made. Don’t look for the big, quick improvement. Seek the small improvement one day at a time. That’s the only way it happens, and when it happens, it lasts.’

–John Wooden, 1997, p.143

‘Genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration.’

–Thomas A. Edison (1847 - 1931), Harper’s Monthly, 1932

‘There is no substitute for hard work.’

–Thomas A. Edison

‘Continuous effort – not strength or intelligence – is the key to unlocking our potential.’

–Black Elk