Mindset Activities for the Secondary Classroom

Nov. 4 - ISACS

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Agenda

• Introduction.
  - My details
  - How I discovered Mindsets
  - Summary of Dr. Carol Dweck's book
  - Why this feels so important to me
• What I've done with my students
  - Outline of a 40-minute class I ran with 7th graders.
  - Description of a recap lesson
  - Results from an end-of-year survey
• What I've learned in this process
  - From my students
  - From a talk I attended by Dr. Dweck.
• Small group discussion/ brainstorming/ sharing of ideas.
Other books I'd recommend:

- *Nurture Shock*
  Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman
- *Intelligence and How to Get It*
  Richard E. Nisbett
- *Why Don't Students Like School*
  Daniel T. Willingham
- *Outliers*
  Malcolm Gladwell
- *Talent is Overrated,*
  Geoff Colvin
- Anything by Peter H. Reynolds

- www.brainology.us
- www.mindsetonline.com
Math 7 - Mindset Lesson

Today, we'll take a few moments to discuss some recent research around how particular beliefs that students hold can influence their achievement. This is an idea that I'm really excited about because I think can be quite helpful, so I hope you'll give it some extended thought.

**Agenda**
- Sorting activity and discussion
- View some videos that will provide examples
- Read an article about the brain
- Discussion and information presentation about different types of mindsets.
| You can't really change how intelligent you are. | Some people are just born smart. | You can actually get more intelligent over time. |
| I haven't mastered this idea yet. | I like to hear about other people's successes, because this inspires me. |
| Hard work is how you become successful. | When you make a mistake, it means you have a chance to learn something new. |
| I compare my score to those of my friends and if theirs are higher, I feel bad. | No one in my family is good at _______. |
| It's best to do things you know you know how to do. | It's best to take risks and challenge yourself, even if you're not sure you can do it. |
| If you have to work hard, then you're not very smart. | I'm always being judged and evaluated and I have to try to appear smart. |
| If someone criticizes me, it means they think I'm not good enough. | I'm always finding opportunities to learn something new. |
| You can actually get more intelligent over time. | When someone criticizes me, it means they think I can do better. |
| Intelligence may be partly inherited, but it is also influenced strongly by the environment. |
Here's another way to classify these ideas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth Mindset/ Learning Goals</th>
<th>Fixed Mindset/ Performance Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Believe that competence develops over time through practice and effort.</td>
<td>*Believe that competence is stable; people either have talent or don't.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Choose tasks that maximize opportunities for learning.</td>
<td>*Choose tasks that maximize opportunities to demonstrate competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• React to easy tasks with feelings of boredom or disappointment.</td>
<td>*React to easy tasks with feelings of pride or relief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• View effort as necessary to improve competence.</td>
<td>*View effort as a sign of low competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More likely to be intrinsically motivated.</td>
<td>*Are more likely to be externally motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use learning strategies that promote true comprehension.</td>
<td>*Use learning strategies that promote only rote learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluate own performance in terms of progress made.</td>
<td>*Evaluate own performance in terms of how they compare to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• View errors as normal and useful part of learning process; use errors to help improve performance.</td>
<td>*View errors as a sign of failure and incompetence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are satisfied with performance if tried hard, even if efforts result in failure.</td>
<td>*Are satisfied with their performance only if they succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpret failure as a sign that they need to exert more effort.</td>
<td>*Interpret failure as a sign of low ability and therefore predictive of future failure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• View teacher as resource and guide to help them learn.</td>
<td>*View teacher as judge and evaluator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples

- Molly and Felicia
- Jim Marshall
- Guess Who
- Embracing failure
- Business School
Please Discuss

Choose one of the following questions to discuss in small groups:

· What would you hope that students would take away from the lesson so far? Would these activities achieve this goal? Can you think of other ways to convey the ideas?

· How would you modify these ideas for younger or for older students?

· Are there any learning or performance goals that stand out as particularly significant to you?
A few comments summarizing Dr. Carol Dweck’s research:

- A growth mindset is critical to adopting learning-oriented behavior.
- Beliefs held by students when they begin 7th grade have a strong influence on their achievement over time.
- Students who believe that effort matters respond with more positive, sophisticated strategies and their achievement has an upward trajectory.
- The brain is much more malleable than previously thought.
- Learning causes substantial changes in the brain throughout life.
Here's a quote from a 7th grader in Dr. Dweck's study, illustrating a growth mindset:
"I think intelligence is something you have to work for... it isn't just given to you... Most kids, if they're not sure of an answer, will not raise their hand to answer the question. But what I usually do is raise my hand, because if I'm wrong, then my mistake will be corrected. Or I will raise my hand and say, 'How would this be solved?' or 'I don't get this. Can you help me?' Just by doing that, I'm increasing my intelligence."

And, here's a succinct example of someone with a fixed mindset:
Math 7
Mindset Recap Lesson

1. Look at Mrs. Crowley’s list of Learning Goals versus Performance Goals.
   a. Select one bulleted point where you feel that you consistently act with a learning goal in mind, rather than a performance goal. Jot here how this has affected you – has it been helpful for you? Problematic at all?

   b. Now, select one bulleted point where you feel that you often act with a performance goal in mind, rather than a learning goal. Jot here how this has affected you – has it been problematic in any way? Helpful at all?
2. How would you summarize what is meant in this research we’ve been discussing by “Growth Mindset” and “Fixed Mindset”?

   a. Can you think of an example of a time when you have acted with a growth mindset? At school, in your sports or hobbies, with your family.

   b. Can you think of an example of a time when you have acted with a fixed mindset? At school, in your sports or hobbies, with your family.
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What I've Learned:

From my daughter:
  - Value the struggles
  - Every child is an individual

From my students - some near-consensus on a few things:
  - They really feel that at least at times, performance goals are helpful/motivating.
  - They insist that it's not that they're happy with easy tasks b/c of a fixed mindset, but b/c they are just lazy sometimes and don't always want to work really hard.
  - They do not like the idea of being told all the time, "You must have tried so hard."
  - "This is all well and good, Mrs. C., but it's kinda tough because my mom and dad have a fixed mindset and certainly don't look at my bad test grade as an opportunity for learning."
What I've Learned:

From Dr. Dweck's talk:
- People can have different mindsets in different areas.
- The most damaging belief is that smart = achievement without effort.
- I asked about the "just try harder" message with a worry about over-pressuring; she replied the message is not "just try harder," it's "value the learning."
- Study: Subject's level of attention was measured while taking a quiz... interesting results!
- Successful students manage their time, their motivation, and their response to disappointing grades.
- It's not just effort praise, it's process praise - praise strategy use, choosing difficult tasks, learning, improving, persistence despite setbacks... any part of the process.
Small group discussion/ brainstorming/ sharing of ideas.

Please consider these topics of discussion:
1) Additional ideas for activities to discuss Mindsets directly in the classroom.

2) Ways to target specific individuals you identify as needing a Mindset adjustment.

3) Ways to weave a Growth Mindset into classroom policies and procedures.

4) Ideas about how to share this message with the larger community at your school - parents, other teachers, counselors, etc.
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THANK YOU!