

Each time we “steal a student’s struggle”, we steal the opportunity for an esteem building experience to take place. – Dr. Sylvia Rimm, Clinical Psychologist



Fixed and Growth Mindset Overview

Fixed mindset thinking results in:

- 1) a false sense of superiority, undermined by a deep sense of self-doubt
- 2) a fear of failure; refusal to take risks
- 3) a feeling that failure permanently defines you as a loser
- 4) the belief that only untalented, ungifted people have to work for success; effort somehow reduces you
- 5) a desire to blame others or outside circumstances when things don’t go your way

Growth mindset thinking results in:

- 1) a love of learning and self-improvement
- 2) a desire to be challenged
- 3) a willingness to work for positive results
- 4) a belief that you can control the outcomes in your life with effort and practice
- 5) the ability to learn from your mistakes
- 6) emotional resilience



From Fixed to Growth Mindsets – Our Classroom Learning

Do you have a fixed or growth mindset?

- 1) When I work on an assignment, I quit trying if I get to a question I don’t know.
- 2) I like work when I can do it perfectly without any mistakes.
- 3) When I struggle, I don’t ask questions or say, “I don’t get it.”
- 4) I like to work best when it makes me think hard.
- 5) I like work that I’ll learn from even if I make a lot of mistakes.
- 6) When something is hard, it makes me want to work on it more, not less.

Students were given statements like the ones above to determine if they had a fixed or growth mindset. The top three statements are examples of a fixed mindset while the last three statements are growth mindsets. Students worked on changing fixed statements to growth mindset language. In class, we use some of the ones below to help us practice having a growth mindset!

Instead of	Try thinking...
I’m not good at this.	What am I missing?
She’s so smart. I’ll never be that smart.	I’m going to find out what she does and try doing the same thing.
This is good enough.	Is it really my best work?
This is too hard.	This may take some time and effort.
I made a mistake.	Mistakes help me learn.
Plan A didn’t work.	Good thing there are 25 more letters!

Growth Mindset Language at Home



We can help our students and children have a growth mindset in the language we use!

Praise:

- A) Praise hard work, determination, and persistence; things a student can control
- B) Don't praise intelligence or smartness; these are things a student cannot control and may become part of their identity

For example, think of Smart Sue. She has been praised for her intelligence all her life and schoolwork is always quite easy for her. One day the class learns something at school that she doesn't understand. Sue is smart; she never had to work hard. To protect her "smart" identity, Sue decides to not even try. After all, if she doesn't try, no one will see her fail. This is a FIXED mindset!

Encouragement:

- A) Focus encouragement on hard work and the product
- B) Help your child work backwards to find where they may have missed something
- C) Refrain from saying something is easy. If it's hard, recognize that it is hard work, but also recognize the progress and learning your child is gaining from it.

Examples of Growth Mindset Responses:

- *When you think you can't do it, remind yourself you can't do it, **yet**.*
- *I admire your persistence and appreciate your hard work. It will pay off.*
- *If it were easy, you wouldn't be learning anything! (Remind them of the neurons!)*

- *You might be struggling, but you are making progress. I can see your growth (in these places).*
- *You were working on this for a while and didn't quit!*
- *Can you tell me what strategies or notes you used to try and solve the problem?*

- *It's great that you have that down. Now, we need to find something a bit more challenging so you can grow!*
- *What skill would you like to work on next?*
- *The next time you have a challenge like this, what will you do?*