

Lessons learned from a teacher Networked Improvement Community sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

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An approach to integrating Growth Mindset supportive practices in your classroom:

1. **Introduce the concept** through an explicit lesson on how the brain develops through effort.
2. **Adopt and use growth mindset language** with your students.
3. **Adjust your teaching practices** to encourage focusing on effort, taking on challenges, learning from mistakes, and adopting appropriate strategies.
4. **Focus either on strategies** (for students who struggle despite effort) **or value** for students who struggle because they do not see value in what they are learning).

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1. Introduce the concept.

Providing a simple introduction to the science behind growth mindset can be essential to convincing students that they can learn if they put in the effort. This is often done through a reading, video, or activity highlighting the neuroscience of learning that their brain, like a muscle, grows stronger and more capable with sustained effort.

Recommendations for introducing **Growth Mindset**:

1. Consider introducing the concept on the **first day or week** of your class, and reinforcing ideas later in the semester as “booster shots.”
2. Consider if students **have already heard** about the concept. If no, you will have more options. If yes, consider how you can build off of and reinforce prior introductions (e.g., can you pick readings, videos, or an activity that relates growth mindset to your particular academic subject?).
3. Pick something that you think will **catch students’ attention** or inspire them, whether it’s a growth mindset example of someone famous or from current events.
4. Consider sharing your **own experiences**.

2. Integrate growth mindset phrases.

One example of adopting growth mindset language is how we praise students. Focus on praising their effort and use of strategies (e.g., “I’m impressed by the effort you put into this assignment!”), rather than praising students for their ability (e.g., “I’m impressed by how smart you showed me you are on this assignment!”).

It’s also important to be mindful and consistent in using growth mindset language in all of your communication with students, such as your syllabus, email communications, how you frame assignments/assessments, how you provide feedback, etc.

3. Adjust your course's activities, assignments, and assessments.

Beyond introducing the concept of growth-mindset and adopting growth-mindset supportive language, we recommend redesigning your courses's activities, assignments, and assessments so they align with four core growth mindset principles:

We grow and develop through:

1. Effort and persistence.
2. Challenging ourselves.
3. Learning from mistakes.
4. Using appropriate strategies and seeking new strategies when needed.

Consider the following questions as you redesign various components of your course:

- How will students know their effort matters?
- How will students know they will get to learn from their mistakes?
- How will students know they should challenge themselves?
- How will students learn new strategies?

For example, during class, do students have opportunities to try out ideas, make mistakes, and share and learn from their mistakes and the mistakes of their classmates? Or are opportunities provided for students to revise and resubmit assignments or assessments?

There are many adjustments you can make to align your course with the four principles listed above. Ideally, the changes you make should integrate well with your subject and teaching style.

4. Focus on strategies or value.

Inevitably, some students may fail to succeed in your class, even when they hold a growth mindset for learning. These students typically fall into two categories:

- 1. Those who struggle despite effort and need help using strategies, and**
- 2. Those who believe that effort pays off but do not value what they are learning.**

For students in the first category, it is helpful to have students reflect on the learning strategies that they're using and to encourage new approaches. It also is helpful to reinforce challenge as a necessary part of learning so students feel more comfortable with the frustration that comes with struggle.

Students in the second category can be supported by helping them find value and relevance in what they are learning, so they are motivated and willing to put forth effort.