Growth Mindset as a Key to Student Motivation

Growth mindset is the belief that an individual can "grow" their intelligence and skills, through sustained effort. Students with a “fixed” mindset believe that they are born with a certain amount of intelligence and that it cannot be increased, despite their efforts. It’s easy to see how a student with a fixed mindset would be more inclined to give up when struggling with a topic in school. By contrast, students with a growth mindset are more inclined to embrace challenges, knowing that sustained effort is an opportunity to develop mastery over a subject.

Numerous studies have shown that students’ beliefs about intelligence can have dramatic consequences for how they experience school and how they respond to setbacks and challenges. The effects are especially pronounced among at-risk students; teaching them about growth mindset yields dramatic improvements in retention, graduation rate, GPA, and other success indicators (Claro et al., 2016; Paunesku et al., 2015; Yeager et al., 2014; Yeager et al., 2016).

One way faculty can help students develop a growth mindset is by empowering them to develop — or to realize they already have — effective strategies for learning. The Strategy Box, developed by the National Mentoring Partnership, is a deceptively simple activity that can help students identify strategies they have used previously to learn new skills, and see which ones might be applicable to a new challenge.

Here’s how it works:

1) On a blank sheet of paper, draw a 2 x 2 box, leaving plenty of space to write.

2) In the first three squares, write down a challenging situation that you may have struggled with initially, but ultimately navigated successfully. Then note down the most important strategies, steps, or beliefs you used that were particularly effective.

3) In the fourth square, write down a current challenge. Go back to the first three squares and review the strategies. Add the strategies that you think might be effective in the new situation to the fourth box.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2020

Article Club
Tuesday, February 18 10:30-12:00, KN 5579
Thursday, February 20 1:00-2:30, FL 2144

Idea Exchange: Creating Opportunities for Self-Reflection
Thursday, February 27 2:30-4:00, FL 1304
Friday, February 28 1:30-3:00, KN 1130

MARCH 2020

Coffee Hour, Wednesday, March 4, 12:00-1:00

Spring Break Social, Thursday, March 5

Spring Writers Group (by application only), Friday, March 6

Visit ccri.edu/tlc for more information.
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RESOURCES


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