

Workshop 3: Adopting a growth mindset

TOPIC

Growth mindset is the theory that you learn from failure and mistakes if you see them as opportunities to develop and improve. This can help you be more resilient and achieve your dreams. Carol Dweck is a pioneering researcher in the area of growth mindset, and during the Self-Study course, students watched Carol's TED Talk about the 'Power of Yet'. Even the most successful people fail. It's just that people don't tend to mention their failures, whereas their success is often publicly celebrated. Successful careers are built on many failures. It's important to develop the skills to reframe failure.

AIMS

This activity raises students' awareness of the kinds of fixed-mindset thoughts they might be experiencing on a daily basis. It then develops their ability to interrogate these thoughts and ultimately reframe them using a series of questions. It helps students to notice how they react to a situation when they are dealing with a setback, and helps them change their attitude to failure.

MATERIALS

STUDENT RESOURCE 2

- Fixed-Mindset Thoughts
- Interrogating and Reframing Fixed-Mindset Thoughts
- Reflection Task
- Possible Answers

GUIDANCE

- 1 Organise students into pairs. If possible, make sure that students are working with someone with whom they have a trusting and respectful relationship.
- 2 Tell students that they are going to begin by looking at a list of fixed-mindset thoughts. Distribute the first page of STUDENT RESOURCE 2. Ask students to tick each fixed-mindset thought they can remember having experienced in the last year. They should try to remember the context of each thought (for instance, where they were, what the thought was in relation to, etc.). Ask students to share their answers with a partner. Monitor as students do this, offering support where necessary.
- 3 Elicit from students that fixed-mindset thoughts often don't stand up to objective, rational interrogation, and to develop a growth mindset, students should learn to reframe negative thoughts and embrace the 'Power of Yet'. Focus students' attention on the list of questions. Tell students that they are going to take it in turns to ask each other questions about each of the fixed-mindset thoughts they have experienced and how they dealt with the thought – did they reframe it with a growth mindset or did they believe the fixed-mindset thoughts? Speakers should answer the questions as honestly as possible, and listeners should listen with empathy and without judgement.
- 4 Ask students to reframe the fixed-mindset statements as growth-mindset statements. Students should complete the thoughts that relate to them. Then, go through the growth-mindset statements as a class. Distribute the **Possible Answers** and compare with the class's work.
- 5 Ask students to reflect on the activity they have just undertaken and discuss the questions in the **Reflection Task** together in their pairs.
- 6 When students have had the chance to note down their reflections, offer them the chance to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

SUPPORT

Due to the personal nature of this exercise, it's important that students know they need only share their reflections with the rest of the class if they wish to, and that you promote a supportive and non-judgemental environment.

Workshop 3: Adopting a growth mindset

FIXED-MINDSET THOUGHTS

Look at this list of fixed-mindset thoughts and tick the ones you can remember experiencing in the last year. Try to remember the context of each thought (for instance, where you were, what the thought was in relation to, etc.). Then, share your answers with a partner.

- 1 'Look at all the mistakes I've made. I'm not good at this.'
- 2 'I must do this perfectly or not at all.'
- 3 'This is too difficult. I'm never going to manage to do it.'
- 4 'I hate practising. It's so boring.'
- 5 'I've failed again. Things never work out for me.'
- 6 'Why did I say that? Now everyone will think I'm an idiot.'
- 7 'Look what I've done. Now I've ruined all my work.'
- 8 'Why do they always win the prizes? It's not fair.'
- 9 'Everyone else can do this except for me.'
- 10 'I don't want to volunteer in case I get the answer wrong.'

INTERROGATING AND REFRAMING FIXED-MINDSET THOUGHTS

Using the list of questions below, take it in turns to ask each other questions about each of the fixed-mindset thoughts you have experienced and how you dealt with these thoughts. Speakers should answer the questions as honestly as possible, and listeners should listen with empathy and without judgement.

- 1 What fixed mindset thought do I have?
- 2 What facts do I have to support my thought? Is there any evidence which contradicts it?
- 3 How will having this thought or belief help me, and how will it hurt me?
- 4 What would my best friend think about this thought? What would they say?
- 5 How can I reframe this thought in a positive way?
- 6 Did you reframe the fixed mindset with a growth mindset or did you believe the fixed-mindset thoughts?

REFLECTION TASK

When you have finished, reflect on the activity and discuss these questions.

- 1 Do you feel that, generally, you have a growth mindset or a fixed mindset?
- 2 Have you discovered that there are certain situations (e.g. certain subjects, exams or tests, interviews, or practising sport or a musical instrument) in which you have a fixed mindset?
- 3 How do you think you can tackle your fixed-mindset thoughts and attitudes?
- 4 How could you help other students to develop more of a growth mindset?
- 5 How could the school help you to develop more of a growth mindset?

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POSSIBLE ANSWERS

These answers are suggestions, so please use them only for guidance as they are not the only possible answers.

Reframing the fixed-mindset statements as growth-mindset statements:

	FIXED MINDSET	GROWTH MINDSET
1	'Look at all the mistakes I've made. I'm not good at this.'	'Look at all these mistakes I've made. What can I learn from them?'
2	'I must do this perfectly or not at all.'	'I'll give it a go, and then make it better later.'
3	'This is too difficult. I'm never going to manage to do it.'	'The more I practise, the easier it will get.'
4	'I hate practising. It's so boring.'	'Practising will be worth it in the end.'
5	'I've failed again. Things never work out for me.'	'I haven't worked out how to succeed at this yet.'
6	'Why did I say that? Now everyone will think I'm an idiot.'	'Next time, I'll respond like this to make a better impression.'
7	'Look what I've done. Now I've ruined all my work.'	'That was a mistake. How can I fix it?'
8	'Why do they always win the prizes? It's not fair.'	'They work hard and deserve to win. I'll ask them how they do it.'
9	'Everyone else can do this except for me.'	'I'm going to work out how everyone else does this.'
10	'I don't want to volunteer in case I get the answer wrong.'	'I'll volunteer, and if I get the answer wrong, I'll learn from it.'