

Mindset Matters: Developing a Growth Mindset to Reframe Failure in Libraries

A **growth mindset** is characterized by an assumption that people have unlimited potential and that intelligence, talents and abilities are not fixed, but continually evolving and improving. By contrast a **fixed mindset** is characterized by the assumption that intelligence, talent and abilities are inherent "gifts" rather than skills to be developed.

Growth Mindset and Failure

- Adopting the Growth Mindset means considering mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow
- As a result, failure is viewed as a part of the process of success
- A Growth Mindset helps to remove negative emotions from failure

Changes at the University of New Hampshire Library

- By changing the way our library thinks about setbacks we hope to encourage risk taking, open communication and the delivery and reception of constructive criticism
- As an organization in transition, the growth mindset is a useful model to help us understand that change is a process, and be understanding of ourselves and our colleagues as we learn and grow as an organization
- Since we introduced the concept of the Growth mindset, the phrase has entered our lexicon and is frequently cited in the context of organizational change.

Mindset Professional Development Activity

Flipping the lesson

- All librarians, staff and administrators read an article, listened to a podcast or viewed a video related to the growth mindset.

Introducing the Growth Mindset

- Participants helped develop our definition using interactive polling
- Information gaps were filled with a brief video and infographic

Active Group Learning

- Participants discussed and responded to prompts related to the specific sources they engaged with prior to the session, including:
 - Summarize the article in a few sentences/bullet points
 - What were the most important takeaways from your article?
 - What are some ways we can use the ideas from this article in the library?
- Each group shared notes and responses from their conversations

Mindset Matters Toolkit: <http://bit.ly/ACRLNEMindset>



Leaders
 - praise process → growth praise talent → fixed
 ↳ more satisfaction
 value being ready to learn + teamwork
 Be aware of where on spectrum you are. Diff in diff situations/roles
 Organizations need to have growth mindset, not just people.
 How to do it here:
 - Focus more on the process - if one bad outcome we learn from it.
 - be mindful of balancing transparency vs. judgement
 ↳ Not getting penalized for something that didn't work
 - Challenge: coaching for performance is tied to merit (fixed)
 (Growth)
 - How to support growth mindset in a time of change?
 - Good + Transparent communication around the process

SUMMARY
 • THE POWER OF "YET"
 • FOCUS ON STUDENT SUCCESS
 • GAVE EXAMPLES OF REACTIONS TO CHALLENGES + FAILURES/MISTAKES
 • EMPHASIZE HARD WORK OVER "INTELLIGENCE"
 LIBRARY APPLICATION + KEY TAKEAWAYS
 • ACKNOWLEDGE PROCESS + HARD WORK INSTEAD OF ONLY THE SUCCESSFUL FINISHED PRODUCT
 • ENCOURAGE "GROWTH" THINKING
 • RESIST PERFECTIONISM + INFLEXIBILITY
 • INCORPORATE GROWTH/IMPROVEMENT IN EVALUATIONS

• fixed environment at work = feel less supported - just a few employees
 • growth environment at work = more trust! - more commitment to organization
 • based on choices (promotion from within)
 • based on pedigree (hiring)
 in a growth mindset organization, employees see better management potential in their employees
 FOR UNH LIBRARY:
 • be aware + sensitive to people's comfort with change
 • value effort + process in evaluation of staff -
 • cultivate professional development and learning to help employees see ways for them to help move org. forward.
 • teams (collaboration → helping groups or coaching to move forward = achieve potential = innovation

Works Cited

Dweck, Carol. "Developing a Growth Mindset." youtube.com/watch?v=hiiEeMN7vbQ.
 Harvard Business Review Staff. "How Companies Can Profit from a 'Growth Mindset.'" *Harvard Business Review*, 1 Nov. 2014.
 Kristjansson, Sophia, and David Tashjian. "Case Study: Transparency and Candor and a Growth Mindset." *People & Strategy*, vol. 39, no. 4, Fall 2016, pp. 26-30.
 Popova, Maria. "Fixed vs. Growth: The Two Basic Mindsets That Shape Our Lives." *Brain Pickings*, 29 Jan. 2014.