

Heathfield Primary School



Growth Mindset Policy

Signed Head:
Signed Chair:
Date:

Based on the work by Carol Dweck, research has shown that people who believe their intelligence can be developed (a growth mindset) outperform those who believe their intelligence is fixed (a fixed mindset). When children learn through a structured program that they can “grow their brains” and increase their intellectual abilities, they do better. This very much compliments the Chyngton “I can” and “I can’t do it ...YET” attitude. It has been found that having children focus on the process that leads to learning (like concentrating or learning from mistakes) can foster a growth mindset. Meta-cognition approaches have consistently high levels of impact, with pupils making an average of eight months’ additional progress. The evidence also indicates that teaching these strategies can be particularly effective for pupils who find learning particularly challenging.

Aims:

This policy aims to ensure a consistency of approach across the school in order to promote a growth mindset culture by using language, by modelling and managing behaviour and by organising teaching and learning. This includes the teaching, learning and assessment of learning attitudes which aim to help learners think about their own learning more explicitly. This meta-cognition approach teaches pupils specific strategies to set goals, and monitor and evaluate their own development.

Environment:

Each class creates an environment in which the differences between a fixed and growth mindset are evident and learning powers are prominent so that both can be easily referred to. Posters and display ideas can be found in: **W:\Growth Mindset**

What is the difference between a Fixed and Growth Mindset?

Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Intelligence is static.	Intelligence can be developed.
Leads to a desire to <i>look smart</i> and therefore a tendency to	Leads to a desire to <i>learn</i> and therefore a tendency to
• avoid challenges	• embrace challenges
• give up easily due to obstacles	• persist despite obstacles
• see effort as fruitless	• see effort as path to mastery
• ignore useful feedback	• learn from criticism
• be threatened by others’ success	• be inspired by others’ success

A quote from Carol Dweck:

"In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset, students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it."

Language, marking and feedback:

The word “work” is something we do for somebody else and contains no explicit connection to education and learning. At Heathfield we refer to “work” as “learning”. We give praise for persistence, effort and resilience; verbal feedback highlights the effort, skill, process or attitude of the learner and not the competition of a task. This approach is paralleled with how we mark work and give written feedback. We always mark giving next steps or challenges, so that all learning for all children is seen as a way to grow.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS

Growth Mindset

What to say:

“When you learn how to do a new kind of problem, it grows your math brain!”

“If you catch yourself saying, ‘I’m not a math person,’ just add the word ‘yet’ to the end of the sentence.”

“That feeling of math being hard is the feeling of your brain growing.”

“The point isn’t to get it all right away. The point is to grow your understanding step by step. What can you try next?”

Fixed Mindset

What not to say:

“Not everybody is good at math. Just do your best.”

“That’s OK, maybe math is not one of your strengths.”

“Don’t worry, you’ll get it if you keep trying.”*

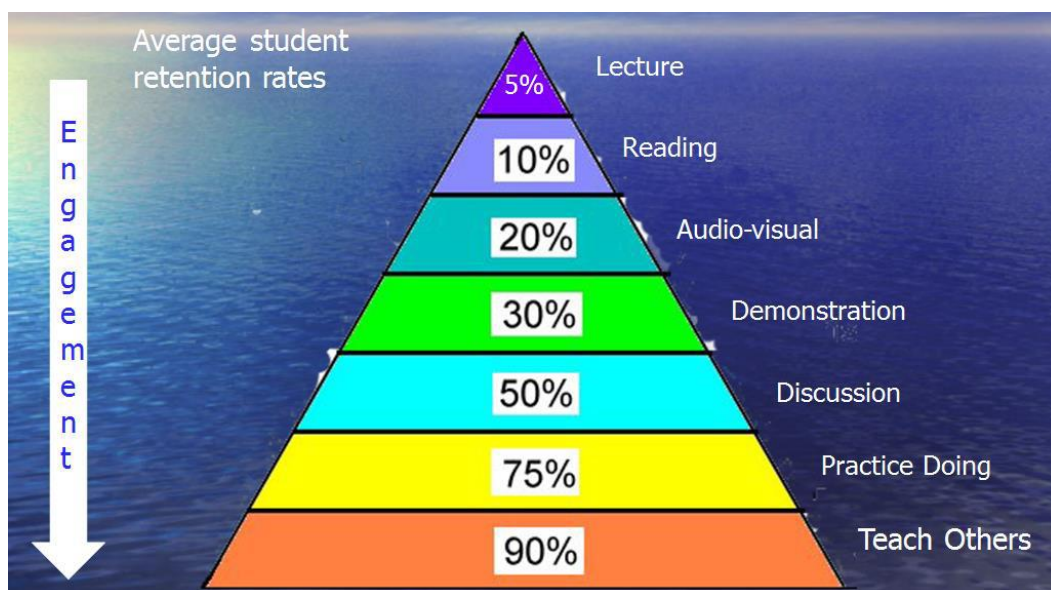
*If students are using the wrong strategies, their efforts might not work. Plus they may feel particularly inept if their efforts are fruitless.

“Great effort! You tried your best.”*

*Don’t accept less than optimal performance from your students.

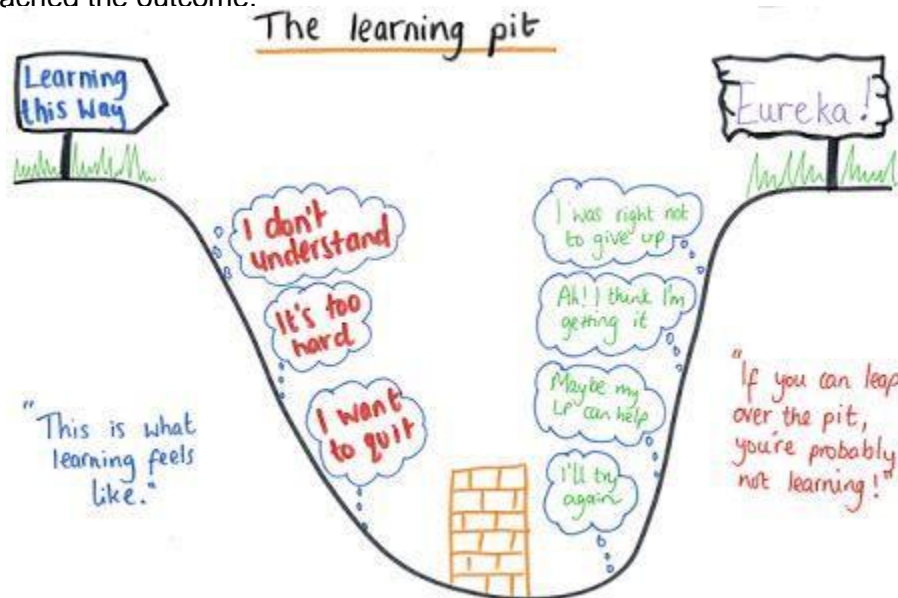
Organisation:

Placing children in ability groups can encourage them to lower their expectations. Access to higher order thinking, language and activities can also be limited by this approach. At Heathfield we strive to provide pupils with a collaborative learning environment. Children mostly work in mixed ability pairings and small groupings: discussing together and cooperatively improving each other’s learning. Research shows that is a collaborative approach has a positive impact on the learning experience and learning outcomes.



Teaching approaches:

The Learning Pit (James Nottingham) is used at Heathfield to aid children's understanding of the process of learning and to encourage self-assessment. Effective use The Learning Pit Pupils means pupils expect learning to be challenging, but recognise with hard-work and perseverance they will make progress. Classes engage differently with the pit, some using visuals of the pit for children to self-assess their process of learning. Praise is given to those in the pit for challenging themselves, rather than those who have already reached the outcome.



Further information: <https://vimeo.com/117364809>

Celebration:

At Heathfield, we encourage a culture where mistakes are celebrated because mistakes are necessary to learning. If children have fixed mindsets they find it hard to cope with failure: we teach our children to see that mistakes and failure are part of the learning process. Rewards are used at Heathfield for a wide range of reasons such as promoting good behaviour and to recognise achievement and effort. Celebration assemblies provide an opportunity for children to be rewarded for showing behaviours which represent growth mindset.

Culture:

Aside from celebration assemblies and learning time, qualities of growth mindset are promoted in whole school assemblies. The list of assembly themes are found in: **W:\Admin\Calendar**. Key stage assemblies explore Famous Failures once per half-term. In 2017/18 we will explore: Malala Yousafzai, Richard Branson, Stephen Hawking, Ellen McArthur, Michael Jordan and Walt Disney. Enrichment provides children with the opportunity to develop and consolidate growth mindset within a range of contexts and experiences. Finally, Commando Joe sessions are planned to challenge the pupils' growth mindset when working as part of a team. 2017/18 will focus on how to cope with perceived failure. Growth Mindset is woven into EYFS practice with COEL. Year one practice will continue to promote these values before making the transition to growth mindset.

Target Setting and reporting to parents:

Discrete Growth mindset targets will be agreed as part of the Assertive Mentoring cycle. This will be reported along with core subject targets to parents at Parents' Evenings. Annual reports will also report successes and next steps of the growth mindset. Mindfulness supports children in dealing with challenge and coping with their emotions when they are struggling; see Nurture Policy for more information.