

for example, any dissatisfaction they have with their learning experience). If it feels too invasive or difficult to do this in public, you can also make a practice of simply pulling students aside during group activities to obtain this information.

- **Find ways to target different senses:** In order to appeal to a wide range of students with differing preferences for learning new information, try to find ways to resonate with as many different senses as you can during each lesson. This could involve researching ways to play videos, provide audiobooks, and use infographics when you're presenting new information or assigning homework to your students. You can also utilize more interactive methods of getting your students involved in a classroom experience, such as inviting your students to act out a scene from a book or from history or asking them to illustrate concepts artistically. Finally, there are some ways you can simply make your teaching style more effective and inclusive by providing written and spoken directions for tasks, passing around physical examples of academic concepts whenever possible, and asking questions from your students while teaching.
- **Share your own weaknesses and strengths with the class.** Think back to when you were a student: Didn't the teachers seem like faultless beings? Adults who had their lives together? Immutable forces of nature? Even if you didn't have great teachers, you probably weren't aware of any who shared their own growth processes with you when you were a student. This kind of transparency and honesty on your part can be incredibly powerful. If you share your own growing process with your students, it will provide another example to them that not everyone grows, learns, or processes information in the same way. Share the way that you review and study lessons. Tell students how you stay focused, what distracts you, and how you've worked to overcome the challenges in your own path.
- **Think-Pair-Share:** To help your students get used to learning, processing, and presenting information in different dynamic ways on a rather quick timeline, use this strategy. It's easy to implement, monitor, and support. When you present your students with a new technique, a reading assignment, or another piece of information, ask that they take a moment on their own to think about what they've just learned. Then, pair the students up, and ask them to discuss what they've learned with their peers. Help them to be receptive to ideas other than their own, and, perhaps, provide them with discussion questions on a board at the front of the class. Finally, you can take the time to open the discussion up to the floor. Ask each pair of students to share what they took from the assignment. This will allow students with

many different learning modalities opportunities to learn as they learn best. It will also show your students that different people will take different types of information away from the same initial source.

- **Consider Literature Circles:** If you're looking for ways to get auditory and participatory kinds of learners more involved in active learning, consider starting or promoting a book club, or a group that explores recent news and innovations in your field. This can help your students see the real-world applications of your subject, which will help them feel more incentivized to do the work to learn it—a central tenet of a growth mindset.
- **Offer different types of studying opportunities during free time.** Instead of asking your students all to read quietly when it makes sense to do so, appeal to many different types of mindsets and learning modalities by allowing your students to process information as it best suits them. This can involve setting up stations again, at which you can have your students play challenging, skill-teaching group games. You could have some students working in groups and taking notes together, allow other students to listen to audiobooks or recorded notes, and still, others to sit quietly and read if that's what they prefer. Taking away the onus of expectations regarding their time will allow your students to choose the manner in which they want to learn.
- **Assign projects to your students which naturally have open ends.** Instead of giving your students a definite assignment, it can occasionally be fun—and illuminating—to allow your students the chance to work on one of their own choices instead. Either give them an open-ended prompt or a list of projects to choose from. Define the expectations for your students—they must learn something specific, use a specific resource, adhere to a specific timeline, etc—in order to challenge them and to teach your students that outcome does matter. However, by letting them do it their own way, you can teach your students that they can achieve their goals by working and learning at their own pace. Challenge them to demonstrate the knowledge they've learned as effectively as they can, but allow them to do so in their own ways. Completing their own projects as well as experiencing the different successes of others will be very telling for your students.

These differentiated learning strategies can take time to implement, but it will be well worth it—for you and your students. See if you can challenge yourself to make classroom time more varied and interactive for your students, and see just how much more rewarding classroom time is as a result.

Helping Your Students Focus So They Can Grow

We have presented here many different options for helping your entire classroom incorporate a growth mindset. This might require some initiative for you to find many different ways to teach several children at the same time but should result in a more engaging classroom experience for everyone involved.

However, sometimes that's not enough. Sometimes, you may need to have the tools to help students who have had a rough educational past, or who don't fit in well with their peers. Other times, you'll need to be able to help students who are just having a hard time keeping up. There may also be occasions when your entire class—a class which is usually very well-oriented to diverse learning experiences—will need extra attention in order to get the most out of their learning experiences.

It might help to have several strategies on hand aimed toward helping your students become more mindful as they prepare to focus on your assignments. In this next section, we'll go over the various ways you can help either individual students or your entire class calm down and focus, which may help them become more receptive to doing the work for a growth mindset.

1. Start your classes with a moment of mindfulness. If you think about it, the transition between classes can be highly exciting and disruptive. Your students have spent previous class periods learning other subjects; in between classes, they took the opportunity to socialize with their friends or sprint across campus. By the time they settle down into chairs in your room, their brains are a jumble of activity. If you jump straight into your material, your students might have a hard time re-orienting themselves to be receptive to learning your subject. Instead, offer them the chance to re-set their minds, and prepare to work on your subject.

This does not have to be a long process. After everyone is in your room, take a moment and have everyone sit upright, with their feet flat on the floor. Have them rest their hands on their legs. If they are comfortable with doing so, have them close their eyes. Then, ask them to focus on their breath. If you feel like asking them to deepen their breaths, that might be nice—but the focus should be enough. After less than a minute of that, ask them to open their eyes, then begin the lesson.

2. Incorporate movement into your lessons. Whether you put together stations, ask children to act out scenes or concepts, or simply have moving objects or learning tools which your students can physically interact with, and try to prioritize action over stasis. Movement can help stimulate specific networks in your students' brains, it can

increase blood flow, and it can alleviate boredom or frustration by varying your student's educational experience over the course of the day.

Emphasizing movement in your student's educational experience can also help even the playing field for students who have a hard time sitting put for the duration of a typical study period. Finally, it can make the study period go by faster by offering a more engaging learning experience for all involved.

3. Welcome your students to take sensory breaks. When was the last time you stared at a book or a PowerPoint presentation for 45 minutes without a break? After a while, the words start to blur together, and your mind travels elsewhere of its own accord. Allowing your students to take a sensory break—to move, to use their fingers, to color, to listen to music, to wash their hands—for a brief moment in the middle of your class can allow them to come back to their work refreshed and ready to begin.

This can be a vital tool for teaching your students to appreciate a growth mindset. Instead of getting bored and giving in easily when the going gets tough, your students will learn through experience that with a short rest, they can come back to their projects with a new outlook and much more energy. It can be just this dose of extra perseverance which can allow your students to push through to complete their projects and feel successful in their accomplishments!

Each of these practices should make it easier for your students to focus on the lesson at hand, which will make their academics much more navigable. However, the benefits of these procedures go deeper than that. Helping your students learn how to focus will give them the tools they need to become calm and prioritize what's important—and what's right in front of them.

If you have one specific student—or a smaller group of students—who require individualized help, that makes sense. Go slowly, listen to them, and be understanding. Inviting your students to ponder the questions we presented above and discuss them with friends, parents, teachers, or even themselves in the form of journaling will likely help.

Summary and Conclusion

In this course, we went over the benefits of a growth mindset, especially when implemented in your classroom. A growth mindset is one that sees itself as plastic; as one that is able to change in response to obstacles, stress, or other challenges. Having

this mindset will allow your students not only to achieve success but to continually reframe what success means to them. It will also allow them to enjoy learning with considerably less pressure than is often possible with a fixed-mindset learning rubric, which balks at the idea of challenges or constructive feedback.

Helping your students cultivate a growth mindset can be difficult. Doing so may require you to brainstorm completely different teaching techniques, investing considerable amounts of time into listening to your student's feedback, and patiently guiding students through confusion and frustration. However, the benefits will be far worth it. Case studies show that when students are able to implement a growth mindset within themselves, they are far better equipped to be happy throughout their studies, work harder for longer, and ultimately achieve the success for which they've worked so hard. A growth mindset is a fundamental way to change someone's life for the better: and your efforts to help your students cultivate their own growth mindset mentalities will certainly reap endless rewards in time.

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