

## **Growth Mindset Course Syllabus**

### **Course Description**

A growth mindset can help students learn to embrace challenges, nurture intrinsic motivation, and ultimately, develop habits of the mind that promote life-long learning. This online course will introduce K-12 educators to the principles and brain-related science behind the psychology of growth mindset. They will come to understand what it means to have a growth mindset themselves, how this differs from a fixed mindset, and how they might foster a growth mindset in their classrooms. Through collaborative discussions and reflective journaling, they will explore ways in which they can enhance their practice and establish a classroom culture in which students do not fear failure. They will discuss ideas for introducing growth mindset to their students, as well as ways they might communicate the principles of growth mindset to parents. They will also explore common misconceptions regarding growth mindset and discuss strategies for avoiding pitfalls. Participants will come to understand the importance of formative assessment and how it can be used to foster a growth mindset. As a final project, participants will develop a S.M.A.R.T goal related to developing a growth mindset in their classroom. (2 MSDE Credits)

### **Prerequisites**

This is an introductory level course for teachers, technology specialists, curriculum specialists, professional development specialists, or other school personnel. Participants are expected to have regular access to computers. In addition, participants should be proficient with using email, browsing the Internet, and navigating to computer files.

### **Course Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Describe the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset and why it's important in K-12 education;
- Develop an understanding of the science and brain research behind growth mindset and the impact for teaching and learning;
- Discuss ways to provide student feedback that fosters a growth mindset;
- Explore strategies for introducing growth mindset to students and applying it to different K-12 content areas;
- Brainstorm ways to communicate the principles of growth mindset to parents;
- Identify ways in which they can reverse a 'fear' mindset and avoid promoting a 'false' mindset;
- Describe how technology applications can help foster a positive growth mindset; and
- Use electronic communication tools to share best practices related to developing positive habits of mind, and contribute to a collaborative environment which supports the growth mindset.

## **Course Outline:**

### **Session 1: Intelligence, Talent and Mindset**

In this first session participants will explore ideas related to intelligence, talent and mindset. Each participant will complete a 'sort activity' to identify language associated with a growth mindset, and through assigned readings and viewings, come to understand that an inquiry-based approach to learning facilitates the growth mindset by embracing challenges, obstacles, and criticisms as chief drivers of learning. In a collaborative discussion forum, participants will discuss their reactions to a timed problem-solving activity, making connections to the session readings. By the end of this session, participants will complete a journal reflection that will allow them to process new information presented during the session.

### **Session 2: Learning and the Brain**

In Session 2, participants will explore brain-based research in order to understand the science behind the growth mindset, and how mindset can determine how individuals will interpret and respond to a situation. After completing several readings on this topic, participants will complete a self-assessment to better understand their own mindset. In a collaborative discussion forum, they will share ideas for how they might teach students about neuroplasticity to build a consistent growth mindset message in their classroom. At the end of this session, they will complete a journal reflection based on the results of their mindset self-assessment.

### **Session 3: Student Feedback and the Productive Struggle**

In Session 3, participants will explore resources that highlight the impact of praise on student attitudes toward learning. They will come to understand that developing a growth mindset fits into the larger context of modeling and explicitly teaching Habits of Mind to prepare students for the challenges they'll encounter. Participants will review Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development to consider how they are currently providing challenging activities for students. They will share strategies for helping students tackle challenging work in a collaborative discussion forum. At the end of the session, they will be asked to reflect on how they help students deal with criticism, failure, and other educational challenges.

### **Session 4: Fostering a Growth Mindset in Students**

This session will provide participants with a wealth of practical classroom strategies that support the development of a growth mindset. During this session, participants will develop an artifact of their choice that allows them to apply what they have learned for immediate use with students, parents or colleagues. There is no collaborative discussion or journal reflection due during this session.

### **Session 5: Classroom Implications**

In Session 5, participants will examine criticism and misconceptions surrounding growth mindset research. They will explore the difference between performance goals and learning goals to ensure emphasis on promoting learning goals in their classroom. In an online collaborative discussion, participants will share strategies for helping a colleague with a fixed mindset and/or

misconceptions about growth mindset change their thinking. At the end of the session, participants will reflect on their own growth in the session using a reflection tool containing prompts that they might adapt for use with their own students.

### **Session 6: Assessment in the Growth Mindset Classroom**

In this final session, participants will consider formative assessment and how it can be used to foster a growth mindset. They will also pull together the main concepts of this course and develop a S.M.A.R.T. goal for incorporating a growth mindset into their classroom instruction; incorporating one or more of the strategies that they have explored in this course. Participants will participate in a peer review discussion forum and provide feedback on draft projects to their colleagues in the course. Lastly, each participant will complete a required final course survey.