

Exercise 2.1

Questions for Teachers About Mindset and Differentiation

Respond to the following questions. After you finish, review your responses and reflect on how your mindset affects your classroom decisions. Building administrators can use this activity at a faculty meeting to discuss how teacher mindset can affect the students' progress in the school. Both teachers and administrators should consider ways in which the school environment and procedures generally reflect a fixed or growth mindset in teachers and students, and the implications of their conclusions. Over time, it is important to carefully examine ways in which both the school and its classrooms can increasingly reflect a growth mindset.

1. How comfortable are you with classes that group students by perceived ability?
2. What evidence have you had in your teaching that students who have previously been seen as "not smart" can be quite successful academically as a result of their effort and a teacher's partnership?
3. When a student does poorly in class, do you ever attribute that to the student's home or background?
4. In what ways do you demonstrate to your students that they are in charge of their academic success—that their effort is the key to their success?
5. How often do you make comments that emphasize being smart versus working hard?
6. In what ways do you show students that discoveries and insights almost inevitably stem from failures rather than from successes?

7. To what degree do you see a student's Ds and Fs as inevitable?
8. To what degree do you see a student's straight As as an indicator that the student may not be experiencing appropriate challenge—may not be growing?
9. How do you share your own failures and persistence with students to ensure that they see you as an adult who believes that continued effort will win the day?
10. In what ways do you monitor your students' mindsets and help them with goal setting and progress monitoring to ensure that each of them will develop a growth mindset about learning and success?

Possible Changes to Consider