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## PROMOTING GROWTH MINDSET IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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## ABOUT ARTICLE

**Key words:** Growth mindset, language learning, English as a Second Language (ESL), student motivation, self-reflection, goal-setting, metacognition, resilience, reading strategies, grammar instruction, learner autonomy, secondary education, classroom practice, mindset intervention, student engagement.

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**Abstract:** This article reports on a classroom-based study aimed at promoting growth mindset principles among secondary school students learning English at a Presidential School. Drawing on Carol Dweck's theory of growth mindset, the study integrated reflective questionnaires, goal-setting tasks, and personalized language activities into regular lessons for students in grades 5, 7, and 8. Data collected through surveys, written reflections, and classroom tasks indicated that students became more engaged, self-aware, and motivated to improve their language skills. Notable outcomes included increased use of reading strategies, clearer goal-setting, and greater confidence in applying grammar and vocabulary in meaningful contexts. The findings suggest that weaving growth mindset practices into language instruction not only enhances linguistic competence but also builds resilience and a positive self-concept among learners. The article concludes by highlighting practical implications for teachers and suggesting areas for further exploration in applying growth mindset in language education.

**Introduction.** The concept of growth mindset, developed by psychologist Carol Dweck, emphasizes the belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed with effort, good strategies, and guidance. In language learning, fostering a growth mindset is particularly beneficial, as students often face challenges that require resilience, adaptability, and perseverance. As an English teacher at the Presidential School, I work with secondary students from grades 5 to 10, a diverse group with varying skills and confidence levels. This article describes a small-scale study conducted in my classes to promote growth mindset, using reflective questionnaires, goal-setting tasks, and engaging activities linked to language content. The study also highlights how growth mindset principles can be seamlessly integrated into regular classroom practice to enhance students' motivation and self-awareness.

**Methods.** The study involved students from grade 5 (classes 5 Green and 5 Blue, each with 12 students) and grade 7 (classes 7 Green and 7 Blue, also with 12 students each). I integrated growth mindset activities into the regular curriculum over several months, during Units 2 and 10, and through follow-up assessments.

For grade 7, in Unit 2 titled "What's in a Name?", I administered a reflective questionnaire with five items that asked students to evaluate their attitudes toward remembering names and the significance of names in identity. Students rated statements like "I find it easy to remember people's names" on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). After collecting the responses, I facilitated a class discussion where students shared their thoughts on why names matter and strategies for remembering them. This activity encouraged self-reflection and connection to the unit theme, while subtly promoting the idea that memory and social skills can be developed.

In Unit 10, focusing on "Money," students completed a writing task from THINK Student's Book 3 (Cambridge University Press, 2015), where they envisioned their future goals (e.g., "When I am 60, I will be learning to play the guitar"). I extended this activity with additional questions that guided students to categorize their goals into financial, educational, and professional domains. I also prompted them to reflect on the steps needed to achieve these goals, reinforcing the growth mindset message that success comes from effort and planning. During these sessions, I noticed that students became more enthusiastic and engaged when they saw their dreams taking shape on paper.

For grade 5 students, who are newcomers to the school system, I conducted an initial questionnaire at the start of the year to assess their beliefs about language learning. The statements included: "I believe I can improve my English skills with practice and good strategies," and "Mistakes help me learn and get better." Students chose from options ranging

from strongly agree to strongly disagree. One month later, I administered a follow-up survey focusing on their reading skills. This survey included items such as: "I tried new strategies in reading (Yes/No)," and open-ended prompts like "One challenge I faced in reading" and "What I did to overcome it."

In addition to questionnaires, I incorporated growth mindset reflection into grammar lessons. For example, when teaching adverbs of frequency, students created personalized sentences (e.g., "I rarely watch TV at the weekend") to reinforce the target language while building their confidence through self-expression. I also asked students to identify the skill they most wanted to improve in the coming month (listening, reading, speaking, or writing) and to draft a personal action plan. This routine encouraged students to take ownership of their learning journey.

For grade 8 students, I implemented two tasks designed to strengthen their belief in self-improvement. In the first, students brainstormed skills they believed future generations would need (e.g., coding, critical thinking, managing emotions). We then discussed which of these skills are developable rather than fixed. In the second task, students wrote a letter to their 25-year-old future selves, offering advice on handling challenges and encouraging continued learning and growth.

**Results.** The activities and reflective tools yielded valuable insights into students' attitudes and progress. In grade 7, the questionnaire on names sparked animated discussions, with many students expressing surprise at how much importance they placed on being remembered by name. Several students admitted they had previously struggled with memory but felt motivated to try new techniques, such as associating names with images or stories. During the goal-setting exercise in Unit 10, over 80% of students successfully distinguished between financial, educational, and professional goals. Many expressed ambitions such as becoming multilingual translators, opening businesses, or pursuing creative arts—goals that reflected both imagination and realistic planning.

In grade 5, the initial belief survey revealed strong growth mindset orientations, with more than 90% agreeing that effort and practice lead to improvement. In the follow-up reading survey, 18 out of 24 students reported trying new reading strategies, such as underlining keywords, summarizing paragraphs, or rereading difficult sections. Common challenges included unfamiliar vocabulary and long texts, but students shared solutions such as using dictionaries or asking for help. Notably, 20 students stated that their reading had improved over the past month, with 7 marking significant improvement.

The grammar lesson reflections showed that personalized sentence creation boosted students' confidence and helped them internalize language patterns. Their responses revealed creativity and ownership, with sentences like "I occasionally bake cookies with my grandmother" and "I can't stand waking up early on Sundays."

In grade 8, the future skills brainstorming highlighted students' recognition of the need for adaptability, communication, and emotional intelligence in a rapidly changing world. Their letters to their future selves were particularly revealing: many advised persistence, openness to learning, and resilience in the face of setbacks. One student wrote, "Remember, mistakes make you stronger—don't be afraid to try new things." These reflections indicated that students were internalizing growth mindset principles.

**Discussion.** The expanded activities and data from this small-scale study demonstrate that integrating growth mindset strategies into language lessons enhances student engagement, reflection, and self-belief. By linking growth mindset concepts directly to curriculum content, students not only practised language skills but also developed metacognitive awareness and resilience. The questionnaires and self-assessments encouraged students to articulate their beliefs, recognise their progress, and set actionable goals.

One key insight was the power of revisiting beliefs over time. For example, the grade 5 follow-up survey showed that even within a month, students could identify specific strategies they had adopted and challenges they had overcome. This suggests that regular reflection can reinforce growth mindset and help students build a positive narrative about their learning journey.

As a teacher, I also learned valuable lessons. The process helped me identify students who appeared confident in class but privately struggled with certain skills, allowing me to offer targeted support. It also highlighted the importance of making language learning personally meaningful—students were more engaged when they could connect lessons to their own experiences, goals, and futures.

While the study was classroom-based and involved a relatively small group, the positive outcomes suggest that these practices could be scaled and adapted to other language learning contexts. Future work could involve tracking student progress over a longer period, incorporating parental feedback, and exploring the impact of growth mindset interventions on specific language skills.

Promoting growth mindset in language learning is not merely an add-on but a powerful, integrated approach that empowers students to view challenges as opportunities and to embrace the lifelong journey of language acquisition with confidence. Teachers, by embedding

reflective practices and growth-oriented tasks in their lessons, can play a crucial role in nurturing resilient, self-directed learners.

**Conclusion.** This classroom-based study illustrates that fostering a growth mindset among language learners is both practical and impactful. By embedding reflective tasks, personalized goal-setting, and self-assessment activities into regular lessons, students not only enhanced their English skills but also developed stronger self-awareness, resilience, and motivation. The positive shifts in students' attitudes and learning strategies highlight the value of making mindset principles an integral part of language education. For teachers, this approach offers a meaningful way to connect language instruction with students' personal growth and long-term success. Moving forward, expanding such practices to different contexts and monitoring their long-term effects can further strengthen our understanding of how growth mindset supports language learners on their journey toward greater competence and confidence.

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