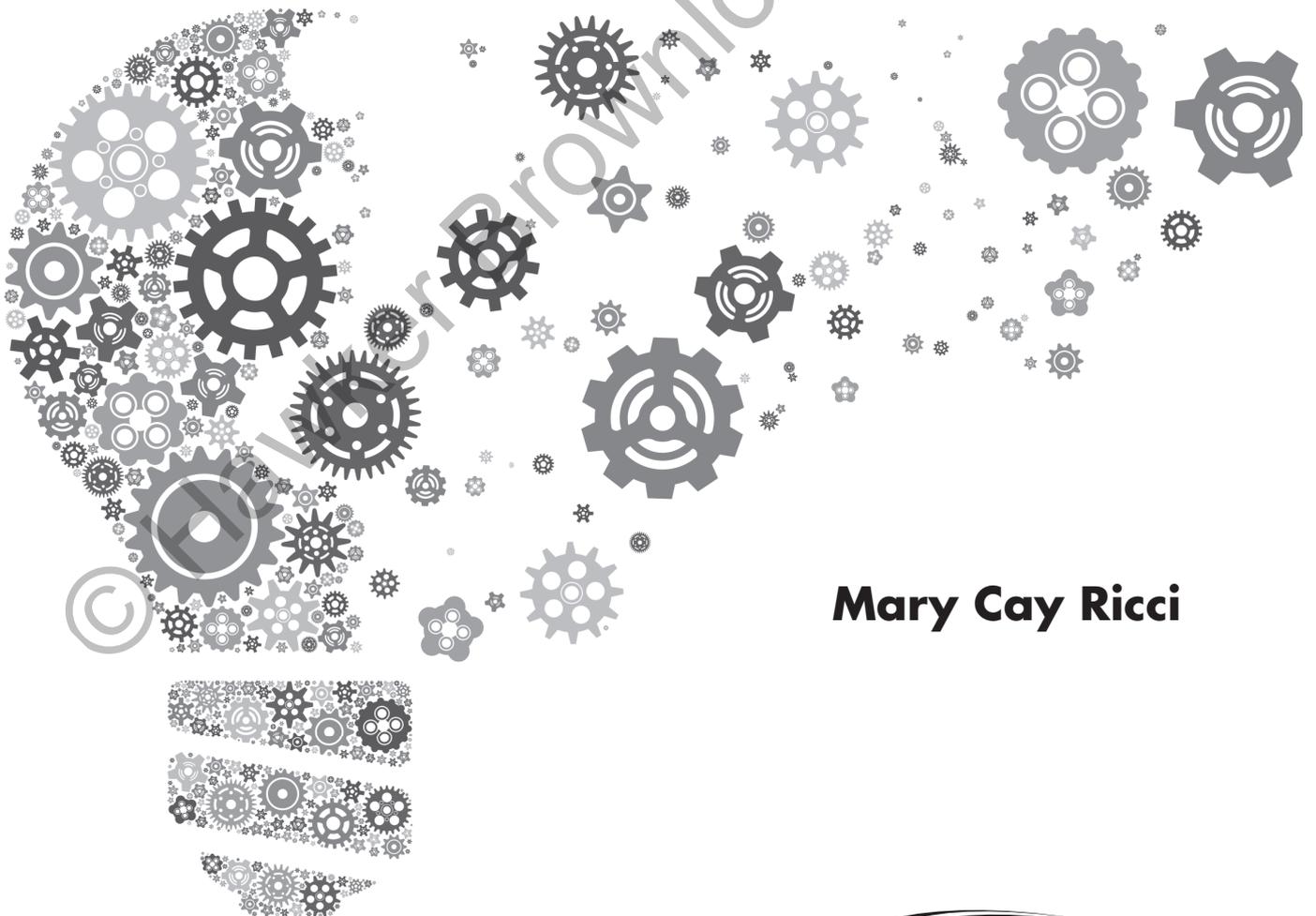


**READY-TO-USE
RESOURCES FOR**

Mindsets in the Classroom

Everything Educators Need for School Success



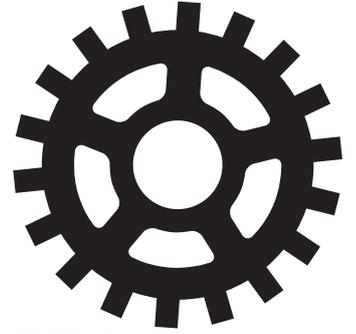
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CHAPTER 1



WHAT ARE MINDSETS, AND HOW DO THEY AFFECT THE CLASSROOM?

What are mindsets? Thanks to the research of Dr Carol Dweck, Stanford University professor of psychology, education is going through a shift in thinking about student learning and intelligence. Dweck (2006) described a belief system that asserts that intelligence can be developed and coined the term *growth mindset*. Educators with a growth mindset believe that all students can achieve at higher levels – with effort, perseverance and resiliency. Learners with a growth mindset believe that they can grow their intelligence with hard work. A growth mindset learning environment encapsulates the philosophy that there is enough success for everyone and both teachers and students learn about the malleability of the brain and what can happen as a result of practice, perseverance, resiliency and grit.

Conversely, Dweck used the term *fixed mindset*, which is a belief system in which one believes that intelligence is something you are born with – it is innate and although everyone can learn new things, your innate intelligence cannot be changed. A person with a fixed mindset might believe that he or she has predetermined “smarts” or talents in a particular area, but not in other areas. A student with a fixed mindset might believe that he or she will never be good in a particular subject or be afraid to try something that he or she thinks is too difficult or at which he or she fears failure.

The growth mindset that has been demonstrated by educators across a myriad of education levels and content areas over the past few years is both impressive and rejuvenating. I have been fortunate to work with schools, school groups and leadership teams since the release of *Mindsets in the Classroom: Building a Culture of Success and Student Achievement in Schools* (Ricci, 2013) and have been amazed by the commitment that educators have toward building a growth mindset culture in schools. Even though the purpose of my visits is to guide and educate, it is I who have learned. These experiences have allowed even more clarity as to what we



Ready-to-Use Resources for Mindsets in the Classroom

must do as educators to continue to develop growth mindset schools and school systems so that all adults and students are provided with opportunities and so they believe that they can succeed with perseverance, effort and motivation.

This book will provide resources that will help educators move forward in their growth mindset journey and serves as a partner book to *Mindsets in the Classroom*. The chapter resources mirror the chapter content of the original book.

Since the release of *Mindsets of the Classroom*, many educators have approached me and asked to identify the most important components of a growth mindset learning environment. In other words, what are the most important actions that must occur in order to have a growth mindset classroom? After much listening, observing, research and reflection, I have identified four components that are essential to a growth mindset culture. These are areas that each learning environment should strive to obtain. These cannot happen overnight and sometimes not even within one school year. These actions should be a long-term commitment and educators must have a growth mindset themselves in order to persevere to attain these goals. These four components are:

1. equitable access to advanced learning opportunities;
2. deliberate cultivation of psychosocial skills such as perseverance, resiliency and grit;
3. student understanding of neural networks in the brain; and
4. growth mindset feedback and praise.

Throughout this resource book you will find tools that will help implement these actions but, for now, let's break these down a little.

Equitable Access to Advanced Learning Opportunities

Do all of the students in your class, school or system have access to enriched and accelerated learning? Is a label (such as “Gifted and Talented”) a requirement to access these opportunities? Ongoing informal assessment and observation should allow for all students, not just those with already developed abilities, to participate in advanced learning opportunities. This may be teacher facilitated small-group work within the classroom or an advanced class offering at the secondary level. Teachers must have a growth mindset in order to allow this to happen. No gatekeeping, no barriers, no “sorry but you are not ‘ready’ for this.”

Once students have this access, are supports put in place to help students succeed? On a recent visit with a group of secondary school teachers, they proudly announced that they have open access to all of their advanced level classes. Any student who wants to enrol may enrol. My momentary happiness did not last long – they shared that most of those students who self-enrol without the recom-



What Are Mindsets?

mentation of a teacher don't "make it" in the class. After some discussion, two things were determined; first, the advanced classes were not at all responsive or differentiated to meet students' needs. The teachers just instructed the whole class as if all of the 25+ kids were on the same level. Second, they possessed a complete "sink or swim" mentality. The attitude was that if the student was in the class, he or she should be able to handle it. No supports or scaffolds were in place for a student who struggled. In fact, in many cases, the child was counselled to move to a standard level class at the first sign of struggle. (On a side note, struggle is not necessarily a bad thing. It is actually a good experience for a student to struggle because resiliency cannot be developed without experiencing some degree of struggle ... more about that later.) With equitable access, provisions should be in place to help students succeed.

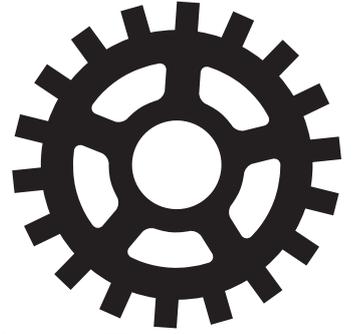
Deliberate Cultivation of Psychosocial Skills

Many educators do not realise that approximately 75% of achievement is contributed to psychosocial skills (which some researchers refer to as non-cognitive factors) and only approximately 25% of innate intelligence or IQ contributes to achievement (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2013). The cultivation of these skills is imperative, especially for those students who have not yet developed their abilities and/or talents. The skills that must be deliberately modelled, taught and cultivated include but are not limited to: perseverance, resiliency, grit, emotional regulation, comfort with intellectual tension/discourse, self-confidence, coping skills when faced with failure, and ability to handle critique and constructive feedback (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2013).

Development of these psychosocial skills should be part of the climate of the classroom, discussed across every content area and modelled daily by the entire class or school community. Students can self-evaluate and make plans for improving and tracking their growth in these skills (see Chapter 9). One resource that can be used is Angela Duckworth's Grit Scale. A 12-item scale is available for adults at Duckworth's site: https://sasupenn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_06f6QSOS2pZW9qR. For children, an 8-item scale is available at www.sas.upenn.edu/~duckwort/images/8-item%20Grit%20081011.pdf.

These scales give adults and students an idea of how "gritty" they are. If they have a low score, then they can make a conscious effort to improve their ability to bounce back after a less-than-successful performance or failure to master a new concept. They can begin working toward being diligent about their actions. Interviewing community and family members who showed perseverance and demonstrated grit throughout their lives is an assignment that can have a great impact on students.

CHAPTER 9



WHAT ARE SOME WAYS SCHOOL STAFF CAN MAINTAIN A GROWTH MINDSET SCHOOL CULTURE?

A Teacher's Mindset

There has probably never been a time in education where a growth mindset is needed more. With rapid changes in technology, blended and personalised learning, transitions to the Australian Curriculum and NAPLAN, it is sometimes a challenge to maintain a growth mindset. Which is why we need to embrace it, be purposeful and exemplify it in front of our students. We can't be in a position where we teach about a growth mindset and not model it ourselves. We have to be patient with ourselves if we have a setback and speak to a student in a fixed way or emphasise marks rather than effort and growth. It takes time. There are occasions when I notice my own thinking going in a fixed mindset way (i.e. "I will never make the deadline for this book."). When this happens, I do an exercise in my mind that takes that fixed thought and reframes it in a growth mindset way (i.e. "If I write down my weekly goals toward creating these resources and writing the chapters, and stick to a timeline, I will have the book done in time."). The more I reframe my fixed thoughts, the better I get. Imagine that – practice helps!

Monitoring and maintaining a growth mindset environment is just as important as developing the culture. Schools and systems that are interested in measuring mindset growth with both students and educators can put some things in place prior to any professional learning sessions about mindsets in order to determine the starting point and to measure growth later. This can be done through a combination of observation, anecdotal records and surveys.



Growth Mindset Sentence Samples for Educators

While visiting with a secondary school that was working toward a growth mindset environment, I asked the school's leadership team what kinds of resources would be most helpful to them. Their response was that they would like to have a list of sentence stems or samples that all adults in the building could use as they adjust to using growth mindset language. This list would be available to all adults: office staff, canteen, maintenance, etc. Resource 56: Educators' Growth Mindset Sentence Samples (p. 137) is a list of growth mindset sentence starters. This is not comprehensive, but will give school staff a good idea of what we should be saying to our students.

Student Goal Setting

Students of all ages should engage in setting and working toward learning goals too. What a better place to start than setting growth mindset goals? Once students begin learning some of the tenets of a growth mindset, they can begin setting individual growth mindset goals. Some examples of these goals include:

- ⊗ I will work longer at trying to figure something out. I will not give up quickly.
- ⊗ I will have high expectations of myself.
- ⊗ I will ask questions when I can't figure something out.
- ⊗ I will review all of my work and modify or redo it to improve it.
- ⊗ I will no longer think or say "I can't do this" or "I don't get this." I will continue to try or seek help.
- ⊗ I will request time after class to work with my teacher or a study buddy to make sure that I understand.
- ⊗ I will spend time every day practising _____ skills.
- ⊗ I will try to approach things in a new way if I am not yet having success.
- ⊗ I will ask for more challenging work if the work presented does not require much effort.

Resource 57: My Growth Mindset Goal (p. 138) provides an example of a tool for student mindset goal setting. It allows students to identify one goal at a time and estimate the amount of time they need to work toward the goal. Students must also identify any strategies that they are using to meet the goal and give some examples of how they met or did not meet the goal. For example, if the student goal was "I will review all of my work and modify or redo it to improve it" then an example might be "I completed my chapter questions during lit class