Mindset Shift

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

Our school worked to move from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. In the past we were very successful at showing high performance marks by "getting all the kids in the green." However, we recognized there is so much more to learning than the final score!

We wanted to encourage and motivate our staff and students towards consistent growth through this change. We were interested to see the correlation between student goal setting and growth on their benchmark assessments.

Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to work with staff and students to shift from a fixed mindset focused on reaching a specific score to a growth mindset focused on continuous improvement.

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered what is the relationship between my increased use of growth data with my students and the outcomes on their achievement? How does my mindset affect their mindset?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into our wondering, we participated in PLCs focused on student growth data. During weekly early release we spent time discussing mindset shifts. We purposefully scheduled time each month for reading and math teams to meet and discuss specific learning targets (standards) and where we are performing. Regularly, staff met individually with students to talk about data, specifically discussing growth. Staff worked with students to set goals for NWEA spring benchmark. Also, some staff worked with students to set goals for their classwork based on previous performance data.

Our team collected data in various ways. We conducted a student survey of understanding of growth mindset after final round of NWEA assessment. The staff survey of understanding of growth mindset was administered to gauge adult mindset shifts. NWEA growth data from fall (baseline) to winter were compared to specifically evaluate the effects of student goals. Staff worked with students to set goals for spring NWEA benchmark and relevant classroom data. Each piece of data was reviewed by the IPLI team and used to help guide the next steps for professional development.

Data was collected at various points throughout the school year. We used the data to validate efforts in student goal writing. After the action research cycle was completed we reviewed the spring NWEA data in PLC groups and began planning for fall goal writing.

Stating Your Team's Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing our data, we learned: 1) Students with individual growth goals performed better on NWEA this year than last year without goals; 2) Students felt empowered through growth mindset; 3) Staff attitudes towards student performance turned more positive and celebratory with growth mindset as the focus.

Students with individual growth goals performed better on NWEA this year than last year without goals. This was evidenced through student growth from fall to winter assessment. The table below shows the improvement and validates students using individual learning goals regularly (i.e. 3rd and 4th grade specifically) were more likely to demonstrate increased growth.

NWEA Data Comparison

*Data compared from fall to winter assessments. Spring assessments not available for comparison at this time.

GRADE	Using student goals?	Math Observed Growth			Reading Observed Growth			Language Observed Growth		
		(2015-16)	(2016-17)	Change	(2015-16)	(2016-17)	Change	(2015-16)	(2016-17)	Change
Kdg	NO	12.7	11.2	-1.5	8.8	11.1	+2.3	LANGUAGE NOT TESTED IN K/1		
1st Grade	NO	14.6	14.0	-0.6	13.0	7.0	-6.0			
2nd Grade	YES	10.4	11.7	+1.3	5.8	6.4	+0.6	9.1	15.3	+6.2
3rd Grade	YES	10.8	14.0	+3.2	6.6	11.6	+5.0	7.4	16.0	+8.6
4th Grade	YES	2.9	4.7	+1.8	-0.7	7.1	+7.8	2.3	6.6	+4.3
5th Grade	YES	6.2	4.3	-1.9	3.1	4.7	+1.6	7.1	9.3	+2.2

Students felt empowered through growth mindset. "When I take a test now I have a good idea what I want to do better at. It slows me down and makes me think harder so I do better" (Dakota, 4th grade). Students were excited to receive assessment feedback. "When I get a test back I see what I did right and what I did wrong. I don't get 100's but I like when my graph goes up. It makes my day happy!" (Noah, 3rd grade).

Staff attitudes towards student performance turned more positive and celebratory with growth mindset as the focus. We began our PLC and staff meetings by sharing some celebrations from the last week. While some were personal, like a new grandbaby or child performing well in sports, most turned into positive remarks about students in their class. "I had a student who improved their score on their weekly spelling test by 45%. It was so encouraging to share their growth on their data chart and do a happy dance together" (Miss Neff, 1st grade). This year Mrs. Wendling worked really hard to teach her students how to write goals and implement action plans to push their progress towards their goals. "This was my best year yet and I've been teaching over 20 years" (Mrs. Wendling, 4th grade).

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

Through the action research project our teachers have grown their capacity in writing student learning goals, implementing action plans, using relevant classroom data to drive their instruction, and celebrating the small steps in-between benchmark assessments. We've learned regardless of facades, our teachers believe student growth is more important that meeting a cut score alone.

Looking forward, we determined ALL classrooms will incorporate regular student learning goals in 2017-2018 based on classroom assessments in-between NWEA benchmarks. While the longer goals were helpful when discussing benchmark performance it was determined more frequent goal setting practice will empower students and build their growth mindset. Teachers also committed to increase their use of mindset vocabulary in daily lessons. Staff also began brainstorming ways to celebrate and reward student growth on benchmarks to motivate students.

References:

N/A