



Don't Talk the Talk if you Can't Walk the Walk

Principal Name: LaFonda Morris

School Name: Clifford Pierce Middle School

Team Members' Names: Patrice Weil and Renee Sabinas

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Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 1)

Outline what led your team to this particular inquiry. Include the following:

- Many of the employees see the principal as unapproachable and unfriendly. Their desire is to have a building with structure but they fail to see how that structure relates to them.
- The principal sees the staff the same way that they see her. The staff is not welcoming, they are divided, lack of structure and rules for staff and students, the building is extremely union heavy coupled with no loyalty, the staff has unrealistic expectations of the administration, the admin nor staff trusts each other (due to their union president), the staff has no faith, and the environment is toxic.

The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 2)

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to change the culture and climate in our building.

Our Wondering (Slide 2)

With this purpose, we wondered does focusing on the staff's mindset improve the culture and climate in the building.

Our Actions (Slide 3)

1. We selected a book for a building wide book study. This was decided based on my year 1 IPLI Project. The book that I selected, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol Dweck, was chosen in hopes that it would help each of us have a more positive attitude.
2. The book has 8 chapters and we have 8 teams. We then placed all certified staff, that wasn't a part of a team, amongst the teams to make sure that all certified staff would receive the same message and be an active part in the change.
3. Each team was responsible for reading and presenting their assigned chapter, on a predetermined date, during our professional development time. Every team member was responsible for at least one slide in the presentation. There was a weekly presentation for eight consecutive weeks. This allowed time for the staff to put anything that they learned

from the professional development into practice.

4. The Lead Teachers and administration wrote the weekly surveys once the presentation was complete.
5. The survey data was downloaded into a spreadsheet weekly.
6. (Intervention) Staff was targeted based on negative response or questions they have asked during the presentation or on the survey. Also, some staff had to be addressed about not responding to the surveys. Sometimes it helped and sometimes it didn't.

Because the Lead Teachers often elected to ask open ended questions, we were able to gain a lot of insight into exactly who our peers were. Some of the staff shared personal things that happened in their past and others tried to stick to things that were happening in their classes.

Data Collection (Slide 3)

Data was collected via weekly surveys. The data was downloaded into a spreadsheet weekly.

Our Data (Slides 5-12)

Chapter 1

- ⊙ Was the information presented in a way that it could be easily received?
- ⊙ Were you able to learn more about your personal mindset?
- ⊙ Do you understand the differences between a growth and fixed mindset?
- ⊙ How do you think you could implement a growth mindset in the classroom?
- ⊙ What is one question you still have about growth or fixed mindsets?
- ⊙ What do you think is the single most benefit of having a growth mindset as an educator?
 1. All yes
 2. 2 no
 3. All yes
 4. 36 none; How to change students from fixed to growth.; How can we communicate this idea to parents as well?; How do you instill a growth mindset in **students who couldn't care less?**

Chapter 2

- ⊙ Was the information presented in a way that it could be easily received?
- ⊙ What was one thing you took away from the presentation?
- ⊙ Is a growth mindset always needed in every situation, or are there some situations where a fixed mindset is needed?
- ⊙ What is one thing in the last week that you have done that you feel could be labeled as a fixed mindset that you would like to change?
 1. All yes
 2. I didn't learn anything new. It was a repeat of chapter 1 (actually took same survey twice); The book is repetitive ; I answered this already;
 3. 30 people – growth mindset always

4. I'm always right; focusing too much on results; I don't need to learn anymore; several "it is what it is"; students failing my test

Chapter 3

- ⊙ Do you believe "being smart" is a mindset? Students can be smart if they just believe they are smart?
- ⊙ Is being artistic a gift you are born with? Do you think that those who are extremely gifted at drawing, creating things, etc. are naturals and you cannot work your way to be that talented?
- ⊙ Do you think there is such thing as too much positive praise for a student?
 1. Yes, yes, yes (New Math)
 2. Yes, yes, yes (Vet SS)
 3. Yes, no, yes (Orch)
 4. Yes, no, yes (Sp. Ed)
 5. No, yes, yes (8th Health)
 6. No, no, yes (Reading)

Chapter 4

- ⊙ Do you spend more time questioning the feedback you receive or taking action? Why?
 1. I spend more time taking action to correct the mistake and figure out which direction I need to go. As an educator, I will not be able to teach students if I do not learn from my mistakes. (Science)
 2. I take more action because any feedback I receive is meant for my own good. You have to accept some criticism when you make a mistake, but in the end, I know that's good for me. (Eng.)
 3. Kind of both. I use the feedback (**when it works for me**) don't really question it too much if it doesn't. Then change if needed. (8th Health)
 4. Depends.....Questioning, more of the time. I think I feel attacked at times. I feel like the person giving the feedback is not genuine. (7th Health)

Chapter 5

- ⊙ Was there a difficult transition in your life where you fell into a fixed mindset and lost confidence in your abilities? Describe it. If you cannot think of a personal example please use an example that fits.
 1. Either I'm good at something, or I'm not was a mindset that I had growing up. I tended to avoid things/opportunities that I thought I would struggle with. When I become a teacher, my mindset changed when I saw kids, especially my special education students, achieve things above their expected potential. (Sp. Ed.)

2. When I first graduated from college and had a hard time finding a job. I started to believe that I would never find a full time job and eventually stopped applying to jobs. (Math)

Chapter 6

- ⊙ Is there someone in your life (a parent, teacher, friend, boss) with a fixed mindset – someone who won't take risks, who can't admit mistakes, who falls apart or gets defensive after setbacks? Give some examples? Do you understand that person better now? Also how can you help that person change their mindset?
 1. Yes, this is actually something with which I struggle; however, I am aware of my struggle and attempt to improve each day. I am attempting to fix my fixed mindset by growing. =) (Eng.)
 2. Many of my students exhibit a fixed mindset. It does give me an insight into their perspective of effort, failure, and success. This, in fact, makes me a better educator, researcher, and fellow human being. (SS)
 3. Most comments about colleagues or family members

Chapter 7

- ⊙ When you find that you are focusing on the things you cannot control, how can you shift your mindset? Give an example of something that has happened that was beyond on your control, but stressed you out. What were some examples of ways you shifted your mindset in this situations?
 1. I'm extremely stressed out at the moment about iReady. I feel like I'm being chastised for doing what I truly believed was best for my students, but this is clearly out of my control. I never do anything without the best interests of my students in mind, they are my priority. I'm proud of my students for retaking the test and taking it serious and showing what they are really are capable of. That is what I'm going to focus on: their success. (SS)
 2. Having to teach math to iReady students knowing they know more than me. Totally stresses me out. I try to go see math teachers or Igras for some tutoring. Also, I ask students that understand it to help us all out. (Health)

Chapter 8

- ⊙ Think of times others may have outdid you and you just assumed they were smarter or more talented. Please explain the situation
 1. SPORTS..I am pretty uncoordinated! (Sp. Ed)
 2. This is a hard one to think on. I am not really into comparisons. I am really not focused on someone else doing better or more than me. I am focused on myself being better and doing more. I cannot really answer this question. (Sp. Ed.)
 3. I attended Gary Community Schools. After graduation, I went to college down South. As a Freshman, I felt like I wasn't as academically prepared as the other

students. I now understand that it wasn't my fault, because I wasn't given the proper tools I needed as a student in an underserved community. (Math 180)

4. There are many times that have happened and it usually happens to me while I am in a meeting. It does not mean that the person presenting or speaking does this purposely...it is merely me...in my head...thinking wow...this person is so smart or I'm not as smart as this person. I am working on shifting my mindset during those situations. (Instructional Coach)

Our Discoveries (Slide 13-15)

- Learning Statement One: Some of our real go getters were identified; some people displayed that they had leadership skills
- Learning Statement Two: The most negative people/complainers neglected to fill out the surveys
- Learning Statement Three: Everyone believes that they have a growth mindset

Learning Statement One: Some of our real go getters were identified; some people displayed that they have leadership skills

Some people were always positive in their response. I tended to wonder about those who saw no benefit in sometimes having a fixed mindset.

- Learning Statement Two: The most negative people/complainers neglected to fill out the surveys

The persons that I have personally identified as negative did not respond to the surveys. The person that I see as the most negative only responded to the very first survey. She didn't even respond when her team presented.

- Learning Statement Three: Everyone believes that they have a growth mindset

As you can see by some of the data presented on slides 5-12, not everyone has a growth mindset. The question, "Is being artistic a gift you are born with? Do you think that those who are extremely gifted at drawing, creating things, etc. are naturals and you cannot work your way to be that talented?" and those who responded with no clearly don't have it!

Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 16)

Considering that it was apparent that many of the staff reflected about others instead of themselves we felt that the following year needs to be about teaching staff the benefits of and how to self-reflect.

Bibliography (Slide 17)

Dweck, Carol S., 2016. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Penguin Random House LLC.

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LaFonda Morris, Principal

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Renee Sabinas, Teacher Leader

Patrice Weil, Teacher Leader

PURPOSE: BACKGROUND

The problems that led me to this action research were:

- Staff not welcoming
- Staff divided
- No structure/rules for staff or students
- Union heavy - no loyalty
- Unrealistic expectations of administration
- No trust/faith
- Toxic Environment

STATEMENT OF MY TEAM'S WONDERING

Does focusing on the staff's mindset improve the culture and climate of the building?

METHODS/PROCEDURE

- Assign each team a chapter of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol Dweck
- Each team presented their assigned chapter (one per week) during professional development time
- Everyone on the team had to contribute at least one slide to the presentation
- Lead Teachers and Assistant Principals wrote weekly surveys
- Data was downloaded into a spreadsheet, weekly
- Staff was targeted based on negative responses or questions they may have asked

CHAPTER 1

- ◉ Was the information presented in a way that it could be easily received?
 - ◉ Were you able to learn more about your personal mindset?
 - ◉ Do you understand the differences between a growth and fixed mindset?
 - ◉ How do you think you could implement a growth mindset in the classroom?
 - ◉ What is one question you still have about growth or fixed mindsets?
 - ◉ What do you think is the single most benefit of having a growth mindset as an educator?
1. All yes
 2. 2 no
 3. All yes
 4. 36 none; How to change students from fixed to growth.; How can we communicate this idea to parents as well?; How do you instill a growth mindset in students who couldn't care less?

CHAPTER 2 (73 RESPONSES)

- ◉ Was the information presented in a way that it could be easily received?
 - ◉ What was one thing you took away from the presentation?
 - ◉ Is a growth mindset always needed in every situation, or are there some situations where a fixed mindset is needed?
 - ◉ What is one thing in the last week that you have done that you feel could be labeled as a fixed mindset that you would like to change?
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 3. 30 people - growth mindset always
 4. I'm always right; focusing too much on results; I don't need to learn anymore; several "it is what it is"; students failing my test

CHAPTER 3 (42 RESPONSES)

- ◉ Do you believe "being smart" is a mindset? Students can be smart if they just believe they are smart?
- ◉ Is being artistic a gift you are born with? Do you think that those who are extremely gifted at drawing, creating things, etc. are naturals and you cannot work your way to be that talented?
- ◉ Do you think there is such thing as too much positive praise for a student?
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 3. Yes, no, yes (Orch)
 4. Yes, no, yes (Sp. Ed)
 5. No, yes, yes (8th Health)
 6. No, no, yes (Reading)

CHAPTER 4 (34 RESPONSES)

- ◉ Do you spend more time questioning the feedback you receive or taking action? Why?
 1. I spend more time taking action to correct the mistake and figure out which direction I need to go. As an educator, I will not be able to teach students if I do not learn from my mistakes. (Science)
 2. I take more action because any feedback I receive is meant for my own good. You have to accept some criticism when you make a mistake, but in the end, I know that's good for me. (Eng)
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 4. Depends.....Questioning, more of the time. I think I feel attacked at times. I feel like the person giving the feedback is not genuine. (7th Health)

CHAPTER 5 (41 RESPONSES)

- ◉ Was there a difficult transition in your life where you fell into a fixed mindset and lost confidence in your abilities? Describe it. If you cannot think of a personal example please use an example that fits.
 1. Either I'm good at something, or I'm not was a mindset that I had growing up. I tended to avoid things/opportunities that I thought I would struggle with. When I become a teacher, my mindset changed when I saw kids, especially my special education students, achieve things above their expected potential. (Sp. Ed.)
 2. When I first graduated from college and had a hard time finding a job. I started to believe that I would never find a full time job and eventually stopped applying to jobs. (Math)

CHAPTER 6 (40 RESPONSES)

- ◉ Is there someone in your life (a parent, teacher, friend, boss) with a fixed mindset -someone who won't take risks, who can't admit mistakes, who falls apart or gets defensive after setbacks? Give some examples? Do you understand that person better now? Also how can you help that person change their mindset?
 1. Yes, this is actually something with which I struggle; however, I am aware of my struggle and attempt to improve each day. I am attempting to fix my fixed mindset by growing. =) (Eng)
 2. Many of my students exhibit a fixed mindset. It does give me an insight into their perspective of effort, failure, and success. This, in fact, makes me a better educator, researcher, and fellow human being. (SS)
 3. Most comments about colleagues or family members

CHAPTER 7 (42 RESPONSES)

- ◉ When you find that you are focusing on the things you cannot control, how can you shift your mindset? Give an example of something that has happened that was beyond on your control, but stressed you out. What were some examples of ways you shifted your mindset in this situations?
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CHAPTER 8 (38 RESPONSES)

- Think of times others may have outdid you and you just assumed they were smarter or more talented. Please explain the situation
 1. SPORTS..I am pretty uncoordinated! (Sp. Ed)
 2. This is a hard one to think on. I am not really into comparisons. I am really not focused on someone else doing better or more than me. I am focused on myself being better and doing more. I cannot really answer this question. (Sp. Ed.)
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WHAT WE LEARNED

- For the most part, we found that everyone believes that they have a growth mindset and that it is very difficult to get adults to self-reflective.
- Although everyone believes that they have a growth mindset, some of their responses clearly showed that their mindset was fixed.
- Open-ended questions yielded better results
- Some who we thought had a growth mindset made us feel otherwise

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Leadership skills that had not been seen in some teachers became apparent
 - These teachers may not volunteer but would likely say “Yes” if asked to help
- Some teams went above and beyond (interest)
- Often, the same people neglected to fill out the survey
- Does noncompliance support a fixed mindset
- Is there a correlation to observations
- As an admin, I learned a lot about myself

FUTURE CHANGES

- ◉ Importance and benefits of self-reflection
- ◉ Have the staff to always ask themselves, “Why?”
- ◉ Make a life satisfaction chart
- ◉ Meditation
- ◉ Journaling

REFLECTION

- ◉ My team and I worked well together
- ◉ Negative Nancy's have been exposed to myself and the team teachers
- ◉ Importance of keeping the negative people as teammates
- ◉ Hiring practices/interview questions
- ◉ Effects of the pandemic on adults
- ◉ Difficult job of administrators
- ◉ Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset
 - Those who truly had it/learned it, displayed it in the classroom
 - People who have a growth mindset fare better on observations

REFERENCES

Dweck, Carol S., 2016. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Penguin Random House LLC.