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# Session #3

## Differentiation and Literacy:

### A Growth Mindset

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#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By watching the video for this session and completing this session's learning activities, you will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the role a teacher's mindset has in improving student achievement.
- Learn how to use RAFT assignments to maximize student engagement and learning.
- Analyze the information presented in the video in terms of concepts in the text and supplemental readings.
- Apply what you have learned in your own teaching situation or complete an alternative application assignment.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your application experience.

#### READING ASSIGNMENT:

Please read the following:

### Teaching Students About Failure and Success

By Gian Fiero

While many teachers are understandably focused on teaching their respective subjects to the best of their abilities, many do so with an eye on the overall success that a student may achieve in their academic endeavors and their lives. Helping students develop the right habits and a proper

mindset to achieve success is a strenuous and difficult undertaking, but teachers are often undaunted in this challenge.

But what about teaching students to deal with failure?

Many students are devastated by failure. Whether it's failing on a test, failing a course, failure to reach some academic goal, or failure to land a sought after internship or job, their tendency is to personalize and internalize the failure.

Unfortunately, many students have a mindset that is not conducive to circumventing failure because of, what I call, the "ego boost syndrome" that's associated with getting good grades.

These are the students who are more focused on getting an "A" than on learning. To receive a "good" grade results in a sharp rise or reinforcement of self-esteem. What is actually learned is secondary.

There is a correlation between getting good grades and not making mistakes. The fewer mistakes one makes on a test, the better the grade. The fewer the mistakes that one makes in life or in one's career, the greater the success, right?

Because we live in a society that encourages perfection and discourages imperfection, many students have a learned fear of making mistakes and will go to great lengths to avoid them. We teachers see this when we bring up questions for discussion. Often it's the not the smartest student who jumps at the chance to provide the right answer; it's the student who is least afraid of giving the wrong answer who responds.

Right or wrong, we appreciate the effort of the student who risks public failure to make a contribution. That's the same unbridled effort that allows for people to learn from their mistakes. It's responsible for breakthroughs and drives innovation. It's also an attitude that's rarely displayed in talented

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people who are protective of their egos. Motivational psychologist, Carol Dweck, has this to say about making mistakes:

"People who believe in the power of talent tend not to fulfill their potential because they're so concerned with looking smart and not making mistakes. But people who believe that talent can be developed are the ones who really push, stretch, confront their own mistakes and learn from them."

In her book, *Mindset*, she writes that people with a growth mindset tend to demonstrate the kind of perseverance and resilience required to convert life's setbacks into future successes. That ability to learn from experience was cited as the No. 1 ingredient for creative achievement in a poll of 143 creativity researchers cited in *Handbook of Creativity* in 1999.

Because the objective of education is learning - not grades - the effectiveness of any teacher lies within the willingness of the student to learn what is being taught. One of the most valuable lessons that teachers provide students is how to analyze mistakes and learn from failure.

I teach my students that the only failure there is, is failure to meet the requirements of success. Each failure - when we acknowledge them as a shortcoming or setback - provides invaluable lessons that clue us in to where we need to place more attention or greater effort.

When my students talk to me about career choices that they are contemplating and the skills and abilities they need to succeed, I tell them that accountability is the most important ability you can use to seduce an employer.

Accountability is an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions.

Unlike success, no one intentionally seeks failure, but to separate one's self from one's

failure, and embrace the knowledge provided by it has to be an intentional act. If failure results from mistakes being made, they clearly need to be analyzed and corrected to prevent being repeated. The action of exploring the causes of failure and addressing them—whether yours or an organization to which you belong—is what creates success.

When students are taught these principles, they will be able to use failure as a building block to success.

*Gian Fiero is a seasoned educator, speaker and consultant with a focus on business development and music/entertainment industry operations. He is affiliated with San Francisco State University as an adjunct professor and the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) where he conducts monthly workshops on topics such as career planning, public relations, and personal growth.*

*Article Source:*

*[http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Gian\\_Fiero](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Gian_Fiero)*

## **PREPARATION:**

In order to focus your thinking as you begin this session, please read the following article.

### **New Teacher Report – Simple Steps to Successful Teaching – It All Begins With a Mindset!**

By Dorit Sasson

For all those new teachers who teach disruptive and uncooperative students, it might be of comfort for them to know they can turn the discipline problem around.

But just how you may ask, is that possible if I teach 1,2 or even more disruptive students who don't let the other students learn?

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Regardless whether you will be meeting your students for the first time or have been teaching them for a while, the way you view your students has important implications for attaining success.

When you stick to what you believe in, you can also make serious changes in your students' beliefs and attitudes about themselves and their own learning. A good teacher mindset shows clear direction that also paves the way for important things to come.

But you ask again, "well, isn't this logical? Isn't it simple enough to do? Aren't I doing this already?"

At least once a week, I receive an email from a new teacher who wants to quit teaching. I read forum posts of anonymous new teachers who can't take it anymore and want out. This makes me very sad. I have nothing but honor and respect for the hard work new teachers do. I know exactly where they are coming from.

Believe me when I tell you that changing a mindset can be simple but the circumstances facing each new teacher are not. As an ESL teacher teaching Israelis for many years, I didn't believe that I had much potential. When the discipline issues became more of a problem, I saw myself as a victim unable to successfully approach my students in a different way.

What ultimately helped me stick to the profession was to first step back and analyze my frustration level and see where it was taking me.

So what are you waiting for? Start using your simple mindset to create your teaching success and you'll be amazed at the results!

*For your free ebook, [Taking Charge in the Classroom](http://www.newteacherresourcecenter.com), and other information for new teachers, visit the New Teacher Resource Center at <http://www.newteacherresourcecenter.com>.*

*Dorit Sasson is a freelance writer, educator, and founder and director of the New Teacher Resource Center.*

*Article Source:*

*[http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Dorit\\_Sasson](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Dorit_Sasson)*

## **PREPARATION:**

Please consider the following questions with respect to the above readings. If you are taking this course as a member of a study team, discuss your answers with your colleagues. If you are taking this course as an individual, reflect upon the implications your answers might have for your teaching situation.

1. In the first article Gian Fiero states, "We live in a society that encourages perfection and discourages imperfection." Think about your own education. Does this apply to how you were educated? If not, why? If so, what effect did it have on you?
2. Also in the first article, the author states, "I teach my students that the only failure there is, is failure to meet the requirements of success. Each failure - when we acknowledge them as a shortcoming or setback- provides invaluable lessons that clue us in to where we need to place more attention or greater effort." Compare and contrast that statement with this one by Dr. Glasser, "If a student sets out to travel to San Diego but only gets half way there, he does fail San Diego, he just hasn't got there yet."
3. Consider this statement: "Mistakes are objective, impersonal; failure is very personal." Do you believe that Fiero would agree with this statement? Why? Why not?
4. Consider Fiero's statement, "I teach my students that the only failure there is, is failure to meet the requirements of success." Is this basically saying the same thing as

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Dr. Glasser's San Diego analogy in #2 above?

5. Compare and contrast the content of the Fiero and Sasson articles, how are their positions on "mindset" similar? Dissimilar?

6. Consider your responses to 1-5 above. What implications do you see for your own classroom?

### **VIDEO PROGRAM:**

View the video program for this session entitled, "**A Growth Mindset.**" The running time for the video is approximately 26 minutes.

### **VIDEO PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

In her presentation in this video, Dr. Tomlinson discusses the importance of a growth mindset for both students and teachers. She discusses the dangerous effect of a fixed mindset on student self esteem and how it can be detrimental to academic success.

### **VIDEO AND READING FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

Please consider the following questions with respect to the information presented in the reading assignments and video program for this session. If you are taking this course as a member of a study team, discuss your answers with your colleagues. If you are taking this course as an individual, consider the implications your answers might have for your teaching situation.

1. Dr. Tomlinson says the teacher's mindset is an important factor in the success of their students. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

2. Dr. Tomlinson demonstrates the use of RAFT assignments in this video. Do you think these would be beneficial to your teaching? Why or why not?

3. Dr. Tomlinson mentions the work of Carol Dweck, who writes about student mindset. At what age do you think a child's perception of whether or not they are smart develops? Do you think it's possible to change this mindset years later?

4. In this video we explore fixed mindset versus growth mindset. Which do you think is more prevalent in today's schools and why?

5. Why is separating students into what Dr. Tomlinson calls "Bluebirds, buzzards, and wombats" detrimental to students reading progress?

6. Consider this excerpt from Carol Dweck's *Mindset: The Psychology of Success*, "Believing that your qualities are carved in stone—the fixed mindset—creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. If you have only a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, and a certain moral character—well then, you'd better prove that you have a healthy dose of them. It simply wouldn't do to look or feel deficient in these most basic characteristics." Have you had students (or colleagues) who felt they had to prove themselves over and over? How did you or how could you have helped them change their mindset?

7. Consider your responses to 1-6 above. What implications do you see for your own classroom?

### **APPLICATION PROJECT:**

Your application assignment for this session is to create a lesson or activity that demonstrates your understanding of course content as it applies to your teaching situation. Select one of the following options:

**Option 1.** Create a lesson or activity utilizing RAFT (role, audience, format, topic). If you have access to a classroom, teach your lesson or conduct your activity. If you do not have access to a classroom, draw on

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your past experience and describe the results of the implementation that you would anticipate.

**Option 2.** Create your own application project. (For detailed instructions and the application project rubric, please turn to the Application Project section for session 2.)

## **PROGRESS REPORTING**

After you have completed, created and implemented your application project, please turn to the Progress Report form for this session. Progress Report forms for all sessions are placed together at the back of this Course of Study book.

### **Session Notes:**



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**Session Notes:**