Lesson Plan 7.1 – Your Mindset

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ✓ To learn what is meant by mindset.
- ✓ To understand how mindset affects how people perform and develop in the short and longer term.

SKILLS

- ► Self-awareness
- ► Personal responsibility

VALUES

- ► Personal choices – autonomy
- ► Openness
- ► Trust

PREPARATION

Ensure you are familiar with the lesson content and are ready to deliver the exercises below.

TIME NEEDED

This lesson can be delivered in 60 minutes, though depending on the range of abilities in the class and the level to which you want to embed learning you can take longer and deliver this over two lessons.

This is a guide and will depend on the extent to which you would like to adapt the lesson.

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EXERCISE 1: A MINDSET CHALLENGE (15 Minutes)

Ask students to form groups of 8 (it will also work with groups of 4 or 6). Split each group into two so there are 4 volunteers and 4 observers.

Ask the 4 volunteers in each group to undertake a challenge – this challenge can be about anything, for example numeracy, literacy or a puzzle.

The four volunteers should attempt their challenge, and ask them to say out loud what they are thinking and feeling as they work on it. The observers should watch the volunteers, listen to what they are saying and write down their comments. The challenge should take no more than 5 minutes.

As an alternative this exercise could be done as a whole class and using up to 8 volunteers working in the middle of the classroom, and the rest of the class acting as observers.

After the challenge ask the observers to spend 2 minutes comparing notes and discussing what they have written down with their volunteers. You can ask them to swap roles and repeat so every one has a go at volunteering, or carry on to the next task.

There are challenges for you to use on the additional sheet called Teachers Challenges Sheet. These are also available to handout to students, without the answers on the challenges sheet for students. Alternatively you can use your own.

Once the above has been completed, ask the class to discuss as a whole, what were some of the comments that were written down and what did the volunteers feel and say about the tasks.

These are likely to reveal something about the students' mindset. Comments are likely to include statements about themselves, their abilities, how easy or hard they found it, and whether they were able to keep going or give up.

Comments or feelings might include:

"I can't do this"

"This is too difficult"

"It's easy"

"I've never been able to do puzzles"

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It doesn't matter whether students are able to do the challenges or whether they find them easy or hard. The important element is their beliefs about trying them and whether they believe they can learn to do them, if they can't already.

This is to introduce them to the idea of their mindset and how this affects their behaviours and actions.

EXERCISE 2: WHAT IS MINDSET? (10 Minutes)

Following the first exercise, ask students in pairs or small groups "What do you think we might mean by mindset?" Then you can share as a class.

There is likely to be a wide range of answers that you can acknowledge and link with the previous exercise. At its simplest, mindset is a belief that someone has about themselves, their abilities or lack of them, talents, faith, personality and about how they also see others and the world.

For younger students (e.g. primary) you might issue them all with one or two tickets (just a coloured piece of paper) and ask them to sit in a circle. Tell them you will be asking questions and you would like all of them to be brave and take part.

By the end of the lesson you would like all of them to have handed over at least one ticket and said something. This will help everyone to be involved, while also asking the more vocal children to encourage and give time to others.

Now ask, "Do you think your mindset matters?" Ask them to give reasons for their answers.

The simple answer is yes – it does. And the research of Professor Carol Dweck, who has popularised the idea of Growth Mindset, supports this.

It seems that your beliefs about your ability are much more important than your actual ability. Does your mindset mean you believe you can develop and improve your abilities or not?

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If you look at the biographies of most successful people (and you can use the stories in lesson 1.1, if you have access to them) you will see how they were able to significantly improve their performance and overcome setbacks to achieve the results they have.

If you don't have access to these lessons then ask your students to identify some successful people and carry out their own research into the actions they took.

Are they able to find out information that would suggest how they thought about setbacks and the effort they chose to put in to become good at something?

You could choose a figure from history or local to the school and work in groups or as a class to write down some notes or to create a newspaper headline and front page story about them and their mindset (a template is provided for you to print and use).

EXERCISE 3: MY HEROES? (25 Minutes)

If you created a newspaper or wrote about the mindset of someone successful in the above exercise you might carry on and use the same person or you can ask students to choose their own hero.

Ask your students, "Who are your heroes? They can be someone famous, from history, or someone you know. Can you choose one person?"

To help all students find someone they can discuss in pairs or groups.

You can ask each student to answer the following questions about the hero they have chosen or you can ask the class to choose one or more from all those suggested or use the one from the previous exercise, and work together on the same person or persons.

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Now ask some or all of the following questions.

"Why are they a hero?"

"What did they do?"

"Why did they do it?"

"How did they do it?"

"What were their characteristics?"

"What do you think their mindset might have been?"

Record the answers and you can use them again during other lessons to see to what extent these 'heroes' had a Growth or Fixed Mindset.

You should also share your own heroes and those of other teachers.

As an alternative approach you might want to use the 'My Heroes' PowerPoint slide (which you can also use as an extension task).

This is likely to work better for younger children and also provide an activity (see extension task 2 below for details).

Alternatively you could choose a hero and read out some details of their story, perhaps from their autobiography or an Internet search.

This could be about someone topical from television that children might know, or from history. Once you have read out details you can ask your students the same questions as above.

EXERCISE 4: MEASURING YOUR MINDSET? (10 Minutes)

You can ask your students to measure their mindset. While this won't necessarily be scientifically reliable, it will raise their awareness and give them something to work on as you progress through the lessons. It will also give you an indication of the overall mindset of the class.

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Ask students to answer the following questions and give themselves a score between 1 and 6, where 1 is strongly agree and 6 is strongly disagree.

They can write out four sets of numbers on paper or use the grid provided and then mark the appropriate one for each question.

Strongly agree Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6

1. Intelligence is something you are born with and can't be changed.
2. It doesn't matter who you are, there is nothing you can do to change your intelligence.
3. You can learn new things but you can't change how intelligent you are.
4. You are a certain type of person and you can't do much to change this.

Now ask them to total the scores they have given themselves and then work out the average. Simply add up the four numbers and then divide by 4.

For those scoring between 1 and 3 they are likely to be towards the fixed mindset and those between 4 and 6 are likely to be towards a growth mindset (anyone scoring between 3 and 4 maybe more mixed.

At an individual level this isn't reliable and is merely a tool to help students think about how this topic may relate to them.

At this stage they won't know what the score mean so ask them to record them for the next lesson and to give them an idea of where they currently are as they work through the all the lessons.

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Finish by referring back to the learning outcomes and whether they have been achieved.

- ✓ To learn what is meant by mindset.
- ✓ To learn what is meant by the terms fixed and growth mindset.
- ✓ To understand how people with different mindsets might perform and develop in the short and longer term.

EXTENSION TASKS

1. To reflect on their mindset score and write a short report on what they think it might mean for them and their future. You may want to ask your students to do this after they have completed lesson 7.2, as they will know more about a Fixed or Growth Mindset.
2. My Heroes. Ask each student to complete one box on the My Heroes PowerPoint slide. As well as adding the picture of their hero they should complete the second box about their achievements. As a class these can then be added to complete a class PowerPoint of all the heroes and their achievements and can be added to later with details of their mindset.
3. As a fun exercise ask all teachers or those teaching these lessons to put forward a picture of their hero and the reasons why. Add photographs of the teachers and their heroes to a PowerPoint and ask the students to guess which teacher links with each hero.

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