

Appendix E

Kristin Allison's Log

I have divided Kristin's log into sections. Section 1 is about explicitly presenting the growth mindset to students and parents, and getting the students to make growth mindset attributions in everyday class life. Section 2 is about her application of the verbal behaviors so that they convey embedded messages of belief and confidence to students. Section 3 is about explicitly teaching students learning strategies. Section 4 is about teaching students to use growth mindset language. Section 5 is about teaching students what effective effort is.

SECTION 1: PRESENTING THE GROWTH MINDSET

Explicitly Teach the Growth Mindset and Brain Malleability to Students

9/14/15 and ongoing throughout school year: Whole-body listening

This is one of the first lessons in the Social Thinking Program by Michelle Garcia Winner that we do in junior kindergarten and kindergarten (JK/K). It establishes the expectations for listening to others in our community. We use the book *Whole Body Listening Larry at School!* (Wilson & Sautter, 2011) and other visual aids to remind children to listen with their eyes, ears, brain, heart, body, feet, hands, and mouth. This is a great launch for the growth mindset and learning from others.

11/4/15 Establishing a growth mindset: Parent and family workshop

I am a member of the Morse Math Advisory Group. At the beginning of the school year, we noted that many of the staff were using the language of growth mindset, but often parents were questioning this term, what it meant, and how to use this belief. As a result of this concern, we

collaborated with the Literacy Team to plan and facilitate an Introduction to Growth Mindset Workshop for families in our school.

The rationale and presentation of the Introduction to Growth Mindset Workshop are found in the links below.

<http://morse.cpsd.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=3044391&pageId=11794794>

http://morse.cpsd.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3044307/File/news/Growth_Mindset_Workshop%20.pdf

11/5/15 The Little Engine That Could

This book was read aloud to the JK/K class. It is a classic story of perseverance and working hard to accomplish a task. The catchphrase “I think I can. I think I can.” was contagious among the children. Soon after we discussed the book, children were heard saying this mantra on the playground, during center activities, and when getting outdoor clothing on in the winter months.

11/9, 11/20, 3/15 and throughout school year: Morning meeting

Each morning we have the Person of the Day do specific jobs (calendar, weather, tell about the daily schedule, poem, etc.). A highlight for children is asking the Question of the Day. This ritual allows the Person of the Day to generate a question for his or her classmates and teachers to answer. It helps us all practice whole-body listening, gives everyone the opportunity to speak, and we can learn from others. The ritual includes “passing the eagle.” The eagle is our school mascot, and we have a small stuffed eagle that is passed around our circle. The eagle is used as a visual reminder that the person with the eagle has a turn to speak and others should be thinking about what he or she is saying.

Here is a sample of questions asked by students: How are you feeling? What did you do over the weekend? What is your favorite song, color, food, animal, season, sport, book, and so on? What do you like to do at school? Have you ever been on an airplane? Do you like to go bowling?

11/9/15: After a recent talk about trying and learning new things, K asked, “What are you trying to get better at?” The answers were an amazing reflection of what is important to the children and how we all are learning new things.

11/20/15: A asked a question that led L to ask, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” The feeling in the class had shifted to a can-do attitude and goal-setting environment. I was pleased at how well children were listening to and commenting on others’ answers.

3/15/16: E asked, "What is your favorite part of your body?" The paraprofessional and I exchanged glances of wonder at where this is going to lead. Each child's answer was appropriate, with statements such as "My brain because it helps me to have a growth mindset," "My heart because it shows that I care what others are saying," "My eyes so I can learn from others," and so on.

1/25/16: As a JK/K cluster, teachers decided to explicitly teach the growth mindset in the whole-class setting. Since I was the only one that had taken Research for Better Teaching's course Studying Skillful Teaching, I had resources to share with the four other teachers. Some questions surfaced from this idea: Will we observe children using a growth mindset during play? What are the challenges and success stories to supporting children's growth mindset during play?

2/8/16: I composed an email blast to families telling them we had been focusing on a growth mindset in our classroom and included links to the parent workshop and "Power of Yet" video.

2/10/16–2/12/16: Several parents commented at dropoff about how their family discussions had started to include phrases like "The Power of Yet" and having a "growth mindset or a fixed mindset." Many families found the resources helpful when encouraging their children to try new things or set goals.

2/25/16: Trying a new snack

B was a picky eater and would often not even attempt to try new food items during snack or lunch. On this day, he was refusing to try grapes. He told me, "I don't like grapes." I asked him when had he tried grapes and if it had been a while since he last tried them. He told me, "They were green and I did not like them." I explained to B that these were purple/red grapes and some people think they have a different taste than green grapes. He said, "Okay, I will have a growth mindset and try something new!" B ate all the grapes with a smile on his face and when asked if he was glad he tried something new, he said, "Yes!" The next day, his mother was so excited to share that he had told her all about the grapes at home the night before. She thought "Power of Yet" video helped change his thinking about trying new foods and hoped he would continue to try new things at school and home.

2/29/16: Blocks

Two children were playing in the block area. The blocks were all over the rug, and there was a small structure in the middle. When I asked them to tell me about their structure, one replied, "We are not ready yet. Come

back in a few minutes.” When I returned to the pair, I noticed how some of the blocks had been put on the shelf in the correct manner. I again asked them to tell me about their structure, which had grown larger. The children explained that they had needed to clean up the extra blocks so I could see their castle. They told me, “We used a growth mindset to make it look better.”

3/29/16: Making a Splash: A Growth Mindset Children’s Book

I had noticed children talking about swimming lessons in our class. I chose to read this book so students could connect having a growth mindset with activities in and out of school. Children really focused on the characters in the book and whether they were using a growth or fixed mindset. Students were able to comment on how you can “stretch your brain” when you challenge yourself to learn something that is not easy to learn. After the reading, we all were able to express something we were going to try to accomplish during the spring. This book was a great reminder about goal setting and challenging oneself.

SECTION 2: VERBAL BEHAVIORS THAT CONVEY EMBEDDED MESSAGES OF BELIEF AND CONFIDENCE (REFERS TO CHAPTERS 3 AND 4 OF THIS BOOK)

Communicating High Expectations in Your Teaching

Responding to Students’ Answers (Oral)

10/22/15 and ongoing throughout the school year: Wait time

As a personal goal, I wanted to really work on giving kids more time to answer questions. I knew I needed to slow down to stick with the student if he or she was taking time to recall an answer. This is often hard in the beginning of the school year, when many JK/K students are calling out or interrupting their peers. The act of turn-taking and learning social graces develops at various rates among 4- and 5-year-olds. Part of our Social Thinking curriculum includes lessons about being a “thinking about you kid” or a “just me kid.” After a few of these lessons, we talked about how interrupting friends or calling out when someone is thinking are “just me kid” behaviors. The number of interruptions decreased after these discussions. We all continue to work on being a “thinking about you kid” and letting friends have time to think and speak. I have noticed children are more considerate of their peers, and this allows me time to stick with a student.

*Responding to Students' Performance***10/15/15: Science Observation—J**

During our first Tree Study observation outside, students were asked to describe a fall tree near our playground. For most students it was easy to give explanations about a fall tree, but when asked to sketch the particular tree, one child became very hesitant. He said, "I can't draw that tree. It is too big. I am not good at drawing trees." This was met with a lot of encouragement from the teacher ("You told me about the tree and I believe you can use your words to draw the tree") and some more coaching ("We are all learning to draw; please just try your best"). This climate of risk taking turned into a success! As we packed up our supplies to return to school, J's final remark was, "I surprised myself!" and the smile on his face was just as telling.

3/28/16: Tangrams—C: feedback with encouragement

After reading the book *Grandfather Tang's Story* (Tompert & Parker, 1990), students were working at a math station to complete tangram puzzles. Christian remarked, "The puzzles with the lines are easy for me so I am going to challenge myself and use the puzzles with no lines." After watching C struggle to complete some puzzles, I asked, "How do you feel about the challenge you gave yourself?" He told me he would like to keep working on the tangram puzzles without the lines during the next math workshop. I was able to celebrate his growth mindset, tell him that he was stretching his brain by using the puzzles without the lines, and note that if he kept trying he would complete all the puzzles soon.

*Changing Attitudes Toward Errors***9/29/15: Beautiful Oops**

This book was a big hit and continues to be a resource for many children in our class! The story shows how everyone makes mistakes or has an accident, and you can turn these circumstances into an opportunity. Instead of starting over or feeling frustrated with an oops, we can change it into something else. The message of creativity and discovery coupled with changing emotions (from disappointment to joy) was a great way to help young storytellers, writers, and artists.

9/30/15: Coloring/drawing during Choice Time


Child A was upset when her picture did not look the way she wanted it to and began to crumple her paper up. Child B said, "Hey, you can turn it into a beautiful oops!" Child A was seen using the backside of the paper to practice drawing her rabbit.

10/1/15: Writers workshop (storytelling, drawing, and writing)

A child was working on her story drawing and didn't like the way her person was positioned on her paper. Her partner said, "You can just turn it into something else and put your person in a different spot." The child turned the "mistake" person into a flower and continued drawing her picture.

SECTION 3: EXPLICITLY TEACHING STUDENTS LEARNING STRATEGIES

Frame Strategies in the Context of Effective Effort to Accomplish Tasks/Connect How Students Use Tools and Show Effort

Name _____


Apples

Arpitha had 5 apples on the table. She ate 2 apples. How many apples are on the table now?

Whole	
Part	Part

Write an equation.

Show your work

Solution

There are _____ apples.

9/14/15 and ongoing throughout school year:
Whole-body listening

3/14/16 and ongoing throughout school year:
Whole, part, part—Visual aid

Students use this graphic organizer when solving math problems. The model helps children organize their thinking when completing the problems. Moving through the concrete-pictorial-abstract, this method lays the foundation for young mathematicians to persevere in solving mathematical problems. The Whole, Part, Part aid is a precursor to the MESS (model, equation, solution, sentence) graphic organizer used by our school in Grades 1–5. Beginning with teacher support and following a gradual release of responsibility, children are able to evaluate their work and effort with this tool to complete problem-solving activities.

SECTION 4: USE AND TEACH STUDENTS TO USE GROWTH MINDSET LANGUAGE AND AVOID FIXED MINDSET LANGUAGE

2/1/16: Establishing a growth mindset with “The Power of Yet” video

Students were engaged with the catchy song but did not seem to grasp the meaning of the word *yet*. Despite some clarification and discussion of the fact that we all are trying to get better at something, some students' egos were not ready to comprehend the message.

2/2/16: Re-teaching the word *yet*

We had more class discussion on how you might not know how to do something or do it well, but you can if you have the right mindset. There was also more discussion on the word *yet*, and we watched the video for the second time.

2/5/16: Fourth- and fifth-grade Variety Show

After we attended the show, we discussed all of the students' talents and how they must have worked hard to be able to perform their talents. JK/K students connected with the growth mindset of needing to practice before you are ready to show others and with the fact that you can also improve your talent/act.

2/22/16

After a lesson on George Washington, there was much classroom discussion on presidents of the past, present, and future. A child remarked, “There is no girl president.” I replied, “Yes, E, there hasn't been a woman president yet.” Another student stated, “Hey, Ms. Allison, that shows you have a growth mindset!”

SECTION 5: EXPLICITLY TEACH STUDENTS WHAT IT MEANS TO PUT FORTH EFFECTIVE EFFORT

9/21/15: *Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf* (Rounds, 1992)

During this story, students were introduced to the vocabulary word *slapdash*. This term is not often familiar to children but is used several times in the book. We discussed how the pigs who built their homes of sticks and straw did not spend a lot of time building their homes, and their careless, messy work created a problem for them. We then looked at how the pig who built his home with bricks took his time and made a sturdy and purposeful home.

The term *slapdash* continues to be a part of our classroom repertoire. Children know that when they notice slapdash in their printing, math, drawing, coloring, and other products, they are not putting forth their best effort. Often children are heard to say:

Student: I took my time, so it is not slapdash.

Student: My letter A looks just like the book. I slowed down so I didn't do slapdash.

Student: Do you think this is slapdash?

Teacher: What do you think?

Student: I tried my best.

Teacher: Then it is not slapdash.

10/26/15: *The Tortoise and the Hare*

Using this fable, students were explicitly taught perseverance. Students were asked, "How did the tortoise show a growth mindset?" Classroom discussion included the statements: "He did not give up. He tried his best. Slow and steady won the race. He worked hard."

Teaching Attribution Theory to Students

3/8/16: *The Fantastic Elastic Brain*

I read this book aloud to the JK/K students in my class. We talked about how everyone is born smart and you need to exercise your brain just as you exercise your muscles. This book helped students learn that you can stretch and shape your brain in positive ways. Through practice and perseverance, we can grow our brains. Children then went to Choice Time, and afterward we reflected on ways we stretched our brains. Comments included the following:

- We had to keep moving the blocks to make our structure stronger to stay up.
- I had to stretch my brain to use the Lincoln Logs to make a house and get the pieces to fit in the right spot.
- We made a booklet and used the names of our friends. We had to write the names with one uppercase letter and then the rest lowercase letters.

3/14/16: *The Fantastic Elastic Brain*

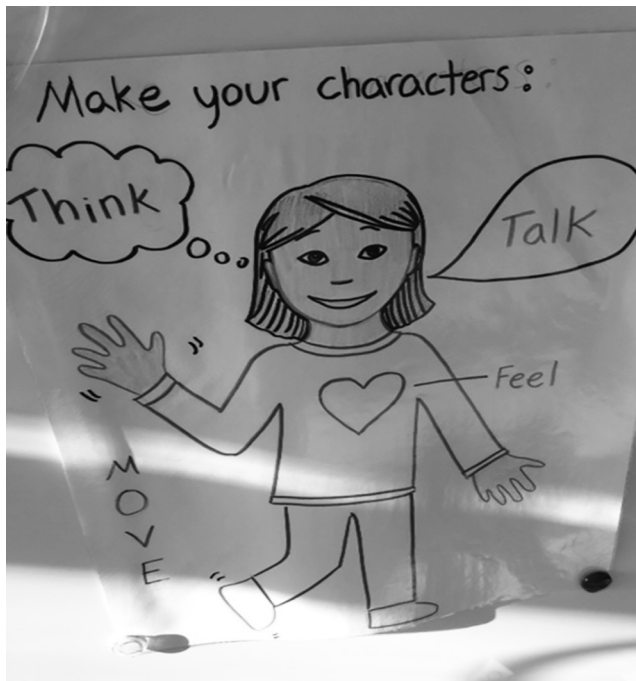
We revisited this story from the previous week, and I used a technique learned from a colleague in our Studying Skillful Teaching class. I showed the children a ball of rubber bands and let a few students demonstrate how

rubber bands can be stretched. I then showed them a rock. We discussed how the rock cannot be stretched, and it is hard. We talked about how the ball of elastic bands was like a growth mindset and how the rock was like a fixed mindset.

Providing Opportunities for Students to Self-Assess Their Products and Performances

3/9/16 and ongoing throughout school year:
Writers workshop graphic organizer

We used this poster to help our young writers add to their writing booklets. Students were taught to make their characters feel, talk, move, and think. The visual aid was helpful when students shared their work with the class and assessed their own stories before moving to their next booklet. Children were asked, "Do the words and pictures in your stories show the characters moving, feeling, thinking, and speaking?"



Highlighting and Teaching Examples of the Growth Mindset

2/24/16: *Whistle for Willie*

When introducing the title of the book, I asked students to listen and look to see if Willie was a character that had a growth mindset or a fixed mindset. After this read-aloud, a student commented on how he thought

Willie had a growth mindset. When asked to explain his thinking, he made the connection that Willie did not give up on trying to learn to whistle. He said, "It was not working at first but he kept on trying and then it worked!"

SUMMARY

During the months of September–November, teachers are charged with establishing the rules and routines of school. I feel in JK/K we talk a lot at children, and everything is new and needs explaining in order to establish the classroom and school culture. It can be a time of exhaustion and saturation for both adults and children.

I noticed this year it was hard to talk about the growth mindset in the beginning of the school year along with Social Thinking lessons and our Morse Code/PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) system. In January, there was more consistency in the school calendar (fewer holidays, early release days, etc.) and the school expectations had been taught, practiced, and learned. This allowed more time to focus directly on teaching a growth mindset. The wonderful part was that it wove so nicely and easily into the other components of our classroom and school environment.

It is rewarding to hear children talk about challenging themselves in math, jumping rope, using lowercase letters, and so on. I have noticed when doing a read-aloud book that many students often make the connection that a character is displaying a growth mindset or a fixed mindset. Children like to explain to classmates how a character could change his or her thinking. The anecdotes described earlier allowed us to celebrate when students were seen using a growth mindset and provided the feedback to show we were on the right path for developing a growth mindset.

I also feel proud when parents or caregivers tell me their children are talking about having a growth mindset at home. I have worked hard to incorporate families into the growth mindset education, and it makes me happy to see the effort has worked. A parent recently said, "I gave my child a pair of roller skates and he told me he will need a growth mindset to learn how to use them!"

FINAL REFLECTION

At the beginning of the school year, I did not see students taking many risks, and a lot of students were hesitant to try new things. I have noticed that students are now more likely to try new things and not worry if they have setbacks. The concept of challenging oneself has become part of our class culture.

Recently, a child mentioned that he felt the growth mindset should become part of our Morse Code/PBIS system. I thought, "Aha! Perfect and initiated by a student." As a class we discussed how this would fit well with our Active Learner category on the grid. We planned to write a letter to the principal expressing the thought and reasons for the idea.

I continue to be aware of giving students wait time and providing feedback that is effort based. I believe these arenas have contributed to more students participating in class discussions, answering questions, and understanding that we need to exercise our brains just like our bodies.

Our JK/K team's goal, to support children's growth mindset during play, was empowering to teachers because it was our decision and not a mandate. As a group we felt that it fit in with what other staff were working on in the building, was supported by research, and complimented our Social Thinking Program and schoolwide PBIS initiative. Teachers believed it was not "one more thing to do" but something that could be worked into the natural elements of the school day.

I have enjoyed getting ideas about books and resources from my colleagues. It was nice to hear how a book worked to teach about the growth mindset or how some parts of the book needed to be skipped, reworked in child-friendly language, or were fine on their own to read. We have been able to share observations and conversations between children that used growth mindset language or behaviors.

When one teacher suggested we email special subject teachers about our initiative, I took on this task. The email included rationale (school initiative), our school-based goal (to teach and observe the growth mindset), and resources (books and "Power of Yet" video) we were using in our classrooms. The response from special subject teachers was that they were grateful for including them in our plan and how they were starting to support a growth mindset in their JK/K sessions. If you want to achieve a goal schoolwide, it's best to be inclusive and have good communication skills.

For an upcoming school assembly, each grade level has been asked to demonstrate how they have been learning about a growth mindset. The children will sing "The Power of Yet" song, and we will have a visual aid on the big screen showing all the books JK/K students read.

We have found that in developing students' growth mindsets, our resources work well with fostering a climate of respect and active learning. While we might not see strong examples in all students, we are confident that we have laid a solid foundation for children to establish a growth mindset that will carry them through their school career and life. We look forward to hearing success stories from our colleagues as the current JK/K students grow through their school years.

I plan to continue growth mindset instruction, and I am expecting, as is often the case with JK/K children, to see even more development in all areas of school during the spring. I know I will be able to send my students to their receiving teachers with a growth mindset and to have

more social and academic confidence during their kindergarten or first grade school year.

The paraprofessional and I have discussed collecting evidence of children using a growth mindset and putting these notes, pictures, work, and other items on a bulletin board in our classroom. This would *make the learning visible* to all who enter our classroom. We think parents and other staff will have an appreciation for student work and play that is showcased in a different manner than through paper-and-pencil tasks.

As JK/K staff, we already decided to use our growth mindset Books Banner (used in the school assembly) for a September bulletin board. “Welcome back to school! Did you bring a growth mindset?” I would like to organize some growth mindset lessons in a logical manner for the next school year. I never know if I will have more junior kindergarten or kindergarten students or the exact demographics until September, but these lessons might help me introduce the learning earlier in the school year and fine-tune the pace of establishing a growth mindset. Thankfully, my JK/K colleagues are interested in fine-tuning our approach to a growth mindset, and I look forward to collaborating more with them.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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