Facilitator Guide
An Introduction to Mindsets behind Academic Success

Session Overview
TIME: 55 MIN

Reflection and Connection: 10 MIN
Discuss ways that learning mindsets can be powerful levers of change

Research and Inspiration: 20 MIN
Develop an understanding of key findings from seminal research on learning mindsets

Interactive Application: 20 MIN
Self-assess strengths and areas of growth for cultivating learning mindsets

Next Steps: 5 MIN
Decide on path forward

Getting students to take on challenges or participate in class can be hard. But the best way to actively make a difference is by trying to influence the mindsets that affect students’ motivation. Indeed, a growing body of research suggests that students’ mindsets, in particular their beliefs about learning in school, have a dramatic effect on their academic success. When students hold these beliefs, they are better able to take on challenging tasks, improve attendance, and participate fully in schools. This session introduces the research behind three fundamental learning mindsets that motivate students to attend, engage, participate, and persevere in school.

LEARNING MINDSETS SESSIONS
1. An Introduction to Mindsets behind Academic Success
2. Growth Mindset: Persisting in the Face of Challenges
3. Sense of Belonging: Creating Safe Learning Environments
4. Value for Learning: Finding Meaning and Purpose at School
5. Designing Learning Environments That Cultivate Positive Mindsets

Learning Objectives:
› Explore the connection between student achievement and learning mindsets
› Identify strengths and areas for growth for developing practices that support learning mindsets
### LEARNING MINDSETS SESSION 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO MINDSETS BEHIND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

**FACILITATOR GUIDE**

Download materials for this session at [https://eskolta.org/learningcenter/sessions/an-introduction-to-the-mindsets-behind-academic-success/](https://eskolta.org/learningcenter/sessions/an-introduction-to-the-mindsets-behind-academic-success/)

For tips on facilitation, visit the School Improvement Methods section of our site at [https://eskolta.org/learningcenter/](https://eskolta.org/learningcenter/)

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<td><strong>Prep</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Review the <em>Facilitator Narrative: The Story behind Learning Mindsets</em> and slides to familiarize yourself with key messages, details, and findings from studies on each of the three learning mindsets</td>
<td>✔ Facilitator Narrative: The Story behind Learning Mindsets</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Based on your knowledge of participants’ learning styles, determine if you will provide digital or hard copies of the <em>Facilitator Narrative: The Story behind Learning Mindsets</em> they will listen to in Step 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Full Session 55 MIN</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Become familiar with the connection between mindsets and academic success</td>
<td>✔ Slides ✔ Participant Note Catcher ✔ Facilitator Narrative: The Story behind Learning Mindsets</td>
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<td>2 Discuss individual experiences with how mindsets impact student learning</td>
<td>✔ Research Brief: Three Learning Mindsets</td>
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<td>3 Explore research on academic mindsets</td>
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<td>4 Connect research findings to specific practices for building mindsets</td>
<td>EXTENSION ✔ David Yeager: Feedback and Learning Mindsets</td>
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<td>5 Self-assess how participants’ current and aspirational classroom practices cultivate positive learning mindsets</td>
<td>✔ Learning Mindsets Self-Assessment</td>
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<td>6 Synthesize individual takeaways with those of colleagues</td>
<td>EXTENSION ✔ Adult Mindset Survey</td>
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<td>7 Complete exit ticket</td>
<td>✔ David Yeager: Feedback and Learning Mindsets</td>
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<td>8 Decide on path forward</td>
<td>✔ If appropriate: <a href="https://eskolta.org/learningcenter/session2">Learning Mindsets Session 2: Growth Mindset: Persisting in the Face of Challenges</a></td>
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<td><strong>Follow-Up</strong></td>
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<td>✔ Review participants’ exit tickets ✔ Provide additional resources and support as needed ✔ Determine next steps for professional learning</td>
<td>✔ If appropriate: <a href="https://eskolta.org/learningcenter/session2">Learning Mindsets Session 2: Growth Mindset: Persisting in the Face of Challenges</a></td>
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Reflection and Connection | 10 MIN

In the opening activity, participants explore and reflect on the links between learning mindsets and academic achievement.

1. Share a Story about Mindsets | 3 MIN

This narrative introduces participants to the impact and mechanisms behind learning mindsets with a summary of key research and anecdotes from the field.

**FACILITATOR:** Recount the story in the *Facilitator Narrative: The Story behind Learning Mindsets* out loud. This story highlights how mindsets, though often viewed as mysterious or magical, are actually critical to learning.

**PARTICIPANTS:** As you listen to *The Story behind Mindsets*, note any connections to your own experiences as a teacher and learner.

Consider making copies of *The Story behind Learning Mindsets* available for visual learners and/or providing digital access to it for participants who would like to follow along.

2. Discuss Connections | 7 MIN

Providing an opportunity for discussion allows participants to process their reflections, unearth connections to their own learning experiences, and engage in collaborative inquiry with colleagues.

**FACILITATOR:** Invite participants to first individually reflect in writing about experiences with mindset changes and then share in pairs:

- Think of a student who you think experienced a “flipping the switch” moment.
- Who were they?
- What happened?
- What do you think caused that change?

**PARTICIPANTS:** Think of a student who you think experienced a “flipping the switch” moment. Who were they? What happened? What do you think caused that change?

Be prepared with 1–2 examples in case participants need support getting started. These could be based on your own experiences as a teacher or learner or on stories that participants have previously shared with you about their own students.
Research and Inspiration | 20 MIN

Participants deepen their understanding of learning mindsets by exploring research demonstrating their impact on academic success.

3. Explore Studies on Mindsets | 10 MIN

Participants explore research on interventions that have been shown to improve three learning mindsets: growth mindset, value for learning, and sense of belonging.

FACILITATOR: Distribute the Research Brief: Three Learning Mindsets, which summarizes four different studies about interventions that have been shown to influence students’ mindsets. The corresponding slides show graphs from these studies. Conduct a read aloud, pausing after participants read each summary to look at the slides together.

PARTICIPANTS: As you read, mark anything that resonates with or that you are wondering about.

If you are familiar with the findings from these studies and/or think that participants might want to read the summaries individually, review the materials in advance and prepare a few talking points for each slide. Take five minutes to go over the slides and then prompt participants to use the rest of the time to read on their own.

4. Discuss | 10 MIN

Self-reflection empowers learners to derive their own meaning from research. This activity allows participants to consider their existing understanding of mindsets through the lens of research-based findings on their impact.

FACILITATOR: Invite participants to explore connections between research on learning mindsets and their own experiences.

PARTICIPANTS: What resonated with your experience? What challenged or extended your thinking on this subject? What implications do you see for your school, classroom, and students?

Listen for moments when participants may cast blame on students for their behavior. Use questioning to steer participants to think about how the context surrounding a student’s behavior and the way students see themselves within a school community have been shaped by experiences beyond their control—including by poverty, trauma, racism, or insecurity.

Extension | 20–30 MIN

Watch and discuss the video clip David Yeager: Feedback and Learning Mindsets for information about the impact of feedback on academic mindsets.
Interactive Application | 20 MIN
Participants identify areas of strength and areas for growth in fostering positive student mindsets in their own classrooms.

5. Self-Assess | 10 MIN

**Self-Assess:**
Consider practices in your own classroom that cultivate learning mindsets.
- Which practices have a strong presence in your own work with students?
- Which do you think would be valuable to implement?
- Star the top three practices you would like to strengthen.

**FACILITATOR:** Distribute the Learning Mindsets Self-Assessment. Prompt participants to think about interactions with their own students while filling out the self-assessment.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Consider practices in your own classroom that cultivate learning mindsets. Which practices have a strong presence in your own work with students? Which do you think would be valuable to implement? Star the top three practices you would like to strengthen.

Remind participants to focus on looking for strengths as much as the opportunities for growth. Improving upon routines and practices that already exist can allow for easier implementation and more sustainability.

6. Share and Synthesize | 10 MIN

**Share and Synthesize:**
In pairs, share the top three practices you would like to strengthen.

**DISCUSS:**
- Where did we rate ourselves in similar ways?
- Where did our ratings diverge?
- What might be the reasons behind that?
- What are potential next steps for cultivating positive learning mindsets for our students?

**FACILITATOR:** In pairs, ask participants to share the top three practices they would like to strengthen and identify areas of overlap. Then bring the full group back together and ask each pair to share one key takeaway from their discussion.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Where did we rate ourselves in similar ways? Where did our ratings diverge? What might be the reasons behind that? What are potential next steps for cultivating positive learning mindsets for our students?

Document a synthesized list of participants’ takeaways on chart paper or digitally to serve as an ongoing resource for reflection and self-assessment.
Next Steps | 5 MIN

Based on where the group lands, invite participants to commit to completing follow-up steps before the next meeting.

7. Wrap-Up | 3 MIN

Reflecting on learning promotes closure and consolidation of new knowledge and skills.

FACILITATOR: Distribute the Exit Ticket. Invite participants to share how their thinking has shifted.

PARTICIPANTS: How do your takeaways compare to the session’s Learning Objectives? How were these objectives addressed?

Consider highlighting specific insights or questions that emerged during the session and how they connect to the Learning Objectives.

8. Next Steps | 2 MIN

Establishing next steps ensures that today’s work is carried forward.

FACILITATOR: Offer next steps or follow up with participants based on their Exit Ticket responses.

PARTICIPANTS: What’s next for your professional growth? What will you take back to your classroom? What resources will you need? How will you impact student learning? What evidence would determine that impact?

Participants may be at different places at this point. Provide specific recommendations based on readiness, such as in the chart on the following page.
Based on where the group lands, invite participants to commit to completing follow-up steps before the next meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If participants need to...</th>
<th>Support them in...</th>
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| Further explore research behind learning mindsets | Reading and discussing research demonstrating the relationship between mindsets and success in school:  
- [Stereotype Threat Widens Achievement Gap](#)  
- [African-American Students May Improve Grades if Teachers Convey High Standards, Study Shows](#)  
- [The New Science of Wise Psychological Interventions](#) |
| Understand the impact of learning mindsets on students’ experiences in school | Listening to transfer school students tell their stories of growth and mindset change through our [Transfer School Stories series](#) |
| Learn about how schools have developed practices for cultivating mindsets | Reviewing the library of Academic and Personal Behaviors Starter Kits shared in [Learning Mindsets Session 5: Designing Learning Environments That Cultivate Positive Mindsets](#) |
| Explore the research behind and strategies for fostering growth mindset for student learning | Reviewing [Learning Mindsets 2: Growth Mindset: Persisting in the Face to Challenges](#)  
Reading and discussing research by Carol S. Dweck or Bryan Goodwin |
| Explore the research behind and strategies for promoting value for learning in the classroom | Reviewing [Learning Mindsets Session 3: Sense of Belonging: Creating Safe Learning Environments](#) |
| Develop instructional practices that build student mindsets | Reviewing [Learning Mindsets Session 5: Designing Learning Environments That Cultivate Positive Mindsets](#) |