

Strategies to Promote a Growth Mindset

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There is Always Room for Improvement

One of the core principles of a growth mindset is understanding that there is always room to improve and grow. Keep these key points in mind to promote growth as an instructor.

1. There are always ways to improve your course and instructional techniques
2. Opportunities for growth exist for all your students
3. Focus on praising student processes over ability
4. Growth requires understanding different views and perspectives

With these concepts in mind, follow the tips below to foster a growth mindset for yourself and your students.

Normalize Student Struggles

When students struggle in your course, they may feel their challenges are unique to them. As an instructor, normalizing student struggles is a powerful tool to show learners they are not alone. There are various ways an instructor can use these difficulties to create a better connection with students.

Reveal your Own Personal Academic Struggles

Early in the course, communicate to students your experiences when you were a college student. Reveal some of the challenges you faced. Focus on showing students that even you, the instructor, had difficulties in college. Using a recorded video, announcement, or a section of the syllabus, connect with your students by showing them that it is normal to face difficulties. Let them know they can overcome them.

Highlight Difficult Concepts in each Module

Are there particular weeks in your course where many students have problems? Consider recording a video or sending an announcement that highlights the complicated topic. Share stories about how you learned to master it. For weeks with difficult topics, consider checking in with students more, letting them know you are there to help, and encouraging them.

Share Tips from Former Students

Have your former students shared with you how they were successful in your courses and progressed through difficult topics? Give your current students tips from successful students who transitioned from struggling to success.

Invest in Your Students by Being Available

When you see each interaction with your students as an opportunity for them to grow, it motivates you as an instructor. To assist your student with their growth, create opportunities to help them in and outside the classroom.

Setup Office Hours

Virtual office hours are a good way to make a connection with your students.

Send Weekly Announcements

Sending an announcement out each week reminding students of key due dates, helpful resources, and reminding them that you are there to help.

Check in with Struggling Students

Your course's early assignments reveal students who might have difficulty with more advanced assignments assessment later in the semester. The first weeks of a course are critical for students. Consider reaching out to students who have difficulty with assignments in the early portion of the course. Here are some actions to consider assisting students early in the semester.

- Enter an alert in Aviso for students that miss the deadline for early assignments.
- Look up the student's phone number in Web Advisor and contact them.
- Send the students an email and offer to meet with them over Collaborate.
- Check your Contact Information in Blackboard and point students towards the information.

Quick actions can make a big difference, show students that you care, and display your recognition that they can do better in future assignments.

Promote and Welcome Different Opinions and Perspectives

Students should feel comfortable and welcome in your course. As the instructor, promote an environment that nurtures learners and allows them to grow to meet their full potential. Consider the following strategies to help you create an inclusive course environment.

Add inclusive language to Your Syllabus

Adding inclusive language to the syllabus demonstrates a commitment to creating a positive, growth environment from the start of the course.

Set Class Norms for Discussions in Your Syllabus

Think about your expectations for student behavior in your forums. Now, consider how you communicate this expected behavior to your students. Here are some items to think about when setting expectations in course discussions.

- What do you consider unacceptable behavior? Write down some examples and include them in a statement inside your syllabus. Common issues include:
 - rude language,
 - being dismissive of someone else's opinion,
 - short, simple posts that do little to enhance class interactions
 - aggressive or insensitive behavior
- Clearly communicate expected student behavior early
- Be involved in class discussions by posting so students see you are reading the posts. Your posts should model the expected behavior and show students an example.
- Students often procrastinate and make all their posts on the due date. Set due dates for their initial post to promote everyone's thoughts and ideas being seen.

Below are some sample items to include when creating netiquette rules for your students

- be accurate and factual
- don't use sarcasm freely
- be as polite as you are in person
- use proper grammar and punctuation
- stay on topic
- remember that nothing is private online
- make clear and brief points
- respect people's privacy

Promote a Welcoming Environment by Monitoring Class Discussions and Session

Class forum discussions and synchronous (live) sessions provide a chance for students to learn from each other and form a group connection. These course environments also create the potential for undesirable behavior. As you teach a synchronous session and post in your discussion boards, remember to monitor students' posts to ensure the class norms are followed.

If you discover a student is not following class norms:

- Contact the individual student and make them aware of their unacceptable behavior
- If there are other students involved that the poor behavior was targeted towards. Contact the student and let them know the issue is being addressed.
- Post an announcement reminding students about the expected class norms.

Early detection and intervention can prevent a worse situation later in the course. Create an environment that promotes growth and acceptance of the opinion and thoughts of others. When students see issues from multiple perspectives, they learn and grow.