Chapter 8
Cultivating the Mindset for Change

ABSTRACT

Social emotional learning is essential in educating students, especially in middle school. However, the idea of creating a mindset is an effective way to support SEL as well as change, particularly with students. To cultivate a mindset for change, teachers need to know about the change process and the elements connected to mindset development. After creating a change plan, teachers can help students promote the growth mindset elements. Research on the growth mindset illustrates how it can support student learning and improve the students' view of themselves. There is further research on how part of the growth mindset can nurture one's grit, or the "stick-withitness" to achieve a goal. Through various instructional strategies, particularly the gradual release process, teachers can help their students cultivate a growth mindset.

INTRODUCTION

The world changed in March 2020 when many businesses, schools, and stores shut down because a global pandemic consumed the world. Many populations around the world had to learn how to work, teach and shop differently. Some businesses easily changed, but schools and stores had more challenges than businesses. For example, many workers were already working from home, and these companies found it easy to pivot to online conferences or stores

where customers ordered online and delivered products through drive-up service. In many schools, students were already using devices and doing online with app platforms. However, that was not the case with most school districts. Most schools had to quickly adapt to this new change. School change is part of the evolutionary process of teaching and learning and especially for social-emotional learning. This chapter will provide insight and some practical ideas to support change with social-emotional learning.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

There is an old statement that everything old is new again. The history of social emotional learning (SEL) is old and goes back to the philosophy of Plato's Republic and holistic education. SEL has had a minor role in educational history, but now this concept is new and very vibrant in the teaching and learning of middle school students. Educators since the beginning of free and public schools have fostered students through SEL through the teaching of moral character traits so that students would later become moral citizens. Over time, however, the nurturing of SEL as good character development has waned. Recently, character development has morphed into SEL aspects of child development, and SEL has moved to the forefront in education. SEL being thrust into prominence is mainly due to the development of CASEL (2001) and the CASEL framework for 21st learning. The CASEL's framework for SEL includes self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision making, which are all elements of what can be called mindset traits.

The work of CASEL and other researchers such as Dweck (2015) and Duckworth (2016) enabled a new and developing idea of mindset learning. CASEL (2017) and other university researchers started studying and advancing SEL in schools and throughout the nation. This disbursement of support came through grants and federal legislation (HR2437, the Academic, social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2011). Then journal articles, books, and professional development appeared within the educational community. Ideas and limitations were disseminated, and schools and teachers began exploring SEL teaching and learning. Soon researchers and educators from many disciplines began researching SEL from different angles.

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