

Growth Mindset Leadership Feedback and Questioning

Growth-minded leaders coach and support their staffs so they can develop and grow. A leader's response to staff is a key motivator in whether or not adults will participate in the risks of learning new skills, acquiring new knowledge, and applying strategies in their work. Use the comments and questions below to coach adults in different stages of growth to build the capacity of the individual, and eventually the organization.

Feedback for people who have failed

- Let's discuss your process, not the end result, so you can learn from your mistakes and partial successes.
- How did the choices you make affect the outcome? What might you do differently and/or how could you apply what you learned for the next challenge?
- Where did things go wrong? Understanding? Lack of opportunity for clarification? Difficulty applying what you were supposed to do?
- How could you overcome those barriers in the future?
- Teaching is hard. I expect you to make mistakes along the way, but I am here to help. Let's talk about how I or someone else can help you.
- There are only two ways we grow—something new or something hard. So let's use this as an opportunity to grow.
- You haven't learned the necessary curriculum, unit of study, new technology, etc. yet. Let's make a plan going forward to learn from this setback.
- The only thing you can control is how you feel about this. If you're not seeing this as an opportunity, let's talk about how you can.

Feedback for people who are struggling with something

- You're struggling with this, which is typical in learning. Both students and adults feel loss of equilibrium from time to time and it's part of the journey of learning. What is this struggle teaching you?
- Are you feeling worried, concerned or anxious? When we're uncertain, we need support; so how can I better support you during this struggle?
- While we struggle, we sometimes cloud emotions with behaviors and outcomes. Let's try to determine where your current barrier is so we can formulate a plan for improved outcomes.
- If it weren't hard, it wouldn't be worth doing.
- You're not alone. I have worked with other teachers who have struggled in a similar way, let me tell you what they have taught me, and how I can help you.
- I know this isn't easy, and I'm proud of how you've persevered through this. How have you done so?
- You're not feeling successful yet, but I do see growth. Where do you think you've grown in this process?

- How can I help? Would you like to work directly with me or is there another coach, colleague or job alike I connect you with?
- If you're feeling nervous try to think about it as being excited. The side effects of nervousness and excitement are the same—butterflies, heightened sensitivity, and sweaty palms. It's all in the way we look at challenge or change.

Feedback for people who succeed with effort

- You should be proud of the effort you've put into this initiative. Remember where you were when we started? Let's talk about how you've grown.
- I appreciate your time, effort and enthusiasm on this; it shows you committed to ensure your and your students' success!
- What have you learned from this experience that will guide you when another challenge arises or is this something you can share at an upcoming staff meeting, so your peers know there is hope and improved outcomes that come through hard work?
- The next time you have a challenge/project/struggle like this, what will you do?
- What choices did you make along the way and how did they inform you?
- Let's debrief so I can learn from your process, which will help me with other staff members.

Feedback for people who don't try

- I've noticed that you haven't gotten started yet. What is the barrier to you getting started?
- Let's talk about formulating a plan to help you begin with scheduled times for reflection and feedback from me, coaches or peers.
- All journeys start with a first step. What will be your first step for this challenge?
- When both adults and students fear failure, there is a natural tendency not to begin a challenging activity because the common thought is if I don't start and fail, I'm competent. I'm not concerned with any failure you may feel; it's expected. I'm concerned that you've yet to begin. Tell me how you'll start?
- Why haven't you started yet? How can I help you?

Feedback for people who succeed without effort

- You are ready for something more difficult. What would you like to try next?
- What would you like to learn more about?
- Where can we use your skills/knowledge/expertise to assist peers or create positive school culture?
- Would you be interested in starting a PLC in _____ to improve practice with your peers?

Giving Growth Mindset Feedback

Thinking about how to respond in a growth-minded manner ahead of time will make it easier to do so in the moment. Work together to write growth-minded responses to these common leadership scenarios. Be sure to think about all aspects of a growth mindset, such as risk-taking, embracing challenges, becoming mistake tolerant, persisting in the face of setbacks, putting forth effort, learning from criticism, believing in brain plasticity, and being inspired by the success of others.

1. When it comes to light that a colleague is missing specific background skills for the job.
2. When a colleague says, "I tried this already, it didn't work."
3. When a peer is struggling, but doesn't seem to be giving much effort.
4. When someone under your leadership consistently goes above and beyond the call of duty.
5. When an employee has a setback, does not take criticism well, and seems defensive.