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# Lesson 3

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## Nurturing a Growth Mindset

**S**tudents need ongoing reinforcement to sustain a growth mindset. Growing up is hard! They need encouragement to continue to take risks and not fear mistakes. Much of this reinforcement happens in the way you talk to and support your students.



### VITAL VOCAB

**grit:** Another term for resilience and perseverance, coined in this context by Angela Duckworth (Duckworth, 2006).

**resilience:** The ability to recover from difficulties or setbacks and respond with a positive attitude.

**risk taking:** The willingness to take on challenges despite uncertainty of the result or reward.



### TEACHER TAKEAWAYS

- It is important to give students opportunities to take risks without fear of being laughed at or getting a bad grade. They need to experience the rewards of risk taking.
- Word choice is important, but so is sincerity. You should praise effort and outcomes tied to strong effort, but only if the effort is truly praiseworthy. Do not praise all effort and all outcomes; otherwise, the praise will no longer be meaningful.



## STUDENT TAKEAWAYS

- Growth mindset is not just about effort—you grow your brain and work toward your goals by trying, practicing, taking risks, and learning from your mistakes.
- If you catch yourself thinking, “I can’t,” replace it with, “What strategy should I try so I can?”
- Everyone makes mistakes and experiences setbacks. It is how you respond to disappointments that determines how much you grow, improve, and ultimately, succeed.



### MINDPRINT STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

- Avoid Stereotype Threat (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/12119>) (T)
- Balanced, Specific Feedback (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/11503>) (T)
- Give Feedback Based on Personality & Mastery Level (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/12321>) (T)
- Positive Self-Talk (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/11889>) (S)
- Coach How to Take Feedback (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/12262>) (T)



### A CLOSER LOOK

- Brainology/Mindset Works Free Resources; Mindset Works ([www.mindsetworks.com/Free-Resources/](http://www.mindsetworks.com/Free-Resources/))
- Why Project-Based Learning? Buck Institute for Education ([www.bie.org](http://www.bie.org))
- Grit Scale; Dr. Angela Duckworth ([angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/](http://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/))



## LESSON ACTIVITIES

### Student Activity

Have students watch and discuss this Ted Talk by Harry Potter author J. K. Rowling ([www.ted.com/talks/jk\\_rowling\\_the\\_fringe\\_benefits\\_of\\_failure](http://www.ted.com/talks/jk_rowling_the_fringe_benefits_of_failure)), who explains her many failures before her unparalleled success. (M, H)

### Student Activity

Have students participate in Project-Based Learning ([my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/12101](http://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/12101)), an approach that supports risk taking, learning through trial and error, and growth mindset. (E, M, H)

### Coaching

Classroom Culture: Create a classroom environment that incorporates student choice, leadership, inquiry, initiation, and independent thinking. Students will grow more comfortable taking risks. Encourage student inquiry via open-ended questions (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/10179>) and modeling curiosity with What If (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/12233>). (E, M, H)

### Coaching

**Celebrate Risk:** When a student takes a risk, point it out either privately or publicly and celebrate it, even if the student might not have been entirely successful. You might offer elementary-age students a sticker each time. (E, M, H)

### Coaching

**Grade-Free Assignments:** Give assignments that will not be graded. After successful completion, have students reflect on what they did, why they did it, and what motivated them to put forth the effort. (E, M, H)

### Coaching

**Speaking Growth Mindset:** Offering regular specific feedback and encouragement is essential to fostering a growth mindset. Feedback should be honest, balanced, and constructive. Just as students need to possess self-awareness of their individual strengths and how to work effectively, the feedback that we give them as educators also needs to be specific so that students understand not only what needs to improve but also how to improve (E, M, H).

### Points to Keep in Mind when Providing Feedback

Praise the effort, not the outcome. Be specific about why it was a good effort, and identify strategies students used effectively. Don't say, "Great job! You worked really hard." Instead, say, "You spaced out your studying and didn't cram for the test this time. That was a great approach. If you keep it up, your grades will continue to improve."

Help students find and use strategies based on their strengths (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/11582>). "You are studying really hard for this vocabulary test. Since you remember things so well with pictures, try finding a picture for each word that will help you remember and put it on a flashcard."

Model positive thinking (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/11889>) and verbalize your own use of strategies out loud. "I did not get out the door on time this morning, but tomorrow I'm going to plan out my morning using a checklist and that will help me get organized."

Help your students view setbacks or mistakes as a steppingstone (<https://my.mindprintlearning.com/toolbox/toolbox-demo/product/11786>) to future success. Every successful person has stories of the failures he or she had to overcome along the way. Acknowledge the obstacles while offering specific tools and strategies to help overcome them. Reinforce that when students are not successful, how they respond can be just as important as the outcome.

Provide relevant examples of your own mistakes and failures. Stories can be the most powerful way to reach students.