SCHOOLS ARE IN THE BUSINESS OF LEARNING...

What type of learner are you?

Do you find learning new things exciting and challenging or do you back away from the unknown? Why does this matter when it comes to learning?

There has been much research conducted about the way different people approach new learning- Do they avoid risk? Are they OK about making mistakes? Can they congratulate others?

Carol Dweck has written a book called ‘Mindset-The New Psychology of Success’ which explores the premise that there are two types of mindsets when it comes to learning. She calls these two distinct types the fixed mindset and the growth mindset.

You would recognise both types of learners in any setting- classrooms, staffrooms and everyday life.

LOOK AT THE TABLE BELOW

Think about students in your classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Mindset</th>
<th>Growth Mindset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence is static</td>
<td>Intelligence can be developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BUCKET THINKING**
Learning is limited. A bucket can be filled-it is self-limiting.

**MUSCLE THINKING**
Learning is boundless and like a muscle only continues to strengthen the more it is used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservative learners- Proving</th>
<th>Adventurous learners- Improving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoids challenges</td>
<td>Embraces challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives up easily</td>
<td>Persists in the face of setbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees effort as fruitless and worth avoiding</td>
<td>Sees effort as the path to mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignores useful negative feedback</td>
<td>Learns from criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels threatened by success of others</td>
<td>Finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failures/Mistakes are bad</td>
<td>Failures/Mistakes are useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in this mindset will actually pass up important opportunities to learn and grow if there is a risk of unmasking weaknesses.</td>
<td>Most great business leaders have had this mindset, because building and maintaining excellent organisations in the face of constant change requires it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ref. Carol Dweck and Guy Claxton

Helpful Websites for rethinking your mindset:
http://mindsetonline.com/  
http://youtu.be/TTXrV0_3UjY
Developing a growth mindset

Schools are places of learning- we are in the business of LEARNING. The good news is that learning itself is very learnable. Learning dispositions are inherent in all of us and in fact, children come to school as exceptional learners. They have grasped amazingly complex skills such as learning to speak and walk. They are curious, fearless explorers of their world. Learning habits can be encouraged, exercised and honed. There is no limit to how well we can develop our capacity to learn.

We can help students become better learners by modelling the language of good learners. Guy Claxton in his book ‘The Learning Powered school ‘suggests that we teach teachers and students how to speak ‘Learnish’.

Here are some examples:

Some ideas for schools to take this idea further

Talk to students about the mindsets- Talk about what it looks like to have a growth mindset- persisting even when things get tricky pays off, making mistakes is important for learning. Pay attention to the struggle, the learning journey in your classrooms.

Display students’ learning on classroom walls- NOT JUST FINISHED PRODUCTS- Show students that you care about their rough drafts, their first attempts, their alternative ways to find out the answers, etc by displaying them and discussing them in class.

Establishing group norms for staff meetings- To encourage the growth mindset in staff, teachers work together to establish group norms to maximise their learning time in staff meetings such as: We will start at exactly 3:25, our phones will be on silent, we will not bring marking to a professional learning meeting, etc.

Take the TEST YOUR MINDSET quiz on Carol Dweck’s website http://mindsetonline.com. Those teachers that are open to learning new things and are keen to be highly reflective about their practice are excellent role models for our students.

References- Books

Carol Dweck - Mindsets- The New Psychology of Success
Guy Claxton- The Learning Powered School
Maryl Chambers, Graham Powell, Guy Claxton - Building 101 Ways to Learning Power