

GUIDELINES FOR TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN MEGHALAYA: A TEACHER-FOCUSED MINDSET MODEL TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

LOSII NISA MAHEO^{1*}, DR. GEORGE PALAMATTATHIL²

¹RESEARCH SCHOLAR, ASSAM DON BOSCO UNIVERSITY, TAPESIA GARDENS, KAMARKUCHI, SONAPUR – 782402, ASSAM,

EMAIL ID: nisajacin@yahoo.com

²PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, ASSAM DON BOSCO UNIVERSITY, TAPESIA GARDENS, KAMARKUCHI, SONAPUR – 782402, ASSAM, EMAIL ID: gpmattam@gmail.com

Abstract

In high school education contexts marked by examination pressure, peer comparison, and increasing learner diversity, teachers' beliefs about students function as a powerful yet often implicit influence that shapes classroom expectations, effort norms, students' sense of belonging, and ultimately their long-term academic trajectories. Grounded in Dweck's (2006) theory, the growth mindset perspective conceptualizes intelligence and competence as malleable capacities that can be cultivated through deliberate strategies, sustained engagement, and structured, supportive feedback rather than as fixed traits determined at the outset. Even as many mindset interventions focus on students, teacher-focused mindset work may be particularly significant because teachers influence classroom norms, feedback practices, assessment cultures, and students' understanding of success and failure. This article tries to integrate researches on teacher mindset, growth-oriented pedagogy, motivational foundations of engagement, and contextual influences such as school climate and equity. Building on this synthesis and India's National Education Policy 2020, the article proposes a teacher-focused mindset model for Meghalaya high schools connecting growth-oriented teaching to improved academic engagement, academic performance, and social competence of students including social connectedness and adaptive help-seeking.

Key Words: Growth Mindset, Teacher-focused Mindset, Academic Performance, Social Competence, High School, Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Mindset research, over the past two decades, has reframed how teachers interpret motivation, persistence, and achievement. Fundamentally, the growth mindset framework proposes that learners' abilities are not static attributes but can be cultivated through effort, applicable approaches, and persistent learning prospects (Dweck, 2006). In fact, this conceptual shift has shaped a wide array of educational intrusions intended to foster learning resilience, adaptive learning approaches, and long-term academic achievement (Claro and Loeb, 2019; Haimovitz and Dweck, 2016). This is even more observed by the recent research regarding the marked distinction in beliefs about the ability among students and teachers, emphasizing the need for context-sensitive tactics to mindset development (Rajaragupathy et al., 2024).

The above-mentioned concerns are particularly significant among high school students. Moreover, this stage of development is characterized by elevated responsiveness to external evaluation, social comparison, identity, development, and heightened concerns about social isolation. In the context of performance-oriented schools, students may construe failures as signals of low ability and may withdraw from demanding learning tasks to maintain self-esteem (Haimovitz and Dweck, 2016). And so, the teachers' pedagogical beliefs and instructional feedback can either perpetuate counterproductive attributions or counteract them by positioning difficulty as an expected and generative competent of learning.

Taking the high school context in Meghalaya, this article tries to explore linguistic heterogeneity, socioeconomic differences, and differential access to educational resources that shape students' learning opportunities and academic confidence. The key argument of this article is that teacher-led growth mindset approaches are essential for long-term educational change. All the more, teachers play a central role in establishing classroom norms that convey what is emphasized in learning, how errors are framed, and which students are perceived as capable of development (Kaymakamoğlu, 2018; Wolf and Brown, 2023).

Recent evidence suggests that teachers' beliefs about ability are not simply private beliefs but classroom signals that students perceive and interpret. While using a multi-informant design, Wang and Scanlon (2024) established that student-rated teacher mindset, as opposed to teacher-reported mindset, was positively related to students' academic engagement, emotional well-being, and social belonging.

Teaching practices based on instruction that are oriented towards growth must be clearly observable in routine classroom instruction through formative feedback, intentional task design, structured opportunities for revision, and teachers' pedagogical responses to student challenge (Rissanen et al., 2019; De Kraker-Pauw et al., 2017). If mindset is framed as a superficial message while pedagogical routines remain teacher-centered or strongly performance-oriented, students may be less likely to internalize incremental beliefs about learning. Considering this, the present article advances a comprehensive synthesis of the literature and outlines a teacher-focused growth mindset framework intended to strengthen academic attainment and social competencies as core elements of holistic education.

2. THE CENTRAL ROLE OF TEACHER MINDSET IN CLASSROOM LEARNING

2.1 Teacher Mindset as a Classroom Meaning-Making System

It is a common factor that mindset is framed as a learner-centered belief system; however, classrooms constitute social learning contexts in which teachers establish powerful normative cues about how ability is understood, how learning occurs, and what counts as success. It is a known fact that teachers' implicit belief regarding the malleability of intelligence inform how they evaluate student performance, make attributions for success and failure, and structure pedagogical environments (De Kraker-Pauw et al., 2017; Lüftenegger and Muth, 2024). It is through ongoing pedagogical choices; teacher mindset becomes ingrained in classroom norms and serves as a shared meaning structure that students continuously interpret.

2.2 Students Responses to Teachers' Instructional Signals

Even as growth-oriented beliefs are beneficial, fixed-ability cues may produce harmful effects. Case-based experimental studies provide evidence that instructors endorsing fixed-ability beliefs are associated with reduced positive emotional responses, heightened stress, weakened motivation, and diminished intentions to seek help among students (Heyder and Pegels, 2025). These are clear across secondary and higher education contexts, underscoring that teachers' belief systems can exert a direct influence on students' emotional and motivational reactions.

The performance pressure that is very strong in the high school setting, the fixed-mindset practices, feedback strategies, and instructional discourses show that only a limited group of learners can succeed academically. This is of particular significance for culturally and socially diverse settings such as Meghalaya, where premature academic labeling can deepen structural inequalities in educational opportunity and learner confidence (Habte et al., 2021; Brinkmann, 2016).

2.3 Teacher Practice as a Mediator of Mindset Effects

The implicit beliefs of teachers about intelligence shape student outcomes most strongly when they are translated into everyday instructional practices. Taking account of the data from multiple sources, Wang and Scanlon (2024) revealed that mastery-oriented instructional practices functioned as a mediating mechanism linking students' perceptions of teacher mindset to student-level outcomes such as learning engagement, emotional adjustment, and social connectedness. This also tells that interventions targeting mindset need to attend not only to belief but also to the pedagogical routines through which these beliefs are enacted.

3. Basics of Learning and Motivation: The Effectiveness of Growth-Oriented Teaching

3.1 Learning as a Process of Improvement through Feedback and Practice

According to National Research Council, 2000, learning happens through the active formation of understanding, the integration of new formation with existing knowledge, and the use of feedback to inform improvement. In fact, academic motivation, meta-cognitive regulation, structured practice, and ongoing engagement are promoted when the learning environment are well-designed (Rissanen et al., 2019).

Often, students come to understand the plasticity of ability through ongoing cycles of formative feedback and refinement. It is when instructional practices are designed to incorporate revision, strategic learning, and constructive struggle, we can enhance the abilities of students (National Research Council, 2000; De Kraker-Pauw et al., 2017).

3.2 Teacher Approaches and the Parameter of Motivation

In order to sustain attention, effort, and persistence, motivation is of utmost importance. When teachers become motivators and supporters they can influence the various tasks of students and manage their engagement. The research of Hornstra et al., (2015) reveal that teachers' pedagogical beliefs and classroom contexts guide the implementation of autonomy-supportive instruction, task meaningfulness, and mastery-oriented goal structures. Rather than indulging in normative comparison, learning-centered teaching can entail motivationally responsive feedback, practices that support learner autonomy and assessment structures that foreground individual improvement.

4. Implementing Growth-Oriented Pedagogy in Teaching Practice

Often times, growth-oriented pedagogy has been misinterpreted as merely encouraging effort. However, various researches underline the need for comprehensive changes in instructional design and classroom norms. It is here the finding of Rissanen et al., (2019) reveal the growth-focused pedagogy as the use of challenging instructional tasks, strategy-oriented feedback, explicit instruction in learning strategies, the framing of errors, and revision as essential components of learning.

In the contexts of inclusive classroom, Sharma and Singh (2022) underscore the need for growth-oriented pedagogy to attend to issues of diversity and equity as they identify pedagogical practices that support learner persistence and resilience across diverse student groups. In this process, teachers could continue to rely on traditional teaching practices as a result of curricular limitations and examination demands despite endorsing constructivist beliefs (Kaymakamoğlu, 2018). These disconnect between pedagogical beliefs and instructional practice underscores the importance of ongoing professional learning and institutional support within schools.

5. Extending Beyond Academic Achievement: Mindset and Social Skill Development

Often, students' classroom participation and collaborative learning with peers are determined by interpersonal skills, including cooperation, self-management, assertiveness, empathy, and constructive help-seeking play a central role. In this regard, Wang and Scanlon (2024) indicate that student-reported teacher mindset is positively related to social connectedness, underscoring the role of teachers' beliefs in shaping relational as well as academic outcomes.

Within a wider social-emotional learning perspective, Claro and Loeb (2019) show that differences in students' beliefs about intelligence predict learning gains beyond the influence of background factors. Help-seeking intentions are especially sensitive to the learning climate of the classroom. Heyder and Pegels (2025) provide evidence that fixed mindset teachers suppress expected help-seeking, in contrast to growth mindset teachers who promote it.

6. The Role of Context in Shaping Schooling

The impact of teachers' mindset orientations is shaped by broader institutional environments. Evidence suggests that positive school climates, characterized by collegial collaboration, pedagogical innovation, participatory leadership, and adequate resource provision, strengthen the association between growth mindset and teacher work engagement (Zhang and He, 2024). Such settings increase teachers' capacity to consistently implement growth-oriented instructional practices.

Resource provision plays a significant role in determining the viability of growth-oriented pedagogical approaches. Shortages of staffing, teaching materials, and leadership support can constrain teachers' capacity to implement formative assessment, differentiation, and cyclical learning practices (Govender, 2005). Equity remains a critical concern, especially in digitally mediated learning contexts, where disparities in access and participation can reinforce pre-existing inequalities if not deliberately mitigated (Remmele and Holthaus, 2013). In regions such as Meghalaya, careful consideration of linguistic, socioeconomic, and technological divides is necessary for inclusive and equitable implementation.

7. Enabling Teachers to Foster a Growth Mindset

Creating growth-oriented classrooms requires ongoing support need more than a single workshop. Real progress comes from continuous professional learning that is closely linked to everyday classroom practice. Studies indicate that one-time training alone seldom yield enduring effects. In contrast, educators benefit most from ongoing development that provides space to implement techniques, think critically, and access guidance (Yoon et al., 2007).

Actual mindset-oriented training should integrate solid knowledge of the idea with practical instructional approaches, mentoring, and collaborative learning. Strong support from school leadership is also vital. When growth-based approaches are supported and integrated with the broader school environment, educators are more inclined stay motivated and consistently enact what they have learned (Rissanen et al., 2019; Hornsta et al., 2015; Zhang and He, 2024).

8. A Holistic Framework for Transformative Teaching in Meghalaya

Drawing from the existing research this framework emphasizes that when teachers believe students can grow, it becomes the foundation for strengthening both learning outcomes and overall student development. In this context, the teachers are more willing to use teaching methods that focus on improvement, provide helpful feedback, allow students to revise their work, and encourage them to take ownership of their learning. Such consistent approaches enable students to remain engaged in their studies and continuing their efforts when assignments are demanding, and progressively building confidence in their abilities, leading to stronger academic outcomes.

The proposed model further emphasizes that mastery-oriented instruction enhances students' interpersonal growth by creating supportive and participatory classroom environments where seeking assistance is welcomed. Academic achievement and social development are therefore conceptualized as closely linked products of belief-to-practice processes instead of standalone initiatives. At the same time, the impact of these processes is shaped

by contextual influences, including school-level culture and access to instructional materials (Wang and Scanlon, 2024; Zhang and He, 2024). In the setting of Meghalaya, meaningful execution calls for culturally inclusive practices that acknowledge language differences, socioeconomic inequalities, and infrastructural constraints.

9. Integrating the Framework with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The National Education Policy of India (2020) sets forth an educational roadmap that prioritizes integrated development, learner-focused instruction, and on-going capacity building for teachers (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). It encourages reducing reliance on repetitive learning, ongoing evaluation, and the strengthening of cognitive, social, and emotional skills. A teacher-centered growth-oriented approach integrates seamlessly with this educational direction since it understands learning as a step-by-step process of development and defines teachers as mentors who foster ability instead of judging fixed competence.

This mindset-based approach integrates the aim of NEP 2020 into everyday classroom practice. When teachers deliver progress-centered feedback, they enable students to improve their tasks, and prioritize mastery over ranking; they clearly strengthen skills-based learning and reduce harmful achievement pressure. In addition, by focusing on teachers' perspectives and classroom norms, the proposed framework supports the reform agenda's dedication to fairness, especially for students from diverse language and social contexts. Thus, developing teachers' incremental belief-based approaches represents a workable and achievable strategy for advancing NEP 2020 in Meghalaya's high schools.

10. CONCLUSION

A teacher-centered growth-oriented model is not merely an encouraging message; it reflects a significant change in the way teaching and learning are viewed. The evidence presented in this article indicates that when teachers maintain the perspective that competence can grow, and enact this belief through encouraging feedback, demanding tasks, and growth-focused pedagogy, students experience improvements academically and interpersonally (Risannen et al., 2010; Wang and Scanlon, 2024; Heyder and Pegels, 2025). On the other hand, fixed-mindset beliefs may reduce student engagement, heighten stress, and inhibit willingness to seek assistance, especially in exam-driven school contexts.

In the context of Meghalaya's high schools, a teacher-focused developmental approach offers a workable and culturally responsive route toward improved and more inclusive learning achievements. When teacher mindset development, better classroom practices, continuous professional learning, and supportive school cultures work together, the approach shifts away from brief initiatives and supports meaningful, lasting change. Even as subsequent research can continue to test and improve this approach, it already provides a substantial foundation for boosting both academic achievement and social growth among Meghalaya's high school students.

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