



April 2020

## Growth Mindset and Online Teaching

We educators are experiencing challenging times. We have been sent home to wait out this virus and, if that isn't scary enough, we also have been charged with having to instantly learn to teach remotely. But this challenge can be a positive. First, we are sure that all of you are life-long learners so teaching remotely is just another learning challenge. Second, as Kathryn Smith and Todd Zakrajsek, (2020) discussed in their most recent blog, learning to teach remotely is a challenge but one that can be overcome by employing a growth mindset.

Carol Dweck, who has spent years researching learning patterns, characterizes individuals with growth mindset as those, "who believe their talents can be developed (through hard work, good strategies, and input from others)" (2016). She further states that those who employ growth mindset don't worry about looking smart, rather, they put their energy into learning. The opposite is true for those who have fixed mindsets. Such individuals believe their talents are innate and therefore fixed and cannot be grown.

In line with some of Dweck's principals regarding growth mindset, Smith and Zakrajsek offer some food for thought which, we hope will help you as you continue to teach online:

1. **Accept that you are a learner.** When you began to teach in the face to face environment you needed to learn what worked best for you and your students. The same is true now. Although challenging, know that you can work through this by seeking support from our IT department, the Center for Academic Innovation, joining teaching list serves, googling for ideas or you can contact Ann! In the process, realize that none of us are perfect and that in the learning process we sometimes fail. That is when learning happens! That is growth mindset!
2. **Plan your growth.** You didn't just become an expert in your content area overnight. You had to work as an undergraduate and later as a graduate student to develop this expertise. The same is true in learning to teach in a different environment. As you continue along this semester with your course(s) share with your students how you are becoming an online educator. This will serve to model how humans develop expertise. As you continue in your teaching, try to identify a few new techniques that you can explore when the semester ends.
3. **Get as much feedback as you can.** Just as you need to assess your students' learning, consider asking your students what is or is not working for them, ask for their suggestions for add-ons or assistance. Asking for input also demonstrates to them that change involves learning and growing. A good lesson!
4. **Avoid setbacks and use information to grow.** As you continue on through the semester, you will probably experience some set-backs while teaching. That's okay. Your students are probably experiencing the same issues. As educators, we need to help our students see that not everything comes easily. New learning includes having setbacks but these allow us to grow.

Developing the growth mindset framework as an approach to this new teaching challenge won't make the work any easier but it might make it more palatable. Just try to remember that there is help available so reach out if you feel the need.

References:

Dweck, C. (January 13, 2016). What Having a "Growth Mindset" Actually Means. Harvard Business Review.  
<https://hbr.org/2016/01/what-having-a-growth-mindset-actually-means> Retrieved March 27, 2020.

Smith, K. and Zakrajsek, T. (2020, March 26). Growth-Mindset Pivot to Online Teaching. *The Scholarly Teacher*.  
<https://www.scholarlyteacher.com/post/growth-minded-pivot-to-online-teaching>

## Finding People Who Are Helpers

Lately, there have been a lot of memes on social media using this Mr. Rogers quote, “When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’” Well, these are pretty scary times, but fortunately, there are plenty of SVSU “helpers” to assist you and your students. Below is a list of people and departments that you can contact should you or your students need help.

Center for Academic Innovation: Poonam Kumar, Director ([pkumar@svsv.edu](mailto:pkumar@svsv.edu)). Poonam can assist with any questions you have regarding your remote instruction.

Center for Academic Achievement: Elaine Hunyadi, Director ([ethunyad@svsu.edu](mailto:ethunyad@svsu.edu)). Elaine can answer questions about most tutoring. To see which academic areas the CAA offers for tutoring, please go to [svsu.edu/caa](http://svsu.edu/caa). You can also point your students in the direction of CAA’s online tutoring by having your students email [tutor@svsu.edu](mailto:tutor@svsu.edu).

Math and Physics Resource Center: Nancy Colwell ([nccolwel@svsu.edu](mailto:nccolwel@svsu.edu)) or Amy Hlavacek ([ahlavace@svsu.edu](mailto:ahlavace@svsu.edu)), Directors. The Math/Physics Resource Center is offering remote tutoring for Math and Physics. To learn more about this or to point your students to directions to access this tutoring please go to [svsu.edu/mathphysicstutoring](http://svsu.edu/mathphysicstutoring).

The Writing Center: Helen Raica-Klotz, Director ([klotz@svsu.edu](mailto:klotz@svsu.edu)). Online writing tutoring is available for your students by having them go to [svsu.edu/writingcenter/onlinetutoring/](http://svsu.edu/writingcenter/onlinetutoring/) to schedule a remote appointment. There are many other writing resources available at this webpage: [svsu.edu/writingcenter/writingresources/](http://svsu.edu/writingcenter/writingresources/)

Canvas: Cindy Patterson, Instructional Technology Specialist ([clpatter@svsu.edu](mailto:clpatter@svsu.edu)). You can write Cindy or call IT at 989-964-4225 (option 4) to ask for help.

Instructional Technology assistance can be accessed by calling IT direct at 989-964-4225.

Student Counseling Center: Eddie Jones, Director ([evjones@svsu.edu](mailto:evjones@svsu.edu)). Students seeking counseling services can call the office at: (989) 964-7078 or email the office at: [counselingservices@scsu.edu](mailto:counselingservices@scsu.edu). All appointments are offered remotely.

Additional resources that might assist during this social distance time are:

Happify: Happify is the single destination for effective, evidence-based solutions for better mental health. To begin the journey, you or your students can go to [happify.com](http://happify.com).

Calm: To help you find your calm you can go to [calm.com](http://calm.com).

Oprah and Deepak’s 21 Day Meditation: To harness peace, strength and connection go to <https://chopracentermeditation.com>.

The University of Michigan has created a guide for your students titled, Adjusting your study habits during COVID. They can access this guide at <https://ai.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/student-disruption.pdf>.

AND, if there is any other help you or your students need, please contact the:

Office of Adjunct Faculty Support Programs: Ann Coburn-Collins ([acoburn@svsu.edu](mailto:acoburn@svsu.edu)). Ann or Deb ([dmar@svsu.edu](mailto:dmar@svsu.edu)) are available to answer any other questions you might have or point you in the direction of someone who can help you.

During this time of social distancing, please take care of your whole self, stay safe, and enjoy the quiet. We will be back to normal and chaos soon enough!

