GROWTH MINDSET IN READING AND WRITING:

EMPHASIZING PROCESS

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UNC STUDENT SUCCESS CONFERENCE

JENNIFER PARK
DEPT. OF ENGLISH
“A “GROWTH MIND-SET,” ENCOURAGES A FOCUS ON “PROCESS” RATHER THAN ON INTELLIGENCE OR TALENT.

— Carol Dweck
Creating opportunities for students to:

- **Respond** — access their own thoughts and ideas
- Engage in **dialogue** — engage with others’ ideas and build upon them
- **Revise** — improve on or construct new readings and writings through collaborative engagement
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EMPHASIZING PROCESS

Building in growth-oriented emphasis: examples

• Syllabus — setting the stage

• First course meetings — starting the journey

• Assignments and coursework — opportunities for revision, emphasizing process
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Building in growth-oriented emphasis: examples

• **Syllabus** — setting the stage

• First course meetings — starting the journey

• Assignments and coursework — opportunities for revision, emphasizing process
"Reading is a process of constructing meaning or composing a text, exactly like writing. The reading of any difficult text will entail drafting and revision (largely in the reader’s head) and will frequently begin with what amounts to a zero draft. Just as writing may be defined as rewriting, so is any reading worth doing essentially a process of rereading.

— Sheridan D. Blau,
The Literature Workshop: Teaching Texts and Their Readers"
Reading and writing are, and need to be in classrooms, a social process, completed in conversation. Students will learn how to derive meaning and how to communicate ideas best and find many of their best opportunities for learning to become more competent, more intellectually productive, and more autonomous readers and writers through frequent work in groups with peers.

— adapted from Sheridan D. Blau, *The Literature Workshop: Teaching Texts and Their Readers*
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The Secret to Raising Smart Kids

HINT: Don't tell your kids that they are. More than three decades of research shows that a focus on “process”—not on intelligence or ability—is key to success in school and in life.

By Carol S. Dweck on January 1, 2015  16
Engl 105
Growth Mindset

I definitely understand the research and ideas behind a growth mindset. I myself have been victim to a fixed mindset and have always been discouraged by poor performance. I always look for an easy route rather than potentially challenging courses due to a fear of failing. I think encouragement and praise from friends and family can be a good thing, but it can also cause children to shy away from challenges to prevent disappointing anyone or not fitting this “image” everyone has of you. It does make you doubt your abilities to succeed and your intelligence. But this kind of learning is limiting and gives students a tendency to look for easy A's and get discouraged at the first sign of “failure.” Teaching kids to focus on effort definitely helps them learn to get back up if they’re knocked down.

Although I’m unsure if people can ever focus solely on learning rather than grades grades grades developing a growth mindset is absolutely a great first step!
CONVERSATION
DISCUSSION
DEBATE
DIALOGUE*

*NATHAN STOGDILL, PH.D.
POLYTECHNIC SCHOOL
The American Wife sits on the floor in front of a fireplace. The flickering light from an electric yule log, left there all year round, plays across the sweaty sheen of her large, pale face. Legs tucked, toes curling nervously in a brand-new pink shag rug from Wal-Mart, she is leaning forward on one arm, perfectly still. Her lips are pursed. Her husband faces her, his mouth drawn taut, ready, inches from hers. They wait.

—Ruth Ozeki, *My Year of Meats*
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ASSIGNMENT

THE INTERPRETATION PROJECT*

• **Stage 1:**
The first stage of the project requires you to write an interpretive paper on one of the texts we have read thus far. Your choice of a text will be complicated, however, by the need to join a group of three students all of whom will be writing on the text/novel.

• **Stage 2:**
This stage asks you to revise your paper in any way that you think will strengthen it, but with the one additional requirement that you now draw upon one or more of the papers written by your colleagues to support, clarify, or stand in contrast to your own ideas about the text.

* Derived from Sheridan Blau’s *The Literature Workshop*
WORKSHOP
THE INTERPRETATION PROJECT, STAGE 2

1. Read each other’s papers, landmarking as you would a text you are reading carefully.

2. Respond to each other’s papers, providing feedback and commentary, as it may help the writer but also as their ideas and arguments help or complicate your own argument.

3. Discuss the novel or work at length within your group—a mini discussion or dialogue that goes more into depth with the issues you have chosen to elaborate on in your papers. In this small community everyone must contribute in significant ways to furthering the ideas and delving deeper into the text.

It is challenging work, but will enable you to learn how collaboration contributes to knowledge-construction in academic communities.
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