PedPilot – Self-regulated Learning Guide for Teachers

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PedPilots – Supporting Self-Regulated Learning

Unit 1.

WHO AM I, AND HOW CAN I BE A LITTLE BETTER?

Self-awareness and a growth mindset: a friendly approach

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Our Hungarian-language digital curriculum, designed for independent study, is available on the following website.

https://pedpilots.jozsefattilaiskola.ro/

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1. WHO AM I, AND HOW CAN I BE A LITTLE BETTER?

Self-awareness and a growth mindset: a friendly approach

Compiled by:
Enikő Tankó – József Attila Primary School, Miercurea Ciuc, Romania

Introduction

Self-awareness is the starting point for successful self-regulated learning. In order for someone to effectively manage their own learning processes, it is essential that they are aware of their own habits, strengths and weaknesses, motivations, and goals. Self-awareness enables everyone to recognise which methods and strategies work best for them, how they respond to challenges, and how they can maintain their motivation in the long term. In this chapter, we offer tools and exercises to help teachers identify their own learning styles, strengths and areas for development.

Objectives

The aim of **this module** is to help participants identify how they learn, what motivates them, and what habits they have when learning. It also develops their self-reflection skills so that they can more consciously recognise their strengths and areas for development. The module also encourages them to set specific, personalised learning goals and to recognise how their habits and motivations affect their learning outcomes.

Time allocated to the module:

2 hours

Learning outcomes:

- Planning pedagogical processes and self-reflection on their implementation (differentiation to promote optimal development, motivation, and out-of-class activities)
- Supporting learning (emotional and physical state, calm environment, encouraging independent

learning, accepting mistakes)

- Personality development, individualised approach (comprehensive personality development, conscious application of pedagogical and psychological methods)

Study materials

Introduction

In this chapter, you will have the opportunity to get to know yourself a little better: how you relate to learning situations, what thoughts, expectations and feelings accompany your development process, and what internal resources you can rely on in your daily life. Self-awareness is a key component of self-regulated learning. The more clearly you can see your own strengths, habits, difficulties and motivational patterns, the more consciously you can shape your learning journey, and the more authentically you can support your students in doing the same.

This chapter helps you to take a look at your current approach to learning in short, simple steps, to map out your mindset, and to bring to the fore the positive messages that reinforce your belief in growth. There are no right or wrong answers: the aim is for you to reflect honestly on your own experiences at your own pace, to build your own and others' learning processes more consciously, and to discover the power and freedom inherent in self-regulated learning.

Getting into the right frame of mind

Before delving deeper into the topic of self-regulated learning, it is worth pausing for a moment to assess where you stand in this process right now, at the starting point. The short exercise below will help you become aware of your current feelings, motivation and inner state, which will determine how you approach learning on the following pages.

Write down three words that best describe your current feelings or thoughts about learning!

- Why did you choose these particular words?
- What do they reveal about your current attitude towards learning?

Rate on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 = not at all motivated, 10 = very motivated) how motivated you currently feel!

- What supports you most in your studies right now?
- What is currently hindering or making your learning difficult?

Our beliefs about learning are often deeply rooted and frequently guide our decisions without us realising it. In this exercise, I invite you to reflect on each statement about learning and try to approach it from multiple perspectives. This will help you see what arguments are at work within you, and where your own boundaries and assumptions lie.

If I had to argue...

Choose one of the statements below! Write two short arguments: one in favour and one against!

Statements:

"Talent is an innate quality."

"Everyone is capable of improving."

"Mistakes reveal our weaknesses."

"We can learn from our mistakes."

TIP: You can also raise these questions among your friends, colleagues or students; they can spark good conversations and debates, and help develop self-awareness.

Our learning habits and experiences reveal a great deal about the situations in which we feel confident and when we become uncertain. The following set of questions encourages you to reflect on some of your past experiences and recognise the patterns that influence your current learning processes.

Self-awareness mirror

Answer the following questions: When have you felt successful in teaching/learning? Why? When was it difficult? What did you think of yourself at the time?

Learning is most effective when we are aware of how we function: how we process information most easily, in what situations we can concentrate best, and through which methods new knowledge is retained in our minds.

The concept of learning style describes the ways in which different people most easily take in and process information. Although everyone is capable of learning in multiple ways, there are usually one or two channels that better support understanding and retention. Understanding learning styles helps us to personalise the learning process and become more aware of what makes us learn more effectively. The most commonly used model distinguishes four main learning styles:

- visual learning style: diagrams, images, colours and visual patterns aid understanding
- reading/writing-based learning style: new knowledge is acquired through texts, notes, lists and

descriptions

- auditory learning style: they learn most effectively through listening, explanations, conversations and lectures
- kinesthetic (or practical) learning style: they learn best through action, experimentation, movement and practical experience

It is important to understand that there is no ‘better’ or ‘worse’ learning style. Each can be advantageous in different situations, and most people use a combination of styles. Recognising your own learning preferences, however, offers a significant advantage: it makes preparation more effective, increases motivation and helps avoid unnecessary frustration.

The following test will help you identify which learning style suits you best. It serves as a starting point for developing more conscious learning habits and can be an important part of the process of self-discovery.

Test: learning styles

Read the statements below and select the answer option that best describes how you like to learn! You may select more than one answer per question.

1. When learning something new, you prefer to...

a) watch a demonstration.

b) read instructions or a manual.

c) listen to an explanation.

d) try it out for yourself.

2. If you need to understand how something works, you...

a) watch a video or look at a diagram

b) read about it.

c) ask someone to explain it to you.

d) try it out, experiment with it.

3. You remember things better if...

a) sees pictures or diagrams

b) reads text or takes notes.

c) talks about it or hears explanations.

d) uses it in practice, does something with it.

4. When giving directions, you usually...

a) draw a map or show the way visually.

b) write down the directions.

c) explains it verbally.

d) accompany the person there.

5. When studying, you prefer...

a) watching someone do something.

b) reading or taking notes.

c) hearing an explanation.

d) doing something themselves.

6. When you receive new information, you find it easiest to...

a) understand it by using pictures or diagrams.

b) understand it by reading written material.

c) understand it by talking or listening.

d) understand it through practical experience.

7. When you are learning, you do best by...

a) seeing how something works.

b) read about it in detail.

c) discussing it with others.

d) try it out for yourself.

8. If you have to learn a new skill, then...

a) watches how others do it.

b) reads about it step by step.

c) asks for an explanation.

d) practises and experiments.

9. When attending a lecture, you pay more attention if...

a) you see diagrams, pictures or a video.

b) you are given notes or handouts.

c) hears a detailed explanation.

d) actively participates in the exercises.

10. When studying, you tend to...

a) watch others doing something.

b) take notes and read.

c) ask questions and discuss the topic.

d) practise the new knowledge.

11. When learning new information, I understand it best...

a) understand it by seeing it.

b) by reading it.

c) by hearing it.

d) by doing it.

12. When you have to learn new material, you do better if...

a) you see the material visually.

b) you read the text or take notes.

c) someone explains it to you verbally.

d) try it out for yourself.

13. When learning about a new topic, you are best helped by...

a) pictures, diagrams or videos help me.

b) text or descriptions help me.

c) conversations and explanations help me.

d) practical experience helps.

14. If you want to learn how to do something, you...

a) watch how others do it.

b) read the instructions.

c) ask someone to explain it to you.

d) try it out for yourself.

15. When learning new concepts, you understand best...

a) understand them by seeing them.

b) understand by reading.

c) understand by hearing.

d) understand by doing.

16. When studying, I prefer to...

a) watch how it's done.

b) read the material.

c) listen to the explanation.

d) try it out for yourself.

Now count how many times you ticked answers a, b, c, d!

If most of your answers were 'a', you **are** a **visual** learner. You understand information better with the help of pictures, diagrams, charts or videos. The use of visual aids, maps, graphs and charts is particularly useful for you.

If most of your answers were 'b', you **are** a **reading/writing** learner. Text-based materials, notes, descriptions and guides help you acquire knowledge best. Taking your own notes and rewriting or summarising what you have read can be a useful tool.

If most of your answers are 'c', you **are** an **auditory** learner. You learn best through listening and conversation. Lectures, explanations, group discussions and asking questions help you retain knowledge best.

If most of your answers were ‘d’, you are a **kinesthetic** or hands-on learner. Action, experimentation and practical experience help you learn best. Practical tasks, experiments, modelling or role-play are useful for you.

Source: https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/

TIP: If you have answers from several different types, you are a multi-channel learner who can process information effectively in various ways. In this case, it is worth organising your learning by combining visual, reading/writing, auditory and practical methods.

Understanding growth and fixed mindsets is key to supporting ourselves and our learners more consciously in their development. The following brief overview provides an insight into Carol Dweck’s research, which provides a scientific basis for understanding the pedagogical significance of mindset.

Fixed mindset and growth mindset

The concept of ‘mindset’, or way of thinking, was introduced into psychological research by the American psychologist Carol Dweck. The theory is based on the idea that people can follow two main paths: the fixed mindset or the growth mindset. In the case of the fixed mindset, the individual believes that their abilities are innate and fundamentally unchangeable. In contrast, proponents of the growth mindset believe that intelligence and abilities can be developed, and that challenges, mistakes and effort are an important part of learning. According to Dweck’s research, mindset is not merely a psychological category, but has a significant impact on learning, motivation, performance and problem-solving ability. In recent decades, numerous studies and educational experiments have confirmed that mindset can be developed and has a direct impact on learning outcomes.

Individuals with a fixed mindset often view success as proof of their ability, whilst they perceive failure as a threat. They avoid challenges, as these carry uncertainty and the possibility of failure, and they often reject feedback that might threaten their self-image. They often tend to compare themselves with others’ performance, which can lead to a lack of self-confidence.

Those with a growth mindset view challenges as opportunities, regard failure as information, and strive to learn from it. For them, learning and development are continuous, and success is the result

of effort and perseverance. They are typically open to new experiences and able to learn from feedback. The psychological effects of these two mindsets are significant: a fixed mindset reduces self-confidence, motivation and tolerance for failure, whilst a growth mindset increases perseverance, motivation, problem-solving ability and openness to learning.

Dweck and her colleagues (2006) demonstrated in several experimental studies that students who adopted a growth mindset responded much better to difficult tasks, were more willing to try new methods, and showed greater improvement in their problem-solving skills in the long term. Research also shows that this mindset can be taught and developed. Teachers play a key role: stories presented to pupils that exemplify perseverance and continuous improvement contribute to the development of a growth mindset. Similarly, teacher feedback that focuses on the process and the effort also reinforces a growth mindset. According to research findings, the impact of a growth mindset extends beyond immediate academic results and, in the long term, strengthens pupils' self-esteem, motivation and academic progress.

Mindset can be shaped! Often, simply rephrasing a single sentence can help us see challenges in a different light. Below, you can rephrase a few fixed-mindset statements to shift them towards a growth mindset.

I think differently

Read and rephrase the following statements, which are expressed in a fixed mindset, to turn them into a growth mindset!

1. I'm not good with technology. →
2. He's more talented than me, there's no point in me trying. →
3. This is too difficult; I'll never manage it. →
4. If I make a mistake, it shows my weakness. →
5. I mustn't take risks, because it might lead to failure. →

Possible rephrasings:

1. I'm not good at it yet, but I can improve with practice.
2. He might be faster, but I can improve with practice.
3. This is a challenge, but I'll get there step by step.

4. Mistakes provide opportunities to learn.

5. Risk and failure are part of development.

In teaching practice, we encounter situations every day that test our mindset. Below, you can examine everyday teaching situations from two different perspectives: a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. This dual reflection helps you recognise what messages you convey as a teacher and how you can support your students' development more consciously.

Analysis of teaching situations

Below you will find descriptions of student/teacher situations (e.g. a student who always gives up when attempting maths problems; a colleague who does not want to try a new method). How would you react?

Write two answers: one with a fixed mindset and one with a growth mindset!

Situations:

1. A student constantly gives up on trying to solve maths problems.
2. A colleague does not want to try out a new teaching method.
3. A student says: "I'm not good at learning languages."
4. A parent claims: "My child isn't creative; there's no point in pushing them."
5. In a group, some pupils are afraid of making mistakes and do not take part in the game.

Learning only becomes real change when it is put into practice through concrete steps. The action plan below helps you translate this shift in mindset into personal, tangible actions. It is important not to try to change too much at once: even a single, consciously chosen small step can have a significant impact on your day-to-day teaching practice.

One thing I will do differently from tomorrow

Self-reflection questions:

- In what areas would you like to improve as a teacher?
- How do you react to your students' mistakes/your own mistakes?
- What would be a different type of reaction?

Situation // Fixed reaction // Developing reaction

- Write/formulate a sentence that you would like to say to your students frequently from now on!
- Write down a specific change you will try out next week (e.g. giving positive feedback on mistakes / using 'not yet')!

If you have already adopted a growth mindset yourself, you can try it with your students too. Teachers' conscious attitude is key to fostering a growth mindset.

Key principles and tools:

- treating students' mistakes as learning opportunities, not as punishments;
- providing feedback on processes and effort, not just on results;
- setting students challenges, encouraging them to try and persevere;
- presenting positive examples and stories about the importance of perseverance and progress.

Methods suitable for use in schools:

- reflective discussions (pupils discuss their mistakes, failures and what they have learnt);
- goal-setting and self-assessment (students can assess their own progress on a daily or weekly basis and set their next goals);
- developing resilience (deliberately created situations where pupils can try new things in a safe environment);
- positive feedback (the teacher emphasises the learning process and effort, not just the result);
- peer feedback and collaborative learning (students evaluate each other's efforts and progress, thereby supporting a growth mindset).

A growth mindset helps students to be more flexible, to take on challenges with greater courage and to learn from their mistakes. A conscious shift in teachers' mindset can promote students' development and self-confidence. Developing this mindset supports not only academic performance but also long-term personal and professional development. Conscious pedagogical intervention and the creation of a positive learning environment are key to students' success and motivation.

At the end of this chapter, it is worth reflecting on your own learning experiences and recognising the areas in which you have made progress. The following short reflective exercise will help you summarise what you have learnt, reinforce your new mindset, and formulate a positive statement that will support you in your further development.

Conclusion

Think of a recent difficulty you faced that was related to learning. Write down in two or three short sentences: What was the challenge? What did you learn from it, or how might it help you in your future development?

Write down a skill or area in which you still feel uncertain! Rewrite the sentence to include the phrase ‘not yet’, e.g. instead of ‘I don’t understand this topic’: ‘I don’t understand this topic yet.’ How does this phrasing change how you feel?

Write a short, encouraging sentence for yourself that might help you with your learning or boost your confidence today.!

Ideas:

“Today I’m taking a small step forward.”

“Today I am open to learning.”

Supporting materials

https://www.edutopia.org/article/fejlődő-szemlélet-resources

https://www.youcubed.org/resource/fejlődő-szemlélet/

https://emilyjlang.weebly.com/tools--resources.html

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https://puskarildiko.hu/fejlődő-szemlélet-teszt/

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https://hosoktere.org/mit-tanitunk/fejlődő-szemlélet/

https://hosoktere.org/vallalatoknak/fejlődő-szemlélet-trening/

https://www.agoraintezet.hu/tag/fejlődő-szemlélet/

Check questions

Decide and indicate which of the following statements belong to which mindset (F=fixed or D=developing)!

1. Talent is innate; it cannot be changed.
2. If something is difficult, it means I'm not good at it.
3. I learn from my mistakes and improve.
4. With practice, anything can be learnt.
5. Students' abilities are fixed and cannot be changed.
6. Every learning setback is an opportunity for improvement.
7. Quick results are the most important thing.
8. The learning process is more important than immediate success.
9. If it doesn't work straight away, I give up.
10. If it doesn't work the first time, I'll try new methods.

Solutions:

1.F, 2.F, 3.G, 4.G, 5.F, 6.G, 7.F, 8.G, 9.F, 10.G

Sources

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https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/

https://www.123test.com/learning-style-test/

https://www.123test.com/learning-style-test/