

Exploring the Designing of a Growth Mindset Curriculum in a Singaporean School

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KEY IMPLICATIONS

- Teachers and school leaders embrace the concept of the growth mindset, and see its relevance to education for Singapore in the 21st century.
- There are certain steps that are necessary in the process of curriculum design to ensure that all teachers understand and own the curriculum, which will eventually lead to success in implementing and sustaining the curriculum, especially in the context of an already overloaded school curriculum.

BACKGROUND

This research was positioned against two recent movements in Singapore's education landscape: the move for schools to develop their own curricula, and the move to empower individuals for lifelong learning. Since the onset of the *Teach Less Learn More* (TLLM) movement, schools have been involving teachers in designing different approaches for engaged learning. For the spirit of TLLM to progress into quality school curricula, schools should develop their own unique curricula based on the school context and culture. Recently, the Minister of Education reminded that the purpose of education must be to prepare our students for life in an uncertain world, where having the

resilience to bounce back after setbacks will be increasingly important (Ng, 2016). Dweck (2006) described such a mindset as the growth mindset.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This study aimed to (1) explore possibilities of a growth mindset curriculum that is relevant for the Singaporean education context; (2) unpack the features and dynamics of school culture and routines that go into school-based curriculum designing; and (3) anticipate challenges and issues in the implementation of such a curriculum.

KEY FINDINGS

The teachers saw the importance of nurturing the growth mindset at the secondary school level. Several of the teachers observed that many of our Singaporean youth have the fixed mindset towards education. As such, it is important to raise teachers' and students' awareness of the two mindsets and the consequences of holding the fixed mindset, and ways to nurture the growth mindset. The school put in place class activities such as generating "growth mindset lingo", creating posters as visual reminders of the growth mindset, and skits on scenarios where the students can

apply the growth mindset. The main challenge the research team discovered was the perception that the growth mindset curriculum was added onto an already overloaded school curriculum. This resulted in a lack of ownership for the growth mindset curriculum, as manifested in a lack of connections to the learning and assessment experiences offered to the students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

Implications for practice

The findings drove home the importance of deliberation among teachers to build consensus regarding the purpose of the curriculum. This includes definition and interpretation of terms and concepts such as the growth mindset, and agreement on the significance or need for the growth mindset in the school's context.

Implications for policy and research

Further deliberations about the teaching approaches in the learning and assessment experiences that will nurture the growth mindset could be pursued.

Proposed follow-up activities

This case study is a concrete example that can be used in courses wherein school leaders are challenged to examine their assumptions about curriculum goals and experiences and the process of implementing change at the school.

PARTICIPANTS

One secondary school was involved, and the respondents included three school leaders, three programme leaders, and six Secondary One teachers.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The method of inquiry was interpretive case study, with the boundary being the school as a unit. Data was collected from interviews and observations at relevant staff meetings where the growth mindset curriculum was discussed.

REFERENCES

- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Ballantine Books.
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