



CASE STUDY

Mastering Mindsets: Delta Academy

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What is your Design Challenge?

Our challenge is to empower students and teachers to embrace growth mindset approaches in their daily practices to positively impact student engagement and student achievement. Our belief is that through the incorporation of growth mindset practices, students will have increased engagement, feel empowered, gain life skills, and have an increase in intrinsic motivation, which will transition into student achievement and ownership of an empowered life. Because of the growth mindset practices, educators will have an increased sense of self-efficacy and productivity, they will broaden their teaching and reflective practices, and their personal fulfillment will increase as well. [Poll Questions](#)

What did you do?

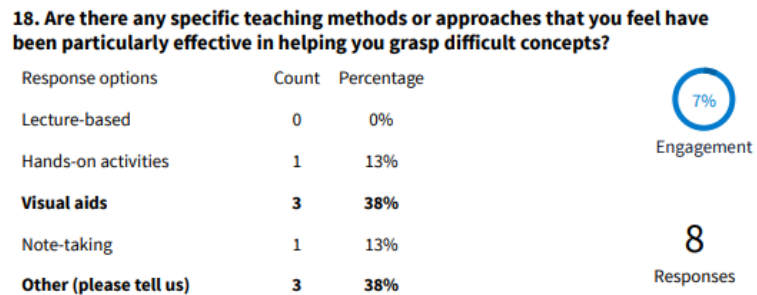
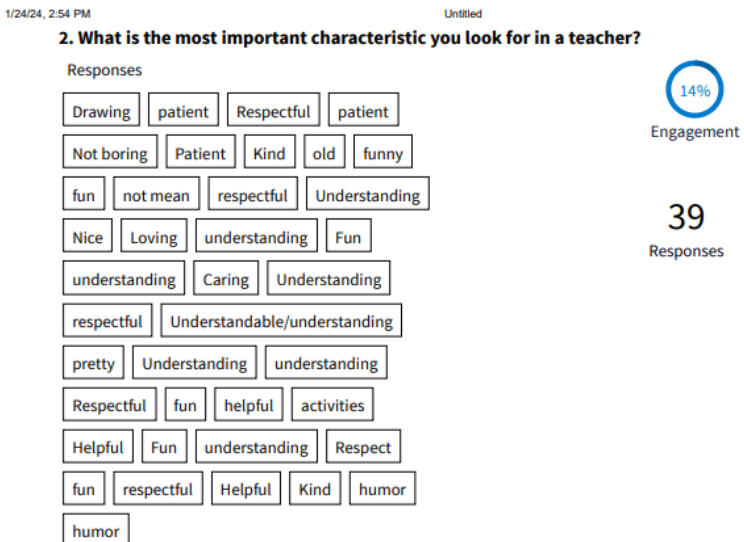
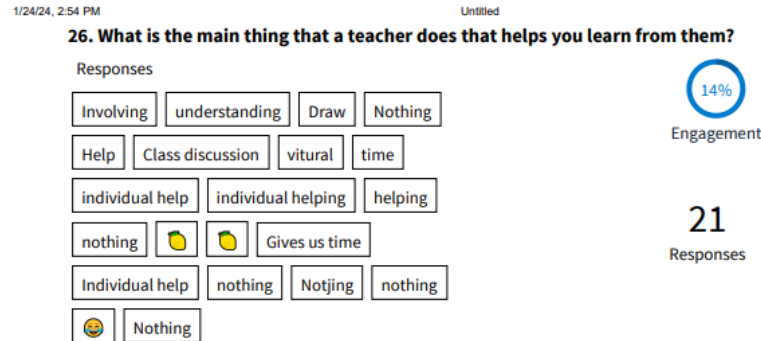
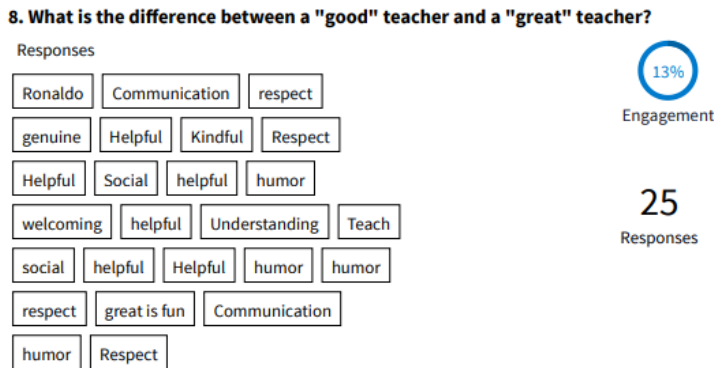
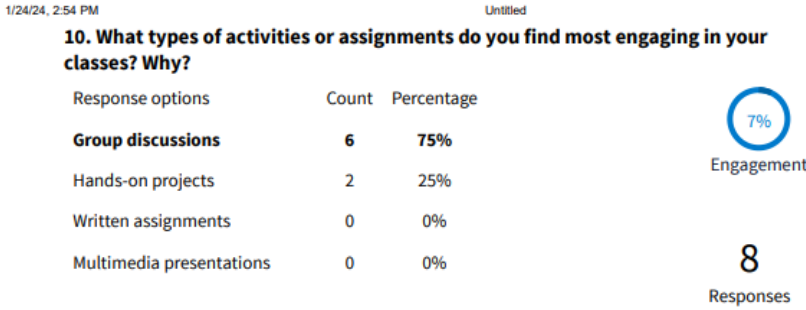
Under Impacting Attributes we saw evidence of Critical Thinking and Solution Oriented. Under Empowering Attributes, we saw Curiosity. We believe that as we continue down the road of changing mindsets, Balance and Self-Advocacy will emerge. Under Thriving Attributes, we see Resilience, but with surviving, not thriving. Under Connecting Attributes, we see Communication and Collaboration as a strength of Delta Academy.

We used PollEverywhere.com to ask questions about how students learn, what engages them, what do the best teachers do, and what does an ideal class setting look and feel like. Questions were multiple choice and short answer so that students could respond authentically. From this poll, we compiled our data with growth mindset strategies that correlate to each response.

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What was the biggest surprise/barrier in implementation? What was the impact?

During our poll administration, there were technological limitations in that our recording was too long so we missed some of the in-the moment responses that would have been useful for our project. After administering the poll, we thought that perhaps some of the students would have felt more comfortable and been more candid in their responses without an authority figure in the room. We feel this way because some of the classes were more disclosive than others.



After the polls, we visited three classrooms weekly to implement our Design Project. Initially we had planned on visiting four classrooms. Due to multiple projects on campus, we had to scale back to three classrooms. We are noticing a distinct difference in the way middle schoolers and high schoolers are responding to growth mindset strategies. The high schoolers seem to have the maturity to be receptive to a change in their thinking, which makes them open-minded and more apt to self-reflect and change. Additionally, we see a difference in the receptivity from our 7th and 8th grade students. Our 7th grade students are similar to our high school students, in that they are willing to self-reflect and they have a high level of on-task participation. On the other hand, our 8th grade students are disinterested and apathetic, and haven't taken any of our lessons seriously. We feel this is due to these students being the last students that were developmentally affected by COVID and we see a diminished lack of social skills and emotional intelligence.

What was the greatest success? How did this success impact young people or how might it impact young people on your campus? What are their perceptions?

Interestingly, we feel our greatest success was in the responses and the conversation that took place during the administration of the poll questions. When we analyzed the data, there were clear and consistent responses across the board from all classes. This enabled us to align growth mindset and instructional strategies with the responses that will be incorporated into our classrooms. We believe our students felt heard and empowered. They trust that we are going to follow through with our project, which will translate into them finding solutions that will benefit their school community. We found that students perceived peer and teacher relationships as paramount to their success.

Changing mindsets is a process as it calls for a personal evolution within each individual. Much like a garden, it doesn't start out big, beautiful and blooming. It begins with cultivating the soil and continues with the planting and watering, so that eventually the garden grows big and beautiful. We feel that we all are gardeners in life and our soil has already been cultivated with some seeds planted here at Delta Academy. Just as we were taught to be gardeners, our hope is that our students will become waterers of their own garden.

1. Are there any particular skills or knowledge areas that you feel are not currently addressed in the classroom?
2. What activities do you find most engaging in a classroom?
3. What advice would you give to teachers to enhance student engagement and learning?
4. What determines whether you will have a good day or a bad day at school?
5. After participating in the PollEverywhere with your classmates, what would you like to see come from this experience?

Video Student Interview (Samantha): [IMG_9731.MOV](#)

Video Student Interview (Brayden): [IMG_9732.MOV](#)

Video Student Interview (Lizetter): [video-output-E2993C24-C7FB-46ED-B14E-0A702CD914B4.mov](#)

What's next? How does your team plan to evolve this work? What are the most significant pieces of learning you see impacting adult work and young people's experiences? What school level, district level, state level policy may need to be addressed?

Moving into the next school year, we would like to continue implementing a growth mindset school wide. This will mean that growth mindset strategies will be modeled and discussed at professional development meetings at the beginning of the year and continuing throughout the school year. The strategies learned in the PD's will be implemented into the classrooms and become a component of school culture. The following are strategies we will focus on implementing schoolwide:

- Mindfulness corners in every classroom
- Planners to help students track homework and other responsibilities
- Teachers greeting all students as they enter the classroom
- Positive reinforcement
- Using effective growth mindset communication in classrooms and with students
- Quarterly one-on-one student teacher conferences

Poll the teachers

1. What is one thing you enjoy about teaching? Explain.
2. What is one thing you do to connect with your students on a daily basis?
3. What determines whether your students have a good day or a bad day in school?
4. What is the difference between a "good" teacher and a "great" teacher?
5. What types of activities elicit the most engagement in your classroom?
 - a. Group discussions/assignments
 - b. Hands-on projects
 - c. Written assignments
 - d. Multimedia presentations
 - e. Note-taking
 - f. Lecture based
 - g. _____
6. What type of feedback do you give your students most often?
 - a. Written comments
 - b. Verbal feedback
 - c. Grades only
 - d. _____
7. How do you stay motivated and avoid burnout during busy or challenging times in the school year?
 - a) Time management
 - b) Taking breaks
 - c) Seeking support
 - d) No motivation techniques

8. What is one thing you would change about the school?
9. How do you handle challenges or setbacks in your teaching journey? Are there support systems you find particularly helpful?
 - a) Self-reflection
 - b) Seeking help from others
 - c) Collaborating with peers
 - d) Ignoring challenges
10. Do you have a preferred teaching environment (e.g., quiet, collaborative, hands-on)?
 - a) Quiet
 - b) Collaborative
 - c) Hands-on

Research + Resources that inspired and informed our thinking

We feel that our team already has a culture of learning, but our participation in the network has given us structure and focus. We don't feel that we had anything to unlearn. We came into this opportunity with open minds, which allowed us to conduct research and answer dream protocol questions. We look forward to compiling and comparing student and teacher data which will allow us to continue our research next year.

Questions for teachers (Palumbo, Delgado)

We discovered that we have a slight fixed mindset around students that aren't engaged or aren't receptive to self-reflection or changing their growth mindset. But the reality is that in all things, we have to meet students (and adults) where they are at. We realize that with those students we have to relinquish control and allow them to grow at their own pace, thus their voice and agency levels will vary. While they are growing, we are still there to water and help tend their garden.