

What Are the 7 Mind Frames of Learning?

By Peter DeWitt

Today's guest blog is written by John Hattie, Professor of Education and Director of Research at the University of Melbourne. In addition, he is the author of four books relating to [Visible Learning](#).

"Learning thrives on error"

Among all the influences that can make a profound difference in student learning is how we think about our role! So, start with looking inward and ask about the mind frames you have as an educator.

It is through these mind frames that we make decisions in the classroom and school, and it is argued that educators highly imbued with these mind frames are among the high impact educators. Note, this applies as much to policy makers who seem to prefer negative mind frames about teachers and schools.

Seven Mind Frames of Learning

Mind frame 1: Teachers/leaders believe that their fundamental task is to evaluate the effect of their teaching on students' learning and achievement (Know thy Impact)

Fundamentally the most powerful way of thinking about a teacher's role is for teachers to see themselves as *evaluators* of their effects on students. Teachers need to use evidence-based methods to inform, change, and sustain these evaluation beliefs about their effect.

These beliefs relate to claims about what each student can do as a consequence of the teacher's actions, and how every resource (especially peers) can be used to play a part in moving students from what they can do now to where the teacher considers they should be-- and to do so in the most efficient as well as effective manner.

It matters what teachers do. But what matters *most* is having an appropriate mind frame relating to the impact of what they do. An appropriate mind frame combined appropriate actions work together to achieve a positive learning effect. The key factor is for teachers to have a mind frame in which they seek feedback about their influences on students and thus change, enhance, or continue their teaching methods.

Mind frame 2: Teachers/leaders believe that success and failure in student learning is about what they, as teachers or leaders, did or did not do. We are change agents! (e.g., Growth vs. fixed: High expectations for all)

This proposition is **not** making the claim that students are not involved in the learning equation, or that all success or failure is indeed the responsibility of the teacher--it is claiming that the greatest impact relates the teacher's mindset that they can have an impact.

Some of the positive beliefs that need to be fostered include:

- All students can be challenged
- It's all about strategies, never styles
- It is important to develop high expectations for all students relative to their starting point
- It is important to teach multiple learning strategies to all students
- It is important to develop assessment-capable students
- Critique, error, and feedback are powerful opportunities for improving learning
- Don't blame the kids
- Handicaps of social class and home resources are surmountable.

Teachers need to see themselves as change agents--they are not facilitators, developers, or constructivists. They are change agents--their role is to change students from what they are to what we want them to be, what we want them to know and understand--and this, of course, highlights the moral purposes of education.

It is about teachers believing that achievement is changeable or enhanceable and is never immutable or fixed, that the role of a teacher is as an enabler not as a barrier, that learning is about challenge and not about breaking down material into easier chunks, and it is about teachers seeing the value of both themselves and students understanding learning intentions and success criteria.

Mind frame 3: Teachers/leaders need to talk more about the learning than the teaching (Focus on learning)

I have almost reached the point where I lose interest in discussion about teaching--not because it is not important, but because it often prevents the important discussions about learning. So many professional development sessions are about best practice, new methods of teaching, interrogation of assessment far too late to make a difference today or tomorrow--and we seem to like these safe and non-threatening topics.

Where is the debate about how we learn, evidence of students' learning in their multiple ways, how to learn differently?--can you name three competing theories of learning? To have these collegial debates about learning and about our impact on this learning requires school leaders that are supportive of teachers being learners and evaluators. Teachers need to be adaptive learning experts, know multiple ways of teaching and learning, be able to coach and model different ways of learning, and be the best error detectors in the business.

Mind frame 4: Teachers/leaders see assessment as feedback about their impact (Assessment for Teaching)

Of all the influences on student learning, feedback is among the top--and it is also the case for teacher learning. Teachers need feedback about their effects on each student. Hence the notions of assessment as teacher feedback, teachers as evaluators, and teacher colleagues and students as peers in the feedback equation. Teachers, like students, need to debate and agree about where they are going, how they are going, and where to next.

Of course, the assessment is about the student, but the power of interpretation and the consequences of assessment is more in the hands of teachers. We need to move from the prepositional divide of assessment as, assessment of, and assessment for, to assessment as feedback for teachers.

The critical questions are:

- Who did you teach well, who not so well?
- What did you teach well, what not so well?
- Where are the gaps, where are the strengths, what was achieved, and what has still to be achieved?

- How do we develop a common conception of progress with the students and with all the teachers in our school?

Mind frame 5: Teachers/leaders engage in dialogue not monologue (Listening to student voice)

While there is a need for teachers to impart information, while the lecture format is indeed efficient, and while teachers do and should know more than students - there is a major need for teachers to also listen to the students' learning. This listening can come from listening to their questions, their ideas, their struggles, their strategies of learning, their successes, and their interaction with peers, their outputs, and their views about the teaching.

The current dominance of monologue may cause less damage for the brighter students who can engage in learning with their typically greater access to learning strategies and self-talk about the learning. Monologue is less satisfactory for the struggling, the disengaged, and the confused' and is powerful for the brighter students.

Mind frame 6: Teachers/leaders enjoy the challenge and never retreat to "doing my best" (Challenge vs. Do you best)

Every day in most classes, life is a challenge--and we need to embrace this challenge and make it the challenge we want. The art of teaching is that what is challenging to one student may not be to another--hence the constant attention to the individual differences and seeking the commonality so that peers can work together with the teacher to make the difference.

The teachers' role is not to decide on the challenge and then "*break it down*" into manageable bits so it is easier for students--instead their role is to decide on how to engage students in the challenge of the learning. This is why learning intentions and success criteria have been emphasized so strongly, because when students understand these they can see the purposes of the challenges that are so critical to success in learning.

Mind frame 7: Teachers/leaders believe it is their role to develop positive relationships in classrooms/staffrooms to then allow errors to thrive (Errors are welcomed/ Trust in class)

So often we are concerned about the classroom climate but forget the purpose of warm, trustworthy, empathetic climates. The primary purpose is to allow students to feel okay about making mistakes and not knowing, and establishing a climate that welcomes error as opportunities. *Learning thrives on error*: a fundamental role for teachers is to seek out misconceptions, misunderstandings, and lack of knowledge. While teachers may have warm interpersonal interactions, this is not the point--the point is, do the students believe that the climate of the class is fair, empathetic, and trustworthy? Can students readily indicate they do not know, do not understand--without getting the snide comments, the looks and sneers from peers?

The power of peers is pervasive, and much about creating the right classroom climate is about creating a safe harbour for welcoming error and thence learning--in the same way it is critical for school leaders to create a safe staffroom climate so that all teachers can talk about teaching and their impact on student learning.

Source:

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