

Mindset: The Journey Within

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Abstract

Each student learns differently, but are they willing to learn with new technologies? Are they stuck in their learning ways? Do they feel like they fail and are unable to learn? After reading some articles, I can explain in more depth about how this affects education and as well as explain what a digital native and immigrant is based on characteristics.

Fixed Mindset

One type of mindset is a fixed mindset. Maria Popova describes a fixed mindset as a “character, intelligence, and creative ability are static givens which we can’t change in any meaningful way, and success is the affirmation of that inherent intelligence, an assessment of how those givens measure up against an equally fixed standard”. This can easily be described as the person, or in our case, a student feels he or she can not learn new things and would rather stick with a traditional way of teaching because technology is difficult for him or her to understand. This means him or she will tend to think he or she cannot perform a specific task because they are scared of failure and will refuse to perform the task. Many will say a fixed mindset may lead to negative feelings towards new things and may need a little bit of a boost to at least try it.

Growth mindset

Another type of mindset is a growth mindset. According to Maria Popova, a growth mindset “thrives on challenge and sees failure not as evidence of unintelligence but as a heartening springboard for growth and for stretching our existing abilities.” This means that a student who has a growth mindset will be more willing to learn especially when it comes to using new

technologies in the classroom. The growth mindset individuals might help a fix mindset individual by teaching the fix mindset individual how to use the new technologies and they can learn from each other.

Digital Native

Digital natives are one type of two categories that it used to describe people on the internet. These types of people are people who have been around technology since a young age. Marc Prensky describes digital natives as people who “... have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, video games, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age.” While growing up, I didn’t have access to the internet until I was in school and I didn’t have access at home until my sixth-grade year, but I play video games and technology-based toys. This makes me a digital native, even though at first I didn’t think I was.

Digital Immigrant

The other category is a digital immigrant which is the opposite. According to Marc Prensky, digital immigrants are “[t]hose of us who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology”. My parents could be considered digital immigrants, but they had some technology in their high school career. On the other hand, my grandparents are digital immigrants, and they struggle to understand some of the newer technology, but some of the technology that has been around for years they mostly understand.

Application to Teaching

Understanding these key terms can be very useful when teaching children or even teenagers because a teacher needs to understand how his or her students learn to be able to achieve the students' learning needs. If you had a student who will only learn a certain way, he or she might need extra help understanding the new material; a student who can learn multiple ways or loves to learn will pick up on things faster and may be able to help those who struggle. Understanding technology is a key to understanding effective ways to teach students with different learning styles. A student may not have grown up with technology and have very little understanding, but he or she may have a love to learn new things and be willing to learn.

Conclusion

The understanding of different terms used in the education and technology worlds will help one understand how an individual thinks and will help make his or her classroom a place where everyone can learn the material.

References

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