

A Multi-Informant Study on Teachers' Mindset, Instructional Practices, and Student Well-Being

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Education reform has embraced the idea of the growth mindset, which suggests that intelligence is not fixed but can be developed. Teachers who adopt a growth mindset may be more likely to use growth-oriented teaching practices that prioritize student needs, value mastery, and provide constructive feedback. These approaches have been linked to improved academic achievement in students; yet, the impact of a teacher's growth mindset and teaching practices may extend beyond academic outcomes to influence student well-being more holistically.

Few studies have explored the relationship between teacher mindset, teaching practices, and well-being outcomes. To address this gap in the literature, we used two-study design to explore associations between teacher's growth mindset and their students' academic engagement, emotional well-being, and social connectedness in two distinct samples of adolescent students (Study 1: $N = 720$; 47% female; 56% Black, 33% White, 11% other race; Study 2: $N = 1142$; 53% female; 62% White, 32% Black, 6% other race). The study also used a multi-informant approach to measuring teachers' growth-mindset and investigated whether the use of growth-oriented instructional approaches mediated these associations at the student and classroom levels.

Findings revealed that a teacher's instructional practices (i.e., sensitivity to student needs, mastery orientation, high-quality feedback) mediated the association between teachers' mindset (as reported by students) and students' academic engagement, emotional well-being, and social connectedness at the student level. Notably, these associations were not significant in models using teachers' self-reported (as opposed to student-reported) growth mindset. Results also were significant only at the student—but not classroom—level.

The findings suggest that instructional practices play a crucial role in how a teacher's mindset influences student well-being. To promote student well-being, preparatory programs and professional development should focus on helping teachers operationalize growth mindset beliefs in their daily instructional practices and student interactions. By incorporating these findings into teacher training and interventions, educators can create supportive classroom environments that foster academic engagement, emotional well-being, and social connectedness among students.