

# Shifting Mindsets to Grow Awareness

Engaging in self-reflection and building awareness about our knowledge, beliefs, and practices can lead to mindset shifts that positively impact engagement with families and communities of multilingual learners.

**Directions:** The following table shows previous and growth mindsets and examples of how a shift in mindset might impact your practice. Look at the table and jot down notes about your own changing mindsets. You may want to focus on one or two areas that resonate most for you and your context. Or perhaps, drawing from your personal experiences and context, you want to consider an additional mindset shift. There is space provided at the end of the document to do so.

Previous Mindset	Growth Mindset
<b>Teacher-Centered Approach</b> “It’s my multilingual learners’ and families’ job to adapt linguistically and culturally if they want to be successful in my setting/classroom.”	<b>Family- and Community-Centered Approach</b> “It’s my job to learn all I can about my multilingual learners and families’ language and cultural practices to incorporate their practices into my classroom and create opportunities for my students to develop their own identities, interests, and be fully engaged in their language development and learning.”

Instead of focusing only on a particular curriculum guide and set of materials, incorporate multilingual learners’ ideas, interests, family histories and stories, linguistic practices, and cultural practices during planning for, and implementation of, learning.

## My Changing Mindset

Previous Mindset	Growth Mindset
<b>Culture as a Characteristic of a Minoritized Racial/Ethnic Group</b> “I learn about different cultural groups and then adjust my practices accordingly if I have a child from that group in my classroom/learning space.”	<b>Culture as Dynamic and Contextual and Something Everyone Enacts</b> “I get to know each child and their families’ interests, values, ways of knowing and being. I visit the communities of the children I serve.”

Instead of simply trying to learn about a particular group of people, build relationships with the multilingual families you serve, and learn about their individual cultural and language practices. This is not a one-time conversation but an ongoing practice. Learn about, notice, and affirm how multilingual learners’ cultural and language practices change depending on their histories, the setting, who’s involved, and the topics at hand. Consider how we all have cultural and linguistic practices. People’s cultural practices often go unnoticed when people are part of a dominant identity group.

**My Changing Mindset**

Previous Mindset	Growth Mindset
<b>Good Intentions Matter Most</b> “All I want to do is help multilingual learners succeed. I have a good heart and good intentions.”	<b>Impact Matters Most</b> “Although I don’t mean any harm, I recognize the ways I haven’t been responsive to multilingual learners and their families in the past and the negative impact it has had. I am working to build stronger relationships with multilingual learners and their families and get their input along the way.”

Instead of focusing on your own intentions as the measure of how you are promoting and providing learning and language development opportunities for multilingual children, collect ongoing feedback on your environment and resources, and identify whether multilingual learners and families feel like they belong.

**My Changing Mindset**

Previous Mindset	Growth Mindset
<b>Accepting Things as They Are</b> “I understand that systemic barriers, such as limited access to resources and culturally inclusive practices, a deficit perception of bi/multilingualism, or a monolingual approach to learning, impact multilingual learners’ success, but there’s nothing I can do about it.”	<b>Moving Toward Change</b> “I will learn about the history of exclusionary practices in U.S. policies to help me understand more about how deep-rooted deficit ideas about multilingual learners and their families shows up in our work today. I will collaborate with fellow educators, administrators, and multilingual families to explore our own policies and practices to promote more culturally and linguistically responsive opportunities.”

Instead of feeling helpless or blaming others, I am going to deepen my knowledge around the systemic and structural barriers that may be impeding our family and community engagement practices. I will learn from and collaborate with my colleagues, multilingual families, and community members to explore these barriers and find ways to address and overcome them.

**My Changing Mindset**

Previous Mindset	Growth Mindset
<p><b>Assuming Without Asking</b></p> <p>"I wish some of my multilingual families would communicate with me more. I notice they don't come to any of our school events either. They must not be interested in what is happening in their child's school and classroom."</p>	<p><b>Including Family Voice</b></p> <p>"I have realized that we planned school-based events and sent out newsletters and messages to multilingual families without asking them what they need, how they want to be involved, or where they want to connect. I will reach out and make this a two-way conversation. I will also talk with administrators about what we can do at our school."</p>

Instead of assuming families don't care about their children's learning and progress, focus on the systemic two-way shift needed to ensure that families' needs and preferences are being addressed. Find ways to communicate and gather information from families. Include them in planning activities and resolve conflicts that may keep them from being able to be involved in their child's learning and school activities.

**My Changing Mindset**

Previous Mindset	Growth Mindset
<b>One-Way Communication</b> “I feel a bit overwhelmed trying to keep up with meeting all the special needs my multilingual families seem to have. I can’t translate everything that goes home!”	<b>Collaborative and Reciprocal Communication</b> “I am going to connect with my colleagues and my families to problem solve so we can communicate and share information in our families’ preferred languages without overwhelming any of us.”

Instead of leaving it up to the families to figure out how to translate all the information we send home or share online, or to place the responsibility on them to reach out to me, I am going to lean into the opportunity to resolve this issue in collaboration with families and my colleagues. I understand the connections I can make with families using their preferred languages is essential to our ongoing engagement.

**My Changing Mindset**

Previous Mindset	Growth Mindset

**My Changing Mindset**

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