

# Lesson One: Understanding Ourselves: Emotions, Growth Mindset, and Learning Styles

## **Objectives**

1. Students will explore the concepts of emotions, empathy, growth mindset, and learning styles.
2. Students will identify strategies for recognizing and managing their emotions, developing a growth mindset, and leveraging their learning styles for effective learning.
3. Students will be able to identify and label basic emotions.
4. Students will demonstrate understanding of empathy by identifying ways to support others when they experience different emotions.
5. Students will engage in activities to enhance emotional recognition and expression.
6. To help children recognize and understand their own emotions and the emotions of others.
7. To teach children the importance of having a growth mindset and how it can help them overcome challenges.
8. To help children understand their own learning styles and how to leverage them for effective learning.

## **Outcomes:**

1. Students will gain an understanding of emotions, empathy, growth mindset, and learning styles.
2. Students will identify strategies for recognizing and managing their emotions, developing a growth mindset, and leveraging their learning styles for effective learning.

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## **Understanding Ourselves: Emotions, Growth Mindset, and Learning Styles**

### **1. On Emotions**

#### **1.1. Theoretical Background:**

Emotions are complex psychological experiences that involve subjective feelings, physiological arousal, expressive behaviors, and cognitive interpretations (Izard, 2010). A technical definition of “emotion” which would not include the word feel would be so out of touch with ordinary language that it could not possibly ensure successful communication between scientists and “ordinary people,” or indeed between scientists themselves. But emotion refers not only to feelings but also to thoughts (as well as to the body): it is the combination of “feel” and “think” which distinguishes “emotions” from

“sensations.”(What links “emotions” with “sensations” is the combination of “feel” and “body.”

**1.2.Emotional Intelligence:** A Definition of Emotional Intelligence is the measure of an individual’s abilities to recognize and manage their emotions, and the emotions of other people both individually and in groups.

## **2.On Empathy**

Empathy refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, involving both cognitive and affective components (Decety & Jackson, 2004). Empathy is, at its simplest, awareness of the feelings and emotions of other people. It is a key element of Emotional Intelligence, the link between self and others, because it is how we as individuals understand what others are experiencing as if we were feeling it ourselves.

Empathy goes far beyond sympathy, which might be considered ‘feeling for’ someone. Empathy, instead, is ‘feeling with’ that person, through the use of imagination.

### **2.1.Some Definitions of Empathy**

1. Empathy n. the power of entering into another’s personality and imaginatively experiencing his experiences. *Chambers English Dictionary, 1989 edition*
2. “[Empathy is] awareness of others’ feelings, needs and concerns.” Daniel Goleman in *Working with Emotional Intelligence*
3. “Empathy is intuitive, but is also something you can work on intellectually.” Tim Minchin

#### **2.1.1. Understanding Others**

This is perhaps what most people understand by ‘empathy’: in Goleman’s words, “sensing others’ feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns”. Those who do this:

- Tune into emotional cues. They listen well, and also pay attention to non-verbal communication, picking up subtle cues almost subconsciously.
- Show sensitivity, and understand others’ perspectives.
- Are able to help other people based on their understanding of those people’s needs and
- feelings.

All these are skills which can be developed, but only if you wish to do so.

#### **2.1.2. Developing Others**

Developing others means acting on their needs and concerns, and helping them to develop to their full potential. People with skills in this area usually:

- Reward and praise people for their strengths and accomplishments, and provide constructive feedback designed to focus on how to improve.
- Provide mentoring and coaching to help others to develop to their full potential.
- Provide stretching assignments that will help their teams to develop.
- Never criticize a man until you’ve walked a mile in his moccasins. American Indian proverb

### 2.1.3. Leveraging Diversity

1. Being able to create and develop opportunities through different kinds of people, recognizing and celebrating that we all bring something different to the table.
2. tailoring the way you interact with others to fit with their needs and feelings.
3. creating an atmosphere that is respectful towards everyone.

## 2. Growth Mindset:

### Theoretical Background:

Growth mindset, proposed by Carol Dweck, is the belief that abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work (Dweck, 2006). Dweck writes, “In the fixed mindset, everything is about the outcome. If you fail—or if you’re not the best—it’s all been wasted. The growth mindset allows people to value what they’re doing regardless of the outcome. They’re tackling problems, charting new courses, working on important issues. Individuals with a growth mindset view challenges as opportunities for growth and persist in the face of setbacks (Dweck,2015).

Most humans have a fixed mindset about jumping (unaided) off a cliff. No amount of belief in your ability to fly; no amount of “hard work and practice” (e.g. jumping off a stair, a table, etc.) will prepare you to fly. Knowing that you cannot fly and that no amount of work will change your ability to fly, is a normal, appropriate (life-saving) fixed mindset.

Dweck goes on to provide a definition for both:

**Fixed mindset:** “In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort.” (Dweck, 2015)

**Growth mindset:** “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.” (Dweck, 2015)

Whether a student holds a fixed mindset or growth mindset significantly impacts their learning experience—from elementary school to high school. Students that hold a fixed mindset give up when they can’t solve a problem and admit defeat. This can be detrimental to students’ future efforts and leads to limited student growth. With a growth mindset, students continually work to improve their skills, leading to greater growth and ultimately, success. The key is to get students to tune into that growth mindset.

## 3. Learning Styles:

### Theoretical Background:

Learning styles theory suggests that individuals have preferred methods of learning, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities (Felder & Silverman, 1988). Understanding one's learning style can enhance academic performance and improve study strategies (Coffield et al., 2004).

### Introduction to Learning Learning:

Learning learning, also known as metalearning or learning how to learn, is the process of understanding and improving one's own learning strategies and techniques. This concept emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and reflection in the learning process. By understanding how we learn best, we can optimize our learning experiences and outcomes.

Introduction to learning learning involves exploring various theories, models, and practices related to learning, as well as understanding the role of factors such as motivation, attention, memory, and cognition in the learning process. It also involves developing skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and information literacy, which are essential for effective learning in various contexts.

### **Learning Style Assessment:**

Learning styles refer to the preferred ways in which individuals absorb, process, and retain information. Learning style assessments are tools or instruments used to identify an individual's preferred learning style or styles. Common learning style models include visual, auditory,

kinesthetic (or tactile), and multimodal, each emphasizing different sensory modalities or approaches to learning.

Assessment methods may include self-assessment questionnaires, observation, interviews, or psychometric tests. It's important to note that while learning style assessments can provide insights into individual preferences, they are not definitive indicators of how someone learns best, and learning styles are often more nuanced and complex than simple categorizations.

### **Applying Learning Styles:**

Once individuals have identified their preferred learning styles, they can apply this knowledge to enhance their learning experiences and outcomes. For example, visual learners might benefit from using diagrams, charts, and images to represent information, while auditory learners might prefer listening to lectures or discussions.

Kinesthetic learners may benefit from hands-on activities, role-playing, or physical demonstrations to reinforce learning. Multimodal learners, who have preferences across multiple modalities, can employ a variety of techniques to engage with material from different perspectives.

However, it's essential to recognize that effective learning often involves a combination of different strategies and approaches, rather than exclusively relying on one preferred style. Flexibility and adaptability in learning methods can lead to more comprehensive understanding and retention of information. Additionally, considering the context and requirements of specific learning tasks can help individuals select appropriate strategies regardless of their preferred learning style.

### **Questions for Reflection:**

1. Why is it important to recognize and understand our own emotions?
2. How can showing empathy towards others improve relationships?
3. What is the difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset? Why is having a growth mindset important?

4. How can understanding your learning style help you study more effectively?
5. What strategies can you use to develop a growth mindset when facing challenges?
6. How can you incorporate your learning style into your study habits to improve learning outcomes?

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