

By [IU PIIC Mentors Jamie Pitcavage and Denise Ross](#)

Imagine going to the emergency room with a broken arm. The doctor examines the break and says, “This is pretty severe. We’re just going to have to amputate it.” Shocked, you think the doctor would at least try to mend it with a cast, splint, or something! You ask the doctor about those options, but the doctor replies, “Well, this is the way we’ve always done it.”

This scenario seems silly because we would never think this excuse would be valid in a field like medicine, steeped in its research and advancements. The same is true for the business and technology spheres. Why, then, do we in the education profession allow “the way we’ve always done it” as a valid excuse? Our profession needs to be a leader in growth and development. Enter the idea of growth mindset.

The idea of growth and fixed mindsets was brought to the world of education through the work of Carol Dweck, author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*.¹ Through her studies, she articulated the role of mindsets, the degree to which we believe we can grow our intelligences and abilities as opposed to the fixed mindset where these traits are innate or static. From this research, administrators and educators have been making the push to promote a growth mindset in their students yet rarely do they reflect upon their own mindsets.

In our PIIC Quadrants, Quadrant 4 examines the role of reflection, both within the coach and the teachers. Coaches need to be aware of their mindsets revolving around work with their teachers and their own reflective practices. Eduardo Briceno, one of Dweck’s colleagues, created a great visual to understand mindset:

Belief (Mindset) -----> Behavior -----> Outcomes

Coaches can help themselves and teachers be reflective about their mindsets by examining

their outcomes, like results of a classroom activity or the feeling of success (or not) of the BDA cycle. Look at the outcomes; if they aren't quite the ones desired, examine the behavior. What about the behavior could have led to the outcome? What could be changed in behavior to result in a different outcome? This reflective conversation between the teacher and coach occurs in the "After" session.

To help teachers and coaches promote growth mindsets within themselves, it is important to stop and reflect. How can a behavior be changed to help improve outcomes? Understand that change takes time. To promote a growth mindset, coaches need to take baby steps to help shape a culture of growth and development. With a growth mindset, any change to improve practices is a step in the right direction.