

## Mindset Mastery: The Core of Good Teaching

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**A**cting from a particular set of mindset alignments forms the core of Teaching For Success Faculty e-Mentor Program. Mindset mastery is the jumping-off point to significantly improving teaching clarity, competence, and confidence.

There are five **GREAT** mindset orientations that enhance instructors' ability to connect, engage, and inspire student commitment and achievement. If you have not studied or thought about the value of mindset adjustments, the explanation offered here will help understand the concept.

### Why bother?

All of these attitudes represent elements of a general belief and commitment to growth. This conclusion rests firmly on scientific studies that show that the brain is always changing its structure throughout life as we live and learn. Those who harbor a closed mindset believe in fixed characteristics and capabilities that do not change over a lifetime. Unfortunately, a fixed, closed orientation is an easy mindset to embrace, but it prohibits the possessor from stretching, learning and achieving more. It is an essential mindset for instructors and students alike. Constructing a Growth Mindset gives one a great advantage in life. Let's use the mnemonic, GREAT to aid in remembering and applying this powerful construct to teaching and learning.



### Goals

**G** for **Goals** represents the bedrock orientation. It consists of the strong desires that a person translates into definite goals. Goals form from the arising of intense desires to improve one's position, opportunities, status, and capabilities.



Goals, once written and coupled to a deadline, provide the drive and energy to accomplish. Goals provide the focus and clarity needed to keep instruction on track toward the desired outcomes of the course. Goal focus is so important that instructors should review course and the session goals at least once before each class session.

Likewise, students will benefit from an instructor who regularly focuses the students' attention on their overall academic and course goals. The more students remain cognizant of their reasons for enrolling and engaging in learning, the more likely they will stay committed to its completion.



## Results

Perhaps, the toughest orientation to achieve on a regular basis is **R** for **Results**. This mindset alignment explains the difference between those who conduct classes and those who teach for success. Without first embracing a Goal orientation, it is almost impossible in any endeavor to realize consistent and desired results.

Coming to teaching from the aviation industry, I learned that a simple checklist is probably one of the most powerful means of ensuring results. After only a few hours of pilot training, I learned the necessity of using a checklist before every take off and landing to be sure of enjoying a safe result. As the saying goes, there are no old, bold pilots. Aviation is committed to achieving successful results and so should teaching.

Several questions may help pinpoint the most important goals. For example, you could ask, "What results do I want to produce?" List them. Look at your list. Then, identify the one result that you give the highest priority to for achievement. Why does it carry this status? What are the steps required to produce this result? Are you tracking progress toward the result with a checklist or other tool?

When you teach from a Results orientation, students will see a big difference in your teaching contrasted with instructors who wing it and pilot their class anywhere the winds blow.

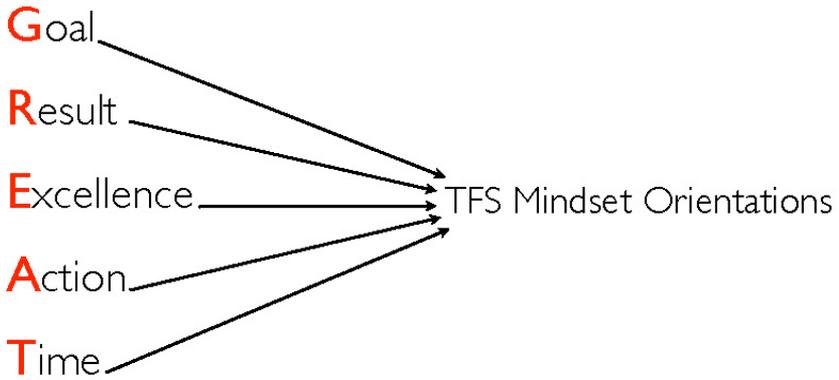
## Excellence

Next, **E** positions our minds on the importance of making an **Excellence** commitment to the realization of each goal at the highest level of performance possible. Teaching For Success is a philosophy built on doing teaching in an excellent manner for the benefit of students and the instructors' sense of job satisfaction and professional status. Getting by in most things demands around a 70 percent effort. Attaining higher level of achievement of goals is usually a matter of 20 or 30 percent more effort and attention.



In addition to effort, excellence appears with proper focus. Today, distractions invite jumping from task to task and goal to goal defusing the concentration that excellence

# The Five Mindset-orientations Faculty Must Develop to Be Effective



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demands. Clarity of purpose, focusing on goals and feeling the desire to progress are essential components of excellence in teaching or learning.

## Action

**Action, A**, reminds instructors wishing and hoping that their students love each class, or that 100 percent of them will complete the course remains a fantasy without applying the work of daily action. The companion attitude to maintaining an action orientation is a firm belief in the value of persistence. Since even well thought-out actions don't always produce desired results, an ongoing commitment to formulate new efforts is essential.

Instructors will find that not every presentation, group project, case study, etc. will work as imagined. There are too many variables in education for it to work all of the time smoothly. Teaching for success means regrouping, analyzing what did not work and trying something different next time. Helping instructors maintain a growth mindset is one reason the TFS e-Mentor Program is so valuable. It provides a wide selection of approaches to solving many teaching problems and challenges so you don't have to reinvent the wheel.



## Time

**Time, T**, represents the instructor's good stewardship of the limited amount of time that can be devoted to the entire course. It recognizes the value down to the minutes students have to complete assignments, study, and integrate new knowledge. Possessing a refined Time orientation means that each teaching and learning moment must count, must have a goal-directed purpose.

Now, this doesn't mean that instruction is regimented and stifling to the exploration of teachable moments and group relationship building. However, it does suggest that the instructor must manage session time to ensure that learning reaches the desired and codified course outcomes.

These five Mindset positions are not exhaustive by any means. Teaching For Success offers these as a starting point for further discussion and inquiry into this complex mental area. It's important to choose the best mindset orientations because they control so much of what happens in teaching and learning.

To that end, the **44 Success Insights** section of the TFS e-Mentor Program reveal to you the expanse of the teaching mindset. These 44 insights have been gathered from education and other professions to provide examples of how high achievers think and act.

TFS recommends that instructors consider sharing some of these mindset information and high-achievement insights with students as they may benefit from them and find ways to apply them to the learning process.

Depending on the subject and nature of the class you teach, a brief discussion of the subject of mindset orientations might prove to be valuable.

Another way to think about mindset and why it so crucial to becoming a good instructor is that your mindset represents your beliefs, your instructional world view about teachers, students, and the nature of education. For example, an instructor who is highly concerned about equality and diversity in education, would work for this goal by operating from a compatible mindset orientation.

**Click here** to enjoy more mindset development via the fantastic collection of **44 "Success Insights"** housed in the TFS e-Mentor Program. Then, benefit from the hundreds of solutions and recommendations for better teaching contained in the other 11 Sections of the TFS e-Mentor Program for teaching improvement.

**Click to go** to the e-Mentor Program's Home Page and the 12-Section Resource list for more teaching improvement.

TFS suggests further study of the value of teaching with a GREAT mindset by reading, *Mindset the New Psychology of Success*, by Carol S. Dweck, PH.D.

