



Pedagogy of Care and Kindness: Humanizing Teaching

Handout #2

Warm, Wise Feedback that supports High Standards + Effort + Ability + Specific Action

A [humanizing element](#) for online courses.

What not to say:			What to say:
			
Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset/Effort	Communicate High Standards + Effort + Ability	Communicate High Standards + Effort + Ability + Specific Action
“Not everyone is good at math. Just do your best.”	“When you learn how to do a new kind of problem, it grows your math brain.”	“This concept can be particularly challenging for many students. I believe that you <u>can</u> be successful in math. When you learn how to do something new, it not only grows your brain, but it builds on your existing abilities.”	“This concept can be particularly challenging for many students. I believe that you can be successful in math. When you learn something your brain grows as you practice. At the beginning of the problem, there’s a missing sign. Go back and include this sign and see how that changes the final value.”



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<p>“That’s okay, maybe math is not one of your strengths.”</p>	<p>“If you catch yourself saying, “I’m not a math person”, just add the word ‘yet’ to the end of the sentence”</p>	<p>“Math 200 includes some challenging concepts for many students that I know you will meet. Everyone can be a ‘math person!’ I believe in you and know with practice you can do this.”</p>	<p>“Math 200 includes some challenging concepts for many students that I know you will meet. I believe that everyone, including you, can be a ‘math person.’ Mistakes tell you that you are learning through your practice. See how you went through each step correctly and although the final answer was incorrect, you correctly computed each previous step up until that point. You’ve got this! Let’s build on this and I’d be happy to give you some more sample problems to practice with.”</p>
<p>“Don’t worry, you’ll get it if you keep trying.”* *If students are using the wrong strategies their efforts might not work. Plus, they may feel particularly inept if their efforts are fruitless.</p>	<p>“That feeling of math being hard is the feeling of your brain growing.”</p>	<p>“Math can seem hard, and this course is challenging. I believe you can do it. Let’s look at each step and make some connections that will give you more confidence.”</p>	<p>“Math was really hard for me in the beginning, too. This course is designed to challenge students because I believe you can do it. I noticed that on step two, you forgot the denominator. Let’s walk through each step together and make some connections that will build on your work.”</p>



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<p>“Great effort! You tried your best.”* *Don't accept less than optimal performance from your students.</p>	<p>“The point isn't to get it all right away. The point is to grow your understanding step by step. What can you try next?”</p>	<p>“This course is designed to ensure you learn from each assignment. The point isn't to get it all right away. When you learn step by step, you are practicing which strengthens your understanding. I believe in you!”</p>	<p>“The point isn't to get it all right away. When you learn step by step, you are practicing, which strengthens your understanding. Look at how well you've approached the first part - you've got this! Let's take a look at the second part to see how you approached it and where you might continue to build on your understanding.”</p>
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Related Resources:

- The chart is an adaptation from Dr. Carol Dweck's article, [Dweck Revisits the Growth Mindset](#).
- Inspired by the critique by Wood, J.L. (2017, November 12). [Prominent scholar calls growth mindset a “cancerous” idea, in isolation](#). *Huffington Post*.
- Wise feedback is a framework derived from Cohen, G. L., & Steele, C. M. (2002). A barrier of mistrust: How stereotypes affect cross-race mentoring. In J. Aronson (Ed.), *Improving academic achievement: Impact of psychological factors on education* (pp. 205-331). Oxford, England: Academic Press.
- For more context and examples of wise feedback, we recommend [Creating a Wise Feedback Framing Statement](#) by the College Transition Collaborative.



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