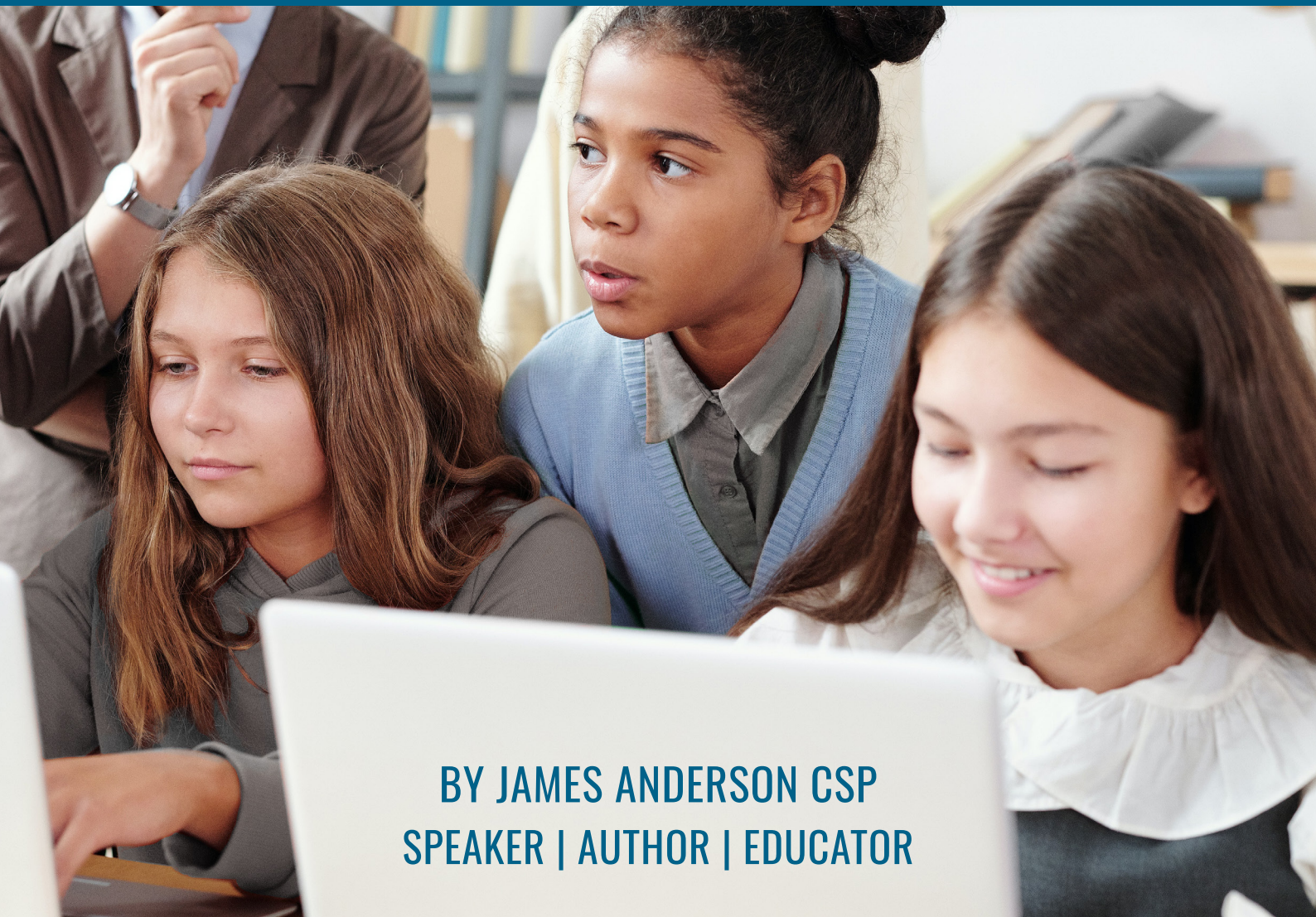


A CASE STUDY IN LEARNERSHIP

ASQUITH GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL:
AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION AWARD FINALIST



BY JAMES ANDERSON CSP
SPEAKER | AUTHOR | EDUCATOR



It has been my pleasure and privilege to sustain a professional collaboration with teachers and leaders at Asquith Girls High School (AGHS) in Sydney since 2019. Together we have created a powerful and innovative program to nurture growth mindsets and develop learnership in their 650 students.

I am absolutely thrilled that Asquith Girls High School has been recognised for this work as a finalist in the 2022 Australian Education Awards for best student wellbeing program.

In this document I provide a case study of how we created a program that demonstrates how you can:

NURTURE GROWTH MINDSETS

INCREASE LEARNERSHIP

DEVELOP HABITS OF MIND, AND

SUSTAIN CULTURAL CHANGE

The results achieved so far have been significant. We have seen measurable improvements in students setting challenging goals and displaying high levels of perseverance, as well as increases in teacher expectations of students. We continue to see changes in teacher practice and the strengthening of a culture of growth in the school.

ABOUT THE AIM PROGRAM

Known in the school as AIM (Asquith Individualised Mentoring) the program we developed pairs each learner with a teacher mentor to support them in creating and articulating their learning goals. A feature of the program is my work to nurture a growth mindset, build learnership capabilities and develop the Habits of Mind in students.

“ I have provided staff with ongoing professional learning and the structures and resources to help them effectively implement Growth Mindset and Learnership in *every classroom, every day*.

The school has done an amazing job of pursuing its vision for creating a culture of aspiration, agility and agencyⁱ where all students are known, valued and cared for. It continues to be a pleasure to have the opportunity to weave my work into this program, and to work with such a passionate group of educators to realise their overall vision.

There have been many people involved in envisaging and creating the AIM program. Special credit must go to Principal Elizabeth Amvrazis and her leadership team for their ongoing commitment to the program.

The key ideas of Growth Mindset, Learnership and Habits of Mind that are woven into the program are relevant to every school.

In this document I outline how we successfully implemented this cultural change program and describe some of the many positive results we've seen so far.

If you're interested in applying this work in your own school, please feel free to contact me at james@jamesanderson.com.au to discuss how.

HOW WE NURTURED A GROWTH MINDSET

What is a growth mindset? Stanford University psychologist, Carol Dweck's describes a Growth Mindset as the belief that your abilities, such as talents and intelligence, can be developed through dedication and hard work. The benefits of a growth mindset include being more persistent, more likely to take on challenges and valuing effort more highly.ⁱⁱ In pursuit of these qualities, many schools have attempted to implement growth mindset programs. Unfortunately, most schools have seen little, if any, impact from these programs.ⁱⁱⁱ

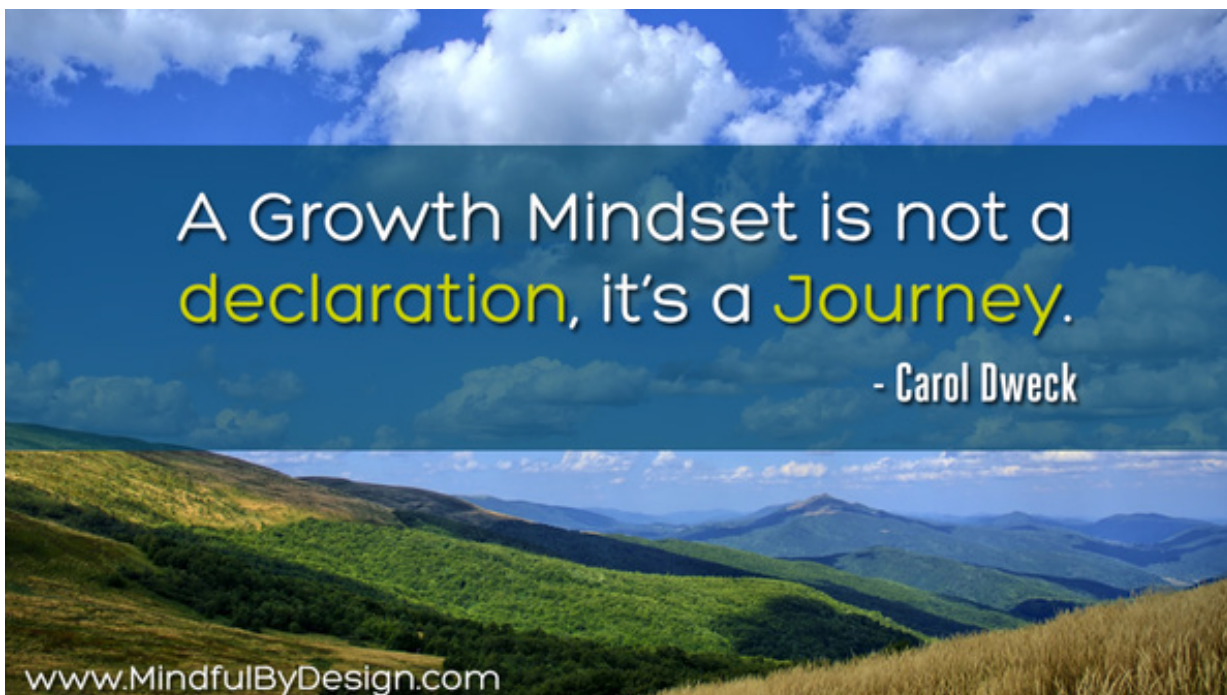


While the benefits of a growth mindset are clear, it turns out that successfully implementing programs that change students' mindsets are rare. Programs that put posters on walls, and use catchphrases like "not yet" simply don't work. In Carol Dweck's own words, "growth mindsets are even more complex than we imagined. In the beginning we did not recognise the complexity of implementation."

“The AIM program is accomplishing what other programs have struggled to do – successfully implement school wide strategies that change students mindsets.”

A key insight in AGHS's growth mindset implementation was to recognise the mindset continuum^{iv}. Looking at the dichotomy of fixed versus growth mindsets works well to understand the importance of a growth mindset. However, seeing mindset as a continuum *between* fixed and growth helps us better understand how to *change* students' mindsets.

In Dweck's words, "a growth mindset is not a declaration, it's a journey", and it is a journey along the mindset continuum.

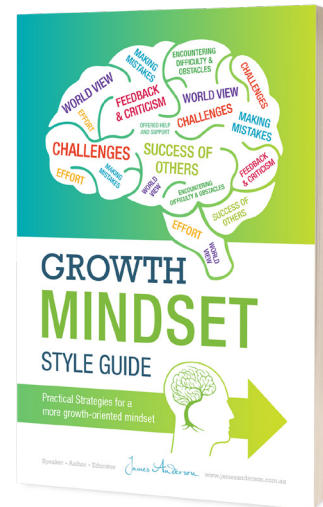


We recognised that successful growth mindset interventions begin not with students, but with teachers. Even well-intentioned teachers can unintentionally create fixed mindset messages in their classrooms. This is what Carol Dweck and Melbourne-based researcher Susan Mackay have identified as the false mindset^v. The False Mindset is our biggest challenge to successfully implementing strategies that change student's mindsets. So, it is critical to give teachers the opportunity to reflect deeply on their own mindsets.

To provide teachers with this opportunity I led extensive professional learning designed to challenge teachers' mindsets, and to help them recognise how their day-to-day interactions – the words they use, the structures they establish, the assessment they use and more – move students along the Mindset Continuum. We developed a school-wide **Growth Mindset Style Guide** to help teachers change their messaging and fill their classroom with growth messages.

The Growth Mindset Style Guide provides teachers with a collection of clear and easily adopted “nudges”. These simple strategies address the false mindset and help to guide teachers’ actions and decisions so they are more likely to create growth messages in their classrooms.

My work focuses on teaching *for* a growth mindset, rather than *about* a growth mindset. By combining our understanding of mindset as a continuum, and how to fill classrooms with more growth messages, the teachers at AGHS have been able to nurture a more growth-oriented mindset in their students.



Measurable Results

The AIM Program has had measurable success in developing a growth mindset and changing student behaviour. According to data gathered by the school through the “Tell Them From Me survey” (a wellbeing and learning tool used widely in NSW public schools)^{vi} the results of this growth mindset approach have included:

- Students setting more challenging goals has increased by 12.5%.
- Students displaying high levels of perseverance has increased 30%.
- Teacher expectation for success – the degree to which teachers hold high expectations for students – rose by 8.5%.

Your success with Growth Mindset will not be measured by the number of students with a Growth Mindset.

It will be measured by how much more growth orientated they have become



HOW WE INCREASED LEARNERSHIP

Setting challenging goals and having high levels of persistence is not enough unless students also understand how to go on and achieve those goals!

A significant goal of the AIM program is to help students become better learners and achieve more. This is where my work in increasing student learnership has been critical.

“Learnership is a concept I have developed to describe the *skill of learning*.”

Like all skills learnership is developed over time, through the deliberate use of practice and dedicated strategies. It is an improvement in the ability to learn. And it results in the learner gaining more from every learning opportunity. It is about *getting better at getting better*.

Learnership describes how learners respond to five key characteristics of learning. Specifically, how they respond to challenge, develop their Habits of Mind, gather information through mistakes and feedback and use their time and energy in what we traditionally call effort. Based on the student's response to these five areas we are able to define six different types of learners as described below.

 LEARNERSHIP: THE SKILL OF LEARNING James Anderson					
	 CHALLENGE	 HABITS OF MIND	 MISTAKES	 FEEDBACK	 TIME & ENERGY
AGILE LEARNER	EMBRACES	CULTIVATES	DESIGNS	TAILORS	GROWING
INDEPENDENT LEARNER	TARGETS	DEVELOPS	USES	REQUESTS	STRIVING
DIRECTED LEARNER	ATTEMPTS	EXTENDS	CORRECTS	RESPONDS	PRODUCING
PERFORMANCE LEARNER	LIMITS	APPLIES	AVOIDS	SELECTS	PERFORMING
BEGINNER LEARNER	REDUCES	DESCRIBES	RECOGNISES	ACKNOWLEDGES	DOING
NON-LEARNER	AVOIDS	IGNORANT	IGNORES	DISREGARDS	WASTES

Measuring Learnership

The Learnership Diagnostic is an online tool specifically designed to assess and identify the prevalence of behaviours associated with each type of learner. It provides insights into the types of learners teachers are working with, allowing them to better target their instruction. The tool provides information on individual learners and can provide aggregates for cohorts of learners or even provide a whole school overview. Importantly, it also provides a mechanism to track improvement in student learnership over time.



Results of the Learnership Diagnostic for Year 11 students at Asquith Girls High School based on student self-reporting, 2022.

Agile Learners

A key goal of the AIM Program is to develop agile learners^{vii}. Agile learners embrace challenges, cultivate their Habits of Mind, design mistakes, tailor feedback and invest more of their time and energy into growth.

“ Agile learners achieve more, both academically and in life.

Utilising the resources and learning design in the AIM Portal described below, the AIM program specifically coaches students in these key areas to improve how they engage in the learning process for better outcomes.

Importantly agile learners surpass “resilience” to become anti-fragile^{viii} by leveraging their challenges to help them grow at every opportunity. By focusing on growth they are proactively future proofing^{ix} themselves by preparing themselves for the future. The result is that they don’t merely survive in our volatile, uncertain and complex world, but thrive in it.

HOW WE DEVELOPED HABITS OF MIND

The Habits of Mind form a central part of the AIM program. Identified by Art Costa and Bena Kallick the Habits of Mind describe the dispositions of excellent problem solvers. These are the dispositions that are skilfully and mindfully employed by successful people when confronted with problems the solutions to which are not immediately apparent.

Persisting  Stick to it! Persevering in task through to completion; remaining focused. Looking for ways to reach your goal when stuck. Not giving up.	Managing Impulsivity  Take your time! Thinking before acting; remaining calm, thoughtful and deliberative.	Listening with Understanding and Empathy  Understand others! Devoting mental energy to another person's thoughts and ideas; Make an effort to perceive another's point of view and emotions.	Thinking Flexibly  Look at it another way! Being able to change perspectives, generate alternatives, consider options.
Thinking About Your Thinking (Metacognition)  Know your Knowing! Being aware of your own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions and their effects on others.	Striving for Accuracy  Check it again! Always doing your best. Setting high standards. Checking and finding ways to improve constantly.	Questioning and Posing Problems  How do you know? Having a questioning attitude; knowing what data are needed & developing questioning strategies to produce those data. Finding problems to solve.	Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations  Use what you learn! Accessing prior knowledge; transferring knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned.
Thinking & Communicating with Clarity and Precision  Be clear! Strive for accurate communication in both written and oral form; avoiding over-generalizations, distortions, deletions and exaggerations.	Gathering Data Through All Senses  Use your natural pathways! Pay attention to the world around you. Gather data through all the senses, taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight.	Creating, Imagining, and Innovating  Try a different way! Generating new and novel ideas, fluency, originality	Responding with Wonderment and Awe  Become intrigued! Finding the world awesome, mysterious and being intrigued with phenomena and beauty.
Taking Responsible Risks  Venture out! Being adventuresome; living on the edge of one's competence. Try new things constantly.	Finding Humor  Laugh a little! Finding the whimsical, incongruous and unexpected. Being able to laugh at one's self.	Thinking Interdependently  Work together! Being able to work in and learn from others in reciprocal situations. Teamwork.	Remaining Open to Continuous Learning  Learn from experiences! Having humility and pride when admitting we don't know; resisting complacency.

Drawing on more than 20 years' experience working with Habits of Mind, I worked with AGHS to develop professional learning and resources to support their work with Habits of Mind (HOM). The HOM provide a common language for learning in the school, that is shared across the school community, including among students, teachers and parents. Beyond being just a language for learning, HOM allow the school community to share a common focus on *how* students are learning, not just *what* they are learning.

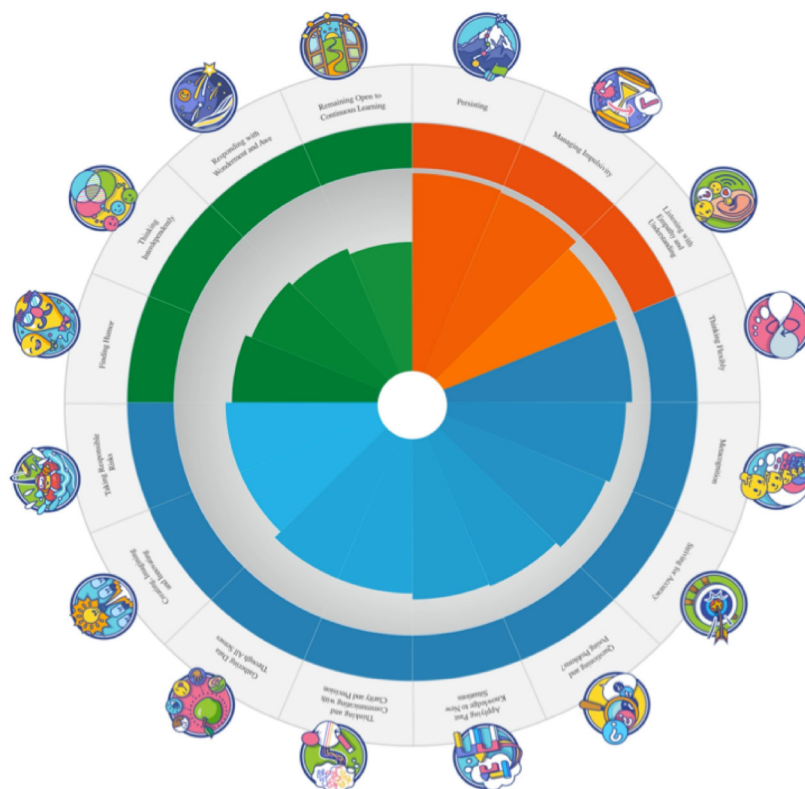
Like all elements of the AIM program, the Habits of Mind form part of the day-to-day work in the classroom. The faculty has had significant training in infusing the Habits of Mind as explicit learning outcomes into unit planning. Drawing on the model provided in *Understanding by Design*, written by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe^x, the faculty were able to explicitly weave the development of the Habits of Mind into unit planning, creating rich tasks that were designed to assess students' deep understanding of the subject areas, and foster their mature application of the Habits of Mind.

The Habits of Mind Profile Tool

An important and unique feature of AGHS's work with Habits of Mind is the Habits of Mind Profile Tool^{xi}. This powerful new tool provides a unique way of assessing a student's Habits of Mind. It provides a snapshot of the student's current level of development and gives insight and direction to guide future growth.

The creative way the tool can compare a student's Habits of Mind to the demands of the rich tasks set for them in each learning unit, allows teachers to provide individualised Habits of Mind profiles and identify individually targeted learning plans for each student.

HABITS OF MIND PROFILE TOOL



HOW WE SUSTAIN CULTURAL CHANGE

The AIM Portal is the centrepiece of the AIM program and critical to its success. For sustained cultural change to occur it is essential that any program be woven into the bigger life and vision of the school. Standalone programs rarely stand the test of time.

Too many schools have experienced the slow decay of programs as priorities shift, commitments waver, learning is forgotten and staff and leadership change over time. Not to mention the immediate pressures teachers experience when delivering the curriculum every day which can force other priorities into the background.

The AIM Portal is specifically designed to address these challenges. It provides the structures, resources, and professional learning to support, sustain and nourish the AIM program over time. The structure provides a mechanism for teachers to revisit, refresh and recommit to the ideals of the AIM program throughout each term.

Asquith Girls High School
Excellence. Commitment. Effort. Leadership.

Overview YEAR 7 YEAR 8 YEAR 9 YEAR 10 Additional Resources My Courses

AIM Portal - Asquith Girls High School

Developing Learnership and Growth Mindset for better results.

[Enter Portal](#)

Categories

14

- AIM - an overview**
How does the AIM program help students develop Learnership and a Growth Mindset as they move through year 7 - 10?
- Term 1 - Understanding Learning**
In term 1 we ask what it means to be a learner. How do we engage in the learning process in an increasingly skilful way? How do we develop the skills of an Agile Learner?
- Term 1 - Year 7**
Year 7's explore some of the Mindset messages that have created self-limiting beliefs and unpack these to help nurture an increasingly growth-oriented mindset.
- Term 1 - Year 8**
Year 8's begin to develop their understanding of learning as a skilful process and are introduced to the idea of Learnership. They complete their first Learnership diagnostic.
- Term 1 - Year 9**
Year 9's are exploring how Agile Learners engage in the Learning Process. They take a deep dive into understanding the skill of learning.

AIM Program

Asquith Girls High School

0 of 99 Lessons Completed

Co-creating the AIM Program

James Anderson
Speaker. Author. Educator

The AIM program belongs to Asquith Girls High School. It's up to every teacher to breathe life and depth into the program by contributing your lesson ideas, resources, reflections and suggestions. This program should be considered a living document. Use the discussion session in each lesson to ask questions and contribute ideas. Email James@jamesanderson.com.au with

AIM Portal Home Page. The online portal provides all the resources for implementing the AIM program.

AGHS has committed to every student having two to three AIM program lessons each term as part of the school time table. It is these lessons that provide the regular opportunity for students to explore key ideas related to growth mindset, learnership and Habits of Mind.

“ These lessons further provide the regular impetus for teachers to continue their professional learning, and facilitate the ongoing infusion of growth mindset, learnership and Habits of Mind into classroom practice.

The AIM Portal is directly linked to these lessons. It provides the structure of the AIM program in the form of a scope and sequence of lessons for the entire AIM program (over 50 lessons), as well as all the resources required to deliver the learning.

The structure of each lesson in the portal provides ongoing professional learning, student activities and teacher actions to integrate and infuse the key ideas into every lesson.

Scope and Sequence for Learnership

The AIM Portal is carefully structured to provide a sustained and sequenced approach to nurturing a growth mindset, improving learnership and developing Habits of Mind.

A theme is adopted for each school term that provides a shared focus and common experience for all students and teachers at every year level throughout the school. As teachers move between year levels they can be confident they are familiar with the general focus of the AIM program the students are experiencing that term.

The focus for each term is:

Term 1 – Understanding Learning: A focus on mindset and becoming a skilful learner.

Term 2 – Habits of Mind: Building a shared language of learning and creating and using your Habits of Mind profile to guide development.

Term 3 – Challenges: Understanding the nature of challenges and becoming comfortable with the discomfort of being in your learning zone.

Term 4 – Achieving Growth: Investing time and energy in growth. Changing the meaning of assessment.

In a similar way, the focus and complexity of each year level increases each year to target age-appropriate strategies to ensure students become increasingly skilful, agile learners who have agency in the world. The focus for each year level is:

Year 7: We are Learners.

Students focus on understanding themselves as learners, recognising how they engage in the learning process, building a deep understanding of learning as a skill and developing a language for learning through the Habits of Mind.

Year 8: Becoming Skilful Learners.

Students focus on developing how they engage in the learning process. They build their first Habits of Mind profile to give insights into their development. They become increasingly familiar with their learning zone and their relationship with it, as they learn to become comfortable with the discomfort of stretch, challenge and effort.

Year 9: Taking Charge of Learning.

Students are becoming increasingly self-directed learners. They are taking charge of the development of their Habits of Mind, setting challenging goals and recognising how they are developing as skilful learners.

Year 10: Becoming Agile Learners.

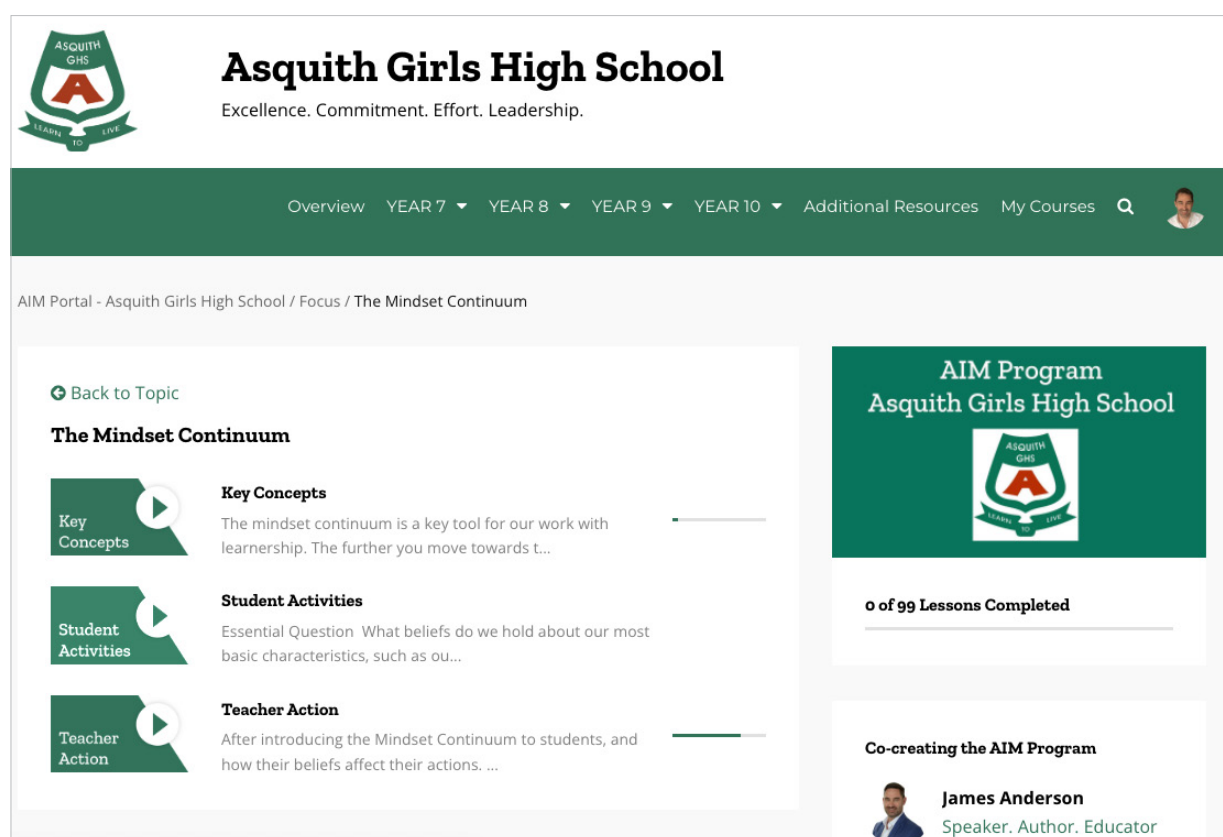
Students are now very aware of how they engage in the learning process and are actively developing the skills of an agile learner.

“ The resulting experience for students is a four-year program that spirals through key elements of nurturing a growth mindset and developing learnership. A familiar pattern is followed each year, with the complexity of the ideas and strategies increasing year upon year.

AIM Lessons

Each lesson in the AIM Portal consists of three elements:

- 1 **Professional learning** related to key concepts being covered.
- 2 **Student activities** to explore and develop skilful learning with students.
- 3 **Teacher actions** with insights and pedagogy for teachers to implement in day-to-day teaching practice.



The screenshot shows the AIM Portal for Asquith Girls High School. The header includes the school's logo and name, followed by a navigation bar with links for Overview, Year 7 through Year 10, Additional Resources, My Courses, and a search icon. Below the header, the page title is 'AIM Portal - Asquith Girls High School / Focus / The Mindset Continuum'. The main content area is titled 'The Mindset Continuum' and features three sections: 'Key Concepts', 'Student Activities', and 'Teacher Action', each with a play button icon and a progress bar. To the right, there is a green box titled 'AIM Program Asquith Girls High School' with the school's logo and a progress bar indicating '0 of 99 Lessons Completed'. Below this, a section titled 'Co-creating the AIM Program' features a profile picture of James Anderson, identified as 'Speaker. Author. Educator'.

An AIM Lesson: Each lesson contains 3 key elements: Key Concepts, Student Activities and Teacher Action.

Professional Learning

While the initial intensive professional learning was provided, the AIM Portal provides short video lessons (five to 20 minutes in length) focused on the topic being addressed in the AIM lesson. This “Just in Time” professional learning revisits key ideas, gives appropriate examples and gives teachers the opportunity to regularly refresh their learning.

These regular professional learning videos are excellent reminders for staff who have experienced the whole school professional learning. They are also a wonderful way to support new staff to the school and by “drip feeding” professional learning in the areas of growth mindset, learnership and Habits of Mind it keeps the ideas front of mind for teachers and administration.

The AIM Portal provides the professional learning and support required to successfully deliver this rich and extensive program.

Student Activities

The student activities section of the AIM lesson is not prescriptive. Rather, it provides teachers with the key learning outcomes expected to be achieved in that lesson, including questions for class discussion and suggested classroom activities. A wide range of supporting resources are also provided. In this way teachers are supported in designing lessons that are suited to the individual needs of their students.

The AIM Portal also provides an opportunity for teachers to share their experiences teaching the lesson. In this way the AIM portal is a living document where strategies, approaches and resources that prove useful can be collected and reused over time.

“**...the AIM portal is a living document where strategies, approaches and resources that prove useful can be collected and reused over time.**”

Teacher Action

One of the biggest challenges for any professional learning is how to apply the theory in classroom practice. The Teacher Action section of the AIM lesson provides immediate, relevant and detailed instruction on how to apply the key ideas around growth mindset, learnership and Habits of Mind, into classroom practice. This ensures that students’ AIM lesson experiences are immediately applied in the classroom.

HOW YOU CAN DEVELOP LEARNERSHIP IN YOUR SCHOOL

The AIM program and the AIM Portal are the result of more than three years of focused, sustained work by Asquith Girls High School. The school's recognition as a Finalist in the Australia Education Awards is a testament to the depth, rigour and quality of the program.

While the AIM program is uniquely woven into Asquith Girls High School, the key ideas of nurturing a growth mindset, improving learnership and developing students' Habits of Mind to improve student learning outcomes are applicable in every school.

The AIM Portal is highly transferable and provides the professional learning, scope and sequence, structures and resources necessary to implement and sustain this important work in any school environment.

If you'd like to find out more about how you can quickly implement a similar program in your school, please contact James directly via email at james@jamesanderson.com.au or book a time in his calendar at www.jamesanderson.com.au/calendar.

Best Wishes,

James

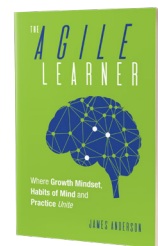


FURTHER READING

James Anderson has published the following publications and e-books to support your professional learning:

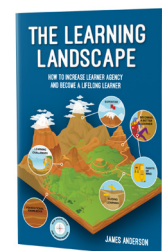
- **The Agile Learner**

The Agile Learner unites three powerful ideas: Growth Mindset, Habits of Mind and Virtuous Practice. In *The Agile Learner* you'll discover how to change your students' Mindsets by moving them along the Mindset Continuum™. Importantly, you'll learn how to engage students in the process and behaviours that achieve growth and the development of new talents.



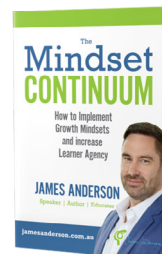
- **The Learning Landscape**

In *The Learning Landscape*, James Anderson outlines a powerful metaphor for visualising learning. Mapping the abstract concept of learning onto a physical journey in the real world, the learning process is made tangible and accessible to learners.



- **The Mindset Continuum**

In *The Mindset Continuum*, James Anderson gives deep insights into the practical application of Carol S. Dweck's work. He explains why most current Growth Mindset interventions are failing and provides clear and compelling direction for schools wanting to implement Growth Mindset strategies that work!



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- xi. Available at www.jamesanderson.com.au/habits-of-mind-profile-tool.

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