Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

The Fixed Mindset:
“Believing that your qualities are carved in stone.” (Dweck, pg. 6)

The Growth Mindset:
“...the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts...
Everyone can change and grow through application and experience.” (Dweck, pg. 7)

How could this sound in a one-on-one conversation with a student?

• “I can’t understand my chemistry professor. I was always really good at chemistry in high school, but it just isn’t clicking anymore. I think I’m going to withdraw from the class, as I’m pretty sure I’m going to fail anyway.” (Fixed Mindset)

• “My chemistry class is really challenging. The subject always came easily to me in high school, but now it’s requiring a lot more time to grasp the concepts. It won’t be an easy class to pass, but I know I can do well if I increase my studying, use professor office hours and stay on top of the work.” (Growth Mindset)

Reframing Activity

Fixed Mindset: “The first midterm didn’t go well. The class is a lot harder than I expected, and I’m just not getting it.”
Reframe as Growth Mindset:

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Fixed Mindset: “My instructor was really difficult to understand. I went to class every day, but it just didn’t make a difference. I don’t think there’s any way I’ll be able to understand the material.”
Reframe as Growth Mindset:

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Fixed Mindset: “The test questions didn’t look anything like what we covered in class. It was like the professor was trying to trick us. There’s no way I could have prepared for them.”
Reframe as Growth Mindset:

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EKolby, 2014; Adapted from Schauss & Thomas, OSU, 2014