

Educational Psychology

Overview Guide

Growth mindset

A growth mindset is a term developed by Carol Dweck in her studies of human motivation. A growth mindset is defined as believing that your abilities and talents can be developed through dedication and hard work and that struggles help us to become better learners. In contrast, a fixed mindset emphasises that their basic qualities are fixed traits about yourself, such as, natural ability/intelligence. People with a fixed mindset may believe that their talent alone creates success and disregard effort.

Why does having a growth mindset matter?

Your mindset affects how you approach a task, resiliency and ultimately the success of a task. Displaying a growth mindset is the difference between a child giving up because they “aren’t good at maths” and a child sticking at a task regardless of the outcome. Dweck’s research has shown that pupils who are taught about growth mindset perform better in school and exhibit more motivation in the classroom. They are happier and have a more positive approach to learning (Dweck, 2014).

How to encourage children to have a growth mindset?

Learning how to foster a growth mindset takes time and practice which needs consistent reinforcement and adult modelling.

- **Praise** effort rather than the outcome and avoid praising intelligence and celebrate growth.
- **Normalise struggle.** Struggle is part of the learning process, and reinforcing that idea helps students react positively when they feel challenged, including seeing adults struggle. Equally, ensure that work is challenging but engaging.
- **Embrace the word “yet”.** Adding the word “yet” to a negative statement made about their abilities encourages the child to continue until they are able to do the task or skill.
- **Demonstrate mistakes and celebrate corrections.** Mistakes should be viewed as learning opportunities. Teachers can model this outlook in reactions to their own mistakes and steps they take to correct a mistake. It can be useful to do these collaboratively with others.
- **Set goals can help children to track and view their** growth and progress.
- **View challenges as opportunities.** Students aren’t the only ones facing challenges; teachers and administrators can benefit just as much from an outlook that celebrates the process.
- **Communicate about your growth mindset to establish a culture which embraces challenges and a growth mindset.**

Resources:

Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random house.

https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve?subtitle=en