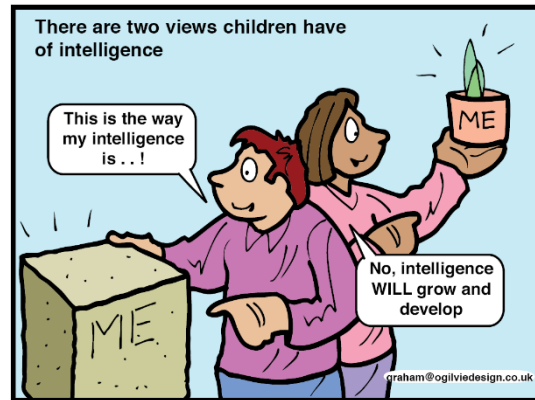


Fixed and Growth Mindsets

Based on the research of
Carol Dweck

"Mindset" The new psychology of success

How we can learn to fulfil our potential



Born SMART....?



Scientists are learning that people have more capacity for lifelong learning and brain development than they ever thought. Of course, each person has a unique genetic code. People may start with different temperaments and different aptitudes, but it is clear that experience, training, and personal effort takes them the rest of the way.

Some children, and adults, believe that many of their qualities are fixed at birth and that they are born with a set of 'gifts', 'talents' and 'resources' and an intelligence quotient that cannot be changed. In contrast, some children, and adults, believe that these traits are not simply a 'hand you are dealt' and have to live with, but that this is a starting point for development. This growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts.

Fixed Mindset Beliefs	Growth Mindset Beliefs
Intelligence and ability are fixed	Intelligence and ability can grow and develop
Represented by scores in a test	You can't measure someone's potential
Look clever at all costs	It's ok not to know everything yet
Failure shows a lack of intelligence	The road will be bumpy, failures are part of the journey to success
If you fail, avoid the activity	Mistakes and failures help you to improve
Intelligent people shouldn't have to work hard	Learning requires hard work and effort

Fixed mindset learners: Don't like challenge, like easy performance goals, like being told they've done well, don't like it when they get questions wrong (including trying to hide mistakes), often react to failure by switching off, don't like feedback and criticism, feel under pressure to show they are 'good' at the task at hand.

Growth mindset learners: Thrive on challenge, enjoy hard tasks, appreciate the value of feedback, learn from mistakes, try harder in the face of difficulties, persevere when faced with setbacks, like challenging learning goals, engage in self-monitoring, and are inspired by others.

Teach pupils about fixed and growth mindsets

When children understand mindsets it helps them to identify when they may be displaying a fixed or growth mindset. It helps them to understand that their intelligence, musicality, sporting success, creativity, etc., are not limited, but can grow and develop.

Value mistakes

The road to success is bumpy. Mistakes are a natural part of learning. They help us to develop, make new connections, take corrective action, think of alternative approaches and consider new learning. We gain a great deal from making mistakes. Help children to recognise this.

Use growth mindset praise

Praise:

- Effort, persistence, struggle despite setbacks
- Strategies and choices
- Choosing difficult and challenging tasks
- Learning, improving

Consider the power of the word 'yet'.

Play games and work together on 'challenges'

Games can often help build resilience, particularly those that require deep thinking. Working together and enjoying puzzles and problem solving can be useful in helping pupils to develop a growth mindset approach to undertaking new challenges.

Books, poems, stories, films

Books, poems, stories and films in which characters demonstrate a growth mindset, e.g. a character who shows perseverance in order to overcome a difficulty or problem. Use these as vehicles for discussing what the character did when faced with problems, what strategies they used and what might have happened if the character had not had a growth mindset.

Learning about the brain

Learning about the brain and brain development helps children to understand that the brain can change and develop as they learn.

Ten ways to support the development of a growth mindset

Cultivate your own growth mindset

Try to develop and cultivate your own growth mindset. Recognise when you are in danger of having a fixed mindset.

Developing and using positive self-talk

Instead of...	Try...
I give up	I'll try a different strategy
It's good enough	Is it really my best work and effort?
This is too hard	This may take some time
I made a mistake	Mistakes help me learn
I'll never be good at this	I'm going to train my brain and grow my skills
Plan A didn't work	There's always plan B

The language of challenge

The 'learning pit', 0-10 scales, traffic lights, the 'brain gauge', etc., are all tools for helping children to discuss the level of challenge and how it feels. Are they in 'panic' zone as the task is too challenging, or are they in 'coast' mode as the task is not sufficiently challenging?

Please be aware that sometimes home learning is set at a level of comfort that allows pupils to work independently or for a specific reason. For example a reading task which they can decode easily may be used to help pupils practice and develop skills such as fluency or expression. Sometimes 'freeing -up' certain brain resources in one area can be useful to aid the development of other aspects.

Role Models

People who are successful in their field, yourselves or people they know can make great role models. Talk to children about the growth mindset qualities these role models have used in order to be successful— e.g. hard work, perseverance, an analytical approach, using feedback, practice, commitment, trying different strategies, choosing a challenge, etc. Help children to understand that these people are not just naturally gifted, but have had to work hard to develop their skills. They were once novices! They have often faced setbacks.