

Mindset

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“A few modern philosophers assert that an individual’s intelligence is a fixed quantity, a quantity which cannot be increased. We must protest and react against this brutal pessimism. With practice, training, and above all, method, we manage to increase our attention, our memory, our judgment and literally to become more intelligent than we were before.”

- Alfred Binet, creator of the IQ test

Fixed versus Growth

MINDSETS

Mindset Video

Mindsets

Fixed

- Intelligence is static
- Challenges are avoided when seen as insurmountable.
- Effort is avoided.
- Negative feedback is ignored or explained away.
- Others' success is seen as a benchmark for looking bad.
- May plateau early and have a deterministic view of the world.

Growth

- Intelligence can be developed.
- Embrace challenges.
- Effort is the path to mastery
- Learn from criticism.
- Find inspiration and information in the success of others.
- Higher levels of achievement and a greater sense of free will

Teacher behavior and language

MINDSETS IN THE CLASSROOM

Language establishes a mindset

What mindset do the following compliments create in students?

- You're learned so quickly! You're so smart!
- Look at that drawing! Is he the next Picasso or what?
- You're so brilliant, you got an A without even studying?

Language establishes a mindset

What mindset do the following compliments create in students?

- You worked really hard on this.
- You did a great job on this painting. Your skills continue to improve.

Evidence from research

- Two groups of junior high school students were followed for two years.
- One group was taught that intelligence and talent could be developed over time.
- The other group was taught that intelligence and talent were in-born traits that couldn't be changed.
- The second group actually did worse in achievement over the two year period.

Dweck's claim

- “After seven experiments with hundreds of children, we had some of the clearest findings I’ve ever seen: Praising children’s intelligence harms their motivation and it harms their performance.”

Do you find this to be true?

How to praise

- Praise effort and strategy, not intelligence.
- Make praise specific.
- Praise in private.
- Offer praise only when there is a good reason for it.

What do you think about this?

Why mindset is critical before even starting DI

MINDSET AND DI

DI and Mindset

- If students are in a fixed place, then there is no need to differentiate for them.
- If failure is permanent, then there is no reason for growth.
- If school is a zero-sum game, then there must be winners and losers, i.e. some students must fail to validate those who make A's.

Discussion

- Why is Mindset important before considering DI?

Watch this video

Discussion

- Are you willing to let students have redos, retakes, and do-overs?
- Why or why not?

Advice

- Take a mindset survey of your grade-level team, department, or faculty. This survey can start some great conversations.
- The more you reinforce a growth mindset with students in your actions and words, the better they will do.
- Be mindful of how you praise students. Work should always be praised while intelligence should never be praised.
- Growth applies to you as much as it does your students.

Final discussion

- What are the implications of mindset for DI?

References

- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Ballantine: New York.
- Pink, D. H. (2009). *Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us*. Penguin Publishing: New York.