



***Transforming Motivation to Learn***

**MINDSETS IN THE CLASSROOM**

**DOWNLOADABLE TOOLS &  
RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS**

**[www.mindsetworks.com](http://www.mindsetworks.com)**

## Background: Suggested Reading

*Introductory article summarizing key research:*

- Dweck, Carol (2008). “Boosting Achievement With Messages That Motivate.” *Education Canada*, 47, 6-10. <http://www.stac.qld.edu.au/documents/Boosting%20Achievement.pdf>

*Additional articles for those interested in applications to practice:*

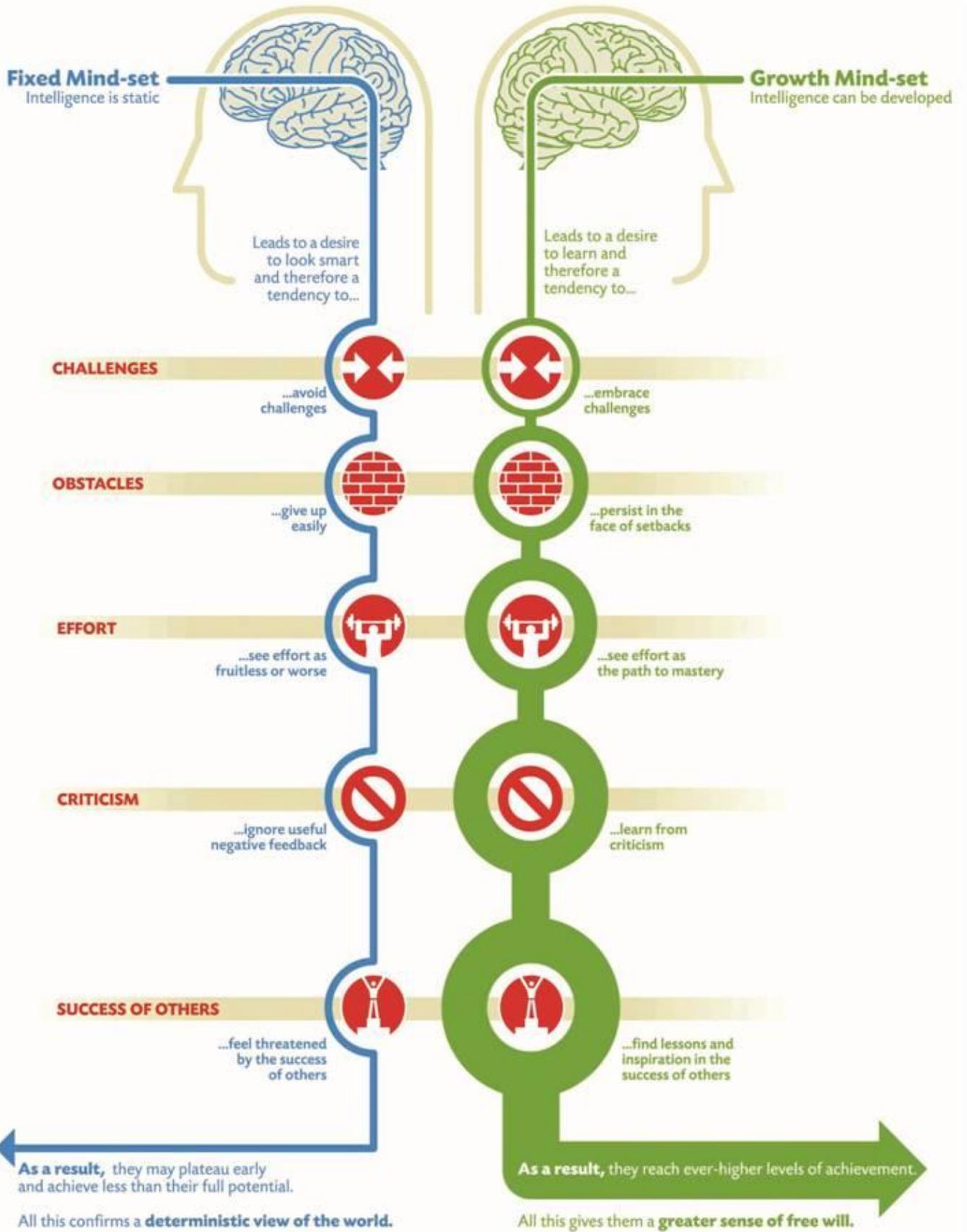
- Dweck, Carol (2010). "Even Geniuses Work Hard." *Educational Leadership (ASCD)*, 68, 16-20. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept10/vol68/num01/Even-Geniuses-Work-Hard.aspx>
- Blackwell, Lisa (2011). “The Power of Mistakes: Creating a Risk-Tolerant Culture at Home and School.” *Mindset Works Blog*. <http://community.mindsetworks.com/the-power-of-mistakes-creating-a-risk-tolerant-culture-at-home-and-school>
- Blackwell, Lisa (2012). “Grading for Growth in a High-Stakes World.” *Mindset Works Blog*. <http://community.mindsetworks.com/tips-on-grading-for-a-growth-mindset>
- Blackwell, Lisa (2012). “Developing a Growth Mindset School Culture.” *Mindset Works Blog*. <http://community.mindsetworks.com/developing-a-growth-mindset-school-culture>

## Introduction to Mindsets

**Mindsets** are beliefs individuals hold about their most basic qualities and abilities. In a **Growth Mindset**, people believe they can develop their brain, abilities, and talents. This view creates a love for learning, a drive for growth and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishments. On the contrary, people with a **Fixed Mindset** believe that basic qualities such as intelligence and abilities are fixed, and can't be developed. They also believe that talent alone creates success, and see effort as a sign of weakness rather than as an effective strategy needed to reach one's full potential.

Research has shown that students who hold a Growth Mindset perform better than those with a Fixed Mindset, especially under conditions of challenge (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007). However, these mindsets themselves are learned, and they can be changed. Adult feedback can influence students' mindset and performance in powerful ways (Mueller & Dweck, 1998). And when students are taught that the brain develops and gets smarter with effort and learning, they become more motivated in school and perform better (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003.)

The following diagram shows how people with different views of intelligence respond in different situations:



GRAPHIC BY NIGEL HOLMES

## *Activity – The Two Mindsets*

Description: The Two Mindsets Initial lesson (Introduces the two Mindsets)

Timeline: approximately 35-50 minutes

Instructions:

- Tell the class, “Today I have something to show you that is a graphic organizer. This graphic organizer’s purpose is to help us understand an important concept about people and what makes them successful. Would you like to learn about how to become successful at something that you want to master?”
- Complete the reflection as a model for your students. Show them how you struggled with something that you had to figure out how to overcome. Model that you did not have all the answers easily.
- Ask students to complete the reflection for something they want to succeed in doing well.
- Present the Nigel Holmes graphic on the two Mindsets. Explain that this came from years of research showing that people can choose to respond in one of two ways whenever they have a challenge (whether that challenge is large or small). Ask them to think about the reflection they just wrote as the class reviews the two Mindsets.
- Begin with the Fixed Mindset. Review and have students help to read each part to the class. Next go over the Growth Mindset.
- Ask the class to think about their reflection. Are they approaching their challenge in the Growth or the Fixed Mindset? Ask them to explain, using language from the graphic organizer.
- You may use the template on the following page with students to:
  - Help put students in a growth mindset frame while preparing to learn a new concept or skill;
  - Provide feedback while they are in the process of learning and practicing;  
or
  - Assess how they approached the new material after a learning session, task, or assignment.

## Mindset Scan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I am :

- about to begin learning
- in the process of learning & practicing
- finished with a task or assignment

The learning goal or task I will write about is:

For each of the rows below, check the box that describes you best. In the above situation, how will you or did you respond? Then finish the statement on the right.

In the situation above I...		I know this because...
Avoid challenges <input type="checkbox"/>	Embrace challenges <input type="checkbox"/>	
Give up easily <input type="checkbox"/>	Persist with setbacks <input type="checkbox"/>	
Put in little effort <input type="checkbox"/>	Put in my full effort <input type="checkbox"/>	
Ignore feedback <input type="checkbox"/>	Learn from criticism <input type="checkbox"/>	
Feel threatened by the success of others <input type="checkbox"/>	Find inspiration in another's success <input type="checkbox"/>	

# Growth mindset ways to challenge, praise, and encourage students

## When students succeed with little effort

- “Wow, you got another A on that test without even studying? I’m sorry that I may have wasted your time with things that are too easy for you. Let’s think of something you can do that will give you more of a challenge.”
- “You always do so well on your \_\_\_\_\_. What do you do to prepare or to succeed? Would you share your strategies with the class?”
- “Addition and subtraction seem to come easily to you! What do you think you might do if you are taught a skill that you are confused about?”

## When students succeed as a result of effort

- “I am so proud of the effort you put forth in order to improve your grade..(make the team, remain on task, complete your homework 3 days in a row).”
- “You really put your mind to it. I guess the struggle was worth it!”
- “It was great to watch you work so hard to accomplish this.”
- “Going to extra help every day really paid off. It mustn’t have been easy to get up early every morning, the effort was obviously worth it.”
- “You really accepted our suggestions for studying, managing your time (behavior, etc). You must feel very good about your accomplishment.”

## When students face disappointment or failure

- “OK, so you didn’t do as well as you wanted to. Let’s look at this as an opportunity to learn.
- “What parts did you do well in? What parts were difficult for you?”
- “Let’s look at the difficult parts. What (specifically) can you do next time to improve?”
- “What did you do to prepare for this? Is there anything that you could have done differently?”
- “Do you know anyone who does well in this area? Maybe we can find out what strategies they use to achieve this task.”
- “How can I help you to do this?”

## References

- Aronson, J., Fried, C. B., & Good, C. (2002). Reducing stereotype threat and boosting academic achievement of African-American students: The role of conceptions of intelligence. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 113 – 125.
- Blackwell, L., Trzesniewski, K., & Dweck, C. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. *Child Development*, 78(1), 246 – 263.
- Cohen, GL, Steele, CM, & Ross, LD (1999). The mentor’s dilemma: Providing critical feedback across the racial divide. *Personality & Social Psych Bulletin*, 25, 1302-1318.
- Cohen, GL, & Steele, CM (2002). A barrier of mistrust: How stereotypes affect cross-race mentoring. In J. Aronson (Ed.), *Improving academic achievement: Impact of psychological factors on educations* (p. 305-331). Oxford, England: Academic Press.
- Dweck, C. (2007). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Good, C., Aronson, J., & Inzlicht, M. (2003). Improving adolescents’ standardized test performance: An intervention to reduce the effects of stereotype threat. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 24, 645 – 662.
- Mueller, C., & Dweck, C. (1998). Praise for intelligence can undermine children's motivation and performance. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 75 (1), 33-52.
- Yeager, D.S., Trzesniewski, K.H., & Dweck, C.S. (in press). An Implicit Theories of Personality Intervention Reduces Adolescent Aggression in Response to Victimization and Exclusion. *Child Development*.
- Yeager, D.S., Trzesniewski, K.H. Tirri, K., Nokelainen, P., & Dweck, C.S. (2011). Adolescents' implicit theories predict desire for vengeance after peer conflicts: Correlational and experimental evidence. *Developmental Psychology*, 47, 1090-1107.
- Yeager, DS, & Walton, GM (2011). Social psychological interventions in education: They’re not magic. *Review of Educational Research*, 81, 267-301.