

### **Fixed mindset vs. growth mindset**

- In a **fixed mindset**, students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb.
- In a **growth mindset**, students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching, and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it.

### **Strategies to help students develop growth mindset in class:**

- **Set achievable micro-goals- to increase confidence.**  
Small wins repeated over time can lead to a growth mindset (and increased confidence!).
- **Encourage hard work, not cleverness.** When students succeed, praise their efforts and strategies as opposed to their intelligence.
- **Set growth mindset norm.** Create opportunities to celebrate and publicly reflect on mistakes.
- **Allow multiple opportunities** -Provide opportunities to re-take quizzes, tests, and do multiple draft essays (if possible).
- **Allow choices-** explore many topics early on. Give students the opportunity later on to choose a topic of interest for a deeper dive.
- **Avoid sorting students into ability groups** (high performers vs low performers). Communicate high expectation from all students early on.
- **Use cooperative, rather than competitive assignments.** Students are more motivated and successful when working in groups.
- **Step out of your comfort zone-** Try something new with your class that may not work out (perfectly from first time), as long as you communicate to your students your purpose in doing so.
- **Focus on and value the process of learning-**Without this emphasis on learning, students will often base self-perceptions of intelligence and worth on grades received, promoting a fixed mindset.
- **Don't forget about formative assessment-** Encourage students to be upfront about what they're struggling with and ask for help when it's needed.
- **Give Specific Feedback-** Early and frequent feedback is important to let student know where they need to improve.
- Provide resources and specific recommendations for practice (writing center, tutoring).
- **Give students an audience-** Take advantage of digital communications- let them lead classroom communications.

### **Resources**

Duckworth, A. *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. (2016).

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Ericsson, A. and Pool, R. *Peak: Secrets form the new science of expertise*. (2016).

Gladwell, M. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. (2011).

Kahneman, D. *Thinking Fast and Slow*. (2011).

- Paunesku, D., Walton, G. M., Romero, C., Smith, E. N., Yeager, D. S., & Dweck, C. S. (2015). Mindset interventions are a scalable treatment for academic underachievement. *Psychological Science*, 26, 784–793.
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- Rimfeld, K., Kovas, Y., Dale, P. S., & Plomin, R. (2016). True Grit and Genetics: Predicting Academic Achievement From Personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.