

March School Counseling News

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

According to the Glossary of Education Reform, the concept of a **growth mindset** was developed by psychologist Carol Dweck and popularized in her book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. In recent years, many schools and educators have started using Dweck’s theories to inform how they teach students.

A *mindset*, according to Dweck, is a self-perception or “self-theory” that people hold about themselves. Dweck’s educational work centers on the distinction between “fixed” and “growth” mindsets. According to Dweck, “In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort.” Dweck’s research suggests that students who have adopted a fixed mindset—the belief that they are either “smart” or “dumb” and there is no way to change this, for example—may learn less than they could or learn at a slower rate, while also shying away from challenges. Dweck’s findings also suggest that when students with fixed mindsets fail at something, as they inevitably will, they tend to tell themselves they can’t or won’t be able to do it.

Alternatively, “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment,” writes Dweck. Students who embrace growth mindsets—the belief that they can learn more or become smarter if they work hard and persevere—may learn more, learn it more quickly, and view challenges and failures as opportunities to improve their learning and skills.

DEVELOPING A **GROWTH MINDSET**



INSTEAD OF.....	TRY THINKING....
I'm not good at this	What am I missing?
I give up	I'll use a different strategy
It's good enough	Is this really my best work?
I can't make this any better	I can always improve
This is too hard	This may take some time
I made a mistake	Mistakes help me to learn
I just can't do this	I am going to train my brain
I'll never be that smart	I will learn how to do this
Plan A didn't work	There's always Plan B
My friend can do it	I will learn from them

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