

# FRAMING GROWTH MINDSET: CHANGE WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

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Thank you to Drs. Billie Franchini and Kimberly Van Orman for their help and contributions to this presentation.

# Let's Start with a Task

1. Open the envelope that I hand to your group. Inside you will find several quotations from students written on slips of paper.
2. At your table: Decide which statements indicate a growth mindset and which indicate a fixed mindset. You have 3 minutes to do your initial sort.
3. Be prepared to share and explain your choices.

# Reflection Question

Did you recognize any of your students (or yourself) in some of those statements?

# Fixed Mindset

## Core Beliefs

- Intelligence is a fixed trait: you have a certain amount of intelligence and talent, and nothing you do can change that.
- It's important to look smart, especially in comparison to other people.

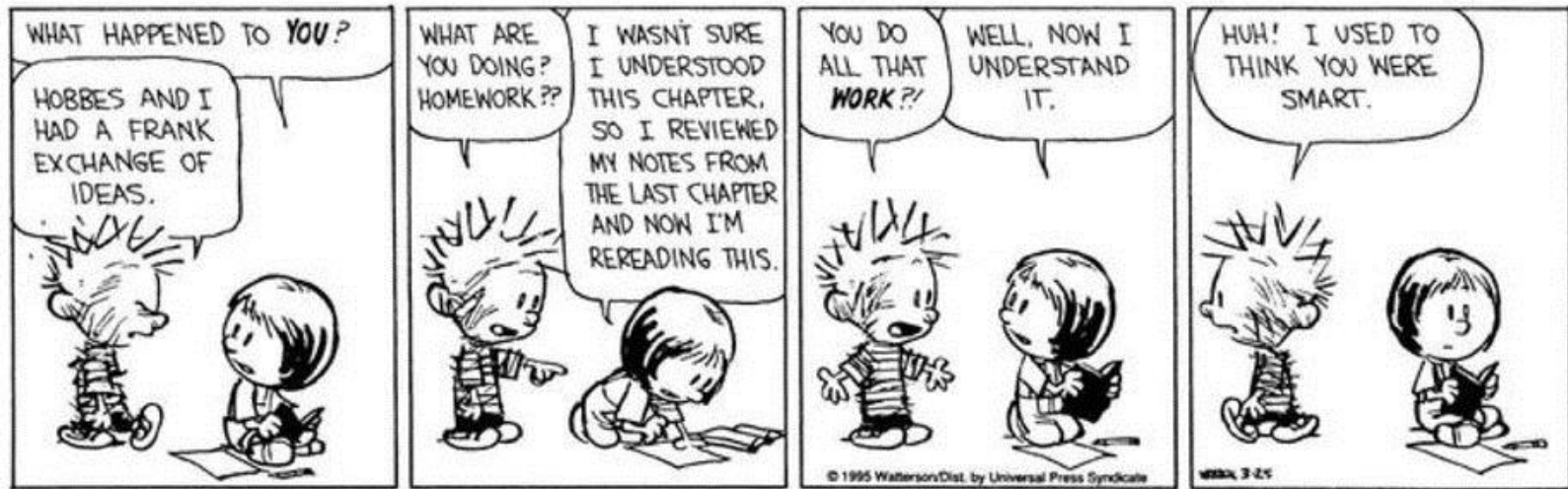
## Some statements that indicate a fixed mindset

- “Only a few people can be truly good at sports – you have to be ‘born with it’.”
- “Truly smart people don't need to try that hard.”
- “I'm just a ‘C’ student in Biology, so there's no point in me spending time on it.”

# Students with a fixed mindset...

- will not accept offers of help
- only put effort into easy tasks
- are less likely to value collaborative learning
- feel smartest when outperforming others
- value good performance over learning
- avoid or put little effort into challenging tasks
- blame others for failure
- lose self-esteem in the face of criticism

# Calvin's Take on Fixed Mindset



# Growth Mindset

## Core Beliefs

- Intelligence can grow: you can develop more intelligence.
- Even those who are seen as great in their field had to practice and learn to get there.
- Learning is more important than appearing to be smart.

## Some statements that indicate a growth mindset

- “I feel smart when I work really hard at something that is difficult for me, but I figure it out.”
- “Anyone can learn math, but it can take a lot of hard work.”
- “When I don’t succeed on an assignment in a hard class, I make sure to re-focus my efforts and try new study strategies so I can improve next time.”

# Students with a growth mindset...

- seek feedback on their work
- welcome challenges
- are more likely to see how others can help them learn
- feel accomplished when they work hard at a challenging task
- value learning over performance
- put effort into challenging tasks
- ask questions and change strategies in the face of failure
- see success as indicative of their efforts, not their ability



# People with a growth mindset...

- Picture Thomas Edison. Think about where he is and what he is doing.



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“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

# A note about intelligence...

The premise of this research is NOT that everyone has the same native intelligence or that intelligence isn't important but instead that *everyone* can develop more intelligence.

What role do instructors play in development of student mindsets?

# The Case of Professor Roman

Read the case on the blue half-sheet.

On your own: How do you think students responded to Dr. Roman's challenge?  
Write down your answer.

- A. Many of the lower-ability students dropped the course, as usual, but the higher-ability students rose to the challenge and performed well. Test scores were about the same as in past semesters.
- B. Because students recognized that they needed to succeed in the course to go to graduate school, many of them worked hard and test scores were slightly higher than in past semesters.
- C. Many students stopped coming to class and didn't do the work, but some of them came to Dr. Roman for help throughout the semester and were successful in the course. Test scores were slightly worse than in past semesters.
- D. Students across the board stopped coming to class and did not seek help from Dr. Roman. Test scores were significantly worse than in past semesters.

At your tables: How do you think students responded to Dr. Roman's challenge? Be prepared to share your answer.

- A. Many of the lower-ability students dropped the course, as usual, but the higher-ability students rose to the challenge and performed well. Test scores were about the same as in past semesters.
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- C. Many students stopped coming to class and didn't do the work, but some of them came to Dr. Roman for help throughout the semester and were successful in the course. Test scores were slightly worse than in past semesters.
- D. Students across the board stopped coming to class and did not seek help from Dr. Roman. Test scores were significantly worse than in past semesters.

# What actually happened...

Dr. Roman sincerely believed that, with her exhortation, students would dig in and work harder to measure up. But to her surprise, they slacked off: they often did not come to class, they made lackluster efforts at the homework, and their test performance was the worst it had been for many semesters.

In an interview after the course, Dr. Roman said, “I don’t get it! This class had the worst attitude I have ever seen and the students seemed to be consumed by an overall sense of lethargy and apathy. I am beginning to think that today’s students are just plain lazy.”



At your tables, how would you rewrite Dr. Roman's first-day announcement to re-frame the challenge and importance of her course to convey high expectations AND motivating students?

- A. "To get a good grade in this course, you must read each chapter before class, come to my office whenever you have questions, and take good notes to prepare for exams."
- B. "To master the material for each class topic, you must read each chapter before class, come to my office whenever you have questions, and take good notes to prepare for exams."
- C. "To get a good grade in this course, you must get good grades on your homework, labs, and exams."
- D. "To master the material for each class topic, you must get good grades on your homework, labs, and exams."

# Framing a course: Learning vs. Performance Goals

- Performance goals = focus on normative standards
  - *Reinforce idea that students need to appear intelligent, protect self-image*
- Learning goals = focus on improving rather than simply attaining a standard
  - *Reinforce idea that students need to gain competence, learn from experiences (including mistakes!)*

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*Note: It's not about lowering expectations: keep your expectations high, but give students the tools (practice) they need to meet them.*

# Redirecting performance goals to learning goals

Framing the course (from day one)

+

Thoughtfully designed experiences (tasks) to provoke growth through self-assessment, feedback, and reflection

# A growth mindset classroom provokes *learning* mistakes

- ***Stretch mistakes:*** we're working to expand our current abilities.
- ***Aha-moment mistakes:*** we achieve what we intended to do, but recognize a mistake when we have more information.

Students make mistakes as part of their progress—and they get feedback when the stakes are low.

***Mistakes = Learning***

# Creating a classroom that nurtures a growth mindset

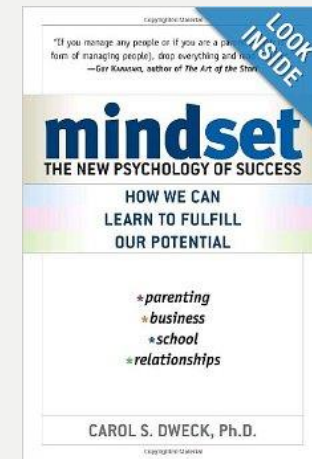
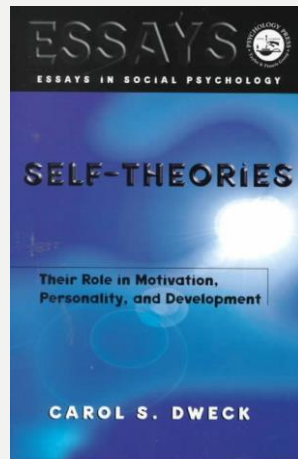
- Frame the course around learning goals.
- Design frequent opportunities for practice and feedback so that mistakes become part of the learning process—and they learn to assess their own competence.
- Talk to students about mindsets and reinforce the idea that their success is a result of their efforts, not their intelligence.

# Growth mindset teachers

- Growth mindset teachers love to learn about teaching, people, class topics, oneself, and life.
- Fixed mindset teachers often think of themselves as finished products. Their role is simply to impart their knowledge.

# The research this task is based on

- Carol Dweck, psychologist at Stanford University
- Looks at how our beliefs about ourselves and our most basic qualities (like intelligence and talent) shape our behaviors
- Books *Self-Theories* (2000) and *Mindset* (2006) applies this research to various dimensions of people's lives





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