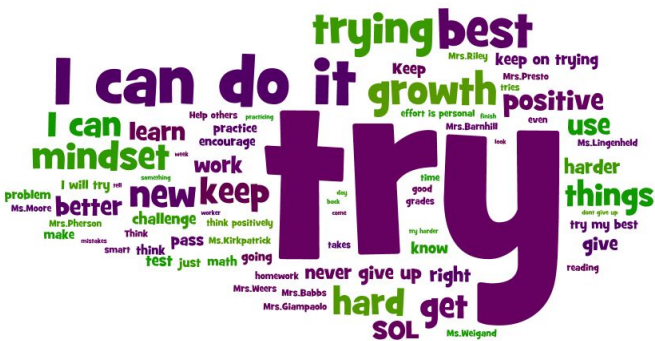


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More than a decade ago, journalist Malcolm Gladwell gained fame with the publication of his first book, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, which identified a new understanding of the moment when an idea, trend, or practice “tips” and becomes popular creating a cultural shift. Today, many businesses, communities, and schools, including WCCHS strive to “tip” students’ attitudes and behaviors toward a “growth mindset,” the philosophy that it is not only possible but necessary to learn and grow through failure and practice.



What is a *growth mindset*? Stanford Professor Carol Dweck defines a growth mindset as a focus on effort rather than intelligence as the most critical component of success and happiness. Dweck’s research found that an individual’s mindset has a measurable impact on his or her success. Those with a growth mindset believe that challenge is an opportunity for learning and improvement; they thrive on new tasks and tests, as opposed to a *fixed* mindset. Those with a fixed mindset believe that an individual’s intelligence and abilities cannot be changed or

developed. They are permanent or fixed. People with a fixed mindset strive for success but attempt to avoid failure regardless of the cost because failure in the mind of someone with a fixed mindset would imply that he or she is “not smart” or can’t do or achieve a particular goal. A growth mindset makes it possible for learners to embrace failure as a step toward success.

How can we “tip” a growth mindset at WCCHS and beyond? When we evaluate our own mindsets, it may be possible to discuss the challenges and benefits of developing a growth mindset. Dweck offers these four statements as a way to self-assess:



Grow Your Mindset¹

Which mindset do you have? Answer these questions about intelligence. Read each statement and decide whether you mostly agree or disagree with it.

1. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can’t change very much.
2. You can learn new things, but you can’t really change how intelligent you are.

¹ These questions and many resources are available online at <http://mindsetonline.com/testyourmindset/step1.php>.

3. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.
4. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.

If you are interested in joining the WCCHS Language Arts Division in promoting a growth mindset, take the quiz, read Dweck's book, or checkout a TedTalk on "the power of believing you can improve".

Works Cited

Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House, 2006.

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Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston:

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