

GROWTH MINDSET NEWSLETTER



Issue 001

October 2024

Newsletter Introduction

The Westport Public Schools (WPS) Growth Mindset committee, composed of educators across disciplines and grade levels, was established during the summer of 2023 with a mission of supporting the district initiative to “Stimulate Growth Mindset Belief Systems in All Students. To help build common understanding for growth mindset across the broader WPS community, we will continue to share information and ideas through our newsletter.

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

A fixed mindset is the belief that intelligence and abilities are set in stone. The idea that you are born with a particular set of abilities that are static has many negative performance-based implications, including challenge avoidance and giving up easily when faced with setbacks/failures. Conversely, people with a growth mindset understand that intelligence and abilities are malleable. In fact, when students believe they can become smarter they see effort as the path to mastery, seek challenges, persist despite failures, learn from feedback and are motivated by the performance of others.

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For more information on Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

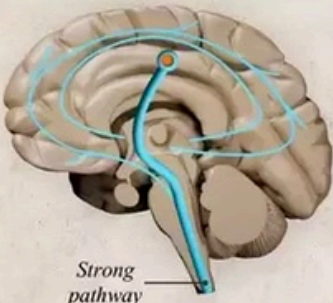
Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Carol Dweck	
Intelligence is static.	Intelligence can be developed
Leads to a desire to LOOK SMART and therefore a tendency to:	Leads to a desire to LEARN and therefore a tendency to:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AVOID CHALLENGES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EMBRACE CHALLENGES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GIVE UP EASILY DUE TO OBSTACLES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PERSIST DESPITE OBSTACLES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEE EFFORT AS FRUITLESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEE EFFORT AS PATH TO MASTERY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IGNORE USEFUL FEEDBACK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LEARN FROM CRITICISM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BE THREATENED BY OTHERS' SUCCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BE INSPIRED BY OTHERS' SUCCESS

Silvia Rosenthal Tolisano - @iangwitches

Neuroplasticity

Pathways


Neural pathways connect relatively distant areas of the brain or nervous system, each pathway is associated with a particular action or behavior.



Strong pathway

Every time we think, feel or do something, we strengthen this pathway. Habits are well travelled pathways – our brain finds these things easy to do.

Neuroplasticity



New thoughts and skills carve out new pathways.

Repetition and practice strengthen these pathways, forming new habits.

Old pathways get used less and weaken.

With repeated and direct attention towards a desired change, we all have the ability to rewire our brains.

Neuroplasticity, also known as neural plasticity or brain plasticity, is the ability of neural networks in the brain to change through growth and reorganization thereby rewiring the brain to function in some way that differs from how it did before. And, it is the essential foundational concept of growth mindset.[4]

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For more info on Neuroplasticity



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Growth Mindset Tenets

Dr. Carol Dweck, a pioneer of growth mindset, identified five situations in which mindset has a significant impact on outcome. Using these identified situations, The WPS Growth Mindset committee developed our district Growth Mindset tenets – see below.

Challenges

Embracing challenges promotes learning opportunities and risk-taking

Obstacles

Being resilient in the presence of mistakes and setbacks fosters growth

Effort

Consistent effort and intentional practice leads to improved performance

Criticism

The drive to seek and ability to utilize feedback is an essential component of learning

Success of Others

The performance of others provides opportunities for learning, inspiration and motivation

Learning Connections

[1] Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.

[2] Sentis. (2012, November 7). *Neuroplasticity* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELpfYCZa87g>

[3] John Spencer. (2017, March 27). *Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MICHpnZfFmU>

[4] Costandi, Moheb (19 August 2016). *Neuroplasticity*. MIT Press. ISBN 978-0-262-52933-4. OCLC 987683015.

[5] Détári, A. (2019, October 31). *Growth mindset – Musician's Focal Dystonia*. Musician's Focal Dystonia. <https://www.musicians-focal-dystonia.com/blog/growth-mindset - Fixed Vs. Growth Mindset Image>

[6] *Are wellness programs worthwhile? – Supply chain solution*. (2018, June 7). <https://supplycs.com/2018/06/07/are-wellness-programs-worthwhile/> - *Neuroplasticity Image*