Mindset
Work by Dr. Carol Dweck

Let’s support effort, perseverance and strategy

not intelligence

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ST.PAULS SCHOOL COMMUNITY
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What you believe about yourself and your ability determines your success as well as your approach to learning.
AGENDA (reminder: be kind to yourself)

- Brief questionnaire
- Introduce Carol Dweck
- Explain the two mindsets of intelligence: Fixed and Growth
- Implications for our daily lives as caregivers and educators
“Enhance students’ motivation to learn by changing their beliefs about intelligence” (Dweck, 2000)
Our own self-theories of intelligence

Think about one role you have in your life

Husband
Wife
Friend
Grandparent
Professional
Parent
Sibling
Student
Our own self-theories of intelligence

What do you believe about your ability in this role?

• Do you believe you have a “gift” in this area, a natural talent?

• Do you believe that you have or can get better in this area if you work hard?
Our own self-theories of intelligence

• When you succeed in this area, why do you think you are successful?
  • Hard work or effort?
  • Natural ability?
  • Luck?
Our own self-theories of intelligence

• When things get difficult, what do you do?
  • Try harder?
  • Give up?
  • Try a new strategy?
WHY is it important what adults think?

FIRST step towards supporting kids:

Adults need to think about their own beliefs about learning and intelligence.....
“Aunt Katie, do YOU think I am smart, pretty, a good girl?”

Olivia, age 4
Carol Dweck PhD

- Professor in Psychology Dept. at Stanford (2004-2011) – has taught for 40 years

  - Previously taught at Harvard, Columbia and Illinois

  - Area of interest has mostly been with theory of intelligence and it’s implications on motivation

  - Created Brainology – which focuses on teaching children on how their brain works in order to develop a growth mindset
Thoughts on Intelligence: Fixed or Malleable?

- Belief that intelligence is fixed = Entity Theory
  - “intelligence is portrayed as an entity that dwells within us and that we can’t change” (Dweck, C. pg. 2, 2000)

- Belief that intelligence is malleable = Incremental Theory (growth mindset)
  - “intelligence is portrayed as something that can be increased through one’s efforts” (Dweck, C. pg. 3, 2000)
Dr. Carol Dweck on TED

- [http://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve?language=en)
## Characteristics of Each Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity Theorists</th>
<th>Incremental Theorists</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Does not encourage a hardy can-do mentality</td>
<td>• Encourages a hardy can-do mentality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helpless Orientated Patterns</td>
<td>• Mastery Oriented Patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• See difficulty as sign of inadequacy</td>
<td>• See difficulty as something to overcome, does not consider themselves as failing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pessimistic outlook</td>
<td>• Optimistic outlook</td>
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</table>
Should we be praising both intelligence and effort?

- What can happen when we praise a student’s intelligence?

- What can happen when we praise a student’s effort?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fixed Mindset</strong></th>
<th><strong>Growth Mindset</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See success and failure as a reflection of self worth.</td>
<td>See success and failure separate from their self worth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When faced with difficulty or an heightened stress, these individuals are at risk for:</td>
<td>When faced with difficulty or heightened stress, they see it as a learning or growth opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anxiety, depression</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What might we see in the classroom?

Entity Theory (focus on performance)

- Difficult task
- Withhold effort
- Can still preserve the idea that you could have done well if you had tried

Incremental Theory (focus on learning)

- Difficult task
- Effort
- Achieve mastery OR trouble shoot new strategies
How do these two beliefs play out in goal setting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Goals (PG)</th>
<th>Learning Goals (LG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Seen within Entity mindset)</td>
<td>(Seen within Incremental mindset)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus is on their level of intelligence</td>
<td>• Focus is on increasing competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Want to LOOK smart and not dumb</td>
<td>• A desire to GET smarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PG’s become a problem when proving ability becomes the only focus – it shifts entire focus away from learning goals</td>
<td>• Students don’t need to think they are already good at something – they WORK TOWARDS understanding and mastery</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Myth Busting

Kids who do well in school are likely to persist in the face of difficulty.

FALSE

In fact, these kids are more likely to doubt their own abilities in the face of difficulty.
Myth Busting

When you praise kids’ intelligence, they become more confident and able to achieve greater goals
FALSE

Praise can often lead to risk avoidant behavior and fear of failure.
Myth Busting

Kids who think they are smart are less affected by failure

FALSE

Children’s confidence is often tied to their success. Fear of failure can be crippling.
Myth Busting

Smart kids love to learn and seek out challenges.

FALSE

Many of these smart kids are worried about failure and avoid tasks that might challenge their track record.
Myth about IQ tests

- IQ tests can measure current skills, but nothing can measure someone's potential.

- It is impossible to tell what people are capable of in the future if they catch fire and apply themselves.

(Dr. Carol Dweck)
A few questions on effort

In general, do you think that working hard and putting in effort towards something makes a difference in the outcome?

What happens if you are not successful even though you think you put in EFFORT?
Thoughts on Effort ...

Entity Theory
Do not value effort

- Believe that effort won’t do much for you if your ability level isn’t high

Incremental Theory
Value effort

- Believe that with prolonged effort, mastery can be accomplished
Dweck’s View on Confidence

“What appears to be important isn’t the confidence you bring to a situation, but the ability to maintain a confident and nondefensive stance in the face of obstacles. This is much more difficult to do in the entity-theory framework.”

(Dweck, pg. 52, 2000)
### Person orientated Praise VS Strategy Praise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Praising the person</th>
<th>Praising a person’s strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attach praise to self worth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>More vulnerable to the effects of failure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More deeply praised = more vulnerable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise is not attached to self worth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate themselves significantly more positively</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Best position to deal with obstacles</td>
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</table>
LEARNED HELPlessness

- Feelings of failure
- Self blame
- Negative feelings
  - Anxiety
  - Doubt
- Plummeting Expectations
- Low persistence
- Lack of constructive strategies
Commentary on how praise effects girls and boys differently

- Early experiences in school differ for boys and girls

- As a result, boys are praised more for effort and girls on their self

- As level of difficulty increases, boys find more success and high achieving girls find less success

- Related to growth and fixed mindsets
Key Message about Praise

Be descriptive...
Be curious...
Show positive interest...

When students succeed – attention and approval should be directed at their efforts and their strategies
Implications for Practice

If students want to learn and achieve they will need to:

1. Expend effort
2. Study
3. Acquire new learning strategies

Therefore, we need to:

1. Provide the appropriate tutoring
2. Model the appropriate attitudes and habits
3. Then it is up to the students...
Conclusion

• Be KIND and FORGIVING to yourself

• This is a NEW language that needs time to learn

• Habits also take time to break –
“I am advocating teaching our students an alternative framework in which effort is expected and enjoyed, and setbacks are informative and challenging”

Carol Dweck, 2000
Questions, comments
