

GATE MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELING

RESOURCE NEWSLETTER

November Edition, 2017

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Greetings,

This is the November edition of the monthly GATE resource newsletters. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide educators with information, practical ideas, classroom interventions and strategies related to the specific characteristics and social-emotional needs of GT middle school students.

Mindset

This month's newsletter topic is mindset: growth vs. fixed. Mindset theory was developed by Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck and featured in her book "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success" (2007). Dweck's research demonstrates that our attitudes and beliefs toward learning greatly influence our success in school, work, and home. Dweck finds that cultivating a growth mindset greatly increases opportunities for achievement, fulfillment, and success across all areas of human endeavor.

This month the GATE counseling department hosted a workshop on the topic of mindset through the Parent University. We had over 65 parents attend, and look forward to repeating this class sometime after winter break (date TBA).

Featured Resources (attached):

1. Ten Strategies for Developing a Growth Mindset in Gifted Students: Handout with strategies for teachers, parents, and counselors to use in cultivating a growth mindset.
2. Effective Effort Rubric: Effective rubric to help students recognize how mindsets apply to effort.
3. Classroom Reading "You Can Grow Your Intelligence": Great article that can be read by students at the middle school level to get a better understanding about the brain science behind growing one's intelligence.
4. Growth Mindset, What Can I Say to Myself: Great tool to help students develop self-talk that encourages growth mindset.

Recommended Books/Websites:

1. **Ready -To-Use Resources for Mindsets in the Classroom: Everything Educators Need for School Success**, by Mary Cay Ricci: This is a wonderful book for educators who want ready-to-use resource pages and lessons to share with students, parents, teachers, and administrators.
2. **Small Selection of Mindset Resources (attached)**: Handout obtained at the NAGC conference in 2016. It includes a list of books, websites, and articles related to growth vs. fixed mindset.


© Ten Strategies for Developing a Growth Mindset in Gifted Students

How exactly do you help students switch mindsets? Here are some strategies that have proven effective for helping them make this transition..

1. Help students recognize their strengths and their weaknesses. Show them how to use their strengths to develop their weak areas or find learning partners who are strong in areas where they may be weak.
2. Provide descriptive, accurate, and constructive feedback that focuses on how students can develop themselves in specific tasks or skill areas.
3. Focus praise on the effort students put forth toward a goal.
4. Offer authentic challenges on issues they or others care about that will take time, effort, and persistence to solve.
5. Teach specific skills of studying, organization, metacognition, time management, goal setting, and monitoring.
6. Use preassessments to help students recognize what they already know/understand and are able to do, and what they don't know/understand and are not yet able to do. Be mindful that students may perceive preassessments as shameful (especially if they are in the fixed mindset). Reassure students that preassessments are meant to focus teaching and learning.
7. When teaching discrete strategies, show students how using the strategy will help them develop certain skills. Some gifted students are whole to part learners and may avoid practicing discrete strategies (part) if they don't understand how it leads to greater skill development (whole).
8. Structure time throughout the day when students can reflect on their learning process, talk with others about tasks that were easy or difficult, or take note of their personal feelings on the topic.
9. Create learning activities where students will need to rely on others to complete the tasks. In these "unlike" groups, students learn to appreciate other people's skills and realize they have skills unique to themselves.
10. Continually support students by showing them how their efforts lead to success.

Effective Effort Rubric

This rubric assesses the learning process—the effective effort that a learner applies.

|  | Fixed | Mixed | Growth |
|---|--|---|--|
| Taking on Challenges | You don't really take on challenges on your own. You feel that challenges are to be avoided. | You might take on challenges when you have some previous experience with success in a related challenge. | You look forward to the next challenge and have long range plans for new challenges. |
| Learning from Mistakes | You see mistakes as failures, as proof that the task is beyond your reach. You may hide mistakes or lie about them. | You may accept mistakes as temporary setbacks, but lack strategies to apply what you learned from the mistakes in order to succeed. | You see mistakes as temporary setbacks, something to be overcome. You reflect about what you learned and apply that learning when revisiting the task. |
| Accepting Feedback and criticism | You feel threatened by feedback and may avoid it all together. Criticism and constructive feedback are seen as a reason to quit. | You may be motivated by feedback if it is not overly critical or threatening. Who is giving the feedback, the level of difficulty of the task, or their personal feelings might all be factors in your motivation. | You invite and are motivated by feedback and criticism. You apply new strategies as a result of feedback. You think of feedback as being a supportive element in the learning process |
| Practice and Applying Strategies | You do not practice and avoid practicing when you can. You do not have any strategies for accomplishing the learning goals or tasks, or you apply ineffective strategies. | You practice, but a big setback can make you want to quit. You are more willing to practice things you are already considered "good at." You are open to being given a strategy to meet a challenge, but you rarely apply your own strategies unless it is something you are already "good at." | You enjoy the process of practicing and see it as part of the process of getting good at something. You may create your own practice or study plans. You fluidly use many strategies, think of some of your own strategies, and ask others about their strategies. |
| Perseverance (focus on task) | You have little persistence on learning goals and tasks. You give up at the first sign of struggle. | You may persevere with prompting and support. Unless you are provided strategies for overcoming obstacles, you will stop or give up. | You "stick to it" and have stamina for the task(s). You keep working confidently until the task is complete. |
| Asking Questions | You do not ask questions or do not know which questions to ask, but you can usually say you don't "get it" if asked. | You might ask questions about a portion of the task that you feel you can do. If you perceive it to be out of your ability, you probably won't ask questions. | You ask specific questions, ask questions about your own thinking, and challenge the text, the task, and the teacher. |
| Taking Risks | You do not take risks, and if something is too hard you turn in blank work or copied work, if anything at all. You are not engaged in the process/task. | You will take risks if the task is already fairly familiar to you. If not, you will resort to copying or turning in partially completed work. | You begin tasks confidently, risk making errors, and openly share the work you produce. |

You Can Grow Your Intelligence

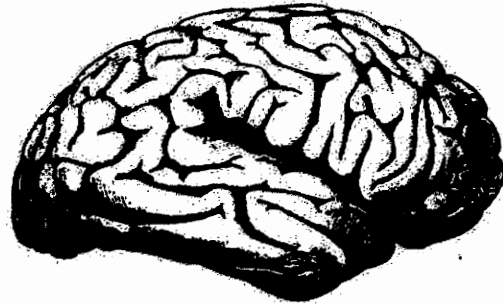
New Research Shows the Brain Can Be Developed Like a Muscle

Many people think of the brain as a mystery. They don't know much about intelligence and how it works. When they do think about what intelligence is, many people believe that a person is born either smart, average, or dumb—and stays that way for life.

But new research shows that the brain is more like a muscle—it changes and gets stronger when you use it. And scientists have been able to show just how the brain grows and gets stronger when you learn.

Everyone knows that when you lift weights, your muscles get bigger and you get stronger. A person who can't lift 20 pounds when they start exercising can get strong enough to lift 100 pounds after working out for a long time. That's because the muscles become larger and stronger with exercise. And when you stop exercising, the muscles shrink and you get weaker. That's why people say "Use it or lose it!"

But most people don't know that when they practice and learn new things, parts of their brain change and get larger a lot like muscles do when they exercise.

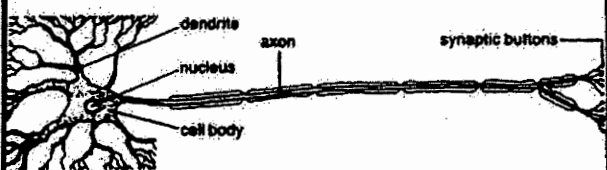


Inside the cortex of the brain are billions of tiny nerve cells, called neurons. The nerve cells have branches connecting them to other cells in a complicated network. Communication between these brain cells is what allows us to think and solve problems.



A Section of the Cerebrum nerve fibers (white matter)

When you learn new things, these tiny connections in the brain actually multiply and get stronger. The more that you challenge your mind to learn, the more your brain cells grow. Then, things that you once found very hard or even impossible to do—like speaking a foreign language or doing algebra—seem to become easy. The result is a stronger, smarter brain.



A Typical Nerve cell

How Do We Know the Brain Can Grow Stronger?

Scientists started thinking that the human brain could develop and change when they studied animals' brains. They found out

that animals who lived in a challenging environment, with other animals and toys to play with, were different from animals who lived alone in bare cages.

While the animals who lived alone just ate and slept all the time, the ones who lived with different toys and other animals were always active. They spent a lot of time figuring out how to use the toys and how get along with the other animals.

These animals had more connections between the nerve cells in their brains. The connections were bigger and stronger, too. In fact, their whole brains were about 10% heavier than the brains of the animals who lived alone without toys.

The animals who were exercising their brains by playing with toys and each other were also "smarter"—they were better at solving problems and learning new things.

Even old animals got smarter and developed more connections in their brains when they got the chance to play with new toys and other animals. When scientists put very old animals in the cages with younger animals and new toys to explore, their brains grew by about 10%!



Nerves in brain of animal living in bare cage.



Brain of animal living with other animals and toys.

Children's Brain Growth

Another thing that got scientists thinking about the brain growing and changing was babies. Everyone knows that babies are born without being able to talk or understand language. But somehow, almost all babies learn to speak their parents' language in the first few years of life. How do they do this?

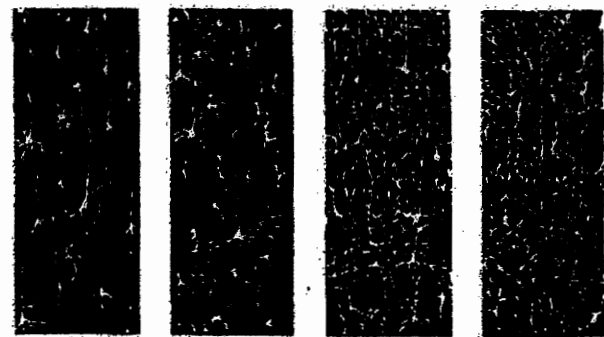
The Key to Growing the Brain: Practice!

From the first day they are born, babies are hearing people around them talk—all day, every day, to the baby and to each other. They have to try to make sense of these strange sounds and figure out what they mean. In a way, babies are exercising their brains by listening hard.

Later, when they need to tell their parents what they want, they start practicing talking themselves. At first, they just make goo-goo sounds. Then, words start coming. And by the time they are three years old, most can say whole sentences almost perfectly.

Once children learn a language, they don't forget it. The child's brain has changed—it has actually gotten smarter.

This can happen because learning causes permanent changes in the brain. The babies' brain cells get larger and grow new connections between them. These new, stronger connections make the child's brain stronger and smarter, just like a weightlifter's big muscles make them strong.



Newborn 3 months 15 months 2 years

Development of nerve cells in the brain from birth to 2 years old. The nerve cells grow both in size and in number of connections between them.

The Real Truth About "Smart" and "Dumb"

No one thinks babies are stupid because they can't talk. They just haven't learned how to yet. But some people will call a person dumb if they can't solve math problems, or spell a word right, or read fast—even though all these things are learned with practice.

At first, no one can read or solve equations. But with practice, they can learn to do it. And the more a person learns, the easier it gets to learn new things—because their brain "muscles" have gotten stronger!

The students everyone thinks is the "smartest" may not have been born any different from anyone else. But before they started school, they may have started to practice reading. They had already started to build up their "reading muscles." Then, in the classroom, everyone said, "That's the smartest student in the class."

They don't realize that any of the other students could learn to do as well if they exercised and practiced reading as much. Remember, all of those other students learned to speak at least one whole language already—

something that grownups find very hard to do. They just need to build up their "reading muscles" too.

What Can You Do to Get Smarter?

Just like a weightlifter or a basketball player, to be a brain athlete you have to exercise and practice. By practicing you make your brain stronger. You also learn skills that let you use your brain in a smarter way—just like a basketball player learns new moves.

But many people miss out on the chance to grow a stronger brain because they think they can't do it, or that it's too hard. It does take work, just like becoming stronger physically or becoming a better ball player does. Sometimes it even hurts! But when you feel yourself get better and stronger, all the work is worth it!

E-mail questions or comments to:
Growyourbrain@aol.com

Name _____

GROWTH MINDSET

What Can I Say to Myself?

| Instead of... | Try thinking... |
|--|---|
| I'm an awful writer. | Writing is challenging, but I can improve through perseverance. |
| I give up. | I'll try another strategy I've learned. |
| I'm no good at this. | How can I approach this differently? |
| I'm a slow runner. | I'm not currently as fast as my peers, but I'm improving on my personal speed through practice. |
| This is too hard. | |
| I can't make this any better. | |
| I just can't do math. | |
| Man, I made another mistake! | |
| I would be able to do this if I was smart. | |
| It's good enough. | |
| Plan A didn't work, what's the point? | |
| This looks too difficult for me. | |
| I don't care about her feedback. | |
| I'll never be good at drawing. | |
| Organization is not my thing. | |
| What if I fail? I'll be a failure. | |

SMALL SELECTION OF MINDSET RESOURCES

By Corina_Kaul@baylor.edu for NAGC 2016 Conference

Books

- Dweck, Carol. (2007). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*
- Ricci, Mary Cay. (2013). *Mindsets in the Classroom*
- Ricci, Mary Cay. (2015). *Ready-to use resources for mindsets in the classroom.*

Websites

- **Stepitup2thrive.org (Mindset curriculum and resources)**
- Mindsetonline.com (Carol Dweck's Website)
- Mindsetworks.com (Online curriculum for purchase)
- Sample of brainology curriculum
<http://www.jcsd.k12.or.us/sites/jcsd.k12.or.us/files/files/Introductory%20Unit.pdf>

Articles

- **Cross, J. L. & Schroth, S. (2016). "Mastery-based learning: Is it good for gifted learners?"**
<https://edexcellence.net/articles/mastery-based-learning-is-it-good-for-gifted-learners>
- Blue, L. (2012). "Motivation, not IQ Matters Most for Learning New Math Skills." *Time Magazine* <http://healthland.time.com/2012/12/26/motivation-not-iq-matters-most-for-learning-new-math-skills/>
- Dweck, C. (2010). "Mindsets and Equitable Education," *Principal Leadership*.
<http://www.epiconline.org/mind-sets-and-equitable-education/>
- Dweck, C. (2010). "Even Geniuses Work Hard." *Giving Students Meaningful Work*.
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept10/vol68/num01/Even-Geniuses-Work-Hard.aspx>
- Dweck, C. (2015). "Carol Dweck Revisits the 'Growth Mindset'" *Education Week*.
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/09/23/carol-dweck-revisits-the-growth-mindset.html>

Other:

- **Larry Ferlazzo's Best Resources on Helping our Students Develop a Growth Mindset**
<http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2012/10/13/the-best-resources-on-helping-our-students-develop-a-growth-mindset/>
- Mindset Infographic.
http://alumni.stanford.edu/content/magazine/artfiles/dweck_2007_2.pdf
- Parent Handout/article
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-secret-to-raising-smart-kids1/>
http://www.stepitup2thrive.org/downloads/2-mindset/mindset_parent_brief.pdf
- Pinterest – Growth Mindset

Games

- Thinkfun.com

You Tube Short Videos

Growth Mindset Overview

- **Growth Mindset Series Videos – Mojo Series**
<https://ideas.classdojo.com/>
- Carol Dweck: The Effect of Praise on Mindsets (3:25)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTXrV0_3UjY%5C
- Carol Dweck: Discovering the Importance of Mindset
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jDVd-nCEYc>
- Fixed vs. Growth Mindsets in Children by Go Strengths Online (0:55)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNAMrZr9OWY>
- Growth Mindset Animation by Cameron Lisney (3:51)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_oqghnxBmY
- Growth Mindset Video by inforbundl (2:21)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElVUqv0v1EE>
- Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset (3:32)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xv2ar6AKvGc>

Brain Information

- Brain Jump with Ned the Neuron: Challenges Grow Your Brain by Kidszoom (1:51)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7FdMi03CzI>
- The Learning Brain by The Learning Pod (7:01)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgL_YkV689s4

Inspiring People

- Famous Failures by Motivating Success (2:53)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zL_YECIjmnQs
- How a Blind Teen Sees with Sound (3:35). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpGjIpgj_YM
- Bethany Hamilton tells her story (4:54). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duelon0MF2o>
- Ben Carson Story (1:14). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9haZDohtYbc>
- No Arms No legs No Worries (4:10). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciYk-UwqFKA>
- Never Say Can't – Jennifer Bricker(4:56)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho9M6r5RF4A&list=PL4111402B45D10AFC&index=5>

Other

- Growth Mindset Student (1:04) and Fixed Mindset Student (0:48)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbaWNPBNJhk&list=PL4111402B45D10AFC&index=8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmaKXiF5g84&index=9&list=PL4111402B45D10AFC>
- Star Wars and Akleeh Clips
Stepitup2thrive.org
- Yoda and Growth Mindset (1:00). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inNMktqIkh0>
- You Can Learn Anything by Khan Academy(1:30)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JC82Il2cjqA&list=PL4111402B45D10AFC&index=4>