

Growth Mindset V Fixed Mindset

Scientific Research

Scientific research has shown that the brain can be developed like a muscle. Inside the cortex of the brain are billions of tiny nerve cells, called neurons. These neurons have branches that connect them to other neurons. When new learning occurs, tiny cells connect and become stronger. The more the brain is challenged the more the brain cells grow.

Fixed Mindset

People with a fixed mindset believe that they are born with a certain amount of intelligence and that it is fixed for the rest of their lives. With a fixed mindset there is a tendency to put an emphasis on scores and test results, celebrating when something has been easy to achieve. However, when faced with a challenging task people with a fixed mindset often give up as they are used to achieving success quickly.

Growth Mindset

People with a growth mindset believe that intelligence is not fixed and can be grown through hard work and perseverance. An emphasis is placed upon the processes of learning and the different strategies used to solve a problem. Mistakes are seen as a learning opportunity not a reflection of intelligence. A sense of achievement is felt when something has been challenging and difficult to overcome. People with a growth mindset embrace challenges and new learning opportunities in attempt to 'grow' their intelligence.

Developing a Growth Mindset at West Lodge

Creating a positive environment

A really important part of developing a growth mindset is creating an environment where children feel comfortable to challenge themselves, take risks and are not scared of making 'learning' mistakes. At the start of this academic year we had a growth mindset day which involved a lesson exploring how the brain can grow. Each classroom has developed their own growth mindset motto in addition to creating a display which highlights the secrets of successful learners.

Involving Children

We are really eager to hear what children would like to learn and where they feel they have gaps in their learning through self and peer assessment. By incorporating these into our planning pupils gain a sense of ownership over their learning, becoming more engaged as a result. By plugging these learning gaps children are making more neuron connections in each subject or topic – their brain is growing!

Making Marking Meaningful

We have developed our marking to ensure the process is purposeful and outlines how each pupil can improve their learning. This is achieved through using the terms: WWW (What Went Well) and EBI (Even Better If). We want pupils at West Lodge to see an activity as an opportunity to understand what they are able to do, and more importantly understand what their next steps are in their learning journey.

The Language of Praise

Praise is a powerful aspect of the learning process and ensures that children are receiving recognition for their achievements and effort. However, the wrong type of praise can have a negative rather than positive effect.

Negative Praise Language

It is very easy to praise a child for achieving a goal quickly and then referring to this as being 'clever'. This can be detrimental as the child then associates success as being a quick process. When faced with a difficult task the child then feels inadequate and 'not clever' because they have not been able to achieve the learning quickly. This develops into a fixed mindset.

Positive Praise Language

To build a growth mindset in our pupils we are very careful with the language we use when praising their learning. A huge emphasis is placed upon the effort that is put into each activity. A pupil's learning is celebrated when they have clearly worked hard, taken their time and employed a range of learning strategies to overcome a difficult activity. Children are then far more likely to persevere with a difficult task as they have experienced success through effort not speed.

Suggested books/websites

Carol Dweck – *Mindset*

Matthew Syed – *Bounce*

Joann Deak – *Your Fantastic Elastic Brain*

Chris Quigley – *Secrets of Success*

<http://mindsetonline.com/>

<http://web.stanford.edu/group/hopes/cgi-bin/wordpress/2010/06/neuroplasticity/>

"Think about your intelligence, talents and personality. Are they just fixed or can you develop them?"

- Carol Dweck



West Lodge Primary School



Developing a Growth Mindset

