



PARTNERSHIP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM – PHER

Supporting Learner Reflection

A Growth Mindset

Researcher Carol Dweck came up with the dichotomy of a growth vs fixed mindset. A growth mindset says that talent and intelligence can grow with practice, effort, and experience, and that basic qualities like intelligence and talent can be cultivated through effort. This emphasizes the learning process. In contrast, people with a fixed mindset believe their abilities are predetermined at birth. The truth is that any successful person that you meet has made many mistakes along the way.

Here is a summary of some of the elements of this dichotomy.

	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Belief	Intelligence is static. This leads to a desire to look smart. Has a deterministic view of the world	Intelligence can be developed. This leads to a desire to learn. Has a greater sense of free will
Challenges	Avoids challenges	Embraces challenges
Obstacles	Gives up easily	Persists in the face of setbacks
Effort	Sees effort as fruitless	Sees effort as a path to mastery
Criticism	Ignores useful negative feedback	Learns from criticism
Success of Others	Feels threatened by the success of others	Finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others
Result	May plateau early and achieve less than their full potential	Reaches ever-higher levels of achievement.

Learner Reflection

- Part of your job as a student is to reflect on how you are doing in a course, based on feedback from your instructor and possibly peers and your own internal monitoring. Consider periodically asking yourself: What have I learned? How am I doing? Would I study or do an assignment differently next time? Do I need to ask for help or study more? The goal is to get good at knowing what you know

and what you need and making good choices. According to the growth mindset, you should not mind making mistakes or evaluating yourself. This is all part of the process of improvement.

- As you study, consider looking at the table of contents of your textbook to see where you are in the sequence and how far you have come. See how many pages are in the chapter you are about to read and take a quick look at the headings before you start to read.
- Consider creating your own study guide.
- Consider studying for a test in a group of other students in your course. When you share your impressions of the course content, you reveal their own mental models of the course material. A mental model is an internal representation of external reality, a structure that represents how someone understands something. It can also be a thought process someone uses to examine a problem. Studying in groups lets you share and embellish each others' mental models. The accountability of a group can also motivate you to study more.