

Build a Tech Mindset

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn that having a growth mindset is critical when it comes to learning something new. It can help you see the value in taking on a new challenge like a new piece of technology. When you have a growth mindset, you understand the effort you put in can help build your abilities. A growth mindset strengthens your initiative skill and sets you up for success.

Specifically, this lesson covers:

1. Types of Mindsets
 - a. Fixed Mindset
 - b. Growth Mindset
2. Technology and Mindset
3. Change Is Possible

1. Types of Mindsets

Carol Dweck, who is a Professor of Psychology at Stanford University, has been studying factors that promote or interfere with achievement since the 1970s. Over this span of time, and especially since the mid-1990s, she came to realize that our ways of dealing with the world and particularly our behaviors in trying to achieve our own goals are influenced by what she calls “self-theories:” beliefs we have about our own abilities, strengths and weaknesses, and potential. These self-theories affect decisions we make about what is possible or sensible or reasonable to do in order to achieve our goals.

1a. Fixed Mindset

Dweck has found that people tend to adopt one of two general sets of beliefs about intelligence. People with a **fixed mindset** tend to think of intelligence as an “entity” – something that is part of a person’s essential self. According to people with this belief, intelligence does not change much regardless of what we do or experience.

➦ **EXAMPLE** “I feel like a reject, a total failure. My computer crashed in the middle of writing my paper and I lost all of my work. The world is out to get me.”

1b. Growth Mindset

Other people have a **growth mindset**, and they tend to think of intelligence as being “incremental” – a quality

that can change for better or worse depending on what we do and the experiences we have. Some people are strongly committed to one or the other end of the fixed vs. growth mindset scale, while others fall in-between to varying degrees.

➦ **EXAMPLE** “My computer crashed and I lost the work I had completed on the paper I was writing. Maybe I can be more diligent in saving my work or write papers on a cloud-based program so this doesn’t happen again.”

➦ **EXAMPLE** “I wonder why my friend has been so distant; I should probably text more often or ask how everything is going with her.”



TERMS TO KNOW

Fixed Mindset

Intelligence does not change much regardless of what we do or what we experience.

Growth Mindset

Intelligence is “incremental” and can change for better or worse depending on what we do and on the experiences we have.

2. Technology and Mindset

Now that you’ve learned more about a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset, we’ll work on applying a growth mindset to technology. Here are some practical strategies you can use to develop a growth tech mindset:

1. **Rephrase your statements:** Rather than making statements such as, “I’ve never been good with technology so I won’t be able to learn technology skills,” reword this thought to be more positive. For instance, you may say “I don’t understand this digital tool yet, but I’ll be able to learn it.” Or, “This tool will be difficult to learn, but if I focus, I’ll be able to use it.”
2. **Practice patience:** When you start the process of learning something new, remember that the process will take time and effort. You will not master it right away, so be patient with the process and give yourself credit as you progress.
3. **Embrace the learning process:** We learn more by making mistakes than we do by always being successful. By viewing mistakes and learning opportunities and continuing to maintain a growth mindset, you will continue learning throughout your future. You will also have a better understanding of mistakes when you encounter them again.
4. **Dedicate yourself:** Learning new skills, especially technology, can become frustrating. Consistently dedicating time and effort will enable you to see results faster and encourage you to continue working at it. The more effort you put into the learning process, the likelier you are to retain what you learn.

3. Change Is Possible

One last thing to remember is this: You can change your mindset. If you regularly handicap yourself by your beliefs (“I just don’t have the talent for this”) and attitudes about learning (“I can’t learn this”), you can change

those beliefs and attitudes. That change in mindset can be the difference between an effective response to challenges or avoidance of those challenges.

Keep in mind that your beliefs and attitudes are the result of many years of experience, so you won't change your mindset overnight by simply deciding to be different. You may have to work at it. In particular, when you encounter difficulty – a poor grade on a test, a paper that has some negative comments from your professor, or a reading assignment that leaves you confused – that is the time that your mindset can have a huge impact on what you do next. Don't let your mindset prevent you from realizing your abilities or reaching your potential!



Initiative: Skill Tip

In the course of a day you might use technology to complete assignments, watch a streaming video, flip through news headlines, search for directions, make a dinner reservation, or buy something online. At school, at home, and at work, technology plays a vital role in your activities. As a result, it will become imperative to gain confidence in using technology and having a growth mindset. Confidence enables you to take the initiative to continue learning technology.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about two different **types of mindsets**, or general sets of beliefs about intelligence: a **fixed mindset**, referring to those who believe that intelligence does not change much regardless of what we do or experience, and a **growth mindset**, for those who believe that intelligence is “incremental” and can change for better or worse depending on what we do and on the experiences we have. You also learned how a growth mindset strengthens your initiative skill and sets you up for success. You explored some practical strategies to apply a growth **mindset to technology** to set yourself up for success. Lastly, remember that **change is possible** and you can change your mindset to effectively meet challenges and reach your full potential.

See you in the next lesson!



TERMS TO KNOW

Fixed Mindset

Intelligence does not change much regardless of what we do or what we experience.

Growth Mindset

Intelligence is “incremental” and can change for better or worse depending on what we do and on the experiences we have.