What is mindset?
Mindset is a mental attitude that determines how you will interpret and respond to situations. The purpose of this session is to consider our current beliefs, attitudes and the views we hold that help us approach learning. How does our internal voice affect, for example, the determination to succeed? In academics, do we push forward when course subjects become more challenging or possible academic setbacks emerge? What motivates students to rise to a challenge or avoid them? How does having a particular mindset influence how we view our choices?

In class, we will consider the research of world-renowned psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck, Ph.D., and her vast work on motivation, personality and developmental psychology. Dweck has spent decades researching the characteristics of a fixed mindset and those of a growth mindset. Are there advantages to developing one mindset over the other?

Below are Dweck’s descriptions of Fixed vs. Growth Mindsets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Mindset</th>
<th>Growth Mindset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Mindset: Intelligence is a fixed trait (Dweck, 2008)</td>
<td>Growth Mindset: Intelligence is a quality that can be changed and developed (Dweck, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are born with intelligence</td>
<td>The distinguishing feature of geniuses is their passion and dedication to their craft, and particularly, the way in which they identify, confront, and take pains to remedy their weaknesses (Good, Rattan, &amp; Dweck, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a fixed intelligence that can be measured using an IQ test (Dweck, 2010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter how much you learn or how hard you work you intelligence stays the same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“...the ability to face challenges is not about your actual skills; it’s about the mind-set you bring to a challenge.”

“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.”

— Carol Dweck, in a [2004 interview with Education World](http://www.educationworld.com/aarticle/dweck040802.shtml)
### Developing a Growth Mindset

#### Focus on Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed:</th>
<th>Growth:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look intelligent at all costs:</td>
<td>Learning is more important:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “The main thing I want to do in college is to show others how good I am.”</td>
<td>• “It’s much more important for me to understand than to get top grades.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I am afraid of looking stupid”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Value Hard Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed:</th>
<th>Growth:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning should come naturally:</td>
<td>Putting a lot of effort into learning and working hard is key:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “When I have to work really hard at a subject, I don’t feel very smart.”</td>
<td>• “The harder I have to work at something, the more effort I put into something, the better I’ll be at it.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Facing Problems and Setbacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed:</th>
<th>Growth:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hide mistakes and conceal deficiencies, retreat, blame others, act superior:</td>
<td>Capitalize on mistakes and confront deficiencies:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I’ll spend less time on this subject from now on.”</td>
<td>• “I will work harder in this class from now on.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I’ll try not to take this subject ever again.”</td>
<td>• “I will spend more time studying for the test.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I’ll try to cheat on the next test.”</td>
<td>• “I’ll go talk to my professor about how to avoid making the same mistakes.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Strategies for Growth Mindset

- Focus on effort, struggle, persistence despite setbacks
- Choose difficult tasks
- Focus on strategies
- Reflect on different strategies that work and don’t work
- Focus on learning and improving
- Seek challenges
- Work hard

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During class, you will engage in a number of activities with your group and mentors.
Discussion:
As you worked on the activities, did your approach reflect a fixed or growth mindset. What about others in your group? How did your mindset influence how you worked? How you felt?

What did you find out about yourself – just how gritty are you? What does this mean for you as you continue through your college career?

12- Item Grit Scale

Directions for taking the Grit Scale: Please respond to the following 12 items. Be honest – there are no right or wrong answers!

1. I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

2. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.*
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

3. My interests change from year to year.*
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all
4. Setbacks don’t discourage me.
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

5. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.*
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

6. I am a hard worker.
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

7. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.*
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

8. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.*
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all
9. I finish whatever I begin.
   Very much like me
   Mostly like me
   Somewhat like me
   Not much like me
   Not like me at all

10. I have achieved a goal that took years of work.
    Very much like me
    Mostly like me
    Somewhat like me
    Not much like me
    Not like me at all

11. I become interested in new pursuits every few months.*
    Very much like me
    Mostly like me
    Somewhat like me
    Not much like me
    Not like me at all

12. I am diligent.
    Very much like me
    Mostly like me
    Somewhat like me
    Not much like me
    Not like me at all
Scoring:

1. For questions 1, 4, 6, 9, 10 and 12 assign the following points:
   - 5 = Very much like me
   - 4 = Mostly like me
   - 3 = Somewhat like me
   - 2 = Not much like me
   - 1 = Not like me at all

2. For questions 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 11 assign the following points:
   - 1 = Very much like me
   - 2 = Mostly like me
   - 3 = Somewhat like me
   - 4 = Not much like me
   - 5 = Not like me at all

Add up all the points and divide by 12. The maximum score on this scale is 5 (extremely gritty), and the lowest scale on this scale is 1 (not at all gritty).