

Building Growth Mindset in the Classroom: Assignments From Carol Dweck

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Growth mindsets aren't just for students. It helps for teachers to have a growth mindset about their students' mindsets, too.

A teacher's classroom approach shapes whether their students believe they are born with fixed academic skills or can grow them through practice and experience, according to Carol Dweck, the Stanford University researcher who pioneered the study of academic mindsets.

"Mindsets create a psychological world with very different meanings," Dweck said in a keynote at the annual Association of Psychological Science conference this weekend. "Those with a fixed mindset tend to think that if you have to work hard at something, you're not good at it. ... When you have a growth mindset, you're not fearful about your abilities all the time; setbacks promote challenge-seeking and greater learning."

For example, she pointed to "one high school chemistry teacher who told the class, 'Within a week, I know who will get an 'A' and who will get a 'C.' Further, I will know the difference between a real 'A' and a fake 'A'—a fake 'A' is one you had to work for.'"