

The Journey to A Growth Mindset

Education Week: Leaders to Learn From

Washington, D.C.

March 11, 2016









Mindsets Matter

Fixed Mindset: Intelligence is fixed

Growth Mindset: Intelligence can be developed

We are all a mixture.

Mindsets Matter

- How and why mindsets matter
- How to make the journey to a growth mindset more successful

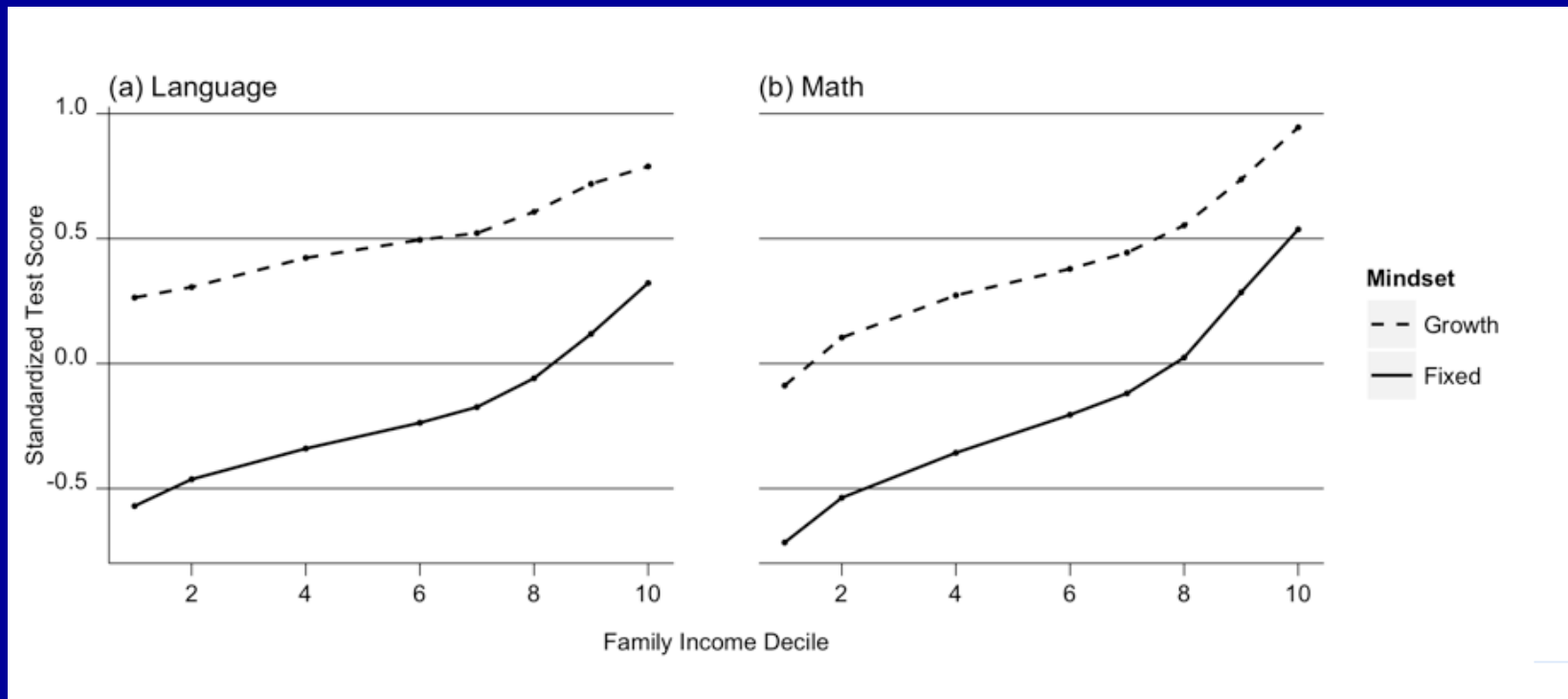
Mindsets Matter

All the 10th Grade Students in Chile



All the 10TH Grade Students in Chile

Claro, Paunesku, & Dweck, 2015



Teaching a Growth Mindset

Teaching a Growth Mindset

Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007

- **Growth Mindset Group:** Study skills + the growth mindset
- **Control Group:** Study skills

You Can Grow Your Intelligence

*New Research Shows the Brain
Can Be Developed Like a Muscle*

Many people think of the brain as a mystery. They don't know much about intelligence and how it works. When they do think about what intelligence is, many people believe that a person is born either smart, average, or dumb—and stays that way for life.

But new research shows that the brain is more like a muscle—it changes and gets stronger when you use it. And scientists have been able to show just how the brain grows and gets stronger when you learn.

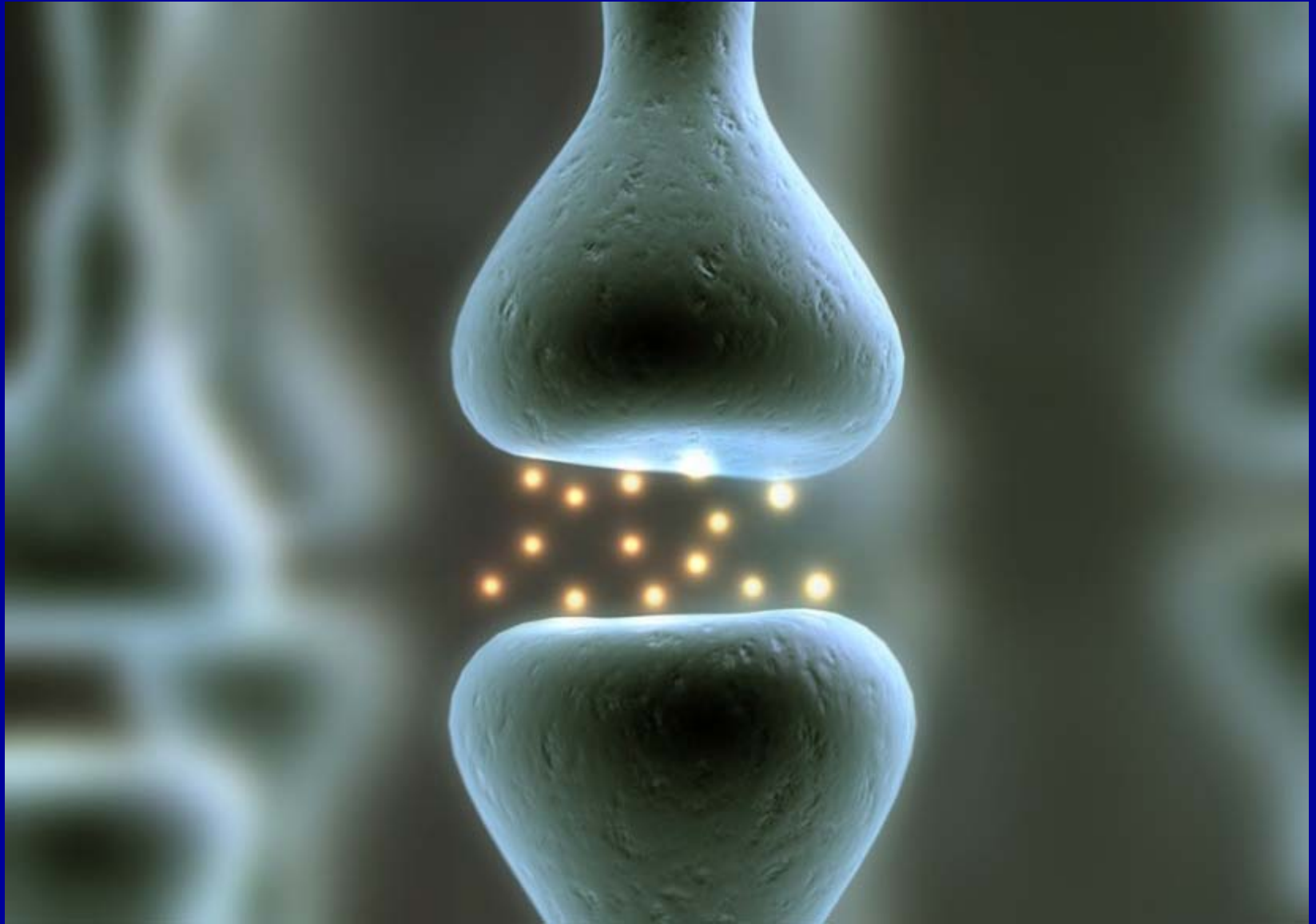
Everyone knows that when you lift weights, your muscles get bigger and you get stronger. A person who can't lift 20 pounds when they start exercising can get strong enough to lift 100 pounds after working out for a long time. That's because the muscles become larger and stronger with exercise. And when you stop exercising, the muscles shrink and you get weaker. That's why people say "Use it or lose it!"

But most people don't know that when they practice and learn new things, parts of their brain change and get larger a lot like muscles do when they exercise.



Inside the cortex of the brain are billions of tiny nerve cells, called neurons. The nerve cells have branches connecting them to other cells in a complicated network. Communication between these brain cells is what allows us to think and solve problems.

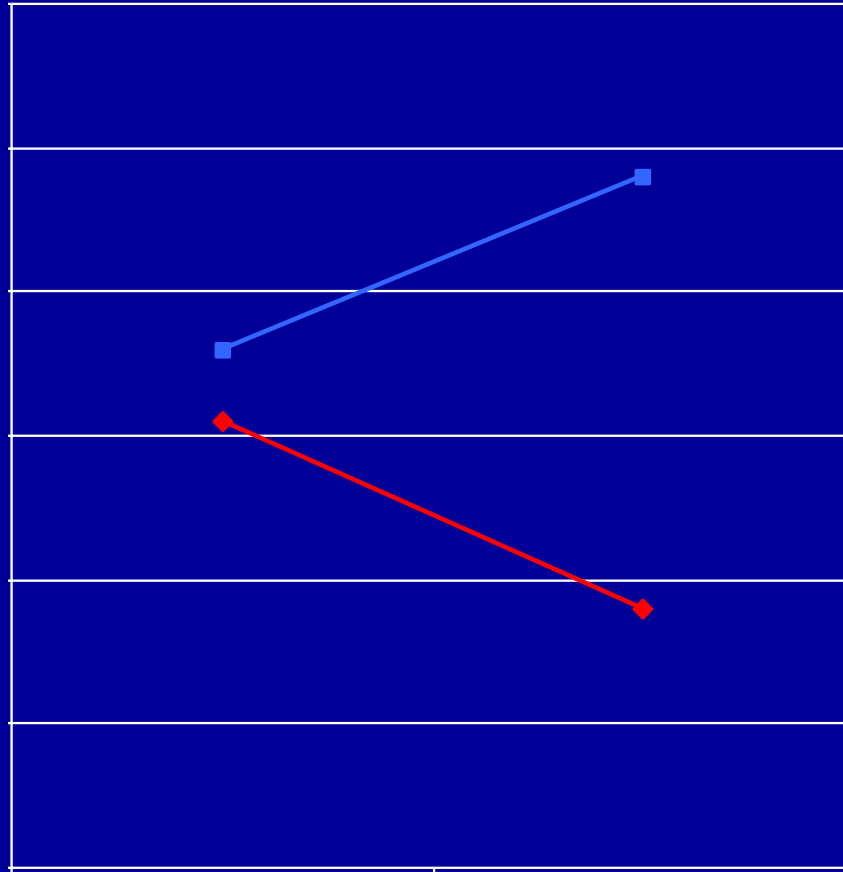






Grades in Math

(Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007)



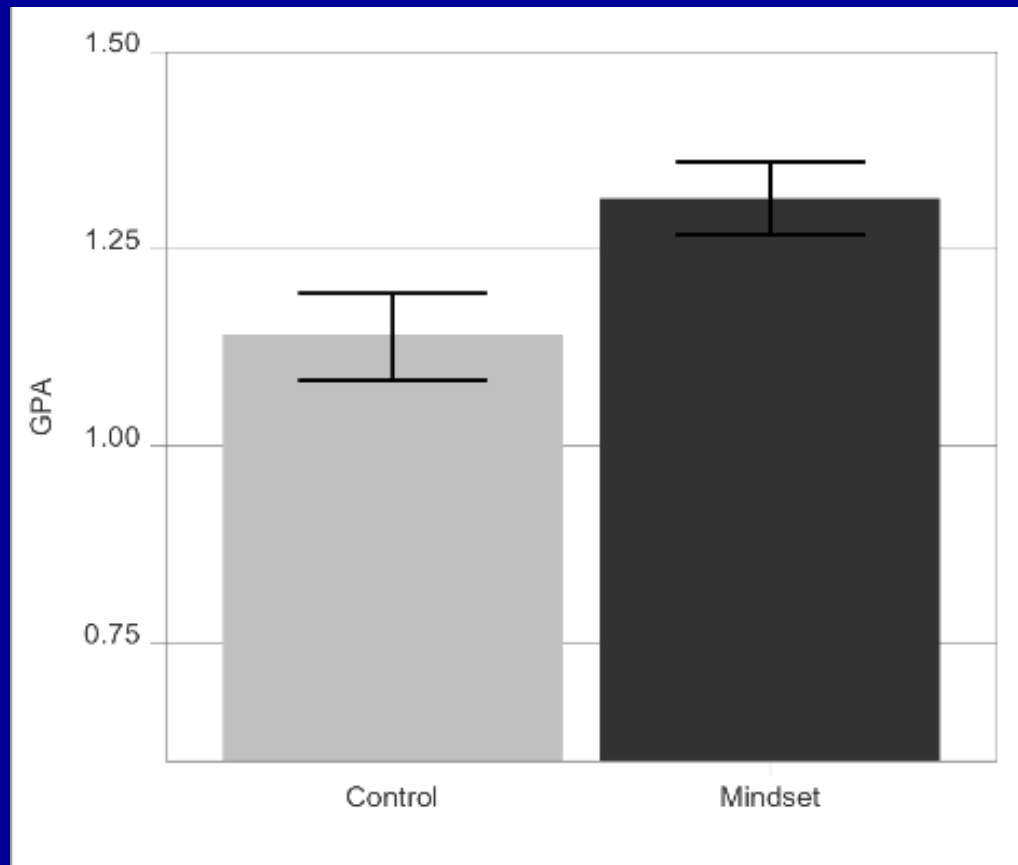
Is it ever too late?

With David Yeager, Dave Paunesku,
Carissa Romero, Greg Walton

High School: Effect on Grades

Students in Bottom Tercile

(Paunesku et al., 2015)



13 High Schools

The Battle Within Us All

Fixed Mindset

1. Never look dumb
2. Don't work hard or seek help
3. Run from difficulty

Growth Mindset

1. Learn
2. Work hard, use strategies, seek help to learn
3. Learn from mistakes

- Grades & test scores are a natural by-product.

The Journey

Prequel to the Journey: The Good Old Days

Used to think things were simple:

- Growth mindset is a simple concept
- And once adults have it they can easily pass it on.

- Wrong on both counts.

The Journey

Part I: What is a Growth Mindset?

What is a Growth Mindset?

Common Misunderstandings

Many educators think a growth mindset is:

- x Being open-minded (“open mindset”)
- x Telling students they can do anything
- x Effort: Encouraging students to work hard

vs.

Believing that talents and abilities can be developed

A Growth Mindset is Not Just
About Effort

Developing abilities also involves...





HELP

SUPPORT

ADVICE

GUIDANCE

Why is this important?

Consider These Reassuring Effort Statements

- “You would have done better if you’d tried harder.”
- “Keep trying and you’ll get it.”

Sound good, but...

- “You would have done better if you’d tried harder.” Maybe, maybe not.
- “Keep trying and you’ll get it.” If they don’t they’ll think they’re really inept.
- Vs. “What strategies have you tried? What will you try next?”

“You worked so hard. That’s wonderful!”

Ways in which it may not be so wonderful:

- 1.They didn’t actually work hard.
2. They didn’t make any progress.
- 3.They didn’t learn anything.

Sheer effort is highly important
but it is not the ultimate value.

- Learning and improvement are.
- Effort is one route to learning and improvement.

Let's not recreate the self-esteem movement—trying to make kids feel good and losing sight of learning.

- The growth mindset is a tool to help students learn
- Not a way to make children feel good about not learning

The Journey

Part II: Changing Educators' Mindsets

An Outbreak In Australia

False Growth Mindset



The Choice

What kind of person am I?





Where's the Journey?

- But there's no journey here
- Just a claiming of the more benevolent view
- And you can't get there without the journey

So what's the first step?

Legitimize the Fixed Mindset!

Acknowledge that we're all a mixture

Watch for Your Fixed-Mindset Triggers

Watch for Fixed-Mindset Triggers

Confronting...

- Challenge: anxious
- Struggle or setback: discouraged, defensive
- Criticism: angry, defensive, ashamed
- Someone more skilled than you: jealous, demotivated

More Fixed-Mindset Triggers

Seeing:

- a student struggling or confused
- a student not listening to your lesson.
- a student learning quickly

Your Fixed Mindset Persona

Get to know it:

- When does it show up?
- How does it make you feel?
- How does it affect your behavior? Your relationships? Your goals?
- Over time, learn to work with it.
- Bank Executives

The Journey

Part III: How to Transmit a Growth Mindset

Remember the good old days...

When we thought..

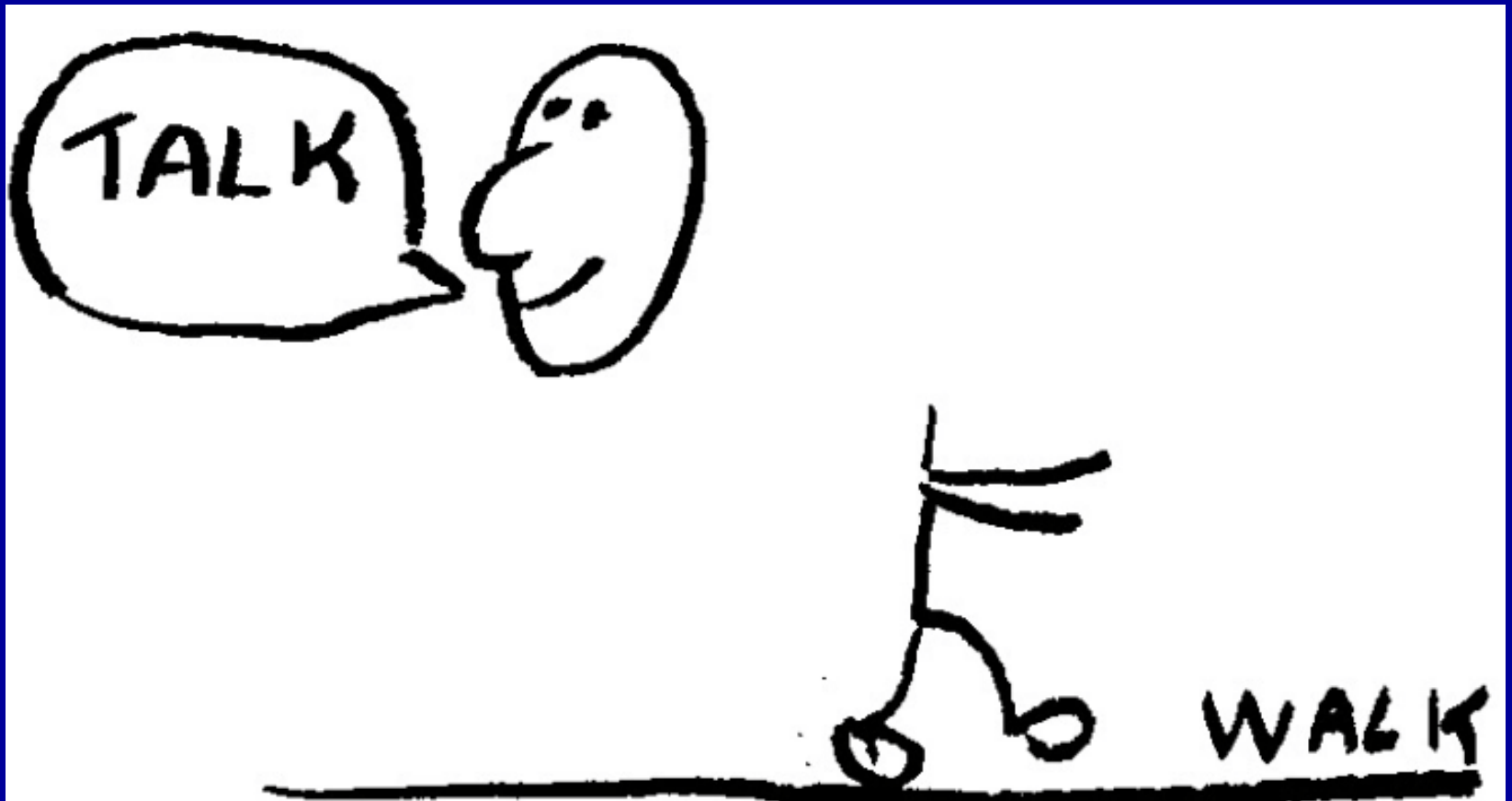
- Growth mindset was a simple concept
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A Very Surprising Finding

- Are parents' and teachers' mindsets related to their children's/students' mindsets?
- Gunderson, Gripshover, Romero, Dweck, Goldin-Meadow, and Levine, 2013
- Sun, 2015
- Haimovitz & Dweck, in press
- Park, Gunderson, Tsukayama, Levine, & Beilock, in press
- Yang, Haimovitz, Wright, Murphy, & Yeager, in prep.
- How is this possible????

Does the Walk Match the Talk?

Sun, 2015; Yang et al., in prep.



Parents too...

(Haimovitz & Dweck, 2015)

Failure is harmful



Failure is helpful



Toddler Praise

Gunderson, Gripshover, Romero, Dweck, Goldin-Meadow,
and Levine, 2013

- Parents' *process praise* predicted child's growth mindset and desire for challenge 5 years later
- And math and language achievement 2 years after that

Practices That Create Growth Mindsets

Focus on the learning process

- Teach for conceptual understanding (+ clear feedback & chance to resubmit)
- Sit with a child who is stuck and say:
“Show me what you’ve done and let’s figure out what you can try next.”
- Treat failures as beneficial for learning
- Focus on child’s process and tie it to learning

More pointers from research...

- Use the neuroscience: effort & difficulty—that's when you're growing your neurons
- With adolescents: Let them author their own learning of a growth mindset.
- Link to larger goals



Thank you!