Brainology: Transforming students’ motivation to learn

Anticipation guide
Write whether you agree (A) or disagree (D) with the following statements. Then discuss with a partner.

_____ A person has a fixed amount of intelligence.
_____ It is important to “look smart” in school.
_____ Children will do well if they are praised for being smart.
_____ If you are really smart, you do not have to work hard in school.
_____ School is a place where you perform and are judged.

Vocabulary
*Match the words to the definitions.*

mindset (n) ______ a. a problem that makes things worse than they were
setback (n) ______ b. to choose not to do something
dumb (adj) ______ c. to make something less strong
to dampen (v) _____ d. general attitude; the way someone thinks about things
to opt out (v) _____ e. stupid

*Now put the words in the following sentences.*

1. If you have a positive ___________________, you will be happier.

2. Many states decided to ___________________ of setting up their own healthcare system for Obamacare and are letting the federal government do it.

3. The mood at the party ___________________ when we found out Larry was not coming. He is such a fun person. (use past simple)

4. I felt ___________________ when I could not help my child with his math homework.

5. It was a huge ___________________ for his family when he lost his job.
Previewing the article
Look at the title of the article. Tell your partner what you think the article will be about.

Now read the first 3 paragraphs.

1. What does the author mean by the following terms?
   fixed mindset

   growth mindset

2. What is the author going to write about in the rest of the article? How do you know?

3. Write 3 predictions or questions you think the text will talk about.

4. Find any of the vocabulary words from the previous page and highlight them in the first 3 paragraphs.
The first section of the article discusses differences between people with growth mindsets and people with fixed mindsets. Write the qualities of each in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIXED MINDSET</th>
<th>GROWTH MINDSET</th>
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How Do Students Learn These Mindsets? (Section 2)
The second part of the article discusses different types of praise and how it affects learners. Answer the following questions about it in your own words.

1. What do the authors mean when they talk about “the praise movement” in the third paragraph of that section?

2. What are some of the questions they had about praise (paragraph 4)?

3. They did a study with 5th graders. Briefly write about how they did the study and what the results were.

4. What suggestions do they make about praise based on their research?
Brainology - Section 3
1. What was the research they did with seventh graders?

2. What results did they find?

3. What did they do as a result of what they found out through their study?

What Do We Value? - Section 4
1. What over all recommendations does the author make based on the research she and her graduate students have done?

Looking at language
Let’s look back as a class at the first section (Mindset and Achievement). This section discusses three differences between students with a growth mindset and students with a fixed mindset. Highlight any language that helps you connect the ideas in the paragraphs. Discuss in class. Then try to do fill-in-the-blank activity 1 without looking at the text.
The thing we found was that students with different mindsets cared about different things in school. Those with a growth mindset were much more interested in learning than in just looking smart in school. This was not the case for students with a fixed mindset. In many of our studies with students from preschool age to college age, we find that students with a fixed mindset care so much about how smart they will appear that they often reject learning opportunities — even ones that are critical to their success (Cimpian, et al., 2007; Hong, et al., 1999; Nussbaum and Dweck, 2008; Mangels, et al., 2006).

we found that students with the two mindsets had radically different beliefs about effort. Those with a growth mindset had a very straightforward (and correct) idea of effort — the idea that the harder you work, the more your ability will grow and that even geniuses have had to work hard for their accomplishments. The students with the fixed mindset believed that if you worked hard it meant that you didn't have ability, and that things would just come naturally to you if you did. This means that every time something is hard for them and requires effort, it's both a threat and a bind. If they work hard at it that means that they aren't good at it, if they don't work hard they won't do well. Clearly, since just about every worthwhile pursuit involves effort over a long period of time, this is a potentially crippling belief, in school in life.

Students with different mindsets had very different reactions to setbacks. Those with growth mindsets reported that, after a setback in school, they would simply study more or study differently the next time. Those with fixed mindsets were more likely to say that they would feel dumb, study less the next time, and seriously consider cheating. If you feel dumb — permanently dumb — in an academic area, there is no good way to bounce back and be successful in the future. In a growth mindset, you can make a plan of positive action that can remedy a deficiency. (Hong. et al., 1999; Nussbaum and Dweck, 2008; Heyman, et al., 1992)