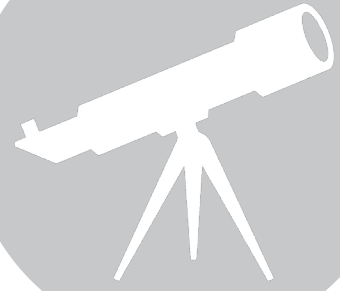


# THE EXPLORER MINDSET

## Open to Learning



7



### GENERAL OVERVIEW

- Step 1 encourages response to statements about intelligence and ability.
- In Step 2, participants explore the ‘fixed’ vs. ‘growth’ mindsets and how it can affect our ability to learn.
- In Step 3, learners practice strategies for shifting mindsets.
- In Step 4, participants examine their learning comfort zones and challenge themselves to stretch.



### PURPOSE

- Understand how our beliefs about learning and intelligence can motivate us or hold us back.
- Discover how the brain changes with use and explore the concept that intelligence is not fixed.
- Identify negative self-talk and apply strategies to change the internal narrative.
- Explore activities in the “stretch” zone – where participants are challenged but not overwhelmed.



### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do you respond to challenges and learning new things?
- What strategies can we use to shift mindsets when challenged?
- What circumstances lead to the most growth and learning?



### WHEN TO USE/TIMING

- Near the beginning of program to set the stage for trying new things
- Half day



### GET PREPARED and materials needed

- Reference Sheet 1: Intelligence Statements**, one for Facilitator
- Reference Sheet 2: World Café Table Questions**, one copy (cut-up), one question per table
- Reference Sheet 3: Activity Statements**, one for Facilitator
- Handout 1: What Was I Thinking?**, one copy (cut-up) per pair/triad
- Handout 2: Changing Your Mind**, one per learner
- Three very long pieces of string or lots of masking tape to make three large concentric circles (4 ft., 6 ft., and 8 ft. in diameter)



### VIDEO PREVIEW

- **Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset:**  
[youtube.com/watch?v=M1CHPnZffmU&t=28s](https://youtube.com/watch?v=M1CHPnZffmU&t=28s)
- **Growth Mindset. The Truth About Your Brain:**  
[youtube.com/watch?v=rf8FX2sl3gU](https://youtube.com/watch?v=rf8FX2sl3gU)

Change it UP

### SKILLS FOCUS

- Adaptability
- Communication

# LEARNING ACTIVITIES

## STEP 01 Shoulder to shoulder

1. Write the following instructions where everyone can see them.
  - 1 step forward for “agree”
  - 1 step back for “disagree”
  - 2 steps forward for “strongly agree”
  - 2 steps back for “strongly disagree”
2. In an open area, ask all participants to stand in a line, “Shoulder to Shoulder”. Read aloud each of the **Reference Sheet 1: Intelligence Statements** one at a time.
  - For each statement, participants will move forward or backward depending on their response to the statement.
3. After reading several statements, have participants observe where people are standing. Are they clustered together or spaced out? Call participants out of their spot to look from a different angle.  
Debrief with the group.
  - Are there any similarities/differences in how we seem to think of intelligence?
  - Is intelligence something we are born with? Is it ‘fixed’ at birth?
  - How do we come to think of ourselves as ‘smart’ or ‘not smart’?



**Online Adaptation:** Change this to a Four Corners Activity, placing the 4 statements in #1 in the corners of an online whiteboard. Have learners use annotation stamps to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the Intelligence Statements and go straight to the Debrief.

## STEP 02 Fixed vs. growth

1. Show the following video. **Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset:** [youtube.com/watch?v=M1CHPnZfFmU&t=28s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1CHPnZfFmU&t=28s)
2. Re-read a couple of the **Intelligence Statements** from **Reference Sheet 1** and have them decide if the statements reflect a Fixed or Growth view of intelligence.
3. Create four groups (or breakout rooms) and distribute one question from **Reference Sheet 2: World Café Table Questions** to each group. Use a (modified) *World Café* approach to explore the concepts.

### Suggested Strategy

- Ask one person from each group to be the *host* (*Who has most recently had a birthday, gone to a movie, etc.*).
- Explain that the host will remain at their original table and will read the question and make notes on all table discussions. The host is NOT an expert or meant to direct the conversation, they are just making sure all ideas get written down from everyone who arrives to discuss the question.
- The rest of the group will be *travelers* who will carry key ideas, themes and questions on to the next table (or breakout room). Everyone is responsible to each other for participating in all 4 table/breakout room discussions.
- Set a timer for 15 minutes and start the first conversation. Repeat the process to cover all questions.
- After the last round of conversation, people return to their first table/breakout room to synthesize their discoveries, before initiating a whole group discussion to identify patterns.

There are many excellent resources available online to explain these concepts and their impact on learning and life. Google *Fixed vs. Growth Mindset* for charts, videos and activities.



The World Café approach provides opportunities for ideas, questions, and themes to link together and cross-pollinate insights from prior conversations. Find out more at [theworldcafe.com](http://theworldcafe.com).

### STEP 03 From a fixed mindset to a growth mindset

1. Use the *Think, Pair, Share* strategy to allow learners to first reflect individually, before discussing with a partner, then sharing with the larger group.
  - Which mindset do you think comes most naturally to you?
  - Why do you think you have developed that mindset? (*Discuss messages from others, success at school, learning disabilities that weren't addressed, etc.*)
  - Do you think it's possible to change the way you think about things?
  - Do you think it's easy or hard to change the way you think? Why or why not?
2. Have the class watch the following video on how the brain can grow and change. (**Growth Mindset. The Truth About Your Brain:** [youtube.com/watch?v=rf8FX2sl3gU](https://youtube.com/watch?v=rf8FX2sl3gU)) Before watching, ask them to be ready to record at least one new piece of information that they find interesting or important. Debrief with the group about what they recorded.
3. Distribute the **Handout 1: What Was I Thinking?** (One set of cut-up sentences for each pair or small group.)
  - Ask each group to read over the sentences and categorize them as a Fixed or Growth mindset. Have them organize their set of statements into two groups based on their decisions.
  - After participants have had time to discuss and label their sentences, discuss each statement as a class and note possible positive/negative effects.

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@ Learners can determine their mindset at **Do You Have a Growth or Fixed Mindset? Video Quiz:** [youtube.com/watch?v=pamzG81yt7g](https://youtube.com/watch?v=pamzG81yt7g) or take a paper quiz at [advising.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/341/2020/07/MINDSET-Quiz.pdf](https://advising.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/341/2020/07/MINDSET-Quiz.pdf)

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4. Distribute **Handout 2: Changing Your Mind.** As a large group, discuss which of the statements feel most comfortable or familiar to them.
  - Where there are blanks, have participants create 'growth' statements to counteract the 'fixed mindset' statements on the page.
  - In the rows that are completely blank, have them brainstorm additional 'fixed' mindset messages that they have encountered within themselves and/or others and develop their own growth messages to practice instead.
5. In pairs or groups, brainstorm statements we could say to each other to promote a growth mindset in our home, workplace or learning environment. As a group, choose some of the favourites/most powerful statements and post them around the room.

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#### Online Adaptations:

- In #1, have learners discuss in pairs using the Private Chat function. Be sure they choose one person to 'share' with the larger group.
  - In #3, use a PowerPoint slide of Handout 1: What Was I Thinking (available at [changeitup.ca/curriculum-extensions](https://changeitup.ca/curriculum-extensions)) and have learners use their annotation tools to put an 'F' or a 'G' next to the statements to indicate Fixed or Growth.
  - In #5, have learners choose their favourite statements, illustrate them, and send a photo out to the group.
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## STEP 04 Learning to stretch

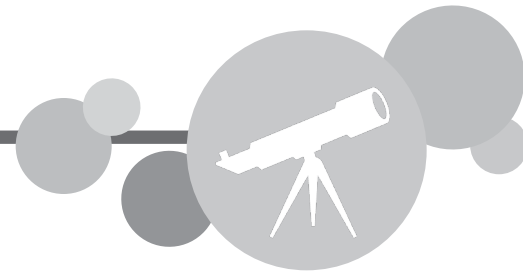
1. Move participants to an open area where you have marked off three concentric circles on the floor with chalk, tape or string. Make sure all circles are big enough for learners to stand in (*see Get Prepared section*).
  - Explain that the innermost circle is the “Comfort Zone”, the next circle is the “Stretch Zone”, and the circle on the outside edge is the “Panic Zone”.
2. Read aloud the activity statements on **Reference Sheet 3** and have participants move back and forth between the circles depending upon how they would feel if they were going to try that activity. (*First DO an example yourself to model what you are looking for.*) Ask participants to:
  - Stay in the “Comfort Zone” if that action or activity would be comfortable for you.
  - Move to the “Stretch Zone” if you are interested in doing it, but are not really confident on how to do it or you are a little nervous about it.
  - If your first thought is “No way - I could never do that”, move to the “Panic Zone”.
  - Stay in that zone until the next question.
3. After all statements have been read aloud, debrief with the following:
  - Were you in the comfort zone a lot? The stretch zone? The panic zone?
  - What does it feel like in your body to be in the comfort zone? The stretch zone? The panic zone?
  - Which zone did you prefer?
  - During your time here in the program, which zone do you spend the most time in?
  - Which zone is the best zone for learning? (*Activities that are just above your head - not too far - put you in the best zone for learning - The Stretch or Optimal Zone – where you are challenged but not overwhelmed.*)
  - What happens if you never stretch yourself? (*You get bored, stagnate and learn very little. But you might be comfortable because it's familiar!*)
4. Have participants think of one thing they would like to learn how to do in the program that would be in their stretch zone. Create a group list, analyzing for similarities/trends and determining how to incorporate the ideas.

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 **Online Adaptation:** Create a PowerPoint slide with 3 concentric circles (#1) and have learners use the ‘stamp’ annotation to indicate how they would feel doing the activity statements from **Reference Sheet 3**.

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“It’s not that I’m so smart. It’s just that I stay with problems longer.”  
— Albert Einstein



### CHECK OUT QUESTION

- What activity in your stretch zone could you try within the next two weeks?



### SPIRALLING CONCEPTS

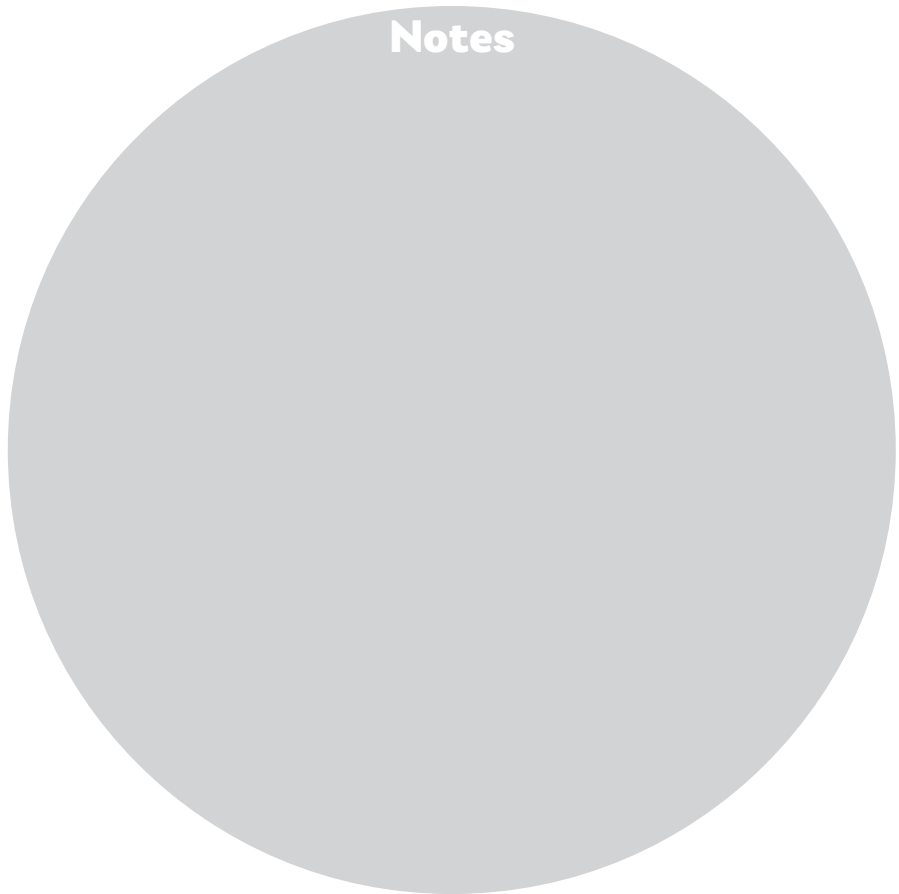
- When participants come up against something they feel they can't do (*e.g. budgets, cover letters*) remind them of Fixed/Growth thinking and putting themselves in the "Stretch Zone".
- Each day, when beginning a new activity or challenge, have participants pause to 'check in' with themselves on what kind of internal dialogue they're having about the current learning experience - is it from a fixed or growth mindset? If it's based in a fixed view, have them respond to negative thoughts/beliefs with growth mindset statements.



### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Have participants teach themselves something they don't know how to do. It could be learning to cook a specific dish from a relative, having someone teach them how to sew on a button, or learning to draw a cow from a YouTube video. Have them record their feelings/thoughts before and after the learning experience.

## Notes



- 1** Being smart is something basic inside you and you can't change it.
- 2** If you learn new things you can become more intelligent.
- 3** You can learn new things, but you can't change how smart you are.
- 4** Your brain develops when you are a child, but when you are an adult, it stops developing and stays the same.
- 5** You are a certain kind of person and not much can be done to really change that.
- 6** No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change.
- 7** It's not worth trying something you know you aren't good at.
- 8** You can always learn to do new things, even if they don't seem to be strengths for you.



1

If you believe that you are stupid or that your intelligence is fixed, what do you think happens when you go to learn something new?

2

If you believe that you can always grow, change and get smarter, what do you think happens when you go to learn something new?

3

When people believe that intelligence is fixed (*you have a certain amount and that's it*), they tend to avoid doing anything that challenges them because they don't want to look stupid or fail. How could that hurt you as you start a new job or training program?

4

When people believe that intelligence can grow and change (*you can get smarter by challenging yourself to learn new things*), they get excited about taking on challenges, because they believe it will lead to learning. How could that help you as you move into a new job or training program?

- 1** Sing alone in front of the group.
- 2** Discuss your future plans with a large group of people.
- 3** Create a crossword puzzle for the rest of the group to do.
- 4** Run a race or a marathon.
- 5** Take a machine apart to fix it.
- 6** Cook a meal for a large group of people.
- 7** Write a description of a business you would love to start.
- 8** Go for a long walk in the bush.
- 9** Play a musical instrument.
- 10** Give someone a piece of art that you made.
- 11** Dance in front of other people.
- 12** Write your bio for a newspaper story.
- 13** Make a video or documentary.
- 14** Create a webpage.
- 15** Teach someone else how to do bookkeeping.
- 16** Make a presentation or business pitch to council.
- 17** Figure out a puzzle.
- 18** Go on a hunting trip in the bush.
- 19** Figure out a word problem.
- 20** Fix an engine.



"I don't think I can do this. Maybe I will never be employed."

"What if I fail—I'll be a failure."

"A lot of successful people had failures along the way and they still succeed in the end."

"I can't do math. I don't want to try this."

"This would have been easy if I really had talent."

"I knew I was too stupid to do this. I'm done with this.  
This is a waste of time."

"It's not my fault.  
It was because you didn't give me the right information."

"I'm not sure I can do it now,  
but I think I can learn to do it if I try."

"You don't know what you are talking about.  
I don't have to listen to you."

"Maybe there is something I could do differently that would help me do better at this."

"Basketball wasn't easy for Michael Jordan at first and science wasn't easy for Thomas Edison when he started.  
They had to learn and practice and put in tons of effort."

SITUATION	Fixed Mindset Responses	Growth Mindset Responses
<b>As you approach a challenge:</b>	"I don't think I can do this. Maybe I'll never be employed."	"Everyone has challenges learning new things. I can do this if I put in the effort. And then I'll have the skills I need for employment."
	"What if I fail—I'll be a failure."	"A lot of successful people had failures along the way and they still succeeded in the end."
	"I can't do math. There's no point in trying this."	Possible Talk Back:
	Another Fixed Mindset Message:	Possible Talk Back:
<b>As you hit a setback:</b>	"This would have been easy if I had any talent."	"Basketball wasn't easy for Michael Jordan at first and science wasn't easy for Thomas Edison when he started. They had to learn and practice and put in tons of effort."
	"I knew I was too stupid to do this. I'm done with this. This is a waste of time."	Possible Talk Back:
	Another Fixed Mindset Message:	Possible Talk Back:
<b>As you face criticism:</b>	"It's not my fault. It was because I was you didn't give me the right information."	"What could I do differently that would help me do better at this?"
	"You don't know what you are talking about. I don't have to listen to you."	Possible Talk Back:
	Another Fixed Mindset Message:	Possible Talk Back: