



CASE Mini-Newsletter

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CASE for Gifted Children is a non-profit support and advocacy group for parents, educators, and supporters of gifted education within Clear Creek ISD.

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Mindset and a Child's Willingness to Work through Challenges

Carol Dweck has been influencing new educational strategies through her groundbreaking experimental research and her book **Mindset**. From her work we learn that students who are overly praised by their parents and teachers can become risk-averse and shun challenges. On the other hand, her work demonstrates that the instruction to children that "the brain is a muscle... Giving it a harder workout makes you smarter" was shown, by itself, to improve math scores. (<http://www.nea.org/home/42298.htm>)

From an interview with Carol Dweck in *Education World*: "When they hit more difficult work, as they often do when they get to junior high school or middle school, they begin to doubt their intelligence, they withdraw their effort, and their performance suffers. ... The students who blossom (in middle school) are the ones who believe that intellectual skills are things they can develop. They see the more difficult schoolwork as a challenge to be mastered through hard work, and they are determined to do what it takes to meet these new challenges."

The interview also discusses the gifted label, college student success, differences in girls and boys, and the problem of standardized testing. See "How Can Teachers Develop Students' Motivation -- and Success?" (http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/chat/chat010.shtml)

Gifted and Talented: We Need a Flexible Mindset

The flexible mindset recognizes:

- That some students experience a year's growth with minimal effort and that only an educator who challenges them to two to five years of growth will encourage them to stretch their mind muscles.
- That there are some students with greater potential but that potential is only a starting point for all students, and all students need to develop grit and resiliency to be successful.
- How applied effort is changed by a learner's disabilities and unique talents--and that a student can have both.
- That student success is a mixture of ability, interest, and effort.

(Peter DeWitt, April 3, 2016, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding_common_ground/2016/04/)

How to Engage Strong Executive Skill in Gifted Learners

"Executive function is *what allows you to plan and perform a series of actions needed to complete a specific duty or project*. ... It can be helpful to think of developing executive functioning skills as collecting "experience points" (usually called "XP") in video games. Getting XP isn't necessarily fun and exciting, but having enough XP unlocks harder challenges, specific opportunities, and special abilities." ~Dr. Matt Zakreski, Psy.D., School Counselor, The Grayson School

For more information, see this article about executive function and gifted children:

<http://thegraysonschool.org/executive-skills-gifted-learners/>