**Enriching Success via Grit and Growth Mindset:**

**Exploring the currents created by personal perceptions of learning**

OBTC 2017 at Providence College

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**Exploring the currents created by personal perceptions of learning**

Too many college students are searching for the easiest way to attain an A, resulting in minimal effort to achieve this goal and resulting in loss of the more important goal: learning. This session primes students for a growth mindset with implications for learning versus obtaining a grade. Participants should become more aware of the underlying currents created by mindset and how a growth versus fixed mindset impacts personal learning and success. Learners with a growth mindset will be equipped to maneuver the underlying currents of new knowledge needed to be successful in both professional and personal lives.

Keywords: Mindset, Grit, Enhanced Learning

1. Teaching Implications:

“*Conventional wisdom and political correctness have for almost a century blamed the teachers, the schools, the classroom size, the textbooks, the funding, the politicians, and the parents for the failure of the students—putting the blame on anything or anyone but the students themselves” (Seligman, 2011, p. 103).*

*“Our potential is one thing. What we do with it is quite another*” (Duckworth, 2016, p. 14).

Too many college students are searching for the easiest way to achieve an A; this results in minimal effort to achieve the goal, often resulting in the loss of the more important goal: learning. This session provides a module to prime students for a growth mindset with implications for learning versus obtaining a grade. Through this module, participants should become more aware of the underlying currents created by their personal mindset and how a growth versus fixed mindset impacts personal learning and success.

Angela Duckworth proposes that students may be at least partly to blame for failure to excel at school. Her research centered on the character strengths of students who succeed and character deficits of students who fail. She proposes that “what really drives success is not “genius” but a unique combination of passion and long-term perseverance,” which she terms GRIT (2016, Book Cover).

Martin E. P. Seligman reports that, “controlling for education, older people have more GRIT than younger people, with those over sixty-five having much more than any other age group” (2011, p. 122). An intuitive implication is that life experiences, along with patience, self-control and perseverance, may enhance grit (2011). Further, this implies that personal GRIT can be utilized by our college students who wish to enrich their character. According to Duckworth, “Grit is about what goes through your head when you fall down, and how that—not talent or luck—makes all the difference” (2016, Book Cover). This idea of “what goes through your head, or how you think about achieving results, draws from Carol Dweck’s Mindset research. Dweck and other researchers have successfully replicated studies demonstrating that changing students’ mindsets from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset dramatically increases learning. Students with a fixed mindset feel the need to continually prove that they are smart; therefore, these students will avoid activities in which they cannot succeed. On the other hand, students with a growth mindset enjoy difficult challenges and look at early failure as learning experiences. Thus, those with a growth mindset are willing to expend more effort to master new things.

These learners with a growth mindset are equipped to maneuver successfully the underlying currents of new knowledge needed to be successful in future professional and personal lives.

**Session Learning Objectives:** Following this session, participants should be able:

* to analyze their personal Grit assessment.
* to discuss fixed versus growth mindset and how these concepts impact learning and success.
1. Session Description and Plan:

Participants in this session will experience a classroom activity designed to prime their mindset and relate mindset to implications for learning versus obtaining a grade. Through this module, participants should become more aware of the underlying currents created by their personal mindset and how their mindset impacts personal learning and success.

Introduction of activity and learning objectives. 5 minutes

Participants complete individual activity that will be used for personal

mindset reflection and discussion. See Appendix A for handout. 10 minutes

Participants discuss guided reflection questions and mindset implications. 15 minutes

Facilitator led discussion of mindset, perseverance, and grit with

participant engagement throughout. 20 minutes

Discussion/Conclusion – Connecting the learning to session objectives. 10 minutes

1. Application to Conference theme:

Today’s students, by the time they are entering university classes, often have self-programmed to obtain a grade instead of focusing on learning as a goal. By introducing students to the concept of a growth mindset, much like tossing a stone into a lake, professors may create underlying currents that affect how students perceive learning. Establishing a growth mindset will assist students in engaging more in learning in the classroom and in their personal and professional lives. It is important for students, then, to be aware of how they perceive challenges, so that they are successful in navigating the changing currents in life.

1. Unique Contribution to OBTC:

This work has not been presented before, and it is not under review anywhere else.

References

Duckworth, A. (2016). *GRIT: The Power of Passion and Perseverance.* New York, NY: Scribner.

Dweck, C. S. (2007). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success. How we can learn to fulfill our potential.* New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

Lee, S. (2014). Research on Success: Grit, Growth Mindset, and the Marshmallow Test. Retrieved from: http://www.slideshare.net/steveplee/grit-and-growth-mindset-38461613.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish.* New York, NY: Atria Books, pp. 121-122.

**Appendix A: GRIT ASSESSMENT -- A reflection of how you see yourself right now.**

Please respond to the following eight items using the following scale:

1 = Not like me at all

2= Not much like me

3= Somewhat like me

4= Mostly like me

5= Very much like me

\_\_\_\_\_1. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from old ones.\*

\_\_\_\_\_2. Setbacks don’t discourage me. I don’t give up easily

\_\_\_\_\_3. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.\*

\_\_\_\_\_4. I am a hard worker.

\_\_\_\_\_5. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.\*

\_\_\_\_\_6. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.\*

\_\_\_\_\_7. I finish whatever I begin.

\_\_\_\_\_8. I am diligent.

**To get your score:**

1. Add your score on statements 2, 4, 7, and 8.

2. Then, add items 1, 3, 5, and 6. Subtract that total from 24.

3. Then, add the two steps together and divide by 8.  **Your Score: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Here are the norms by sex:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| DOCILE (Tenths) | MALE (N=4,169) | FEMALE (N=6,972) |
| 1st | 2.50 | 2.50 |
| 2nd | 2.83 | 2.88 |
| 3rd | 3.06 | 3.13 |
| 4th | 3.25 | 3.25 |
| 5th | 3.38 | 3.50 |
| 6th | 3.54 | 3.63 |
| 7th | 3.75 | 3.79 |
| 8th | 3.92 | 4.00 |
| 9th | 4.21 | 4.25 |
| 10th | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Mean, SD (Standard Deviation) | 3.37, 0.66 | 3.43, 0.68 |

Source: Adapted from Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish.* New York, NY: Atria Books, pp. 121-122.

**APPENDIX B: Mindfulness Reflection**

1. Write about a recent situation where you overcame a difficult challenge:
	* What internal characteristics helped you to overcome the obstacle? ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­
2. **Compare this to a similar situation when you failed to overcome the challenge:**
	* What internal characteristics hindered your success?