

Growth Mindset

Education

What the theory claims, and why large trials keep shrinking the effect.

Growth mindset is the belief that ability can be developed through effort and strategy, contrasted with a fixed view of ability. The theory is coherent; the size of the classroom effect is contested.

TYPICAL EFFECT

small, often near zero

STATUS

contested

- Early studies reported large gains for weak students.
- Large replications find effects near zero to small.
- The National Study of Learning Mindsets found small effects.
- Gains concentrate in lower-attaining pupils, if present.
- Praising effort alone is not the intervention.
- Telling pupils to have a mindset is not the intervention.

LOOK FOR IT

Sisk et al., 2018: two meta-analyses found weak overall associations and small effects, strongest for at-risk and low-income students.

Educational reference. Contested. Treat mindset work as a modest supplement, never as a substitute for teaching the content well.