

## Self-Efficacy and Growth Mindset

**Self-Efficacy:**<sup>1</sup> An individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to obtain a certain goal.

- Self-efficacy pertains to *beliefs*, or perceived abilities, rather than actual *abilities*
- It is influenced by one's accomplishments or mastery, vicarious experiences through others, "verbal persuasion" i.e. others' encouragement, and physiological states (Bandura, 1977, p. 191)
- Self-efficacy and persistence: Whether one believes their actions will have an impact or they can achieve a goal will determine whether they take an action, and for how long they expend effort to achieve it:
  - "It is hypothesized that expectations of personal efficacy determine whether coping behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences." (Bandura, 1977, p. 191)
  - "Efficacy expectations determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the more active the efforts." (Bandura, 1977, p. 193).
- Self-efficacy (about personal capability) is distinct from *self-esteem* (focuses on "self-worth" or "self-liking")

**Growth Mindset:**<sup>2</sup> A theory of intelligence: that intelligence is a malleable quality that can be cultivated, not a fixed trait

- The belief that intelligence is malleable leads to a focus on effort and learning, and predicts greater persistence in the face of failure
- Students with a growth mindset choose activities in which they will learn more or gain personal satisfaction over those that make them "look smart"
- Mindsets are malleable, at least via interventions in the short term
- Praise: praising students for their ability and intelligence (performance) fosters a fixed mindset, praising their effort (process) fosters a growth mindset
  - "So, even more important than showing that beliefs matter for students' motivation and achievement is showing that when you change their beliefs, you change their motivation and achievement." (Dweck, 2002, p. 37)

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<sup>1</sup> Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change. *Psychological Review*.84( 2), p. 191-215.

<sup>2</sup> Dweck, C. S. (2002). Messages that motivate: How praise molds students' beliefs, motivation, and performance (in surprising ways). In J. Aronson (Ed.), *Improving academic achievement*(pp. 37-60). New York: Academic Press.