**Mindset** is the cognitive view that individuals develop for themselves. You likely have one of two mindsets: (1) a *fixed mindset*, in which you believe that your qualities are carved in stone and cannot change; or (2) a *growth mindset*, in which you believe your qualities can change and improve through effort (Dweck, 2006, 2012). Which mindset do you have? Complete Know Yourself Assessment “Assessing your Mindset” to find out.

Your mindset influences whether you will be optimistic or pessimistic, what your goals will be, how hard you will strive to reach those goals, and how successful you are in University and after. Carol Dweck (2006), a professor at Stanford University, who created the concept of mindset, studied first year pre-med majors taking their first chemistry class. Students with a growth mindset got higher grades than those with a fixed mindset. Even when they did not do well on a test, the growth mindset students bounced back on the next test.

Fixed mindset students typically read and reread the text and class notes or tried to memorize everything verbatim. The fixed mindset students who did poorly on tests concluded that chemistry and maybe pre-med weren’t for them. By contrast, growth mindset students took charge of their motivation and learning, searching for themes and principles in the course and going over mistakes until they understood why they made them. In Dweck’s analysis (2006, page 61) “They were studying to learn, not just ace the test. And actually, this is why they got higher grades – not because they were smarter or had a better background in science.”

Dweck (2006) recommends the following to develop a growth mindset:

- **Understand that your intelligence and thinking skills are not fixed, but can change:** Even if you are very bright, with effort you can increase your intelligence.

- **Become passionate about learning and stretch your mind in challenging situations:** It’s easy to withdraw into a fixed mindset when the going gets tough, but as you bump up against obstacles, keep growing, work harder, stay the course, improve your strategies, and you will become a more successful student.

- **Start now:** If you have a fixed mindset, commit to changing it now. Think about when, where, and how you will begin using your new growth mindset.

**Assessing Your Mindset:** Read each statement and place a check mark in the box next to each item to indicate whether you mostly agree with it or mostly disagree with it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mostly agree</th>
<th>Mostly disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your intelligence is something very basic that you can’t change very much.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. You can learn new things, but you can’t really change how intelligent you are.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.</td>
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**Scoring and Interpretation:** Items 1 and 2 are fixed mindset questions; items 3 and 4 are growth mindset questions. Which mindset did you agree with more? You can be a mixture, but most people lean one way or the other. What did you learn about yourself? You could also substitute other skills and abilities (such as speaking skills, writing skills, math skills, athletic skills, and so on) for intelligence to discover whether you have a fixed or growth mindset in those areas.

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