

Growth Mindset

Video: Challenging Pedagogy

(JO BOALER:) We have the knowledge now but when students have a growth mindset and they believe that they can learn anything and they can learn to high levels they do much better in mathematics. My concern is a lot of people think that I can just tell students this. I can have students sort of make a pledge that they're going to have a growth mindset and I can tell students the power of having a growth mindset and that will give them a growth mindset. So what we work really hard to do is to communicate to people you have to change the way maths is taught, you can't just speak these words and tell kids this. So, if mathematics is classed as a series of short, closed questions that kids get right or wrong, they don't see the potential for growth in those questions, they think they're questions that you can either do or you can't. And so, if we want kids to develop a growth mindset we have to give them more open questions where they can see that they can learn inside those questions and they can grow. So that's a big change for maths teachers. So there's a lot of attention to mindset now. I worry when I walk around tech exhibitions that all of these companies have growth mindset all over them, but then they're delivering maths products that are all about short, closed answers which, for kids that gives them a fixed mindset. Other things in education, putting them into ability groups is the ultimate fixed mindset message so, tracking, grading also, giving kids a grade, many students think oh that's who I am, they don't even think this is a reflection on what I'm doing, they think that's the sort of person I am. So these are all very fixed messages, tracking the grading, the questions. I'm glad there's a lot of attention to mindset but it's, the more work I do, the more classes I visit, the more students we interview, the clearer it becomes you have to change the mathematics teaching if you want students to have a growth mindset about mathematics.