

Working hard or hardly working?

How attitudes and life-skills can affect language learning

Edmund Dudley
VUS Conference 2018



In this talk

- What is the secret to success?
- Looking beyond language: a global trend in ELT
- From global to local: using what works
- Practical techniques and ideas to try

In this talk

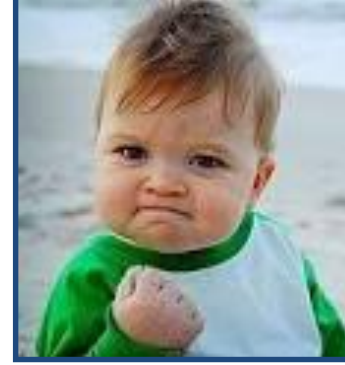
- **What is the secret to success?**
- Looking beyond language: a global trend in ELT
- From global to local: using what works
- Practical techniques and ideas to try

Winners and losers

Which is which?



What is the secret to success?



- What lies behind the outcome?
- What is the role of guides, coaches and teachers?
- How important are attitudes – and can they be taught?
- What is the role of failure in shaping success?
- Is success the same for everyone?
- What can teachers do to keep students motivated?

What is the secret to academic success?

talent

luck

circumstance



attitude

effort

skills

In this talk

- What is the secret to success?
- **Looking beyond language: a global trend in ELT**
- From global to local: using what works
- Practical techniques and ideas to try

Looking beyond language

A global trend in ELT

English teachers are no longer just language instructors.

We are also encouraged to promote other skills and traits.

Life-skills are also being strongly promoted, including:

21st Century Skills

Growth mindset

21st Century Skills

What are they?

Partnership for 21st Century Learning www.p21.org

- Non-profit organisation
- Established in 2002 in the US
- Supported by education, business and tech sectors
- Promotes the *Four Cs* of 21st Century learning
- *Four Cs* feature in many ELT curricula and materials

21st Century Skills

What are they?

The *21st Century Skills* are a set of abilities that students need to develop in order to succeed in the information age.

Partnership for 21st Century Learning

www.p21.org



The Four Cs



Communication

Sharing thoughts, questions, ideas, and solutions



Collaboration

Working together to reach a goal — putting talent, expertise, and smarts to work



Critical Thinking

Looking at problems in a new way, linking learning across subjects & disciplines



Creativity

Trying new approaches to get things done equals innovation & invention

What's new?

The skills or the circumstances?

Communication central to ELT since 1980s

Collaboration pairwork pre-dates technology

Critical Thinking Socratic questioning 2500 years old

Creativity Do we really mean *adaptability*?

21st Century Learning

A shift in expectations

In the recent past:

- Some basic English is an advantage
- Having IT skills is an asset
- It's important to have access to information
- Show people what you already know!

Now / In the near future:

- Some basic English is essential
- Having IT skills is taken for granted
- We have access to too much information
- Show people how you would figure it out

Looking beyond language

A global trend in ELT

English teachers are no longer just language instructors.

We are also encouraged to promote other skills and traits.

Life-skills are also being strongly promoted, including:

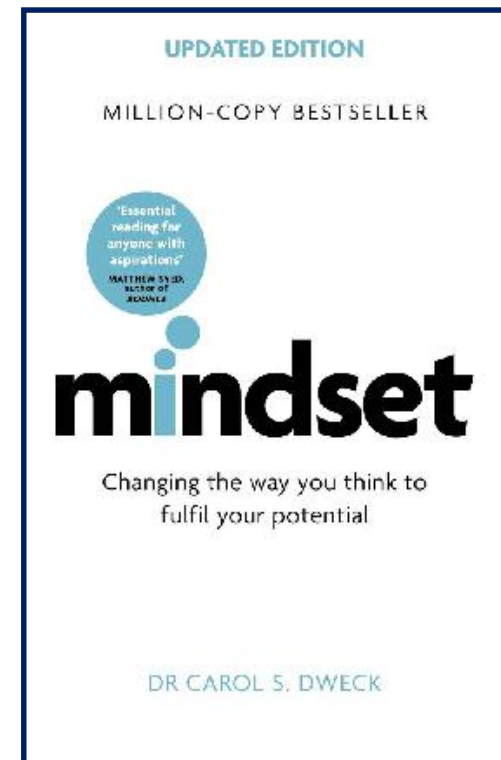
21st Century Skills

Growth mindset

Mindsets

- Fixed mindset
- Growth mindset

Dr Carol S. Dweck *Mindset*



Fixed mindset

- Success is a result of talent

Growth mindset

- Success is a result of hard work

Fixed mindset

- Success is a result of talent
- Success and failure are *identities*

Growth mindset

- Success is a result of hard work
- Success and failure are *provisional outcomes*

Fixed mindset

- Success is a result of talent
- Success and failure are *identities*
- “You either have it or you don’t”

Growth mindset

- Success is a result of hard work
- Success and failure are *provisional outcomes*
- “Everyone can improve over time”

Fixed mindset

- Success is a result of talent
- Success and failure are *identities*
- “You either have it or you don’t”
- Tendency to avoid challenges

Growth mindset

- Success is a result of hard work
- Success and failure are *provisional outcomes*
- “Everyone can improve over time”
- See challenges as learning opportunities

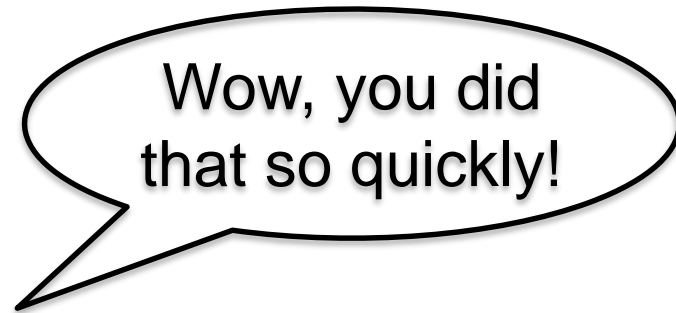
The wrong kind of praise

“After seven experiments with hundreds of children, we had some of the clearest findings I’ve ever seen:

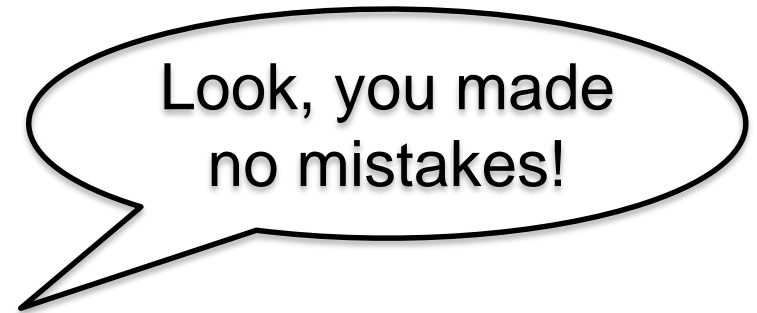
Praising children’s **intelligence** harms their motivation and it harms their performance.” Dweck

The wrong kind of praise

The value of difficult learning



speed



perfection

“Speed and perfection are the enemy of difficult learning.”

Dweck

The right kind of praise

Process feedback

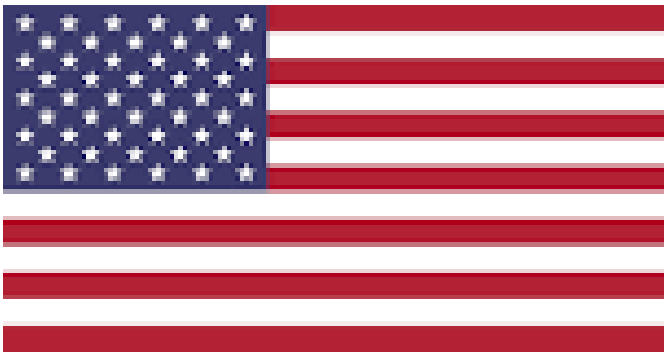
- praise effort, not intelligence
“I can see that you have *worked* really *hard* at this – great *job!*”
 - accept setbacks as strategic opportunities
“Everyone *works* in a different way. Let’s *keep trying* to find a way that *works for you.*”
- be positive; be truthful

In this talk

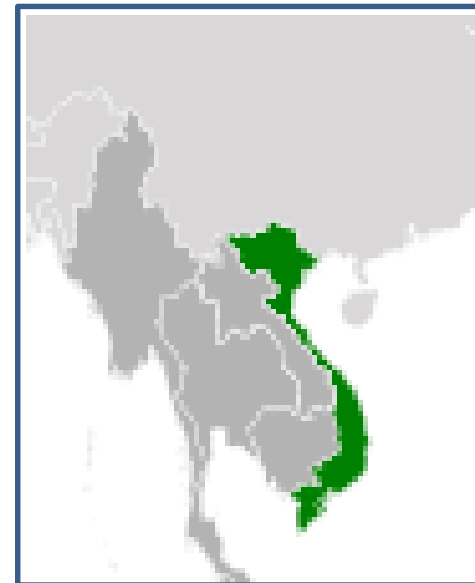
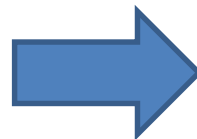
- What is the secret to success?
- Looking beyond language: a global trend in ELT
- **From global to local: using what works**
- Practical techniques and ideas to try

From global to local

How applicable are these ideas globally?



21st C. Learning Skills
Growth Mindset



Useful here?

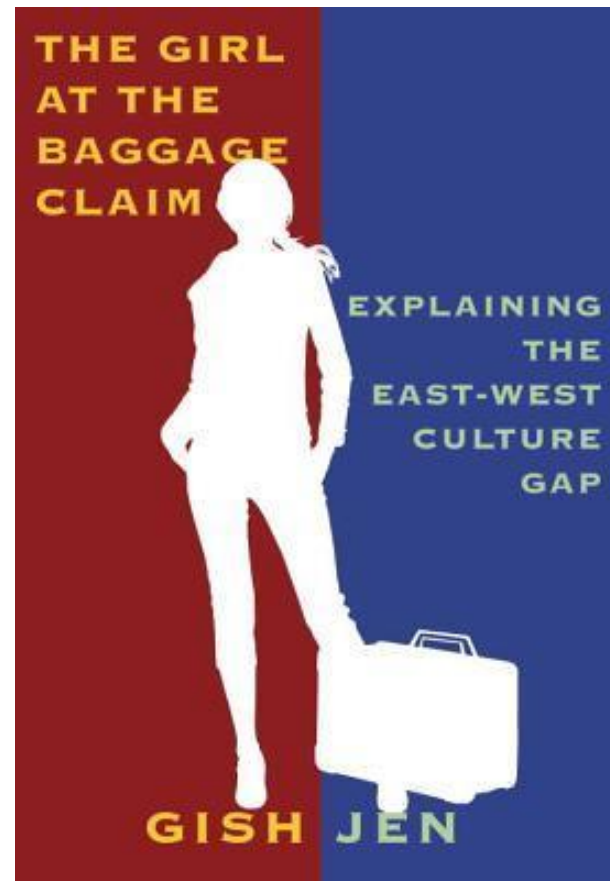
The Girl at the Baggage Claim – Gish Jen

Explaining the East-West Culture Gap

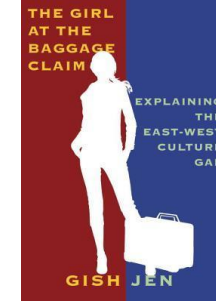
- Big-pit self



- Flexi-self



Different ways of seeing



OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Big-pit self:

Typically western

- individualistic
- emphasises the exceptional



Flexi self:

Typically eastern

- interdependent
- holistic
- pattern-making
- emphasises the general

Different ways of seeing

Soloists and chamber musicians

In music, is it better to be a soloist or a chamber musician?



- Flexi-self values harmony and deep understanding
“Soloists are often lonely / chamber music is just right”



The genius and the master

Different notions of greatness

Big-pit self:

The genius

- innovates
- thinks differently
- wants to change the rules



Flexi-self:

The master

- embraces ancient tradition
- adds new details
- completes a long, difficult apprenticeship



Local specialities

Many students in Vietnam...

- **are willing to make an effort** (growth mindset emphasises hard work over talent)
- **understand the importance of ‘difficult learning’** (Dweck stresses the need to embrace difficult challenges)
- **do not require ‘growth mindset intervention programs’**
- **are less ego-driven and happy to collaborate with others** (a key aspect of 21st Century Learning Skills)

Areas for growth

Students in Vietnam might benefit from...

- **activities that encourage them to ‘think differently’**
(linked to the 21C Learning Skill of creativity)
- **tasks that promote critical thinking** (21C Learning Skills)
- **taking risks in class when using the language**
(accepting communicative challenges, esp when speaking)

In this talk

- What is the secret to success?
- Looking beyond language: a global trend in ELT
- From global to local: using what works
- **Practical techniques and ideas to try**

Areas for growth

Students in Vietnam might benefit from...

- **activities that encourage them to ‘think differently’**
(linked to the 21C Learning Skill of creativity)
- **tasks that promote critical thinking** (21C Learning Skills)
- **taking risks in class when using the language**
(accepting communicative challenges, esp when speaking)

Practical ideas and techniques to try

1. Encouraging students to think differently

A laptop is stolen from an **unlocked** car.

Interpret the incident in two different ways:

1: tell the story in such a way that the theft is **morally unjustifiable**

2: tell the story in such a way that the theft is **morally justifiable**

Students work in small groups; they can add as many extra details to their stories as they want

Practical ideas and techniques to try

2. Promoting critical thinking

- Get students into three groups
- Give each group a copy of the same picture to look at
- Ask students to describe the man
- **Sneaky teacher!** Give each group a different title:
 - a.) Portrait of a Man with a Blue Chaperon
 - b.) The Jeweller
 - c.) Beggar in Blue
- Create new mixed groups (ABC): compare



Practical ideas and techniques to try

2. Promoting critical thinking

- a.) Portrait of a Man with a Blue Chaperon
(actual title of this painting by van Eyck)
- b.) The Jeweller
- c.) Beggar in Blue

Students' descriptions are influenced by the title they were given

- Are they surprised by the differences?
- What conclusions can they draw?



Practical ideas and techniques to try

3. Taking risks when speaking

Forcing students to speak increases their anxiety and reduces their willingness to take risks.

How to help students find the courage to take risks?

- Provide time to think, write and plan
- Reward attitude as well as performance
- Create favourable conditions: give students the option of **not** speaking:
 - when students force *themselves* to speak, they perform better

In this talk

- What is the secret to success?
- Looking beyond language: a global trend in ELT
- From global to local: using what works
- Practical techniques and ideas to try

Working hard or hardly working?

How attitudes and life-skills can affect language learning

Edmund Dudley
VUS Conference 2018

Slides here:

legyened.edublogs.org



edtothemund