

Making the most of students' potential

Edmund Dudley

IH Milan Annual Conference, 12 October 2018



Making the most of students' potential

In this talk

- Must try harder? Why students lose heart
- Unlocking potential: three boxes to open
- How you can be a role model for your students

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Must try harder?

Why students lose heart

What students hear:

Must do better

Must-try-harder is not bad advice...
...but it's not helpful, either.

Students need to know:

- Where to start
- What to do
- How it will help



*Must try
harder!*

Making the most of students' potential

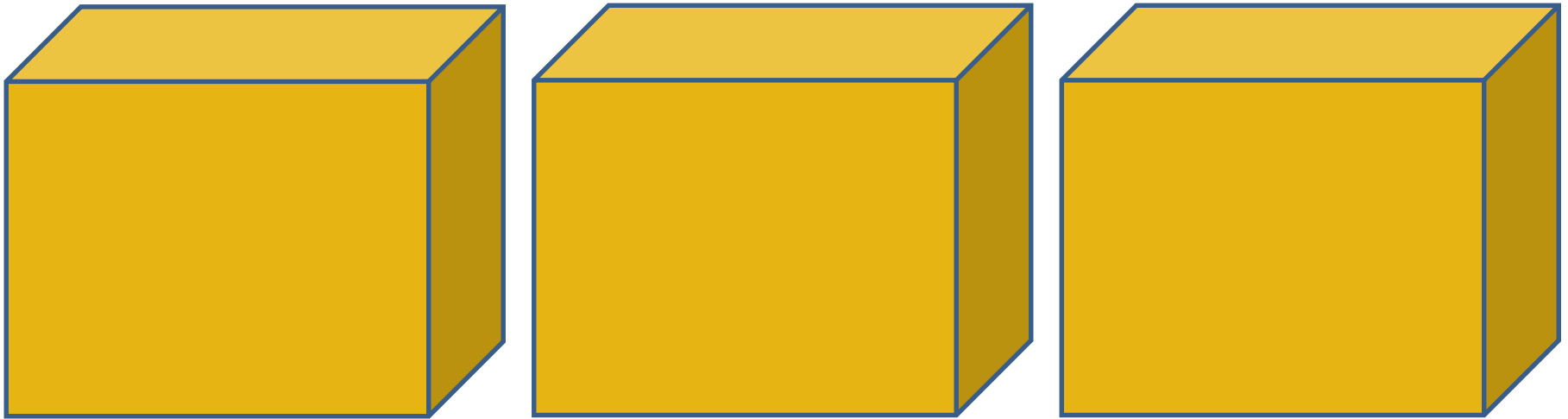
In this talk

- Must try harder? Why students lose heart
- **Unlocking potential: three boxes to open**
- How you can be a role model for your students

Unlocking potential

Three boxes to open

creativity



Creativity

True or false?

In your experience, are the following statements true or false?

1. The students with the best English also have the best ideas.
2. Mobile phones are making people less creative.
3. Selfies are a great way to motivate students to be creative.

Spot the difference

- Students find a photo on their phones which was taken at school
- In class they try to recreate it as accurately as possible



Spot the difference

- Compare the two images side-by-side
- Collect as many differences as possible



Imaginary photo contest

- Get students to open their gallery and find a picture taken in the last week
- In pairs, they share background info + answer any questions
- Tell students that each pair has to nominate **one** of its photos in an (imaginary) themed photo contest
- Announce the theme of the contest

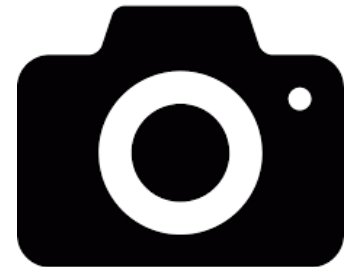


Photo-contest theme revealed:

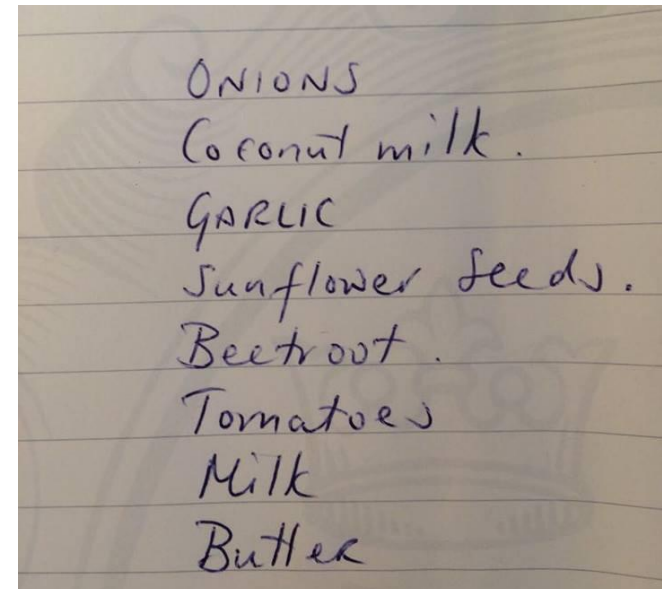
Remembering
Michael
Jackson

- Students have to figure out:
 - 1) how their photo matches the theme of the contest
 - 2) what to say about it
- Tip: don't let students change pictures after you announce the theme.

Photo-contest theme revealed:

(with random photos I took last week)

Remembering
Michael
Jackson

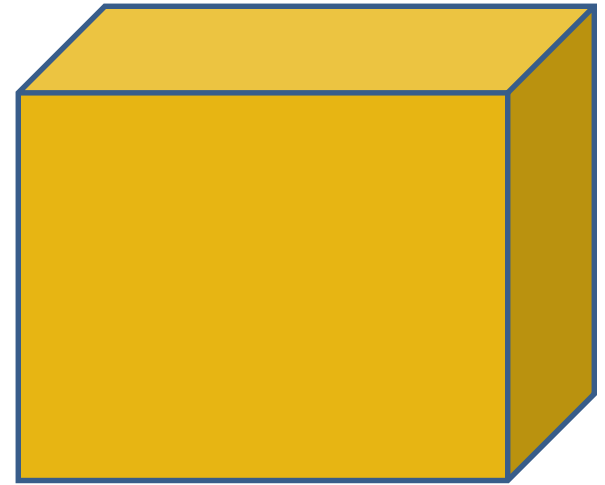
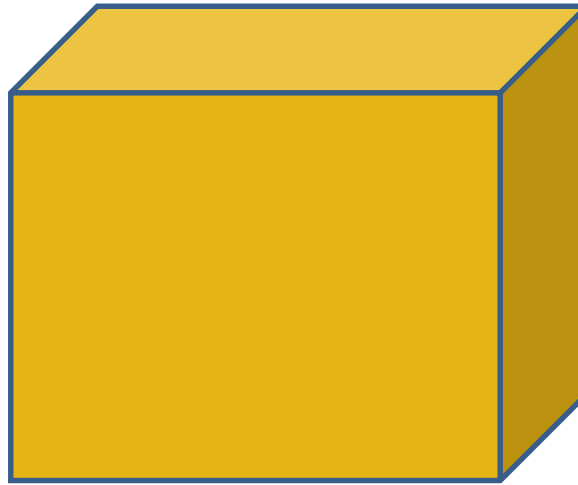
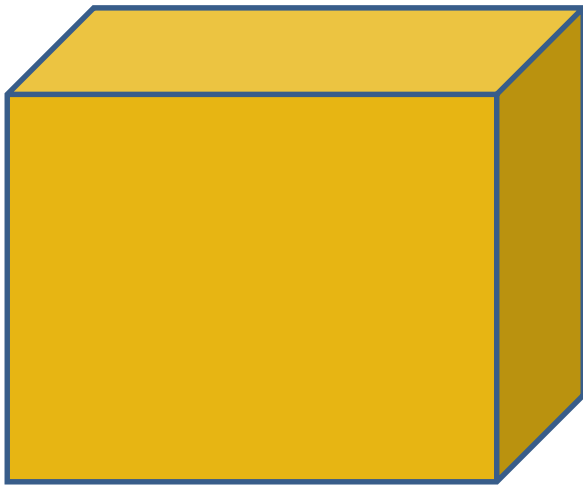


Unlocking potential

Three boxes to open

creativity

versatility



Versatility

True or false?

In your experience, are the following statements true or false?

1. Students spend much of the school day interested, energised, and focused.
2. Learners become passive when the teacher always expects them to do the same things.
3. If we give students a variety of roles in class, they become more active, more involved, and more responsible.

Versatility

Occasional extra roles for students

Class rep

Tech support

Arts and
special effects

Timekeeper

Adjudicator

Online
admin

Observer

Versatility

Students as observers

- Decide on an aspect of your classroom you would like to investigate (e.g. *How involved are students in the lesson?*)
- Invite two students to be observers and give them specific criteria to work with
- Get the observers to watch a lesson from the back of the class and collect data



Students as observers

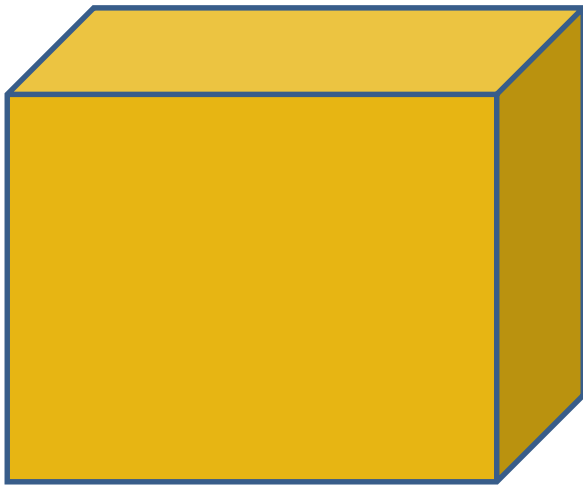
What's the point?

- Students usually have good insights
- It gives them a voice
- It makes them feel more involved
- They become more active as learners

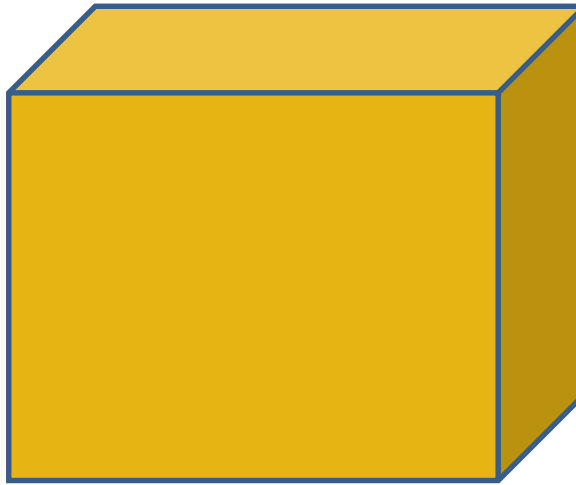
Unlocking potential

Three boxes to open

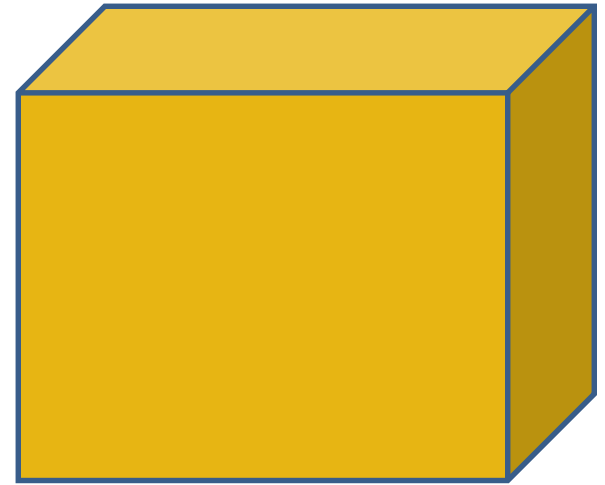
creativity



versatility



resilience



Resilience

True or false?

In your experience, are the following statements true or false?

1. Students with *grit* achieve the most in the end.
2. You don't need talent to be hardworking.
3. You should finish the lesson with something difficult.

Grit

The importance of effort

Two components:

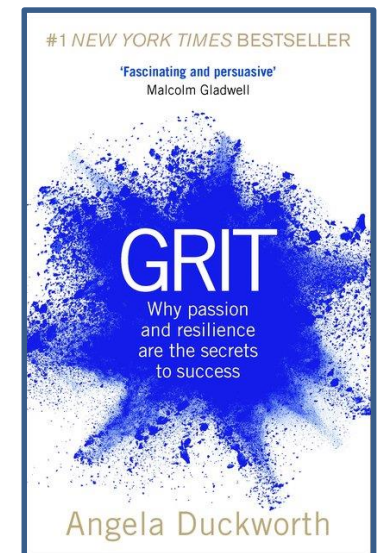
passion (staying focused)

perseverance (bouncing back from setbacks)

talent x **effort** = skill

skill x **effort** = achievement

Angela Duckworth *Grit*



Something fun?

Great idea. But first this...



Dictation

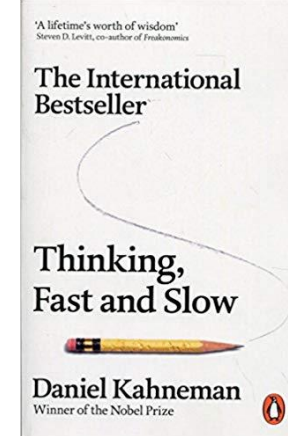
3 125 Ascolta e completa il brano.



There are five people in my family. My
1 _____ is Mary and my 2 _____ is
John. 3 _____ two sisters, Maya and Rosie,
and 4 _____ brother, Aidan. Oh, and
5 _____ a dog, Jasper.
Our house is in Gordon Road in Winchester.
6 _____ River Park. There are 7 _____
and a 8 _____ upstairs. There's a
9 _____, a kitchen and a 10 _____
downstairs. There's a small garden
11 _____ the house.
My favourite things are 12 _____,
my phone and Jasper, my dog!

- Nothing worth knowing can be learned easily – you have to work
- In particular, you have to work on your weaknesses (“deliberate practice”)
- Value hard work and help students to build resilience
- Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional 😊

Remembering pain



Which two of the three factors below influence how we look back on a painful experience (e.g. a medical procedure)?

Which factor has **no** effect on our memory of the experience?

Duration of
pain

Peak pain-
level

End pain-level

Building resilience

In the English class

Whatever else you do in the lesson, finish on something light.

Students remember their final impressions (peak-end rule)

- Work hard early on in the class
- Delay gratification
- Unwind at the end

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How you can be a role model for your students




Do the same
creative tasks
as your
students

creativity



Leave your
comfort zone:
learn skills from
students

versatility



Do painful
tasks together
("joint
hardship")

resilience

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