

From language lessons to life lessons

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Sofia, Bulgaria

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In this talk

- language skills and life skills
- collaborative and co-operative skills
- mindsets for learning
- grit and resilience
- setting the right example

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Language skills and life skills

Paired task

Students have different skills and strengths, e.g.

- vocabulary skills
- observation skills

When working with mixed pairs, do activities that exploit these differences



They go to the **cornfield** and eat some corn. Then they go to the **orchard** and eat some apples. "This food is okay, but it's too plain for me!" says City Mouse. It's bedtime and they're tired. They sleep in an **old** barn.

Language skills and life skills

Which ones do you teach?

Language skills

- the four skills (LSRW)
- grammar
- vocabulary
- pronunciation

Life skills

- working with others
- avoiding distractions
- finding solutions
- handling setbacks

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Collaborative and co-operative skills

What is the difference?

collaboration

- a way of working together
- involves pair work and group work
- can be project work

co-operation

- a way of learning together
- can result from pair work and group work
- students learn from each other



Look at the picture for
10 seconds.
Memorise the items!



**GREAT
JOB!**



games



comic book



board game



doll



stickers



pins



sandwich



grapes



juice



cookie



chips



soda

Did anyone notice the unusual word here? →

How many items did you remember?

Work in pairs

- Students write down what they remember in Eng/L1
- Provide time for them to translate L1 → Eng
- Check:
 - Start with whoever had the fewest
 - Others listen and check off what's been said
 - Continue until all the items have been said



Pair work and group work

Collaborative work

Bring in other skills, such as artwork and presentation skills

Project: A Needs and Wants Survey

B Do a needs and wants survey.

- Ask people what they need and what they want.
- Write their answers in a chart.
- Find or draw pictures.

C Put your chart on the wall.
Tell the class about it.

Needs and Wants Chart		
People	Needs	Wants
My mother	A new job 	Flowers 
My brother	New sneakers 	Game 
My cousin	A school backpack 	Pins 

I ♥ Sofia

The 2018 Mercer *Quality of Living* survey ranked 450 cities; a number of different factors are taken into account, e.g.:

political stability
 crime
 law enforcement
 medical and health
 international schools
 public services
 transportation
 recreation
 consumer goods
 housing
 climate
 natural disasters
 etc



Which do you want to see: some capitals in the region ranked **higher** than Sofia? Or some that were ranked **lower**?

I ♥ Sofia

Higher-ranked capitals in the region

Bratislava = 80th

Warsaw = 82nd

Bucharest = 107th

Sofia = 116th



I ♥ Sofia

Lower-ranked capitals in the region

Sofia = 116th

Moscow = 167th

Kiev = 173rd

Minsk = 188th



I ♥ Sofia

What does your choice reveal?

Bratislava = 80th

Warsaw = 82nd

Bucharest = 107th

Sofia = 116th

Moscow = 167th

Kiev = 173rd

Minsk = 188th



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Fixed mindset v growth mindset

Carol Dweck

Fixed mindset

ability is fixed

talent matters

be better than others

avoid challenges

Growth mindset

ability can be developed

hard work matters

be better than you were

enjoy challenges

Growth mindset

The importance of effort, the power of *yet*

“your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts.”
Dweck

I can't do this.

I can't do this yet.

Growth mindset

What can teachers do?

Evidence suggests it is hard to teach *growth mindset*

However, it can be learned. What we can do:

- praise students for effort, not intelligence
- remember the *power of yet*
- turn *I don't know* into an opportunity to learn
- encourage speculation

Encouraging a spirit of enquiry

Helping students to speculate

Fear of being wrong

Students are often reluctant to speculate

→ Praise guesses as well as correct answers

Give students useful language:

I have no idea but I'll say...

It could be...

I think it's...

I'm pretty sure it's...

I know this one, it's...



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Grit

The importance of effort

Two components:

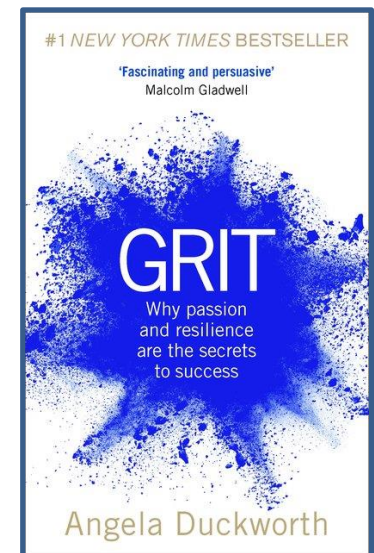
passion (staying focused)

perseverance (bouncing back from setbacks)

talent x **effort** = skill

skill x **effort** = achievement

Angela Duckworth *Grit*



SLANT

Helping students develop useful habits

S	=	Sit up in class
L	=	Listen to the teacher
A	=	Ask questions
N	=	Nod your head when listening
T	=	Track the speaker with your eyes

(used in *KIPP* schools in NY)

Making an effort in class

‘joint hardship’

Student's Writing Resource

Writing Process

BEFORE YOU WRITE:

- Read the example text.
- Think about what it means.
- Think about your own ideas.
- Choose an idea to write about.

AFTER YOU WRITE:

- Read your text.
- Correct your mistakes.
- Ask your friend or teacher to read your text.

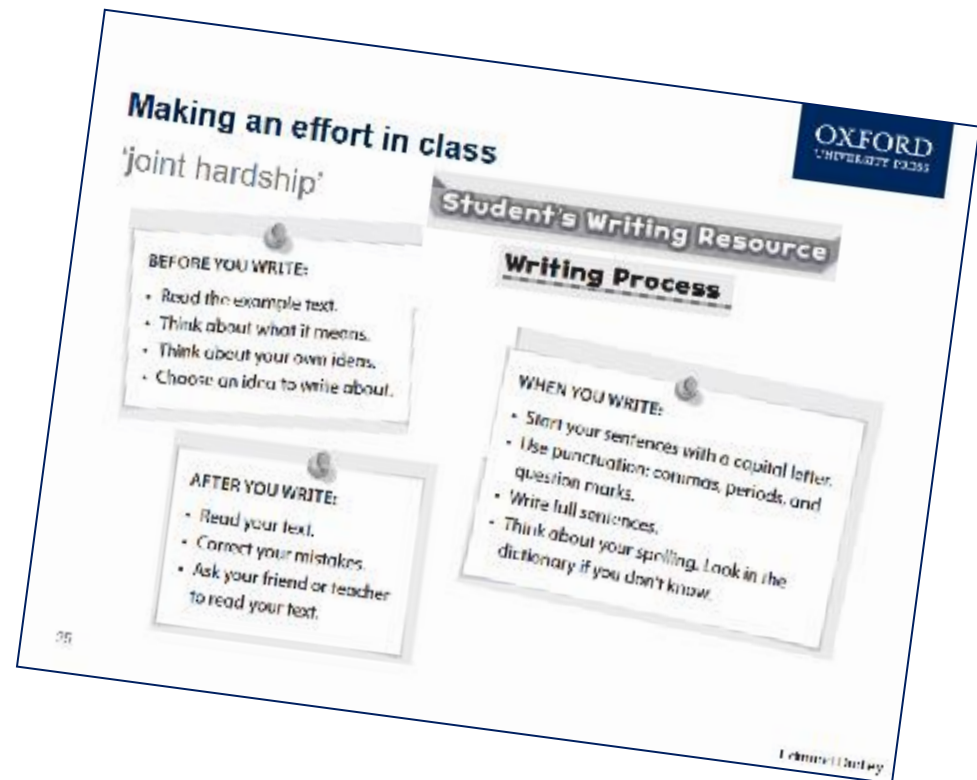
WHEN YOU WRITE:

- Start your sentences with a capital letter.
- Use punctuation: commas, periods, and question marks.
- Write full sentences.
- Think about your spelling. Look in the dictionary if you don't know.

Making an effort in class

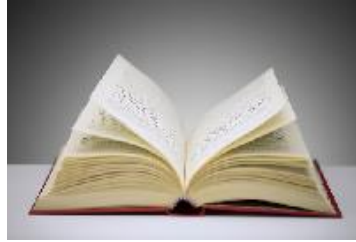
‘joint hardship’

- do writing tasks in class, not for homework
- students can foster a sense of *joint hardship* (Dörnyei)
- they work together on things that need practice
- *pain is inevitable; suffering is optional*



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Shaping attitudes and beliefs

A checklist for modelling helpful attitudes

As teachers, we should:

- look beyond language when appraising students
- reinforce effective habits
- be a role model for positive attitudes and beliefs
- be a guide and a warden
- give the students – and ourselves – time to grow better



Setting the right example

Time limits and word limits

Write Tell your partner about the places in your neighborhood.
Now write about them in your **Workbook**.  page 125

Different students work at different speeds.

→ Give *time limits* for writing tasks instead of *word limits*.

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Slides here:

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