

Growth Mindsets

Seminar on Didactics of Strategy Games
Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge
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Aims



- To provide a (very) brief introduction to mindset theory
- To outline what mindset theory does *and doesn't* say about achievement as this might relate to strategy games

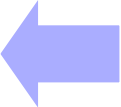
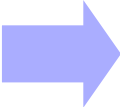


Prof Carol S Dweck, Stanford University



'Ability':

"A vernacular construct that has been transformed into a tool used for comparison within the education system"
(Cremin & Thomas, 2005)

Mindset:	 Fixed	Growth 
Your belief:	Intelligence is a fixed trait	Intelligence is cultivated through learning
Your priority:	Look smart, not thick	Become smarter, through learning
You feel smart:	Achieving easy, low effort successes and outperforming others	Engaging fully with new tasks, exerting effort, stretching and applying skills
You avoid:	Effort, difficulty, setbacks, higher-performing peers	Easy, previously mastered tasks

Looking Intelligent vs. Learning

Fixed Mindset Student:

“The main thing I want when I [play boardgames] is to show how good I am at it.”

Growth Mindset Student:

“It’s much more important for me to learn things than it is to get the best [result].”

(Blackwell, Trzesniewski & Dweck, 2007)

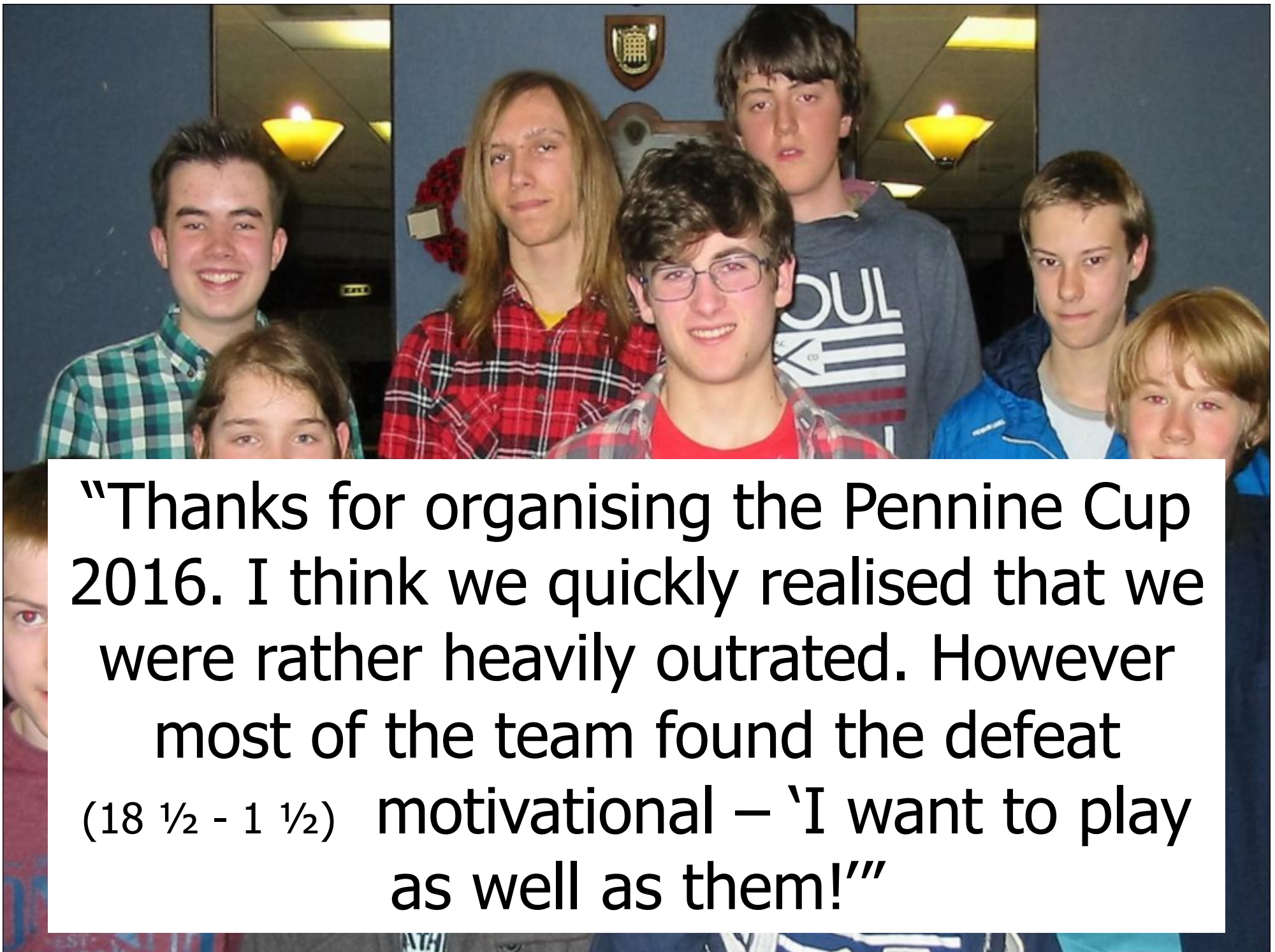
Fixed and growth mindset in action...





Debate skills
are
something
you either
have or
don't have.

(24 September 2016)



“Thanks for organising the Pennine Cup 2016. I think we quickly realised that we were rather heavily outrated. However most of the team found the defeat (18 ½ - 1 ½) motivational – ‘I want to play as well as them!’”

“If everything feels easy we aren’t pushing ourselves hard enough or being challenged enough.”

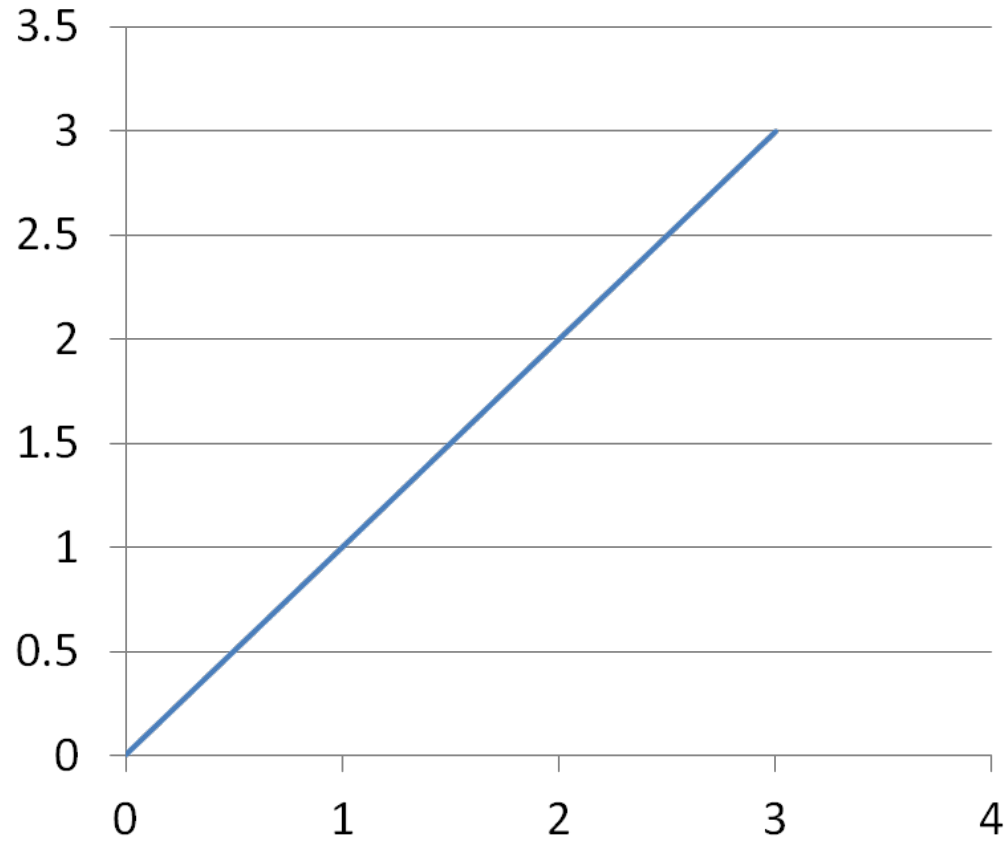
(Kasparov, *How Life Imitates Chess*)



There is no significant correlation
between 'ability' and mindset

It's less this...

ability



growth
mindset

Than this ...

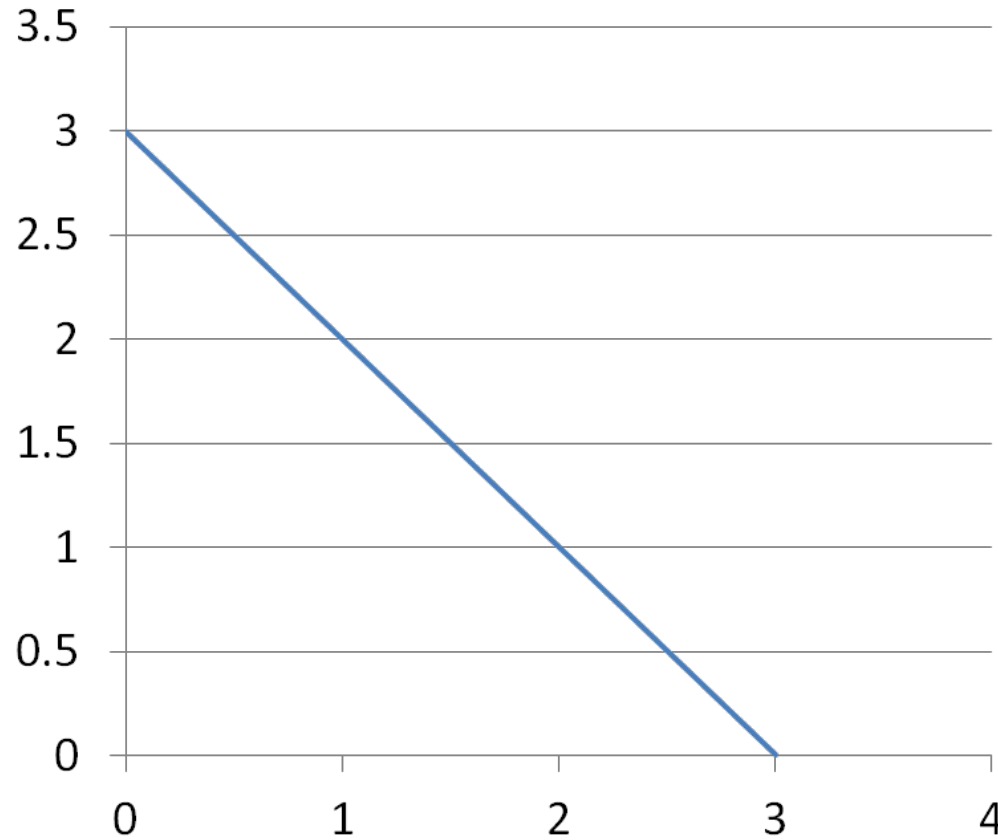
ability



growth
mindset

And in some cases it's ...

ability



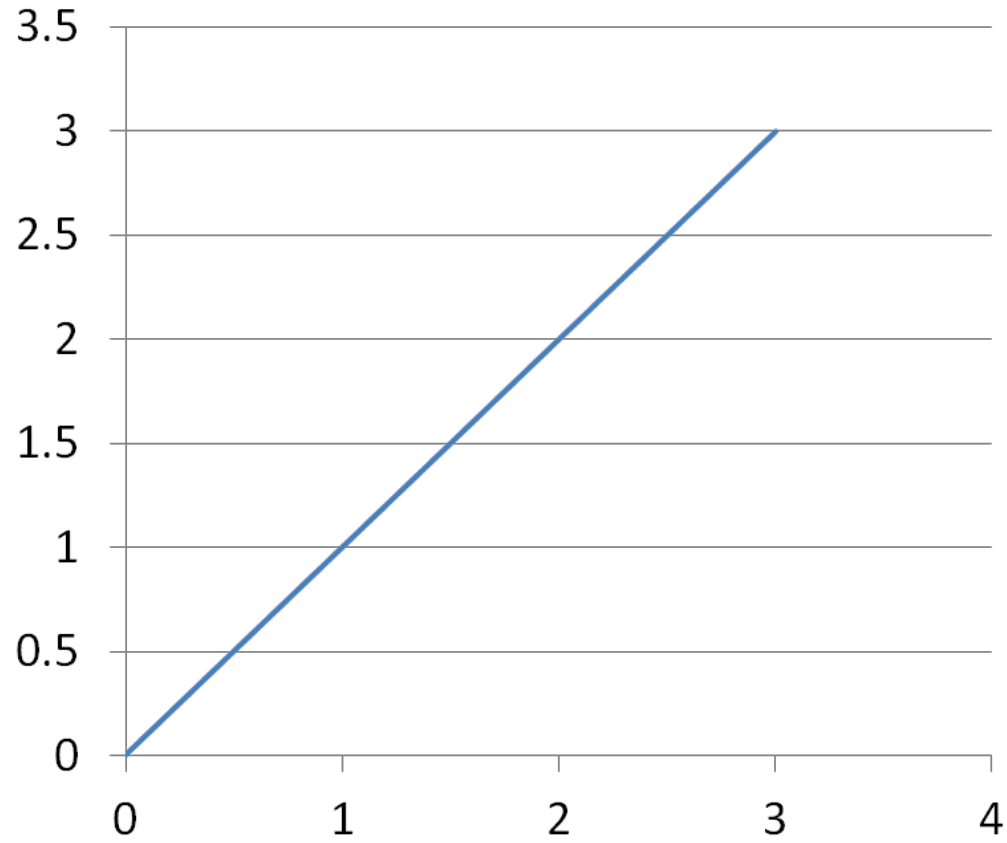
growth
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Three mindset myths:

- Natural ability/talent doesn't exist
- Natural ability/talent doesn't matter
- Hard work guarantees ultimate success

Beware the easy promise

success



hard
work

“It’s not enough to work hard and study late into the night. You must also become intimately aware of the methods you use to reach your decisions.”
(Gary Kasparov, *How Life Imitates Chess*)



Other candidates in the mix:

- Opportunity
- Metacognitive strategies
- Quality of teaching
- Prior skills
- Strategic vision
- Nature of task/challenge
- Genes / 'Ability'
- 'Luck' ...

“The hallmark of successful individuals is that they love learning, they seek challenges, they value effort, and they persist in the face of obstacles.”
(Carol Dweck, 2000)

“What we make of the future is defined not only by our past but by how well we understand and make use of that past.

Our pasts create a map not only of where we come from, but of where we are going. But the most wondrous thing about this map is that it is not engraved in stone. With insight and effort we can shape it to our will.”

(Kasparov, How Life Imitates Chess)