

The importance of praising effort rather than results

In our first newsletter this term we looked at ways that parents can support the development of a growth mindset in their children. Growth mindset, the idea that intelligence can be developed rather than it being set in stone, is arguably the most popular psychological theory in education at the moment. In this article we are focusing on the aspect of feedback and praise.

Research by Claudia Mueller and Carol Dweck from Columbia University, New York, explored the consequences of how different types of praise affected students. In each, students aged nine to 12 years old completed a problem-solving game. They were then told they'd answered 80% of the questions correctly and were praised for either their natural intelligence or how hard they had worked on the task. The researchers reported on how the students felt, thought and behaved in subsequent tasks.

What were the main findings?

Praised for Intelligence	Praised for Effort
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more likely to choose future tasks that they thought would make them look smart - less likely to persist on tasks - performed worse in future tasks - the majority (86%) of children asked for information about how their peers did on the same task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tended to choose tasks that would help them learn new things. - greater enjoyment from task - 23% of children asked for this type of feedback - most of them asked for feedback about how they could do better. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Busch, 2018)</i></p>

The problem with praise such as 'you're so clever' is that it doesn't tell students what they need to do next time in order to improve.

What does this mean for teachers and parents? This study highlights the complexities and importance of how we deliver feedback. It shows that it is more beneficial to students if they are praised for their effort instead of their results as doing so builds resilience and persistence.

Having a growth mindset is about the belief that everyone can learn and improve through persistent application and effort. To help shape students' behaviours and mindsets, Berry PS has made growth mindset the focus of this semester's Bounce Back program. Thank you for your ongoing support.