

Cambridge Conference Cape Town

The importance of task design for promoting a
growth mindset

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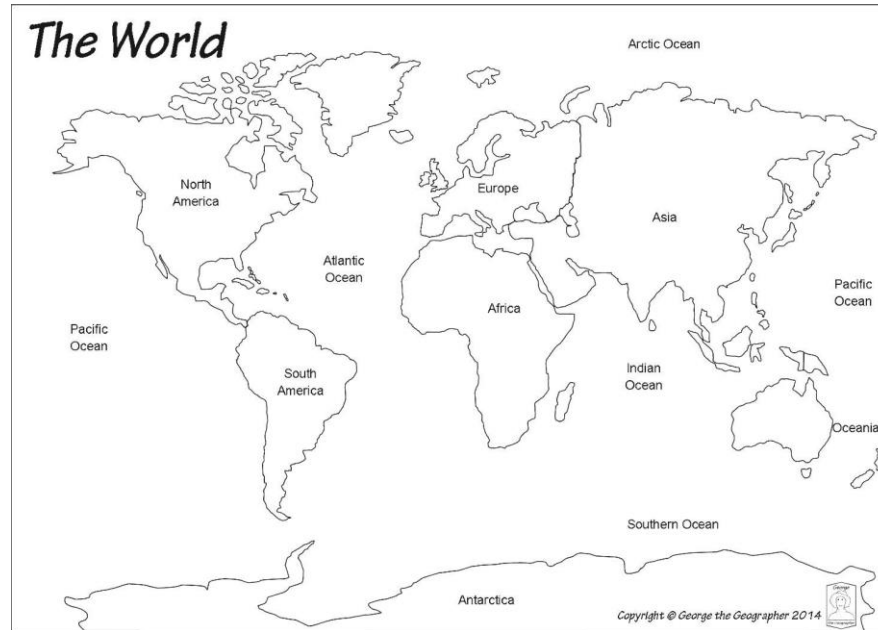
Outline of session

We will:

- ▶ consider what makes a task a *good task*;
- ▶ engage in different types of tasks to consider their potential;
- ▶ discuss how different types of tasks can move from being closed, fixed mindset tasks to growth mindset tasks;
- ▶ reflect on the impact of tasks on student's learning.

Introductions

► Location, location, location!



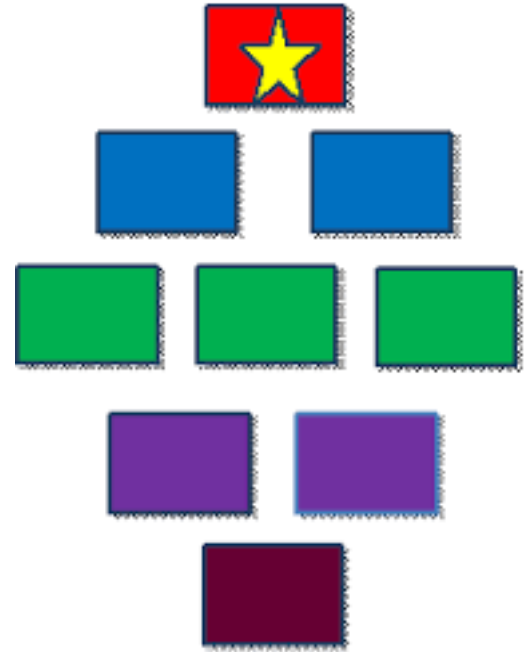
► Pros/cons of this task?

What do we mean by a *good task*?

- ▶ Think – Pair – Share
- ▶ Does it help to think what makes a *bad task*?
- ▶ Can we create a list of features?

Possible features of good tasks

- ▶ Open ended
- ▶ More than one solution/route
- ▶ Collaborative
- ▶ Resourceful
- ▶ Innovative/creative
- ▶ Challenging
- ▶ Responsibility
- ▶ Curiosity
- ▶ Fun



“

[Teachers] can make the difference between happy, inspired students and disengaged, unmotivated students.

Jo Boaler, 2016

”

Fixed or growth?

According to Carol Dweck, @ 40% of the children in her studies held a damaging fixed mindset, believing that intelligence is a gift that you either have or don't.

Another 40% had a growth mindset.

The remaining 20% wavered between the two mindsets.

(Dweck, 2006)

A range of tasks

We have 3 tasks to explore:

1. Six word headline.
2. See Think Wonder.
3. Multilink dinosaurs.

Task: Six word headline

Think of a session or keynote you have attended at the conference so far.

Summarise it in 6 words!



Task: See Think Wonder



Task: Multilink dinosaurs

Your task is to make an attractive dinosaur which has a value of 540. Each cube has a value.

- ▶ Red = 50
- ▶ Black = 20
- ▶ Green = 10
- ▶ Yellow = 5
- ▶ Brown = 2



How do tasks help promote a growth mindset?

- ▶ Importance of mistakes and misconceptions.
- ▶ Importance of all students believing they can, not they can't.
- ▶ Effort is more important than ability.



Imperfection is a part of any creative process and of life, yet for some reason we live in a culture that has paralyzing fear of failure.

Peter Sims, 2011



Barriers/Solutions

- ▶ Even the best tasks don't automatically enable a growth mindset – why?
- ▶ What are the barriers?
- ▶ What could be the solutions?

Habits of successful people

1. Feel comfortable being wrong.
2. Try seemingly wild ideas.
3. Are open to different experiences.
4. Play with ideas without judging them.
5. Are willing to go against traditional ideas.
6. Keep going through difficulties.

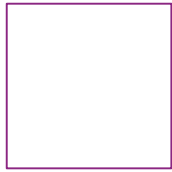
Peter Sims (2011)

Reflections: Impact of task design on promoting a growth mindset

- ▶ Pedagogical influences – how we teach is as important as what we teach.
- ▶ Purpose of tasks - are we always clear what we expect from a task?
- ▶ Do we play safe or take a few risks?

Fleas or eagles?





Any questions?

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- ▶ reflected on the impact of tasks on student's learning.

THANK YOU



References

Boaler, J. (2016) *Mathematial Mindsets*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dweck, C. (2006) *Mindset: The new pyschology of success*. New York: Ballentine Books.

Sims, P. (2011, August 6) Daring to stumble on the road to discovery. *New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/07/jobs/07pre.html?_r=0