Your notes

GCSE Psychology: revision notes

Mindset, learning styles and learning theories

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Dweck's mindset theory

- Dweck said people have either a **fixed mindset** (believing ability can't change) or a **growth mindset** (believing ability can improve with effort).
- People with a **growth mindset** see mistakes as chances to learn, and try harder when things are difficult.
- Praising effort ("you worked hard") rather than ability ("you're clever") encourages a **growth mindset**.

Learning styles

- The **learning styles** idea says people learn best in a preferred way: **verbalisers** (words), **visualisers** (pictures) and kinaesthetic learners (doing).
- Many psychologists criticise this: there is little evidence that teaching to a preferred style improves learning.

Willingham's learning theory

- Willingham argued that teaching should match the content, not a student's supposed learning style: for example, maps are best learned visually.
- He said practice and effort matter more than style, and that knowledge is needed to think well.

Applying these ideas

- Encourage effort and resilience; give specific feedback; practise regularly; use the best method for the topic.

Key terms

Fixed mindset	Believing ability can't change.
Growth mindset	Believing ability can improve with effort.
Learning styles	The idea that people learn best in a preferred way.
Verbaliser	A person said to learn best through words.
Visualiser	A person said to learn best through pictures.
Kinaesthetic learner	A person said to learn best by doing.
Praise for effort	Praising hard work rather than natural ability.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is a growth mindset?
2. What is a fixed mindset?
3. Which type of praise encourages a growth mindset?
4. What is a kinaesthetic learner said to prefer?
5. What is a criticism of learning styles?
6. What did Willingham argue?
7. Who developed mindset theory?
8. How do people with a growth mindset see mistakes?

Answers

1. Believing ability can improve with effort
2. Believing ability can't change
3. Praising effort
4. Learning by doing
5. There is little evidence that teaching to a style improves learning
6. Teaching should match the content, not a learning style
7. Dweck
8. As chances to learn

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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