Change is Possible – Applicable Knowledge from Brain Research

Rationale:

The brain is a lot more flexible than most people think and continues to change and develop throughout life. This insight can change anyone’s perspective on their personal ability to learn and change. The neurologist Carol Dweck, who integrates neuroscience, psychology and education, has shown that teaching children and teens about the brain’s plasticity – and its ability to change – influences their thought patterns and alters their fundamental beliefs about their ability to learn, develop, and face challenges. Effects can be seen even after a very short learning period.

Our activity teaches children these insights using an interactive and accessible method.

So, what do we do?

1. Show students one of these two movies, which give a 2-minute explanation about the brain’s plasticity: [option 1](https://youtu.be/OOY3niRvehc), [option 2](https://youtu.be/dwyWDPIyZO0)
2. Pose questions for class discussion:
* What does it mean about us that our brains are plastic and can change?
* What does that say about ideas that limit us in our lives? Ideas like: “I’ll never learn math” or “It’s not for me”?
* What helps us maintain our brain’s plasticity? (Eg., nutrition, physical activity, breathing exercises). And what interferes with the brain’s ability to change?
1. When students have a hard time or feel they can’t succeed in class, remind them of the film and of the fact that brains are plastic and can be trained and changed.

Things to emphasize:

In classes after the activity, remind students again and again that the brain is plastic and can change.

Inspiration:

[Article](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rJ-Jp2MoCK5FVgdsBplfQvE1Mjfu5hea/view?usp=sharing) by the Sagol Center for Brain and Mind (Reichman University) research on brain plasticity.