Change is Possible – Applicable Knowledge from Brain Research

Rationale:

The brain is much more flexible than most people think; it continues to change and develop throughout our lives. 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 – can influence their thought patterns and alter their core beliefs about their ability to learn, develop, and cope with challenges.

These effects can be seen even after a very short learning period.

Our activity introduces children to these ideas in an interactive and accessible way.

What do we do?

1. Show students one of these two videos, 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? (For example, nutrition, physical activity, breathing exercises). And what interferes with the brain’s ability to change?

1. When students struggle or feel they can’t succeed in class, remind them of the video and of the fact that brains are plastic and can be trained and changed.

Emphasis:

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

Inspiration:

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