PSY 254

Precept 9 - Morality & Mindset

AI/Preceptor: Alex Ku

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he/him

Today’s agenda

Warneken & Tomasello, 2006

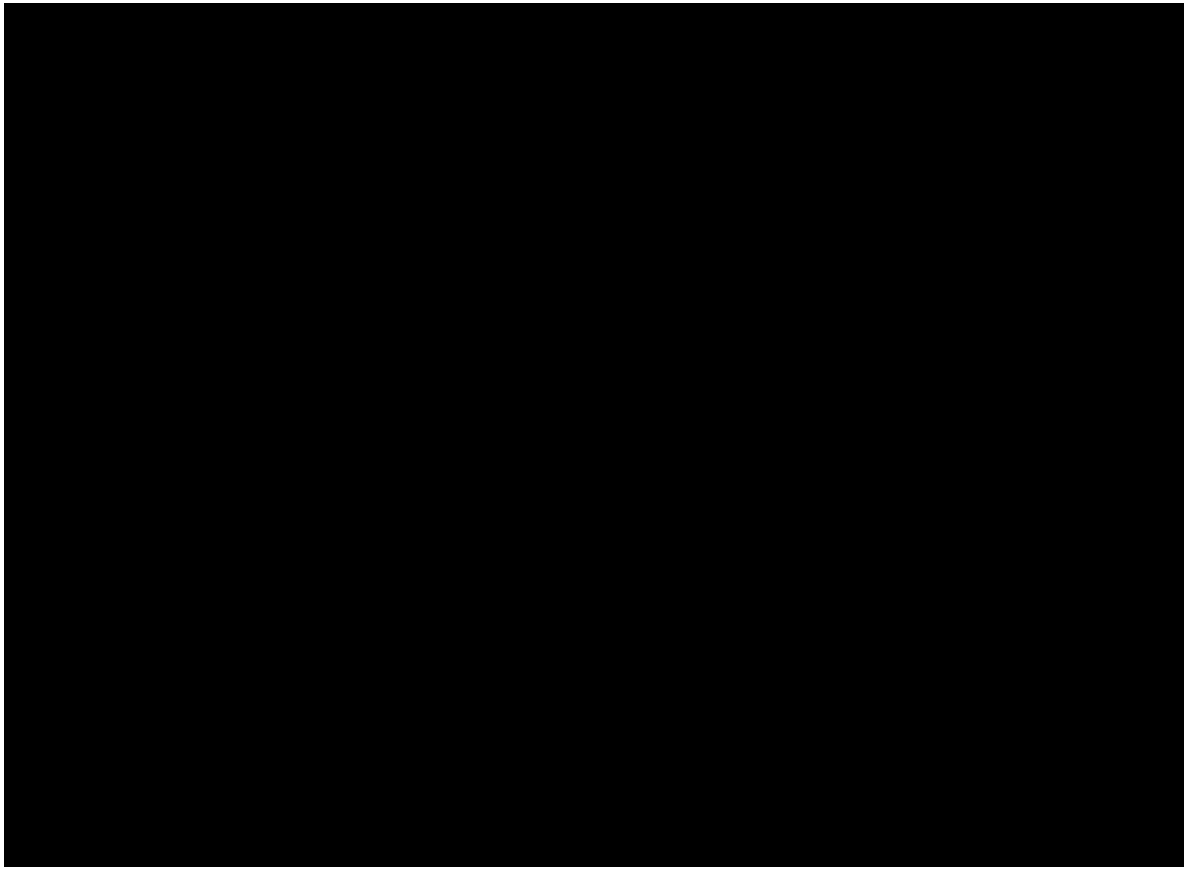
Dweck, 2007

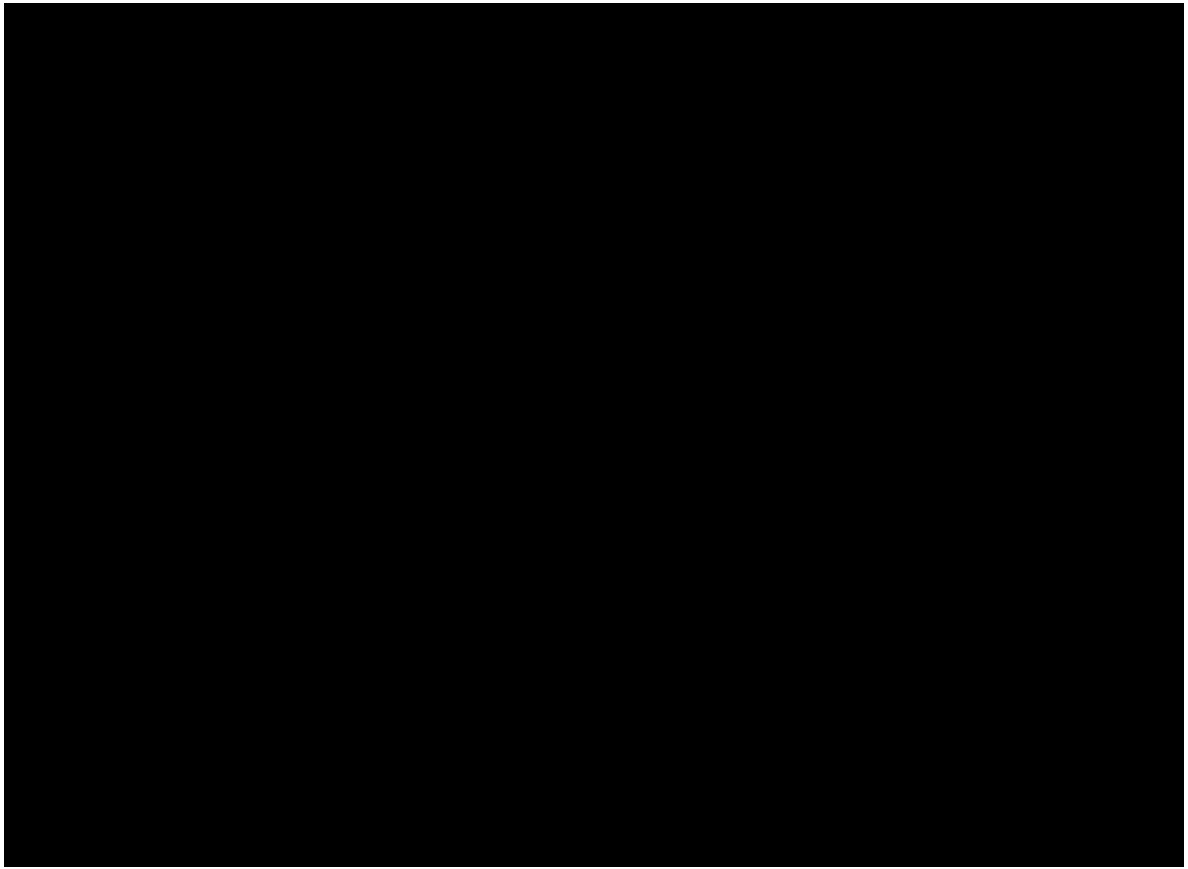
Next time (LAST precept!)

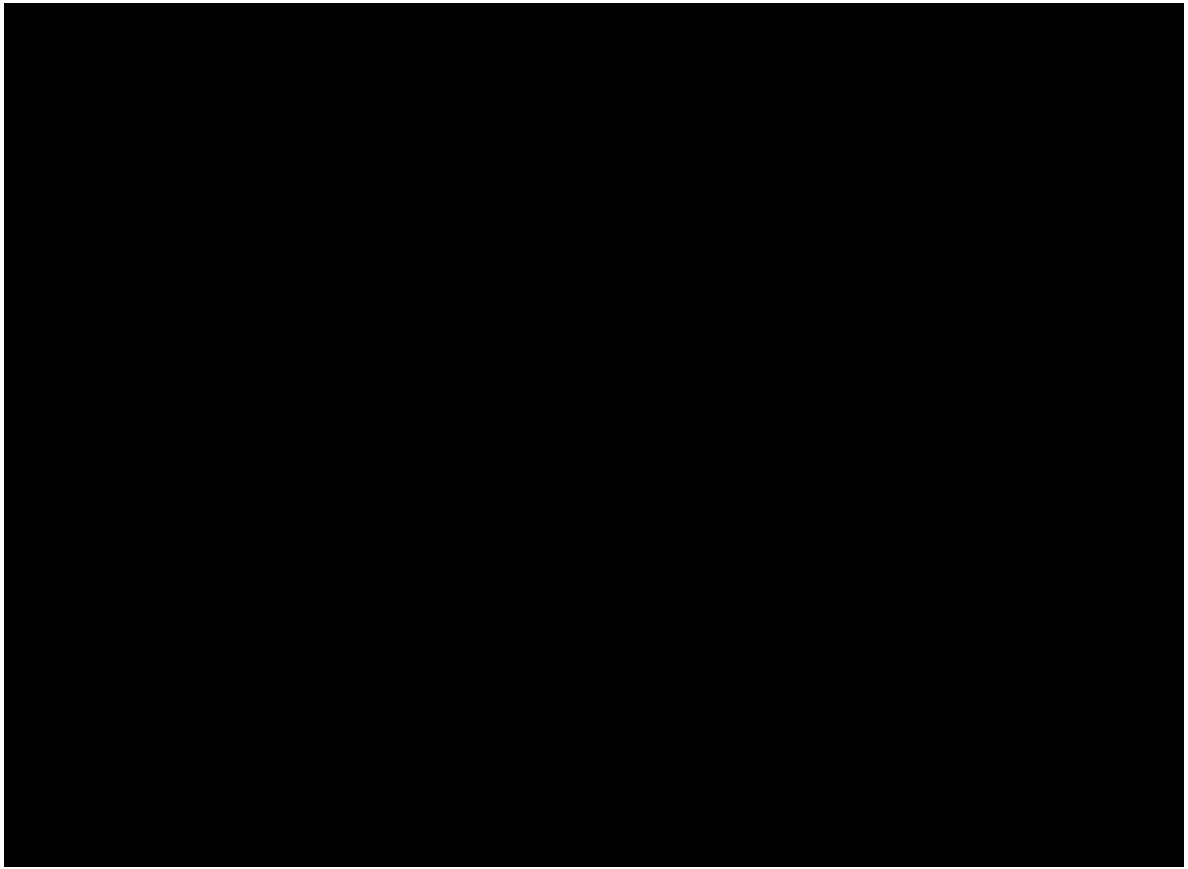
Warneken & Tomasello, 2006:

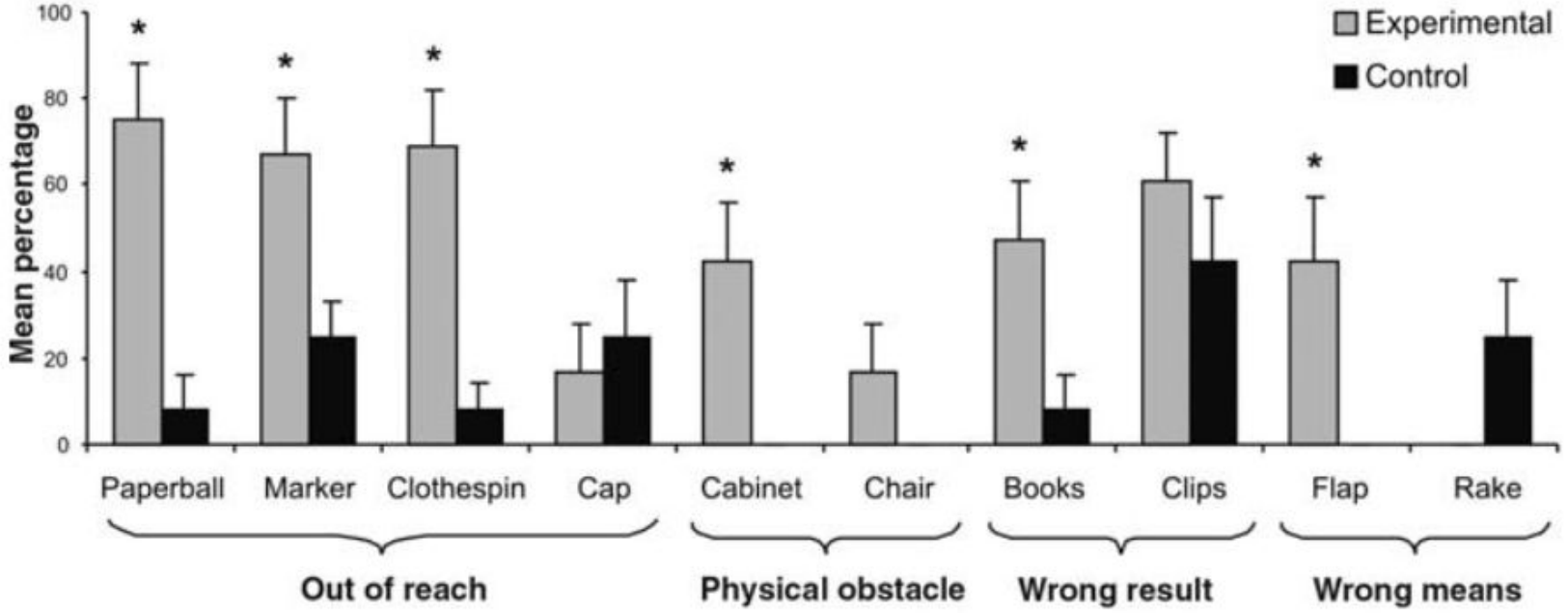
Are we inherently prosocial creatures?


© Warneken & Tomasello








Experimental
Control
Mean percentage
100
80
60
40
20
0
*
Paperball
Marker
Clothespin
Cap
Cabinet
Chair
Books
Clips
Flap
Rake
Out of reach
Physical obstacle
Wrong result
Wrong means

Think from the author's point of view

You have the data… Now, how do you explain it?

In Groups of 2-3:

- Create a title for the paper
- Explain what you found (can you highlight how/why it's exciting?)
- What are the limitations?

Present titles & conclusions

Then we'll reveal the actual title and conclusions…

Altruistic Helping in Human Infants and Young Chimpanzees

Felix Warneken* and Michael Tomasello

Human beings routinely help others to achieve their goals, even when the helper receives no immediate benefit and the person helped is a stranger. Such altruistic behaviors (toward non-kin) are extremely rare evolutionarily, with some theorists even proposing that they are uniquely human. Here we show that human children as young as 18 months of age (prelinguistic or just-linguistic) quite readily help others to achieve their goals in a variety of different situations. This requires both an understanding of others' goals and an altruistic motivation to help. In addition, we demonstrate similar though less robust skills and motivations in three young chimpanzees.

Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2006) Altruistic helping in human infants and young chimpanzees. *Science, 311*, 1301-13

Warneken & Tomasello (2006)

Hypothesis: young children, and to some extent chimpanzees, help others achieve their goals

Participants: 24 18-month-olds; 3 chimpanzees

IV: condition (indication of problem or not); task (cabinet, books, etc.)

DV: percentage of target behaviors

Results: children helped more in the experimental condition than the control condition for most tasks; chimpanzees did so only in the out-of-reach task

Introductio

Helping is an extremely interesting phenomenon both cognitively and motivationally. Cognitively, to help someone solve a problem, one must know something about the goal the other is attempting to achieve as well as the current obstacles to that goal. Motivationally, exerting effort to help another person—with no immediate benefit to oneself—is costly, and such altruism (toward non-kin) is extremely rare evolutionarily. Indeed, some researchers have claimed that humans are altruistic in ways that even our closest primate relatives are not. A powerful method to test this idea is to directly compare human infants and our closest primate relatives (chimpanzees) on their propensity to help. Such a comparison may enable us to distinguish aspects of altruism that were already present in the common ancestor of chimpanzees and humans from aspects of altruism that have evolved only in the human lineage. To date, no experimental studies have systematically tested human infants and chimpanzees in a similar set of helping situations.

A number of studies have demonstrated that young children show concern (empathy) for others in distress. Preschool-age children and even infants (1 to 2 years of age) occasionally attempt to respond to the emotional needs of others, for example, by comforting someone who is crying (*1–10*). In contrast, there are no experimental studies with infants that have systematically investigated instrumental helping—providing help to people who are faced with an instrumental problem and are unable to reach their goal (*11–13*).

Discussion

However, the chimpanzees did not help the human reliably in the other types of tasks—that is, in those involving physical obstacles, wrong results, or wrong means. In a follow-up study, we gave them two additional tasks of these types—designed to make the human's problem especially salient and with more time for a response—and they still did not help in these tasks (*14*). Presumably, when someone is reaching with an outstretched arm toward an object, the goal is in principle easier to understand and the kind of intervention follows straightforwardly. This could explain why out-of-reach tasks (in contrast to the other scenarios) elicited more helping by children and the only instances of helping by chimpanzees. Children and chimpanzees are both willing to help, but they appear to differ in their ability to interpret the other's need for help in different situations.

These experimental results demonstrate instrumental helping (toward goals) in a nonhuman primate. It is possible that helping behaviors are more likely when they involve objects that are not food, and that this explains why we obtained positive results when others, using different tasks involving food, have found negative results. It should also be noted that the chimpanzees of the current study, unlike those in (*21*, *22*), were helping not a conspecific but a human. This might be important because chimpanzees are extremely competitive with one another (*24*, *25*), but when they grow up interacting with humans, they seem to develop some more cooperative skills and motivations as well. Although our chimpanzees had been rewarded in the past for handing humans objects already in their possession upon request, they had not been encouraged to retrieve, nor rewarded for retrieving, out-of-reach objects for humans.

The human infants helped much more, and they did so for an adult they had just met (who was clearly not kin). Of special note, they helped in four different kinds of situations, whereas the chimpanzees helped in only one. This could be due to a greater propensity to help in children, or to children's more sophisticated cognitive skills in discerning the goal of the other in a variety of different situations. Infants 18 months of age are too young to have received much verbal encouragement for helping from parents. However, even if they had received some prior encouragement, many of the current tasks would have been unfamiliar for them, and the recipient of the help was an unfamiliar adult as well. In any case, viewed from a larger evolutionary perspective, the facts that human parents encourage their children to help others and that children comply by helping (even before they are linguistic) are noteworthy as the teaching and learning of prosocial norms.

A number of theorists have claimed that human beings cooperate with one another and help one another (especially non-kin) in ways not found in other animal species (*26*–*28*). This is almost certainly so, and the current results demonstrate that even very young children have a natural tendency to help other persons solve their problems, even when the other is a stranger and they receive no benefit at all. However, our nearest primate relatives show some skills and motivations in this direction as well, and this suggests that the common ancestor to chimpanzees and humans already possessed some tendency to help before humans began down their unique path of hypercooperativeness (*25*, *29*).

Today’s agenda

Warneken & Tomasello, 2006

Dweck, 2007

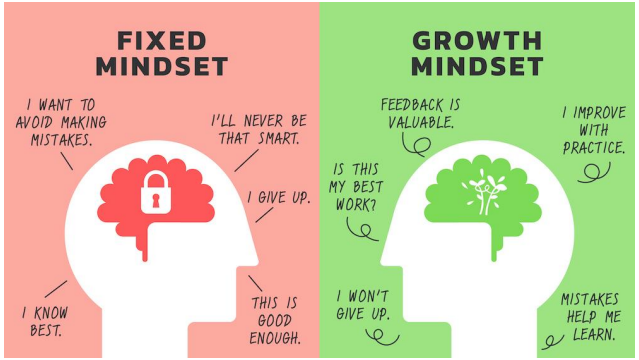
Next time (LAST precept!)

Dweck, 2007

Growth vs. Fixed Mindsets

…and plenty more

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset



What is a "Fixed Mindset"?

- Belief that intelligence is static (**entity theory**)
- Leads to a desire to look smart, avoid challenges, give up easily, see effort as fruitless, avoid criticism, may plateau early, achieve less than their potential, deterministic view of the world, etc.

What is "Growth Mindset"?

- Belief that intelligence can be developed (**incremental theory**)
- Leads to a desire to learn, embrace challenges, persist, see effort as a path to mastery, learn from criticism, achieve higher levels, greater sense of free will, etc.

Marva Collins

Reflect, Consider, and Critique

- Do you have a “fixed” or “growth” mindset?
  - Has this changed over time and who may have influenced it?
- Is either one inherently bad?
- How generalizable is this categorization? Do you believe it? Does it explain everything?

BEHAVIOR & SOCIETY

Debate Arises over Teaching "Growth Mindsets" to Motivate Students

Research shows conflicting data on the impact of the intervention, but a major new study confirms it can work

By Lydia Denworth on August 12, 2019

Dweck and Yeager's recent *Nature* findings underscore the realization that successful mindset interventions appear to require finesse. "The national study showed us how much more there is to learn," Yeager says. They spent years fine-tuning the materials they used and are confident in their appropriateness for ninth graders but cannot be sure about other populations or about the materials used in other interventions. "Just because it's easy to deliver doesn't mean it's easy to develop," Yeager says.

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Next time (<u>LAST</u> precept!)

Looking ahead to our last precept!

- FINAL Reading (DeLoache, 2010) & MCQs
- Multimedia Presentation; during **LAST** Precept (max 6 people)
  - **SIGN UP** in Drive
  - (10% of final grade)
- Three Bullet Points; **Dec. 5th** on Canvas
- Journal Article; **Dec. 9th by 11:59pm** on Canvas
- Final Exam; **Dec. 14-16** on Canvas

Office Hours: **Wednesday, 4:30-5:30pm** (PNI 136B)

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