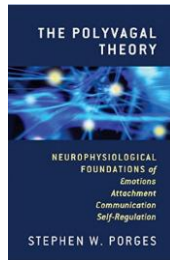
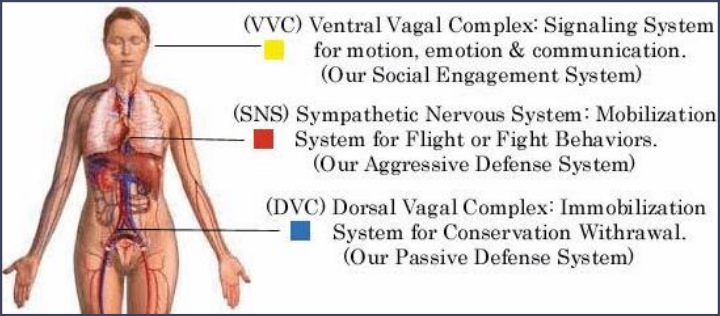


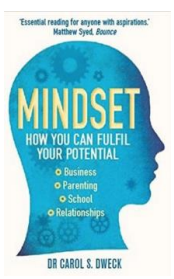
Wellbeing

Polyvagal Theory & Growth Mindset

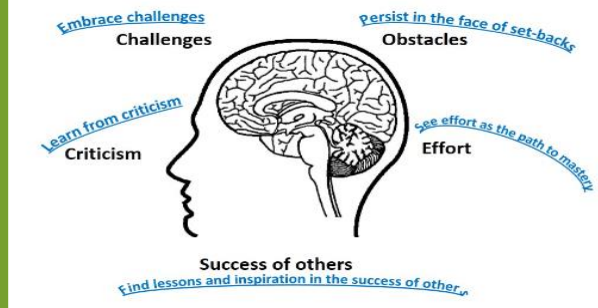


Recommended Reading:
The Polyvagal Theory – Stephen W. Porges

Porges' Polyvagal theory proposes that an individual's Automatic Nervous System (ANS) (the part of the nervous system responsible for control of the bodily functions not consciously directed, such as breathing, the heartbeat and digestive processes) has three states: Ventral Vagal Polysympathetic (when we feel relaxed and safe); Sympathetic (when we feel that an external factor may have an effect on our wellbeing) and Dorsal Vagal Parasympathetic (when we feel that our wellbeing is under such a threat that we freeze and/or lose consciousness). For most people, we are able to process sensory information very quickly, allowing us to dismiss external sounds, movement or events as not being an immediate threat to us. For many young people with Sensory Processing Disorders however, this is not always the case. This theory explains why some children may have both emotional and physical responses to seemingly trivial or innocuous changes in their environment. As an educator, I have found that equipping young people with the ability to better self-regulate at times during which they feel threatened (through a process of meta-cognition) is the most effective method in supporting pupils remain in their Ventral Vagal state.



Recommended Reading:
Mindset – Dr Carol S. Dweck



Dweck's ground-breaking work on 'Growth Mindsets' seems to be the fashion in education at the moment (and with good reason!). The study uses the axiom that young people can develop fixed ideas about their abilities as learners based on the frustrations and mistakes that they may perceive in their learning. This, in turn, can lead to low self-esteem, heightened anxiety in relation to children's neurological response to school (see: neural networks). The answer, Dweck proposes, is to engage young people in a process of meta-cognition; that is, get children thinking about thinking. Through affirmations in relation to making mistakes (which should be celebrated), the power of the word 'yet' (it's not that you can't do it, it's that you can't do it yet!) and the value of persistence as a tool to increasing learning (which, in my class, we call 'building brain power'), pupils can begin to recognise and develop the cognitive skills required to become happier, more engaged, more empathetic and more effective learners.

Recommended Websites:
<https://external.classdojo.com/en-gb/?redirect=true> – wonderful, accessible videos and resources based on Dweck's Mindset.
<http://stephenporges.com/index.php/scientific-articles/scientific-articles/publications/3-the-polyvagal-perspective> - a downloadable copy of Porges' Polyvagal Study.
<https://www.buildinglearningpower.com/> - Claxton's model of building learning power clearly informs Dweck's work.