
The authors evaluated a small-group counseling intervention, Student Success Skills, provided to 53 fourth- and fifth-grade African-American students in an inner-city environment. Compared with the control group, students who received the treatment reported significant changes in metacognitive skill, feelings of connectedness to school, and executive function.

Students picture a safe place where they feel protected and in control … a caring, supportive, and encouraging place. Before a task, students spend a few minutes breathing deeply and imagining their safe space.
Mindset and Goals Interventions


This article presents two studies about the math achievement of middle school students. In the first study, seventh-graders who believed that intelligence is malleable (incremental theory) showed improvement in grades compared to students who believed intelligence is fixed (entity theory). In the second study, seventh-graders who were given an intervention teaching an incremental theory were more motivated and had improved grades compared to the control group of students.

Seventh-grade students complete a visualization exercise that allows them to see how new neuronal connections grow when they complete hard math. Students read an article describing the brain's ability to restructure itself through effort. The article focuses on the implications for students' potential to become more intelligent through study and practice. This message is reinforced through several writing exercises. In the first, students summarize the scientific findings in their own words. In the second, they read about a hypothetical student who is becoming discouraged and starting to think of himself as “not smart enough” to do well in school. Students are asked to advise this target student based on what they have read.


In this study online growth-mindset and sense-of-purpose interventions were given to 1,594 students in 13 geographically diverse high schools. Both interventions were intended to help students persist when they experienced academic difficulty. The interventions were most beneficial for low-performing students. Among students at risk of dropping out of high school (a third of the sample), each intervention raised students’ semester grade point averages (GPA) in core academic courses and increased the rate of satisfactory performance in core courses by 6.4 percentage points.

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Student Success Skills (SSS) is a structured group intervention designed to help students become more academically successful by improving specific cognitive, social, and self-management skills. Results from studies of the SSS program in grades 4–9 found significant increases in math and reading on standardized achievement tests. See also Villares, E., et al. (2011). Student success skills: An evidence-based school counseling program grounded in humanistic theory. The Journal of Humanistic Counseling, 50(1), 42–55.

Each week, students select a personal goal and write a plan to help them reach it. Then they share their goal and plan with a partner. The following week they give their partner an update on their progress and brainstorm adjustments they could make to their plan.