



Building Academic Mindsets for Student Success

A Lot of Messiness

Resilience

Grit

Growth-Mindset

Hope

Optimism

Social and Cultural Issues

First-generation students do not have the cultural capital that is gained by having someone in their family who has attended college (it's not the degree, it's the ***experience***).

For ***low income students***, it's the lack of experience and opportunity afforded by money.

Higher education is a middle to upper class culture. For many students, in addition to challenges with academics or finances, its about ***making a transition to a new culture.***



Identity

A student's cultural background and social networks are part of their *identity*.

Having an identity that does not match the dominant culture can cause feelings of *self-doubt and alienation*.

If the message is that talent, hard work, and sacrifice are the path to success, *what does that say about me and my family?*

(Johnson, 2009)



Basic Definitions

Resilience

- Bouncing back from adversity
- “. . .broadly understood as capacities for persistence, creativity, emotional intelligence, grit, cognitive flexibility, risk-taking, agency, adapting to change, delaying gratification, learning from failure and questioning success.”

(Resiliency Consortium)



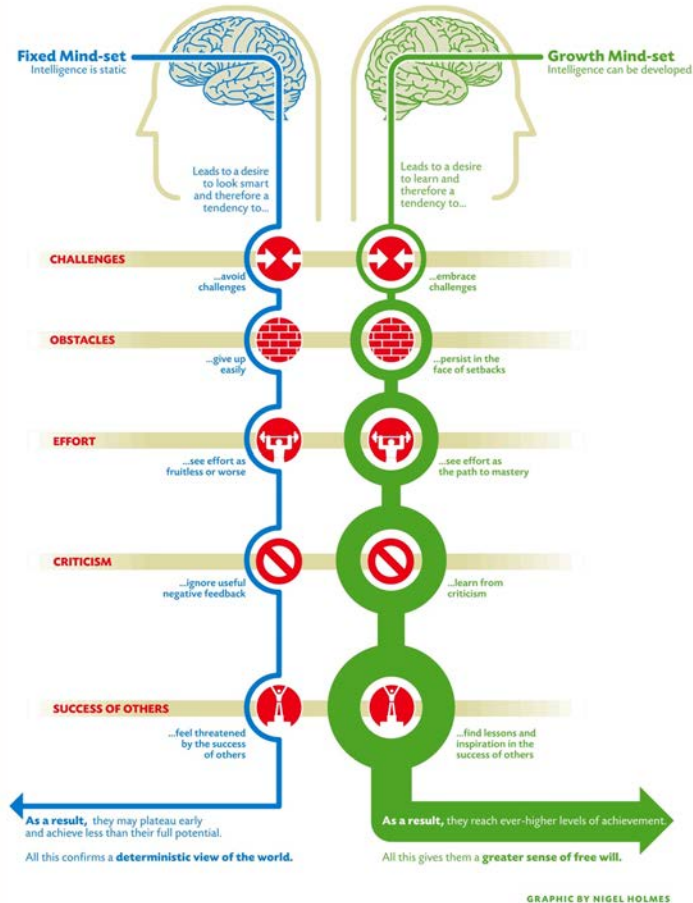
Growth vs Fixed Mindset

“In a **fixed mindset**, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort.”

“In a **growth mindset**, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities.”



The more a person believes that abilities can be developed, the greater the success that person will eventually enjoy



By Carol Dweck

Grit = Passion + Perseverance

Passion is developed through

- Discovering **Interests**
- Developing interests through **Practice**
- Moving interests beyond yourself to become **Purpose**

Perseverance is related to self-concordant goals and hope



Hope

"a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful
(a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)"

(Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991, p. 287)

Generate **effective strategies**

Plausible **routes and alternatives**

Confidence in this route and ability





Putting it All Together

Academic Mindset

By increasing student's perseverance (grit) to improve academic behaviors increases ***academic mindsets***.

Four Key Academic Mindsets

1. I belong in this community
2. I can succeed at this
3. My ability and competence grow with effort
4. This work has value for me

Consortium on Chicago School Research (2013)



Context for Psychological Interventions

Do I Belong? When I feel lonely or disrespected does that mean I don't belong?

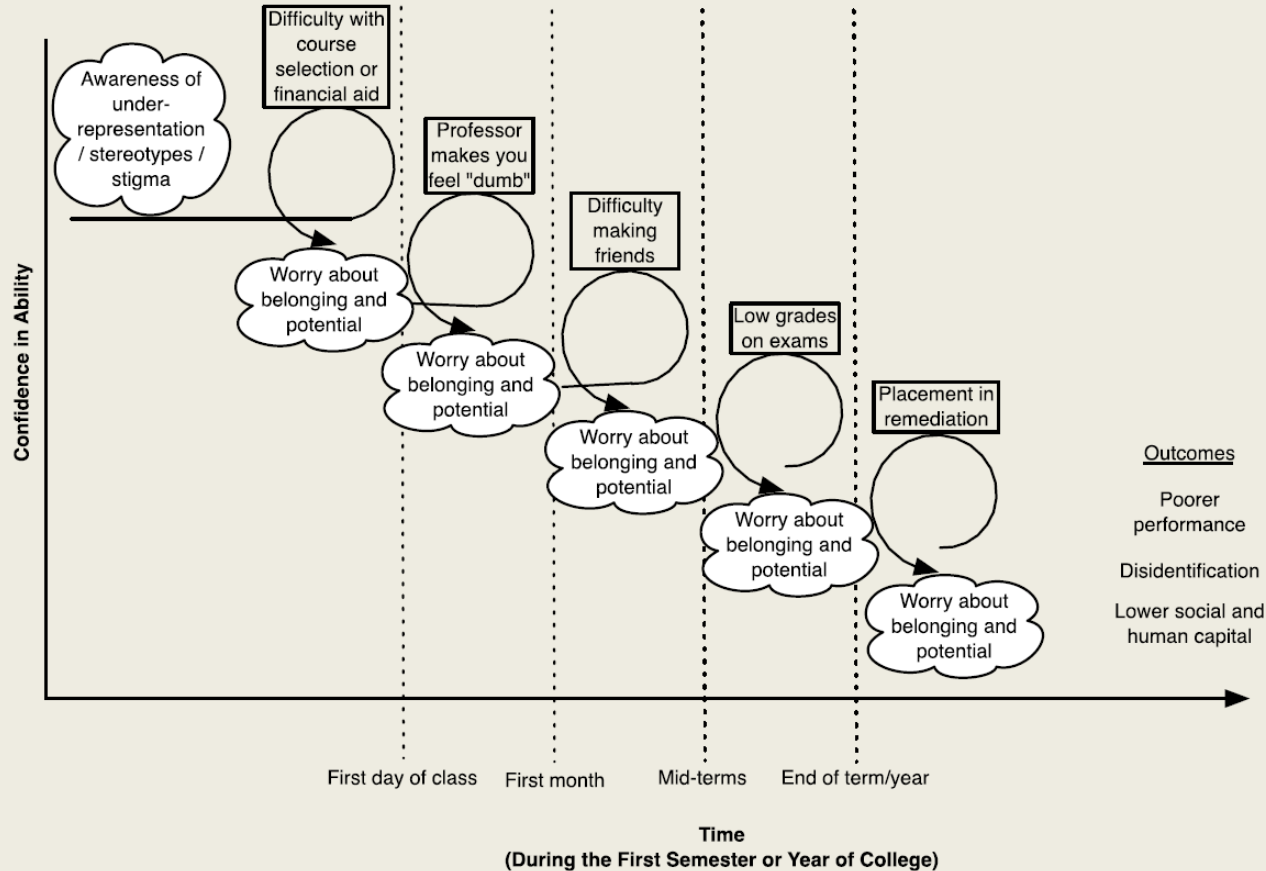
Can I do it? When it's hard or struggle, does it mean I'm not capable?

Does it Matter? When it's boring, does it mean there is no reason to try?

Mindset Scholars Network



Social Psychological Approach to College Success



It's not as much about the actual experiences themselves but rather the **MEANING** students make of the experience

Taken from Powers and Murphy, 2018



What about You?

A SENSE OF
BELONGING

Breaking it Down

“The worst part was that I felt as if I were the only one who was this lonely.”

‘Loneliness is too often paired with self-blame and self criticism: “I can’t find my place among these people, so it must be my fault.”’

Loneliness is only one example of where struggle leads to a sense that you don’t belong.

Others?

What is the “meaning” attached to those feelings?

Bergmann, Emery (October 9,2018). Advice from a formerly lonely college student. New York Times.



Promoting Mindsets at IUPUI

The Project

- 200 21st Century Scholars enrolled in eight sections of first-year seminars
- Required to include a summer bridge and first-year seminar program curriculum based on mindset and resiliency research
- ePortfolio served as the tool for associated reflective writing, integrative thinking, and metacognition
- Faculty participated in a week-long professional development workshop in which they learned about challenges of low-income students, ePortfolio pedagogy, growth-mindset, and resiliency.
- Wrote curricular modules for growth-mindset and resiliency for faculty to use



Results

Pre-Post Test

- Developed survey used validated scales of grit, resiliency, growth-mindset, hope and optimism
- Compared students in sections with resiliency curriculum to those in traditional sections

Retention and GPA

- No change in retention and GPA after first-year
- Able to maintain high scores on pre-post versus declines in comparison group



Classroom Activity Repository

<https://iu.box.com/v/FYSResiliency>

Resources

Transitions by William Bridges

Other resources are posted in Canvas and included in binder

Timeline

Summer Bridge

Myths of success

Born to learn/mindset bio

Circles of comfort

Life transitions

FYS weeks 1-4

StrengthsQuest

Values in action

FYS weeks 5-8

Resiliency quiz

Be for yourself

FYS weeks 9-12

Pause and plan

Pursuit of excellence/Rx for procrastination

FYS weeks 13-16

Composite student

What's next/Appreciative inquiry

Lesson Plan

RESILIENCY: Circles of Comfort

SEMESTER

BRIDGE BEGINNING Weeks 1-4 MIDDLE Weeks 5-8 END Weeks 9-12

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcome #2 - Develop and adapt healthy ways of belonging and interrelatedness in three locales: environment (helping students respond to environment and practice resilience), thoughts, and practice

OBJECTIVES

- Examine what is defined as the comfort, stretch, and panic zones in your personal context
- Explore the benefits of intentionally leaning into the stretch zone

TIME

60min

PREPARATION/MATERIALS

- Ropes to demarcate three zones

PRINCIPLES OF UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING

- Core Communication
- Understanding Society and Culture
- Integration and Application of Knowledge

HOMEWORK DUE

Students are to have read the Slate magazine article, "What Are You So Scared of? Saber-Toothed Cats, Snakes, and Carnivorous Kangaroos: The evolutionary legacy of having been prey."

REFLECTION

- Why is leaning into the stretch zone where we grow the most?
- What happened when I approach what is uncomfortable rather than avoid it?
- Who can support me as I lean-in?

Lesson Plan

Circles of Comfort

ACTIVITY

In this activity the instructor uses rope or another method to demarcate three zones—the comfort zone, the stretch zone, and the panic zone. They can be three concentric circles if you have room, or can be three linear sections along a path between tables and chairs in the room.

- The preface to this activity is to recap the article students read regarding the source of vigilance and anxiety we experience through to the fight or flight mechanism of the human body.
- All participants stand outside of the large circle or the linear sections.
- The instructor says, "How comfortable are you...?" and completes the statement with:
 - Seeing a spider
 - Personal or professional conflict
 - Being around snakes
 - Talking to a professor
 - Swimming in the ocean
 - Taking a class in a subject in which you aren't confident
 - Driving in a snowstorm
 - Public speaking
 - Being uncertain about your path
- After each statement students move to zone that best represents their comfort level—comfortable (comfort zone), it's a stretch for me (stretch zone), or it will be put me into fight or flight mode (panic zone).
- Ask a student or two from each zone to share why they put themselves where they are. After this brief discussion, the instructor presents a new statement.

DEBRIEF

Connect the activity to the idea that approach behavior (moving into the stretch zone) is associated with learning, growth and success and that avoidance behavior (remaining or retreating to the comfort zone) means missed opportunities to learn, grow and develop toward our success. Briefly outline the six reasons to move into the stretch zone:

- You grow and expand your comfort zone
- You feel more confident
- You learn something new
- You are doing things that many avoid
- You remove or better manage barriers
- You open yourself up to new opportunities

WRAP-UP

Wrap up with a creating a saying or mantra to remember when we feel the urge to avoid. Mine is "stay curious when things get unpleasant." What is yours?

Academic Probation Randomly Controlled Trial

Worked with College Transitions Collaborative (affiliated with the Mindset Scholars Network) to determine if mindset language could impact students on probation. Involved UCOL, SCI and LIBA.

I am writing to inform you that, because your cumulative GPA is below 2.0, your current academic performance is not meeting the requirements for good standing at University College. As a result, you will begin an academic probation process in Spring 2018.

The academic probation process is designed to be helpful for you and to promote a successful experience at IUPUI. The purpose of this letter is to make sure you are aware of these academic difficulties and to help connect you with resources you can use to address barriers to your success. The probation period will end once you meet the requirements to return to good academic standing.

We are committed to the academic success of each of our undergraduates. We also understand that success is not always achieved in a predictable path. There are many reasons students enter the academic probation process. These include personal, financial, health, family, or other issues. Our goal is to help you identify the factors that are relevant to you and support you in addressing them. You should also know that you are not alone in experiencing difficulties. Many students participate in the academic probation process each year and, by accessing campus resources and reaching out to others for support, many leave the process and continue on to have a successful career at IUPUI. To see some examples of how other students have done this, we encourage you to read the section below, "Students' Experiences in the Academic Probation Process."



PERTS Social-Belonging Intervention

Administered fall 2018 to all beginning freshmen

Students were sent video link the day before bridge

- Bridge faculty were encouraged to make completing the module an assignment

1,132 students completed the module

Looking at just students who did the module with no bridge (n=649)

4% higher fall to spring retention than the overall student population (89% vs 85%)

2.91 fall GPA compared to overall student population fall GPA of 2.75

<https://www.perts.net/orientation/cb>



As excited as I was to come to college, I must admit that part of me thought that I might not measure up to other students. Early on, I bombed a test. It was the worst grade I'd ever received and I felt terrible and isolated. But then, I found out I wasn't the only one. No one did well on that test. It was really hard – the professor was trying to set a high standard. He knew it'd be tough, but he knew if we worked hard we could get to that level. It wasn't for some time that I believed I was totally up to par and could really succeed here. But eventually, I did, and college started to feel like home. Though I still have doubts about myself sometimes, I know they're the kind of things everybody feels on occasion.

Junior, female

I was so excited about coming to college. But sometimes I also worried I might be different from other students. And when I got to campus, sometimes it felt like everyone else was right at home, but I wasn't sure if I fit in. At some point, I realized that almost everyone comes to college unsure whether they fit in or not. It's ironic – everybody comes to college and feels they are different from everybody else when, really, in at least some ways we are all pretty similar. Since I realized that, my experience at college has been almost one-hundred percent positive.

Junior, female

To help us further understand the transition to college, please describe how you think students might feel initially unsure about whether they belong at a university and why these feelings are likely to go away over time as students come to feel at home at campus.

Please illustrate your answer with examples from your own feelings about coming to IUPUI and your past experience with other transitions (e.g., going to high school).

Fall 2019 Intervention

[IUPUI Social Belonging Video](#)

Students were mailed a link to the video, reflection questions, and survey on the first day of Summer Bridge (one week before start of classes)

2297 out of 3653 students have completed the exercise (63%)

About 90% of student in Summer Bridge completed the exercise



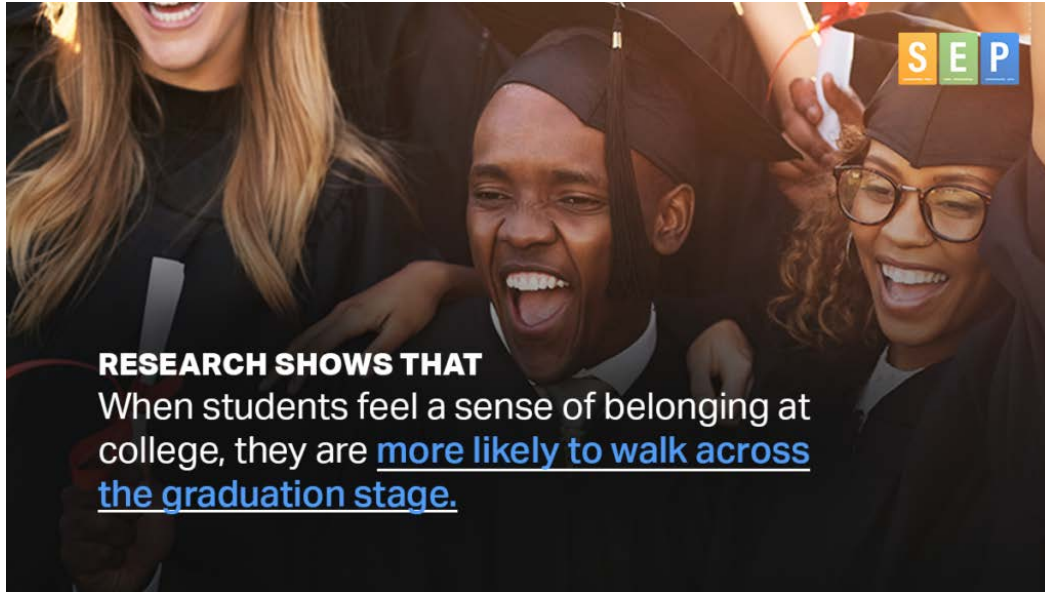
Follow-Up Intervention

First-Year Seminars

- 25 faculty have agreed to pilot three additional “normalizing” videos
- Created three class activities to support the videos
- Topics
 - Changing Your Major
 - Academic Success Skills
 - Getting Involved on Campus



Other National Projects



Focus on improving equity in students experience in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines

- Examine website language for belonging signaling
- Campus environment (e.g., signage, posters, art)



First-Day Project

In what ways to faculty signal to students that they belong, can be successful, and that the course has purposed and relevance?

Course syllabi

Messaging prior to the course

Canvas

Videotaping of the first day

Lead to the Development of a “First Day Toolkit”



What about Your School?