

Mindset as a predictor of academic achievement and academic buoyancy

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While academic stressors are unavoidable and perhaps ubiquitous features of the collegiate environment, vast individual differences exist in students' perceptions of and responses to these experiences of challenge; while some students are stifled by academic difficulty and incapacitated by failure, others are invigorated by challenge and see setbacks as an opportunity for learning and growth. Previous studies indicate that students' implicit theories of intelligence (i.e. growth versus fixed mindset) may influence their academic successes and task-specific patterns of persistence, but research has not yet considered how mindset might predict "academic buoyancy," or students' resilience to everyday academic setbacks, which has been shown to predict positive school outcomes. The present study used longitudinal survey data to examine whether individual differences in students' mindset at their entrance to college would predict differences in first-year academic achievement (GPA), first-to-second year college retention, and subsequent academic buoyancy. 474 first-year students completed a measure of mindset during college orientation; 247 of these students again reported on their mindset as well as academic buoyancy during junior or senior year. Academic records were obtained from the college registrar. Analyses are currently underway; it is expected that first-year growth mindset will significantly predict GPA at the end of freshman year, first-to-second year retention, and subsequent academic buoyancy.