

Annotated Bibliography

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THESIS HELPERS

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Calma-Birling, D., & Gurung, R. A. (2017). Does a brief mindfulness intervention impact quiz performance? *Psychology Learning & Teaching, 16*(3), 323-335.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1475725717712785>

This study was based upon the concept of mindfulness as a means of focusing on stimuli that are relevant to the subject matter. Therefore, it is proposed that mindfulness is a critical component of academic performance because it requires attention and awareness on a specific set of topics for a specific period. Although two prior studies exist regarding mindfulness interventions in achieving academic performance in college, the current study sought to determine if mindfulness over five-minute intervals would lead to positive benefits for students when taking quizzes in the form of higher scores. Study participants were selected from a human development course at a university in Wisconsin and included 58 females and 9 males (n=67). A quasi-experimental design was used, and the first group included 28 students and a second group included 39 students. All participants were trained to use practice focused-attention meditation and were evaluated using the State Mindfulness Scale. Students in each group were given quizzes and exams, some of which were announced in advance and one which was not. The study results indicated that after a single mindfulness practice session, students in this group had higher scores on the quizzes than those who were part of the control group, and when mindfulness exercises occurred in both groups, the quiz scores were not significantly different. It was anticipated that the group who exercised mindfulness more frequently would perform better on quizzes, but when the control group received the intervention and their scores were similar, it was demonstrated that mindfulness is a type of mental state that prepared students for the activities to come. The study limitations included the surrounding environment in a college

classroom and therefore, some limits were placed on time to limit the intervention and its effects on the classroom experience. Furthermore, it was not easily determined what caused the higher scores on the two quizzes in the test group versus the control group.

Covarrubias, R., Jones, J., & Johnson, R. (2020). Exploring the links between parent–student conversations about college, academic self-concepts, and grades for first-generation college students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 22(3), 464-480.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1521025118770634>

This article addresses the significance of understanding the factors that affect many first-generation college students, or students who are the first in their families to attend college. It is perceived that with the achievement gap that is prevalent for many students, those who are first-generation are likely to face greater challenges in their courses, have lower scores on examinations and other assignments, and experience higher rates of attrition. Specifically, the self-concepts of first-generation college students was explored in detail to identify key perceptions regarding academic abilities as well as understanding the impact of the Academic Self-Concept Scale in measuring individual performance in an academic setting. It is proposed that parental involvement among first-generation college students may have an impact on academic self-concept and grade performance, and the setting chosen was a university with a general middle to upper-class student population. Two studies were conducted and in the first study, 102 students were part of the final sample and included 54 first-generation students and 48 continuing-generation students. The instrument used was a computer-based survey that included 24 questions from Reynolds' Academic Self-Concept Scale with a rating system of 1 to 7 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The results were evaluated using regression analysis. For

study 2, parental conversations with students were evaluated with the same type of student population; in this study, 49 first-generation students and 120 continuing-generation students were included, and the same process applied as in Study 1. The results indicate that in study 1, first-generation students had fewer positive academic self-concepts and no measured grade differences with the other students; in study 2, parent-student discussions positively impacted academic self-concepts and grades for first-generation students but had no impact on continuing-generation students. The primary limitation was that the study did not have a causal link between grades and the study measures of academic self-concepts and parent-student conversations. Nonetheless, these studies support the belief that a positive academic self-concept may contribute to improved performance and higher grades.

Dobronyi, C. R., Oreopoulos, P., & Petronijevic, U. (2019). Goal setting, academic reminders, and college success: A large-scale field experiment. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 12(1), 38-66.

https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w23738/w23738.pdf

This study was designed to address the significance of goal-setting interventions that were conducted online and could benefit the field of social psychology. Among college students in Ontario, a variety of services available to students may make a difference in their desire to remain in the program rather than withdraw. It was proposed that singular interventions may be useful in encouraging students to remain with their programs and to complete their courses for graduation. Goal-setting on its own is inadequate; however, achieving smaller goals may make a difference for students and provide them with the resources needed to complete college. The study population was selected from students enrolled at the University of Toronto, Mississauga Campus, a primarily commuter school; among this group, 1,492 students who enrolled in an

introductory economics course completed an online exercise for course credit; of this group, 60 percent were part of the treatment group and 40 percent were part of the control group. Among the treatment group, 50 percent received a longer goal-setting exercise and 50 percent received a briefer exercise. The exercises were based on goal-setting, creativity, and expressive writing theories. It was determined that despite the interventions conducted, there was little evidence to suggest that students benefited from them regarding their academic performance. Therefore, the development of an intervention to promote goal-setting may not have a desirable impact on students' academic performance in college. One of the primary limitations is that the intervention was perhaps too brief to affect students at the desired level, and it demonstrated that goal-setting reminders are not necessarily a positive behavioral facilitator for many students.

Han, C. W., Farruggia, S. P., & Moss, T. P. (2017). Effects of academic mindsets on college students' achievement and retention. *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(8), 1119-1134.

http://newcms.kmu.ac.kr/sites/test/contents/images/2019/09/20190924_101053187_53679.pdf

The study examined the concepts of understanding the benefits of motivation, self-efficacy, and sense of belonging as drivers of academic performance. Specifically, academic self-efficacy may determine if students develop behaviors that facilitate positive or negative academic performance. Furthermore, academic motivation may lead to different types of behaviors for students and create new challenges for growth and development. The study proposed that academic mindset and factors such as motivation, academic self-efficacy, and sense of belonging were of critical importance in academic performance. The study included 1,400 participants with 653 males and 747 females who were students at a large public US

university; the population included 7 percent African American, 27 percent White, 27 percent Asian American, 29 percent Latino, and 10 percent other. Students were administered a survey instrument and data from the institution was also collected. All students were asked to sign consent forms prior to their participation. Key variables examined included self-efficacy, motivation, and sense of belonging, along with institutional data that included grades in the writing course, first semester grade point average, and retention rates over the first and second years. The study results indicate that students who exhibited high rates of efficacy exhibited higher grades, GPAs, and course credits earned, while those with lower rates of efficacy exhibited lower grades and other performance measures. The study limitations included the need for additional variables such as intelligence, goals for achievement, and help-seeking behaviors are also critical. Furthermore, it is likely that racial identity may play a role in the study as part of the self-concept and the relationship between identity and academic performance. Future studies should focus on these variables to determine if these other factors play a role in shaping outcomes for students.

Muro, A., Soler, J., Cebolla, À., & Cladellas, R. (2018). A positive psychological intervention for failing students: Does it improve academic achievement and motivation? A pilot study. *Learning and Motivation*, 63, 126-132.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ramon_Cladellas/publication/326745373_A_positive_psychological_intervention_for_failing_students_Does_it_improve_academic_achievement_and_motivation_A_pilot_study/links/5d1b24fca6fdcc2462b75410/A-positive-psychological-intervention-for-failing-students-Does-it-improve-academic-achievement-and-motivation-A-pilot-study.pdf

The study addressed the significance of positive psychological interventions (PPIs) in

determining the effects of wellbeing, positive emotional responses, and overall life satisfaction. In this manner, PPI may be a useful tool in addressing individual academic performance. This concept was examined in a group of high school students who had low levels of academic performance to determine if it would have a positive impact. Study participants were selected based upon their levels of academic performance, and only those with low academic performance were selected from a pool of tutoring students in Barcelona. For the study, a total of 164 participants were included, including 46 girls and 118 boys. These students were receiving extra tutoring and support classes (ETSC) to address their academic deficiencies. The proposed design was a pre-post study that included a control group as well as an interventional group. There were three phases of the project, the goal training phase, the PPI phase, and the self-evaluation phase. By obtaining descriptive statistics from the intervention, it was determined that among students who received a PPI in addition to the standard private tutoring, their academic performance improved in the form of higher grades and greater motivation. These factors are critical because they demonstrate that PPI may have a universally positive impact on students across the spectrum, including boys and girls. Therefore, a combination of PPI in conjunction with private tutoring is a positive step forward for many students to improve their overall academic performance and to expand their future academic potential. The study was a cross-sectional study, which was one of its primary limitations. Furthermore, the study did not examine PPI on its own and was only associated with private tutoring as a primary component. Any future studies of this nature should examine the issues using a longitudinal approach that will have a greater impact on performance and in determining if these factors are impactful in other settings.

References

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