

Predictors for Growth Mindset and Sense of Belonging in College Students

Sara L. Cook
College of Education, Science, and
Mathematics
Viterbo University

Brenda L. Murray
Department of Economics
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

Sloan Komissarov
Western Technical College

James M. Murray¹
Department of Economics
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

May 31, 2017

Abstract:

Mindset and sense of belonging are important predictors for college student success. Mindset refers to beliefs on how or whether intelligence can grow with time and effort. Belonging refers to students' sense of being respected and supported in their college environment. We measure several dimensions of mindset and belonging and educational and demographic background information for more than 2,000 students at two four-year universities including a public and a private university. We estimate factor analysis models to construct measures for mindset and belonging and we explore predictors for these including educational and demographic characteristics and frequency of instructor feedback to students. We find that formative instructor feedback on writing leads to improvements in mindset, belonging, perseverance, and confidence. We also find that frequent feedback on writing improves students' mindset regarding mathematics. We also find explanatory power from semesters in college, parents' educational attainment, race, and students' chosen fields of study.

Keywords: Mindset, belonging, student writing, feedback, regression

1 Corresponding author. Email: jmurray@uwlax.edu. Address: 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601