



TURNING ON THE LIGHT BULB

MICHIGAN FUTURE SCHOOLS

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Contents

Introduction	3
Section I: Research and Context.....	4
Knower, Seeker, Dreamer, and Foreclosure	4
A Discussion of the all-important Grit	5
Motivation and Goals	8
Section II: Turning on the light bulb	13
Mindset #1 – Relevance	15
Mindset #2 – Competence	34
Mindset #3 – Growth Mindset	42
Mindset #4 – Belonging.....	48
Mindset #5 – Autonomy.....	52
Conclusion.....	55
Appendix	56
Possible Selves: <i>Research Summary and Lesson Sketch</i>	56
Sample Repot Card Letter	59
Weekly Goal Sheet	61
Works Cited	62

Introduction

Adolescence presents a tricky situation. The students we meet in 9th grade are going through significant developmental changes, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. And just as they're going through this drastic shift in development, and trying to form their own identities, we're also asking them to develop the behaviors that will put them on a path to success in life.

Our goal with this book is to arm educators with a variety of tools that may help make this situation easier. We've tried to include in these pages a summary of the best available research in psychology and adolescent development on what prompts students to develop the identity, goals, motivation, and accompanying mindsets and behaviors, that will enable them to graduate from college and chart a successful path through life. Along with the research, we've also included different "opportunities for practice,"¹ or ways that various components of this research might be applied to individual classrooms and schools. We've also mixed in findings from our conversations with students in both the MFS and Noble network of schools, to get a sense of what turned the light-bulb on for students who made tremendous GPA growth from their freshman to sophomore year. And when appropriate we've included examples and best practices from schools we've visited where we saw great examples of student-ownership.

The work of trying to get students to develop the ownership, mindsets, and academic behaviors needed to succeed in high school and college is always in progress, and there are few absolutely right answers, so feedback, critiques, and additions are very welcome. Hopefully you'll be able try out some of the ideas and practices listed below, and also create some of your own. We look forward to continuing to work with all of you to figure this out as best we can.

Section I: Research and Context

Importance of the Light-Bulb Going On Early

The Consortium on Chicago Schools Research has done significant research on the connection between 9th grade success and high school graduation and college-readiness. One study found that, controlling for family income and previous achievement, freshmen who earn a B average in their freshman year have an 80% chance of graduating from high school with a 3.0 GPA, a significant college-ready benchmark.² And it turns out that freshman year success is attainable for all students. While background characteristics and test scores explain about 12% of the differences in failure rates among freshmen, an additional 61% of the variation is explained by absences and self-reported study habits.³ So we don't need all of our students to be on grade-level in their freshman year, but we do need them to be developing the academic mindsets and habits that will allow them to be successful, both now and in the future.

Aside from identity and habit development, the freshman year is also critical in relation to the pure mechanics of getting into college. If students struggle in the freshman year, they may dig themselves a hole that can be very hard to get out of by the time they apply to college. Indeed, in every class a large group of students will, by the end of their sophomore year, have mathematically disqualified themselves from earning a 3.0 by the time they apply for college in their senior year. This means that their potential network of college options would be limited to less-selective institutions with really low graduation rates.

So clearly, it's essential that we get the light bulb turned on for students, and early. And while there's no single best way to do it, there are a lot of ideas.

Knower, Seeker, Dreamer, and Foreclosure

First, some language. In our conversations about the "light bulb," we've generally leaned upon the shorthand of Dreamer, Seeker, Knower to describe student ownership of their long-term goals, and their own education. This framework for assessing student ownership of the college goal was developed by Kassie Freeman, formerly of Southern University.

Dreamers are those students who may dream of college, and say they aspire to college success, but whose actions don't match with their supposed goals. Seekers are those that are trying on a college-going identity, and some of the behaviors associated with that identity, but have not yet fully committed to the goal. Perhaps the goal is still extrinsically motivated, with the student just doing what he knows he's supposed to be doing, and doing it inconsistently. And the Knowers are those that have committed to their college-going identity, have taken full ownership of their long-term goals, and are taking the appropriate actions along the path to their goals. Their goals and their actions are more intrinsic in nature, or at least internally regulated (Deci and Ryan, 2000), meaning that their efforts are completely driven from within – the goals, and the pursuit of those goals have become a part of who the student is.⁴ *Students own their own education when they derive meaning from what they're doing in school, and align their actions accordingly, without the need for adult intervention.*

So we have dreamers, seekers, and finally knowers, who display ownership over their own education. A fourth classification is what developmental psychologist James Marcia calls 'foreclosure,' in which a student has ruled out college without "seeking or receiving appropriate information."⁵ These are the students that we've heard school leaders refer to as "pre-dreamers." Certainly we could all identify students who meet this description as well.

Using this framework, it fits that there are actually three separate "light bulbs." The first phase is students realizing that they want to go to college, or want the type of life that a college degree can help them achieve. So, first we need students to dream – to aspire to a college degree, and all the opportunity that a college degree affords. But simply dreaming about these things doesn't translate to action. The second phase involves students making the connection between their aspirations and their current work, and performing at a level that matches their future goals. This could be thought of as the transition from dreamer to seeker, as students begin to try on some of the academic behaviors that are associated with college going. However, we've all seen students who do their homework for a night, or behave well in class for a week, only to revert to their old ways shortly thereafter. So the third phase of the light bulb involves students internalizing their goals, their path, and their actions such that they're no longer dependent on external regulators and external motivators, but are instead fully owning their own path. These students are our Knowers.

Example from Practice: *Ownership Personified*. On our school visits, we met a student from Brooklyn who provided a living and breathing example of what we mean by ownership. Cheyenne Smith, a senior at the Bushwick School for Social Justice, was profiled by the New York Times, and given the title of Mayor of Teenagers (*The Real Mayors of New York* by Emily S. Rueb and Kirk Semple -

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/nyregion/real-mayors-of-new-york.html?_r=0).

She earned that distinction through deep involvement in both her school and her community, something we'll touch on repeatedly through this book. Cheyenne leads school clubs dedicated to different social justice issues, and goes out into the community to lead rallies and protests for causes she believes in, recruiting her classmates to come with her. When asked what she wanted to do for her career, she said she wanted to come back to Bushwick after college to make a difference in the neighborhood. Cheyenne had a clear vision of who she was and what she wanted to do, and was acting accordingly.

A

Discussion of the all-important Grit

Perhaps the key difference, in our formulation, between a seeker and a knower is that while a seeker is trying on the appropriate academic behaviors, and exhibiting some, though perhaps inconsistently, the knower is committed to them, and exhibits them consistently. In shorthand, this could be thought of the degree to which they demonstrate "academic perseverance." "Academic perseverance is the difference between doing the minimal amount of work to pass a class and putting in long hours to truly master course material and excel in one's studies," write

the authors of *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*, an influential paper from the Consortium on Chicago Schools Research.⁶

Another way to look at academic perseverance is through the lens of the now quite popular “grit” research done by Angela Duckworth and her colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania. “Academic perseverance,” the CCSR authors write, “addresses student effort and the resulting...intensity, direction, and duration of a student's academic behavior.”⁷ This definition is very similar to Duckworth’s description of grit, which also refers to the intensity, direction, and duration of a student's academic behavior. Duckworth’s defining feature of those who are gritty versus those who are not is the duration of their focus; gritty individuals hold their focus on a single goal over a long period of time, while those who are not gritty may drop their goal at the first sign of trouble or distraction.

In order for students to be Knowers, they can't just exhibit the academic behaviors temporarily, but instead need to exhibit them all the time, every day, as a part of their identity. “Academic perseverance requires not only an initial surge of momentum in a focused direction, but also the ability to maintain that momentum regardless of what gets in the way.”⁸

Opportunity for Practice: *The Grit Scale*. Angela Duckworth developed a 12-item grit scale, to measure consistency of interests and persistence of effort. This doesn't tell you what to do with these results, but it can serve as starting point for a conversation about grit in the classroom.

You can find the Grit scale here: <http://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/>

So if “grit” is a characteristic of a Knower, how do we develop more of it in our students? The answer to that one is a bit tricky. As the CCSR authors write, “Duckworth and colleagues suggest that grit behaves like an inherent character trait - in other words, that is fairly stable over time.”⁹ They go on to write that, “This does not mean that it is impossible to change a person's grittiness but rather that doing so would be difficult.” The good news, however, is that “there is ample evidence that people can change the intensity, direction, and duration of their behaviors *despite* their personalities,” and “in effect...*act* perseverant even if that is not in his core nature.”¹⁰

Research suggests that we can get students to *act* “grittier” by altering the context and the psychological conditions under which they operate. “There is significant empirical evidence that students demonstrate different amounts of perseverance at academic tasks under differing conditions, supporting the idea that academic perseverance as a behavior in a specific context is highly malleable,” write the CCSR authors.¹¹

One might argue, however, that this gives us a false sense of security, because, after all, we need students to be perseverant regardless of context. And the contexts we create for them in high school won't be the same contexts they face in college. While this is definitely true, it's also true

that we need students to experience success as a first step in this complex motivational process. We need students to realize that when they do persevere and work hard over a long period of time, they can be successful. From there, we can launch to being perseverant regardless of context.

Okay, so how do we alter student contexts, and shift students' psychological conditions, in order for them to *act* perseverant?

No discussion of education psychology is complete without mention of the now famous Walter Mischel marshmallow experiment. For those who haven't heard of this experiment, Mischel, a psychologist then at Stanford, did an experiment where he put a marshmallow in front of children, and told each child that if she waited to consume the marshmallow until he came back, she could have two marshmallows. Follow-up studies showed that those who waited for the second marshmallow had higher SAT scores and other positive life outcomes above and beyond those who went ahead and ate the marshmallow. The initial conclusion that people drew from this experiment, was that the students who waited had greater non-cognitive skills, such as self-control, and that because of those skills, over the years they were higher performers in school, leading to those higher SAT scores and other positive outcomes.¹²

This is the narrative that everyone knows. However, it's not the full story. These results only held, it turns out, when two conditions were met: either when the marshmallow was in plain sight, or when the students weren't given strategies for self-control. What this means is that the students who waited under those conditions (with the marshmallow in plain sight, and not given mechanisms for self-control) were able to come up with their own ways of distracting themselves, a sign of higher *cognitive* skills, which would be reflected in a standardized test like the SAT exam.¹³

On the other hand, when the marshmallow was not in plain site, or when students were given strategies for self-control, both the future low SAT kids and the future high SAT kids did equally well at waiting for the marshmallow. So in the experiment, structures (putting the marshmallow out of sight) and strategies eliminated the difference between students' natural tendency to exhibit self-control. What this means then is that under the right conditions, both low SAT and high SAT students were equally good at waiting for marshmallow, and that "...whether children exhibit self-control depends on *context* (e.g., whether the marshmallow is in plain sight or not), and on whether the children are given *strategies* that allow them to complete the task successfully...."¹⁴

The suggestion here is that we need to take a more nuanced view of "non-cognitive" skills like self-control, and realize that these skills have a significant cognitive component as well. If a student is struggling with reading, we'll set up the structures (tutoring, different texts, strategic partners) to help them overcome their difficulties. This research suggests we should think the same way about a student struggling with self-control, and the range of other "non-cognitive" skills that are essential to academic achievement. We can equip the students who lack self-control and academic perseverance with explicit strategies to help them control their impulses

and stay focused on a task, so they can be successful in an academic environment that rewards those skills.

Opportunity for Practice: *Setting Up Structures.* I'm sure you all have a lot of experience doing exactly this: setting up, and more importantly helping students set up, the systems and structures that will enable them to be successful both in their behavior and their academics. These systems and structures might include: sitting on the opposite side of the room from friends that a student knows will distract her; coming up with a secret signal to give a teacher when he's frustrated or needs a break; creating a standing date to come after school every day to finish homework with a specific teacher before going home; or setting benchmarks for how much a student will read each night before going on Facebook (or whatever it is the kids are using these days...). Again, these are practices that educators do all the time, but it's helpful to have the context that when you're working on these things, you're working to develop your students' non-cognitive skills.

Opportunity for Practice: *Completing Homework.* Oddly enough, there hasn't been much rigorous research on effective practices to help students with one very important academic task: completing homework. The one intervention that has been rigorously studied, however, is close monitoring and intervention plans on the part of the staff. This means that if homework completion rates and/or grades fall below some benchmark, there is a staff intervention set up in which students are given additional supports and structures to help them complete this work initially.

Again this is an effort to set up the structures and systems needed for students to exhibit the self-control needed for academic success. This is sort of like the reverse way of trying to get the light-bulb on: if we can get students to exhibit the correct academic behaviors, they may develop the mindsets (self-competence, self-efficacy, a belief that they can do the work and that their performance improves with effort) that can lead to more effort, more ambitious goal-setting, and a continuation of the positive cycle of success.

Motivation and Goals

Two key themes that will emerge throughout this book are that all of the concepts we associate with 'turning on the light bulb' (motivation, goals, academic mindsets, academic perseverance) are highly context-dependent, and highly cyclical. The goals someone has, how motivated they are to work towards those goals, how hard they work, how well they perform, and how they feel about their effort and their performance may change depending upon a particular context, and each component feeds off of the others in a continual cycle. In the book *Ready, Willing, and Able*, a book championing an approach to college access that focuses on adolescent development, Harvard professors Suzanne Bouffard and Mandy Savitz-Romer write, "contrary to popular belief, motivation is not something that people either have or don't have; motivation cannot be measured in terms of 'how much.' Motivation is something that must be understood qualitatively and descriptively. Motivation is a cyclical process involving the kinds of goals people set, the reasons they set them, and the actions they take to achieve them."¹⁵

Goals and motivation are naturally entwined. Aside from pure intrinsic motivation, in which you're motivated to do a task for the inherent enjoyment of that task, most everything we're motivated to do is prompted by some initial goal. What those goals look like however – and the reasons that we're pursuing them – is vitally important for turning the light bulb on, and keeping it burning. As Bouffard and Savitz-Romer write, "...goals play a large role (in the active process of motivation) because they shape behaviors, which affect outcomes, which then shape the meaning that people make of the whole process and therefore how they set other goals in the future."¹⁶

So what types of goals are best for students to set? And how do we motivate students to achieve those goals? Years of research on motivation finds that "motivation ultimately has to come from within," though "it is affected by other people and environmental factors."¹⁷ This means that though we may have varying degrees of influence over our students' goals and their level of motivation to attain those goals, they ultimately need to arrive at their goals, and develop their motivation, from within.

This may seem like common sense to some people ("of course someone's motivation needs to come from within") while others may see this as pie-in-the-sky thinking ("we can't expect everyone to be self-motivated"). To reconcile these views, and analyze the differences between the types of goals we set, we turn to motivation gurus Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, psychologists from the University of Rochester who've been cited in popular books by the likes of Dan Pink and Malcolm Gladwell. Over the years, Deci and Ryan have become famous in the world of psychological research for their experiments on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. The bulk of their research finds that when complex, creative work is at hand, classic extrinsic motivators like rewards both kill intrinsic motivation, and lead to a decrease in the quality of the output. When individuals aren't offered any extrinsic motivators and are taking on tasks solely for intrinsic reasons, their interest and quality of output increase. In other words, the researchers established intrinsic motivation as the gold standard for motivation, and the type of motivation we'd need for something as complex as a student's educational journey through high school and college and ultimately beyond.¹⁸

However, Deci and Ryan's early experiments were based on the *classic* forms of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators – either motivation comes from rewards on one extreme, or from the inherent interestingness of the task on the other. But the research goes on to discuss how not all extrinsic motivators are created equal, which is particularly important in educational contexts, where the work students are being asked to do may not always be inherently enjoyable. In their pioneering work on self-determination theory, what seems to matter just as much as whether a motivator is intrinsic or extrinsic is whether a motivator *originates* from within an individual, or outside of an individual's control.¹⁹ So even if a motivator is extrinsic ("I want an A on this paper"), if the goal originated from within the student ("I know what a quality education will get me, so I want to excel"), and wasn't forced upon them, that matters a great deal from a motivational perspective.

The chart below shows how motivators exist on a continuum, with external control, driven by rewards and punishments on one end, and what the authors call *integration* on the other end, with an individual's goals originating from within, and being fully integrated into the individual's identity.

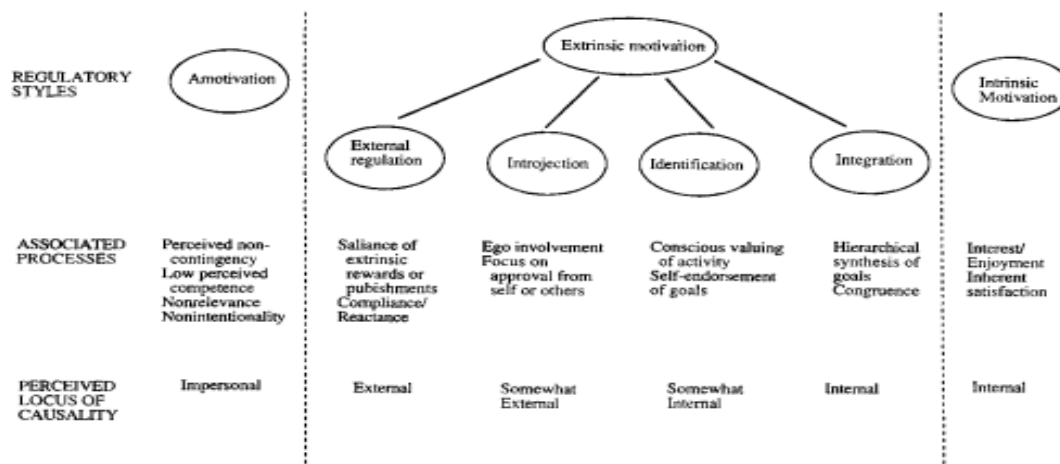


FIG. 1. A taxonomy of human motivation.

As you can see, on the far right of the extrinsic motivation spectrum, right next to intrinsic motivation, is the concept of integration, or internalized regulation, in which "people value and pursue activities that they do not find intrinsically interesting but that they believe will help them reach their ultimate goals."²⁰ A good example, used by Savitz-Romer and Bouffard, is ACT prep. It's unlikely that most people find ACT prep inherently interesting. However, students can be internally driven to undertake significant ACT prep because they know they need a good score to get into their goal college that will lead to a career that they're passionate about.²¹

When students demonstrate internalized regulation of their actions based on long-term, intrinsically motivated goals, we'll know we have Knowers. And research shows that "intrinsic motivation and internalized regulation make adolescents more likely to persist and succeed once they get to college."²²

This last point almost certainly seems true. Try conducting a thought experiment. Think of a student who is inspired by some potential career, or even just inspired by academic success in general. This student is inspired by a vision of their future self, and it's something that's internally directed; they're not doing it to gain anyone's approval. Now, contrast that with a student who's attending college because people have told them to, or they're attending college because they know, in some vague way, that they'll make more money in the long run. Who do you think is more likely to persist through the many obstacles they're likely to meet in college?

While all this might sound good in theory, Bouffard and Savitz-Romer point out some potential objections that are probably floating around in your mind as well. As the authors write, "Encouraging young people to be intrinsically motivated and mastery oriented sounds great, but

is it realistic given the fact that many of the reasons for and demands of education are traditionally focused on performance and rewards?"²³ They go on to ask, "Aren't establishing a well-paying career, avoiding poverty, and feeling the pride of one's family legitimate reasons for going to college?"

In answering their own questions, they respond that of course those are legitimate reasons for wanting to go to college – and indeed some studies of successful low-income students have cited the desire to escape poverty as a key motivator.²⁴ But at the same time, students need to strike a motivational balance. **Getting a career that earns a good living, being a first-gen college goer, and staying out of poverty may indeed be motivation enough for a student. However, these motivators need to be paired with those that are more intrinsic in nature, to make sure that a student's set of reasons for wanting to go to college are enough to carry them through all the obstacles they'll face throughout their journey.**

This shift doesn't have to be very dramatic. Instead of simply talking about a well-paying career, we can talk more about how college also offers the opportunity to write your own ticket to an interesting and rewarding career, rather than doing whatever's necessary to get by. Or, if you know that a student is motivated by family and their hometown, we can help the students see that a college education will better enable them to make positive changes in the area they grew up.

A recent study from the Institute for Higher Education Policy also hinted at the importance of developing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for college. The study found that of a sample of students who were qualified to go to college but chose not to, two-thirds of them admitted that college was necessary to obtain the material things they wanted in life: money, a good job, a good home. So why didn't they pursue a college degree? There are many different potential explanations. The study's authors thought that they may have simply lacked the academic preparation, and didn't think they could do it. Some might posit that the students didn't feel "college-goer" was part of their social identity. But a third potential explanation is that the students' motivational makeup wasn't robust enough - they had full knowledge of the extrinsic reasons to attend college, but those weren't enough; they lacked the inner drive.²⁵ If students rely solely on motivational factors that exist outside of themselves, they run the risk of seeing college *acceptance* as the goal, and may lose focus on why they're there when they get there.²⁶

(Tough)²⁷

Example from Practice: *Intrinsic motivation.* Psychologist Karen Arnold has studied what is known as the 'summer melt,' which is the phenomenon in which first-gen college students who plan to enroll in college at the end of their senior year of high school, but then fail to do so. In her work on the subject, she quotes a college-goer who discusses the danger of going to college for extrinsic reasons alone: "There's a difference between wanting to go to college and someone telling you they want you to go to college. Because when you go to college for reasons you don't know why, then you drop out. Because you don't know why you're there. You're going for someone else. It's like a promise you're keeping that's not yours. It's not your own promise." This is why, as part of an advisory or college readiness course, we need students to consistently be articulating, in their own words, why they want to go to college. (*Ready, Willing, and Able*, 125)

In closing this section on motivation, I want to note one over-arching recommendation for practice. Bouffard and Savitz-Romer write "motivation is an active process that is about the meaning that people make of their experiences, not a passive state that can be imparted to them by others."²⁸ This statement demonstrates the idea that advisory lessons, co-curricular activities, college access programs, and other efforts to shift student academic mindsets, can't be built around filling in worksheets.²⁹ Instead, they need to be experiences and interventions (readings, reflection, and discussion) that help students create meaning.

Throughout the rest of this book, and in the advisory resources, you'll find multiple examples of these types of exploratory, experience-based activities.

Section II: Turning on the light bulb

Collectively, we've talked about turning on the light bulb quite a bit. This book gives us the opportunity to put a framework onto this idea of developing student ownership, and turning on the light bulb. Through reading the research on motivation and psychology, much of which is summarized in the excellent paper from the Consortium on Chicago Schools Research, *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*, it seems that there are five major mindsets that we need to affect in order to turn on students' light bulbs, and enable them to develop ownership over their education. We could even think of these as potential switches for turning the light bulb on, and while any one of these might be able to turn the light bulb on for students, it's more likely that we need to affect all five in order for a student to truly take ownership over their education.

In the aforementioned *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*, the authors write that impacting mindsets is a more effective way of changing student behaviors than trying to change those behaviors directly. As the authors of the paper write,

"...the mechanisms through which teachers can lead students to exhibit greater perseverance and better academic behaviors in their classes are through attention to academic mindsets and development of students' metacognitive and self-regulatory skills, rather than trying to change their innate tendency to persevere."

The authors go on to discuss four specific mindsets that educators need to focus on:

- 1) This work has value for me (relevance);
- 2) I can succeed at this work (competence);
- 3) My ability and competence grow with my effort (growth mindset);
- 4) I belong in this academic community (belonging).³⁰

In shorthand, we'll call these mindsets (1) **relevance**, or the idea that students need to see a connection between what they're doing school and their lives, either through long-term goals (I need to study for the ACT so I can get into an Ivy League college; I need to be really good in biology so I can be a doctor), or short-term goals (I need to learn about emissions standards because I'm presenting to city council on the topic; I just love learning about Detroit history so much – I can't get enough!); (2) **competency**, or the idea that students need to have experienced academic success, and feel that they can be successful in the future, in order to actually do the work; (3) **growth mindset**, or the idea that students need to believe that they can improve with effort; and (4) **belonging**, or the idea that students need to feel connected to the group of people (teachers, leaders, students) dispensing desired goals and behaviors. A fifth one that we'll add, that is essentially synonymous with ownership, is (5) **autonomy**, which is the idea that students need to have some choice, some agency, and some responsibility for what their school is like, what they're learning, how they learn it, and what they want to do with their lives, in order to truly demonstrate ownership. In the end, they need to be the ones driving this bus.³¹

And one can see how developing each of these mindsets could be a switch that turns the light-bulb on – a student could demonstrate ownership because she really wants to go to U of M (relevance); or she finds that she’s really good at school, and develops ownership through competence – after all, we like to do things we’re good at (competence); or maybe she has a firmly developed growth mindset, so no matter how many times she fails, she still demonstrates ownership because she knows she can get better (growth mindset); or she feels like such a part of the community, and has such good relationships with teachers, that she’ll do anything for them (belonging). With these mindsets in place, she may have the confidence to truly take ownership over her education, make her own choices, and create her own unique path in life (autonomy).

And as stated above, it’s more than likely that all of these mindsets need to be developed to fully turn the light bulb on. After all, no matter how relevant a student feels her education is, she won’t develop ownership if she never gets the sense that she can do the work; and she may never get the sense that she can do the work if she doesn’t first have a growth mindset; and she won’t really feel like putting in effort if she doesn’t feel a part of the community; and she won’t feel a part of that community if she’s not afforded any choice and voice along the way.

So how do we impact these academic mindsets? It turns out that just about everything we do impacts academic mindsets, and to truly focus on academic mindsets may require large or small shifts in what we do with students, depending on the work you’re already doing.

Quoting the CCSR report at length:

"Any given school and classroom context will reflect a wide variety of variables affecting student motivation and opportunity to learn. For example, how supports are made available and to whom, grading structures and policies, available course tracks, the ways students are assigned to those tracks, the nature of the academic tasks students are asked to do, the relationships among student peers and their orientation toward academic work, the level of safety one experiences in school, and the availability of adequate resources for learning are all important parts of any school and classroom context. Some of these variables - e.g., grading structures, feedback, and norms of behavior - are quite proximal to students' course performance and have been shown to affect academic mindsets, academic behaviors, and/or academic performance."³²

In other words, observable student behaviors don't exist in a vacuum; they're highly dependent on the context the student operates (i.e., classrooms and schools). We therefore need to evaluate everything we do in our classrooms and schools for their potential impact on student mindsets.

So, without further ado...

Mindset #1 – Relevance

We'll start with **relevance**, or what author Daniel Pink calls *purpose*.³³ There are a few different ways that students can find purpose in what they're doing. The first is pure intrinsic motivation – students are so engaged in a task, or in learning in general, that this is how they develop ownership. They simply love to learn, think of themselves as learners, and do it for the intrinsic joy of learning.

While this is a wonderful ideal, we need to acknowledge that our lessons aren't always exciting, and the things we ask students to do aren't always the most riveting. For these situations, there are a few different ways to trigger a sense of purpose in our students.

The College Goal

The first, and probably most common way to trigger relevance is through the goal of college. Whenever we talk to students about the entry requirements for certain colleges, set college goals, talk about all the benefits that come with a college education, or get students on a college campus, what we're really trying to do is make what they're doing in class, every day, relevant to their future: you need to do well on this so you can get a good GPA and get into a good college. Or, even better, if you're pushing your scholars to be better critical thinkers, and contribute to class discussions with pointed analysis, we can again reference the relevance to their future work in college: this is the type of thinking, and the level of discussion, that will be required in college.

However, while we preach the college-goal from day one, we also need to make sure we're demonstrating to students why college is a worthy goal. Many of our students have only a vague idea of what college really is, the purpose of college, or what college is like. Most of our students have a general sense that college is a good thing because you're more likely to get a job, and make money, but they likely have no sense of what students do in college, and why the college experience should be valued beyond just jobs and money. We need to ask ourselves what opportunities students have had to explore what happens at this place that everyone is telling them should be their focus for the next four years of their lives.

We should also be asking ourselves *who* gets these opportunities to explore what college is like. A major theme of *Ready, Willing, and Able* is that the students who already have a strong college-going identity are those that are most likely to experience various college access and college exploration programs – the **seekers** and **knowers**. The authors point out that ironically, it's the **foreclosed** and the **dreamers** – the students that most need college exposure – that are generally not found in the pre-college programs that might help them turn on the light bulb, and develop that initial taste of a college-going identity.

Opportunity for Practice: *Give students the opportunity to "try-on" the role of college-goer.* Bouffard and Savitz-Romer write that "Role theory suggests that adopting a particular role identity comes from having opportunities to enact that role or engage in activities that people in similar roles do" (RWA, 83). Therefore, the more opportunities students have to try on the role of "college-goer," the better. This includes...

- **Dual-Enrollment.** Dual-enrollment courses at U of M – Dearborn have been the single best intervention for solidifying college-going identities, with the added bonus of offering feedback to the school on whether or not their students are truly college ready.
- **Summer Programs.** Summer programs offer a tremendous opportunity for students to try on their college-going identity. We've heard all sorts of anecdotes about students coming home from summer experiences with new interests, academic mindsets, and a college-going identity. These summer experiences can serve to broaden student horizons, and alter their trajectories. Make researching and applying to these summer programs a focus of your advisory curriculum.

Opportunity for Practice: *Connecting current work with future goals.* One of the most oft-mentioned interventions for connecting students' current work with their future goals is to include on student report cards the schools that their grades "qualify" them for. The APS schools (JRLA and Consortium), have created a great letter that goes out with every report card, and, using students' GPA and EPAs scores, projects the type of school they could get in to when it comes time to apply to colleges. In addition to the schools, the letter includes graduation rate and net-price statistics, two markers of school quality. This tool not only gives students a sense of where they're at, but also where they need to get to if they want to get into a certain school. A sample letter from JRLA is in the appendix.

Opportunity for Practice: *Systemic college exposure.* College exposure, and a college-going culture, can be a tough thing to quantify. But that hasn't stopped the Achievement First charter network from trying. Each campus shoots to reach a goal of a certain number of college exposure events every year (27 to be exact – not sure where that came from), from guest speakers to on-campus visits. We never quite know what will make it click for different students, so we need to make sure they get lots of exposure – even if we have to set a goal.

The winning intervention here is likely campus visits. Getting students on campus is clearly essential for giving them the opportunity to visualize themselves in the role of a college student. However, all college visits are not created equally. A campus visit in which the student is a casual bystander – checking out the campus, vaguely listening to the tour, joking with friends – is unlikely to have much impact. Visiting the campus in smaller groups, having the opportunity to sit-in on classes and shadow students to get a sense of their lives, however, may have a much larger impact.

Opportunity for Practice: *College is fun...make sure students know it.* At one of our MFS governing council meetings, council member Carmen N’Namdi told us that based on the way we talk about college, if she were a high school student, she wouldn’t want to go. Her point was that we’re always talking about college in the language of achievement, test scores, and future careers. None of that stuff, Carmen reminded us, is inherently fun for a 15 year-old. Carmen reminded us that we also need to show students that college is a fun and life-expanding experience in and of itself, not just because it’s good for our long-term economic prospects. Here are some ideas for how we can do that:

- *Summer Programs.* Summer programs offer a tremendous opportunity for students to try on their college-going identity. We’ve heard all sorts of anecdotes about students coming home from summer experiences with new interests, academic mindsets, and a college-going identity. These summer experiences can serve to broaden student horizons, give them a sense of what college life is like, and alter their trajectories.

The schools that do this well appoint a staff person to take ownership over this process – getting students to work on applications during the winter months, making sure they get their materials in, and staying in touch over the summer. While all schools may not have this capacity, Alicia is working on a database of quality summer programs, and much of the application process can be done in advisory.

- *Student clubs/activities.* Another way to invest students in the goal of college is to expose them to all of the different types of clubs and activities they can take on at college. What they’ll find is that whatever they like doing now, they can still pursue, and they’ll also be exposed to tons of stuff to try that they’ve never thought about before. Consider having students research a college not for their academics, but for what clubs they want to join, and activities they want to try. And invite alumni back to the school to talk about what they’re doing in college – my guess is that the first thing out of their mouths will be swing dance classes they’re taking on Tuesday nights (this didn’t come out of nowhere – a few of the DEPSA students at Alma are taking weekly swing dance lessons).
- *College courses are cool.* Have your students seen a college course catalogue? As far as they know right now, school consists of math, English, social studies, and science, but do they know that they could take “Philosophy and Star Trek,” at Georgetown, “The Art of Walking,” at Centre College (KY), or “Nuthin’ but a ‘G’ Thang,” at Oberlin College (OH)?¹ It’s worth having our students explore course catalogues and construct their ideal course sequence, to see if we can show them how much college might expand their conception of what school is. (<http://www.fastweb.com/student-life/articles/3848-25-epic-college-courses>)

Opportunity for Practice: *Why College?* Because young peoples' identities, motivations, and goals are always developing, one anchor practice, of an advisory or college readiness course, in every year of school, could be a "Why College?" essay. A potential prompt could be:

"College is becoming a necessary next step in your education in order to secure a good job and earn a decent living. However, people attend college for all sorts of different reasons. Here are some:

- To pursue a particular passion (like dance or theater), in an academic environment;
- To gain greater expertise in a specific subject, with the hopes of attaining a career in that area and/or going on to graduate school;
- Because they don't know what's possible, and they want to explore all of the options available to them;
- Because they're committed to intellectual exploration, and want to learn as much as possible;
- To learn the skills that they believe they need to make a positive change in their community.

And there are many, many, more. What's your own personal reason for wanting to go to college? Has this changed at all through the years? What caused it to change?"

These essays can form the foundation for conversations around the different reasons people choose to go to college, and provide a deeper level of investment for students around their personal college goal.

This last opportunity for practice is important to balance the (still important) narrative that students often hear about why they should go to college – that it's the path to a well-paying job, a ticket out of poverty, a chance to rise above current circumstances.³⁴

To finish the college goal section, we also want to include practices that provide low-level, constant exposure to the college goal, and generally find their way into nearly every college-prep high school. These practices are basically college exposure 101, so if you haven't done anything else in this area, you can start here.

Opportunity for Practice: *Teachers rep their colleges.* All of our teachers went to college, and many of them attended highly selective colleges. A lot of schools leverage their teachers' college experiences to build investment in the college goal for their students. This includes things like:

- Naming advisories after that teacher's college;
- Posting the average ACT and GPA needed for admission to that college on the teacher's door;
- Having teachers tell their "college story" to the students. How did they decide on their school? When did the light bulb go on for them? What was their college experience like?
- College pennants. Now the staple of just about every high school, but still a good practice.

The Career/Life Goal

A second type of relevance that is closely related to the first is the idea that students will take ownership over coursework that they find relevant to their future careers, or their future visions of themselves. This could take a few different forms. As discussed above, it could be the student has some general sense that education is a ticket out of a life of poverty, so the student may not be shooting for a particular career, but instead academic success more generally, associating that success with future career and life success. It could also be that either through school, or some co-curricular activity, a student becomes passionate about a particular career or life path, allowing the student to connect the dots between that activity, what they're doing in school, and what they want to do with the rest of their lives. This could mean that a student excels in a particular subject because she knows that she'll need to master that subject in order to reach her career goals, or it could mean that a student starts focusing more on academics once she realizes how hard it is to get into med school, for example. Either case provides an opportunity for a student to see greater relevance in their education, and hopefully take ownership of their education to a greater degree.

Example from Practice: *Discovering passions.* For maybe the best example of finding relevance in education by becoming passionate about a particular subject, we turn to world-famous theoretical physicist Neil DeGrasse Tyson. When DeGrasse Tyson was nine, he visited the Hayden Planetarium in New York on a school trip. He was so fascinated by what he saw there, that he decided then, at the age of nine, that he was going to be a theoretical physicist when he grew up. That desire then governed his educational and professional journey, and the choices he made, for the rest of his life. And what's interesting about his story is that he wasn't an all-star student in all subjects – just those that were most relevant to him, like math and science. He is now the most famous theoretical physicist in the world, and currently *runs* the Hayden Planetarium that he idolized as a child.

Now, it's unlikely that *all* of our students are going to grow up to be theoretical physicists (though maybe some?). However, one essential lesson can be gained from the story: the light bulb went on for DeGrasse-Tyson on a class trip. This begs the question for our schools and our students: what potential interests and passions have they been exposed to? What should they be exposed to? Do they know what a theoretical physicist is? (Does anyone know what a theoretical physicist is?)

Note (This story was heard on an episode of NPR's "Fresh Air" on February 27, 2014.)

And we should work to make this exposure as broad as possible, because we really don't know where things will lead. Even seemingly non-academic student interests and goals can set them on a potential path through college and career, giving order and meaning to their lives.

Opportunity for Practice: *Student interest inventory.* The first step in getting students turned on to in potential interests and passions is to figure out what they're interested in already, or what they potentially could be interested in, and what they may want to learn more about. We can start this process by deploying the MFS student interest inventory, which will allow Alicia, but more importantly your staff, to get a sense of what interests we can get students deeper into, and connect them with opportunities around the city.

Example from Practice: *Make it a priority.* The Cleveland High School of Science and Medicine has clearly made the search for interests and passions a priority at their school. The school exposes students to every imaginable opportunity – through opportunities found by students, staff, school leadership, and even board members – to see what grabs the students’ attention. Many students we talked to there could draw a clear line between what they’re currently involved in outside of school, what they’re passionate about, and what they want to study in college and why. Most of those students did not come to high school pre-packaged with those interests; instead, they were able to chart a path, and tell a nice story, because of the initial exposure they got at the school.

How did they do this? They made it a priority on par with academics. When we toured the school with principal Ed Weber, he asked two things of every student he stopped in the halls: how they did on the last report card, and what they’re doing outside of school. And the students were doing some pretty impressive things.

Opportunity for Practice: *Utilize student activities database and tracker.* MFS’s own Alicia Hernandez has been hard at work taking stock of all the organizations in the city that can offer enrichment opportunities to our students. She’s organized a bunch of the organizations into an online tool that allows school staff and students to see what’s out there, and tap into these groups that can expose students to potential interests and passions that may drive their education. Reach out to Alicia to get trained up on this tool, and connected with organizations across the city.

Then, figure out a way to track what students are being exposed to outside of school. Many schools use Naviance to track the different activities students are involved in – reach out to Pat to get trained on these tools.

Opportunity for Practice: *Student grant-writing program.* When I asked Cleveland School of Science & Medicine principal Edward Weber what drove their culture of exposure, he traced it back to their student grant-writing program. In the first few years after the school was opened, Weber realized that his students needed to be exposed to much more, but also knew that he didn’t have the resources to do that work. So what did he do? He put the students to work. He started by asking students what they were interested in, and what they wanted to see at the school. Then, he got them to go out and make that happen, by having students write grant proposals to local foundations and businesses. He brought in adjunct faculty from local community colleges to teach students how to write the grants, and in time the students ended up raising half of the school’s discretionary funds.



Opportunity for Practice: *Use Naviance career tools.* The Naviance program has a ton of great tools that enable students to get a sense of what careers interest them and match their strengths. There are a whole host of career-interest inventories and strengths-finder tests, as well as a video series that interviews famous folks from a variety of fields. The idea behind using these tools is not that students should decide what they want to do for the rest of their lives in their freshman year, but instead to give them a sense of what's out there, and what a quality education can get them.

Reach out to Pat to get school staff trained up on these tools.

Opportunity for Practice: *Connect passions to college.* The authors of *Ready, Willing, and Able* write that "Adolescents know what is important to them, but they may not always draw connections between those things and college." If this is the case, and you've established what is important to students through student-interest inventories, identification of core characteristics, and various writing exercises, we can then help students make the connection between their interests and a college-path. Even if a student says they want to go to the NBA – though they may not have a hope of strapping on even a JV jersey – their driving interest in basketball can be leveraged to focus on potential college goals. The student could be a sports reporter at the college paper, leading to summer internships at local publications; the student could be a manager on the basketball team, leading to a student assistant position; or the student could develop skills in statistics, useful in any number of ways in sports careers.

We can also leverage a student's interest in basketball, for example, into a truly interesting and engaging out of school project off the basketball court. Student success author Cal Newport (<http://calnewport.com/blog/>) wrote a book called *How to be a High School Superstar*, in which he dissected the methods of students who were able to distinguish themselves in high school through non-traditional ways. These students were able to accomplish something unique and interesting in high school, which led to success in college admissions above and beyond what their grades would indicate. Newport says they did this by following these three steps:

- 1) Choose something that seems interesting;
- 2) Complete a pursuit in that area;
- 3) Look for new opportunities, and complete step 1.

He goes on to share a lot more nuance, but that's the general idea. In a blog post, <http://calnewport.com/blog/2013/08/21/do-you-want-to-succeed-in-college-admissions-finish-something/>, Newport describes one student who had a *mild* interest in the New York Knicks, and, looking for a project to take on, decided to start blogging about them. Committed to writing daily posts, he soon developed a following, a Knicks press pass, and an article in the New York Daily News. By taking on this project that he was interested in, the student likely developed a better sense of identity, purpose, and path, and had a nice story to tell college admissions counselors as well.

There are two opportunities for practice that come to mind here. The first is through a student project exploring all of the ways that they might be able to grow their interests through attending college. This could be something as simple as choosing a college and looking at the various co-curricular clubs that are offered, and again, working with students to look beyond the varsity basketball team.

The second potential project is something like the passion project listed above. Pick something the student is excited about, and start a blog about it – something they're committed to writing about weekly.

Developing Identity

One of the obstacles that can block the development of a student's focus on college and career goals is their *social identity*. A student's social identity is the identity they may perceive to be their own, because of their membership in a particular social group (i.e., race, socioeconomic status). This can result in students constantly asking the question, "Do people like me, or people from my social group, go to, and succeed, in college?" In other words, even if a student starts to dream of college, they may not fully believe in that dream if they don't see examples of individuals who share their same social identity, and have successfully gone the college-going path.

Opportunity for Practice: *Speaker Series*. One opportunity for practice in this area is to start a speaker series, in which the goal is to get individuals in front of your students who share a similar social identity, and have been successful in postsecondary education. Sue Rowe, principal at Detroit Cristo Rey High School, spoke of the direct benefits of this type of intervention. She brought in an African-American male from the U of D – Mercy Law School to speak with her students about his college path, and she said the affects were pretty remarkable. In her interpretation, the students no longer saw college as some abstract goal; the goal, instead, was to become someone like him.

It's important to note here that an individual's identity goes far beyond their social identity. Everyone's identity is an individual undertaking, personal to that student. This means that a student won't necessarily connect with every speaker, or every college story. Instead, they need to hear a range of stories, from a range of different people, to hear more about how college can play a role in their lives regardless of how they define themselves. In the words of Bouffard and Savitz-Romer, "youth need open, safe spaces to consider the dimensions of their identities and to explore how these dimensions can be consistent with college and why they might not initially seem that way."³⁵

This insight is essential. Youth may see various components of their individual identity as inconsistent with college going. Maybe they think that they want to focus on art, and don't need everything else that a college offers; maybe they think college-going, and the positive academic behaviors that go along with college-going, are for "good kids" who always do the right thing; or maybe they may dream of college, but they believe deep down that the goal is not attainable. Because of all of these different potential components of a student's identity, they need a bunch of different models that they can identify with, and say "that could be me."

So this is one way that we can help students build their identities – by providing various models for students to identify with, and giving them opportunities to explore what they could be. And

this is clearly needed. From conversations with teachers, it seems that students define who they are, and what they could be, pretty narrowly. Students say they want to go to the NBA, mention one or two careers that they've heard of, or talk vaguely about wanting a big house and living well.

African-American children's book author Christopher Meyers shares an anecdote from his experience talking with African-American students about their dreams that I think reflects many teachers' experiences³⁶:

"At a public school in Southeast Washington, D.C., I ask a fifth grader what he wants to do with his life, what the map is that he has drawn for himself. He is talkative and smart, and his high-top fade adds a few extra inches to his height, so that he is almost as tall as his classmates, and far more stylish. He tells me that he will join the NBA, and use that money to buy a recording studio and record his first rap album. Looking at him, I think that these are not necessarily his dreams; they are just the dreams that have been offered him, the places he can go in the narrow geography that has been delineated for him..."

While this issue isn't unique to African-American youth (many young people are offered few paths in life, and many 5th graders, regardless of background, think they're destined for professional sports), the core message has significant implications for our practice.

We need to expose students to dozens and dozens ways of being, potential paths, and potential life maps. This can be done, as mentioned above, by bringing in individuals from the community who've been successful either in college or career and have backgrounds similar to those of your students, and have them share their path, how they found their identity, and how they found their passion and life's work.

Opportunity for Practice: *Biography Study:* We can also expose students to excerpts of biographies and autobiographies of successful people of color who found their identity, found the connection between their identity and their education, and found their unique path.

In addition to exposing students to various pictures of what they could be, we also use advisories and other programming to give students a better sense of who they are right now. Bouffard and Savitz-Romer write that, "Typically...efforts to instill a college-going identity focus on raising educational aspirations and exposing youth to an array of postsecondary awareness and readiness activities. These efforts are certainly valuable. But they are missing a crucial component: the 'identity' part of 'college-going identity.'"³⁷ In other words, we need students to learn more about who they are, what they stand for, what they're good at, and what they value, before they can then connect that identity to a potential college path.

This means that while we give students plenty of exposure to college, we also need to give students the opportunity for identity exploration in ways that have nothing to do with college, but help them make connections between who they are now, and who they want to be in the future.

Opportunity for Practice: *Who am I?* For students who have had no prior experience with identity development, start with "Who am I?" "writing exercises, collages, art projects, and group discussions." After that, you can move to discussions and similar projects of how that identity relates to college-going, and seek to reconcile differences as to whether it does or does not. Finally, you can look at the multiple aspects of identity, making conscious for students how their identity does or does not change at home, with friends, or in school.

There are multiple examples of these types of identity-based lessons in the advisory resources.

Jobs/Money/Success

One overwhelming narrative that is pitched to high school students is that they need a college degree in order to survive in the future economy. And this is more or less true. Despite the recent rash of newspaper stories documenting the dearth in job prospects for recent college grads, over their lifetimes those with a bachelors' degree will have a far greater chance of being employed, and will make a lot more money.³⁸

Indeed, no advisory curriculum is complete without showing students the graphs that demonstrate how much more money college grads make in the long run, or how much more likely they are to be employed. The message is that it may very well be difficult to find a job in our future economy, and that we need to be armed with every potential tool possible in order to ensure our success.

Keep in mind however, that money, in and of itself, is generally thought to be a weak motivator. While it definitely may work for some students, as you'll see in the examples below, it's generally over-relied on in conversations about what motivates students to go to college. Recent research has found that connecting academics to some larger purpose in life, and making a meaningful contribution to the world, is a more powerful motivator than just earning a good living.³⁹

Example from Practice: *Money switch at Ben Carson.* Indeed, the money switch turned out to be a potent motivator for one Ben Carson student we interviewed. The student had a very challenging freshman year, and ended with a GPA around 1.0. His sophomore year GPA, however, was close to a 3.0. When I (Pat) asked him what changed, he said that the root cause was multiple conversations he had with his older brother, who drove home the message of how difficult it was to get any type of job, and how much more difficult it would be without a college education. In the appendix there is a description of a research study done by University of Michigan professor Daphna Oyserman, in which students take the time to explore their “possible selves,” both those that they hope for, and those that they fear. It’s clear that for this student, his “feared” possible self was what drove him to focus on his education.

Opportunity for Practice: *Advisory Lessons.* Because no advisory curriculum is complete without a lesson on how much more money you can make with a college degree and how much more likely you are to be employed, make sure yours includes one! There are dozens of articles students can read on the topic, but more importantly, leave space for conversations on the topic. High schoolers, and particularly 9th and 10th graders, are prone to magical thinking – even if they don’t get a college degree, or do well in school, things will somehow workout, and they’ll still make a lot of money and have a big house. Part of the advisory curriculum needs to be having discussions with students to let them know that this isn’t how things work, and show them the data to prove it.

There are a bunch of lessons to this end in the advisory resources.

Opportunity for Practice: *Possible Selves.* Psychology researchers Daphna Oyserman, Deborah Bybee, and Kathy Terry, of the University of Michigan, did a study a few years back to try and get students to better envision, and act upon, detailed visions of their hoped for possible selves. The idea is that if youth internalize visions of their hoped for possible selves, both far in the future (college and career), and in the more short-term (the possible self that passes the math test), it will lead to an increase in the self-regulatory behaviors (doing homework, behaving in class) needed for academic success.

In the study design, researchers had students picture both hoped for and feared future selves, finding that it was the balance of the two that would spring students to action.

The full research summary and description of Oyserman’s possible selves study can be found in the appendix.

Example from Practice: *Money switch for John Hope Bryant.* John Hope Bryant, the founder and CEO of Operation Hope, an organization that works to bring financial literacy, entrepreneurship education, and banking support to low-income communities, traced back his light-bulb moment to a guest speaker in his 5th grade classroom. He said that one day a banker came in to talk to the students about what he did and his path in life. The man came in wearing a nice suit, and gave a professional presentation. John could tell that this man was successful, and that he had money. He asked the man what his job was, and the man said he was a banker. From that moment on, John said that what drove him was that vision. He was quick to point out that he didn’t always get the best grades, but he did well enough to get where he wanted to go, always with that image of the banker from 5th grade in his mind.

(heard at a speech at the Detroit Regional Chamber)

Opportunity for Practice: *People Like Us.* The good folks at the Jalen Rose Leadership Academy have introduced an event called “People Like Us.” The idea for the event is that the school pulls in professionals from the community that have a similar background as the students, and they talk about their path in life that led to their current position. The name is clever too – not only are the people coming to talk “like” the students, but by taking time out of their schedules to come chat, it also shows that they *like* the students. Get it?

Opportunity for Practice: *Set a career exposure goal.* As mentioned earlier, to measure their ‘college-going culture,’ the Achievement First charter school network sets a goal of college exposure events that they’ll have every year, ranging from guest speakers to college visits. Maybe try the same thing with career exposure – guest speakers, job-shadow days, etc. As much as possible, we want students to see all of the various paths in front of them.

A Bigger Purpose

Another way to make education relevant to students is by having them take on goals that are larger than themselves. University of Texas psychologist David Yeager, along with other leading psychologists, recently conducted a study on what motivates students, specifically looking at whether “pro-social” goals, like making an impact on the world, were more motivating than goals that were solely focused on themselves, like money and a good career. It turns out that they were.

The researchers had students engage in some of the most boring schoolwork they could find – real rote work that you would not engage in unless you had some broader purpose in mind. But before they gave them that work, they prompted some students to think about pro-social goals, and consider what pro-social goals they wanted to accomplish in their own lives. Students who went through the intervention were not only more persistent in completing the boring task at hand, but also saw GPA bumps; and this was particularly true for the weakest students.⁴⁰ It turned out that students who agreed with socially oriented statements (e.g., “I want to become an educated citizen that can contribute to society”) ranked higher on measures of grit and self-control than those who were focused on self-oriented goals that were limited to a good job and more money

These findings suggest a few things. First, part of getting students to see the relevance in their own education might involve getting them to think outside of themselves. And second, students may need to be reminded of their pro-social goals more often – when fresh on the mind, these pro-social goals may enable students to trudge through the most tedious academic tasks.

Opportunity for Practice (SSP): *Why do you work hard in school?* The psychologist cited above, David Yeager, has become somewhat famous for conducting these “small, stealthy, psychological” mindset interventions (“small, stealthy, psychological” was the name given to these interventions by Donald Kamentz of YES Prep at the 2012 NACAC conference). The interventions are “small” because they are brief interventions – 20 to 30 minutes. They’re stealthy because the students don’t realize that they’re being intervened upon – if they knew they were being helped, they might shut down. And they’re psychological because these are active experiences, not worksheets.

These interventions will be referenced throughout the book, and are included in the advisory resources, but the basic setup is as follows: students read a passage, watch a video, or have a discussion; students then summarize what they’ve learned, or write about how their own experiences relates to what they watched/read, to internalize the learning; and finally, if possible, students share their newly acquired knowledge, in some way, with an outside group, to make the shift in their minds from being the beneficiary of a lesson, to the benefactor of the lesson.

In an advisory class, use the same experiment design that Yeager and company used to help students get a better sense of purpose in their own education. The researchers took a few hundred 9th graders in the San Francisco area and had them read a passage about how a lot of students not only work hard in school in order to pursue a career they like, but also to gain the skills needed to eventually give back to their community. Students read quotes from other students like them talking about the path they imagined for their life, and how education fit into that greater purpose.

Students then wrote testimonials that they were told would be shared with future high school students, explaining how they were planning to use their education to give back to their community, and society in general. So step two is to have the students write about how they relate to the individuals promoting these pro-social goals. Why do they work hard in school? What impact do they want to have? How will doing well in school contribute to that impact?

Awareness

Closely related to this broader sense of purpose is the idea of building students’ awareness of the structures and systems (social, educational, economic) in which they live, and the inequality with those systems. Students understanding this system, realizing that they have the agency to change things within that system, and understanding that a good education is their ticket to making positive changes both in their own lives and within that system, could be pretty powerful.

Opportunity for Practice: *What do you want to change?* Use identity-exploration activities to discuss with students what they would like to change in their communities, and how education can be used as a tool to make those changes.

Examples of these sorts of activities are listed in the advisory resources.

Example from Practice: *Discussion group sparks the light-bulb.* In this New York Times article on the challenges facing community colleges (*Raising Ambitions: The Challenge in Teaching at Community Colleges* by Ginia Bellafante:

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/21/nyregion/raising-ambitions-the-challenge-in-teaching-at-community-colleges.html?_r=0) the author tells a story about a student who came to community college taking remedial courses, and eventually ended up getting his PhD in psychology. What turned the light bulb on for this student was gaining this sense of awareness of his own circumstances and own sense of alienation through a discussion group that focused on the writings of Marx and Paolo Fieri. It was through learning about the “system” that the student understood his place in it, sparking his desire to learn even more.

The advisory curriculum guide offers some lessons to build student awareness.

Current Engagement

The final type of relevance that we’ll cover in this section is what we’ll call “current engagement,” where students are engaged in material, and find it relevant, not for some future goal, but because it’s relevant to them that very day, or the next week. This relevance could come from engaging material (this is relevant to me because it’s so interesting) or from making student work directly applicable to the “real world.”

Opportunity for Practice: *This work has value for me.* Hulleman and Harackiewicz (2009) conducted a study in which students, once a month in their science class, wrote about how weekly science topics applied to their lives. Researchers found that the intervention had dramatic effects for students who went in with low expectations for success, though it's not clear what the effect of the intervention would be on already high achieving students (Small, Stealthy, Psychological).

Citation for Small, Stealthy, Psychological Interventions⁴¹

Opportunity for Practice: *Authentic audiences/authentic products.* Expeditionary Learning schools build engagement through a project-based approach to learning, in which every project culminates in an “authentic product” that is delivered to an “authentic audience.” Students are motivated to take on their projects because the project has direct relevance to their lives – they’re presenting to city council on what the city can do to be more sustainable, or writing their congressmen to advocate for greater international relief aid. This authenticity is thought to build ownership by making the work immediately relevant to the student that very day or that very week, not four years down the road.

And if you’re not a project-based school, you can look for small ways that authentic products can be built into the curriculum through what the EL schools call “intensives,” which are one-week projects that groups of students complete with a faculty lead, that take the place of a week of classes. At the Urban Academy high school, in New York, students do two, two-week intensive studies, with the entire school, around a single question like, “What is the impact of architecture on people’s lives?”, “What makes a good museum?”, and “Is technology progress?” (From Urban Academy website)

Mindset #2 – Competence

Next, we'll look at **competence**. The central idea here is that in order to have ownership over their academics, students need to experience success, and feel that they can do the work, that they can be successful again. In other words, the light bulb could switch on for students, or become brighter, when they realize that they can do the work, and that they are competent in some area of academics.

The research in psychology and adolescent development backs up this notion. In *Ready, Willing, and Able*, the authors write "Children and adolescents who perceive themselves as having high levels of academic competence are more engaged and self-motivated in school, perform better academically, exhibit higher expectations for success, and pursue more challenging academic goals."⁴² Indeed, in Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, students need to fulfill the psychological need for competence in order to be intrinsically motivated.⁴³

Zone of Proximal Development

One area in which we can examine our own practice as it relates to student motivation and competence is through the homework and in-class tasks we ask students to do every day. In particular, we want to make sure that the things we assign are targeting students' "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky), or the space just above the student's current skill level, but not so far advanced whereby the student gets overly frustrated.

This idea of the zone of proximal development is cited frequently across the field of education, and has significant implications for student motivation. Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's ideas on "flow," or the point at which an individual becomes completely absorbed in an activity, have perhaps the broadest implications for this work. Under the idea of flow, students will only be engaged in material if it pushes them just beyond their skill level (so they're not bored), but stops short of being so frustrating that they give up. It's a tricky balance, but one that we have to hit to keep our students motivated.

Tied in with the ideas of flow and proximal development is the idea of "deliberate practice," popularized by Florida State University psychologist K. Anders Ericsson. It's very similar to the concepts of flow and the zone of proximal development in that when someone is practicing deliberately, the individual is not mindlessly going through exercises, but instead focusing on just those parts that they really struggle with, just above their skill level, but not so far advanced that it's unreachable. A good example of deliberate practice comes from the book *The Talent Code*, by Geoff Calvin, in which the author recounts seeing a video of a young girl practicing violin in a way that's not so pleasing to the ear. In the video, the girl repeats the same tricky part over and over, slowing down, stopping when she makes mistakes, focusing on just a couple notes at a time, and then moving on to the next set of notes. This is deliberate practice.⁴⁴

In the book *Fires in the Mind*, about student motivation, author Kathleen Cushman asks teachers to look at whether or not their assignments qualify as "deliberate practice." She begins with a quote from a student she's interviewing, describing the homework assignments she receives: "It's always been a predetermined assignment: This is what you're going to do. It's always on the

whiteboard even before you get into class, and it's not necessarily what students need at that point." The idea the student is expressing is that considering all students are at different academic levels, a predetermined, one-size-fits-all assignment can't constitute "deliberate practice" because it wouldn't be able to target every student's zone of proximal development: for some students, the assignment will surely be a piece of cake, while for others it will be far too challenging.

Aligned with targeting students' zone of proximal development, students also need to feel that the homework and classwork has a purpose, and that it's helping them improve at a particular skill; in other words, it can't be busy work.⁴⁵

Opportunity for Practice: *Let the students decide.* Edublogger Shawn Cornally writes frequently about how to best grade homework (<http://shawncornally.com/wordpress/?p=583>) for purposes of motivation and fairness. In one post, he proposes the somewhat revolutionary idea of letting students *decide* how much homework they'll do at night. This may work better in a math classroom, but there could be applications for other subjects as well. The idea here is that you really are treating homework as practice, as a student's opportunity to get better at something that is important to their future, rather than just doing some set of exercises because the teacher said they had to. If a student has mastered the material, and doesn't feel they need practice, they're all set. If a student needs a lot of practice, then they should do quite a bit of homework.

The obvious pushback to this program is that maybe, just maybe, our high schoolers aren't mature enough to decide on their own how much homework they need. However, if we're trying to build self-reflective learners, this might be a skill that we need to develop as well. And if a student decides to do no homework, and then fails the quiz that week, it's a pretty good sign that they need to adjust the way they practice in future weeks.

Opportunity for Practice: Give Choice. If you're like me, the idea of not having a homework assignment on the board when students walk in causes you a lot of anxiety. What if I forget to assign homework? How will students know what to put in their planners?

For anxiety-prone teachers, there may still be a way that we can better target students' zone of proximal development, and keep our homework assignments up on the board when students walk in. Rather than present a one-size-fits-all assignment, we can provide a few different choices for students to take on, depending on both preference, and how comfortable they are with the material. If a student hasn't mastered some underlying foundational skills, they can choose the assignment that targets those skills. If a student has mastered the skills, they can move on to more advanced application of those skills. And if the student has already worked through some advanced problems, they can work on creating their own problems (sorry these are all math examples).

Alternatively, you can have three homework assignments at the ready, and then you assign the homework to the individual students who need a particular assignment.

While we're on the topic of homework, Karen Cushman, author of the book *Fires in the Mind*, on student motivation, asked hundreds of students how they felt about the assignments they were being asked to do in school, what they were motivated to do, and what they were particularly *not* motivated to do. Some of the findings are pretty interesting, and mirror the opportunities for practice above:

"Deliberate practice" looks like this...	...but homework often looks like this
It has an express purpose	We don't know the point of doing it
It's geared to the individual	Everyone gets the same homework tasks, no matter what each person needs to work on
It involves attention and focus	We can do it without thinking
It requires repetition or rehearsal	We're repeating something just to get it over with, not to perfect and remember it
It requires careful timing	It takes more time than we have to do it
It leads to new skills	We don't use it for anything after it's done

This little chart is filed in the "competence" section because another major finding from Cushman's book, and one mirrored in conversations with students from Ben Carson High School, is that once students realize that homework is a form of practice, and actually does help them get better, they become more invested in the work. "When they saw that homework helped them, they felt the same motivation to do it that they experienced in other learning activities, like dance or sports," writes Kathleen Cushman about the students she interviewed for *Fires in the Mind*. Likewise, a student at Ben Carson remarked that when she started to do homework,

she realized she was actually learning more, did better on tests, and could participate more in class. This set in a motion a chain of events where she started to do homework in all our classes, became more academically successful, and indeed started to pin her identity on her academic success.

Here are two more major findings from Cushman, both related to competence, and whether or not students feel like they have it, and how that's related to homework:

- If a teacher fails to follow up on homework assigned it can be particularly demotivating, as the homework then fails to really be deliberate practice. In order for students to reflect on their practice the teacher needs to spend some time going over the material in some capacity with the students.
- Grading homework was another practice that tended to turn the light bulb off. Students generally felt it was unfair for teachers to grade what was supposed to be practice, particularly for something that they just learned. They also said that grading homework for correct answers, rather than genuine effort and risk-taking, tended to promote dishonest behavior like cheating.

To close out the *Zone of Proximal Development* section, another way of hitting on every student's ZPD is by creating tasks that have, in the words of math blogosphere celebrity Dan Meyer, a "low floor for entry, and a high ceiling for exit."

When I was teaching math, I was constantly looking for ways I could hook the lowest achieving students, who often couldn't access the day's lesson. Meyer's tips were helpful here (<http://blog.mrmeyer.com/2012/ten-design-principles-for-engaging-math-tasks/>), specifically the one cited above, which basically is saying that when designing lessons, the first thing we need to be thinking about is the entry point – will all of my students be able to access the material at the level I'm introducing it? A potential idea he recommends is having math educators start their tasks with guesses, because everyone can venture a guess, and guessing is engaging. And then you can build up, slowly, from there, with plenty of room for the superstars to take the task as far as they want. For a nice synopsis of Meyer's approach to teaching, see his (http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_meyer_math_curriculum_makeover?language=en).

Expanding the definition of competence

Of course, no matter how accessible we make the material for students, there will be students who continue to struggle. The trick is, how do we get these students to have that sense of self-competence if they are behind, and they actually can't do the work right now? Below are some potential practices that try and deal with this obstacle.

Opportunity for Practice: *Expand the definition of competence.* One way that we can help students feel a sense of competence is by helping them see that they can be good *students*, even if they haven't mastered all the material yet. One way we can do this is by giving students a broader concept of what it means to be a good student, by setting goals around academic behaviors, rather than certain performance metrics. If they set goals built around behaviors like completing homework, checking their answers, writing rough drafts, and asking one question per class, it's possible that the performance pieces will take care of themselves. As with many other examples, this could lead to a cycle of success, in which students feel more competent, work harder, perform better, and so on.

A template for setting goals around academic behaviors and learning goals from educator Larry Ferlazzo are in the resources section of the book.

In interviewing students from Ben Carson who experienced tremendous GPA growth, this idea of starting with academic behaviors, and then gradually achieving competence in academic material, was raised repeatedly. Below is a student response to a question about the amount of time she spends on academic work outside the classroom:

"When I was in freshman year, when I went home I didn't do no homework, and when I came to school I was lost, so I just stayed lost, instead of catching up. But, sophomore year...I made a promise that I didn't want to do summer school no more, it was terrible, and I was like I'm not never going back, so when sophomore year started, I was on top of my grades I wanted to make sure I did everything, and then as I went along I started getting better at reading...and now I read like 15 books (a week)...I can't stop myself from reading now, I read so much, and I didn't even like English at first, and once I got that habit, I just wanted to start working more on math so I could improve that also."

It's unclear if this student really is a speed-reading prodigy that takes down 15 books a week, but what is clear is that academic behaviors contributed to her sense of self-competence. She started doing her homework, started realizing she was learning more, and then re-doubled her efforts in all classes.

Opportunity for Practice: *Competence outside of academics.* The authors of *Ready, Willing, and Able* note that out-of-school activities can also impact the competence light bulb:

"To feel a deep sense of self-competence and to believe that they can achieve their goals, youth must have experiences of success on which to draw. This requires that youth programs, schools, and other contexts provide ample opportunities for young people to develop skills in a range of areas and interests, which can include academics, arts, sports, technology, cooking, and many other areas."

The recommendations here cover well-tread ground: keep track of the organizations and clubs your students are involved in; expose students that aren't involved to potential interests and passions through clubs, volunteer experiences, job shadowing experiences, and internships (using Alicia's tool!); and help students make connections between those co-curricular experiences and their long-term purpose.

One potential way to make this intervention more concrete is by taking a page out of the Cranbrook School's playbook and setting the goal that every student will be involved in at least 2 co-curricular activities.

Opportunity for Practice: *Track student involvement.* To emphasize this point again, one way to prioritize student involvement in co-curriculars is to track it, just as we would with GPA. Keep track of which students are involved in what, and how they feel about their various activities. Many schools, when they do this, find that a small percentage of their students are involved in a bunch of activities, with the rest left unengaged. Measuring this may help schools expose and act on this problem.

The tracking can be facilitated by advisors, and can be entered into Naviance. Pat can help train staff and students on this.

Battling stereotype threat

In addition to helping students feel a sense of competence by widening the scope of activities in which they can exhibit competence, we can also help address the psychological underpinnings of competence. One way that we can do this is by having conversations with students about stereotype threat.

The research of social psychologist Claude Steele "suggests that stereotypes subconsciously and negatively affect individuals' beliefs about what they can do."⁴⁶ The concept of stereotype threat holds that one's sense of self-competence and belief in their own ability is hindered when certain negative stereotypes are brought to mind. The classic example comes from an experiment in which women were told prior to a math test that it's been scientifically proven

that men do better in math than women. Controlling for other factors, women who were told this fabricated “scientific fact” did worse on the test.⁴⁷

Research suggests that students often feel stereotyped without being prompted as well. Students are constantly surveying the landscape that surrounds them: what type of people go to college? Do ‘people like me’ go to college?

Opportunity for Practice: *Address stereotype threat.* Stereotype threat is a powerful force, but one way to help break through it is to present evidence that debunks commonly held stereotypes. Advisors could start with a conversation with students about commonly held stereotypes, and examine the extent to which students believe in those stereotypes. After getting the stereotypes out in the open, advisors can present evidence that debunks those stereotypes, like an article discussing scientific findings that show that there is no biological difference between men and women in their aptitude for math and science.

Opportunity for Practice: *Strengths inventory.* In order to help youth deconstruct potential stereotypes, Bouffard and Savitz-Romer also recommend that students take the time to reflect on their own strengths in the areas that they feel threatened. In the advisory curriculum, there are a series of lessons in which students reflect on values, core characteristics, and skills that are important to who they are.

Two ideas put forth by Bouffard and Savitz-Romer are activities based on strength-based asset mapping, and writing exercises in which students explicitly focus on their strengths. As the authors note, students who are underachieving are notorious for focusing on their deficits, not recognizing their strengths. Potential essay prompts include: “What makes you successful?” or “What have you done to support your own success?” Even students who struggle academically can find areas in their lives where they are successful (it’s also important to paint a broad view of success – athletics, academics, interests, relationships with peers, relationships with family, behavior, etc.).

Teach with “mastery” in mind

Another way that we can help students develop a sense of competence is by giving them more opportunities to demonstrate true mastery over material. The idea here is that we show students that we won’t just keep moving along if they haven’t mastered the material yet.

And sorry for all of the math examples, but below is another example from Meyer, on how he builds his assessments in order to encourage competence and mastery.

Opportunity for Practice: *Mastery-based testing.* Dan Meyer (<http://blog.mrmeyer.com/>), used to write frequently about his mastery-based tests. He made it explicit to his students that they were learning a set of different skills that were broken down by objectives (though he also took those objectives, and re-grouped them into skills that were more meaningful to students). Then, on each test, he'd include two questions on each skill that was being tested – one moderate problem, and one difficult problem. If the student got both, Dan was pretty confident that she'd mastered that skill. What happened then was that the student, keeping track of the skills she's mastered, didn't have to do those questions on the next edition of the test. So if the student had mastered 3 of the 5 skills on test 1, on test two, which might feature those five skills, plus a couple more, the student didn't have to do questions for the first three skills. It presents tests as a way to prove your knowledge, and nothing more – you don't have to do those other questions, because you've already proven that you can do them. For students that haven't mastered those skills yet, they'll see those same set of skills again – they don't only get one shot.

This is thought to be motivating to students because under this system, they're not simply getting a grade on some test which, to them, may seemingly measure some arbitrary set of disconnected skills. Instead the concrete skills they're learning are made explicit and transparent, while the purpose behind learning those skills is defined. And when they do finally master them, students get to experience that sense of competence.

And testing in this way need not clash with a traditional grading system. Students can still receive grades on these tests, to encourage college-ready academic habits like staying up with homework and putting in the needed hours of study, it's just that students receive multiple opportunities for mastery, and are able to improve upon those grades that they do receive.

Be relentless

Regardless of the specifics, there may be no substitute for simply being relentless when it comes to student competence. Working with a student – in whole-group instruction, individually, after school, and over the phone – until they *finally* get it is perhaps the greatest competence intervention, as the student sees for herself that she really can do the work.

Mindset #3 – Growth Mindset

The third key mindset for achieving ownership is **growth mindset**, or the idea that you can improve with effort. As educators, I'm sure you're all familiar with growth mindset by now, but just in case, here's a two-sentence description. For the past thirty odd years, Carol Dweck, a famous psychologist now at Stanford University, has repeatedly found that individuals with a growth mindset, or the belief that one can improve with effort, are more successful on a range of outcomes than those with a fixed mindset, who believe their abilities are static. The idea here is that students with a growth mindset are less afraid of failure, more willing to take risks, and more willing to stick with something longer, because they know if at first they don't succeed, they just need to try, try again. In order for a student to be motivated, and take full ownership over their education, they have to believe that putting in work will make a difference.

As the CCSR authors write, "Students who believe they can increase their academic ability by their own effort are more likely to work toward building competence, more likely to be self-motivating and persistent, and more likely to exhibit behaviors associated with higher academic achievement."⁴⁸ In many ways, the other mindsets all hinge on this one – if students don't believe that they can improve with effort, then there's not much hope in getting them to try.

But if we are able to get students to buy into the idea of growth mindset, the results can be pretty powerful. Indeed, "...in the studies (on growth mindset), beliefs about intelligence and attributions for academic success or failure are more strongly associated with school performance than is actual measured ability (i.e. test scores)."⁴⁹ This is pretty amazing when you think about it. If we can get students to believe that their performance grows with effort, we can minimize the importance of innate ability.

Opportunity for Practice: *Mindset assessment.* To get a sense of whether a student has a growth or fixed mindset, you can have them go through an attribution practice. After receiving a grade on a test, or after a semester grade, have them attribute the grade to something. Why were you successful, or not successful? If they attribute it to effort (either I worked hard or I didn't), it's clear their mindset leans more toward growth, and they need strategies and supports to help them put forth more effort. However, if they have a fixed mindset (with their attribution being I'm stupid or the teacher's not fair, etc.), then they've got some learning to do about the nature of the brain, and the advantages of cultivating a growth mindset.

There are some resources for having these conversations in the advisory curriculum.

Learning about the brain

Through the mindsets survey that we distributed across the network last year, we got a sneak peak into the current states of our students' growth mindsets. Indeed, the questions relating to growth mindset garnered some of the lowest scoring responses across the network, with a particularly low score on the question that asked students to what extent they agreed with the

statement, *My intelligence is something I can't change very much*. Students' tendency to agree with this statement is a bit troubling. It essentially means that many of our students have a misunderstanding of the nature of intelligence – what it is, how it develops, and how to attain more of it. In addition, if we want our students to exhibit the attributes of ownership, we need them to believe that this statement is completely false! We need students to know that they can indeed change their intelligence, that their intelligence is malleable, so that they exhibit the perseverance needed to truly grow their intelligence and be academically successful.

Opportunity for Practice (Small, Stealthy, Psychological): *Learn about the brain.* In one now famous growth mindset intervention, Carol Dweck and her fellow researchers had students go through 8 lessons on the nature of the brain, the chemistry behind how the brain works, and research on growth mindset. Those students ended up with GPAs that were on average 0.3 points higher than the control group by the end of the year (TABL, 30). This study demonstrates that just by being exposed to the science behind how the brain works, and realizing that their brain literally *grew* when they learned new material, students were much more willing to put in the work needed to learn new material.

The study also provides fairly concrete evidence that we can't just teach study skills, but need to target mindsets as well. The control group in the Dweck experiment was only taught study skills, and did not learn about how the brain actually grows when you learn new things.

A great extension of this lesson is to have the students write a summary of their newfound knowledge, and share it with an external audience, like a group of middle schoolers, to teach them about the brain. In addition to helping educate some middle schoolers, this also has the powerful affect of turning the high school students from the beneficiaries of an intervention, to the benefactors.

These lessons, and others that are closely aligned are provided in greater detail in advisory resources.

Opportunity for Practice: *Growth-mindset conversations.* Just like with stereotype threat, we can teach students about growth mindset. What is a growth mindset? What are the symptoms of a fixed mindset? Why is it bad? How can we recognize it in ourselves? What will it prevent us from doing?

There are resources in the advisory curriculum to help with these conversations, in addition to an assessment that will allow students to see what type of mindset they have.

Learning about people

In addition to learning about how the brain can grow on a scientific level, there are also interventions we can try to help students see how people can grow, change, and improve. In one

recent growth mindset intervention that has garnered a lot of attention, psychologists David Yeager and Geoffrey Cohen, then both at Stanford University, conducted a study at an elite northeastern college. The subjects of the study were students who were struggling in their freshmen year of college. The students read essays written by upperclassmen in which the overwhelming message was that they also struggled both academically and socially in their freshmen year, but eventually got over it and were successful in both realms. Black students who went through the intervention went on to triple the percentage of black students who got a GPA in the top quarter of their class, compared with a control group.⁵⁰

Opportunity for Practice: *Take in and internalize.* There are many different ways that the above idea, of older students sharing lessons with younger students, could play out in practice at the high school level. Some are below:

- Have upperclassmen talk with the underclassmen about their early struggles, how they overcame them, and how they're doing now. The same thing could be done with alums who are now thriving in college.
- Put together your own research report of major GPA jumps in your school, and talk to the students that experienced those jumps about what led to the improvements.
- Have upperclassmen serve as mentors to underclassmen, showing them the ropes.
- At Casco Bay, senior testimonials are formalized through the "Last Word" speech, that every senior gives. Students talk about how they've grown, how they've changed over the years – academically, socially, in terms of their goals, and talk about where they're going from school and why. When we visited the schools, we saw seniors writing these fairly lengthy documents, putting great care into it, and saying that they've been thinking about their Last Word speech – thinking about how they would grow – since they saw seniors do it when they were freshmen

The key with many of these interventions is taking that internalization step. After students hear about how a now successful student initially struggled, they should then take some time to reflect, either through writing or some other means, about how their experiences thus far relate to the stories they just heard from upperclassmen. In the original study discussed above, students were told that their reflections would later be shared with future students who were also struggling with the transition, again sending the message that this is something everyone goes through, and that they're not alone. This last step once again achieves the goal of turning the student from one receiving a helping hand to the one offering a helping hand.

Opportunity for Practice: *Biography Study.* In addition to hearing from folks the students know, there's also a wealth of material out there from people the students don't know. Inspirational biography excerpts and magazine profiles abound, many telling the tale of a student who struggled mightily in school before flipping on a switch and improving greatly. These biographies present more possibilities for showing students how growth mindset works in the real world, and allowing students to reflect on how the experiences of famous, accomplished individuals could potentially be reflected in their own lives.

Learning Goals vs. Performance Goals

Much of the research shows that there are certain types of goals that promote growth mindset better than others. In particular, it's thought that "learning goals" do a better job of promoting growth mindset than "performance goals." As Dan Pink, author of the book *Drive*, describes the differences between the two, a performance goal is setting the goal to get an A in French, while a learning goal is setting the goal to master the French language, and speak it fluently.⁵¹ While both goals obviously have merit, performance goals have a tendency to be more associated with a fixed, rather than a growth, mindset – you either know it or you don't, and this is reflected on a test. However, learning goals are more directly related to growth mindset, because the attitude is that learning is a process, and the more we work at it, the more we'll get it, and if you haven't mastered it yet, well, that's okay, because you will with more time.

Opportunity for practice: *(small) shift to mastery.* A small step along this process could be a shift to grading systems that are slightly more mastery-based. This could mean allowing more opportunities for re-takes, perhaps if certain academic habits are met. However you do it, the general idea we want to reinforce is that there's this body of knowledge to learn, and it's a process – if you don't learn it the first time, you will the next time.

Opportunity for Practice: *Setting learning and performance goals:* In the advisory resources, there's a goal-setting exercise from edublogger extraordinaire Larry Ferlazzo. In the exercise, students, at the beginning of every semester, or every month, or every week, are asked to set both learning and performance goals, to ensure that they understand that while they want to get good grades, the main reason why they're all here is learning.

Opportunity for Practice: *Mastery-Based Grading.* And if you wanted to take this all the way to its natural end, you could shift to a system of mastery-based grading. Several of the schools we’ve visited build mastery over performance into the school culture by instituting a mastery-based grading system. Students are afforded greater choice in how they’re assessed, and if they fail an assessment it doesn’t count as a grade – it just means that they haven’t learned the objective(s) yet. So they regroup and try again.

The obvious flaw in this system is that students could operate with no sense of urgency, or could be successful academically without developing the academic habits they need for college. To avoid this trap, Casco Bay High School in Portland, ME pairs their competency-based system with a Habits of Work rubric. Students are frequently assessed on their Habits of Work (paying attention in class, getting homework in on time, collaborating with classmates) on a 1 to 4 scale. If they achieve an average of 3 or higher, and still fail their assessment, teachers bend over backwards to re-teach the things they missed, and create new ways for the student to be assessed. After all, the student has been putting in the work, but just hasn’t mastered the material yet. However, if the student receives a 1 or a 2 on Habits of Work, they’re not reassessed, and the grade becomes permanent (and may have to be made-up in summer school). In this scenario, it’s not that the student had put in the work but hadn’t mastered the material yet, but instead that the student just hadn’t been putting in the work.

Praise. But the right kind of praise.

There are two main ways in which praise relates to motivation, and both contribute to building a growth mindset. First is the idea of praising effort over ability. This is one of the most consistent findings from Carol Dweck’s work on growth mindset. In experiment after experiment, students who are praised for their effort and persistence go on to try more challenging problems, and take on novel tasks; those that are praised based on their intelligence do just the opposite. Praised for their smarts, they want to make sure they remain smart in the eyes of the teacher, and so they don’t take on the most challenging problems and new risks, for fear of looking stupid.⁵²

The second major principle is that we should make praise specific, or, in the words of Doug Lemov in *Teach Like a Champion*, give Precise Praise. Students need to be told specifically what they did well, rather than a generic “good job.” Students can see through the generic “good job” praise, and may end up feeling manipulated. Instead, what is it about what they’re doing that deserves praise? What specific strategy are they exhibiting that’s worthy of praise?

The same goes for how you deliver that praise. When possible, praise in private, rather than making a big show in front of the class, and only give praise if the students deserve it. The number one thing that just about every new teacher finds out pretty quick is that students can see right through you – if you offer praise that is not genuine, they’ll know it, and it will have the exact opposite affect than you want it to have.

So what are some general principles, or rules of thumb to keep in mind for doling out praise in your class? Again, edublogger extraordinaire Larry Ferlazzo has some sage advice for us.

Opportunity for Practice: *Turning praise into questions.* As a general rule of thumb, Ferlazzo recommends asking a question of the student, rather than praising, per se. Here are a couple of examples he gives:

- “That was impressive that you did two drafts of that essay. What made you want to put that extra effort into it?”
- (To a student that’s generally a challenge behaviorally) “You were really focused on classwork today. Can you tell me what you did or thought to help yourself not get distracted? It would give me some ideas that I could suggest to other students.”

Describing the behavior, and asking questions in this way, has the affect of putting student and teacher on the same team – more collegial than authoritative, as the teacher is just asking a question to get more information. In addition, it puts the student in the position of *helping* other students down the road.

Mindset #4 – Belonging

A fourth mindset that is referenced throughout the psychological literature is the feeling of a sense of belonging in an academic community.⁵³ Deci and Ryan refer to this same concept in their work on intrinsic motivation, though they call it “relatedness.”⁵⁴ Regardless of what you call it, it’s pretty important.

The basic idea here is that in order for a student to be motivated and take ownership of their education, the student needs to feel connected to the people dispensing various educational and life goals, be they teachers or peers. On the importance of belonging, Roderick et. al. quote psychologist Daphna Oyserman (2000) at length when she writes that students who experience belonging “have more positive attitudes toward school, class work, teachers, and their peers...They invest more of themselves in the learning process.”⁵⁵

Relationships

This idea also rang true in my conversations with Derek Pierce, principal of the Casco Bay Expeditionary Learning School. When I asked him about his theory on student ownership, he quoted the commonly referenced 3 Rs of rigor, relevance and relationships, but he placed a major emphasis on that final R. He said he structured his school around relationships, believing that if they didn’t get that right, the rigor and the relevance wouldn’t hook the students.

Opportunity for Practice: *Three questions.* There are obviously tons of things that teachers can do to build relationships with, and get to know their students. But one place we can start is with the advisors, and ensuring that every advisor can answer three questions about their advisees. For example:

- 1) What is the student most interested in?
- 2) What are the biggest obstacles that stand in the way of the student’s learning?
- 3) What is the student’s life like outside of school? (family structure, what they do in their spare time, jobs, siblings, etc.)

These questions are obviously just an example – you may have three different questions. But the goal is that there’s one person on staff that really knows each student.

Opportunity for Practice: *Phone calls.* When we surveyed students on their mindsets, one of the lowest scoring questions was “my teachers care if I’m not in school.” Clearly, teachers do care when students aren’t there, but based on their survey responses, this doesn’t always come through to students.

A potential remedy for this issue is making phone calls home, both to the student and the families, a priority. In the book *Building a Better Teacher*, we meet a teacher from the Match charter school network who was known for having incredible relationships with students and their families. It turned out that one reason for this was that the teacher spent a ton of time on the phone with students and families, to build what he called “relationship capital.” So impressive was this practice that all Match teachers, as part of their induction, are trained to spend 6 hours per week on the phone with students and families – 1 hour per day on weekdays and 2 hours per weekend.

This is obviously a huge time commitment, and it may not be feasible for everyone. But the broader point is that if you’re focused on building better relationships with students, making more calls home might be the place to start.

Part of an academic community

A couple years back, myself and our former colleague James Ray spoke with students who’d seen major GPA increases from their freshman to their sophomore year. One student I spoke to at Ben Carson High School said that what turned the light bulb on for him was when he looked around and saw that all of his peers were successful in school, and he wanted to join them. He realized that this community of achievers had emerged around him, and he wanted to be a part of it. This is the general idea of building a school culture in which it’s ‘cool to be smart,’ which can obviously be a hard thing to do.

One way to go about doing this is to normalize the idea that everyone wants to and will be successful at the school. James traveled to Chicago to speak with students from the Noble network of schools who’d seen tremendous GPA gains, and he said that the overwhelming theme he heard from those students was that teachers were relentless in their efforts to get those students to be academically successful. They were constantly calling them, giving them reminders, making them stay after school to finish incomplete assignments. The message was that you’re part of this community, and you’re going to be successful, so you’d better get on board.

Opportunity for Practice: *What interventions occur when students are struggling? What happens when a student misses a day of homework? What happens when a student gets less than a C? What structures can we set up at the school so that students have the strategies and supports to be successful?*

At certain Noble campuses, students who don't complete their homework stay after school for "LaSalle," the street in Chicago where banking employees are known for staying late to get work done. As long as this is not set up in a punitive way (with the message instead being that this is an opportunity we've structured for you to help you get work done), this is an example of a shift in context that enables a student to be successful.

At the Cranbrook college-prep school, if a student earns a grade, in any class, of less than a C, it triggers a grade-level meeting in which the teachers collectively come up with an intervention plan for the student, led by his advisor. Again, the message is that the entire community is responding if a student needs assistance.

Opportunity for Practice: *Normalizing goals.* There's a famous study referenced earlier in which students are asked to bring to mind their hoped for and feared possible selves – essentially to do a deep dive of their goals, and how they'll achieve them. One cool finding from the exercise was that it had the affect of affirming to everyone that they were a part of a community that all wanted to succeed. When every student stated their goals, they all got to hear from one another that everyone is striving for something greater, and that they're all in this together.

Opportunity for Practice: *Peer mentors.* Some high schools assign peer mentors to incoming freshmen, strategically matching upperclassmen with lowerclassmen so that the juniors and seniors can show the freshmen and sophomores the ropes of what the school is all about, how to be academically successful, how to get involved, and even what the college process looks like. From the perspective of building belonging, this type of system would have great benefits, both for the upperclassmen and the newbies.

Part of a broader school community

In addition to feeling a sense of community through academic success, students can also feel a sense of belonging by getting involved in the school community outside of academics. When we spoke with the admissions folks at Alma College, they all said that the number one predictor of whether or not a student would stay in college was the extent to which they got involved at the college in non-academic activities. The theory is that through involvement in those non-academic activities, students begin to feel like they belong, like they're part of the community.

We saw examples of this in our visits to top high schools as well. At the Bushwick School for Social Justice in Brooklyn, NY, both teachers and students talked about the familial atmosphere at the school. When asked how that developed, they pointed to the fact that everyone would be hanging around after school, not necessarily to work on academics, but to work on clubs, teams, and planning events.

Opportunity for Practice: *Ask students what they want to see at the school.* Again, an opportunity for practice is to get students involved in at least one school-based, non-academic activity, to help build ownership of the school outside of academics. One way we can do this is by giving students more ownership over the clubs and activities they have at the school. At Walnut Hills High School in Cincinnati, there are over 60 student clubs, most of which are student-run, with a faculty or volunteer advisor offering minimal time-commitment. And at Cleveland Science and Medicine, most of the clubs are student-initiated, with students chasing down the needed funds to run the clubs. This leads to a greater sense of belonging in the school because students are literally building a piece of the school by starting or being a part of some non-academic club or activity.

Another reason these in-school clubs are so important is that they present an opportunity for students and teachers to be around each other in a non-instructional setting. At Cranbrook, every faculty member leads one activity for exactly this reason – to enable them to get to know students outside of the 50 minutes they have them in class.

Mindset #5 – Autonomy

The final bucket is a category that's essentially synonymous with ownership. Building a sense of autonomy in students is the idea that students need to have some choice, some agency, in what school is like, what they're learning, how they learn it, and what they want to do with their lives, in order to truly demonstrate ownership. In the end, they need to be the ones driving the bus.

This sense of autonomy is particularly crucial when we consider our ultimate goal of getting students to graduate from college. If our goal is to get students' light bulbs turned on and burning through the next 8 years (and beyond), we need student actions in school to be governed by their identity and future goals. If, instead, students are only doing things to get praise or a small reward (class points, avoiding detention, etc.), then their light bulb may not be fully turned on.

Carrots, sticks, and potential affects

One thing we need to ask ourselves is to what extent our students are acting based on short-term carrots and sticks, versus long-term goals and identity. Carrots and sticks may be necessary in order to function during the school day (there may not be enough time in the day to follow up every student incident with a conversation about their long-term goals and how their actions are impacting those long-term goals...), but the end goal is obviously to get to a point where students are internally regulated by their own current and future goals and visions of themselves, so the more conversations that can be had with this in mind, the better. As Bouffard and Savitz-Romer write, "when people are extrinsically motivated, they depend on structures in the environment in the form of either rewards (which they pursue) or sanctions (which they intentionally avoid). When those structures are no longer available, the motivation disappears."⁵⁶ Are we setting up situations in which students only act right, and do their homework, to get rewards (grades, praise) and avoid punishments (demerits, detentions)? And if that is the case, will they lose all motivation to do those things when they get to college? And is there a plan in place to wean students off of those rewards and sanctions?

In *Ready, Willing, and Able*, the authors demonstrate this idea with an interesting personal example:⁵⁷

"A colleague of ours illustrated (the results of a carrots and sticks system) with an example of his ever-mounting pile of speeding tickets. Although he has a tendency to drive over the speed limit, he complies with the law at certain spots along the highway where he knows that state troopers frequently set up speed traps. But as soon as he passes those spots, he speeds again. (Unfortunately for him and his insurance premium, he's not very good at predicting where the state troopers patrol outside of those known speed traps.) Because he is motivated only by the desire to avoid the extrinsic sanction (the speeding ticket), his behavior has not been changed in a meaningful or permanent way. If instead he focused on and internalized the benefits of the speed limit (such as drivers' safety), he would be more likely to stop speeding even in places where he is unlikely to encounter a speed trap. Because our colleague is a good person who

genuinely cares about the welfare of others, simply having frequent reminders from friends, family, and authority figures would probably help him internalize the benefits of the speed limit and change his behavior in a more long-lasting way."

The idea here again is one of balance. Rewards and punishments may be needed to keep a school running smoothly, but how do we also ensure that students know why grades are handed out (as a signal that you're on track), and why disciplinary rules are in place (so that you and other students can learn as much as possible).

It's also worth reflecting on whether or not external motivators and punishments can, in any way, *prevent* the light bulb from going on. When students ask themselves why they are really doing academic work – paying attention in class, taking great care with essays, doing homework instead of hanging out with friends – it may be to get a good grade, and stay out of trouble, but going even deeper, they should be doing it for other reasons as well. Our goal should be that they're doing it because they're either engaged in the academic task, are committed to academic excellence, or because they know that what they're doing is essential for college and career success.

Opportunity for Practice: *Purpose.* This discussion of carrots and sticks again brings up the idea of purpose. In order for a student to truly have autonomy, they need to be the person deciding what her overall purpose is, and what she wants to do with her life. And this purpose should be what helps drive student actions, both inside and outside of school.

One way to help make this idea of purpose a major theme at school is to borrow a practice from the Casco Bay Expeditionary Learning school, and their three-question reflection that they use with students repeatedly: Where are you going? How are you doing? What do you need to do next?

Using those three questions may be one way to keep bringing the conversation back to purpose, and how what we do, every single day, relates to that overall purpose.

Autonomy in the classroom

I'm sure we can all think of times when students were, shall we say, particularly de-motivated because they had no autonomy, instead being directed by the adults in the building. And surely this is often necessary in school. However, we may also want to reflect on how and when we give students the chance to be autonomous, and drive their own work from time to time.

The resulting shifts in the classroom can actually be pretty simple. Autonomy could simply mean offering students some choice in how they accomplish a learning task, offering flexibility on how they finish their homework and how much they complete, or discussing different ways of studying or learning and guiding the student to figure out what works best for him. These

techniques aren't the only way, or even the right way, but if you're having trouble with student motivation in your class, below are some experiments you could try.

Opportunity for Practice: *Do your homework...or don't.* I'm not sure if they're still doing it, but a couple years ago at the Uncommon High School, the math teachers stopped grading homework. It was up to the students to do it or not. However, what the teachers did do was put up a big scatter plot in the hallway, showing the correlation between those students that completed their homework, with quality, and the students with high test scores. Spoiler alert, they were (generally) the same students. A system like this puts the onus on the student, and enables them to see the connection between the work they put in, and what they get out of it. It's all on them.

Opportunity for Practice: *Do all your homework...or just some of it.* This second example also comes from a math classroom, that of math blogosphere celebrity Shawn Cornally. Shawn's a math teacher in Iowa who writes frequently about his love for mastery-based grading systems.

Cornally also takes a mastery-based approach to homework. He tells students to do as many practice problems as they need to until they feel that they've mastered the day's topic. And he'll go over homework in class, but only if students bring questions to him – if they tried a problem, and just couldn't understand it. This again puts the onus on the student, and could produce a shift in the way homework is thought of – from this thing that needs to get done, to an opportunity to work on a set of skills that they need to master, for themselves.

Conclusion

So that's all we've got for now. Hopefully, you've found a couple of ideas that you can try putting into practice, and you've been left with a few big ideas ringing around your head. And if not, here are a couple to leave you with:

- (1) Getting students to take ownership of their education is a process of shifting their academic mindsets in the areas of *competence* (I can do this work), *growth mindset* (my ability improves with effort), *belonging* (I'm a part of this community), *relevance* (this work has value for me), and *autonomy* (I'm the one driving the bus).
- (2) With those mindsets in mind, it doesn't matter where you start – motivation is cyclical in nature. If you shift a student's mindset on relevance, it could inspire them to work harder and improve (growth mindset), excel (competence), and feel connected with school (belonging). A similar pathway can be visualized starting with any of the other mindsets.
- (3) While the dividing lines are blurry, and the ideal doesn't always match what's expedient, we should try and keep in mind this balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivators – the more we can remind students that everything we're doing is part of a greater goal, and the more we can encourage that goal to be driven from within, the richer a student's motivational makeup will be.

Below are some resources that were mentioned throughout the book, though a far larger set of resources is available in the advisory resources.

Appendix

Possible Selves: Research Summary and Lesson Sketch

Psychology researchers Daphna Oyserman, Deborah Bybee, and Kathy Terry, of the University of Michigan, did a study a few years back to try and get students to better envision, and act upon, detailed visions of their hoped for possible selves. The idea is that if youth internalize visions of their hoped for possible selves, both far in the future (college and career), and in the more short-term (the possible self that passes the math test), it will lead to an increase in the self-regulatory behaviors (doing homework, behaving in class) needed for academic success. This is more difficult than one might originally think, however, because just picturing one's future self obviously does not always lead to the actions that promote the attainment of that possible self. The research from Oyserman and crew is designed to try and figure out how and when visions of possible selves impel action.

There are a few factors that generally present as roadblocks in getting students to act to fulfill their possible self, and they're generally more difficult to overcome for low-income youth. The first obstacle is that a student's perceived social identity may not feel congruent with his hoped for academic self. For example, this could mean that an African-American student's hoped for academic self doesn't align with academic achievement because he doesn't associate academic achievement with his social identity of African-American. It could also mean that academic achievement doesn't align with his individual social identity, of someone who is the class clown, or puts on the front that he doesn't care about school.

A second factor that gets in the way of acting on possible selves is that accomplishing a possible self over time is very difficult (changing your behavior to go from a failing student to an A student is really hard), and youth could interpret difficulty as a sign that academic achievement, and the possible self that they've dreamed up, is not for them.

A final barrier that can take students off of their possible selves track is the lack of contextual supports. The authors point out that low-income and minority students often lack models in their lives that they can base their hoped for possible selves off of, and that they may lack the contextual structures that cue the actions needed to stay on track (such as adult figures prompting students to do their homework).

All that said, the researchers designed their interventions to try and disavow students of these metacognitive roadblocks; the interventions seek to show students that academic achievement can be a part African-American identity, that all students face difficulties in accomplishing their possible selves, and that accomplishing possible selves requires concrete strategies (due to potential lack of structures in their lives outside of school).

Summary of Interventions:

Session 1: “Each group member introduced a partner in terms of the skills or ability the partner possessed that would help him or her complete the school year successfully (e.g., ‘well-organized,’ ‘positive attitude’). This provided an initial example of APSs and social identity as congruent; because all youth engaged in the task, the metamessage was ‘we all care about school.’”

The point of the first session was two-fold. One is to express the idea that all classmates are academically competent in one way or another, and the second purpose is to drive home the fact that academic success and the students’ social identity are not incompatible; instead, everyone wants to succeed in school.

Session 2: “Youth picked photographs that fit their adult ‘visions’ (PSs). Because most adult PSs youth describe are images of material success, the metamessage was ‘we all want a good future.’ Because all youth choose photographs of adult PSs, successful PSs and social identity are presented as congruent.”

Again, the goal in this session is to dispel the idea that its part of the students’ social identity to not value success. It may be a good idea to follow up with a reflection on this session for students to identify what’s similar and what’s different about their fellow students’ visions of their possible selves.

Session 3: “Students drew role models and negative forces – people or things that provide energy to work toward PSs and those that are draining or nay-saying. The metamessage was ‘everyone faces obstacles and difficulties; this does not make the PSs less part of the ‘true’ self.’”

Session 4: “Students drew timelines into the future, including forks in the road and obstacles. The metamessage was ‘everyone has difficulties, and failures and setbacks are a normal part of timelines and do not mean that APSs are not true selves.’”

These timelines can go as far into the future as you wish. Having students trace out the obstacles they’re likely to hit through high school, college, and career, however, would be very interesting.

Session 5: This session “introduced action goals, allowing students to practice articulating specific strategies to attain their APSs, further highlighting the normativeness of difficulty in attaining APSs.”

The idea to drive home in this session is that these things don’t just happen, but instead need to be planned for and strategized around. Strategies can be things like allowing yourself 10 minutes on Facebook for every 50 minutes of homework, or sitting away from friends in class to be able to better take notes.

Session 6 and 7: These sessions “focused on PSs and strategies to attain them, building on previous sessions, with a different concrete medium, poster board, stickers, and markers. Students chose next year feared and to-be-expected PSs and linked them with current and possible strategies.

Feel free to use any artistic medium that is age appropriate. These lessons were designed for middle schoolers, so make sure they're adjusted for high schoolers.

Another reason the messaging is good here is that it creates this sense that everyone is on the same team, and that getting to a possible self is a process – if you make a mistake on the path the first time, you can re-strategize and try again.

Sessions 8 to 10: These sessions “focused on decoupling difficulty and genuineness explicitly through work in small groups on every day problems, social problems, academic problems, and the process of getting to high school graduation, and the metatheme was that all students care about these issues, that difficulties are normative and not self-defining.”

You can substitute in for high school graduation college graduation. Small groups topics could include discussions and products built around several questions:

- *Biggest problems (in general) you run into every day;*
- *Social problems you run into;*
- *Academic problems you most often hit;*
- *How these problems and what other problems will affect you on the path to high school graduation.*

Session 11: Participants reviewed and critiqued the sessions.

Sample Report Card Letter

Greetings JRLA Scholars and Families!

As we strive towards our mission of preparing scholars to graduate with a college degree, the faculty, staff, and administrators at Jalen Rose Leadership Academy want to ensure that our scholars are successful in the mission and vision of graduating from college.



As the college team, we encourage, promote, and support our scholars in the college matriculation process. We provide ample opportunities for students to engage in conversations about college, build character as individuals, and learn to work together as a community to become well-rounded individuals. We help scholars research different colleges and majors, go on college tours, participate in college admissions visits, narrow down college lists, and provide them with tools, strategies, and resources to ensure they will become competitive candidates for selective college admission.

As we prepare to assist you and your scholar in this process, please remember that success begins with individual ownership as each scholar walks through the doors to start their high school career. Scholars have the ability to define their own life choices and opportunities by always putting in effort and hard work. This first quarter marks the first step in what will be a successful school year if we all work together as a team. **Please take this opportunity to align your scholar's grade point average with their EXPLORE test score to see an example of the college they are on track to be admitted to.**

	3.8+	3.3+	2.8+	2.3+
21+	Harvard University (97%, \$2,880)	University of Michigan (90.7%, \$5,431)	Michigan State University (77.3%, \$5,569)	Western Michigan (56%, \$12,770)
17+	University of Michigan (90.7%, \$5,431)	Alma College (67%, \$5,550)	Michigan State University (77.3%, \$5,569)	Bowling Green (58%, \$13,966)
13+	Michigan State University (77.3%, \$5,569)	Howard University (63%, \$15,177)	Bowling Green (58%, \$13,966)	Eastern Michigan (37%, \$11,588)
9+	Western Michigan (56%, \$12,770)	Eastern Michigan (37%, \$11,588)	University of Toledo (46%, \$11,569)	Schoolcraft College (17%, \$2,812)



If you have any questions, please give me a call at 313.397.3333, ext. 204 or via email at lindseyl@jrladetroit.com.

Sincerely,

LeDetra Lindsey
College Success Counselor



Weekly Goal Sheet

(from Larry Ferlazzo, *Helping Students Motivate Themselves*)

Figure 1.2. Weekly Goal Sheet

GOAL SHEET

Name _____ Date _____

Current Grade in Class _____

Goal _____
_____Method for Achievement _____

I rate my work in this class last week as a

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Last Week's Goal _____

Achieved? _____ Why or Why not? _____

Parent/ Guardian Response

Printed Name _____

Current Contact Information _____
_____Questions/Comments _____

Signature _____

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¹ "Opportunities for Practice" is the term used in *Ready, Willing, and Able*, by Mandy Savitz-Romer and Suzanne Bouffard

² Allensworth, Elaine M., and John Q. Easton. *What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools*. Consortium on Chicago Schools Research, July 2007. Web. June 2014.

³ Ibid

⁴ Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions." *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25.1 (2000): 54-67. Web. 30 June 2014.

⁵ *Ready, Willing, and Able*, p. 70

⁶ Farrington, C.A., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E., Nagaoka, J., Keyes, T.S., Johnson, D.W., & Beechum, N.O. (2012). *Teaching adolescents to become learners. The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance: A critical literature review*. Chicago: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² A nice summary of the research, and misconceptions, can be found in *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ *Ready, Willing, and Able*, 113

¹⁶ Ibid, 116

¹⁷ *Ready, Willing, and Able*, 118

¹⁸ Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions." *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25.1 (2000): 54-67. Web. 30 June 2014.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ *Ready, Willing, and Able*, 120

²¹ Ibid

²² *Ready, Willing, and Able*, 120

²³ Ibid, 130

²⁴ This finding comes from Shaun Harper's work at the University of Pennsylvania, and his paper *Succeeding in the city*

²⁵ *Ready, Willing, and Able* (131), provided the summary of this research, and the proposal.

²⁶ Ibid, 132

²⁷ Anecdote from Paul Tough's *How Children Succeed*

²⁸ *Ready, Willing, and Able*, 116

²⁹ At a presentation at NACAC in the fall of 2012, Donald Kamentz of YES Prep, Laura Yeager of Mastery Charter Schools, and Angela Duckworth of the University of Pennsylvania, gave a presentation dealing with the types of interventions likely to shift student mindsets, and central message was that the interventions couldn't be worksheets, but had to be actual interventions or experiences that students could actively create meaning out of.

³⁰ *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*

³¹ While "autonomy" is not listed in *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners* as one of the key mindsets, it is included because of the presence of the concept in so many other texts on student motivation.

³² *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*

³³ Daniel Pink's *Drive* offers a great framework for what motivates people, and why.

³⁴ *Succeeding in the City*

³⁵ *Ready, Willing and Able*

³⁶ From a March 16, 2014 article in the New York Times

(http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/opinion/sunday/the-apartheid-of-childrens-literature.html?_r=0)

³⁷ *Ready, Willing, and Able*, 64

³⁸ Anthony Carnevale, of the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, and David Leohnardt, of the New York Times, have both written extensively on the value of a college degree in today's economy.

³⁹ From an article from kqed.org mindshift blog (<http://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2014/08/18/how-a-bigger-purpose-can-motivate-students-to-learn/>)

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ The range of "small, stealthy, psychological" interventions can be found in the paper "Social-Psychological Interventions in Education: They're Not Magic," by David Yeager and Gregory Walton, found here ([http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2014.ptw.\(15\).pdf](http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2014.ptw.(15).pdf))

⁴² *Ready, Willing, and Able* 93

⁴³ Deci and Ryan

⁴⁴ *The Talent Code*

⁴⁵ *Fires in the Mind*

⁴⁶ *Ready, Willing, and Able*, 113

⁴⁷ Steele's work on stereotype threat can be found here

(http://users.nber.org/~sewp/events/2005.01.14/Bios+Links/Krieger-rec5-Steele_Threat-in-the-Air.pdf)

⁴⁸ *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ As summarized in Paul Tough's *Who Gets to Graduate* article

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/18/magazine/who-gets-to-graduate.html>)

⁵¹ *Drive*, 122

⁵² As summarized in Larry Ferlazzo's *Helping Students Motivate Themselves*.

⁵³ *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*

⁵⁴ Deci and Ryan

⁵⁵ *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*

⁵⁶ Ibid, 121

⁵⁷ Ibid, 121