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## Assessing learning orientation to maximize academic achievement

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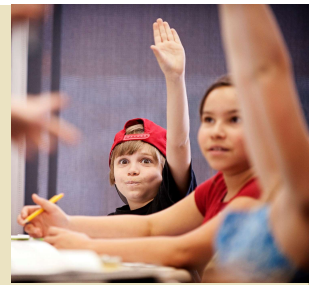
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# Assessing Learning Orientation to Maximize Academic Achievement

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### INTRODUCTION

The belief in one's ability to succeed impacts one's satisfaction with their academic performance (Garriott, Hudyma, Keene, & Santiago, 2015).

Sorrenti, Filippello, Costa, and Buzzai (2015) indicate that overtime, learned helpless individuals will develop negative attitudes toward work displaying, for example, rejection, anxiety, and boredom. Negative emotions, such as a boredom, have negative effects on an individual's academic performance (Pekrun, Goetz, Hall, & Perry, 2014; Sia & Kaur, 2015). Pekrun and colleagues (2014) note that when an individual experiences boredom in the classroom, their academic performance may be negatively impacted.

Mega, Ronconi, and De Beni (2013) note that an individual's positive emotions have a larger impact on motivation and discipline than negative emotions. Research suggests that mastery-oriented individuals show greater motivation for academic achievement than learned helpless individuals (Garriott, Hudyma, Keene, & Santiago, 2015). Furthermore, research on academic performance demonstrates that individuals who have greater confidence in their abilities perform better academically (Sorrenti, Filippello, Costa & Buzzai, 2015; Jia, Konold, & Cornell, 2016). Thus, academic performance of an individual is driven by their perception of their academic performance, positive or negative.

Current research on learned helplessness and mastery orientation has examined the mental processes associated with academic performance based on academic emotions., such that mastery oriented individuals demonstrate positive academic emotions (Mega, Ronconi, & De Beni, 2013) while learned helpless individuals display negative academic emotions (Pekrun et al., 2014). Training techniques, such as separating an emotion-provoking stimulus from the unwanted emotional response, have been successful in changing failure attributions from being viewed as a lack of ability to a lack of effort, thus improving persistence to complete tasks in learned helpless individuals (Hooper & McHugh, 2013).

### METHODS

A literature search for related articles was conducted in March 2019. The initial search was conducted using PsychInfo for peer-reviewed empirical articles published between 2013 and 2016 and relevant to learned helplessness and mastery orientation. Articles were included if they were: (a) written in English; (b) published between 2013 and 2016; (c) provided a definition or description of learning orientations and (d) focused on academic settings. By examining the results of 25 studies, 7 were deemed relevant to this review. Review of the selected articles sought to answer how much importance should be placed on the evaluation of students learning orientation.

### ANALYSIS STRATEGY

The analysis of the 7 sources involved three subsequent rounds. First, the articles were examined to develop a general profile of the research on learning orientation. This round of the analysis was also aimed at identifying the main learning orientations associated with academic achievement; learned helplessness and mastery orientation. The second round of analysis focused on how the concepts of learned helplessness and mastery orientation impact students academic achievement. This round of analysis revealed the possible benefits of assessment tools in the academic setting to better understand learning orientation. In the third round of analysis, articles were reviewed for unclear aspects and inconsistencies. When needed, original articles were consulted to clarify main points. The final part of the third round of analysis involved a critical review of the interpretations as presented in the text.

### SUMMARY

Assessing the learning orientation of each student is vital to help students achieve success in academics. By utilizing tools, such as the Student Behavior Checklist, educators will gain a greater understanding of the ways in which each student approaches learning.

The current scientific literature on learned helplessness and mastery orientation suggest that learning orientation is a good predictor of academic performance. By using the Student Behavior Checklist to measure learning orientation in the academic setting, educators could develop approaches to teaching that address both constructs of learning orientation, allowing for increased academic achievement.

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### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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