

Authors: Lauren Simak, Katrina Brown, Abigail Wilk

### **Through Their Eyes: How Students View Growth Mindset Teaching in Middle and High Schools**

When teachers communicate growth mindsets – or the belief that student intelligence is malleable vs. fixed – their students report greater belonging in the classroom, show increased motivation, and perform better. However, extant research on the benefits of teacher growth mindsets focused exclusively on college student samples. Thus, the purpose of the present research is to determine how teachers' mindset beliefs affect middle and high school students in the classroom. Specifically, we examined how students perceived four dimensions of growth mindset teaching: (1) *messages about success*, (2) *provision of opportunities*, (3) *responses to struggle, confusion, or poor performance*, and (4) *value placement*. Students ( $N_{student} = 90$ ) learned about mindsets and then categorized 42 teaching practices as either growth- or fixed-minded ( $N_{observations} = 3,780$ ). Results revealed that much like college-students, middle and high school students were more likely to perceive teaching practices as growth-minded (vs. fixed-minded) when teachers suggested that all students are capable of academic success, when they provided opportunities to improve, when they offered support and reassurance to struggling students, and when they valued learning over performance. Future research should explore how to train teachers to foster growth-minded classrooms that are perceived as such by students.