Building the Pyramid: Fostering Academic Success through Non-cognitive Skills

Melissa Knight, MA, BCC, PCC
Amanda Evans, MA, BCC, ACC
Introductions

• Melissa Knight, Director of Academic Coaching, Lynn University

• Amanda Evans, Senior Academic Coach, Lynn University

• Welcome to our session!
What are Cognitive Skills?

• Cognitive Skills: brain-based skills including perception, attention, memory, and processing

• Typically related to IQ and Academics
What are Non-Cognitive Skills?

- Non-cognitive skills are characteristics and traits that are not measured by academic tests, but are important to fostering academic success

- Non-cognitive skills include:
  - Motivation
  - Academic Self-Concept
  - Self-Efficacy
  - Resilience
Research

• A lack of non-cognitive skills has been associated with less desirable educational and economic outcomes in adulthood.

• Research has shown non-cognitive skills can help compensate for cognitive deficiencies related to academics (Rosen et al., 2010)

- Motivation
- Academic Self-Concept
- Self-Efficacy
- Resilience
Research continued...

• Self-efficacy can account for academic success beyond learning disabilities and delinquency (Evans, 2005)

• University Study
Research summary

• It appears as though cognitive skills and non-cognitive skills can predict academic success, but that non-cognitive skills additionally predict employment and occupational status in adulthood (Rosen et al., 2010)

• Ivy League Study
The Brain

Amygdala
  fight, flight, free
  spontaneous joy
Hippocampus
  Visual Spatial memory
  Memory in context setting
Non-cognitive Skills

- How do we develop non-cognitive skills in the following areas:
  - Motivation
  - Academic Self-Concept
  - Self-Efficacy
  - Resilience
Motivation

Motivational Interviewing

• How to facilitate change through conversation
• A method that is strength based to support students in finding their own way for change
  • Avoid being the “fixer”
• Skills needed
  • Active listener
  • Ask powerful questions
  • Patience
Self-efficacy

• Cognitive or non-cognitive skill?

• Fostering self-efficacy
  • Performance accomplishments
  • Vicarious experience
  • Verbal persuasion
  • Physiological states

“Developing specific EF and self-determination skills will lead to an increase in self-efficacious behavior.” Goudreau & Knight, JAD
Academic Self-concept

- Academic self-concept is one’s self perception regarding academic performance (ex: “I am good at math”)
- Academic self-concept can significantly and positively affect academic achievement
- Research has shown that a strong academic self-concept is correlated with higher grades
Strategies for Improving Academic Self-concept

• Develop assignments and projects that encourage students to pursue their individual interests to reduce social comparison

• Provide students with performance feedback related to their improvement over time, rather than comparing class averages

• Express to students that each brings a unique set of valuable skills
Resilience

• The ability to “bounce back” from setbacks

• Ex: Failing an exam
Building Resilience: The Transactional Model

Stressful event (tough math test)

Appraisal

Threat (“Yikes! This is beyond me!”)

Response

Panic, freeze up

Challenge (“I’ve got to apply all I know”)

Aroused, focused
Group Activity

• Break into groups of 4

• Group 1: Motivation
• Group 2: Self-concept
• Group 3: Self-efficacy
• Group 4: Resilience

• Write down what you can do in your daily practice to foster academic success in the assigned area
Q/A

- Thank You!
Reference


• Rosen (book/print out)