People do not always take action to attain their desired possible selves—after all, whether consciously or nonconsciously, taking current action makes sense if there is an open path toward attaining the desired self, but not if paths are closed. Following this logic, children from families with fewer assets may lower their expectations for school
success and plan to engage in less effort in school. To test this hypothesis, we examined the impact of experimentally manipulating mind-set about college as either “closed” (expensive) or “open” (can be paid for with need-based financial aid) among low-income early adolescents. Adolescents assigned to an open-path condition expected higher grades than those assigned to a closed-path condition (Study 1, n = 48, predominantly Hispanic and Latino seventh graders) and planned to spend more time on homework than those assigned to a no-prime control condition (Study 2, n = 48, predominantly African American seventh graders).

II. Study Description

Intervention Description

• Name of the program/study condition:
  o Openness of Mindset

• Main purpose or general description:
  o When students see the path to their future selves as open, effort in school and grades improve. When the path to their future selves (i.e. going to college) is blocked, their aspirations and future effort is undermined

• Theoretical background:
  o Modern goal theories (Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007)
  o Possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2008)

• Components:
  o Study 1
    • “The closed-path text indicated that average college tuition costs $31,160 to $126,792. The open-path text described only need-based financial aid opportunities (e.g., the Free Application for Federal Student Aid).” (p. 415)
    • “Those in the closed-path condition were also provided the financial-aid information.” (p. 416)
  o Study 2
    • “Students in the open-path condition received financial aid information, and students in the no-prime control condition were not given any college information.”

• Previous studies / evaluations:
  o Open-path mindset (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002)

Implementation Elements

Content elements:

Pedagogical strategies:
Research Question(s) / Hypotheses

Study 1
“We hypothesized that compared to a closed-path mind-set (thinking about college costs), an open-path mind-set (thinking about financial aid) would enhance academic aspirations and planned effort.” (p. 415)

Study 2
“We compared a condition in which the open-path mind-set was primed with a control condition in which no mindset was primed and included grade point average as a control variable. We hypothesized that, controlling for current grades, both male and female students primed with an open-path mindset would plan to engage in more school-focused effort than students in the no-prime control group.” (p. 417)

Research Methods
Sample Description:

Study 1
• Total N final sample: 48
  o Closed-path classroom: 29
  o Open-path classroom: 19
• Composition:
  o Gender: 22 female, 26 male
  o Location: Chicago
  o Grade: 7\textsuperscript{th}
  o Ethnicity: 43 Hispanic/Latino, 5 other
  o SES: low (95% free or reduced lunch)

Study 2
• Total N final sample: 48
  o Closed-path classroom: 22
  o Open-path classroom: 26
• Composition:
  o Gender: 25 female, 23 male
  o Location: Detroit
  o Grade: 7\textsuperscript{th}
  o Ethnicity: 28 African Americans, 11 Whites, 3 Latinos, 6 other
  o SES: low (57% free or reduced lunch)

Measures:
• Expected grade in math and English – self-report questionnaire
  o 13-point scale (1 = F, 13 = A+), α = .71
• Planned effort reading/studying and doing homework – self-report
  o 8-point scale (0=less than an hour, 7=all night long)
Procedures:

• Design:
  o Experimental

• Times of assessment:
  o Pre-test and post-test

• Assignment method:
  o Level of assignment: classrooms
  o “Each classroom was randomly assigned to a condition.” (p. 415)

Research results

Study 1

• Students in open-path condition predicted they would get better grades, aspired to better grades, and had higher planned effort than those in the closed-path condition

• No effects of gender, except that girls’ planned effort increased in open-path condition

Study 2

• Students in open-path condition had higher planned effort, but after controlling for GPA, most effects went away – i.e. “An open-path mind-set improves planned effort when students are not already behind academically” (p. 417)

Summary of results

“Even as early as age 11, thinking about college affordable with need-based financial aid enhances school-focused goals (Study 1) and corresponding planned effort, when controlling for current achievement level (Study 2).” (p. 417)

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<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
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Study limitations

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Outcome Variables Taxonomy

Predicted grades
Aspired grades
Planned effort

_program Association_
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