Project Title
Increasing Student Retention: Forum on Growth Mindset for EDUC-U100 Students and Faculty

Team
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Abstract
Imagine if we could attract a world-class expert on growth mindset to provide a forum for the EDUC-U100 students as well as providing a workshop for faculty who teach first year students. Research has repeatedly shown that first generation college students and under-represented students fail to succeed in college because they do not embrace the growth mindset (Yeager and Dweck, 2012). A growth mindset enables students to move toward the “yes” of three important questions: Can I do it? Do I belong? And is it worth it (Yeager, Walton, and Cohen, 2013)? These three questions provide an ecosystem with the absence of any one affirmative negatively affecting a positive response to the other two questions. If students do not believe they “can do it,” they will never put in the effort to achieve success. In my role as a UCET Teaching Fellow (2016) focusing on Growth Mindset, I have reviewed numerous books, article, videos, and have had conversations with leaders in the field. I am already positioned to invite our inaugural presenter who generates enthusiasm about the topic, who connects with students and helps them experience the power of growth mindset, and who can work with faculty to develop practical application to cultivate growth mindset in their students.

Narrative

Goals:

A. To concretely help students understand the difference between growth mindset and fixed mindset and to guide them in developing a plan to apply growth mindset to their toughest course.

In Carol Dweck’s landmark work Mindset (2006), she found that students’ mindsets—how they perceive their abilities—played a key role in their motivation and achievement. If students believed their intelligence could be developed (a growth mindset), they outperformed those who believed their intelligence was fixed (a fixed mindset). And when students learned they could “grow their brains” and increase their intellectual abilities, they did better. Additionally, she found that having students focus on the process that leads to learning (like hard work or trying new
Increasing Student Retention: Forum on Growth Mindset for EDUC-U100 Students and Faculty strategies) the benefits of the growth mindset were significant.

The inaugural Growth Mindset forum for students will be strategically placed in the curriculum. The EDUC-U100 students are introduced to growth mindset early in the semester. Then the application of the concept will be revisited and deepened through the forum – held toward mid-semester.

**How will you assess whether you reach your goal?**

Each EDUC –U100 student will be required to attend the forum and develop a growth mindset plan for their toughest class. That plan will be reviewed by the instructors and peer mentors on a weekly basis. At the conclusion of the course, students will be asked to assess the degree to which they applied the growth mindset to their toughest course and the outcome of that effort.

**What will you do to reach those goals?**

- Identify and invite the presenter to provide the forum for the students. Since a top-notch expert of growth mindset needs to be invited many months before the event, I began conversation with a potential speaker in November of 2016. After several emails and a phone call, I have already tentatively booked the speaker for the forum.
- Build the forum into the fall EDUC-U100 curriculum. And make the event mandatory for all EDUC-U100 students.
- Create an assignment for all EDUC-U100 students to develop a growth mindset plan for their toughest class.
- Create an evaluation tool for the students to determine their effort to apply growth mindset to their toughest class and to evaluate its effectiveness.
- Two hundred students will be required to attend the forum.

B. To offer EDUC-U100 and instructors of first year students a workshop to develop a toolkit for teaching with a growth mindset and cultivating growth mindset in their students. To provide ongoing education on the topic through a free e-newsletter, complete with tips, visual essays, and recommended articles and books created by the inaugural speaker, Trevor Ragan.

The workshop for teachers and peer mentors will focus on understanding the obstacles to cultivating a growth mindset in ourselves and in our students. And similar to the students developing a growth mindset plan, faculty will also create a handful of practices that will infuse their teaching with a growth mindset strategy.

**How will you assess whether you reach your goal?**

If faculty leave the workshop with a plan to apply the growth mindset through their teaching and actually apply the plan, we will have met our goal. The plans for U100 Instructors will be discussed in the professional development meetings.
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What will you do to reach those goals?

Work with the Reimagining the First Year Experience committee (I am on that committee) to invite all instructors of the first year experience to attend the workshop. Work with the presenter to discuss ideas for creating a hands-on session. Invite instructors to send me their plans so I can make a master list of ideas to be shared with all instructors.

Budget

Year 1 $5,000 and Year 2 $5000

Although the first year’s presenter has requested $5,200 to cover honorarium, travel, housing, meals, he has agreed to a fee of $5000. We would simply pay him a $5000 honorarium and he would be responsible for his travel, housing, meal costs. In succeeding years, we would maintain the $5000 budget.

Time Line – Year 1 and Year 2

March – Confirm Presenter
April – Secure auditorium for Student Forum
April – Secure room for faculty workshop
April – Update Syllabus to include Student Forum on Growth Mindset
April – Develop Assignment and Evaluation for Students
September – Work with Reimagining the First Year Experience to promote faculty workshop
September – Conversation with speaker to discuss details for the presentations
October – Invite faculty to send their toolkit ideas to me for distribution to EDUC-U100 faculty
November – Send speaker’s e-newsletter to all participating faculty
December – Compile evaluations from students

Fiscal Sustainability

After the completion of the 3-year grant, I would work with other units on campus to generate the funding for the forum and faculty training. Since this is such a high impact retention effort, I am hopeful that the University administration along with the Reimaging the First Year Experience would help to fund this program.

Routing sheet

Attached

References
Increasing Student Retention: Forum on Growth Mindset for EDUC-U100 Students and Faculty


Dweck, Carol (2015). “Carol Dweck Revisits the 'Growth Mindset'”. Education Week.
Increasing Student Retention: Forum on Growth Mindset for EDUC-U100 Students and Faculty