



# PSYCHOLOGY

## WITH PROJECT KNOWLEDGE

### Talking *points*

#### KNOWLEDGE & COMPREHENSION

1. What are the aims of Project Knowledge (PK)?
2. What are protective factors and risk factors? Give an example of each for someone's academic success.
3. What are the differences between a Future Time Perspective and a Past Negative Time Perspective?

#### APPLICATION

4. How do you think PK mentors encourage their mentees to associate positive feelings with schoolwork?
5. Give examples of behaviours that can result in improved academic performance. How could you develop these skills to enhance your own learning?
6. If you were a PK mentor, what questions would you ask your mentee to discover what skills they would benefit from building?
7. How do you think skills and knowledge from psychology would help you during a career in marketing or technology development?

#### ANALYSIS

8. Why do you think mentors benefit from PK just as much as mentees?
9. How have Cheryl, Victoria, Jordan and Meya's experiences each influenced their involvement in PK?
10. Aside from recording persistence in STEM degrees, how do you think the PK team assesses the success of the interventions at Virginia State University and Petersburg High School? What data do you think they collect to determine the impact of the interventions on individual students?

#### EVALUATION

11. Students report they are not taught 'how to learn' in high school, as memorisation is more important than understanding. From your own experiences, to what extent do you agree with this? How would you change your school curriculum to better equip students for university and careers?
12. "Having a mentor who looks like you and who can relate to what you are going through makes navigating life a bit easier," says Meya. Why do you think these two characteristics of a mentor are so important?

### Activities

#### 1. Gain and share skills through mentorship

Imagine you are a high school mentee in the Project Knowledge intervention. What would you want to gain from the experience? Create a mind-map containing:

- How you view yourself academically (your academic identity)
- Good academic skills and behaviours you currently have, and how they help you
- Challenges you face in your education
- Good academic skills and behaviours you would like to develop, and how they will help you
- How your mentor could help you develop these skills
- The characteristics a good mentor will have
- What you think you would gain from the relationship with your mentor
- Your visions and motivations for your future after leaving school

When you have finished, take time to look over your mind-map. Have you learnt anything new about yourself? Share the skills and behaviours you have and would like to develop with your class.

Do you have any skills or behaviours that your classmates would like to develop? If so, how could you mentor your classmates to help them acquire these? Design and lead a mentoring session, considering:

- How you will demonstrate the skill or behaviour
- How you will teach your classmates to perform the skill or behaviour
- How you will encourage them to practice the skill or behaviour, so it becomes a natural habit

Do your classmates have any skills or behaviours that you would like to develop? If so, participate in a mentoring session designed and led by a classmate. Consider:

- How the skill or behaviour helps them academically
- What you will benefit from acquiring the skill or behaviour
- How you will continue to develop the skill or behaviour, so it becomes a natural habit



## 2. What is academic success?

Everyone's definition of 'success' will be unique to their own academic identity. To 'succeed in school' does not mean to 'come top in every class', it means to achieve the best you personally can. Individually, honestly reflect on the following questions:

- What does academic success look like for you?
- Does your definition of success vary for different subjects or in different situations?
- To what extent do you compare yourself to others when measuring your success?
- How do you feel when you achieve more than those you compare yourself to?  
How do you feel when you achieve less than them?
- What problems can arise when you define your success based on the achievements of other people?
- How could you adjust your mindset to redefine your success, based on personal goals and achievements and without external comparisons?
- How do you think altering your definition of success in this way could impact your levels of academic success, your feelings associated with schoolwork and your academic identity?

If you feel comfortable doing so, share your answers with your class and discuss what it means to achieve 'academic success'.

## 3. Skills and techniques for academic success

Write a list of all the skills, behaviours and practical techniques that you think will help students succeed in school. You could:

- Make notes from the article
- Read the tips from Project Knowledge ([knowledgevsu.wixsite.com/knowledge4teen](https://www.knowledgevsu.wixsite.com/knowledge4teen))
- Search for other advice online
- Add your own suggestions

Design a poster to inform your classmates about these skills, behaviours and techniques. Your poster should:

- Describe what each skill involves
- Explain why each skill will contribute to academic success
- Be engaging and capture your reader's attention through use of text, colours and images

Visit the Project Knowledge Futurum webpage to watch an animation about the team's work:

[www.futurumcareers.com/what-skills-do-you-need-to-succeed-in-school](https://www.futurumcareers.com/what-skills-do-you-need-to-succeed-in-school)

## More resources

- Learn more about Project Knowledge and the team: [www.projectknowledgevsu.com](https://www.projectknowledgevsu.com)
- Learn how to manage your time, take smart notes and study actively with Project Knowledge's tips for academic success: [knowledgevsu.wixsite.com/knowledge4teen](https://knowledgevsu.wixsite.com/knowledge4teen)
- Project Knowledge is part of the HBCU STEM Hub, researching the science of teaching and learning at HBCUs: [www.hbcustemhub.org](https://www.hbcustemhub.org)
- Project Knowledge is also part of the HBCU STEM Undergraduate Success Research Center, investigating what academic interventions are effective in helping HBCU students succeed and why: [www.stemuscenter.org](https://www.stemuscenter.org)
- Learn about Cheryl's educational technology company, Phygital Learn LLC: [www.phygitallearn.com](https://www.phygitallearn.com)
- This video introduces you to eight branches of psychology and their applications: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtWtZgdVyRU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtWtZgdVyRU)