

WHAT SKILLS DO YOU NEED TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL?

PROJECT KNOWLEDGE

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TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF THIS SCRIPT, YOU COULD:

- Stick it in your book as a record of watching the team's animation
 - Pause the animation and make notes as you go
 - Add your own illustrations to the sheet
 - Create your own animation to accompany it
 - Add notes from classroom discussions
 - Make notes of areas you will investigate further
 - Make notes of key words and definitions
 - Add questions you would like answered – you can message Cheryl, Victoria, Meya and Jordan through the comments box at the bottom of their article:
- www.futurumcareers.com/what-skills-do-you-need-to-succeed-in-school

SCRIPT:

Your academic identity is your idea of who you are in your educational surroundings. While a positive academic identity can lead to success in school, a negative academic identity can become a self-fulfilling prophecy – students who tell themselves “I can’t do math” are likely to struggle in math classes due to a lack of self-confidence in their abilities.

Dr Cheryl Talley is a psychologist at Virginia State University. She was saddened to hear students saying they ‘couldn’t do science’ and to discover that 60% were dropping out of university. In response, Cheryl founded Project Knowledge, a research project and intervention to investigate what techniques help students achieve academic success.

Cheryl works with team members Dr Victoria Davis, Meya Mongkuo and Jordan Windley. The goal of Project Knowledge is to provide experiences that bolster the feelings associated with academic accomplishment, as the team believes that positive feelings about learning strengthen a student’s academic identity. When a student feels good, they are motivated to do even better.

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The team's research revealed that students who have protective factors, such as self-confidence and aspirations for the future, are more likely to persevere at university, while students who have risk factors, such as a lack of motivation and poor learning techniques, are less engaged and therefore more likely to drop out.

Therefore, the focus of Project Knowledge is to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors. To do this, older students mentor first year students, teaching them good academic habits such as using a calendar to improve time management, reading the textbook before class and reviewing their lecture notes. These sorts of actions will reap rewards and the small successes will increase motivation and confidence.

As a result of Project Knowledge's success at Virginia State University, it has now been expanded to a local high school, enabling students to learn good academic habits earlier in their educational journey. In this version, the first year university students act as mentors to the high school students.

The team's research shows that mentors benefit from participating in Project Knowledge just as much as mentees. By acting as role models, mentors provide mentees with a vision of themselves as successful students, while also strengthening their own academic identity through the process of helping others to achieve.

The team hopes the lessons learnt in Project Knowledge can equip students across the country with the skills and confidence needed to achieve success, allowing them to go far in life.

What could you achieve as a psychologist?

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