Growth Mindset: Relations with Achievement Among Gifted Students
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ABSTRACT
This study examined the relation between growth mindset and standardized achievement (math and reading) for elementary students on Regular Track versus a Gifted-Talented Track in school. Students in the two tracks did not significantly differ in their levels of growth mindset, but growth mindset only predicted achievement for students in the Regular Track. Differences in growth mindset’s relation with achievement for the two groups were significant for reading, but not math. Results add several new dimensions to the growth mindset research, which often focuses on older students and math achievement.

INTRODUCTION
• Growth mindset captures individuals’ implicit belief that their abilities can change with effort (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007).
• Like other socioemotional skills (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011) a growth mindset predicts greater motivation and standardized achievement (Blackwell et al., 2007).
• Educators’ dialog around student ability makes a difference (Rattan, Good, & Dweck, 2012): elementary students praised as “smart” were more likely to give up on difficult math problems than those praised for being “hardworking” (Mueller & Dweck, 1998). Students persisted more on activities that emphasized growth over inherent ability (O’Rourke).
• Educators often conceive of giftedness in terms which exclude a growth mindset. Common descriptors include “innate ability,” “potential,” and “rarity” (Lee, 1999). Gifted students are more often described as “being” (rather than “becoming”) excellent (Ollthouse, 2014).

OBJECTIVES
Examine relations between growth mindset and school achievement for elementary-aged students who are either in a “Regular” or “Highly Gifted” track.
• Placement in a Gifted and Talented program may emphasize students’ intelligence more than their effort, and we hypothesize lower levels of growth mindset among Highly Gifted students.
• We speculate that growth mindset may be less related to school achievement for Highly Gifted students.

METHODS
RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: Independent t-tests suggested similar levels of growth mindset between Regular Track (M = 4.92, SD = .66) and GT Track (M = 4.99, SD = .56) students; t(241) = .68, p = .50.

Hypothesis 2: Growth mindset was only a significant predictor of reading and math achievement for students in the Regular track (Table 1 and Figure 1). Multigroup difference tests suggested a significant difference in growth mindset’s prediction of reading between the Regular and GT tracks (Estimate = -5.95, SE = 2.37; p < .05, CI[ -10.59, -2.09]). This relation trended toward significance for math achievement (Estimate = 5.92, SE = 3.12, p = .058, CI[ -12.04, -19]). The model fit was adequate, RMSEA = .00, CFI = 1.00, SRMR = .00. Students’ status as a dual language learner was a significant control variable for both reading and math.

DISCUSSION
Levels of growth mindset did not differ between Regular and GT track students. Growth mindset only had an impact on achievement for Regular Track students. For those in the GT Track, growth mindset did not predict achievement.

REFERENCES

DATABASES
• Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)• Language and Linguistics (L&L)

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