A growth mindset is associated with higher perseverance and has been linked to improvements in achievement. When students with a fixed mindset perceive their ability as low, they tend to adopt a maladaptive behavior pattern, which is evident by increased anxiety over their performance. An intervention that trained students to endorse a growth mindset have been found to be effective. A group of third (N = 40) and fourth/fifth (N = 36) graders at a local public elementary school participated in a six-week enrichment program that educated children about the brain, mindsets, and stress. When asked about experiences of stress, 32% of the answers were academic performance-related sources. Additionally, before the program only 25% of the elementary students believed that their abilities could change. Therefore, combining stress-coping skills with growth-mindset training may offer a combination that will allow students to adapt in the face of challenge. The implications of the current findings will be discussed in the context of how stress-reduction skills can help elementary students overcome the anxiety that is associated with having a fixed mindset and better adopt a growth mindset.

**Results**

To the question, “What does the brain do?”, over half (56%) of the students identified cognitive processes (e.g., learning, thinking), 38% identified motor processes (e.g., sleeping, controlling the body), and the remainder mentioned other processes (e.g., breathing, phaturnization) (21%).

When asked “How does the brain work?”, nearly half (47%) the students did not know, and 26% said the brain works by controlling the body and telling it what to do, and less than 20% talked about sending signals throughout the body.

When asked about their beliefs about ability, only one-fourth (25%) believed it was permanent and not good at (see Figure 1).

After receiving mindset training, nearly three-quarters (69%) of the students reported that they noticed doubting their abilities at least once in the past week.

When asked to describe stress, students described seven types of stress: challenging tasks (22%), being angry (21%), being frustrated (6%), worrying (5%), physical manifestation (3%), pressure (5%), and being overwhelmed (5%) with the rest of the answers not being descriptive of stress (31%; e.g., “something you don’t want”).


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