

Using Positive Psychology to Bolster Student Success at GateWay Community College

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University of Pennsylvania

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Abstract

Supported by a situational analysis and review of positive psychological literature, this paper outlines an application plan to support GateWay Community College's 'experiential learning with a purpose' vision which focuses on infusing meaning into students' career development and learning. This vision was articulated by Kerry Sanderson, Director of Career Services, and Jessica Brosilo, Service Learning Center Coordinator, in the form of three guiding principles for our work: 1) accessing large student populations, 2) developing students' personal meaning and understanding of purpose through career goals, and 3) cultivating a broader view of success beyond career goals. Future-mindedness and self-efficacy emerged as key pillars in an integrative system for building meaning, along with the importance of persistence which surfaced through our discussions with Sanderson and Brosilo and our review of the Maricopa County Community College District and GateWay Community College's joint strategic direction on student support goals. Our application plan rests on these three pillars: future-mindedness, self-efficacy, and meaning – with persistence running as a key thread throughout. The plan resides on three key processes: 1) administering a foundational, future-oriented writing exercise for incoming students that also cultivates foundations for self-efficacy and goal setting; 2) administering a growth mindset, belonging and self-efficacy intervention focused on messaging and environmental for incoming students, and 3) ongoing programming for students that supports purpose and meaning as well as student persistence.

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Introduction

Our journey began with GateWay Community College's ("GateWay") vision of 'experiential learning with a purpose' focused on infusing meaning into students' career development and learning (Sanderson, personal communication, January 22, 2018). Speaking with Kerry Sanderson, Director of Career Services, and Jessica Brosilo, Service Learning Center Coordinator, three statements on how and where the student experience should meet career, service learning, and civic engagement aspects, stood out: 1) "We are not accessing big groups of students as much as we would like, and we tend to lose them along the way;" 2) "We want to think with them [students] about who they *are*, not only what they will do in their career," and 3) "[It's about] how to make career decisions [that contribute not to work success, but to *life success*]" (Sanderson, personal communication, February 16, 2018). The roots of our work reside in these statements and are key to our proposals for dosing positive psychology elements for fostering meaning and purpose in students' careers and lives.

We developed our situational analysis, literature review, and application plan through a dual lens of exploring the resources and goals of GateWay Career Services and the positive psychological underpinnings of how to best foster meaning in students. Future-mindedness and self-efficacy emerged as key pillars in an integrative system for building meaning. Additionally, the importance of persistence surfaced through our discussions with Sanderson and Brosilo (personal communication, March 6, 2018) and review of Maricopa Community Colleges' student support goals (Maricopa Community Colleges, 2017). Our application plan rests on these three pillars: *future-mindedness*, *self-efficacy*, and *meaning* – with persistence running as a key thread throughout. The literature review provides the empirical basis for this plan and is also framed by these delineations – all of which is set in the context of the situational analysis.

Situational Analysis

Our pathway to developing a plan for cultivating future-mindedness, self-efficacy, meaning, and persistence on the GateWay campus came through a situational analysis of the state of community college education and an analysis of GateWay's recent initiatives in fostering student development.

The State of Community College Education

Community colleges are an integral component of the United States higher education system, and constitute its fastest growing sector (Boggs, 2012). On an annual basis, community colleges collectively enroll approximately 12.7 million students (American Association of Community Colleges, 2014) including an estimated 5 million students in noncredit programs (Boggs, 2011). Established as affordable educational institutions that provide open access to all, community colleges serve a diverse population of students (Bragg, 2001). According to 2009 figures, community college students are, on average, 28 years old, 56% are female, and 36% are non-white. Slightly less than half of the community college population are first generation students (42%), and 60% of enrolled students attend part-time (Boggs, 2011). In a recent report, the Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasted that 21 of the 30 most rapidly growing occupations will require postsecondary education (Boggs, 2012).

Even with these growing and positive impacts, community colleges face challenges. The results of a longitudinal study by the U.S. Department of Education show that within six years of initiating a program only 23% of matriculated community college students actually earned an associate's degree and 13% completed a bachelor's degree (Brock, 2010). There are a multitude of reasons for this less than satisfactory completion rate including insufficient financial aid support (Boggs, 2012). In particular, this lower than optimal success rate can be attributed to the

challenges that many students face in completing prerequisite remedial coursework and balancing work and family responsibilities (Brock, 2010).

GateWay's Recent Initiatives in Fostering Student Development

Two developments are key to understanding GateWay Career Services' potential: 1) GateWay's joint direction setting with the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), and 2) GateWay's strength-based strategic planning process and current initiatives.

In recent years, GateWay aligned with other MCCCD affiliates to define a joint strategic direction focused on student support, industry partnerships, effective business practices, and a revamped career development and career advising function (Reyes & Barajas, 2017). As part of the latter goal, the Guided Pathways transformation model has sought to deliver students an experience-centered platform that aligns programs with future education and employment, thus helping students choose and enter an academic path in their first year, assisting them to stay on course, and ensuring learning in the process (Bailey, Smith Jaggars & Jenkins, 2015).

As part of GateWay's own strategic planning process, a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and expected Results (S.O.A.R) analysis was conducted, identifying six strategic goals: access, learning, success, community engagement, entrepreneurialism, and stewardship (GateWay Community College, 2015). These goals directly relate to GateWay Career Services' initiatives involving service and experiential learning (Community Engagement and Entrepreneurialism) as well as to the broader focus on fostering future-mindedness, self-efficacy, meaning, and persistence (Success, Access, and Learning). In line with these strategic categories, GateWay Career Services' has shifted towards goals beyond degree completion and towards a more comprehensive career development.

Literature Review

Our literature review advances the foundations driving our application plan as well as the most relevant and best-supported pathways for driving GateWay's vision.

Foundations for Application Plan

Analyzing our discussions with Sanderson and Brosilo, as well as our situational analysis on GateWay's recent initiatives, the following dimensions (and lead questions) surfaced: 1) *time*: how might, from a GateWay perspective, students be captivated by experiential learning at orientation (knowing that from there entropy ensues), and from a student perspective, how might their start at GateWay be memorable and imbued with potential; 2) *meaning*: in content terms, what about experiential learning might aide GateWay to better attract and retain students, creating a more meaningful learning journey for them; 3) *self-efficacy*: how might GateWay ensure students 'check in' regularly and complete their academic paths, and from a student perspective, how might they experience a clear pathway, with successive steps, toward a meaningful goal, and 4) how might *persistence* maintain momentum throughout all of the above? These dimensions structured a mental scheme for a desired student experience (described by the visual: O---o---o---o---o), where *time* is visualized by a memorable start (hence the 'O') and progress in career and life, *meaning* by an engaging journey ("-----"), and *self-efficacy* and *persistence* by the successive steps: "o o o o o." This scheme frames our literature review as well as our application plan.

With feedback from Sanderson and Brosilo throughout, we identified the most sequentially relevant and best-supported pathways: 1) best possible selves and future time perspective; 2) growth mindset, belonging and self-efficacy; 3) purpose and meaning, and 4) grit

and resilience. These are interlocking, which will drive how they will be translated into the application plan.

The Four Pathways

Pathway 1: Best possible selves and future time perspective. Time perspective is a uniquely human capability (Leondari, 2007) and key to any academic journey. Different theories conceptualize it in several ways, such as future time perspective (FTP) (Lens, 1986) and possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Both involve our mental representation for the future, created at certain points in our life, reflecting personal and social-contextual influences (Lens, 1986).

Learning is by definition future-oriented, involves cognitive-motivational variables, and is strongly related to future goals (Lens, 1987). Motivation is an important determinant of differences in school performance and the growth in ability over time. Differences among students in how they perceive aspects of FTP involved in their daily school work affect their motivation to study as well as their learning efficiency and performance (Lens, 1987).

Two aspects of FTP are particularly relevant to GateWay's 'experiential learning with a purpose' vision on learning: utility and valence (De Volder & Lens, 1982). Utility is the cognitive aspect, consisting of the ability to anticipate the long-term consequences of a potential action in the present. Valence is the dynamic aspect consisting of our disposition to attribute high value to future goals; it has been shown to be associated with adaptive behavior and positive motivation (De Volder & Lens, 1982). The motivational importance of our future perception is implicitly present in the 'possible selves' concept as we mediate long-term motivation; it also provides direction for achieving a desired goal (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Those selves that appear plausible and probable to us give meaning to current behavior and influence the direction of current activities by enabling us to focus attention on specific, task-relevant thoughts and to

organize action. Moreover, the more we value a possible self, the more likely it will be related to our behavior (Leondari, 2007).

Several studies show that ‘possible selves’ are related to a variety of positive outcomes, such as self-esteem, memory, reduced delinquency, and superior performance (Leondari, 2007). Possible selves build a bridge between the current state and the desired future self. The more colorful and elaborate our possible selves are, the more they help us to concentrate on task-relevant thoughts and foster an energizing emotional state. Research also supports the view that we are better able to face failures once equipped with well-elaborated positive possible selves (Leondari, 2007).

Furthermore, written reflection on personal emotional matters with optimism may correlate with a multitude of favorable outcomes central to experiential learning, including affect, well-being, and efficacy (King, 2001; Peters et al., 2010; Pennebaker, 1997) especially when done regularly (Layous, Nelson & Lyubomirsky, 2012). GateWay might also find a written ‘possible selves’ exercise useful for linking writing about and imagining possible selves with increased optimism about expecting favorable outcomes (Meevissen, Peters & Alberts, 2011; Peters et al., 2010), not least since writing about personal and emotional matters has been associated with improved GPAs (Pennebaker, 1997). Lastly, Zander’s written “give yourself an ‘A’ and explain why” exercise ahead of starting a course might stimulate future-oriented perspective (Zander & Zander, 2002).

Pathway 2: Growth mindset, belonging and self-efficacy.

Growth mindset. Dweck (2006, 2009) describes two mindsets: fixed and growth. A fixed mindset assumes that talents and abilities are static, while a growth mindset believes that there is potential for developing talents and abilities with the requisite effort. Research shows that when

using a growth mindset, students achieve a higher level of performance, more readily adapt to major life transitions, and experience increased motivation and higher achievement (Duckworth, 2016; Dweck, 2006; Grant & Dweck, 2003; Halverson, 2012). Schreiner (2010) describes that students with a positive perspective are confident in their ability to achieve goals, they do not give up or stop trying, and they use a growth mindset to persist. Failure is considered temporary; making them unafraid to fail, which encourages continued effort.

Growth mindset and belonging. Yeager et al. (2016b) combined a pre-college growth mindset intervention with a belonging intervention and saw a reduction in the achievement gap of 30-40%. This finding has recently been supported on a large scale with 65 participating schools and over 12,000 ninth grade students (Yeager et al., 2018b). While the effect size was small on this large study (Yeager et al., 2018b), and the combination of the growth mindset with belonging interventions did not increase the results (Yeager et al., 2016b) versus doing just one of the interventions, the results have been statistically significant. There may also be additional potential to these types of interventions as researchers are only now beginning to take a design thinking approach to growth mindset and belonging interventions (Yeager et al., 2016a).

Belonging. Schreiner (2010) discusses a study of thriving college students, which are defined as fully engaged emotionally, socially, and intellectually. In addition to being successful academically, thriving students also experience a sense of community and well-being such that they are able to persist to graduation and to fully profit from their experience in college. Developing a sense of community, however, is not easy with a diverse group of adolescents and adults. Yeager, Dahl, and Dweck (2018a) suggest several customized strategies for improving the efficacy of interventions amongst adolescents and adults who tend to be less malleable and more skeptical than children. Specifically, Yeager et al. (2016a) identify both *communal values*

and goals, as opposed to just independent ones, and *norm alignment*, such as ‘people everywhere are working to get smarter,’ as ways to achieve higher buy-in for these populations. Taking this sort of customized approach provides for a potential virtuous cycle in which belonging and growth mindset work together to enhance the efficacy of the overall intervention.

Self-efficacy. For any given task, Bandura (1986) calls the belief that one’s goals are achievable *self-efficacy*. In order to promote self-efficacy, Bandura’s (1986) sets forth three strategies for making goals attainable: 1) adjust the goal (reduce if too high initially), 2) improve the goal setter’s capacities, and 3) increase the goal setter’s opinion of his/her capacities. Maddux (2009) describes self-efficacy as both social and dynamic: It depends on not only one’s self-image, but also what others think, and what one thinks others think. Research indicates that a student’s belief in their capacity to learn well, or self-efficacy, can predict their level of academic performance beyond their measured ability and prior performance (Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014). This makes targeting self-efficacy quite promising in a community college setting.

Goal setting theory. To strengthen self-efficacy, goal setting theory can be a valuable tool. *Goal setting theory* states that there is a positive linear relationship between specific goals and actual task performance (Locke & Latham, 2007). Locke and Latham (2002) describe the four major mechanisms by which goals improve performance: 1) they direct attention to goal relevant activities (Locke & Bryan, 1969; Rothkopf & Billington, 1979); 2) they energize (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Bryan & Locke, 1967); 3) they improve persistence (Laporte & Nath, 1976), and 4) they lead to development of task-specific knowledge and strategies (Wood & Locke, 1990).

While goals increase performance, all goals are not created equal. Locke (1996) explains that the more specific a goal, the more precisely performance can be monitored. Additionally, he

shows that goals that are both specific and difficult lead to the highest levels of performance. He also points out, however, that goals are least effective if the goal-setter lacks appropriate experience or skills, or there is a high level of pressure to perform. And while high goals may lead to many positive outcomes, they are related to less satisfaction upon their successful performance than lower goals (Mento, Locke, & Klein, 1992).

Goal setting in the community college context must consider that many students are managing some subset of concerns including limited formal education, potential stereotype threat, limited financial resources, work commitments, and/or family commitments. These concerns, if significantly distracting, can reduce results, as measured in standardized testing or IQ, by up to a full standard deviation in performance (Bronzaft, 1981; Mani, Mullainathan, Shafir & Zhao, 2013; Mullainathan, S., & Shafir, E., 2014). Potential strategies for bringing self-efficacy and goals into alignment include: 1) creating a safety net for students (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008); 2) adding more peer-to-peer interactions and support (Saenz, Hatch, Bukoski, Kim, & Lee, 2011); 3) providing role-models, even if virtual, of successful prior students (Walton & Cohen, 2011); 4) teaching “if-then” goal setting strategies (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006; Halvorson, 2012); 5) teaching mental contrasting tactics (Oettingen & Stephens, 2009), and 6) practicing non-academic strength spotting (Cohen, Garcia, Purdie-Vaughns, Apfel & Brzustoski, 2009). While perfect alignment of self-efficacy and goal setting is challenging, their symbiotic nature creates the potential for an upward spiral of positive outcomes.

Pathway 3: Purpose and meaning. Determining and understanding one’s life purpose is an eternal question that individuals and philosophers have pondered since the beginning of time. Purpose, simply defined, is an intention or reason for something. Relative to one’s life purpose, the definition is more complex and is described as an intention to accomplish goals that

are meaningful to the self and the community beyond the self (Kosine, Steger, & Duncan, 2008). Meaning is defined as belonging to and serving a purpose that is larger than the self (Seligman, 2011).

To more deeply define the concept of meaning in life, Martela and Steger (2016) use a tripartite model composed of 1) coherence: one's life making sense, 2) significance: one's life having value and is worth living, and 3) purpose: one's life having a specific direction and goals. What does *meaning in life* mean for the thousands of college students graduating each year? The diversity of interpretations of this term is equal to the total number of college students graduating annually; each person must define and design what *meaning* means in their own life (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006).

As college students progress through their studies, questions often arise about purpose and meaning and how they relate to work and career. While employment consumes almost half of one's waking life (Wrzesniewski, 2003), it offers the opportunity to earn an income to fulfill basic needs of housing and food. However, employment can also be used to create comparable stability to fulfill the needs of purpose, values, efficacy, and self-worth. Wrzesniewski (2003) states that people want to determine a deeper purpose or meaning in their work. Kosine et al. (2008) highlight research showing that those with a strong sense of meaning and purpose are happier and have fewer psychological issues. College students who self-identify as having high levels of meaning in life also express higher certainty of their future career plans.

University career development centers can help students by focusing their programming on meaning and purpose development with the deliberate intent of assisting them in identifying career options that are meaningful on a personal basis and also serve the community beyond the self, which includes the local, national, and global communities (Kosine et al., 2008). A purpose-

centered approach is detailed by Kosine et al. (2008) and is comprised of five components: 1) identity development; 2) self-efficacy; 3) metacognition; 4) culture, and 5) service.

These five components form a network that demonstrates some of the key factors in creating and sustaining meaning in career development. There is a strong connection between identity development and career decision-making such that people who have well-developed career interests have a stronger sense of identity. Betz (2004) explains a person's sense of self-efficacy has an impact on their career choices, performance, and persistence. Metacognition or self-awareness in the career development process assists students in taking action, developing strategies, and proactively utilizing feedback, while college career development recognizes, appreciates, and aids students in understanding the influence of culture on making career-oriented choices (Kosine et al., 2008). Finally, Duffy and Raque-Bogdan (2010) affirm that college students who want to serve others in their future career are more optimistic about their career future. In research studies of undergraduate students, service motivation positively correlated with career self-efficacy, adaptability, and optimism.

Pathway 4: Grit and resilience. Grit provides an important perspective in the cultivation of students' long-term goals, as well as synergy between those goals and self-efficacy. Embedded in Duckworth's definition of grit (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007) is an attention to time and the synergy of its key elements: passion, the catalyst, fuels perseverance, creating a combined energy that is channeled toward long-term goals or an orientation toward the future. We might use this deconstruction of grit as a model for the trajectory of GateWay Community College students. Passion can become a foundation for developing resilience. Duckworth explains that resilience is a component of grit, although not the only element (as cited

in Perkins-Gough, 2013). However, it is an important one in helping students build and become their best selves.

In a longer-term view, subjective well-being increases when passion/interest aligns with a chosen career (Harris & Rottinghaus, 2017). However, our goal at GateWay is not to foster *states* (e.g., ideal job situation) for students, but rather to foster *traits* (i.e. skills, based on the pathways covered in this review, that can affect the experiential learning vision). Duckworth claims that grit focuses on an adaptability and positive response to adversity as well as a commitment to interests and goals (as cited in Perkins-Gough, 2013). Thus, grit helps foster different types of resilience, both in terms of everyday persistence and the ability to recover and/or grow from larger setbacks. To cultivate persistence and begin building students' personal sense of resilience, we will look to infuse written possible selves exercises coupled with 'check-ins' throughout students' tenure at GateWay.

Application Plan

Returning to the mental scheme introduced in our literature review, our Application Plan represents a further refinement to this scheme. It includes three targeted positive psychology interventions organized around a healthcare metaphor: 1) an 'initial dose' for administering a foundational, future-oriented Best Possible Self (BPS) writing exercise for incoming students, 2) a 'follow-up inoculation' for administering a Growth Mindset, Belonging and Self-efficacy (GMBS) intervention focused on messaging and environmental cues where incoming students all pass through – the Enrollment Center, and 3) a 'maintenance dosing' program that supports: a) purpose and meaning, leveraging existing academic coursework, and b) student persistence based on regular check-ins with advisors. For each approach, we have included appendices (see Appendix A, B, C, D, and E) that can function as implementation tools. Additionally, we have

created our own measurement tools, a Best Possible Self Rubric with variations for Academic Advisors and Career Advisors, as well as a version for students to administer a self-evaluation. These assessments are included in Appendix F.

The 'initial dose:' Best Possible Self (BPS)

Loading future-mindedness with self-efficacy and goal setting. Our discussions with Sanderson and Brosilo confirmed the validity of an 'initial hit' for three reasons: 1) it is relevant to ongoing internal discussions at GateWay regarding the creation of a more full-fledged first-year student experience; 2) it will enhance consciousness among incoming students regarding the need for (and benefit of) academic and career planning, and 3) for reasons stated in the literature review, a written BPS exercise can yield specific well-being outcomes for first-year students (King, 2001; Peters et al., 2010; Pennebaker, 1997; Layous, Nelson & Lyubomirsky, 2012; Meevissen, Peters & Alberts, 2011; Peters et al., 2010). In this section, we will also discuss possible options for follow-up aspects of this exercise, but the overall attention to 'maintenance dosing' will be in the third section.

To the latter point, discussions with Sanderson and Brosilo following the literature review regarding community college student mindsets motivated us to include self-efficacy and goal setting in the 'initial hit' to lay the foundation for the development in later doses. Self-efficacy and goal setting, then, will function as add-on components to the future-mindedness that drives the BPS writing exercise (Appendix A).

As Bickerstaff, Barragan and Rucks-Ahidiana (2012) point out, several characteristics of community college students seem to validate the inclusion of self-efficacy and goal-setting components in the foundational BPS exercise. First, community college students are more likely to hail from groups traditionally marginalized in education. They may experience conflicting

priorities between home and school, and may have less access to information about how to succeed in college (Elizondo, Allen, & Ceja, 2012; Jehangir, 2009; Rendón, 2002, as cited by Bickerstaff, Barragan & Rucks-Ahidiana, 2012). They also spend less time on-campus compared with their peers at four-year institutions and may have more off-campus roles and responsibilities. Additionally, Cox (2009) demonstrated the ways in which students' lack of confidence is connected to self-protective avoidance strategies that "prevent full commitment to the role of college student" (p. 77) and how such a lack of confidence can lead to attrition and poor performance. Importantly, Cox (2009) argued that "certain students require a specific kind of validating academic environment to overcome their fear of failure and complete their coursework" (p. 78). To address this gap in the context of experiential learning, it seems advisable to administer a self-efficacy component in the 'initial hit' to bolster students' belief in their ability to coordinate their skills and ability to successfully complete coursework at GateWay. In addition, a goal setting component is recommended to bolster students' belief that their goals are achievable.

Sequencing and alignment with the realities of students' first-year experience. Three factors merit consideration: student mindsets, reach, and phasing. We will discuss these areas with more specificity in later sections, but we also wanted to lay the groundwork for the material in Appendices A and B. First, incoming students may feel overwhelmed; they tend to have varying levels of confidence and ability as well as explanatory styles (Seligman & Schulman, 1986), thus requiring careful consideration of the 'initial hit' dosage. Additionally, we learned from Sanderson and Brosilo that for various reasons, reaching and tracking interactions with students electronically remains difficult with the exception of tracking them on the Maricopa Career Link (MCL) via Career Services. Considering ease of implementation and control, it

would be advisable to start an ‘initial hit’ pilot in the “Skills for College Success” classes, “Gecko Gear Up” sessions, and new student orientation programs. (GateWay’s mascot is a charming gecko.) While the new student orientation and the student success courses would allow for more time to administer the BPS writing exercise, Sanderson and Brosilo confirmed that attendance is relatively low, that is, less than 10% participation from the roughly 10,000 students (Sanderson and Brosilo, personal communication, March 6, 2018). Other options for administering the BPS writing exercise include during the career assessment period that is now part of the initial placement testing at GateWay or to embed the exercise as a diagnostic tool for other departments, such as English instructors to use during their initial class periods. Including the exercise in placement testing or in collaborative forums with other academic departments might establish some synergies with other learning goals such as writing skills in English Composition courses; however, students might feel pressured to ‘perform’ at such occasions, affecting outcomes in components - BPS, self-efficacy, and goal-setting - where ‘performance’ is *not* the focus and perceived pressure is less desirable. A standalone ‘initial hit’ seems most desirable, however, unless other short-term solutions appear feasible, it will probably have to wait until electronic interaction and tracking become easier and integrated as in the form of an electronic portal. In the above options for administering this ‘initial hit,’ GateWay must also begin identifying opportunities for following-up on ‘initial hit’ exercises, thereby enhancing the probability of favorable outcomes (Layous, Nelson, & Lyubomirsky, 2012). We will expand on some of our ideas for this follow-up in Section C: *Maintenance dosing*, and we have also included additional ‘initial hit’ strategies in Appendix B that might be applied to sustaining self-efficacy and goal setting throughout a student’s time at GateWay.

The ‘follow-up inoculation’: Growth Mindset, Belonging and Self-efficacy (GMBS)**Providing an initial inoculation of growth mindset, belonging and self-efficacy.**

Similar to the FBS writing exercise, we want to leverage GateWay’s existing assets to deliver a powerful growth mindset, belonging and self-efficacy intervention. We want this upfront inoculation to help bridge the gap between the benefits that might be associated with the BPS writing exercise and sustaining self-efficacy and, with it, persistence.

Our GMBS intervention will leverage design thinking in order to maximize the efficacy of a growth mindset and belonging interventions (Yeager et al, 2018a, Yeager et al., 2016a) with the GateWay student body. Unlike standard growth mindset questions that simply state that the brain is like a muscle (Blackwell, 2007; Paunesku et al., 2015), we will leverage the user-centered design work of Yeager et al. (2016a) and emphasize the importance of: 1) adjusting strategies (versus just working harder), 2) communal values and goals (versus just independent ones), and 3) norm alignment (e.g. people everywhere are working to get smarter). Our GMBS will integrate those insights while also being sensitive to students’ felt levels of status and respect (Yeager, 2017) to ensure the message is heard and a sense of belonging is engendered.

GMBS messaging. Our proposed messaging for the GMBS can be found in Appendix C. The GMBS messages will leverage GateWay’s Enrollment Center as all students must pass through this center. Options for implementing the GMBS intervention at the Enrollment Center include scrolling messages on a new flat-screen TV in the Enrollment Center and creating postcards and posters with codes that link to online video content. These messages can also be built into modules for use in the “Skills for College Success” classes, “Gecko Gear Up” sessions, and the new student orientation programs in which the FBS writing exercise is implemented.

The right environment for GMBS messages to resonate. There is substantial research showing that environment matters. Continuing our healthcare metaphor, we can find inspiration in SSM Health Care who has won multiple awards, including the highly prestigious national Malcom Baldrige Quality Award, for its dedication to care and healing that is omnipresent, even in the actual words they use (e.g. “approach a problem” vs. “attack a problem”, “goals” vs. “targets”, “outdistance” vs. “beat”, etc.) (Cialdini, 2016; Myers & Wooten, 2009). Words matter – a lot. In a study where people were primed with either rude words (e.g. disturbing, annoying, and obnoxious) or polite words (e.g. courteous, polite, and considerate) those primed with rude words were over four times more likely to interrupt a subsequent conversation (Casciaro & Lobo). Even unconscious exposure can impact behavior (Bargh, Lee-Chai, Barndollar, Gollwitzer, & Trotschel, 2001).

Beyond words, a recent meta-analysis of physical neighborhood disorder, also known as the “broken window theory,” confirmed the link between disorder and negative outcomes (Braga, Welsh, & Schnell, 2015). Langer and Rodin’s (1976) study showed that it was not just the addition of house plants, but the expectation that nursing home residents would care for the plants, that resulted in significantly decreased morbidity rates. We intend to harness these concepts by creating the right environment for our GMBS messaging to thrive: an environment in which students feel inspired and empowered to do their best. Specifically, we propose the following steps be taken:

- GateWay to embark in a high visibility clean-up project for the high crime parking lot adjacent to Career Services. This should be an intentional activity designed to gain attention of employees at the Enrollment Center. Ideally, this will be made into a short documentary making the GateWay Career Services a GMBS exemplar.

- Train all Career Services and Enrollment Center employees on the specifics of GMBS.
- Develop language protocols including prohibited language (e.g. I/you can't, why did you do that?) and preferred language (e.g. not yet, of course you can, please walk me through your thought process?).
- Create a video recording “studio” area in Career Services Center where all inspirational student story videos can be produced. When students come in to create the video vignettes, Career Services will use their visit as an opportunity to trigger prosocial motivation of employees (Grant et al, 2007; Grant, 2012) at the Enrollment Center. The visit will also serve to reinforce the GMBS programming at the Enrollment Center.

The GMBS in all of its forms whether a GateWay Gecko message as in Appendix C, a student story, or Enrollment Center interaction is intended to provide four of the five pathways Maddux (2009) identifies to develop self-efficacy: vicarious experiences, imagined experiences, verbal persuasion, and positive emotional states. These pathways might also be a tool in fostering the continued development of self-efficacy and, with it, persistence.

After GateWay creates momentum with the initial GMBS inoculation, they can turn their attention to maintaining that momentum in the form of booster shots. We envision the development of a graphically represented timeline, to be developed collaboratively with GateWay Career Services, that shows exactly how the student experience will look from matriculation to graduation and employment. The timeline tool will be available at the Enrollment Center as a large postcard and will include both major milestones as well as potential obstacles to encourage *mental contrasting* (Oettingen, 2009). The timeline will be designed to prompt the sort of specific “if-then” thinking that has been shown by Gollwitzer and Sheeran’s (2006) meta-analysis to be effective across multiple domains. This timeline will also provide the

framework for ongoing positive interventions, or the *maintenance doses*, as discussed in the next section. The timeline enables Maddux's (2009) fifth and only remaining pathway to self-efficacy: the performance itself.

'Maintenance dosing:' Ongoing support for purpose, meaning, and persistence

Persistence. A student's ability to persist is distinguished by the investment of his effort, strong time management skills, a desire to succeed, and the specific intent to pursue his goals (Schreiner, 2010). Goal setting theory states that a positive linear relationship exists between set goals and actual task performance (Locke & Latham, 2007). As high school graduates and non-traditional students begin an academic program at a community college, they experience significant transition. Developing and maintaining a sense of self-efficacy is key. Betz (2004) explains that a person's sense of self-efficacy has an impact on their persistence towards set goals.

In order to develop students' self-efficacy and maintain consistent communication with students over their tenure at GateWay, we recommend regular in-person check-ins with students by a member of the GateWay advising community every six-months or 12 credit hours during the student lifecycle. The check-ins could coincide with reviewing or revising the student's academic plan, enrollment questions, or a career coaching session; however, while this coincidence may be efficient, the explicit intent is that the student is connected with an assigned member of the GateWay advising community, if only to simply check-in on a personal basis. Members of the GateWay advising community include Academic Advisors, Career Advisors, and trained and certified Peer Advisors. As noted in the *Integrated Student Support Advising Model Recommendation*, "consistent, quality academic advising directly contributes to improved student persistence and retention" (Maricopa Community Colleges, 2017, p. 4). Additionally, the

FBS writing exercise includes additional follow-up plans that might help craft the check-in conversation for students and members of the advising community.

Brosilo explained that persistence is a top priority for GateWay (personal communication, March 6, 2018). Persistence in this instance refers to the retention of GateWay students from enrollment through their graduation, also referred to as the student lifecycle. One of the *Big Six Collegiate Experiences* identified through the Gallup-Purdue Index, a study of over 70,000 college graduates, is the importance of a mentor who encouraged the student to pursue their goals (Busteed & Auter, 2018). The importance and value of connection with students through the advising function at GateWay cannot be underestimated.

We understand that the Maricopa Community Colleges are in the midst of evaluating alternative advising models with the intent to adopt a new model in June 2018 that, if approved, could include the hire of 30 new Academic Advisors. Currently GateWay has fourteen Academic Advisors and three Career Advisors on staff. While the actual allocation of Advisors to GateWay is expected to be less than 30, any increase to the current headcount is expected to have a positive impact on delivery of services to students assuming that the proposed 300:1 student to advisor ratio is achieved (Maricopa Community Colleges, 2017). Advisors would have more time to develop a meaningful relationship with the students assigned to them. Additionally, the support material in the FBS writing exercise, along with the FBS Rubric (Appendix F) can help to support the advising community as they strive to support a large student population.

Strengthening purpose and meaning. Snipes, Fancsali, & Stoker (2012) explain that meaningful membership in a university community results in students developing confidence or self-efficacy. When students find learning to be valuable beyond their specific academic program, and also in their future, passion and purpose result. Martela and Steger (2016) define

purpose as one's life having specific directions and goals. Kosine, Steger, & Duncan (2008) highlight research indicating that college students who self-identified as having a high level of meaning and purpose in life also express a higher certainty of their future career plans.

The "Skills for College Success" class sets the expectations of academic coursework for GateWay first year students and prepares them for the long-term journey of self-exploration relative to job and career. We propose that the curriculum for this course include goal setting and purpose/meaning exploration through the use of the VIA Character Strength survey and character strengths interventions specific to goal setting, purpose, and meaning. We chose the VIA Character Strengths assessment because of the extensive research that Dr. Martin Seligman and the late Dr. Chris Peterson coordinated on a global scale (Niemic, 2017). A classification of 24 character strengths evolved from six virtues, (wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence) that were found globally across cultures, nations, religions, and faith traditions. The VIA survey should be introduced towards the beginning of the semester with a presentation by the course instructor. A sample presentation is included in Appendix D. Each week class time should be allocated, so that students can focus on a character strengths intervention. Simple reflective writing prompts can be given to students to complete in-class (Appendix E) or more formalized, evidence-supported interventions may be used. These could expand on the initial writing exercises for FBS. Niemic (2017) collected and published 70-character strengths interventions that may be reproduced for educational purposes. Interventions that focus on purpose and meaning include: *What Matters Most*, *Cultivate Inner Self-Worth*, and *Strengths Alignment*. Goal-setting interventions include: *Goal-setting with Character Strengths*, *Hope for Your Goals*, and *Mental Contrasting* (Niemic, 2017).

Conclusion

GateWay's 'experiential learning with a purpose' vision elicited the above body of work with the dual lens of being mindful of GateWay Career Services' goals and resources as well as of how to best foster meaning in students' using empirically validated positive psychological interventions. Our application plan is built on the pillars of *future-mindedness*, *self-efficacy*, and *meaning*, with persistence running as a key thread throughout. We expect the dosing of positive psychology interventions associated with the above pillars to create the following for GateWay students: 1) more meaning and purpose in their careers and lives; 2) a more dynamic relationship with GateWay Career Services, and 3) more persistence in whatever they choose to do. To track the sustained development of the above, we have created a measurement assessment that provides students with the opportunity to self-assess these critical areas of their lives (Appendix F). Additionally, we have outlined established measurement tools at both GateWay and in positive psychology that can be used to create a dynamic and broad picture of the impact of the application plan. We hope that this tool will underscore the importance of each of the pillars, as well as the recommended interventions in the application plan that put them into practice.

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Appendix A

Best Possible Selves Writing Exercise: Suggested Activity & Follow-Up Instructions

Suggested Time: 30 minutes

[Adapted from Layous, Nelson, and Lyubomirsky (2012) and Meevissen, Peters, and Alberts (2011); italic text is provided for consideration by GateWay Career Services only.]

1. Best possible self (BPS) activity. Please take a few moments to think about your best possible academic life during your time at GateWay Community College. Imagine that everything has gone as well as it possibly could. Perhaps you have successfully chosen a major or concentration that you enjoy; perhaps you are achieving good grades in your classes, and/or you may have set yourself up for the job or career of your choosing. Think of this as the realization of the best possible academic life you could ever hope for yourself.

Now, for the next 15 minutes, please write continuously about what you imagined. Use the instructions below to help guide you through this process:

- i. Be as creative and imaginative as you wish. There are no ‘rules.’
- ii. Use your preferred writing style and remember to imagine your ideal life IN THE FUTURE upon finishing your studies at GateWay or shortly thereafter.
- iii. Do not worry about perfect grammar or spelling.
- iv. Use as much detail as you want.
- v. Your words will not be shared with anyone and will remain strictly confidential.

After completing this exercise, repeat it for at least consecutive three days. Each day, reflect on the desired future you wrote about above, and write down ways to make it a reality.

[Note: in case of inclusion in any form of assessment, instructions ii and iii should be modified.]

2. Goal setting activity. Now, for the next five minutes, write down a goal or goals you think you might want to attain that will help you achieve the best possible self that you just described. Sometimes long-term goals seem overwhelming or out of reach. But every journey begins with just a single step. Think about taking small steps towards your long-term goal or goals. A small step could be as simple as proactively seeking information you need or talking to someone who may be able to guide you. Defining the next small step you need to take to get a little closer towards your goal is a great way to get going with the journey without worrying too much about the length of the road to get there.

3. Imagery activity. After completing the BPS and goal-setting activities, please:

- i. Visualize your BPS and goal(s) for five minutes. To get a sense for how this works, imagine a lemon using all your senses. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you think? What do you feel? Feel free to focus on your feelings or emotions as you consider these questions. *[This activity can be converted into a 20-minute imagery training; see Holmes, Coughtry, and Connor, 2008, as cited by Meevissen, Peters, and Alberts (2011)].*
- ii. Continue to visualize your BPS and goal(s) every day for the next two weeks.

4. Peer testimonial affirmation. *In addition to the BPS and goal-setting instructions described above, students (online or offline) should read a quote from a fellow GateWay student or alumnus who either completed the academic program successfully or who performed the same writing activity previously. The basic message should be that the BPS writing activity had helped the peer student clarify their goals and take steps to making progress – academically and in life. Participating students may be asked to read the following:*

Please read this excerpt from a follow-up done with a fellow student from GateWay who completed the same exercise earlier: *[insert peer testimonial affirmation here]*.

***Follow-up.** Our suggestion is to include the FBS writing exercise with the student's file so that the advising community can easily reference the original material, as either a touch point for conversation or a way to measure improvement. In particular, the regular intervals of check-ins with the advising community will be the most effective integration as described in Section III. Furthermore, the advising community can use the FBS Rubric (Appendix F) as a way to record their meetings and interactions with students. The rubric is short and helps assess the future-mindedness of the FBS exercise, the self-efficacy of FBS and GMBS, and the overall impact on meaning through these interventions and the on-going check-ins.*

Appendix B

Other Strategies and Considerations for Aligning BPS,

Self-efficacy, and Goal Setting in the ‘Initial Dose’

- *Medium* (or channel) – In a four-week, once-a-week randomized control trial BPS study, Layous, Nelson, and Lyubomirsky (2012) found no differences between students who completed the BPS activity online versus in-person.
- *Peer testimonials* – In the same study, Layous, Nelson, and Lyubomirsky (2012) observed larger gains in well-being among students who read a testimonial extolling the virtues of the ‘initial hit’ activity than those in the control group. The results lent legitimacy to students’ beliefs in the self-efficacy of such activities for optimum results.
- *Self-affirmation and role models* – Walton & Cohen (2011) claimed that students’ sense of belonging increased as a result of reading affirmative statements, writing an essay on how these statements applied to their own college experience, and subsequently video-recording these to serve as role models for other students, seemingly validating the importance of role modeling, even if virtual, of successful prior students.
- *Imagery* – Layous, Nelson, and Lyubomirsky (2012) as well as Meevissen, Peters, and Alberts (2011) emphasize the positive results of using imagery: visualizing subjective feelings and emotions. After 20 minutes of BPS, Meevissen, Peters, and Alberts (2011) asked participants to visualize their BPS for five minutes, and to continue this exercise every day for the next two weeks. Participants averaged six days out of each week with the imagery exercise and achieved significant uplift in affect and optimism.

- *Repetition* – Layous, Nelson, and Lyubomirsky (2012) emphasize repetition: the former asked students to engage in BPS writing for four weeks, once a week, for ten minutes continuously, followed by a five-minute goal-setting exercise.
- *Time metrics* – Besides repetition or frequency, another more subjective metric seems key to the ‘initial hit:’ implying when follow-up will occur. Lewis and Oyserman (2015) claim that for the future to energize and motivate current action, it must feel imminent. If people know when a future event will occur but that time seems distant, time metrics influence plans to start or continue action. To create this sense of imminence, simply communicating how many days – not months or years – until graduation and/or until the next exercise can make a difference.
- *Success or failure-like context* – Oyserman, Destin, and Novin (2015) claim that BPS can motivate action but whether motivational power resides more in positive or more in negative future identities or avoiding these is not clear. This depends on whether the community college and, specifically, GateWay experience is perceived as success-likely or failure-likely by the individual student and may cause GateWay to consider crafting two versions for the ‘initial dose:’ one for success-likely and one for failure-likely contexts.

Appendix C

The Seeds: Three Messages GateWay Can Own

These three messages are based on two GateWay-specific themes as a starting point.

Theme 1: GateWay Geckos can stick to anything; we're made to stick.

Message 1: Did you know Alfred Binet invented the IQ test to track improvement in intelligence (Siegler, 1992)? Only recently have people forgotten that the brain is a muscle that grows with exercise. We are made for this opportunity, *we are made to stick*.

Message 2: Have you ever done something hard like a job, taking care of family, or fighting an injustice? College is like that, but over time it will become more natural – you belong here. We are made for this opportunity, *we are made to stick*.

Theme 2: GateWay Geckos always have their eyes open; we don't blink.

Message 3: Why are you at GateWay? You can make it happen; just remember why you are here. Keep your eyes on the prize, *we don't blink*.

The GMBS content will be primarily digital videos of student success stories that can be accessed and disseminated in a myriad of ways. Each video vignette will seek to leverage the concepts of growth mindset, belonging and self-efficacy and connect to the ethos of GateWay.

Appendix D

Character Strengths Presentation

DISCOVERING YOUR STRENGTHS

Understanding & Honoring Your Unique Character



a short film by Tiffany Shlain

“Each human being has a constellation of character strengths that make them distinct or unique.”

- VIA Institute on Character

VIA Character Institute (2018). *What are character strengths?* Retrieved from <https://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths>

WHAT ARE CHARACTER STRENGTHS?



Positive traits reflected in behaviors, feelings, and thoughts.

Morally valued aspects of personality.

Pathways to well-being.

Found universally across cultures, nations, religions, and faith traditions.

Niemiec, R. M. (2018). *Character strengths interventions: A field guide for practitioners*. Boston, MA: Hogrefe Publishing Corporation.

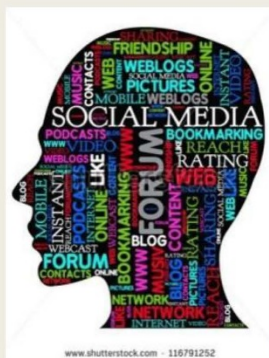
WHAT ARE YOUR CHARACTER STRENGTHS?

Taking the [VIA Survey of Character Strengths](#)

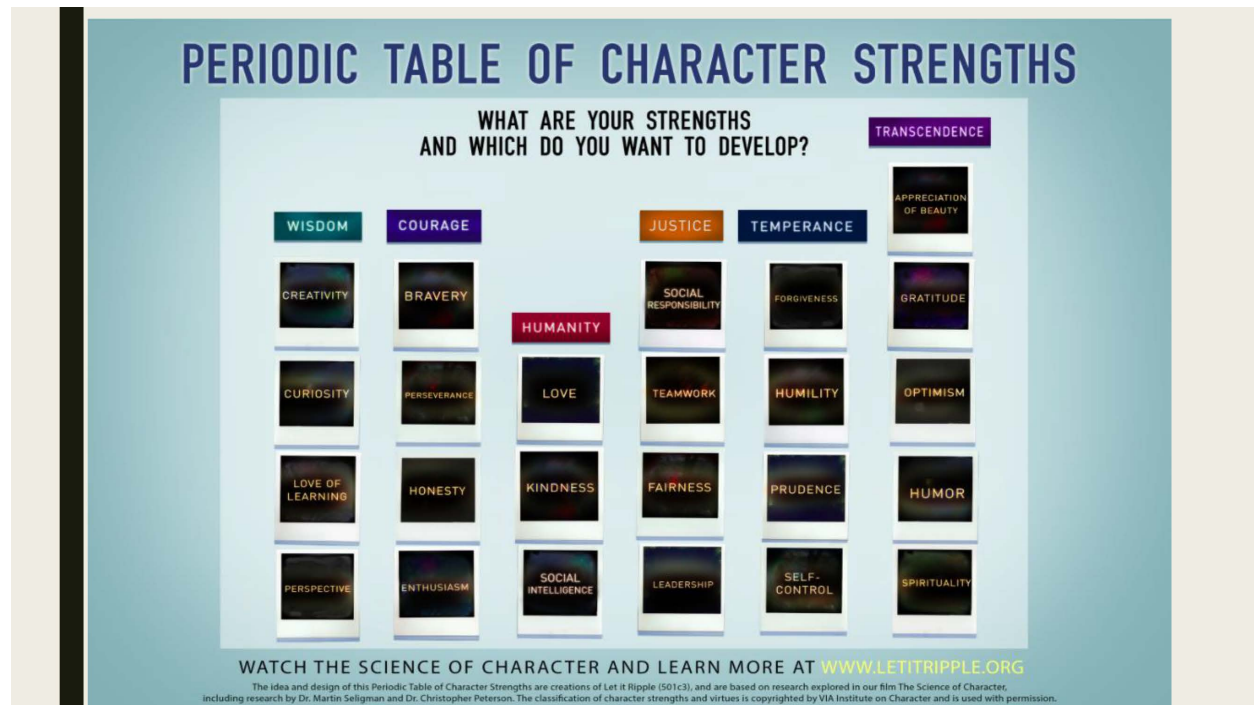
HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR CHARACTER STRENGTHS?



Elevator Pitch



PERSONAL BRAND



INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION & GROUP DISCUSSION

Choose one of your signature strengths and answer these questions:

- Why did you pick this strength? Describe how you use it in your daily life.
- Pick a goal that you want to achieve. Why did you pick this specific goal?
- Write three steps you will need to take to achieve this goal. For each of these three steps, describe how you will use this strength to complete it.

Niemiec, R. M. (2018). *Character strengths interventions: A field guide for practitioners*. Boston, MA: Hogrefe Publishing Corporation.

Appendix F

Overview of Measurement Tools and Suggested Use

Our experimental design includes three groups:

- Group 1: students at GateWay who participate in two independent variables: the FBS writing exercise and exposure to the GMBS intervention;
- Group 2: students at GateWay who do not participate in the FBS writing exercise, but will be exposed to one independent variable: the GMBS intervention at the Enrollment Center and/or when meeting with advisors; and
- Group 3 (Control Group): students in the larger Maricopa community college system external to GateWay.

We observe the impact of the application plan on Groups 1 and 2 and comparing any change in these metrics with changes in the control group's metrics, controlling for starting at different baselines.

Established Metrics at GateWay: we will begin by reviewing metrics that are already documented by GateWay.

- **Graduation Rates and Average GPA**
 - We predict that the more students interact with the success stories steeped in our themes of self-efficacy growth mindset, belonging, the better that their academic outcomes of GPA and graduation rate will be. We will evaluate how the GateWay campus performs versus its historic baseline GPA scores and graduation rate, adjusted for student profiles to ensure or adjust for comparability. Failure would be an inability to improve GPA and graduation rate, which would lead us to

reexamine our intervention themes, prompts, and student stories. If successful, we will look to build the intervention into a module versatile enough to be used at a wide array of community colleges.

- **Enrollment in “Skills for College Success” classes, “Gecko Gear Up” sessions, and New Student Orientation Programs**
 - Similar to graduation rates and GPA, these metrics are already measured by GateWay, and therefore will be an accessible tool to measure the impact of the Application Plan. Failure would be no change or a decrease in attendance. Any increase will result in a discussion with new students on the most effective aspects of the Application Plan.
- **Career Service and Service Learning Center Metrics** (number of participating students, number of appointments with Career Advisors) and **Academic Advisor metrics** (number of appointments with Academic Advisors)
 - Failure would be no change or a decrease in meetings with students. Any increase will result in a discussion with new students on the most effective aspects of the Application Plan.

New Metrics at GateWay that are Established in the Field of Positive Psychology: we suggest adding two highly validated metrics to assess the impact of the Application Plan.

- **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)**
 - SWLS is a psychometrically validated scale (Pavot, Diener, Colvin & Sandvik, 1991; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985)
 - SWLS is accessible and quick to administer (Diener et al., 1985), which makes it

easy for advisors to administer at check-ins or for students to complete online

- **The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)**
 - Specifically, we suggest using the PANAS scale (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988) to measure reactions to FBS writing exercise or the character strength exercises outlined in section three.
 - PANAS is a reliable and valid scale that can provide a quick picture of the impact of an experiment (Crawford & Henry, 2004)

New Metrics Designed Specifically for GateWay: we suggest implementing new forms of measurement to support advising community and students.

- **Future Best Self Rubrics** - we have designed two templates to support either the advising community in guiding students or in enabling students to conduct self-assessments. The construct for these rubrics is outlined in the following section.

Future Best Self Rubric Design

In discussing the FBS writing exercise or career and life goals with advisors, students convey important information. The information they convey connects to key areas explored in the three sections of focus: *future-mindedness* in the ‘initial hit,’ *self-efficacy* in the ‘initial hit’ and in the surrounding environment at the Enrollment Center, and a sense of *meaning* that develops through periodic check-ins over the students’ college career. To support and guide advisors in their interactions with students, we have developed a rubric that advisors can quickly complete after meeting with students to track their progress, assess their strengths and spot for places where they might need more support.

- **Choice of Rubric Type: Multi-dimensional**
 - Rubric development applies to a range of performance types, such as writing or speaking (Suskie, 2018), so we have adapted some of the core frameworks into this model. Multidimensional rubrics allow for users to get a better sense of the areas in which students can improve rather than using holistic rubrics which evaluate a performance overall (Suskie, 2018).
 - Multidimensional rubrics might require more training because users need to understand the distinctions between the dimensions: in this case, future-mindedness, self-efficacy, and meaning, and the different levels of the dimensions (Suskie, 2018).
 - The dimension in the rubric were informed by Lens' (1986) work on future-mindedness, Betz' (2004) work on self-efficacy, and Martela and Steger's (2016) work on meaning.
- **Choice of Educational Model: Formative**
 - Formative assessments are focused on assessing student learning and shaping further learning in comparison to summative assessments that function more like a snapshot of current knowledge (Mislevy, 2018).
 - Formative assessments can provide more individualized feedback by reviewing individual performances on certain sections (Mislevy, 2018). In this case, the use of a multidimensional rubric can assist advisors in shaping the learning process by focusing on the particular areas in the rubric where students are most in need.
- **Additional Notes to Consider (revise rubrics as needed):**
 - For either rubric, advisors will need to be trained to understand the distinctions

between the categories. Best practices for rubric training includes examples of each point on the rubric (Baldwin, Fowles, & Livingston, 2005). Student stories can be used to exemplify each point on the rubric.

- For the student rubric, students should also be trained by being exposed to examples of different student stories.
- Career and life goals are combined in both rubrics.
- Student rubric does not indicate levels of success, only personal statements to avoid stigma.

Future Best Self Rubric for Career Advisors and/or Academic Advisors

	Future-mindedness	Self-efficacy	Meaning
Clear	Demonstrates thoughtfulness and clarity when discussing future career and life goals	Demonstrates confidence aligned with an awareness of personal abilities and ability to affect external situations	Demonstrates a thoughtful and clear sense of purpose in both career and life goals
Progressing	Generally, demonstrates an attention to future-oriented career and life goals, but may express some hesitation and lack of clarity	Shows some confidence in being able to affect external situations and demonstrates a general awareness of personal capabilities, but not consistently	Has some sense of connection to a larger purpose, even if it is not clearly defined, in career and life goals
Needs Guidance	Demonstrates little attention to future career and life goals	Demonstrates little understanding of personal capabilities or the confidence to apply them in external situations	Demonstrates little connection to a larger purpose in career or life goals

Strength-Spotting: Top 3 Character Strengths

Please choose from the bank below and write the student's top three strengths here:

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Strength Bank:

Wisdom and Knowledge: *creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, perspective*
Courage: *bravery, perseverance, honesty, zest*
Humanity: *love, kindness, social intelligence*
Justice: *teamwork, fairness, leadership*
Temperance: *forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation*
Transcendence: *appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality*

Future Best Self Rubric for Students' Self-Assessment

Future-mindedness	Self-efficacy	Meaning
I am thoughtful and clear when discussing future career and life goals	I am confident in my own abilities and I understand how I am able to affect external situations	I have a clear sense of purpose in both my career and life goals
I have a general understanding of my future career and life goals, but I don't always have a clear sense of them	I am somewhat confident in my own abilities and I have some understanding of how I might affect external situations, but I'm not always sure	I have some sense of connection to a larger purpose in my career and life goals, though it's not clearly defined
I don't often think about future career or life goals	I am not often confident in my abilities and I don't always see how I might affect external situations	I don't have an overarching sense of purpose in my career or life goals

Strength-Spotting: Top 3 Character Strengths

Please choose from the bank below and write three strengths you see in yourself here:

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Strength Bank:

<p>Wisdom and Knowledge: <i>creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, perspective</i></p> <p>Courage: <i>bravery, perseverance, honesty, zest</i></p> <p>Humanity: <i>love, kindness, social intelligence</i></p> <p>Justice: <i>teamwork, fairness, leadership</i></p> <p>Temperance: <i>forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation</i></p> <p>Transcendence: <i>appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality</i></p>
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