The EdVisions Hope Survey Variables

Autonomy

What is It?

"Autonomy" refers to the opportunity for self-management and choice. Erik Erikson believed that the need for autonomy is innate in all human beings and that a frustration of this need during childhood or adolescence would lead to maladaptive behavior and neurosis. Subsequently, Richard deCharms argued that all humans strive for "personal causation", or in other words, to be the origin of their own behaviors. According to deCharms, when an individual is able to make decisions regarding things that effect them, that person is said to have an *internal locus of causality*. An individual acting under direction from another person has an *external locus of causality*. He hypothesized that an internal local of causality would lead to stronger motivation and greater engagement. Richard Steinberg has emphasized *adolescence* as a time where the need for autonomy, particularly from parents and teachers, is particularly strong.

Why is it Important in School?

Motivation in school is higher when a classroom situation is perceived as supportive of the need for autonomy, or, in other words, acknowledges the student's personal point of view and conveys choice in satisfying requirements. High-autonomy situations stimulate student motivation, engagement, and persistence, which in turn results in higher levels of achievement and lower dropout rates. In contrast, a controlling approach in the classroom creates a reduced perception of autonomy, which can interfere with student learning and creativity, especially with regards to more complex tasks.

Autonomy has also been found to be essential to healthy psychological development. Less autonomy is associated with higher levels of anxiety and negative coping strategies, whereas higher levels of autonomy are associated with positive coping strategies. Lack of autonomy in childhood and adolescence can lead to various forms of psychopathology and increased participation in high-risk behaviors.

What Can Teachers/Advisors Do?

Teachers are able to support the need for autonomy while maintaining control in school by setting rules and boundaries that are not seen as controlling but rather as "informational", i.e., impersonally stated to avoid a direct challenge and conveying acceptance and respect for the viewpoints of the students. A controlling approach, on the other hand, could include commanding language (i.e. "must", "have to", etc.), micro-management of student actions, and little opportunity for student choice in meeting class requirements.

How is it Measured?

This construct is measured using the "Learning Climate Questionnaire", which was created by Drs. Ed Deci and Richard Ryan at the University of Rochester. This scale consistently demonstrates reliability (Cronbach's α) above .70 and has been subject to extensive tests of validity. The scale has been used throughout the educational psychology literature, including:

- Black, A. E., & Deci, E. L. (2000). The effects of instructors' autonomy support and students' autonomous motivation on learning organic chemistry: A self-determination theory perspective. *Science Education, 84,* 740-756.
- Williams, G. C., & Deci, E. L. (1996). Internalization of biopsychosocial values by medical students: A test of self-determination theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70,* 767-779.

Belongingness

What is It?

"Belongingness" (sometimes referred to as "relatedness") is a measure of the depth and quality of the interpersonal relationships in an individual's life. The need to belong, or the need to form strong, mutually supportive relationships and to maintain these relationships through regular contact, is a fundamental human motivation that can affect emotional patterns and cognitive processes. Supportive relationships can serve to buffer the impact of stressful life events, leading to superior adjustment and well-being.

Why is it Important in School?

Both peer relations and teacher-student relationships are vital to maintaining high levels of motivation and engagement in school. Positive peer relations in the school setting can refer to either the number of supportive, intimate friendships maintained by a student, or to general popularity among the wider peer group, which leads to a sense of being accepted and respected at school. Both types of positive peer relations have been found to influence school competence, involvement in the classroom, and academic achievement. Positive teacher-student relationships are also important in that they can enhance student motivation, engagement, coping with failure, and achievement.

In contrast, socially rejected students show lower levels of engagement, have higher levels of academic and behavioral problems, and can be at significant risk of dropping out of school and eventually running afoul of the law. In the school setting, socially rejected students are defined as those children nominated by others in the classroom as being someone who, for example, is "liked least" or "fights a lot". In addition to social rejection, friendships with negative features (i.e., regular conflict, rivalry) can predict poorer school adjustment and more disruptive behavior.

Belongingness also has a profound impact on adolescent mental heath and well-being. Intimate, supportive adolescent friendships can enhance adjustment, perceived competence, and self-esteem, as well as reduce emotional distress and suicide ideation and lead to lower levels of involvement in high-risk behaviors, including violence, drug use and teenage pregnancy. Children with low levels of perceived friendship support are at a higher risk for depression than children who report supportive friendships. Belongingness becomes especially important to well-being as children enter adolescence. During this phase, the ability to establish and maintain positive peer relations is linked to higher levels of sociability, perceived competence and self-esteem, and reduced hostility, anxiousness and depression.

What Can Teachers/Advisors Do?
Positive relationships are most often seen when teachers exhibit genuine caring and concern for student learning, a democratic approach in the classroom, and respect for individual differences. Though this kind of modeling, teachers can also encourage students to develop positive, supportive relationships with one another. Various instructional practices, such as cooperative learning or student tutoring, can also be used to encourage more positive student relationships.

How is it Measured?
This construct is measured using the "Classroom Life Scale", which was created by Drs. David W. and Roger T. Johnson at the University of Minnesota. The components of this scale consistently demonstrate a reliability (Cronbach's α) at or above .90 and have been subject to extensive tests of validity. The scale has been used throughout the educational and social psychology literature, including:

- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., Buckman, L. A., & Richards, P. S. (1985). The effect of prolonged implementation of cooperative learning on social support within the classroom. *The Journal of Psychology, 119,* 405-411.
- Wentzel, K. R. (1994). Relations of social goal pursuit to social acceptance, classroom behavior, and perceived social support. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 86,* 173-182.
- Wentzel, K. R. (1997). Student motivation in middle school: The role of perceived pedagogical caring. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89,* 411-419.

Goal Orientation

What is It?
A goal orientation represents the reasons behind a student's effort to achieve. A "learning" or "mastery" or "task" goal orientation represents a desire to achieve purely for the purpose of obtaining knowledge and increasing skills. In contrast, a "performance" goal orientation represents the desire to succeed in comparison to others, and thus the purpose of all activity in the classroom is not the enjoyment of learning or to satisfy personal interest but to demonstrate superiority or avoid the appearance of failure.

Why is it Important in School?
Students with task goal orientations seek challenges and show persistence in the face of adversity, use more effective learning strategies and have more positive attitudes, and are more cognitively engaged in learning. A task goal orientation is very much internal to the student, without need for external comparisons, and as a consequence has been linked to higher levels of motivation and, in turn, academic achievement.

Students with a performance goal orientation seek to avoid challenge and, in the face of failure, attribute their results to lack of ability and exhibit a "learned helplessness" response (i.e. negative affect, strategy deterioration and disengagement). As a result, performance goal orientation leads to reduced motivation and academic achievement.

What Can Teachers/Advisors Do?
Students' personal goal orientations are strongly influenced by the goal orientation of their school environment. Teachers can encourage a learning goal orientation by demonstrating consistent expectations of all students, emphasizing understanding rather than rote memorization, recognizing student effort regardless of the outcome, and realizing that mistakes are part of the learning process and encouraging students not to worry too much about them. In contrast, a performance goal

orientation results when teachers exhibit favoritism toward certain high-achieving students or make it clear that they have given up on certain students who have not been able to achieve to certain standards.

How is it Measured?
This construct is measured using the "Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey", which was created by Drs. Carol Midgley and Martin Maehr at the University of Michigan. The components of this scale consistently demonstrate a reliability (Cronbach's α) at or above .80 and have been subject to extensive tests of validity. The scale has been used throughout the educational psychology literature, including:

- Anderman, E., & Midgley, C. (1997).Changes in personal achievement goals and the perceived classroom goal structures across the transition to middle level schools. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *22*, 269-298.
- Anderman, E. M., Maehr, M. L., & Midgley, C. (1999). Declining motivation after the transition to middle school: Schools can make a difference. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 32*, 131-147.
- Roeser, R. W., Midgley, C., & Urdan, T. C. (1996). Perceptions of the school psychological environment and early adolescents' psychological and behavioral functioning in school: The mediating role of goals and belonging. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 88,* 408-422.

Academic Press

What is It?
Academic press is a consistently high expectation on the part of the teachers that students will do their best work. The emphasis is on a press for understanding, rather than a press for performance, which can be detrimental to student achievement. In other words, it is important to maintain a task or mastery goal orientation while pressing for student understanding, which emphasizes deep understanding, rather than lapsing into a performance goal orientation, in which students are pressed simply to obtain a high grade.

Why is it Important in School?
School environments high in academic press have been found to encourage more effective student learning strategies and greater levels of student achievement. If a task or mastery goal orientation also exists, then the impact of a press for understanding can contribute to student achievement over and above goal orientation.

What Can Teachers/Advisors Do?
Teachers can press students by encouraging them to think deeply about questions, take on challenging tasks, and explain their reasoning when presenting solutions to problems.

How is it Measured?
This construct is measured using the "Academic Press for Understanding" scale, which was created by Drs. Michael Middleton at the University of New Hampshire and Carol Midgley at the University of Michigan. The components of this scale demonstrate reliability (Cronbach's α) of .70. The scale was used in the following:

- Middleton, M. J., & Midgley, C. (2002). Beyond motivation: Middle school students' perceptions of press for understanding in math. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 27,* 373-391.

Engagement

What is It?

"Engagement" refers to the student's behavior and attitudes in school. Being behaviorally engaged, for example, means that a student works hard, concentrates, and pays attention. When a student is not behaviorally engaged, they are bored, distracted, and doing just enough to get by. Being emotionally engaged means that a student enjoys being in school and learning new things, whereas an emotionally disengaged student feels worried or discouraged and believes that school is not a fun place to be.

Why is it Important in School?

The quality of a student's engagement in school is a reflection of the amount of effort and persistence they put into their learning. If a student is not engaged, then they will likely not be able to complete their work on time and will not achieve to their potential. An engaged learner, however, will attack their schoolwork with passion and will regularly achieve solid or outstanding results. The quality of the learning is also superior in that an engaged learner will obtain a deeper understanding of the material and retain the knowledge for a longer period of time.

What Can Teachers/Advisors Do?

Engagement in learning is encouraged when students' core needs developmental are met in school. In other words, if the school environment is perceived as providing opportunity for autonomy and the development of belongingness, as well as encouraging a task or learning goal orientation instead of a performance goal orientation, then students will be more engaged in their learning.

How is it Measured?

This construct is measured using the "Engagement vs. Disaffection with Learning", which was created by Dr. Ellen Skinner at Portland State University. The components of this scale consistently demonstrate a reliability (Cronbach's α) at or above .90 and have been subject to extensive tests of validity. The scale has been used throughout the educational psychology literature, including:

- Patrick, B. C., Skinner, E. A., & Connell, J. P. (1993). What motivates children's behavior and emotion? The joint effects of perceived control and autonomy in the academic domain. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65,* 781-791.
- Furrer, C., & Skinner, E. (2003). Sense of relatedness as a factor in children's academic engagement and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95,* 148-162.
- Skinner, E. A., & Belmont, M. J. (1993). Motivation in the classroom: Reciprocal effects of teacher behavior and student engagement across the school year. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 85,* 571-581.

Hope

What is It?

According to hope theory, hope reflects individuals' perceptions regarding their ability to clearly conceptualize their goals, develop the specific strategies to reach those goals (i.e., pathways thinking), and initiate and sustain the activities in support of those strategies (i.e., agency thinking). According to hope theory, a goal can be anything that an individual desires to experience, create, obtain, accomplish, or become. A goal may be related to grades in school or activities outside of school, but the important thing is that the goal has *value* to the individual.

Why is it Important in School?
Hope can benefit students during their time in school as well as in other parts of their lives. For example, higher-hope students not only set more challenging school-related goals for themselves than lower-hope students, but tend to perceive that they will be more successful at attaining these goals even if they do not experience immediate success (i.e., resilience, positive self-beliefs).

Higher hope people also perform better in college. For example, hope scores can predict final grades in a college class even after taking into account the grades on the first exam in the class. In addition, hope scores can predict college grade point averages even after controlling for entrance examination scores on the ACT. In other words, for students of relatively equal ability, the higher-hope students will have a greater chance of success in college.

In another study, 57% of the higher-hope individuals had graduated from college after six years, while only 40% of the lower-hope individuals had graduated, and 25% of the lower-hope individuals were dismissed because of poor grades, while only 7% of higher-hope individuals had been dismissed. Higher levels of hope, in this case, can be equated with persistence. Outside of school, higher hope people report more optimism about life, more physical health, more self-esteem, and greater levels of happiness, as well as less depression and hopelessness.

What Can Teachers/Advisors Do?
The teacher can support the process of developing higher levels of hope by encouraging students to set challenging goals for themselves and supporting their efforts to achieve those goals by modeling proactive behavior, working together to develop a project plan and adjust the plan for any roadblocks that are encountered, and providing constructive feedback whenever possible. A project plan should ideally contain many small steps that can be easily identified and tracked, giving the student a clear picture of their progress and a feeling of accomplishment for each step that is completed. Students that are especially anxious or unfamiliar with the process of setting goals and developing plans should be given more intensive coaching, whereas students with more experience can be given more latitude and freedom to self-monitor their activities, with regular check-in.

It should be noted that the most successful teachers will likely be those that are able to establish positive relationships with their students. These relationships form the basis for the actions described above, and without these relationships in place, the above actions will be less effective. A positive relationship is measured in terms of liking, trusting, and respecting one another's opinions and attitudes, as well as a feeling of mutual commitment to success in school.

How is it Measured?
This construct is measured using the "Dispositional Hope Scale", which was created by Dr. Rick Snyder at the University of Kansas. The components of this scale consistently demonstrate reliability (Cronbach's α) at or above .70 and have been subject to extensive tests of validity. The scale has been used throughout the clinical psychology literature, including:
- Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T., Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C. & Harney, P. (1991). The Will and the Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*, 575-585.
- Snyder, C. R. (2002). Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. *Psychological Inquiry, 13*, 249-275.