GROWTH MINDSET AND THE STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Recent research supports the claim that a growth mindset (viewing academic ability as malleable rather than fixed) can support students’ motivation and success in school, especially when facing challenges. Although these individual processes are theoretically shaped by the local social environment, we know relatively little about how contextual factors shape mindsets. Where is a growth mindset more common? And where is it most beneficial? This project explores these questions using administrative data from several large California school districts. I draw on course enrollment pathways to characterize the local structure of curricular opportunities, and I assess how these opportunities relate to the prevalence and benefits of a growth mindset.