Motivating Study Group Attendance with the Growth Mindset
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Summary
- We utilize an information intervention to motivate attendance in study groups, a program organized by the Science Learning Center at the University of Michigan.
- Our goal is to reduce absenteeism because a lack of attendance in course activities can be an indicator of larger disengagement and poor academic outcomes (1,2,3,4).
- The information intervention is based on the Growth Mindset Theory (GMT) developed by Prof. Carol Dweck. We plan to use the information to teach students the benefits of having a growth mindset and ways to develop it.
- Although treated students are more likely to know about the GMT, we do not find treated students attend the study groups more or have a higher course grade.
- Survey evidence shows that the intervention might fail because treated students have not yet actually developed attitudes aligned with the Growth Mindset.

Design – The Intervention Messages
A total of four messages were sent out during Fall 2015:

MSG1 sent after the 1st exam:
Control students saw:

Treated students saw:

MSG2 sent on 10/23:
Control students saw:

Treated students saw:

MSG3 sent after the 2nd exam
Control students saw:

Treated students saw:

MSG4 sent on 11/20: before the 3rd exam (12/8) and final (12/18)
Control students saw:

Treated students saw:

Results
- Treated students are far more likely to report that they have heard about the GMT. Our intervention passes the manipulation check.
- However, we do not find that treated students attend the study groups more or have a higher course grade. We also do not find that having treated group members affects these outcomes.
- Using a mindset test (5), we find that treated students are no more likely to hold attitudes aligned with the Growth Mindset.
- Our results suggest that future interventions based on the GMT need to focus more on cultivating mindsets, in order for the intervention messages to affect the outcomes significantly. Just sending out messages is not enough.

References

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