

RESILIENCE FORUM  
26/11/2014

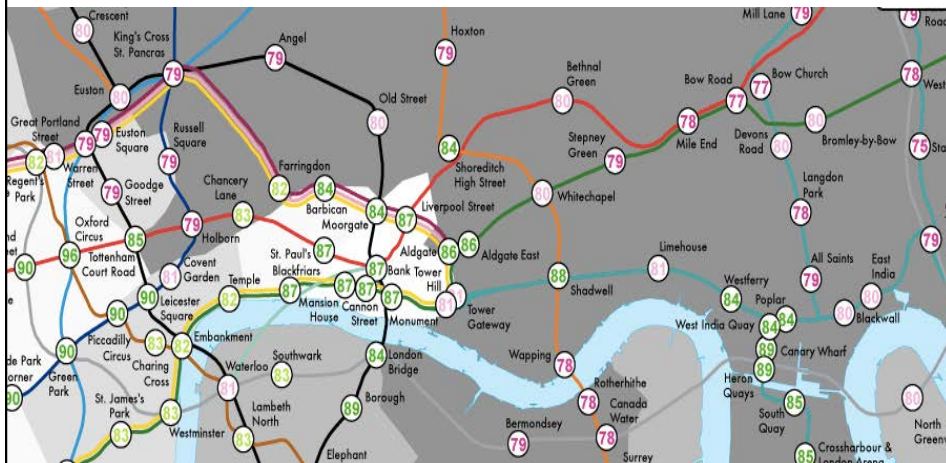
# **FOSTERING RESILIENCE: IMPROVING PERSPECTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS & YOUNG PEOPLE**

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## **INEQUALITIES**

**Inequalities are associated with profound differences in educational attainment and career opportunities. Social and health inequalities go hand in hand: being poorer or coming from a disadvantaged background more generally is associated with inferior physical and mental health; durations of a healthy life and life expectancies are frequently considerably shorter.**

## LIFE EXPECTANCIES 'LIVES ON THE LINE'



<http://life.mappinglondon.co.uk/>

James Cheshire (@spatialanalysis)  
& Oliver O'Brien (@oobr)

## POVERTY AND LONG TERM CONDITIONS: COPD

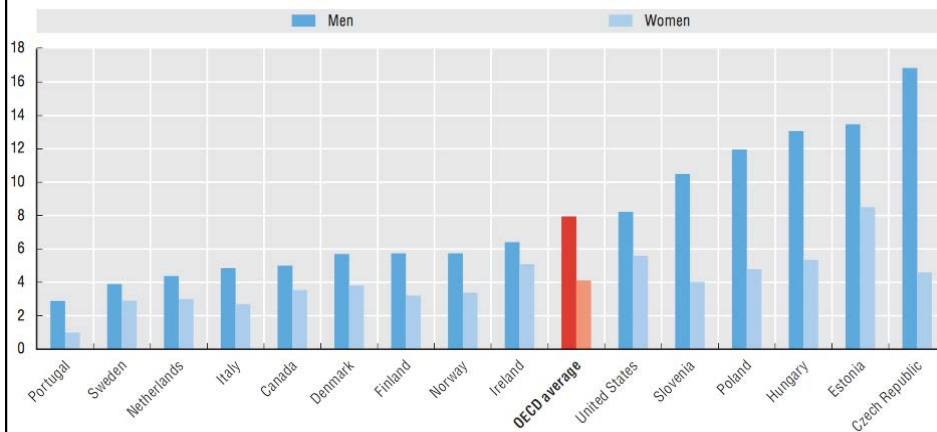
Table 1. Rates of admission to hospital with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (with 95% confidence intervals) from 2001 to 2010 per 10,000 person years by season

	Spring (March–May)	Summer (June–Aug)	Autumn (Sep–Nov)	Winter (Dec–Feb)	Winter – Summer difference
SIMD 5 (least deprived)	28 (27 to 29)	23 (22 to 24)	26 (25 to 27)	31 (30 to 32)	7 (8 to 9)
SIMD 4	45 (44 to 46)	38 (37 to 39)	42 (40 to 43)	50 (49 to 52)	12 (10 to 14)
SIMD 3	67 (66 to 69)	56 (55 to 58)	62 (61 to 64)	74 (73 to 76)	18 (16 to 20)
SIMD 2	100 (98 to 102)	86 (84 to 88)	96 (94 to 98)	112 (110 to 114)	26 (23 to 28)
SIMD 1 (most deprived)	141 (138 to 143)	120 (118 to 122)	137 (135 to 140)	159 (157 to 162)	39 (36 to 42)

Person-years for each quintile were calculated as one-fifth of the sum of each mid-year estimate for Scotland for the decade 2001–2010.  
SIMD=Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

McAllister et al, 2013

## LIFE EXPECTANCY GAPS BETWEEN LEVELS OF EDUCATION, 2010



Very pronounced for men

OECD (2012), *Education at a Glance 2012: Highlights*, OECD Publishing

## INQUALITIES: PERSISTENCE AND ACCENTUATION

**A considerable amount of research shows that inequalities are transmitted from generation to generation, and persist throughout the life-course of individuals. For a number of historical and economic factors, inequalities have increased and are particularly difficult to overcome for those who find themselves 'at the bottom of the heap'. This pattern can be found in many countries, but is fairly pronounced in the UK.**

# MailOnline

**Britain 'has worst social mobility in the Western world and becomes ingrained in children as young as three'**

1 May 2012

## TRANSMISSION OF INEQUALITY

**Wage persistence – very strong for UK males**

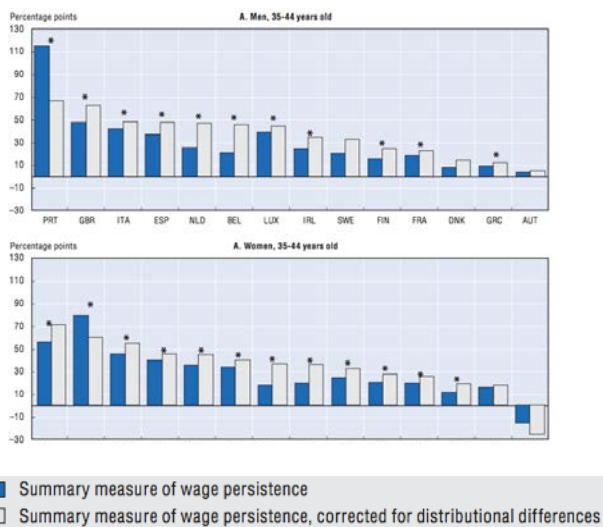
**Education persistence – UK fares well (but there are concerns about the quality of large minority of graduates)**

**Teacher pay, social and tax policies shape the extent of the effect of parental background on achievements**

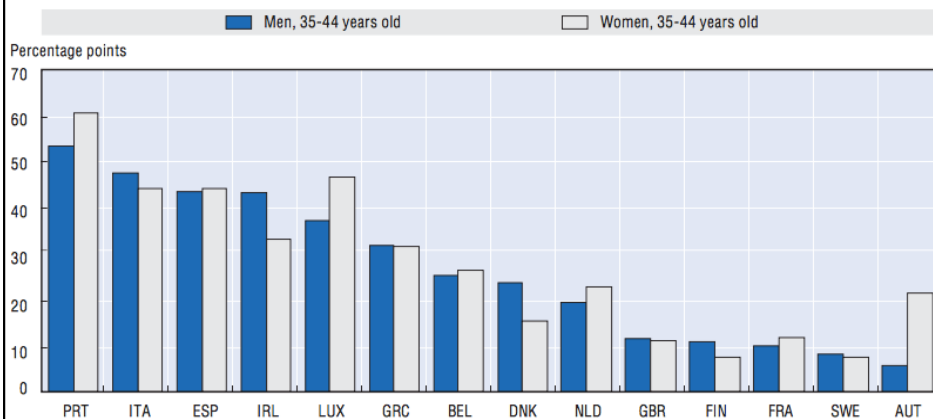
**Examples include school practices that start grouping or “tracking” students only late in their educational curricula so as to encourage the social mix within schools, or government-supported loan or grant systems that reduce students’ dependence on their families for financing their post-secondary studies.**

*OECD, Education at a Glance, 2012*

### SUMMARY MEASURE OF WAGE PERSISTENCE ACROSS GENERATIONS FOR SOME OECD COUNTRIES



### SUMMARY MEASURE OF PERSISTENCE IN BELOW UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR SOME OECD COUNTRIES



## INTERSECTIONALITY THEORY

Intersectionality theory possibly provides a new perspective on inequalities and social disadvantages; it goes beyond the classic demographic approach focusing on single variables in isolation or at best through linear additive models.

The theory argues that disadvantages (oppression, domination and discrimination) can combine in complex and unique ways. Most cited example is a black woman in US.

Intersectionality theory is highly relevant to people and groups characterized by multiple and complex disadvantages.

This theory can help to improve our understanding of multiple and complex disadvantages.

*Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1989*

## RESILIENCE

Resilience refers to successful adaptation in the face of adversity. Attempts at fostering resilience have focused on interventions informed by cognitive behavioural therapy and a focus on the individual; a more contextually sensitive approach focuses on fostering resilient families, groups and communities, informed by ideas coming from social work, social network theory and systemic approaches focusing on families, schools and other 'settings' or social entities.

## OVERCOMING INEQUALITIES

One possible way of intervening in the transmission and persistence of inequalities is to facilitate resilient moves in education and training opportunities. The seminar will introduce and discuss relatively simple and short interventions which enhance utilisation and uptake of opportunities in secondary school and at college. Both studies demonstrate considerable changes and improvements with regards to study practices and identity in students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### ILLUSTRATION 1 - UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: CLOSING THE SOCIAL-CLASS ACHIEVEMENT GAP

University education reproduces and widens the *social-class achievement gap* between first generation and continuing generation students

1<sup>st</sup> generation students (= student's parents did not attend university) require financial resources and academic skills, but also psychological resources:

- believe that people who come from backgrounds without university education deserve to attend college and thrive
- these students may feel left out
- need to learn about/adjust to the middle-class culture of higher education ('rules of the game')
- Universities do not acknowledge social class differences at university (it may never get mentioned)

*Stephens et al, 2014*

## INTERGROUP DIALOGUE

***Intergroup* dialogue groups bring together people from diverse backgrounds (race, ethnicity, gender, social class/ socio-economic status, sexual preference).**

**Participation increases *intergroup* understanding, collaboration, empathy and civic engagement.**

**Increases students sense of comfort, ability to operate in diverse settings, and equip them to better navigate their own university experience.**

*Stephens et al, 2014*  
*Gurin et al, 2013*

## IDENTITY SAVE SETTINGS

In classrooms where students feel safe and have a sense of belonging (= absence of stigma and discrimination), they develop stronger attachments to school and achieve at higher levels, even when confronted with considerable social and economic disparities.

***Identity save settings* are characterised by absence of stigma and discrimination.**

See also:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AcM-PsAgew>

*Dorothy Steele & Becki Cohn-Vargas, 2013*



## METHODS

**Mean age: 18 years, gender balance 50/50, final sample n= 147**

**Groups: 1<sup>st</sup> generation = 66; continuing generation = 81**

**Low income (based on university records)**

- 59% of 1<sup>st</sup> generation
- 9% of continuing generation

**Random group allocation to discussion panels:**

- Intervention: difference education panel
- Comparison ('control'): standard panel

### DIFFERENCE PANEL

Can you provide an example of an obstacle that you faced when you came to [university name] and how you resolved it?"

1<sup>st</sup> generation panelist: "Because my parents didn't go to college, they weren't always able to provide me the advice I needed. So it was sometimes hard to figure out which classes to take and what I wanted to do in the future. But there are other people who can provide that advice, and I learned that I needed to rely on my adviser more than other students."

Continuing-generation panelist, after mentioning her parents' graduate-level degrees, responded: "I went to a small private school, and it was great college prep. We got lots of one-on-one attention, so it was a big adjustment going into classes with 300 people. I felt less overwhelmed when I took the time to get to know other students in the class."

### STANDARD PANEL

"What do you do to be successful in your classes?"

One panelist advised:

"Go to class, and pay attention. If you don't understand something or have a hard time with the material, meet with your teaching assistant or professor during office hours."

## FINDINGS

The subsequent slides are included for those who want to get an idea of the size of the effects (and can read these kind of stats).

You may want to move straight to main finding.

**Table 1. Between-Conditions Comparison of the Percentage of Responses Coded Within Each Coding Category.**

**Table 1.** Between-Conditions Comparison of the Percentage of Responses Coded Within Each Coding Category

Coding category	Sample responses	Difference-education		$\chi^2(1, N = 140)$
		condition	Standard condition	
People's different backgrounds matter	"People from different backgrounds have different expectations of college." "College means very different things to different people."	44.29	12.86	16.94***
People with backgrounds "like mine" can succeed	"People have come from a background like mine." "I feel like I'm in the right place because students from backgrounds like mine understand the stresses I have."	67.14	18.57	33.72***

\*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

Stephens N M et al. *Psychological Science*  
2014;25:943-953

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**Table 2. Multivariate Analysis of Covariance Results for the Psychosocial Measures.****Table 2. Multivariate Analysis of Covariance Results for the Psychosocial Measures**

Measure	Sample item	Difference-education condition	Standard condition	F(1, 126)
Stress and anxiety				
Psychological distress	"During the past 30 days, how much of the time did you feel worried?"	2.24 (0.09)	2.49 (0.09)	3.65*
Social-identity threat	"Other students at [university name] make unfair assumptions about me based on my background and previous experiences."	2.80 (0.16)	3.23 (0.15)	3.75*
Psychological adjustment				
Psychological well-being	"At present, how satisfied are you with your life?"	3.40 (0.08)	3.16 (0.08)	4.73*
Social fit	"I expect that I will belong as a student at [university name]."	5.63 (0.12)	5.13 (0.11)	9.45**
Academic engagement				
Perceived preparation	"I am well prepared to be academically successful as a student at [university name]."	5.93 (0.13)	5.60 (0.13)	3.40†
Academic identification	"How important is being a college student to you?"	6.41 (0.11)	6.06 (0.11)	5.12*
Social engagement				
Social support	"How often do you feel like you have someone who understands your problems?"	3.39 (0.08)	3.19 (0.08)	3.53†
Maintain relationships	"Number of hours talking on phone to family and friends from home."	4.76 (0.50)	3.03 (0.48)	6.11*

Note: Numbers in the condition columns are estimated marginal means. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors of the mean. All analyses included race and ethnicity (0 = disadvantaged, 1 = advantaged), gender (0 = male, 1 = female), income (0 = not low income, 1 = low income), highest SAT scores, and high school grade point average as covariates.  
† $p \leq .10$ . \* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p \leq .01$ .

Stephens N M et al. Psychological Science  
2014;25:943-953

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**Table 3. Analysis of Covariance Results for the Difference-Education-Framework Measures.****Table 3. Analysis of Covariance Results for the Difference-Education-Framework Measures**

Measure	Sample item	Difference-education condition	Standard condition	F(1, 130)
Appreciation of difference	"Students with different backgrounds can find their own way of being successful at [university name]."	5.84 (0.09)	5.59 (0.09)	3.91*
Perspective taking	"Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place."	3.85 (0.06)	3.67 (0.06)	4.00*

Note: Numbers in the condition columns are estimated marginal means. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors of the mean. All analyses included race and ethnicity (0 = disadvantaged, 1 = advantaged), gender (0 = male, 1 = female), income (0 = not low income, 1 = low income), highest SAT scores, and high school grade point average as covariates.  
\* $p \leq .05$ .

Stephens N M et al. Psychological Science 2014;25:943-953

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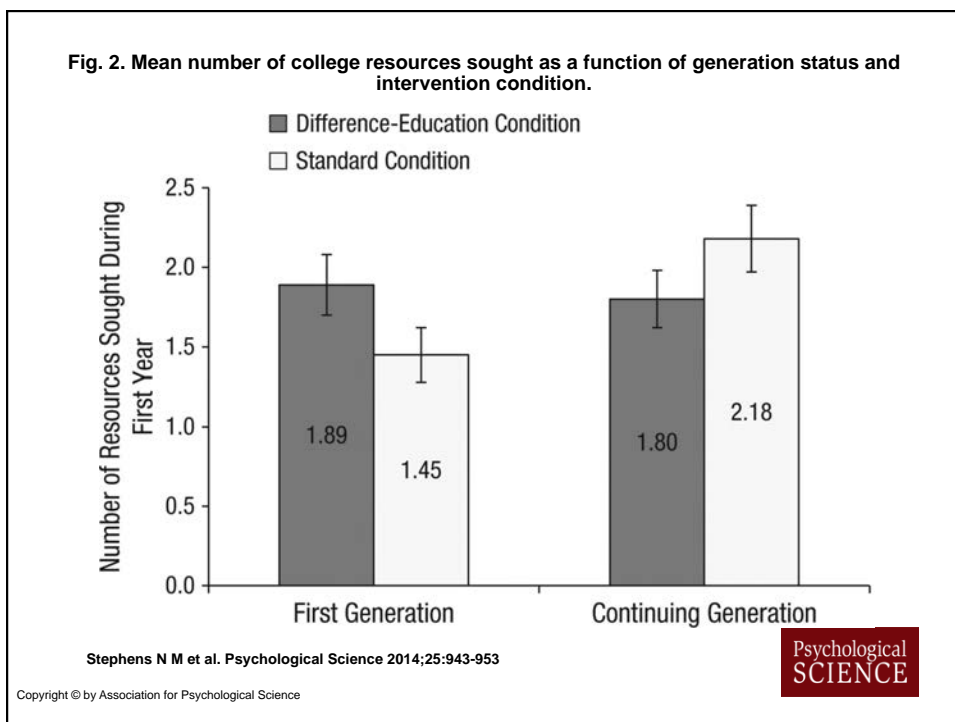
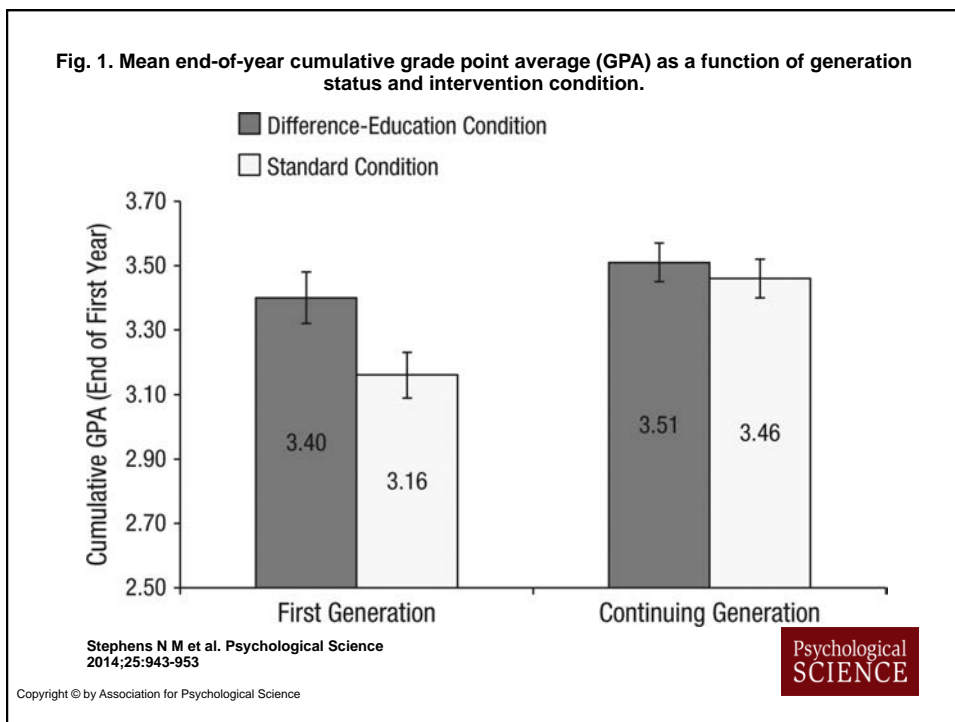
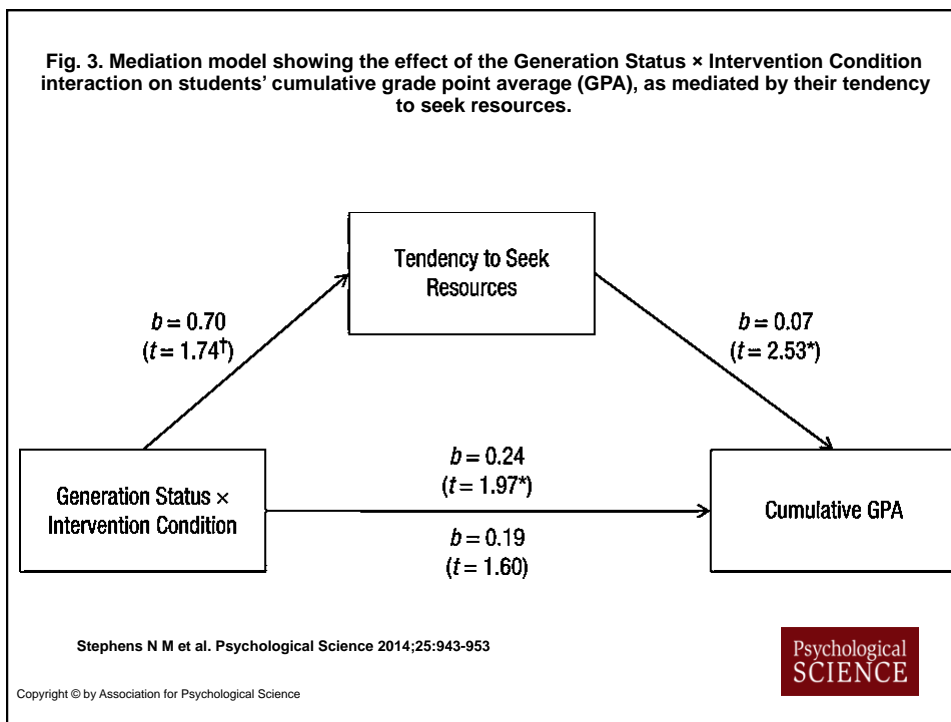


Fig. 3. Mediation model showing the effect of the Generation Status × Intervention Condition interaction on students' cumulative grade point average (GPA), as mediated by their tendency to seek resources.



## MAIN FINDING

A 1-hr difference-education intervention at the start of university ...

- reduced *social-class achievement gap* among 1<sup>st</sup> generation and continuing-generation college students by 63% at the end of their 1<sup>st</sup> year, and
- improved first-generation students' college transition on numerous psychosocial outcomes (e.g., psychological adjustment and academic and social engagement).

Stephens et al, 2014

## MESSAGE

“people’s different backgrounds ...

- **matter, and people with different backgrounds can be successful;**
- **can and should be leveraged to foster more inclusive and equitable schools, work places and communities.”**

*Stephens N M et al. Psychological Science 2014;25:943-953*

## ILLUSTRATION 2: POSSIBLE SELVES

- **are the future-oriented components of self-concept.**
- **“Youth construct possible selves by synthesising what they know about their traits and abilities and what they know of the skills needed to become various future selves” (e.g. Cantor et al, 1987)**

*Oyserman et al, 2002  
Oyserman et al, 2006*

## ACADEMIC POSSIBLE SELVES (APS) AND 'OVER-INTERPRETATION OF DIFFICULTY'

'To judge what this difficulty means, whether academic possible selves (APSs) are "true" possible selves (PSs) or contradict other important social identities, to judge whether attaining these PSs is plausible or not worth the effort, teens must answer the implied questions "Why is engaging in this APS so hard for me; is this really the true me? Do we have PSs like this?" Likewise, they must judge whether particular behavioral patterns (e.g., asking for help) are likely to work and if they contradict in-group identity (e.g., "Will asking the teacher for help actually help *me* succeed in school or is it just a 'White' thing to do?").'

Note on forum discussion: Oyserman et al focus on academic possible selves, but we a wider lens considering a range of *alternative adult possible selves* is not incompatible with her and her colleagues views.

Oyserman et al, 2006

## DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT ON POSSIBLE SELVES: WHO WILL YOU BE NEXT YEAR?

Next year, I expect to be	Am I am doing something to be that way		If yes, What I am doing now to be that way next year
	NO	YES	
(P1) _____			(s1) _____
(P2) _____			(s2) _____
(P3) _____			(s3) _____
(P4) _____			(s4) _____

Next year, I want to avoid	Am I doing something to avoid this		If yes, What I am doing now to avoid being that way next year
	NO	YES	
(P5) _____			(s5) _____

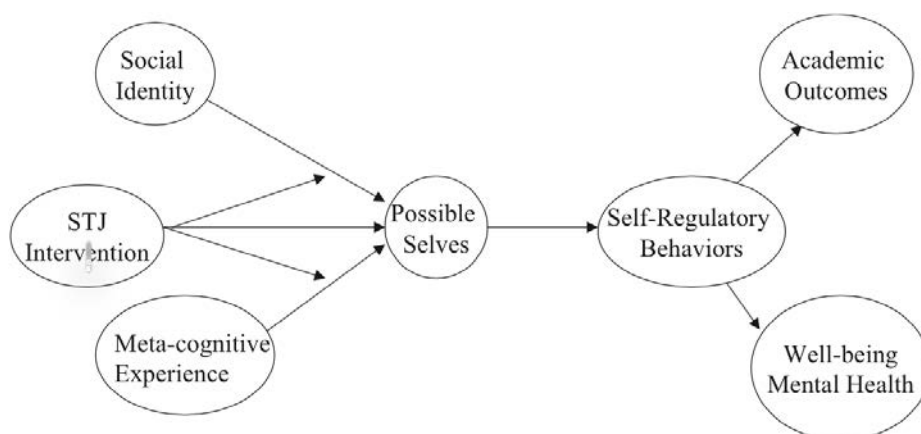
## FOR ILLUSTRATION: CODING INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEXT YEAR POSSIBLE SELVES

### CATEGORY LABELS

There are six main categories of **Next Year Expected Possible Selves**:

- **Achievement**- relates to school and school interactions with teachers, achievement-related activities
- **Interpersonal Relationships**- involves family, friends, relationships, and social interactions except with teachers
- **Personality Traits**- relates to personality characteristics, self-descriptions of traits
- **Physical/Health-Related**- relates to physical health, weight, height
- **Material/Lifestyles**- relates to material possessions and living situation, including moving
- **Negative**- includes all negatively worded responses

## POSSIBLE SELVES AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES



*Oyserman et al, 2006*



## THUMBNAIL SKETCH OF SCHOOL-TO-JOBS PROGRAMME

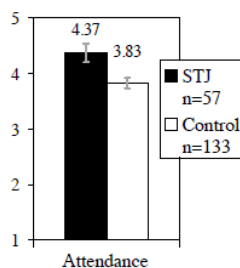
### SESSION 1 CREATING A GROUP

(Goal: **create a positive sense of membership and set the stage for school involvement and adult possible selves**).

Facilitators and participants share expectations and concerns about programme content, and participants develop programme rules. Activities include introducing one another in terms of skills and abilities to succeed in the eighth-grade, human knot and other activities which build the idea that group members have positive attributes related to school achievement and that others also want to do well in school.

See Oyserman et al (2002) for further examples.

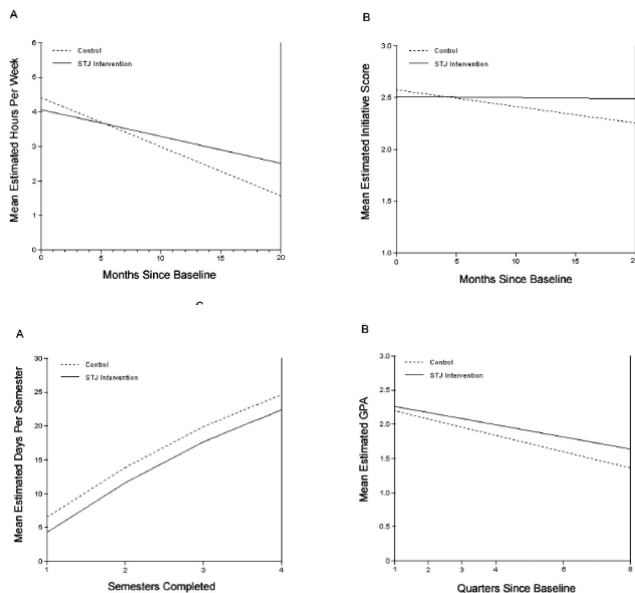
## FINDINGS: IMPACT OF SCHOOL-TO-JOBS INTERVENTION ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE



ANCOVA analyses of impact of School-to-Jobs intervention on school attendance controlling for cohort, sex, and prior attendance.

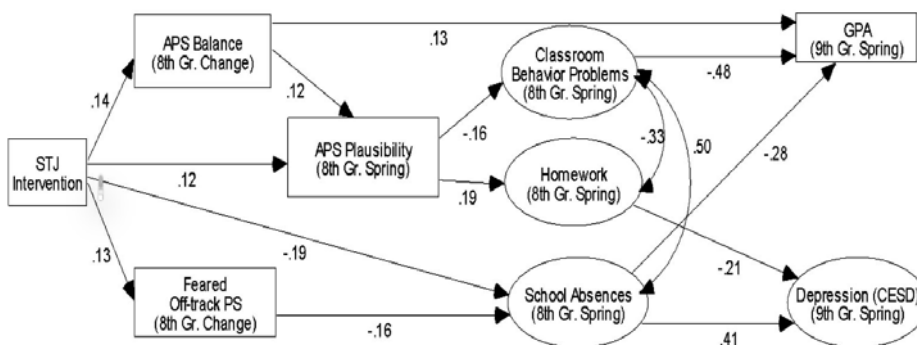
*Oyserman et al, 2002*

## THE INTERVENTION HAS POSITIVE EFFECTS EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT DRAMATIC



Oyserman et al, 2006

## POSSIBLE SELVES AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES – MEDIATION MODEL



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS

### Improvement

- academic initiative
- standardized test scores
- grades

### Reduction

- depression
- absences
- in-school misbehaviour

### Effects

- sustained over 2-year follow-up
- mediated by change in possible selves

## CHARACTERISATION OF INTERVENTIONS

- **Very brief and low intensity, but may demand considerable involvement (e.g. video testimonial) – *psychosocial education* rather than therapy**
- **Awareness of differences appears to have positive effect**
- **Stigma and discrimination require minimisation**
- **Effects are on achievements, but also wellbeing and health**
- **Some studies used RCT methodology (including blinding)**

### Limitations:

- **All studies were carried out in US**
- **Methodological weaknesses: convenience samples, limited number of sites (Oyserman: 1 and 4, Stephens: 1, Cohen: 2 (?), Miu: 3 sites (?))**

## MESSAGES

- A time-limited, low intensity intervention can improve achievements of so-called 1<sup>st</sup> generation students, modify selves ...
- Is the focus on differences psychologically more helpful compared to the constitutional demand put forward by the French revolution: *Égalité*? (and frequently still dominant in normative discourses)
- *Identity-based motivation* is a relatively recent concept, but which has been influential in this country through Robert West and colleagues in his *Prime theory* which is employed to guide addiction interventions
- Changes or intended changes need to be tangible, concrete, practical (*all of psychology* would agree on this)
- Means of creating commitment through 'intensive mental processing' are required (probably involving both reasoning and affective components; involving the *slow system*, see e.g. Kahnemann)

## PLAN FOR SEMINAR

The discussion will focus on the successes and limitations of the interventions in terms of their success in engendering resilient moves, and their relevance to the UK context, as both studies were carried out in the US. The seminar will end with a workshop activity on generating ideas and plans for similar interventions within UK educational contexts. Plans for a (systematic) review, an intervention study and respective funding may constitute some of the possible outcomes for the event.

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY

1. Decide on target group – 5 min
2. Consider programme sessions by Oyserman et al (2002) – see handout – 10 min
3. Can this be applied and/or modified to suite your target group? How? – 10 min
4. What could a pilot study look like? How to involve the target group? Where? What duration? What assessments? – 10 min

## INTERVENTION STUDIES

Cohen GL, Garcia J, Apfel N, Master A. Reducing the racial achievement gap: a social-psychological intervention. *Science*, 2006;313:1307–10.

Miu AS, Yeager DS. Preventing Symptoms of Depression by Teaching Adolescents That People Can Change: Effects of a Brief Incremental Theory of Personality Intervention at 9-Month Follow-Up. *Clin Psychol Sci* [Internet], 2014 Sep 15 [cited 2014 Sep 23];2167702614548317. Available from: <http://cpx.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/09/15/2167702614548317.full>

Oyserman, D., Terry, K., & Bybee, D. (2002). A possible selves intervention to enhance school involvement. *Journal of Adolescence* (Vol. 25, pp. 313–326). doi:10.1006/jado.2002.0474

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Kerpelman JL, Eryigit S, Stephens CJ. African American Adolescents' Future Education Orientation: Associations with Self-efficacy, Ethnic Identity, and Perceived Parental Support. *J Youth Adolesc* [Internet]. 2007 Aug 10 [cited 2014 Dec 2];37(8):997–1008. Available from: <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s10964-007-9201-7>

Harrell-Levy MK, Kerpelman JL. Identity Process and Transformative Pedagogy: Teachers as Agents of Identity Formation. *Identity* [Internet]. Routledge; 2010 Apr 30 [cited 2014 Dec 2];10(2):76–91. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15283481003711684>

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Gurin P, Nagda B A, & Zuniga X (2013). *Dialogue across difference: Practice, theory, and research on intergroup dialogue*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.