**Help-seeking behaviour**

**Closing the Social-Class Achievement Gap: A Difference-Education Intervention Improves First-Generation Students' Academic Performance and All Students' College Transition** (Stephens et al, 2014)

In this hour-long intervention, students were invited to a student panel that they were told was part of a project to improve student transition. The student panel contained a culturally diverse group of senior peers, and they responded to planned questions that asked about their transition to college and how they achieved success. Students were then assigned to one of two groups.

* In the first group, the ‘difference-education’ group, the student panel **related their answers to their own backgrounds and personal stories**. One student panellist for example explained that, as a first generation student, their parents weren’t always able to give advice and they learnt that it was more helpful to ask a student advisor rather than other students.
* In the second group, the control group, students gave the same advice but without reference to their own backgrounds.

It was found that **student grades did not differ significantly in the ‘difference education’ group between first generation and continuing generation students**, whereas there was a difference in attainment between first and continuing generation students in the control group. It is thought that this was due in part because first generation students in this first group were **equally likely to take advantage of academic support and resources** as continuing generation students after this intervention.

**Wise feedback**

**Breaking the Cycle of Mistrust: Wise Interventions to Provide Critical Feedback Across the Racial Divide** (Yeager et al, 2014)

Current research in the USA to raise student attainment looks at how to build trust between the tutor and student. It is thought that critical feedback can reinforce students’ lack of confidence in their own ability (Yeager and Dweck, 2012), and reinforce students’ mistrust of tutors due to concern that they are being seen “through the lens of a negative stereotype” (Yeager et al, 2014, p 805).

Yeager et al have explored how to give feedback in a way that encourages “students to **attribute critical feedback to their teacher’s high standards** and his or her belief in **their potential to reach those standards**” (Yeager et al, 2014, p805).

In this intervention, students were shown peer testimonials that included photos of students from a range of backgrounds that attributed tutor feedback to high expectations. African American students (aged 14-18 years) who took part in the intervention were less likely to fail and more likely to achieve higher grades, “closing the racial attainment gap in the sample by nearly 40%” (ibid, p820).

**References**

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