Building a Postsecondary Mindset

Paving the Pathway to College and Careers Training Series

IES Institute of Education Sciences

REL Appalachia at SRI International

- Laying the foundation for postsecondary success
- Supporting students with nuts and bolts of postsecondary transitions
- Building a postsecondary mindset

Paving the pathway to college and careers

Agenda

- Welcome and overview
- Social-emotional skills for a postsecondary mindset
- Growth mindset
- Academic self-efficacy
- School culture
- Application of learning: Activity options

Meeting goals

- Define the social and emotional skills that support a postsecondary mindset.
- Share strategies that support students to develop a postsecondary mindset.

Activity

Barriers and strategies from your experience

#1 - What challenges did you face in your postsecondary experience?

#2 - What skills and resources did you bring to your postsecondary experience that enabled you to succeed?

What gets in the way of students' successful transition?

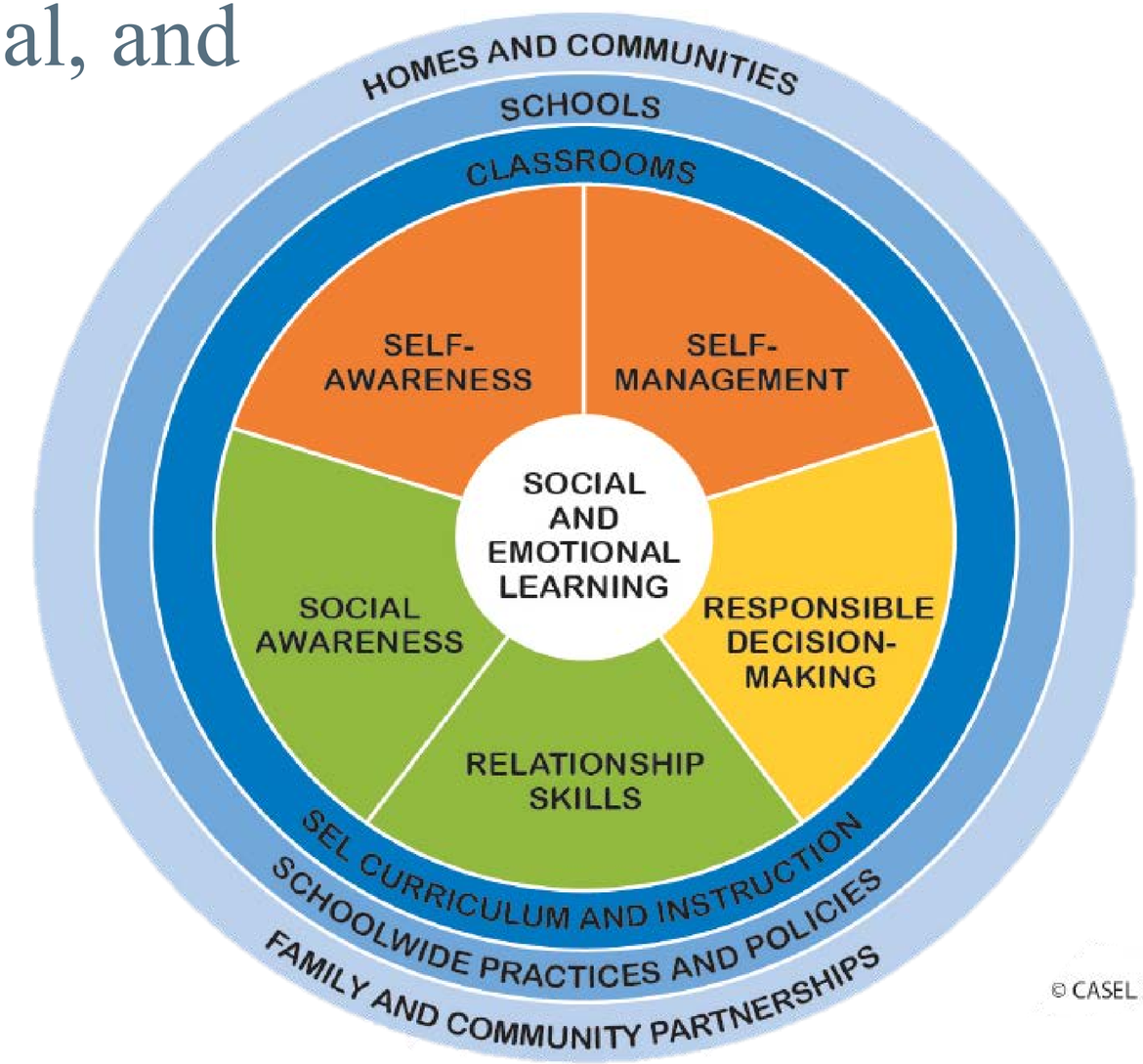
- Lack of confidence
- Geographic isolation
- Localism
- Family culture, family obligations
- Lack of college knowledge
- Low levels of family educational expectations and involvement in education
- Financial considerations

(Ali & McWhirter, 2006; Barnett, 2016; Bennett, 2008; Byun, et al., 2012; Hlinka, 2017; Hlinka, Mobelini, & Giltner, 2015; Meece et al., 2014)

Social-emotional skills for a postsecondary mindset

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Core Competencies

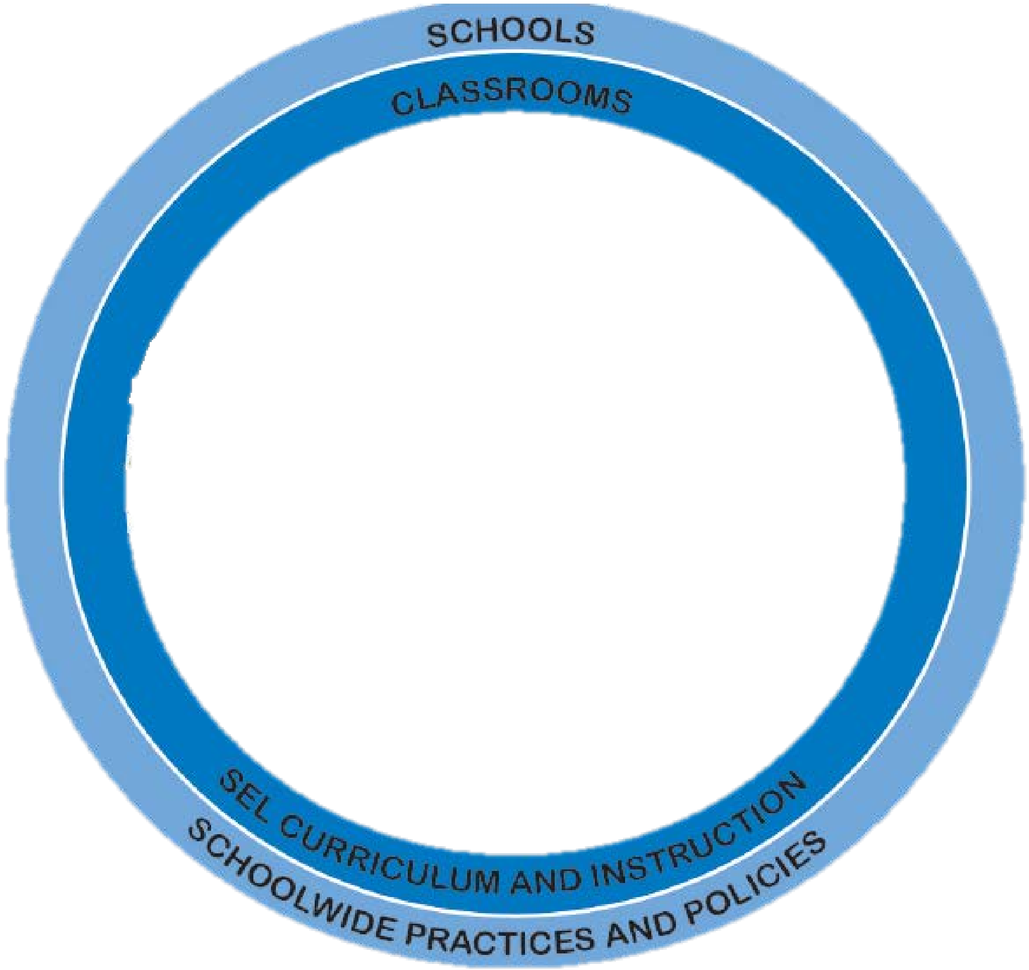
- A framework for defining SEL competencies.



(CASEL framework, 2017)

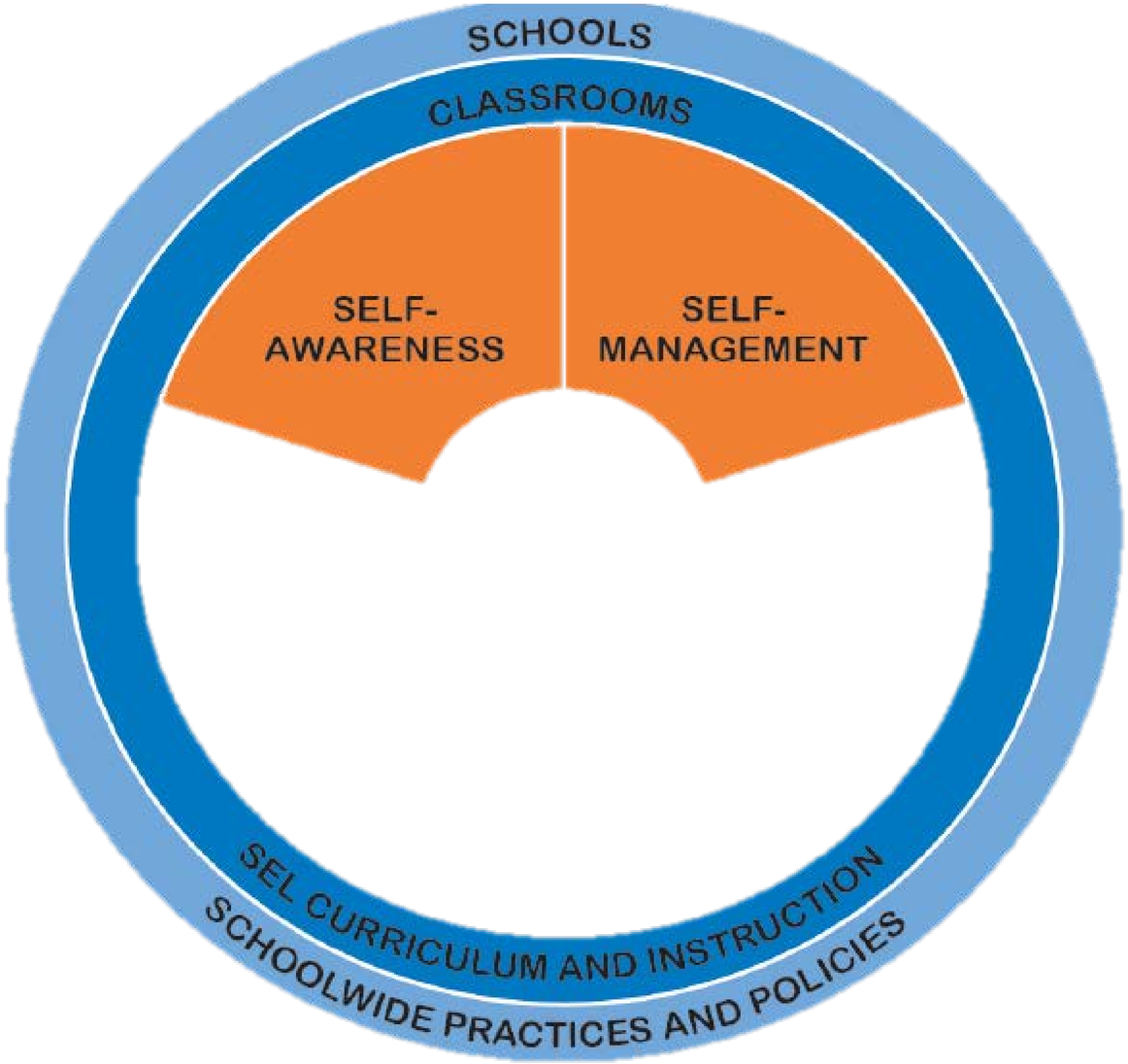
Narrowing the focus

- Areas of influence in the school and classroom.



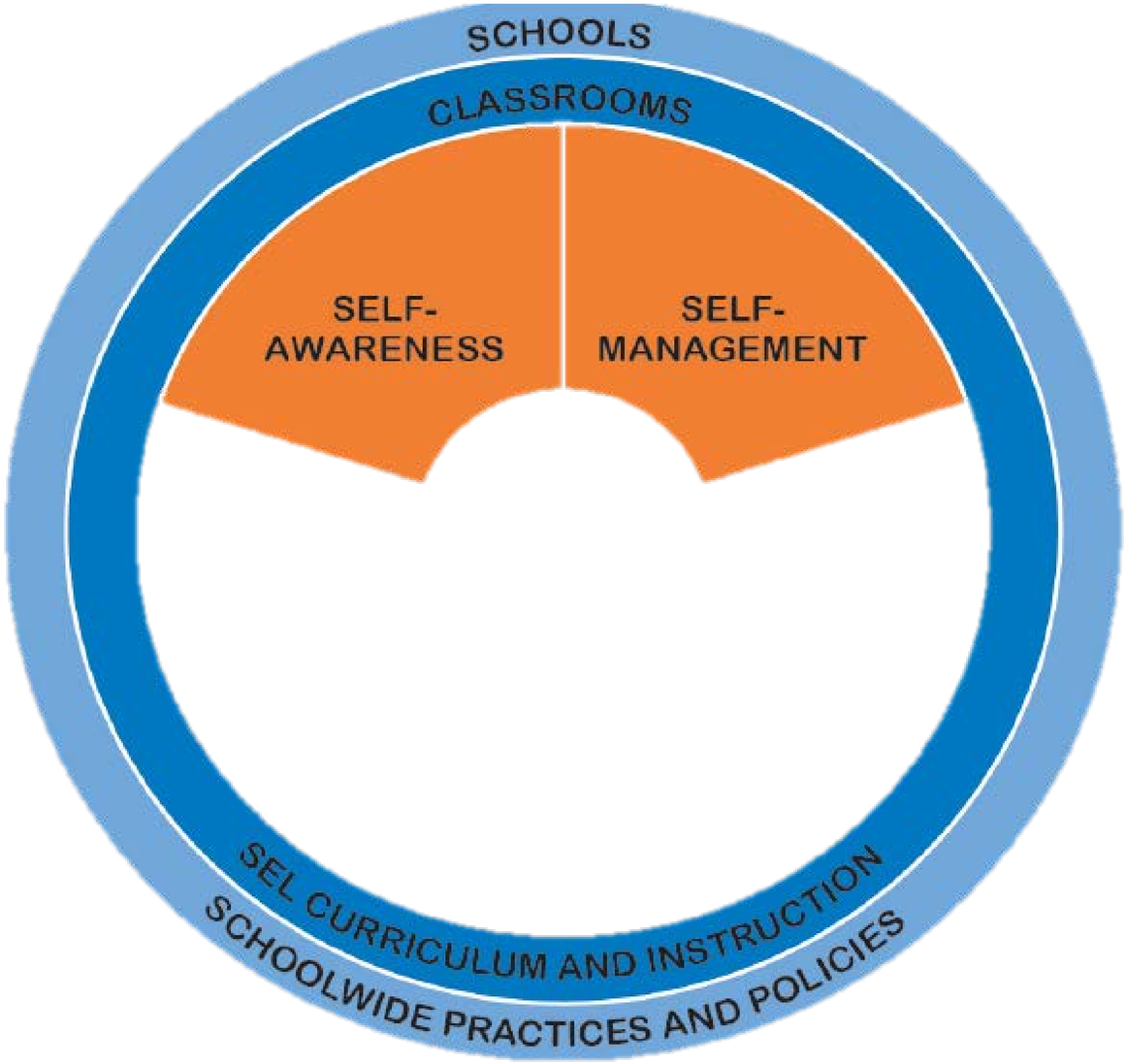
Narrowing the focus

- Areas of influence in the school and classroom.
- Areas of need identified by your colleagues and our partners.
- We heard…
  - Students give up easily.
  - Students don't set goals for follow-through.
  - Students don't believe they can pursue college or career training due to finances, family obligations, or ability.

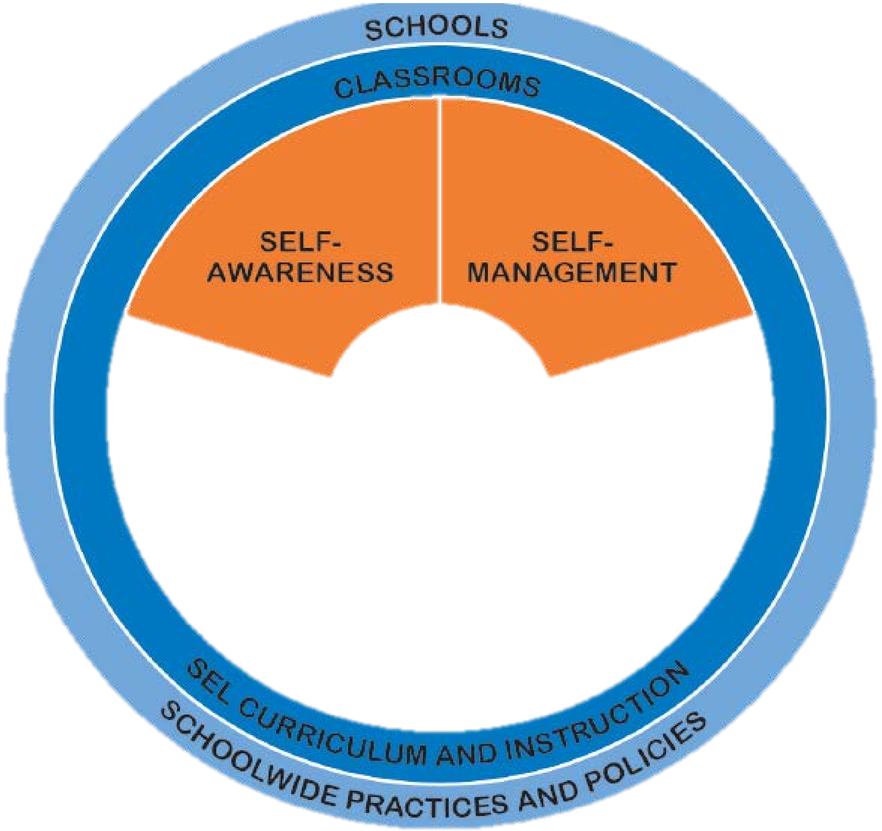


Narrowing the focus

- Growth mindset
- Academic self-efficacy
- School culture



Growth mindset



*"In a **growth mindset**, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point."*

Image: Pixabay

(Dweck, 2017)

Why is growth mindset important?

- Students who view intellectual ability as something that can be developed "are more resilient when they encounter the rigorous learning opportunities presented to them," (Yeager & Dweck, 2012, p. 306).
- Limited but promising evidence shows growth mindset is "related to college success and… malleable in response to interventions," (National Academies, 2017, p. 5).
- "Students with low socioeconomic status or who are academically at risk might benefit from mindset interventions," (Sisk et. al., 2018, p. 549).

(National Academies, 2017; Sisk et al.; Yeager & Dweck, 2012, Yeager et al, 2019)

What is growth mindset?

	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Challenges	Avoids challenges	Embraces challenges
Obstacles	Gives up easily	Persists in the face of setbacks
Effort	Sees effort as fruitless (or worse)	Sees effort as the path to mastery
Criticism	Ignores useful negative feedback	Learns from criticism
Success of others	Feels threatened by the success of others	Finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others

Strategies that work: Growth mindset

Building growth mindset in students

Praise the process

Praise the process of learning, solving a problem, or completing a task, not intelligence or smarts.

Teach students their brains can grow

Explicitly teach students that intelligence is malleable.

(Dweck, 2007; Mueller & Dweck, 1998; Blackwell et al., 2007; Paunesku et al., 2015; Yeager et al., 2019)

Sample strategy details: Praise the process

Praising the process can help students associate their efforts with success. In contrast, praising students for being smart suggests that a fixed trait is the reason for success.

- "I liked how you tried a few approaches until you found a way to solve the problem."

Possible ideas…

- Focus on process over product.
- Embrace mistakes as part of the learning process.
- Talk up strategies and efforts.
- The struggle is good.

(Dweck, 2007; Mueller & Dweck, 1998.; Transforming Education, n.d.)

Sample strategy details: Teach students their brains can learn and change

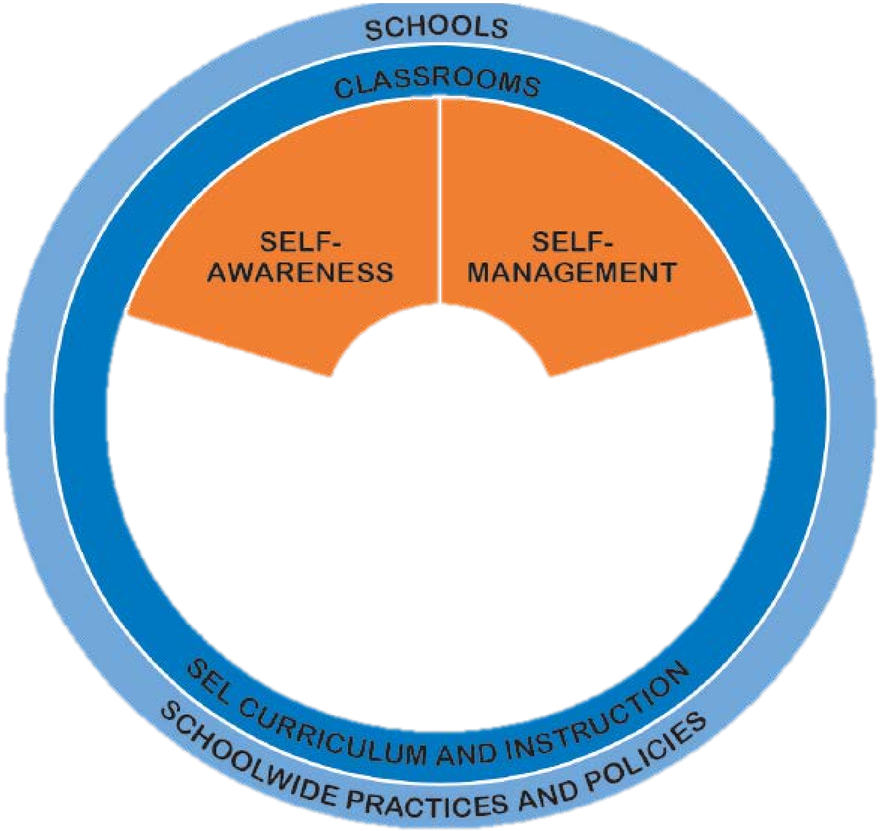
Teach students that intelligence is malleable, and that with effort and the right strategies they can take on challenging tasks.

Possible ideas . . .

- Have students read an article or watch a video:
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG3HxrW1qZk
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrbaflYcbFY
- After they've learned about the malleability of the brain or the importance of goal setting, ask students to write a letter to their future selves that they can read if they find themselves struggling with a class in college.

(Blackwell et al., 2007; Paunesku et al., 2015; Yeager et al., 2019)

Academic self-efficacy



What is self-efficacy?

- Belief in one's ability to succeed or to accomplish a task.
- Our sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how we approach goals, tasks, and challenges.
- ***Academic*** self-efficacy is a person's belief that they can do well on educational tasks.
- Academic self-efficacy is a predictor for postsecondary performance and persistence.

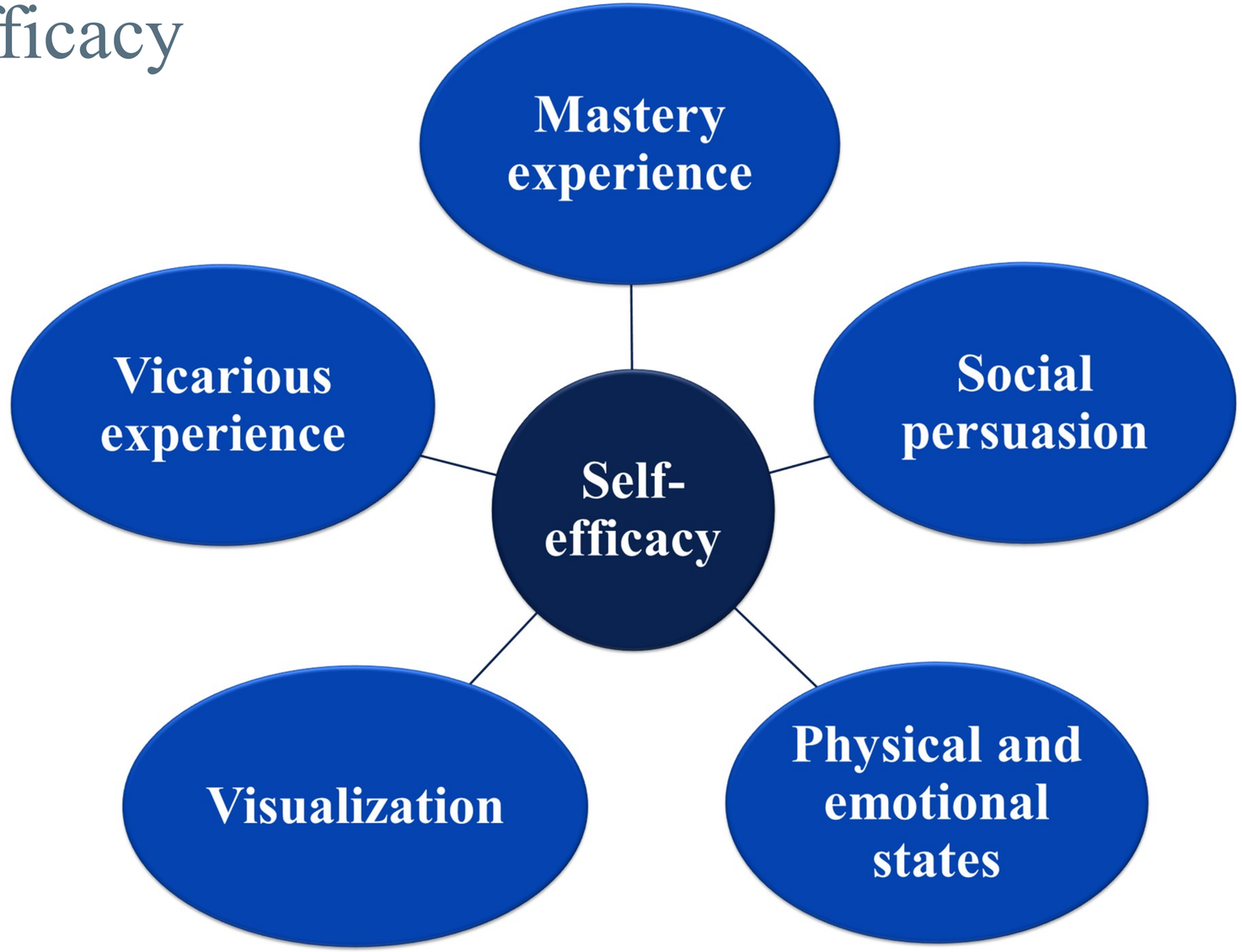
(Bandura, 1994; Usher & Pajares, 2008; Robbins et al., 2004, Zimmerman, 1995)

Why is academic self-efficacy important?

- Students' academic self-efficacy influences their academic goals and academic achievement.
- College students' academic self-efficacy is related to academic adjustment in college.
- Students are more likely to choose majors and careers in subjects in which they have higher self-efficacy.
- Students with high academic self-efficacy tend to pursue careers that require advanced education.

(Hsieh, Sullivan, & Guerra, 2007; Ali & Saunders, 2009; Bandura et al., 2001; Lent & Brown, 1986; Chemers et al., 2001; Ramos-Sanchez & Nicholas, 2007; Valentine et al., 2004; Zimmerman et al., 1992)

Sources of self-efficacy



Strategies that work: Self-efficacy

Building academic self-efficacy in students

- Give students road maps with milestones to mastery.
- Set goals.
- Begin with a simple task and create opportunities for success.
- Use modeling.
- Employ peer tutoring.
- Have advanced students work through problems with peers, out loud.
- Have students use if-then statements for planning.
- Celebrate incremental success.

(Margolis & McCabe, 2006; Schunk, 1990; Uchida et al., 2018)

Photo: Pixabay

Sample strategy details: Road map and milestones

- Provides a “mastery experience” for students to build their own self-efficacy through scaffolding.
- Builds confidence in achieving each step on the way to the goal.

Possible ideas…

- Create a timeline of activities that includes college entrance testing, FAFSA completion, searching out institutions and options, essay writing, application submission.
- Break down each activity into manageable steps.

(Schunk, 1990)

Sample strategy details: Modeling

- Provides a "vicarious experience" for students to build their own self-efficacy.
- Is most effective when they can see some of their own characteristics in the model.

Possible ideas…

- Invite recent graduates to return and talk about their experiences in postsecondary transition.
- Share stories about how other students have been admitted, received financial aid, or transitioned to either a local institution or a distant institution.

(Margolis & McCabe, 2006)

Sample strategy details: Teaching goal-setting

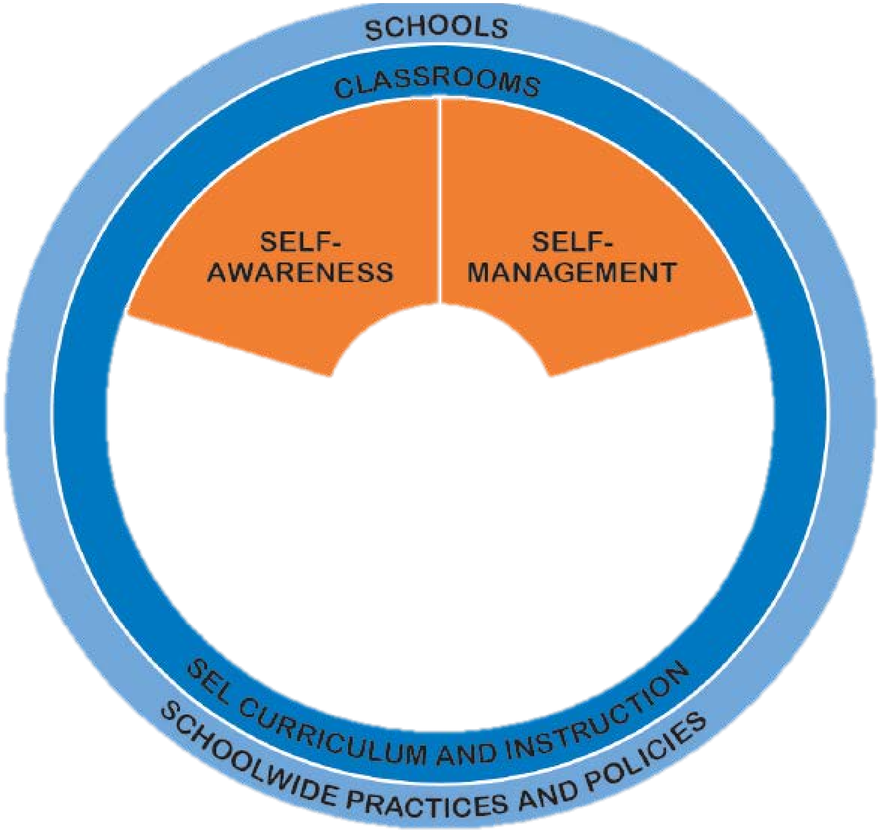
- As goals are met, students gain confidence in their abilities.
- Goals should be attainable, timely, and specific.

Possible ideas…

- Students can set a goal for completing the FAFSA, researching postsecondary options, or completing applications.
- Students can set goals for their current course assignments or course milestones.
- As goals are achieved, students can set a new goal.

(Midwest Comprehensive Center, 2018)

School culture



School culture and postsecondary success

- A culture that "builds the expectation of postsecondary education for all students—not just the best students. It inspires the best in every student, and it supports students in achieving their goals," (The College Board, 2006, p. 2).
- "College-focused schools do the following:
  - Expect that all…students are capable of being prepared to enroll and succeed in college;
  - Provide a range of high-quality, college-preparatory tools for students and families;
  - Embrace students' social, cultural, and varied learning styles when developing the school environment and school-based activities;
  - Involve leaders at all levels in establishing policies, programs, and practices;
  - Maintain sufficient financial and human resources for this mission; and
  - Assess policy, programs, and practices regularly to determine their effectiveness," (The College Board, 2006, p. 2)

(The College Board, 2006)

Strategies that work: School culture

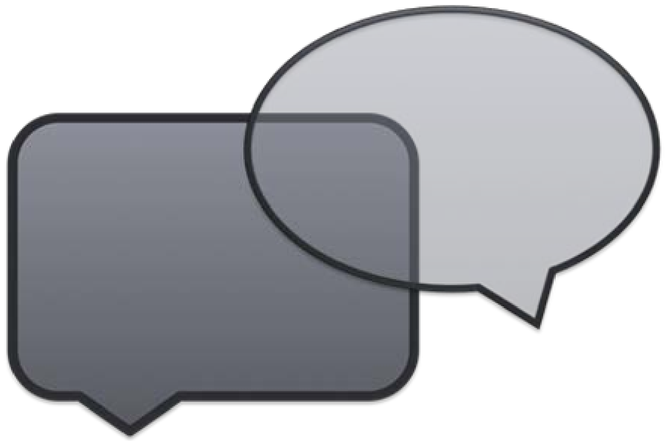
School culture strategies

- Create a culture of high expectations, with consistent schoolwide messages about what is needed for postsecondary success.
- Collaborate with postsecondary institutions, community-based organizations, economic development agencies, and employers to help create smoother transitions to college and the workforce.
- Engage families early and often through counseling and events.
- Hold frequent postsecondary-related events and make use of existing events to spread the word about applications, deadlines, and resources.
- Identify and use data to support students and families.

(Bangser, 2008; The College Board, 2006)

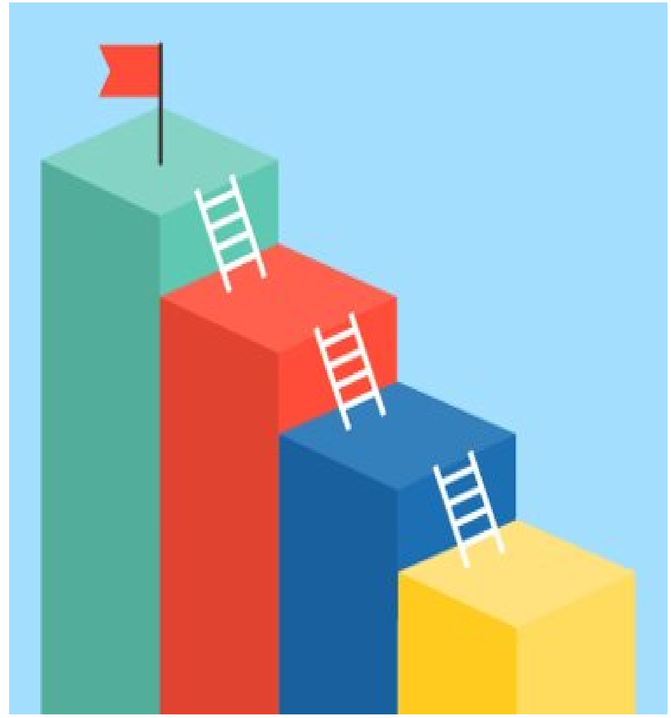
Wrap-up and next steps

Question and answer



Continuing this journey

How can you use what we discussed today?

Develop an action plan

- In which area do you want to improve?
- What specific strategies or considerations from today's presentation do you want to employ?
  - Refer to the Strategies and Possible Applications section of the resource compilation for more ideas.
- What's your plan?
  - Identify next steps.
  - Assign responsible parties and due dates.
  - Track progress.