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Home/school Collaboration and the Development of a Growth Mindset Within Gifted Students

Lauren A. Carlson
Loyola University Chicago

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

HOME/SCHOOL COLLABORATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GROWTH MINDSET WITHIN GIFTED STUDENTS

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LAUREN A. CARLSON

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ABSTRACT

Studies show that curricula related to mindset can have a positive effect on increasing growth mindset in students. Literature also suggests that messages students receive from parents about their skills and hard work can have implications for mindset development. In this project, the researcher explored the knowledge, exposure, and involvement of parents of gifted students in a small suburban K-8 school district with regard to growth mindset instruction. The researcher also explored how teachers can increase home school collaboration in regards to growth mindset concepts. The researcher used a survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview through a focus group format in a mixed-method case study design. Descriptive statistics and constant comparison analysis was used. The following research questions were asked: (1) What impact has the current growth mindset practices in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district had on parents? (2) How do parents of students in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset to look moving forward? (3) How do gifted teachers of students in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset to look moving forward? The researcher found that parent participants demonstrated a relatively high basic knowledge of growth mindset concepts as well a relatively high level of exposure to growth mindset concepts.

However, parent participants indicated a moderate, but variable, level of involvement with these concepts. Teachers report feeling a parent's role is to reinforce growth mindset concepts at home with the support of a classroom teacher. In addition, collaboration could improve through the use of workshops, discussions during parent teacher conferences, student assignments, and collaborative goal setting. Limitations of the current study and directions for future research are discussed.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

As a school psychologist working with students in grades K-8, I have observed many students display negative aspects of perfectionism as well as a lack of resiliency to academic failure. In recent years, I have been asked to consult more often with teachers and parents during problem solving for gifted students that are displaying these difficulties. Parker and Adkins (1995) provided a review of the literature, and they indicated that although the rate of perfectionism in gifted students is not higher than the rate for non-gifted students, perfectionism is still present in many gifted and talented individuals and that it can lead to negative effects. There is a need to address the negative aspects of perfectionism among students who are gifted.

Contribution of the Study

In 2014, all of the gifted teachers in a small suburban K-8 school district began implementing the Brainology® computer curriculum (Mindset Works, Inc, 2012) as a part of the gifted education curriculum in grades 5 and 6 to help decrease negative aspects of students' perfectionism as well as to increase students' levels of resiliency. The focus of this curriculum was on teaching students about having a growth mindset. Growth mindset, also known as incremental theory, is the belief that intellectual ability is malleable through hard work and effort (Dweck, 2000). Current research indicates that

these types of curriculums can increase positive learning goals, effort, and resiliency in gifted and non-gifted students (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Donahue, Topping, & Hannah, 2012; Esparza, Shumow, & Schmidt, 2014; Paunesku, Walton, Romero, Smith, Yeager, & Dweck, 2015).

In recent years, the teachers of gifted students in the small suburban K-8 school district have continued to teach lessons on growth mindset, derived from the Brainology® computer intervention. In addition, the district has provided an annual opportunity for parents of gifted students to listen to a guest speaker on the importance of having a growth mindset. This is an important addition to the teachers' lessons because research suggests that parents have a great impact on the motivation, goals, and mindset that students endorse (Ablard & Parker, 1997; Garn, Matthews, & Jolly, 2012). However, this addition alone may not be enough to assist parents in implementing strategies related to the development of a growth mindset at home. At this time, a more systematic and extensive review of the process for involving parents in the growth mindset instruction occurring in a small suburban K-8 district is warranted to determine how parents can better support their students in the gifted program at home with developing a growth mindset.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study is to explore the current knowledge, exposure, and involvement of parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 school district with regard to the growth mindset instruction occurring within the gifted program. In addition, another purpose of the current study is to explore how the gifted

teachers in a small suburban K-8 district can increase home school collaboration in regards to growth mindset concepts so that these concepts are further reinforced at home.

Thus, the questions to be answered by this study include:

1. What impact has the current growth mindset practices in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district had on parents?
    a. What do parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 within a small suburban K-8 district currently know regarding the concepts of growth mindset?
    b. What do parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 within a small suburban K-8 district report regarding their exposure to the concepts of growth mindset?
    c. What do parents report regarding their level of involvement with the growth mindset instruction being provided within a small suburban K-8 district?
    d. Is there a relationship between the levels of what parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 know regarding growth mindset and their current reported exposure or involvement with the growth mindset instruction occurring within a small suburban K-8 district?
2. How do parents of students in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset to look moving forward?

   a. How do parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 district perceive their role in developing a growth mindset for their children?
   b. How would parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 district like collaboration to occur between the child's gifted teacher and themselves with regard to developing a growth mindset for their children?

3. How do gifted teachers of students in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset to look moving forward?
   a. How do gifted teachers of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 district perceive the parents' role in developing a growth mindset for the children in the gifted program?
   b. How would gifted teachers of gifted students in grades 5-6 in the small suburban K-8 district like collaboration to occur between the parents and themselves with regard to developing a growth mindset for children in the gifted program?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Implicit theories of intelligence state that students can hold differing "theories" or beliefs about the nature of intelligence (Dweck, 2000). These implicit beliefs can be defined into two different categories known as incremental theory (otherwise known as growth mindset) or entity theory (otherwise known a fixed mindset). Incremental theory can be defined as the belief that intelligence is malleable or something you can increase (Dweck, 2000). When faced with a challenge, students who endorse an incremental theory of intelligence also believe through hard work, effort, and persistence, that they can increase their skills and achieve their goals. Furthermore, they are more likely to have learning goals for themselves. With a learning goal, a student's focus is on increasing their skills. Conversely, students who endorse an entity theory believe that intelligence is fixed, concrete, or something you cannot change (Dweck, 2000). When faced with a challenge, students who endorse in an entity theory of intelligence may lack persistence and give up more easily on a task, reducing their skill development and decreasing the likelihood of achieving their goals. They are more likely to have performance goals for themselves. With a performance goal, a student's focus is on achieving a certain criterion and demonstrating their skills to others. Dweck summarized current research in this area and discussed how these differing beliefs of intelligence can have an impact on the motivation of students, the types of goals that they set for

themselves, and thus their achievement. Additional research has also validated these claims.

Blackwell et al. (2007) provided evidence that beliefs about intelligence can impact student motivation and achievement. In the first part of a two-part study, the researchers assessed entering seventh grade students' theory of intelligence, goals, and beliefs about effort, and responses to failure via rating scales. They then assessed the students' baseline level of mathematics achievement from the end of sixth grade and monitored their fall and spring mathematics grades from seventh to eighth grade. Not only did they confirm that junior high students who endorsed an initial incremental theory of intelligence also believed in effort, learning goals, and had lower levels of helpless attributions to failure, but that the type of theory of intelligence these students held significantly predicted their mathematics achievement. Students who endorsed an incremental theory of intelligence demonstrated higher mathematics grades compared to students that endorsed an entity theory of intelligence. Through analysis of growth curves, testing of mediation, and structural equation modeling, the researchers found that it was the students' motivational patterns, influenced by their endorsement of an incremental theory of intelligence, which impacted students' increases in mathematics grades.

Similarly, Haimovitz, Wormington, and Corpus (2011) examined whether student beliefs about intelligence correlated with the decline or maintenance of intrinsic motivation. The researchers assessed third through eighth grade students' intrinsic motivation, theory of intelligence, and ability-validation goals through rating scale

administration in the fall of one school year. Ability-validation goals are similar to performance goals as described previously. Specifically, ability-validation goals encompass a student's desire to verify their intelligence through their achievements. The researchers then re-assessed the same sample of students' in the spring of the same school year on the variable of intrinsic motivation. A hierarchical logistic regression provided evidence that an endorsement of an entity theory of intelligence predicted the decline of intrinsic motivation found in students. A meditational analysis indicated that this relationship was mediated by an endorsement of ability-validation goals. Interestingly, the research did not find an interaction by grade level, suggesting that the motivation of students as young as third grade can be impacted by the adoption of a fixed mindset. Examining the motivational patterns of students within specific populations, such as gifted, is warranted to determine the impact mindset may have on these specific populations.

Underachievement and Perfectionism in Gifted Students

Despite high levels of intelligence as measured by cognitive tests, gifted students are not immune to underachievement and motivational concerns. Reis and McCoach (2010) provided an overview of the research and literature surrounding the existence of underachievement in gifted students. The authors describe several internal and external factors as being present in gifted underachievers (including, but not limited to, having a low self-concept, having a fear of failure, and lacking goal directed behavior) that may be linked to the development of underachievement in this population.

Similarly, Blaas (2014) describes how gifted students are at risk for underachievement and social emotional difficulties because of the unique characteristics of giftedness. One of the unique characteristics described was perfectionism. Researchers have discussed the notion of two different types of perfectionism (Fletcher & Speirs Neumeister, 2012). The two types include an adaptive, healthy, or positive type of perfectionism and a maladaptive, unhealthy, or negative type of perfectionism. The latter type is described as being socially prescribed, having concern over mistakes, and having doubts about actions. It is this type of perfectionism that may be detrimental to a student's motivation and resiliency.

Although research indicates that overall rates of perfectionism (both adaptive and maladaptive) are not different among gifted students and general ability students (Parker & Mills, 1996), Parker (1997) provided evidence that the negative/maladaptive type of perfectionism occurs in approximately a quarter of the gifted population. A large national sample of sixth grade, gifted students was assessed on their levels of perfectionism via the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale as well as several different personality characteristics via administration of four different rating scales. In addition, parental perceptions of the adjustment, behaviors, and goals of their children as well as the responsiveness of the child's school were assessed via questionnaire. Parker found three distinct groups of gifted students based on responses to surveys, which included a nonperfectionistic group (32.8%), a healthy perfectionistic group (41.7%), and a dysfunctional perfectionistic group (25.5%). The dysfunctional perfectionistic group was described as being concerned about making mistakes, perceiving parental criticism,

having doubts about their actions as well as likely being socially detached, defensive, anxious, moody, hostile, and overly competitive. It is with this group of students that mindset changes may be beneficial.

Expanding on the findings of Parker (1997), Chan (2012) provided evidence that a growth mindset intervention would be beneficial to gifted students with a maladaptive form of perfectionism. Similar to Parker, he found two different types of perfectionists groups (adaptive perfectionists and maladaptive perfectionists) in a sample of Chinese gifted students. However, Chan also explored the mindsets that these different groups held. He found that healthy, adaptive perfectionists were more likely to have a growth mindset while unhealthy, maladaptive perfectionists were more likely to have a fixed mindset. Because of this, Chan suggested that interventions to support unhealthy, maladaptive perfectionist gifted students should focus on changing mindsets from a more fixed orientation to a more growth orientation.

Increasing Growth Mindset

Because research suggests that having a growth mindset can impact the motivation and achievement of students, it must then be asked whether the development of a growth mindset in students can be fostered through interventions or curricula. There have been several studies that have implemented school-based interventions to increase growth mindset to determine the effectiveness of such interventions.

Specifically, in the second part of a study conducted by Blackwell et al. (2007), the researchers implemented an intervention in which mentors taught, through various teaching techniques (readings, activities, discussion), seventh grade students about

incremental theory and the malleability of intelligence. They found that by teaching students about the malleability of intelligence, students showed increased knowledge regarding an incremental theory of intelligence, a change in their personal beliefs regarding the malleability of intelligence, and an increase in motivation (per teacher report). Although the sample as a whole showed a decline in mathematics grades from prior to the study, those who were taught about incremental theory and the malleability of intelligence demonstrated a lesser decline than those not taught about incremental theory and the malleability of intelligence.

In a different research study, Donahue et al. (2012) examined the effectiveness of the Brainology® intervention (Mindset Works Inc., 2012) on increasing growth mindset and resiliency in secondary school students in Scotland. Brainology® is an online curriculum that teaches students the scientific basis of developing and having a growth mindset. It includes not only online lessons and modules, but also several classroom activities that teachers can utilize to reinforce the concepts of the program. In the study, students were assessed on their mindset and resiliency via rating scales prior to the experimental group being exposed to the Brainology® curriculum. All students were then reassessed on these variables after the experimental group completed the curriculum. Those who completed the Brainology® curriculum demonstrated increases in mindset scores at post-test, but there was no difference found in the students' levels of reported resiliency. In addition, the experimental group's increase in mindset scores was not maintained three months after the intervention ended. This suggests the need for follow up lessons and reinforcement regarding the concepts to create sustainability in mindset

changes. However, the study did not examine the impact this intervention had on achievement, which was an outcome variable examined in prior studies.

Researchers have recently started to examine whether interventions targeted for increasing mindset have been beneficial specifically for gifted students. Esparza et al. (2014) investigated whether the Brainology® intervention would be effective for increasing the growth mindset of gifted and talented seventh grade science students. Specifically, the intervention was provided to seventh grade science classrooms within a school. This included the participation of eighty students that were identified as gifted and talented that participated in the general science education curriculum with pullout enrichment. The researchers assessed all students' beliefs about the malleability of intelligence through the administration of a survey prior to and after the implementation of the Brainology® intervention. Initially, the researchers found that gifted and talented students had a higher belief in the malleability of intelligence than regular education students. However, they still found that gifted and talented students who were exposed to the Brainology® intervention increased in their level of growth mindset after the intervention. They reported that this change was maintained through a follow up check as well. Given these results, the authors concluded that other interventions that are targeted at enhancing mindset in gifted students should be reviewed for effectiveness with the gifted population.

More recently, Paunesku et al. (2015) explored the impact of a 45-minute growth mindset online intervention and a 45-minute sense of purpose online intervention with a large number of high school students across thirteen geographically diverse high schools.

Unlike a growth mindset intervention, the intent of the sense of purpose online intervention was to increase students' beliefs in how schoolwork could help them accomplish life goals. To begin the study, prior to the administration of the online interventions, the researchers assessed students' beliefs regarding the malleability of intelligence and their beliefs regarding the meaningfulness of schoolwork tasks. They then re-assessed these variables after the online interventions and reviewed students' academic performance via fall and spring GPA. In this more large-scale application of a growth mindset intervention, the researchers once again found that the growth mindset intervention led to students' endorsing an incremental theory view of intelligence. The sense of purpose intervention led to students' endorsing the relevance of academic tasks to learning outcomes. In addition, students that were having academic difficulties (one third of the sample that demonstrated a first semester GPA of 2.0 or less or failed at least one academic course) that were exposed to the mindset intervention demonstrated increases in GPA and number of satisfactory grades in core classes after the intervention.

Overall, many studies have shown a positive effect on increasing growth mindset in students. Specifically, growth mindset interventions appear to be effective not only in increasing knowledge about growth mindset and the malleability of intelligence, but also by increasing student motivation and achievement. However, the thoroughness and complexity of the intervention may impact the sustainability of these effects as evidenced by the results from Donahue et al. (2012). Parent involvement with growth mindset concepts may be the answer to increasing the effects of mindset interventions.

Parental Influence on Gifted Students' Mindset

The mindset that gifted students develop is not limited to the influences of interventions or curricula at school. The message that parents convey also impacts the development of a child's mindset. Specifically, parental messages can impact the development of a fixed mindset in children if the message portrayed is that intellect is innate and achievements are based on skill and not hard work and effort (Dweck, 2010). Parental practices and the messages they portray to their gifted children are influenced by their own beliefs surrounding the abilities of their children (Garn, Matthews, & Jolly, 2012).

Specifically, parental mindset about the fixed nature of intelligence may impact the goals they set for their children. In 1997, Ablard and Parker investigated the types of goals that parents of gifted students commonly held for their children. Although most parents of gifted students primarily held learning goals as opposed to performance goals for their children, the researchers also found that if parents of gifted students endorsed performance goals, their children were more likely to display characteristics of dysfunctional/maladaptive perfectionism. Specifically, the students reported a higher concern about mistakes, doubts about their actions, high parental expectations, and high levels of parental criticism. Because of this, interventions and curricula should also include parents so that the mindset of parents can be simultaneously addressed at the same time as their child's mindset.

In addition, interventions and curriculums should also include parents so that parents learn appropriate ways to talk with their children about their successes. Although

it is sometimes natural and common for parents and teachers to praise students for their ability and achieved level of performance (especially for gifted students), Mueller and Dweck (1998) found that students who are praised for their intellect are more likely to endorse performance goals as opposed to learning goals. They also display less persistence, task enjoyment, and task performance after experiencing a failure. In addition, Mueller and Dweck also found that children who were praised for their intellect viewed intelligence as more of a fixed trait than those who were praised for hard work and their effort.

Siegle and McCoach (2005) explain that complimenting students should contain the elements that help them realize that their effort is resulting in skill development and that these skills are necessary to their success. Specifically, praise and compliments should be framed in such a way that parents and teachers acknowledge the ability of the student, while also recognizing that effort went into the development of that ability. By helping parents understand that their verbalization of praise can influence their child's mindset, schools will be in a better position to see results from growth mindset interventions and curriculums.

These findings suggest that the messages gifted students receive from their parents about their skills and hard work can have implications for their development of a fixed mindset. With this in mind, we must not only focus our intervention efforts on increasing the mindset of gifted students, but we must also focus our intervention efforts on changing the attitude and mindset of caregivers to ensure that gifted students are receiving a consistent message throughout their lives. It may be possible for this to be

accomplished by increasing the collaboration between home and schools that are implementing growth mindset curricula.

Home-School Collaboration and Parent Education

Home school collaboration has become an increasingly important area of study as it has been shown to have a positive impact on the academic outcomes for children. Specifically, Esler, Godber, and Christenson (2008) indicate that home school collaboration can promote higher achievement, higher engagement, and reduced behavior problems, to name a few. More recently, studies have focused not only on the benefit of such outcomes but also the best processes for increasing home school collaboration (Esler et al., 2008).

Esler et al. (2008) describe the "eight P philosophy" as a process for increasing home school collaboration. First and foremost, home school collaboration must be seen as a priority. Schools should create a school-wide philosophy that reflects this belief and is disseminated to staff, parents, and the community. However, it must not only be communicated, it must also be seen as actionable. Allowing parents to share in the decision-making responsibilities of the school can accomplish this task. The second "P" is planned effort. This means that schools take the time to ask families how the school can help them, what their needs are, and inviting them to participate in programming. The third "P," proactive and persistent communication, indicates that communication should occur before a concern arises and should be ongoing throughout the year, across a variety of mediums. In the fourth "P," it is indicated that communication should be positive and should also include the parents' perspective. This communication, as

described in the fifth “P,” should be personalized and should be completed along with school wide communications. In addition, parents appreciate and value practical and specific suggestions to support their child at home. This is the sixth “P” and should include both universal and individualized suggestions for their child. The seventh “P” takes into consideration that the home school collaboration programs should be continually monitored for effectiveness. The eighth and final “P” suggests the process for building home school collaboration is more important than involvement activities lacking in a partnership. It is clear that, although important, increasing home school collaboration is not an easy and simple task. It requires time, effort, and planning to ensure effective partnerships are created to benefit the academic outcomes of students.

Although these strategies and suggestions may be beneficial in increasing the home school collaboration efforts for gifted students, some research suggests that the development of home-school collaboration for gifted students can be even more complex. Morawska and Sanders (2009) describe the lack of research on the specific needs of gifted and talented children and their families. They also describe some of the difficulties inherent in providing parenting programs to support parents with their gifted child. Despite offering nine sessions tailored to the needs of parents of gifted and talented children, Morawska and Sanders found that parents still did not feel that the program fully met their unique needs as a parent of a gifted child. Specifically, parents felt the program was good for parents of “normal” children but did not necessarily meet the needs specific to gifted and talented children. This provides just one example of how complex the development of a program for parenting of gifted and talented children can

be and the need for further research in how to best meet the needs of this population through home and school collaboration.

However, additional research that looked specifically at the effectiveness of free parenting workshops for parents of gifted and talented children found that other workshops were beneficial in increasing the content knowledge of parents (Weber & Stanley, 2012). The results of these workshops were positive, demonstrating increases in pre/posttest measures on content knowledge. The authors recommended the following strategies when implementing parent education workshops: collaborating with outside organizations, including professionals in counseling for gifted, publicizing the event in advance, using a central location, providing transportation when needed, translating the information into other languages, minimizing cost to parents through other funding, and being aware of conflicting events. Although this once again shows the benefit of parent education increasing the knowledge of parents, it did not examine the effectiveness of this increased knowledge and how it did or did not translate into parenting practices at home.

Specifically related to growth mindset (but not gifted students), Elish-Piper (2014) explains ways in which teachers and parents can increase collaboration and partnerships to develop a growth mindset in students that are struggling with reading. She explains that the first step is for teachers and the school to share information about growth mindset with parents. Specifically, parents must learn how to model, encourage, and reinforce a growth mindset for their children (Fink, n.d., as cited in Elish-Piper, 2014). This could look like learning how to share personal experiences with their child

about things that were challenging to them or times in which they failed but persevered. Parents could also learn how to discuss the fact that time and effort is required in order to get better at something and the value in making mistakes and trying again. It could also look like parents learning how to teach their children to combat negative self-talk that is reflective of a fixed mindset. More importantly, it is about helping parents teach their children that frustration is ok, and modeling ways to overcome the challenge, without parents fixing the problem for them. The development of parental skills in this area will not only take teachers and schools providing parents knowledge opportunities about growth mindset, but also modeling, practice, and assistance from teachers and school officials on what this specifically looks like in action.

Although there have been several articles published that describe different techniques parents can use at home to support the motivation and achievement of gifted students or how parents of gifted children can be better supported (Morawska & Sanders, 2009; Siegle & McCoach, 2005; Weber & Stanley 2012), little specific research has been conducted on how parents and teachers can specifically work together to foster a growth mindset in gifted children. This is an area that must be addressed in order to examine whether the resources and supports provided by schools needs to extend beyond content based education classes for parents, and if so, what home school collaboration should look like in practice to enhance the effectiveness of growth mindset interventions.

Summary

According to a literature review, many studies have shown that specific curriculum related to mindset can have a positive effect on increasing growth mindset in

students. However, the literature also suggests that the messages gifted students receive from their parents about their skills and hard work can have implications for student mindset development. With this in mind, we must not only focus our intervention efforts on increasing the mindset of gifted students at school, but we must also focus our intervention efforts on the knowledge and involvement of caregivers with growth mindset concepts to ensure that gifted students are receiving a consistent message at home as well.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a mixed method case study design to explore the knowledge, exposure, and involvement of parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 school district with regard to the growth mindset instruction occurring within their child's gifted classroom. Specifically, the researcher used a survey to collect and analyze this data. The researcher utilized both quantitative and qualitative analyses of survey results, including coding and analyzing themes that emerged from open-ended items. Although a parent focus group was also planned, participants were unable to be recruited and thus more in depth parental perception data could not be collected.

The researcher also explored how teachers in the same school district can increase home school collaboration in regards to growth mindset concepts so that these concepts are further reinforced at home. Specifically, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview through a focus group format with gifted teachers. The researcher then coded and analyzed the themes that emerged in the group's discussion.

Researcher's Role and Biases

The researcher is a school psychologist in Sunnydale District 100. She specifically worked within one of the elementary schools included in this study when data was collected. Although she did not directly work within the gifted program at this

elementary school, she assisted with an acceleration evaluation for one student previously within the program. This student's family, however, would not have been within the designated study sample parameters given her grade level. In addition, because she worked at this elementary school for six years and participated in several school-wide functions, she may have informally met and talked to several of the families within the study's population. She also was a direct colleague of one of the gifted teachers within the study's population parameters. They had a previous history of consultation on an as-needed basis for a variety job related activities, including behavioral, emotional, and academic consultation. The researcher is also biased in believing that a growth mindset curriculum is a valuable use of time within the gifted program and should be expanded in order to enhance benefit. However, her lack of a direct role within the gifted program minimizes these biases.

Background Information

In Sunnydale District 100 (district name is pseudonym), students in grades 2-6 can be nominated for the gifted program based on their academic skill performance on district wide benchmarking procedures, their performance on the Cognitive Abilities Test, their performance on planned observations by the gifted teacher, and teacher/parent nomination. After nomination, students are also rated on the Scales for Identifying Gifted Children. This information is compiled and reviewed by a panel for determination of eligibility for gifted services. This nomination process typically begins in the winter of a student's second grade year and again in the winter of a student's sixth grade year. Parents or teachers can re-nominate students during any other year as well.

Students can be identified as eligible for gifted services in the areas of reading, math, or both, to begin as early as 3rd grade. If identified in the area of reading, elementary students within the gifted program receive gifted literacy services for 45 minutes a day, five days a week with a gifted specialist in addition to the core general education literacy instruction. If identified in the area of math, elementary students primarily receive gifted enrichment for math within their general education classroom until 6th grade when they begin to receive gifted math services for 60 minutes a day, five days a week with a gifted specialist in replacement of the core general education math instruction.

In addition, students in the gifted program are exposed to growth mindset instructional activities during instruction with the gifted teacher. This began with 5th and 6th graders in 2014-2015 involving specific work with the Brainology® curriculum. In the following two years, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, all grades 3-6 were exposed to teacher-designed lessons regarding growth mindset. In addition, annual parent information nights on growth mindset for gifted parents were provided in the fall of 2015 and 2016. These information nights were led by local experts in gifted education and mindset.

Description of Site

District

Sunnydale District 100 is comprised of six elementary schools (K-6) and one junior high school (7-8). The district is located in a western suburb of Chicago, with an approximate population of 33,476 people. The median household income is $76,858.00.

There are 6.8% of individuals that are considered to be below the poverty level within the suburb. Ninety-five point eight percent are high school graduates or higher (United States Census Bureau, 2017).

According to the 2016-2017 Illinois State Report Card, there are 2,964 students enrolled within the district. The specific demographics of Sunnydale District 100 include: 44% of students are White, 30% of students are Hispanic, 14% of students are Black, 7% of students are Asian, 5% of students are two or more races, 0% of students are American Indian, and 0% of students are Pacific Islander. Forty-six percent of students are considered to be low-income. Due to the inherent differences between the junior high and elementary schools in Sunnydale District 100 (differences in structure and gifted programming), the junior high school was excluded from the current study. The total student population within the six elementary schools consists of 2,337 students. However, the student population was limited to 5th and 6th grade gifted students as these were the only grade levels in which the growth mindset instruction had been previously systematically provided. In 2016-2017, 54 students were identified as being in the gifted program in grades 5-6 per administrative report.

Participants

Parents. Convenience-sampling procedures were utilized to obtain as many parent participants as possible within the intended population for the survey and a follow up parent focus group. Participants of the parent survey included eight parents of 5th and 6th grade students currently enrolled in the gifted program at the elementary schools in

Sunnydale District 100. No participants were able to be recruited for the focus group. Demographic data for parent participants are presented in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, the respondents' ages were distributed between 30-39 to between 50-59 years of age. A majority of respondents (n=6) were female with only 2 respondents being male. Six out of eight respondents were White, one respondent was Asian, and one respondent was Indian (South Asian). All respondents reported some level of college experience. Specifically, four respondents reported obtaining a graduate degree while three respondents reported obtaining a bachelor degree. One respondent reported obtaining some college but no degree. A majority of respondents (n=5) reported they were employed and working full time. One respondent indicated being employed and working part time and one respondent indicated not being employed and not looking for work. One respondent provided no response to this item.

Table 1

Background and Demographics of Parent Participants

Characteristic	*n*	*%*
Age		
18-20	0	0.0
21-29	0	0.0
30-39	2	25.0
40-49	5	62.5
50-59	1	12.5
60 or older	0	0.0
Gender		
Male	2	25.0
Female	6	75.0
Ethnicity		
White	6	75.0
Black or African American	0	0.0
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0.0
Asian	1	12.5
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0.0
From multiple races	0	0.0
Some other race: Indian (South Asian)	1	12.5
Highest Level of Schooling		
Less than high school degree	0	0.0
High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)	0	0.0
Some college but no degree	1	12.5
Associate degree	0	0.0
Bachelor degree	4	50.0
Graduate degree	3	37.5
Employment Status		
Employed, working full-time	5	62.5
Employed, working part-time	1	12.5
Not employed, looking for work	0	0.0
Not employed, NOT looking for work	1	12.5
Retired	0	0.0
Disabled, not able to work	0	0.0
No Response	1	12.5

Note. For each category N=8.

In addition to this demographic data, parent participants were also asked about the demographics of their child and their child's participation in the gifted program (see Table 2).

As shown in Table 2, the ages of respondents' children were between 10-12 years old. Five children were in 6th grade, while three children were in 5th grade. Five out of eight of the respondents' children were White, and one respondent's child was Asian, one respondent's child was multi-racial, and one respondent's child was Indian (South Asian). None of the respondents' children qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch. A majority (n=6) of respondents' children began initial participation in the gifted program in 3rd grade, while two respondents' children began initial participation in the gifted program in 4th grade. This means that all children had been in the gifted program for at least a year. A majority (n=7) of respondents' children qualified for both English/Language Arts and Math gifted services. One respondent reported not knowing whether or not their child qualified for English/Language Arts services, math services, or both.

Table 2

Background and Demographics of Parent Participants' Child in the Gifted Program

Characteristic	*n*	*%*
Age of Child		
10	3	37.5
11	2	25.0
12	3	37.5
Grade of Child		
5th Grade	3	37.5
6th Grade	5	62.5
Ethnicity		
White	5	62.5
Black or African American	0	0.0
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0.0
Asian	1	12.5
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0.0
From multiple races	1	12.5
Some other race: Indian (South Asian)	1	12.5
Free and Reduced Lunch Qualification		
Yes	0	0.0
No	8	100.0
I don't know	0	0.0
Grade of Child's Initial Participation in Gifted Instruction		
3rd Grade	6	75.0
4th Grade	2	25.0
5th Grade	0	0.0
6th Grade	0	0.0
I don't know	0	0.0
Subject of Child's Gifted Instruction		
English/Language Arts Only	0	0.0
Math Only	0	0.0
Both English/Language Arts and Math	7	87.5
I don't know	1	12.5

Note. For each category N=8.

Teachers. Purposive sampling procedures were utilized in which all gifted teachers (six) at the elementary level were recruited to participate in the teacher focus group. Three of the six elementary gifted teachers from Sunnydale Elementary 100 participated. All three of the participants of the teacher focus group completed a survey after focus group completion that requested information related to demographics and educational background (see Table 3).

As shown in Table 3, the respondents' ages were distributed between 30-39 to between 50-59 years of age. All respondents (n=3) indicated that they are female and White. Two respondents indicated earning their Bachelor Degree in Education, while one respondent indicated earning their Bachelor Degree in Business/Economics. All three respondents earned different Master degrees including: Teaching, Reading, and Master of Science in Language and Literacy. One respondent indicated receiving their Middle School Math endorsement and National Board Certificate, and one respondent indicated receiving their Certificate of Advanced Studies: The Gifted as well as a Technology Specialist endorsement. One reported not earning any specific endorsements. Participants reported each individually teaching for 11, 13, and 22 years with 3 of the 11 years being within the district, 12 of the 13 years being within the district, and 4 of the 22 years being within the district. The number of years they specifically taught students within gifted education was 8, 3, and 17 years, respectively.

Table 3

Background and Demographics of Teacher Focus Group Participants

Characteristic	*n*	*%*
Age		
18-20	0	0.0
21-29	0	0.0
30-39	1	33.3
40-49	1	33.3
50-59	1	33.3
60 or older	0	0.0
Gender		
Male	0	0.0
Female	3	100.0
Ethnicity		
White	3	100.0
Black or African American	0	0.0
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0.0
Asian	0	0.0
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0.0
From multiple races	0	0.0
Some other race	0	0.0
Degrees Obtained		
Bachelors Degree in Education	2	66.6
Bachelors Degree in Business/Economics	1	33.3
Master Degree in Teaching	1	33.3
Master Degree in Reading	1	33.3
Master of Science in Language & Literacy	1	33.3
Endorsements Received		
Middle School Math	1	33.3
Certificate of Advanced Studies: The Gifted	1	33.3
Technology Specialist Endorsement	1	33.3
National Board Certificate	1	33.3
Not Applicable	1	33.3
Number of Years Teaching		
11	1	33.3
13	1	33.3
22	1	33.3

Number of Years Teaching in District		
3	1	33.3
4	1	33.3
12	1	33.3
Number of Years Teaching Gifted Education		
3	1	33.3
8	1	33.3
17	1	33.3

Note. For each category N=3.

Data Collection

Instruments

Parent survey. A researcher-created survey titled *Gifted Instruction* was completed by eight parents of 5th and 6th grade gifted students in Sunnydale District 100 (see Appendix A). The main purpose of the survey was to assess current parent knowledge of, exposure to, and involvement with concepts surrounding growth mindset. An additional purpose of the survey included the gathering of demographic information. Specifically, the survey was designed to address one main research questions with four sub-questions. This included:

1. What impact has the current growth mindset practices in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district had on parents?
    a. What do parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 within a small suburban K-8 district currently know regarding the concept of growth mindset?
    b. What do parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 within a small suburban K-8 district report regarding their exposure to the concept of growth mindset?

c. What do parents report regarding their level of involvement with the growth mindset instruction being provided within a small suburban K-8 district?

d. Is there a relationship between the level of what parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 know regarding growth mindset and their current reported exposure or involvement with the growth mindset instruction occurring within a small suburban K-8 district?

The survey was developed by the researcher and was administered online utilizing Survey Monkey. A mail in option was also available but was not requested by any respondents. The survey contained 28 close-ended and open-ended items divided into four sections: knowledge (13 items), involvement/exposure (3 items), additional information (1 item), and demographic information (11 items). The open-ended items were placed in the survey prior to the close-ended items so that respondents would not be primed when answering the open-ended items. According to information provided by Survey Monkey, the time it took respondents to complete the survey ranged from five minutes to 33 minutes. At the end of the survey, a link to a second survey was provided (see Appendix B). Respondents were requested to click on the link to the second survey if they were willing to provide their information (in their desired medium) to be contacted regarding participation in a follow-up focus group. This second survey was not connected to the original survey and responses were recorded separately. A mailed version of this second survey was available but was not requested by any respondents. No parents responded to this second survey to participate in the follow-up focus group.

Parent focus group. A focus group was not completed with parents of 5th and 6th grade gifted students in Sunnydale District 100 due to a lack of participant interest. Open-ended items had been prepared and a protocol was developed (see Appendix C). The interview questions were intended to address one main research question and two sub-questions:

2. How do parents of students in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset to look moving forward?
    a. How do parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 district perceive their role in developing a growth mindset for their children?
    b. How would parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 district like collaboration to occur between the child's teacher and themselves with regard to developing a growth mindset for their children?

Thus, this research question and sub-questions were not answered in the current study.

Teacher focus group. A focus group was completed with three elementary gifted teachers from Sunnydale District 100. Specifically, a semi-structured face-to-face group interview was conducted by the researcher. Six open-ended questions were prepared prior to the semi-structured interview along with a protocol (see Appendix D). The group interview lasted approximately 25 minutes. The interview questions were intended to address one main research question with two sub-questions:

3. How do gifted teachers of students in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset to look moving forward?
    a. How do teachers of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 district perceive the parents' role in developing a growth mindset for the children in the gifted program?
    b. How would teachers of gifted students in grades 5-6 in the small suburban K-8 district like collaboration to occur between the parents and themselves with regard to developing a growth mindset for children in the gifted program?

The researcher utilized two digital recording devices. Two devices were used in case of technological malfunction. After the recording was complete, the researcher transcribed the recording for later analysis and deleted the original audio recordings.

Teacher survey. Following the completion of the focus group, the researcher also utilized a survey to collect additional information about the teachers that participated in the focus group. Specifically, the survey requested the teachers to provide demographic and background information including gender, age, race, education, and work experience (see Appendix E).

Procedure

Parents. A recruitment letter describing the purpose of the study was emailed to parents of the 5th and 6th grade gifted students. For those families without an email address, the recruitment letter was mailed home. The letter was signed by the researcher

but was sent by the district's Gifted Coordinator. In addition to describing the purpose of the study, this letter requested a parent of the family to participate in the researcher created online Survey Monkey survey (see Appendix A). A link to the online survey was provided within the letter and parents were able to click on the link or type the link into a web browser to begin the study. If preferred, parents were given contact information for the researcher in order to request a mailed version of the survey. Parents were asked to complete the survey at some point within a two-week time frame. For the online version, implied consent was collected by informing respondents that their completion of the online survey constituted their consent to participate. For the mailed version, a written informed consent was requested to be mailed back in a separate self-addressed, stamped envelope from the original survey.

At the end of the online survey, respondents were requested to click on a link to a second survey if they were willing to provide their information (in their desired medium) to be contacted regarding participation in a follow-up focus group (see Appendix B). This second survey was not connected to the original survey and responses were recorded separately. If a mailed version of the survey had been requested, a second survey would have been included and if they were willing to participate in the follow-up focus group, they would have been asked to also return this second survey in a different self-addressed, stamped envelope from the original survey.

After the two-week time frame, the district's Gifted Coordinator emailed another recruitment letter to parents of 5^{th} and 6^{th} grade gifted students. Once again, for those families without an email address listed, the recruitment letter was mailed home. This

letter was also signed by the researcher but sent by the district's Gifted Coordinator. The letter referred to the original recruitment letter, thanked those who had already participated in the survey, and reminded those that had not yet had a chance, that they could complete the survey within another two-week time frame. All other procedures were the same as during the original recruitment phase.

The researcher collected eight valid parent surveys using this procedure. These surveys were considered valid because respondents indicated their child's grade level and participation in the gifted programming as being accurate for the study's parameters. There were no follow up focus group surveys received from parents.

Despite the lack of interest in participating in the parent focus group, a follow-up recruitment script had been created in the event parents had shown interest in participation. This script was intended to be used over email or phone, depending on the preference of contact method indicated by the parent. However, because no parents volunteered for the focus group portion of the study, the script was not utilized. In addition, interview questions and a protocol were created for the focus group but were not utilized (see Appendix C).

Teachers. A recruitment letter describing the purpose of the study was emailed to gifted teachers of the 5^{th} and 6^{th} grade gifted students. The letter was signed and sent by the district's Gifted Coordinator. In addition to describing the purpose of the study, this letter requested teacher participation in a focus group with the researcher. Specifically, teachers were requested to email the researcher for further information about the focus group by a specific deadline.

Upon receiving responses from the teachers, the focus group was scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and within the junior high of Sunnydale District 100. Three teachers participated in the focus group. The focus group lasted approximately 25 minutes and was led by the researcher. To begin, informed consent was reviewed which included permission to audio record the focus group. All participants signed consent for participation. The researcher then assigned a simple identifying number to each participant so that the researcher could more easily track who responded to a question on the audio recording. The researcher then began audio recording and followed the focus group protocol (see Appendix D). At the end of questioning, participants were thanked for their time and the recording was stopped. Participants were also reminded of confidentiality. Transcripts of the audio recordings occurred as soon as feasible after the focus group was completed. The transcription only included the numerical identification codes so as to de-identify participants. The audio recording was then destroyed and the transcription was sent to a second coder for separate analysis.

The researcher later emailed a brief demographic survey through Survey Monkey to the teacher focus group participants in order to gain demographic and background information about participants (see Appendix E). The researcher received three valid responses, as there were three participants in the focus group.

Data Analysis

A mixed method, exploratory design was used for this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Specifically, the researcher first utilized descriptive analysis techniques to analyze the demographic and background characteristics of the parent and teacher

samples. The researcher analyzed the data at both the individual level, as well as by a summary of responses for each demographic and background item with the assistance of the Survey Monkey cloud based software.

In addition, descriptive analyses were conducted utilizing SPSS to provide overall group mean and standard deviation information with regard to the variables of parent knowledge, exposure, and involvement with growth mindset concepts. Pearson correlational analyses to explore the relationship between these variables could not be conducted due to small sample size. However, review of the raw data was completed.

The researcher then utilized qualitative procedures to analyze results of the open-ended parent survey items as well as the transcripts from the teacher focus group. This was done through content analysis methods of constant comparison analysis. As described by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2008), constant comparison analysis methods are utilized to build theory, analyze data, understand multiple meanings from data, provide a process by which data can be analyzed, and assist researchers in seeing and creating relationships among themes. This includes the systematic process of open coding, axial coding, and then selective coding.

During the open coding stage, the researcher and a second coder separately read through each transcript multiple times. Then, they began assigning codes to specific ideas individually. Once this was complete, the researcher and the second coder both individually drafted a code book that contained a list of all of the codes, the definition for each code, a description of when to use each code, a description of when not to use each code, and sample quotes involving the code. The researcher and the second coder then

met and discussed the codebooks they each created. From this, they created a master codebook in which they both agreed on each code, definition of each code, description of when to use each code, description of when not to use each code, and sample quotes that would be representative of each code. This led to 100% agreement on codes that were present in the master codebook.

The researcher and second coder continued to discuss the codebook, by grouping the individual codes into categories, as a part of the axial coding stage. Agreement was reached that eight main categories were present among both the parent survey and the teacher focus group. Once again, 100% agreement on categories was reached.

Once the researcher and the second coder agreed on the master code book, they each separately re-coded each transcript utilizing the master codebook. They each underlined segments that pertained to particular codes and wrote the code above the segment. The second coder returned her transcripts to the researcher for reliability analysis to be completed before the next stage.

After reliability analysis was completed and further consensus in assigning codes was reached, the researcher then re-reviewed and further analyzed the categories for more general concepts and themes to answer the research questions for the current study. This was the stage of selective coding.

Trustworthiness

Steps were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the data obtained from this study. Specifically, because the parent survey and focus group protocols were

researcher created measures, there is no existing information on the validity or reliability of these data sources. However, steps were taken to ensure validity of these tools.

The researcher created the parent survey and focus group questions based on her research and understanding of growth mindset concepts and home-school collaboration. This included key concepts, definitions, and findings discussed in research articles and books. In addition to this, the survey and focus group questions were reviewed by the researcher's chair and committee members. Updates to the survey and focus group questions were then further reviewed by the researcher's chair.

In addition, to ensure trustworthiness of the open-ended survey data as well as the focus group data, inter-coder agreement was utilized with a second coder. As described previously, this led to 100% agreement between codes and categories within a master codebook that was utilized to conduct the final analysis of the transcripts. However, when the researcher returned to compare the separate coded transcripts that were completed with the utilization of the master codebook, 100% similarity in coding had not been reached. Conflicts were discussed and resolved through a consensual coding process. Validity checks were then completed by the researcher by going back to the raw data to identify participant quotes to fit identified themes, searching for alternative explanations, and using self-reflexivity.

Some techniques described by Nastasi and Schensul (2005) for ensuring trustworthiness of qualitative data were also utilized including triangulation and thick descriptions. Specifically, triangulation involves utilizing multiple sources and methods (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005). Both parents and teachers were sources of information in

the current study as well as both survey and focus group procedures. Thick descriptions were also utilized in which detailed information was provided regarding the study's participants, context, and procedures (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005).

Summary

The researcher wanted to explore the current knowledge, exposure, and involvement of parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 school district with regard to growth mindset instruction occurring within their child's gifted classroom. In addition, the researcher also wanted to explore how teachers in the same school district can increase home school collaboration in regards to growth mindset concepts so that these concepts are further reinforced at home. In order to do this, the researcher created a survey to assess the knowledge, exposure, and involvement of parents of gifted students. The researcher also developed a semi-structured interview to be used in a focus group format to gather teacher perceptions of how to increase home school collaboration related to growth mindset. A mixed method exploratory design was utilized. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and qualitative data was analyzed through constant comparison analysis. To ensure validity and reliability of the data, researcher created measures were reviewed by committee members and the committee chair. In addition, 100% inter-coder agreement was reached for open-ended survey and focus group data. The researcher used validity checks (fitting participant quotes to identified themes, searching for alternative explanations, and self-reflexivity) as well as triangulation of sources and thick descriptions to improve trustworthiness of the data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Parent Survey

Parent Knowledge of Growth Mindset Concepts

The researcher first analyzed current parent knowledge of growth mindset concepts. Parent knowledge was assessed utilizing both close- and open-ended items (see Appendix A). For the close-ended items, respondents needed to correctly answer 10 items regarding terminology, examples, and outcomes of growth and fixed mindsets. Respondents received one point for every correct response. A higher score indicated a higher level of growth mindset knowledge whereas a lower score indicated a lower level of growth mindset knowledge. The minimum score possible was "0" while the maximum score possible was "10." All participants provided an answer to every item. One respondent indicated "I don't know" for 2 of the 10 items and one respondent indicated "I don't know" for 1 of the 10 items. Responses of "I don't know" were scored a "0." The range of participants' scores was from 4 to10. However, all scores were an 8, 9, or 10 with the exception of the one score of 4. The average score was 8 (SD = 1.77). This indicates a relatively high level of basic knowledge of growth mindset concepts for a majority of the sample based on the survey items. There were four items that all participants answered correctly which included: (1) What kind of mindset do you think is the belief that intelligence cannot be changed even with hard work, effort, and

perseverance; (2) If a student says, “I’m just not good at that,” “No matter what I do, I won’t get better,” or “I give up, it’s just too hard,” what type of mindset do you think they are most likely to have?; (3) If a student says, “Even though this is hard, I am going to keep trying,” “This may be hard now, but I will learn from it,” or “With extra effort, I know I can accomplish this,” what mindset do you think they are likely to have?; and (4) To increase a growth mindset in students, what do you think is the best way to praise a student?

Upon analyzing the written responses to the three open-ended items related to respondents’ knowledge of growth mindset concepts, it was confirmed that most participants had a relatively high level of basic knowledge of growth mindset concepts. The exception to this was one respondent that indicated “I don’t know” for all three open-ended items. This respondent also received the lowest knowledge score of 4 from the closed ended items. There was only one other respondent that indicated “I don’t know” for one of the open-ended items. When analyzing the remaining written responses, the following categories emerged from the data to demonstrate the respondents’ understanding of growth mindset concepts.

Theme 1: Growth Mindset is A Belief Regarding Learning and Improvement

One of the themes that emerged from the responses was that growth mindset is a belief regarding learning and improvement. All of the respondents identified the aspect of learning and improvement in some way at least once when answering any of the three open-ended items. In addition five of the seven respondents identified the aspect that

growth mindset is a belief in some way. Below are excerpts from some of the participants' written responses:

Respondent #1:

In my opinion it is a philosophy that encourages people to think about improving themselves…With a growth mindset you are striving to grow or be in a better place than where you started…

Respondent #4:

A growth mindset is a belief that you can also learn and do more.

Respondent #5:

...the ability to gain or have access to information that causes deeper thought for an issue.

Respondent #6:

… growth mindset is based on the theory that talent can be developed…

Respondent #7:

Continual learning, not thinking you know it all already.

A small number of respondents (two) also identified the aspect that improvement is a result of making mistakes and overcoming obstacles while also describing growth mindset as a belief regarding learning and improvement. This addition demonstrated a deeper understanding among these two participants. Below are excerpts from the participants' written responses:

Respondent #2:

A growth mindset is the ability to embrace mistakes as a learning opportunity. It is a practice of belief that growing and learning is the results of failures and overcoming obstacles is part of the journey.

Respondent #8

I would explain a growth mindset as a flexible way of thinking, or thinking outside the box, as a way to teach young people so that they can make mistakes, learn and grow in many different ways, and not just go down one path of thinking.

One respondent also described growth mindset as being universal, while another described the importance of effort within growth mindset. Although these are important aspects of growth mindset concepts, they were not concepts identified by more than one respondent.

Theme 2: Innate Abilities and Obtaining a Criterion are Contradictory to Having a Growth Mindset

Another theme that emerged from responses, particularly from the second open-ended item, was the description of different factors that contradicted a growth mindset. In other words, the participants described a fixed mindset which is known to be the opposite of growth mindset. The common factors participants included were the concepts of innate abilities and trying to obtain a certain criterion. Four of the seven respondents identified the aspect that growth mindset beliefs are contradictory to beliefs regarding innate abilities while three of the seven respondents identified the aspect that the desire to

obtain a certain criterion undermines the concept of growth mindset. Below are excerpts from some of the respondents' written responses:

Respondent #1

I think the difference is that with a fixed mindset you are reaching toward a particular score or grade. With a growth mindset you are striving to grow or be in a better place than where you started.

Respondent #2

A fixed mindset= "I'm not good at math." A growth mindset= "I'm going to learn the first step and move on from there until I understand fractions.

Respondent #4

A fixed mindset indicates you are not able to grow beyond the abilities you are born with. It can limit the amount of growth that a person has because they feel limited by past events and are unable to continue growing and changing their possible limitations.

Respondent #6

While growth mindset is based on the theory that talent can be developed, fixed mindset is based on the theory that talent is innate.

Respondent #7

A fixed mindset thinks they know it and their way is the best. Not open to continual learning and questioning the status quo.

Two respondents also indicated in the other open-ended items that perfectionism is detrimental to having a growth mindset. Although this is an important aspect of

growth mindset concepts, it was not something that was identified consistently throughout.

Theme 3: Encouraging Learning and Improvement with Their Children Helps to Promote a Growth Mindset

A final theme that emerged from responses was that parents are providing encouragement to their children toward learning and improvement in order to promote a growth mindset. All of the respondents identified this aspect of encouraging learning and improvement within the third open-ended item. Below are excerpts from some of the participants' written responses:

Respondent #1

Encourage them to think about how they can do better or improve their work, regardless of the grade they got. Point out where they are in relation to where they were last year, celebrate that vs. celebrating a grade or score.

Respondent #4

Ask questions. Encourage them to do more and do research on their own. Encourage them to explore the things that interest them. Challenge them.

Respondent #5

I believe that letting them try to solve a problem and guiding them with different options, as well as showing them how to obtain information themselves.

Respondent #6

By challenging them and encouraging them to work hard to learn and provide ample resources and opportunities for them to learn at home and school.

Respondent #7

Also tell them to ask questions. Question authority, never accept "because I said so" as an answer.

As described previously in the Theme 1, two participants also identified the aspect of making mistakes related to growth mindset. These same participants indicated they would help their children accept mistakes. This addition, once again, demonstrated a deeper understanding among these two participants. Below are excerpts from the participants' written responses:

Respondent #2:

I try to instill the idea of switching their perception of mistakes/frustration to an opportunity to rise to a challenge. And the idea that learning never ends so to try to release the feeling of pressure to get it right away.

Respondent #8

Allowing them to have an idea and test it for themselves…see what works and what fails, without telling them what you think is likely to happen. Children need to not be afraid to fail or think in black and white in order to growth and develop their critical thinking.

One respondent also described ideas of providing challenges and encouraging hard work. Although these are important aspects of growth mindset concepts, it was not something that was identified consistently throughout.

After analysis of the parental knowledge closed and open-ended items on the survey, the researcher determined that all but one participant had a relatively high level of

basic understanding of growth mindset concepts. Three themes were identified from the open-ended items that confirmed this basic level of understanding from parents. The three themes that emerged were: (1) growth mindset is a belief regarding learning and improvement, (2) innate abilities and obtaining a criterion are contradictory to having a growth mindset, and that a growth mindset can be promoted by (3) encouraging learning and improvement with their children.

Parent Exposure to Growth Mindset Concepts

The researcher then analyzed current parent exposure to growth mindset concepts. This was assessed with one close-ended item. Specifically, respondents marked whether any or all of the four statements related to exposure of growth mindset concepts applied to them (see Appendix A). Respondents received one point for every marked exposure item. A higher score indicated a higher level of exposure to the concepts of growth mindset whereas a lower score indicated a lower level of exposure to the concepts of growth mindset. The minimum score possible was "0" while the maximum score possible was "4." All participants provided an answer to every item. One respondent indicated "I don't know" for 2 of the 4 items and one respondent indicated "I don't know" for 1 of the 4 items. Responses of "I don't know" were scored a "0." The range of participants' scores was from 1-4. However, most scores were 3 or 4 with the exception of one score of 1 and two scores of 2. The average respondents' score was 3 (*SD = 1.20).* This indicates a relatively high level of exposure to growth mindset concepts for a majority of the sample based on the survey items. All respondents indicated hearing the term growth mindset prior to completing the survey, while six out

of eight participants indicated hearing the term growth mindset specifically from their child's teacher/school/district while one respondent indicated only hearing the term from outside resources.

Parent Involvement with Growth Mindset Concepts

Finally, the researcher analyzed current parent involvement with growth mindset concepts. This was assessed with both close and open-ended items (see Appendix A). For the close-ended item, respondents marked whether five statements related to growth mindset involvement applied to them. Respondents received one point for every marked involvement item. A higher score indicated a higher level of involvement with the concepts of growth mindset whereas a lower score indicated a lower level of involvement with the concepts of growth mindset. The minimum score possible was "0" while the maximum score possible was "5." All participants provided an answer to every item. One respondent indicated "I don't know" for 1 of the 5 items. The response of "I don't know" was scored a "0." The range of participants' scores was from 0-5. The average respondents' score was 3 (*SD = 1.69)* indicating a moderate, but variable, level of involvement with growth mindset concepts across the sample based on the survey items. All but one respondent indicated implementing growth mindset strategies with their child at home, with five of the seven of these respondents indicating that they have also spoken directly to their gifted child about growth mindset concepts. In addition, of the seven respondents that reported implementing growth mindset strategies with their child at home, six of them indicated that they either attended the parent information session on growth mindset provided by the district and/or spoke to their child's teacher or another

school staff member about growth mindset concepts. Only two respondents indicated only reading additional outside information regarding growth mindset not provided by their child's gifted teacher/school/district but still implementing growth mindset strategies at home.

Upon analyzing the written responses to the open-ended item related to participant involvement with growth mindset concepts, it was confirmed that some participants had a moderate level of involvement with growth mindset concepts while others had a low level of involvement. Two respondents explained their involvement by describing specific growth mindset strategies they use at home with their children. Four respondents explained their involvement by either describing broad generalizations of growth mindset strategies they use at home with their children or by solely reading/ researching about growth mindset concepts. The two other respondents either did not respond to the question or simply reported, "low" to their level of involvement. When further analyzing the written responses, the following categories emerged from the data to demonstrate respondents' involvement with growth mindset concepts.

Theme 1: Promotion of and/or Active Use of Strategies at Home

One of the themes that emerged from the participants' responses was that parents reported primarily being involved with growth mindset concepts by the way they promoted or actively used growth mindset strategies at home with their children. Five of the six respondents that fully answered the item described this level of involvement by promoting a growth mindset environment at home by the way they spoke with their children or utilized different learning opportunities to promote growth mindset.

However, as mentioned above, the specificity of strategies varied among participants. Below are excerpts from some of the participants' written responses:

Respondent #3

I encourage my kids to not give up on something just because it is hard. I use real life examples on how they have learned new skills in the past and how it was hard in the beginning.

Respondent #4

I think I am as involved as the teachers because at home the same atmosphere can be fostered.

Respondent #5

I personally believe that with the right learning environment at home and school and with the right guidance and motivation, one could achieve anything they want to.

Respondent #6

We've always taught our kids to question everything. To think of both side of every question. Being able to debate the side you're most opposed to teaches you to think from the others perspective and understand that theirs multiple side to an issue.

Theme 2: Reading/Researching

Another theme that emerged from the participants' responses was that some parents reported reading information about growth mindset. However, this was only reported by two of the six respondents that fully answered the item, thus this was not a

theme that was consistent throughout. Below are excerpts from the participants' written responses:

Respondent #1

It is something I have heard about and mentioned on teacher blogs. Also, I see a lot of products about it promoted on Teachers Pay Teachers.

Respondent #2

I have read a small bit. I should actively practice it more. I find myself falling into old habits of definitive language.

After analysis of the parental involvement closed and open-ended items on the survey, the researcher determined that participants had a moderate, but variable, level of involvement with growth mindset concepts. One parent indicated directly that their involvement was "low," while another chose to skip the item. Aside from this, two themes emerged that separated involvement from being limited to reading/researching about growth mindset concepts to promoting and/or actively using growth mindset strategies in the home with their children. However, the specificity of growth mindset strategies being used at home varied among participants.

Correlations between Parent Knowledge, Exposure, and Involvement

Because of small sample size, Pearson correlations to explore the relationship between the close-ended items related to parent knowledge and exposure, parent knowledge and involvement, and parent exposure and involvement could not be completed as intended. However, a review of raw data appears to show a trend in the direction that the higher a parent's exposure to growth mindset concepts, the higher their

level of knowledge about growth mindset concepts, and vice versa. In addition, the data appears to be trending in the direction that the higher a parent's involvement with growth mindset concepts, the higher their level of knowledge about growth mindset concepts, and vice versa. When examining the relationship between parental exposure to growth mindset concepts and parental involvement with growth mindset concepts, raw data appears to show a trend that the higher the parents' exposure to growth mindset concepts, the higher their involvement with growth mindset concepts, and vice versa. A larger data set would be beneficial to determine whether a significant correlation between these variables actually exists by calculating Pearson correlations. However, this analysis would not speak to the causality of the effect of these variables on each other.

Teacher Focus Group

After the completion of the parent survey, the researcher conducted a focus group with the gifted teachers of 5-6th grade students (see Appendix D). During the focus group, panel members were asked to share their perceptions of the value of the growth mindset work being done in their classrooms. They were also asked what role they felt teachers should have in promoting growth mindset concepts with students and what role they felt parents should have in promoting growth mindset concepts with students. Furthermore, the discussion then consisted of what resources they felt were necessary for parents to reinforce these concepts at home and how teachers and parents could work together to promote these concepts. Participants provided in depth information on their beliefs surrounding growth mindset while also providing possible ideas on how to further

increase home school collaboration in the future. The following themes emerged from the data.

Theme 1: Growth Mindset Activities Are Currently Being Utilized in the Classroom to Promote Growth Mindset

Upon asking the gifted teachers about the value of the growth mindset work being done in the classroom, they first described and explained the practices that were being completed in their classrooms. Specifically, the teachers described lessons, activities, and teacher led discussions in which the goal is to promote effort, improvement, and thus a growth mindset in gifted students. This included projects students complete throughout a trimester, student goal setting, and ongoing discussions and modeling of concepts. All three respondents explained these types of activities in some way or showed agreement with others in the focus group. Below are some excerpts from the participants' responses:

Respondent #2:

… Our theme for the year is changes… the first trimester is going to be about perseverance and mindset and about what makes a leader… what qualities they have that separate them from other people…

Respondent #2:

…we do talks about perseverance and…famous failures and people who took…thousands of tries to get something right…

Respondent #3:

…the students have to create a social emotional goal and I focused mine around the habits of mind which we start with talking about more of the growth mindset vs. fixed mindset … then we go into habits of mind and the students develop… a social emotional goal based on that, on one of those habits…

Respondent #1:

Also we start the year with…setting SMART goals…to talk about how we have to set goals and achieve goals and set new goals or higher goals…One thing I really try to do is just instead of just teaching them a lesson about growth mindset…fixed mindset just using that vocabulary every single day…

Respondent #3

…that's something I'm looking forward to doing with the unit next…year…I think it will carry on throughout the year as well, it's not just going to be set with this trimester, I think we will carry on…

Theme 2: Growth Mindset Work is Valuable Because of Characteristics of Gifted Students

When probed further about the specific value the teachers feel this instruction has for gifted students, the teachers described characteristics of gifted students and why they feel that growth mindset work is important for them. This included discussion of how things typically come easily to gifted students and that the students can become frustrated and lack perseverance when faced with challenges or making mistakes. Two of the three respondents identified these ideas and the importance they feel in doing growth mindset

activities because of it. The third respondent also discussed the desire many gifted students have to obtain a certain grade or mark. Another participant showed agreement with her response. Below are excerpts from the participants' responses:

Respondent #3:

…I feel like gifted students totally have that fixed mindset…they give up if they don't, ya know, get something right away…they lack persistence…even when their faced with a challenge… they don't push themselves to, ya know, get it…so I feel like there is a huge value in teaching them and understanding that…it's OK to make a mistake and you learn from your mistakes…

Respondent #2:

…I think our kids in particular are so used to everything coming so easily…they definitely are used to…once and their done, they go it…and…we kind of put them in a lot of situations where that's not true…and it's very easy for them to get frustrated…

Respondent #1:

…Our kids also like want to know what they have to do to get an extend…what they have to do, like what is the limit, like what do they have to reach so they get that certain mark …

Respondent #2:

…just knowing that, ya know, it doesn't come easy to everyone…I think it's really important for our kids to hear. And see. And know about. More than anything I think that's a huge thing for them….

At the end of the focus group, one member also identified the concept of "grit" and how this impacts the growth mindset and achievement of gifted students as well. She described that growth mindset and "grit" often go hand in hand and without grit, gifted students may not reach their potential. One other member also indicated agreement. Below is an excerpt from the participants' responses:

> **Respondent #1:**
>
> Another thing I want to kind of add on is the whole concept of grit, how fixed mindset or actually growth mindset fit with grit. And how you can be the smartest kid in the school but if you don't have that grit or growth mindset likely you won't carry through as far as you could probably, you will probably will not live up to your potential…Because you don't have the ability to push through that hard thing. And…you know if you quit…you're going to stop…you know a kiddo that's not necessarily gifted but a high achiever but has a tremendous amount of grit or um has such a growth mindset and they, you hear they go to Notre Dame and their a doctor, and you hear another kiddo who was just reading at an 8th grade level in 2nd grade and could ya know do algebra and all these things, and then that person is not really doing much outside of high school because they just didn't have that development of that perseverance.

Theme 3: The Teacher's Role is to Provide Lessons and Reinforcement of Growth Mindset Concepts in the Classroom

The group was then asked to expand on what they felt the teachers' role was in helping students develop a growth mindset. All respondents shared that they felt the

teachers' role was to expose the concepts of growth mindset to their students through lessons and to reiterate these lessons/concepts throughout their instruction. Some participants expanded on this by describing modeling practices or ways to enhance the classroom environment (bulletin boards) to reinforce these concepts. In addition, later in the focus group, one participant also explicitly indicated the need to collaborate with general education teachers so that they can reinforce growth mindset concepts in the general education classroom with gifted students as well. Below are excerpts from participants' responses:

Respondent #2:

…I think it's our job to just to challenge them but also to let them know that there is a reason for it, ya know, that like I was talking earlier…about the famous failures and stuff for them to see what happens if you give it one more try…or if you just work a little bit harder…what there is out there.

Respondent #3:

…I feel that teachers can probably like almost like weekly do some type of growth mindset lesson, read a book, or share a story um just because I mean kids forget about it…in the next month, ya know, they need something to constantly remind them…or like a bulletin board, I've seen a lot more teachers putting like more growth mindset stuff up on bulletin board wise but still referring back to it…

Respondent #1:

…And then also modeling it…like teaching a lesson ya know you maybe veer off on something or whoa wait a minute that's not right and then I mean, sometimes they've asked me questions and I don't know the answer and I say, "well let me think about that" or "I'll come back to it" or "Does anybody else have anything" or um just that it's OK to make mistakes…

Respondent #1:

…We need to expand um and keeping talking about mindset with um our collaboration with the classroom teachers too and just um, ya know, what their expectations are because if these kids are always excelling in the classroom, their always getting told they do a great job, well, they need the opportunity to have that failure, not, or that challenge in the classroom…

Furthermore, one participant indicated the need to provide instruction and lessons on perseverance and "grit" which are linked to the concepts of growth mindset. Below is an excerpt from her response:

Respondent #1:

…You know a kiddo that's not necessarily gifted but a high achiever but has a tremendous amount of grit or um has such a growth mindset and they, you hear they go to Notre Dame and their a doctor, and you hear another kiddo who was just reading at an 8th grade level in 2nd grade and could ya know do algebra and all these things, and then that person is not really doing much outside of high school because they just didn't have that development of that perseverance. And that

why…so important and I think we can do something to help them develop that as teachers in the earlier grades and middle school and high school.

Theme 4: The Parent's Role is to Reinforce Concepts at Home with the Support of the Classroom Teacher

The group was then asked what they felt the parents' role should be in helping students develop a growth mindset. The teachers described that parents should be reinforcing these concepts at home by the way they speak with their children. For example, they should give students' time to process their days instead of trying to fix things for them. However, they described their role in supporting parents in this endeavor by communicating with parents about these strategies during parent teacher conferences. Below are excerpts from participants' responses:

Respondent #2:

…You hear parents all the time, oh my gosh, you're the greatest thing in the world and you're so smart, you're so…ya know and, ya know, we are just not doing them favors by saying that and, ya know, a couple of years ago we had a speaker come and talk to the parents about growth mindset and one of the things she said to them is like, "Stop asking your kids, ya know, how there day was immediately, like everybody needs time to process like, ya know, just give them time to talk and think and, ya know, and let it come out" but, ya know, everybody wants everything to be OK all of the time and I think that that does not lend itself to growth…

Respondent #3

…just interacting with parents…communicating with them and making sure they understand, ya know, what they can do at home and, ya know, at parent teacher conferences I've talked to parents about their social, their child's social emotional goals and um, ya know, having that growth mindset but ya know offering them like resources…

Respondent #1:

...I think every parent…parents of gifted kids should read something about fixed, what a growth and fixed mindset is. They need to be educated in how to speak to their own children in order to promote that mindset also. Not just academically, but how they do the dishes, or how they fold their clothes, or any, anything other there that they're doing, just…life skills too. To carry through their daily goings on or whatever….

Theme 5: Workshops, Parent Teacher Conferences, Student Assignments, and Collaborative Goal Setting are Ways to Help Parents Reinforce Growth Mindset Concepts

When asked to expand on what resources are needed to help parents learn how to promote growth mindset concepts at home and how parent and teacher collaboration could occur regarding growth mindset concepts, the focus group discussed several ideas. These ideas included active parent involvement and engagement strategies as well as continued teacher and parent communication. These strategies included parent workshops, sharing information at parent teacher conferences, assigning students

"homework" related to sharing with their family, and collaborative goal setting. Below are excerpts from participants' responses:

Respondent #3:

…Any speakers or even like workshops or anything like that where, that almost teachesthem how, like the parents, how kids grow…I was just thinking back to like the, my Rube Goldberg project, almost like putting the parent in like a hands on type of workshop and having them figure it out, giving them supplies and having them create something, and obviously making it difficult for them to like, overcome obstacles and challenges and realizing that they have to persist in order to get something to work…just almost having them realize, OK this is what your children, what we want your children to be doing, ya know, something like that…

Respondent #2:

…It's part of our parent education too, I know I talk a lot with parents at conferences, ya know, when a grade is not maybe what they think it is, and why I think it's still great, ya know…if your child is getting extending on every single thing we do in math, then I'mnot really doing my job, I'm not pushing your child…

Respondent #1:

…I think they need like an environment of, where they can see what it is, or even encouraging the kids, like when you are talking about growth mindset and fixed mindset, having, giving them a little bit of an assignment to go home and teach their family what that is…like one science lesson the whole class failed on

something and I said "Alright, I want everybody to go home and tell, everybody got an F in science today, everybody failed, failed, failed and it was AWESOME!" And that was their assignment, but then they also had to explain to teachers, their parents why. Why that was ok.

Respondent # 3:

…When we create those social emotional goals, almost having like the parents involved in the goal setting…or like the planning because maybe it will help them understand like this is something that should be carrying on throughout their life, like even at home, ya know…

Respondent #1:

…I like that a lot actually, having the parents involved in the social emotional, but based on this, like having…some kind of goal that based on growth mindset…and specific thing that the parent and the teacher… and the student all make up together…so then that's, that's um, ya know, helping them understand what it is…we can teach the parents a little bit more about that…

After analysis of the focus group transcript, the researcher identified five themes in which the majority of focus group members contributed. These themes indicated how teachers felt about the growth mindset work being conducted in their classrooms and how to support students further through parent and teacher collaboration. The five themes that emerged were: (1) growth mindset activities are currently being utilized in the classroom to promote growth mindset, (2) growth mindset work is valuable because of characteristics of gifted students, (3) the teacher's role is to provide lessons and

reinforcement of growth mindset concepts in the classroom, (4) the parent's role is to reinforce concepts at home with the support of the classroom teacher, and (5) workshops, parent teacher conferences, student assignments, and collaborative goal setting are ways to help parents reinforce growth mindset concepts.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher analyzed current parental knowledge of growth mindset concepts. A majority of parent participants demonstrated a relatively high basic knowledge of growth mindset concepts with the following themes emerging regarding their understanding: (1) growth mindset is a belief regarding learning and improvement, (2) innate abilities and obtaining a criterion are contradictory to having a growth mindset, and (3) encouraging learning and improvement with their children helps to promote a growth mindset. The researcher then analyzed parental exposure to growth mindset concepts. A majority of parent participants indicated a relatively high level of exposure to growth mindset concepts. Following this, the researcher analyzed parental involvement with growth mindset concepts. Participants indicated a moderate, but variable, level of involvement with growth mindset concepts. The following themes emerged regarding their level of involvement: (1) promotion of and/or active use of strategies at home, and (2) reading/researching. Because of small sample size, Pearson correlations to explore the relationships between the variables of parent knowledge, exposure, and involvement could not be completed as intended. Finally, the researcher introduced the themes that emerged from coding the teacher focus group transcript. The five themes that emerged included: (1) growth mindset activities are currently being

utilized in the classroom to promote growth mindset, (2) growth mindset work is valuable because of characteristics of gifted students, (3) the teacher's role is to provide lessons and reinforcement of growth mindset concepts in the classroom, (4) the parent's role is to reinforce concepts at home with the support of the classroom teacher, and (5) workshops, parent teacher conferences, student assignments, and collaborative goal setting are ways to help parents reinforce growth mindset concepts.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the current knowledge, exposure, and involvement of parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 school district with regard to growth mindset instruction occurring within the gifted program. Therefore, the study addressed the following overarching question: What impact has the current growth mindset practices in grades 5-6 gifted classroom within a small suburban K-8 district had on parents? Another purpose of the current study was to explore how the gifted teachers in a small suburban K-8 district can increase home school collaboration in regards to growth mindset concepts so that these concepts are further reinforced at home. Therefore, the study also addressed the following overarching question: How do gifted teachers of students in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset to look moving forward?

In this chapter the researcher discusses the importance of the study in terms of how current growth mindset instructional practices have impacted parents' knowledge, involvement, and exposure to growth mindset practices. The researcher points to teachers' perception of the parents' role in the development of a growth mindset in gifted students and what practices could be introduced or enhanced to further increase home school collaboration regarding growth mindset concepts. Parental perceptions could not be obtained due to lack of parent participants for the focus group. Thus, the researcher

synthesizes and interprets results from only two sources. These sources include a parent survey and a transcript from a teacher focus group discussion. The researcher also discusses relevant literature and how it relates to interpretations of results. Finally, the researcher also discusses limitations of the study and implications for future research and practice.

Importance of the Study

Findings indicate that given the current growth mindset practices in a small suburban K-8 school district, a majority of parent participants demonstrated a relatively high basic knowledge of growth mindset concepts with the following themes emerging regarding their understanding: (1) growth mindset is a belief regarding learning and improvement, (2) innate abilities and obtaining a criterion are contradictory to having a growth mindset, and (3) encouraging learning and improvement with their children helps to promote a growth mindset. In addition, given the current growth mindset practices, a majority of parent participants indicated a relatively high level of exposure to growth mindset concepts. However, parent participants indicated a moderate, but variable, level of involvement with growth mindset concepts themselves. The following themes emerged regarding their type of involvement: (1) promotion of and/or active use of strategies at home, and (2) reading/researching. In addition, teacher focus group members discussed five main themes reflecting their perceptions of how home school collaboration regarding growth mindset could look moving forward as well as their reflections on current practices and the parents' role in reinforcing those practices. The themes that emerged were: (1) growth mindset activities are currently being utilized in

the classroom to promote growth mindset; (2) growth mindset work is valuable because of characteristics of gifted students; (3) the teacher's role is to provide lessons and reinforcement of growth mindset concepts in the classroom; (4) the parent's role is to reinforce concepts at home with the support of the classroom teacher; and (5) workshops, parent teacher conferences, student assignments, and collaborative goal setting are ways to help parents reinforce growth mindset concepts. Results lead to suggestions for further development of home school collaboration regarding growth mindset practices. Findings for each research question will be discussed below.

Question #1

What impact has the current growth mindset practices in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district had on parents? Overall, parent participants demonstrated a relatively high basic knowledge of growth mindset concepts. Parents received relatively high scores on the close-ended knowledge portion of the parent survey and they were also able to further explain their level of knowledge through open ended questions by describing themes of (1) growth mindset is a belief regarding learning and improvement, (2) innate abilities and obtaining a criterion are contradictory to having a growth mindset, and (3) encouraging learning and improvement with their children helps to promote a growth mindset.

The concepts within themes 1 and 2 (growth mindset is a belief regarding learning and improvement and that innate abilities and obtaining a criterion are contradictory to having a growth mindset) are represented in literature as being related to growth mindset and are therefore illustrative of a basic level of knowledge of growth mindset concepts.

For example, Dweck (2000) described how students can hold differing "theories" or beliefs about the nature of intelligence (incremental vs. entity) which is similar to parents' understanding that growth mindset is a belief students can hold. In addition, Dweck defined incremental theory (otherwise known as growth mindset) as the belief that intelligence is malleable or something you can increase or improve. This is similar to parents' explanation that growth mindset is about learning and improvement. Dweck went further to describe that students who endorse an entity theory (otherwise known as fixed mindset) believe that intelligence is fixed, concrete, or something you cannot change. These students are also more likely to have performance goals for themselves where their focus is on achieving a certain criterion and demonstrating their skills to others. Parents' responses were representative of these ideas when describing that innate abilities and achieving a criterion are contradictory to have a growth mindset. The concept in theme 3 (encouraging learning and improvement with children helps to promote a growth mindset) is represented in literature as well. For example, Siegle and McCoach (2005) explain and recommend when talking with students, parents and teachers should acknowledge the ability of the student, while also recognizing that effort went into the development of that ability. This is similar to when the parents described that they need to encourage learning and improvement at home with their children to promote a growth mindset.

A majority of parent respondents also reported being exposed to growth mindset concepts specifically by the district. Elish-Piper (2014) describes how sharing information about growth mindset with parents is the first step to increasing collaboration

and partnerships to develop a growth mindset in students. Although this finding is limited to the sample that completed the parent survey, it suggests that the current practices for growth mindset instruction within the district are reaching at least some parents to increase their exposure to growth mindset concepts, which can lead to greater collaboration and partnerships in the future.

Respondents also indicated a moderate but variable level of involvement with growth mindset concepts. The involvement parents described for promoting and/or actively using strategies at home can be linked to the literature for how parents can promote growth mindset in children. For example, Mueller and Dweck (1998) and Siegle and McCoach (2005) describe the way parents talk with their children can influence their development of a growth mindset. Although variable in the specificity for describing their use of active strategies at home with their children, parents demonstrated that they understand that their involvement, promotion of these concepts, and the way they talk with their children can influence their children's development of a growth mindset.

Unfortunately, due to small sample size, correlations to explore the relationship between the variables of knowledge, exposure, and involvement could not be completed in the current study. However, a review of raw data appears to show a trend in the direction that (1) the higher a parent's exposure to growth mindset concepts, the higher their level of knowledge about growth mindset concepts (2) the higher a parent's involvement with growth mindset concepts, the higher their level of knowledge about growth mindset concepts, and (3) the higher the parents' exposure to growth mindset concepts, the higher their involvement with growth mindset concepts. Therefore, it is

possible that increased exposure to growth mindset concepts is correlated with increased knowledge and involvement with growth mindset practices, which could in turn lead to increased reinforcement of growth concepts at home. A larger sample size in a future study would be beneficial to determine whether these trends are accurate and significant. However, this analysis would not speak to the causality of the effect of these variables on each other.

Question #2

How do parents of students in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset to look moving forward? This question was intended to explore how parents perceived their role in developing a growth mindset in their children as well as how they would like collaboration to occur between their child's teacher and themselves with regard to developing a growth mindset for their children moving forward. Unfortunately, these questions could not be answered due to lack of parent interest in participating in the parent focus group.

Question #3

How do gifted teachers of students in grades 5-6 gifted classrooms within a small suburban K-8 district want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset to look moving forward? Overall, teachers provided insight through discussion that resulted in several themes that answered this research question. For example, one theme that emerged was that teachers believe that a parent's role is to reinforce growth mindset concepts at home with their children but with the support of a classroom teacher. They

described that this reinforcement at home should occur through the way parents speak with their children not only about academic activities and skills, but also the way they talk about nonacademic activities (folding clothes, doing the dishes, etc.). This theme is consistent with the literature that states that the way parents speak with their children can impact the development of a growth mindset (Mueller & Dweck, 1998; Siegle & McCoach, 2005). However, it was evident in this theme that teachers also felt that it was their responsibility to continue to support parents in this endeavor while also continuing to instruct students on growth mindset concepts. Specifically, the teachers described their current home school collaboration practices of talking with parents at parent teacher conferences about growth mindset concepts. As Elish-Piper (2014) described, providing exposure to growth mindset concepts in this fashion is the first step in increasing home school collaboration regarding growth mindset concepts.

Taking it a step further, another theme emerged that described several ideas on how teachers thought home school collaboration regarding growth mindset concepts could improve moving forward. They described the use of additional workshops, discussions during parent teacher conferences, engaging in collaborative goal setting, and using student assignments that involve parents. More specifically, the teachers described the idea that the additional workshops should be hands on, where parents are put in situations in which they are expected to persevere and show a growth mindset. They indicated that this would be done to help parents learn exactly what it is teachers are expecting from students regarding perseverance and having a growth mindset. The teachers also discussed parent teacher conferences as being a time in which they should

be continuing to introduce, discuss, and model the concepts of growth mindset with parents. They felt that the development of the social emotional goals that they are currently completing with students could be expanded to involve collaboration between parents, teachers, and students. Specifically, the teachers felt this may be a beneficial activity to complete during beginning of the year parent teacher conferences. On a more ongoing basis, they suggested the development of student assignments in which the requirement was to involve parents in their learning and development of growth mindset concepts being done in the classroom.

These suggestions are congruent with some of the concepts discussed in literature for effective general home school. Esler et al. (2008) describe the importance of communication being proactive and persistent with parents. The teachers' suggestions represented proactive and persistent communication because they described multiple ways, over the course of the year that home school collaboration regarding growth mindset concepts could be provided to parents. Esler et al. (2008) also describe that communication should be universal, but individualized in order to meet specific student needs. Although the teachers had the idea to adapt the annual information night to more of a workshop model, this type of workshop would still be a way of providing universal communication. But because the teachers also recommended for students to create individualized social emotional goals with the input of parents, teachers, and students during parent teacher conferences, an element of individualization was also included that would make for a more effective means of home school collaboration.

These suggestions are also congruent with the concepts discussed in literature for how to increase development of a growth mindset in children. Elish-Piper (2014) describes that teachers and schools should share information about growth mindset with parents but also help parents learn how to model, encourage, and reinforce a growth mindset at home. The teachers described continuing to share growth mindset information with parents, but also introduced the concept of a workshop that could go beyond just being provided information from a guest speaker. In this type of workshop model, parents could gain a deeper understanding of these concepts through hands on experiences that would help them better understand how to model, encourage, and reinforce growth mindset concepts at home.

In addition to the themes described previously that represented the answer to the main research question, additional themes also emerged from the data. These themes provided a more in depth understanding of what is currently occurring regarding growth mindset practices within the district, why teachers felt this type of instruction was important for their students, and what teachers believed their role to be in this instruction. Specifically, the teachers described current lessons, activities, and discussions being completed in which the goal is to promote effort and improvement and thus a growth mindset with their students. This included student projects they would complete throughout a trimester, student goal setting, and ongoing discussions and modeling of concepts by the teacher. This information confirmed that teachers were implementing growth mindset instruction and practices in their classrooms as intended.

Teachers also described that they felt growth mindset instruction was important for gifted students because things typically come easily to these students and that the students can become frustrated and lack perseverance when faced with challenges or making mistakes. Students were also described as often demonstrating a desire to obtain a certain grade or mark instead of focusing on improvement and learning. In addition, teachers shared concern that without "grit" or having a growth mindset, gifted students may not reach their potential. These ideas are consistent with research that indicates that underachievement, motivational concerns, and social emotional difficulties are present with gifted students (Blaas, 2014; Parker, 1997; Reis & McCoach, 2010) and that growth mindset instruction may be beneficial in combating these concerns (Chan, 2012).

Teachers also shared the belief that their role was to expose the concepts of growth mindset to their students through lessons and to reiterate these concepts throughout their instruction. Some teachers expanded on this by describing modeling practices or ways to enhance the classroom environment (bulletin boards) to reinforce these concepts. In addition, they discussed the need to involve and collaborate with general education teachers to reinforce these concepts in the general education classroom as well. Overall, these themes demonstrate that the gifted teachers believe that the current growth mindset practices occurring with the classroom are valuable and that they believe it is a part of their role to reinforce these concepts with students.

To summarize, given the current growth mindset instructional practices occurring in a small suburban K-8 school district, a majority of parent participants demonstrated a relatively high basic knowledge of growth mindset concepts as well as a relatively high

level of exposure to growth mindset concepts. However, parent participants indicated a moderate, but variable, level of involvement with growth mindset concepts. Teachers report feeling a parent's role is to reinforce growth mindset concepts at home by the way they speak with their children with the support of a classroom teacher. In addition, collaboration could improve with parents through the use of workshops, discussions during parent teacher conferences, student assignments that involve parents, and collaborative goal setting.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the current study included the small sample size of parents that completed the survey. The eight participants represented only 14.8% of the study's intended population, which suggests that results may not be representative of the knowledge, exposure, and involvement of all parents within the population. For example, it is possible that parents that had a greater knowledge, exposure, or involvement of growth mindset concepts were more likely to participate in the survey than parents with less knowledge, exposure, or involvement because of their familiarity with growth mindset concepts. Therefore, the results suggesting moderate to high levels of basic knowledge, exposure, and involvement with growth mindset concepts may be inflated as compared to the knowledge, exposure, and involvement of the entire parent population of 5^{th}-6^{th} grade gifted students.

Another limitation of the current study includes the lack of parent participants for the parent focus group. Because of lack of participation, parent perspectives on their role in fostering a growth mindset with their children as well as how they would like home

school collaboration to occur could not be obtained. As Esler et al. (2008) indicated, one of the elements for increasing home school collaboration includes gaining parents' perspective. Without the input of parents, the suggestions for future home school collaboration activities are limited.

Additionally, because of the qualitative nature of the research, results are limited to the district studied. However, the researcher did not intend to be able to generalize results to other school districts or settings, but rather look at this study as a specific case for which results could be utilized to improve practices within the intended district.

Implications for Future Study

This study was designed to explore the current knowledge, exposure, and involvement of parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 school district with regard to growth mindset instruction occurring within the gifted program. In addition, the study was designed to explore how parents and teachers want home school collaboration regarding growth mindset concepts to look moving forward. However, there was a lack of parent participants for the focus group portion of the current study which limits the findings. Future researchers should utilize enhanced recruitment procedures within the same district in order to encourage parent participation. This could include increased notification of the need for participants, including both direct (handing out flyers at parent teacher conferences) and indirect (sending home reminder emails) methodologies. This could help to ensure that parent perceptions and opinions are taken into consideration when considering changes to home school collaboration regarding

growth mindset in Sunnydale District 100 which is an important component for effective home school collaboration as described by Esler et al. (2008).

In addition, future researchers could also expand on the current study by exploring how collaboration with general education teachers in Sunnydale District 100 can be increased as well. In the current study, teacher participants mentioned that their role, in addition to teaching growth mindset concepts to gifted students, also included working with the students' general education teachers in the classroom. This was indicated to be the case so that the general education teachers could also help reinforce growth mindset concepts with gifted students. In essence, this would help to further create a culture of learning across a gifted student's day that is consistent with growth mindset concepts. Haimovitz and Dweck (2017) discuss the importance of the classroom as being a setting by which mindsets can be socialized, but that this socialization is not limited to interactions between one teacher and one student, but rather through creating cultural norms. By also collaborating with general education teachers regarding growth mindset instruction, these teachers could help to enhance a greater culture of growth mindset throughout the gifted student's day. Therefore, future researchers could ask: How could collaboration between the student's gifted teacher, general education teacher, and parent best occur? Additional focus groups including general education teachers would be beneficial in addressing this question.

However, future researchers could also take this one step further to look toward how to expand growth mindset instruction occurring in classrooms in Sunnydale District 100 to school wide practices. Haimovitz and Dweck (2017) describe that more than 150

schools in the United States are adopting an education model called "expeditionary learning" that is fostering a growth mindset culture within entire schools. The schools go beyond the feedback teachers provide in individual classrooms, and instead hold school wide events in which they celebrate learning as a community as well. They hold "celebration of learning" events that show what students have achieved while emphasizing the learning process. They also celebrate the setbacks, mistakes, and struggles that can occur through this learning process. Haimovitz and Dweck indicate that these school wide practices may be highly effective ways to socialize entire communities into a culture of growth mindset. However, they indicate that future research is still needed to determine the effectiveness of these types of institutional practices. Therefore, future researchers could not only ask: How could school wide practices be incorporated with the growth mindset classroom instruction occurring in Sunnydale District 100? But also: What impact is incorporating school wide practices having on increasing gifted students' growth mindsets in Sunnydale District 100?

Finally, many research studies (Blackwell et al., 2007; Donahue et al., 2012; Paunesku et al., 2015) have examined the effectiveness of growth mindset interventions with all students, regardless of giftedness classification. In addition, as Parker and Adkins (1995) indicated, perfectionist tendencies are not limited to the gifted population. Therefore, all students, not just those within the gifted population, would likely benefit from the growth mindset instruction occurring in the gifted classrooms in Sunnydale District 100. Future researchers could look toward how to expand or transfer the growth mindset instruction occurring in the gifted classrooms in Sunnydale District 100 into the

general education classrooms so that all students are exposed to growth mindset instruction. For example, researchers could ask: How could current growth mindset practices being utilized in the gifted classroom be transferred into the general education classroom? This may include investigating how the gifted teachers would be able to support and coach general education teachers in the implementation of this type of instruction with all students.

Conclusions

This study explored the current knowledge, exposure, and involvement of parents of gifted students in grades 5-6 in a small suburban K-8 school district with regard to growth mindset instruction. In addition, this study explored how teachers in the same school district can increase home school collaboration in regards to growth mindset concepts so that these concepts are further reinforced at home. The findings of this study indicate, given current growth mindset practices, parent participants demonstrated a relatively high basic knowledge of growth mindset concepts as well as a relatively high level of exposure to these concepts. However, they only reported a moderate, but variable, level of involvement with growth mindset concepts themselves. Teachers report feeling a parent's role is to reinforce growth mindset concepts at home by the way they speak with their children with the support of a classroom teacher; however, home school collaboration could improve with the use of workshops, discussions during parent teacher conferences, student assignments that involve parents, and collaborative goal setting. These suggestions are in line with best practices for improving home school collaboration (Esler et al., 2008). However, these suggestions are limited due to the lack of parent

perception and feedback regarding home school collaboration techniques. A future study needs to ensure obtainment of parent perspective with regard to home school collaboration moving forward. Future study could also explore how to expand growth mindset instruction beyond the gifted classroom, into the general education classroom.

APPENDIX A

PARENT SURVEY

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.
Knowledge

1. In your own words, please describe what you think a growth mindset is as if you were explaining it to another person. If you are unsure, please indicate "I am not sure" or "I don't know."

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. In your own words, what do you think is the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset? If you are unsure, please indicate "I am not sure" or "I don't know."

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What do you think are some ways that you can promote a growth mindset for your child? If you are unsure, please indicate "I am not sure" or "I don't know."

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.
Knowledge

4. What kind of mindset do you think is the belief that abilities can be developed through hard work, effort, and perseverance? Please check one.

o Effort Based Mindset

o Growth Mindset

o Intelligence Mindset

o Fixed Mindset

o I don't know

5. What kind of mindset do you think is the belief that intelligence cannot be changed even with hard work, effort, and perseverance?

o Effort Based Mindset

o Intelligence Mindset

o Fixed Mindset

o Growth Mindset

o I don't know

6. If a student says, "I'm just not good at that," "No matter what I do, I won't get better," or "I give up, it's just too hard," what type of mindset do you think they are most likely to have?

o Fixed Mindset

o Growth Mindset

o Intelligence Mindset

o Effort Based Mindset

o I don't know

Please answer the following to the best of your ability.

7. If a student says, "Even though this is hard, I am going to keep trying," "This may be hard now, but I will learn from it," or "With extra effort, I know I can accomplish this," what mindset do you think they are likely to have?

o Effort Based Mindset

o Fixed Mindset

o Intelligence Mindset

o Growth Mindset

o I don't know

8. What type of mindset do you think will help increase a student's motivation?
   - o Growth Mindset
   - o Intelligence Mindset
   - o Effort Based Mindset
   - o Fixed Mindset
   - o I don't know

9. What type of mindset do you think will cause a student to be more likely to give up?
   - o Fixed Mindset
   - o Intelligence Mindset
   - o Growth Mindset
   - o Effort Based Mindset
   - o I don't know

10. What do you think having a growth mindset can help students with improving the most?
   - o Grades and standardized test performance
   - o Eating habits
   - o Friendships
   - o Sleep
   - o I don't know

Please answer the following to the best of your ability.

11. What do you think students with a fixed mindset are least likely to do:
   - o Avoid challenges
   - o Give up easily
   - o Learn from criticism
   - o Feel threatened by the success of others
   - o I don't know

12. To increase a growth mindset in students, what do you think is the best way to praise a student?
   - o You are so smart!
   - o You are a natural at that!
   - o You worked really hard!
   - o Wow! Good job!

o I don't know

13. To increase a growth mindset in students, what do you think is least helpful for parents to talk with their children:

o Natural strengths and abilities

o The brain and how it learns

o Mistakes as learning opportunities

o Emotions and how it can impact learning

o I don't know

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.
Involvement

14. In your own words, please describe your level of involvement with the idea of growth mindset. If you are unsure, please indicate "I am unsure" or "I don't know."

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.
Involvement

I have heard the term "Growth Mindset" prior to completing this survey.

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

I have heard the term "Growth Mindset" from information provided specifically from my child's gifted teacher/school/district prior to completing this survey.

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

I have heard the term "Growth Mindset" from additional outside resources other than my child's gifted teacher/school/district prior to completing this survey.

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

I have heard the term "Growth Mindset" from information provided from my child's gifted teacher/school/district as well as additional outside resources prior to completing this survey.

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

16. Please indicate whether or not the following statements apply to you.

I attended a parent information session on growth mindset hosted by the district either in the fall of 2015 or fall of 2016.

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

I have spoken with my child's gifted teacher or other school staff regarding growth mindset.

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

I have read additional outside information regarding growth mindset not provided by my child's gifted teacher/school/district.

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

I have spoken with my gifted child regarding growth mindset.

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

I have implemented growth mindset strategies with my gifted child at home.

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.
Additional Information

17. Please provide any additional thoughts or comments that you wish to share regarding the concept of growth mindset.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please answer the following questions in regards to your oldest child currently participating in the 5th or 6th grade gifted program in "Sunnydale School District."
Basic Information

18. Please indicate the current age of your oldest child within the 5th or 6th grade gifted program.

_____

19. Please indicate the grade level of your oldest child within the 5th or 6th grade gifted program.

_____

20. Please indicate the grade level in which you child first participated in the gifted program at "Sunnydale School District."

_____

21. Is your oldest child within the 5th or 6th grade gifted program:

- o White
- o Black or African-American
- o American Indian or Alaskan Native
- o Asian
- o Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander
- o From multiple races
- o Some other race (please specify): _____

22. Does your oldest child within the 5th or 6th grade gifted program qualify for the free and reduced lunch program?

o Yes

o No

o I don’t know

23. In what areas do your oldest child within the 5th or 6th grade gifted program currently receive gifted services?

o English/Language Arts Only

o Math Only

o Both English/Language Arts and Math

o I don't know

Please answer the following questions in regards to yourself.
Demographic Information

24. Are you male or female?

o Male

o Female

25. What is your age?

o 18-20

o 21-29

o 30-39

o 40-49

o 50-59

o 60 or older

26. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

o Less than high school degree

o High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)

o Some college but no degree

o Associate degree

o Bachelor degree

o Graduate degree

27. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

o Employed, working full-time

o Employed, working part-time

o Not employed, looking for work

o Not employed, NOT looking for work

o Retired

o Disabled, not able to work

Please answer the following questions in regards to yourself.
Demographic Information

28. Are you:

o White

o Black or African-American

o American Indian or Alaskan Native

o Asian

o Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander

o From multiple races

o Some other race (please specify): _____

APPENDIX B

FOLLOW UP PARENT SURVEY

1. Please provide your first and last name.

_____

2. Please provide your email address or phone number (whichever way you prefer to be contacted).

_____

APPENDIX C

PARENT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Introduction

1. Introduce yourself
    a. I would first like to thank you all for being here this evening. I appreciate the time you are taking out of your busy schedules to meet with the group and talk a little more about the growth mindset work being done in your child's gifted classroom. My name is Lauren Carlson, and I am a School Psychologist within Sunnydale School District. I am currently assigned to XXXX Elementary and XXXX Junior High. This is my fifth year working within the district as a school psychologist. I attended Illinois State University for my graduate training where I received my specialist degree in school psychology. I am currently working on my doctor of education degree at Loyola University Chicago in school psychology. I have been working closely not only with university faculty, but also Dr. Kelly Neylon, the District's gifted coordinator, in development of the current project.
2. Discuss the purpose of the study
    a. The purpose of the current study and the reason why we are gathering here today is to talk more about the growth mindset work being done in your child's gifted classroom. As you know, you completed a survey earlier this year regarding your understanding of growth mindset. As a follow up to that survey, I am interested in learning more about your perceptions of the growth mindset work being done in your child's gifted classroom as well as the role you see parents having in the development of growth mindset for their children. In addition, I am interested in the collaboration between teachers and parents related to growth mindset.
3. Get informed consent signature
    a. Before we get started, I would ask that you all review the consent form in front of you as I explain it. (Read consent form with them). If you consent to your participation in this portion of the study, I would ask that you please sign and date the form and return them to me.
4. Provide structure of interview (audio recording, saying number first, taking notes)
    a. During the next part of the discussion, I will begin audio recording. The audio recording will later be transcribed for analysis. In assisting with this process, I would ask if you could please state a number each time before you speak to maintain confidentiality of your responses. Here is the number that I will assign you. (Assign numbers). I will also be taking notes during the discussion on these sheets of paper. Please be respectful of each other's comments and wait until someone is done talking before sharing your opinion. You do not need to raise your hand in order to participate, but you may if you choose to do so. Please just remember to say your number, but not your name, before speaking.
    b. The information you share during this focus group will not be connected with your personal information during analysis or reporting of results. In addition, I please ask that information shared tonight not be discussed

outside of this room. I would like to respect to the privacy of all participants and would like for everyone to feel that this is a safe place to share their thoughts freely.

5. Ask if interviewees have any questions
    a. Do you have any questions?
6. Define any necessary terms
    a. Before we get started, I would like to define for you the definition of growth mindset and fixed mindset as described by the Stanford researcher Carol Dweck, so that we are on the same page. I will also provide you a handout of this information in written form to refer back to as needed through our discussion.
    b. Growth mindset is the belief that intellectual ability is malleable through hard work and effort (Dweck, 2000). When faced with a challenge, students who have a growth mindset tend to believe through hard work, effort, and persistence, that they can increase their skills and achieve their goals.
    c. Conversely, fixed mindset is the belief that intelligence is fixed, concrete, or something you cannot change (Dweck, 2000). When faced with a challenge, students who believe in an entity theory of intelligence may lack persistence and give up more easily on a task, reducing their skill development and decreasing the likelihood of achieving their goals.

Questions

1. What is your understanding of the growth mindset work being done in your child's classroom?
   Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

2. What value do you see in the growth mindset work being done in your child's classroom?
   Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

3. What role do you think teachers should have in promoting a growth mindset for a gifted child?
   Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

4. What role do you think parents should have in promoting a growth mindset for their gifted child?
   Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

5. What resources are needed for parents to reinforce the concepts of a growth mindset at home for their gifted child?
   Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

6. How could teachers and parents work together to reinforce the concepts of a growth mindset for gifted children?
   Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

7. Is there any further information related to growth mindset and giftedness that you would like to share that we have not covered?
   Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

Closing Instructions

8. Thank everyone for participating
9. Assure everyone of confidentiality
10. Provide contact information for further questions

APPENDIX D

TEACHER FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Introduction

1. Introduce yourself
    a. I would first like to thank you all for being here this evening. I appreciate the time you are taking out of your busy schedules to meet with the group and talk a little more about the growth mindset work you all are doing in your gifted classrooms. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Lauren Carlson, and I am a School Psychologist within the district. I am currently assigned to Sunnydale Elementary and Jefferson Junior High. This is my sixth year working within the district as a school psychologist. I attended Illinois State University for my graduate training where I received my specialist degree in school psychology. I am currently working on my doctor of education degree at Loyola University Chicago in school psychology. I have been working closely not only with university faculty, but also Dr. Kelly Neylon in development of the current project.
2. Discuss the purpose of the study
    a. The purpose of the current study and the reason why we are gathering here today is to talk more about the growth mindset work being done in your gifted classrooms. I am interested in learning more about parent perceptions of the growth mindset work being done in your classrooms as well as the role you see parents having in the development of growth mindset for their children. In addition, I am interested in the collaboration between teachers and parents related to growth mindset.
3. Get informed consent signature
    a. Before we get started, I would ask that you all review the consent form in front of you as I explain it. (Read consent form with them). If you consent to your participation in this portion of the study, I would ask that you please sign and date the form and return them to me.
4. Provide structure of interview (audio recording, saying number first, taking notes)
    a. During the next part of the discussion, I will begin audio recording. The audio recording will later be transcribed for analysis. In assisting with this process, I would ask you if could please state a number each time before you speak to maintain confidentiality of your responses. Here is the number that I will assign you. (Assign numbers). I will also be taking notes during the discussion on these sheets of paper. Please be respectful of each other's comments and wait until someone is done talking before sharing your opinion. You do not need to raise your hand in order to participate, but you may if you choose to do so. Please just remember to say your number, but not your name, before speaking.
    b. The information you share during this focus group will not be connected with your personal information during analysis or reporting of results. In addition, I please ask that information shared tonight not be discussed outside of this room. I would like to respect the privacy of all participants

and would like for everyone to feel that this is a safe place to share their thoughts freely.

5. Ask if interviewees have any questions
    a. Do you have any questions?
6. Define any necessary terms
    a. Before we get started, I would like to define for you the definition of growth mindset and fixed mindset as described by the Stanford researcher Carol Dweck, so that we are on the same page. I will also provide you a handout of this information in written form to refer back to as needed through our discussion.
    b. Growth mindset is the belief that intellectual ability is malleable through hard work and effort (Dweck, 2000). When faced with a challenge, students who have a growth mindset tend to believe through hard work, effort, and persistence, that they can increase their skills and achieve their goals.
    c. Conversely, fixed mindset is the belief that intelligence is fixed, concrete, or something you cannot change (Dweck, 2000). When faced with a challenge, students who believe in an entity theory of intelligence may lack persistence and give up more easily on a task, reducing their skill development and decreasing the likelihood of achieving their goals.

Questions

1. What value do you see in the growth mindset work being done in your classroom?
    a. Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

2. What role do you think teachers should have in promoting a growth mindset for a gifted child?
    a. Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

3. What role do you think parents should have in promoting a growth mindset for their gifted child?
    a. Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

4. What resources are needed for parents to reinforce the concepts of a growth mindset at home for their gifted child?
    a. Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

5. How could teachers and parents work together to reinforce the concepts of a growth mindset for gifted children?
    a. Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

6. Is there any further information related to growth mindset and giftedness that you would like to share that we have not covered?
    a. Probes: Tell me more. Please explain.

Closing Instructions

11. Thank everyone for participating
12. Assure everyone of confidentiality
13. Provide contact information for further questions

APPENDIX E

FOLLOW UP TEACHER SURVEY

Please answer the following questions in regards to yourself.

1. Are you male or female?
    - o Male
    - o Female
2. What is your age?
    - o 18-20
    - o 21-29
    - o 30-39
    - o 40-49
    - o 50-59
3. Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, or some other race?
    - o White
    - o Black or African-American
    - o American Indian or Alaskan Native
    - o Asian
    - o Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
    - o From multiple races
    - o Some other race (please specify):

    _____
4. Please list all degrees you have received and what areas they were received in.

    _____
5. Please list any endorsement(s) you have received, if any, and what area(s) they were received in. If none, please indicate N/A.

    _____
6. Please indicate the number of years you have been teaching (include all districts and all positions.
    - o 1

- o 2
- o 3
- o 4
- o 5
- o 6
- o 7
- o 8
- o 9
- o 10
- o 11
- o 12
- o 13
- o 14
- o 15
- o 16
- o 17
- o 18
- o 19
- o 20
- o 21
- o 22
- o 23
- o 24
- o 25+

7. Please indicate the number of years you have been teaching in “Sunnydale School District.”
    - o 1
    - o 2
    - o 3

- o 4
- o 5
- o 6
- o 7
- o 8
- o 9
- o 10
- o 11
- o 12
- o 13
- o 14
- o 15
- o 16
- o 17
- o 18
- o 19
- o 20
- o 21
- o 22
- o 23
- o 24
- o 25+

8. Please indicate the number of years you have been teaching students in gifted education.
    - o 1
    - o 2
    - o 3
    - o 4
    - o 5

- o 6
- o 7
- o 8
- o 9
- o 10
- o 11
- o 12
- o 13
- o 14
- o 15
- o 16
- o 17
- o 18
- o 19
- o 20
- o 21
- o 22
- o 23
- o 24
- o 25+

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VITA

Lauren A. Carlson was born in Joliet, IL. Lauren completed her bachelor of arts in psychology from Illinois Wesleyan University in 2008. She then pursued her specialist degree in school psychology from Illinois State University. She completed her internship at “Sunnydale School District” under the guidance of Dr. Barb Martin. After completing her school psychology degree in 2011, she began working for “Sunnydale School District” and continues to be employed there. Lauren then pursued her Doctor of Education degree in School Psychology from Loyola University Chicago.

DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT COMMITTEE

The Doctoral Research Project submitted by Lauren A. Carlson has been read and approved by the following committee:

Markeda Newell, Ph.D., Director
Associate Professor and Program Chair, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Gina Coffee, Ph.D.
School Psychologist
Denver Public Schools

Kelly Neylon, Ph.D.
Principal
Woodridge District 88