

NAVIGATING THE SECOND YEAR TRANSITION: EXPLORING THE MINDSETS OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS

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SUBTHEME: Other

BACKGROUND

The "Second Year Slump" is a widely recognised phenomenon affecting undergraduate students' engagement, motivation, and transition through university (Loughlin et al., 2013). Second year students must become highly adaptable in their learning approaches to overcome these challenges (Kibedi, 2019). Students with a growth mindset may be more prepared for second year, as they believe their intelligence can improve over time through dedication, effort, and learning (Dweck & Yeager 2019). It has been postulated that these students are more proactive in their learning approaches compared to those with a fixed mindset who believe intelligence is unchangeable (Yan et al., 2014). This study examined the relationship between mindsets and learning approaches in second year biomedical science students.

METHODS

Biomedical science students enrolled in a second-year physiology course in semester 1, 2024 were asked to describe their beliefs about their intelligence in bioscience, as well as their learning strategies. Consenting student responses (n=256) were subjected to inductive and deductive thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Over half the students held a growth mindset. Another fifth reported a mix of both growth and fixed mindsets, and a smaller proportion of students displayed fixed mindsets. Overall, students reported learning strategies involving rehearsal and memorization, such as flashcards and spaced repetition as being most effective for the course. Specifically, fixed mindset students more frequently reported finding study groups and collaborative learning as effective compared to students of other mindsets. Whereas mixed and growth mindset students more frequently reported self-verbalizing and teaching concepts as being effective. These results suggest that more second-year biomedical science students are inclined to embrace a growth mindset about their bioscience abilities, which may encourage the use of learning approaches that are conducive to success.

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