



Center for  
Community College  
Student Engagement

Faculty Discussion Guide



# AMIND at Work

Maximizing the Relationship  
Between Mindset and  
Student Success

2019 NATIONAL REPORT

# INTRODUCTION

What follows is a discussion guide that can be used to facilitate conversations with faculty about their experience and perceptions around academic mindset.

To access the full CCCSE Focus Group Toolkit, visit <https://cccse.org/resources/focus-groups>. Featured on this page is the Focus Group Manual, which provides comprehensive guidance around planning and conducting focus groups with students, faculty, and staff. This manual contains several appendix resources, such as templates for invitation emails and consent forms as well as sample intake survey questions and basic focus group opening questions. In addition, the Toolkit includes a variety of discussion guides (including this one) devoted to a diverse array of topics important to community college student engagement and success.

## FACULTY DISCUSSION GUIDE

### OUTCOME #1

*To understand faculty perceptions about students' intelligence and their own learning.*

1. Why did you decide to become a faculty member? Why at a community college? Why this community college?
2. Let's talk about your perceptions around intelligence.
  - a. Do you believe that there is anything that students can do to change their intelligence?
  - b. If not, why not? What has led you to this conclusion?
  - c. If so, how can students change their intelligence? How much of someone's intelligence can be changed?
3. Which of these statements most accurately expresses your views about math and intelligence?
  - a) Students can learn new things in math, but they cannot really change their basic intelligence in math; b) Students can change their intelligence in math a lot.
    - a. Why do you feel this way?
4. Which of these statements most accurately expresses your views about English and intelligence?
  - a) Students can learn new things in English, but they cannot really change their basic intelligence in English; b) Students can change their intelligence in English a lot.
    - a. Why do you feel this way?

5. Let's talk more specifically about the students at this community college.
  - a. How do you think students at this college would complete this sentence: "When I first started here, I felt \_\_\_\_\_." Describe why they would feel that way.
  - b. How does the college create a welcoming and respectful environment? How could the college improve in fostering a welcoming and respectful environment for students?
6. How does the college prepare students for what they plan to do in life?
7. How could the college improve in how they prepare students for what they want to do in life?
8. In your opinion, what is the greatest challenge your students face in achieving their academic goals?
9. In your opinion, what is the greatest strength your students bring to the learning enterprise?
10. Do you see differences in needs and expectations of your students based on age, gender, socioeconomic factors, college readiness, learning styles, etc.? Please describe.
11. What is the greatest challenge you face in meeting your students' varying needs and expectations?
12. What do you believe is the single most important factor that helps students remain in school and achieve their educational goals?
13. Thinking about your own classes, what would you say are the most important things you can do to help your students succeed? Inside the classroom? Outside the classroom?
14. What are your expectations for your students' performance? In what ways do you communicate those expectations?
15. What would you say is (are) the most important thing(s) students can do to promote their own success? Inside the classroom? Outside the classroom?
16. In general, do you believe students are doing all they can to promote their own success? Explain your answer. If no, what, if anything, do you believe faculty can do to motivate students to take more responsibility for promoting their own success?
17. In your courses, what percentage of your students do you feel can learn all of the materials being presented? Why do you feel that way?
18. What percentage of your students do you feel can change their basic intelligence? Why?

19. What percentage of your students believe that they can change their basic intelligence?
  - a. Explain how you came to that percentage.
  
20. Think about a class in which everything is clicking just right. You feel like students are learning, everyone is getting what they need from the class. Describe that class.
  - a. What's going on? What are you doing? What are students doing?
  - b. How are people working and learning in that class?
  - c. What percentage of the time would you say your class measures up to that ideal?
  - d. When your class isn't operating at your ideal level, what's getting in the way? What are the most important things you can do to reach that ideal?
  - e. What are the most important things students can do to reach that ideal?

## OUTCOME #2

*To understand the professional development opportunities that faculty receive or would like to receive regarding academic mindset.*

21. When did you first become aware of the concept of “academic mindset?” Where were you? How was the topic brought up?
  
22. How would you define academic mindset?
  
23. What kind of training or professional development, if any, have you received in academic mindset?
  - a. Was this self-initiated? Required by the college? Provided by the college but not required?
  - b. Describe the training. How long was the training? Who attended? What activities were provided? Were any readings provided? If so, which ones?
  
24. What kind of professional development would you like to receive in academic mindset (if any)?

## OUTCOME #3

*To understand how faculty are incorporating academic mindset into their courses.*

25. Why did you initially begin to incorporate academic mindset into your courses?
  
26. How do you incorporate academic mindset into your courses?
  - a. Paint a picture of what academic mindset looks like in your courses.

27. Has academic mindset had any impact on the way you assess learning in your courses?
28. Do you have any data or success stories that support the use of academic mindset in your courses?
29. What do you think the future looks like regarding continuing to incorporate academic mindset into your courses? Are other faculty incorporating academic mindset?

## SUMMARY AND CLOSE

30. What are the most compelling elements in making the case for academic mindset to other faculty?
31. What advice would you give the college about one or two things the college could do to help faculty incorporate academic mindset into their courses?