

SCHOOL PROFILE

Stuart-Hobson Middle School has a student body of a 423 with children in grades six through eight, located in the nation's capital, the District of Columbia. Despite its location on Capitol Hill, approximately 63% of students qualify for free and reduced-priced lunch. The school is comprised of about 87% African American students and 13% Caucasian. Many of the students who attend Stuart-Hobson hail from some of the poorer areas of the District.

SchoolKit Implementation

CASE STUDY

OVERARCHING GOAL

The staff and administrators at Stuart-Hobson recognized that, generally, middle school can be a time when students question their own abilities. Research has shown that times of transition can be very difficult for all students. It was with this insight that Stuart-Hobson began a journey to transform the mindsets of its students, equipping them with the tools they would need to be successful in middle school and beyond.

ACTION PLAN

The staff at Stuart-Hobson recognized the potential benefits of a curriculum that focused on empowering students to take control of their learning through a transformation in their beliefs. After reading Carol Dweck's book, *Mindset*, Principal Dawn Clemens recognized how *Mindset* was remarkably relevant to her as a mother. With her daughters just having left for college, she knew she wanted to implement the growth mindset work and language with her students at Stuart-Hobson, but wasn't sure how.

After attending a principal's conference where Mindset Works staff presented, she watched the engaging videos

and completed the online modules of MindsetMaker™. In addition, Carol Dweck and her colleague Lisa Blackwell had already synthesized the book into a student curriculum. Principal Clemens became interested in these types of resources to help the teachers and students at Stuart-Hobson engage in growth mindset practices.

At a principal's conference Principal Clemens attended, she was made aware that, with funding by the Raikes Foundation, DCPS was able to offer a SchoolKit and live training to interested schools. The SchoolKit is comprised of Brainology®, a program designed to teach students the growth mindset through brain science and learning strategies, and MindsetMaker, an online professional development course for educators.

In year one, all support providers, administrators, and teachers were trained with live training and/or MindsetMaker in the fall. Because the teachers were trained in mindset before it was introduced to the students, first year's implementation was a second semester offering. Stuart-Hobson implemented Brainology in all of their 7th grade science classes. This turned out to be a great opportunity to learn, grow and improve upon their first year.

By year two, Brainology was offered as a 'Specials' class, where students signed up if they were interested. During year two, Mr. Creef was the Brainology lead teacher. He had been a science teacher for fifteen years, and Brainology was new to him. When he recognized the significance of the program, he really took ownership of the program and became one of its biggest champions. Thus, with a dynamic, enthusiastic teacher, Stuart-Hobson was able to reach quite a few kids, who self-enrolled in the course.

In year two, Brainology was taught as a stand-alone 9-week course with six sections of 20-25 students each.

In year two, Principal Clemens was not only able to expand the program to reach more students; she was able to use her trained support staff to engage parents as well. What Principal Clemens recognized was that if she was going to teach students about the Growth Mindset and the importance of effort, process, and strategies at school, it was critical to have the messages they were receiving at home be aligned. The parent engagement sessions taught parents about the Brainology curriculum and also introduced them to the language that

encourages, communicates and fosters a growth mindset. As Principal Clemens stated, “Language such as, *‘I love the strategies you choose’, ‘I love how you persevered despite the challenges’* and *‘I love how you came home and got right to work’*, is what parents need to be communicating more of instead of how smart their child is.”

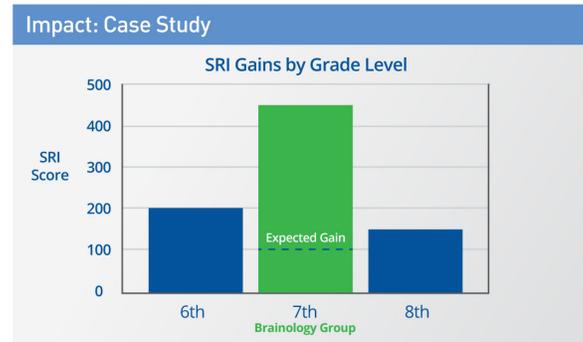
However, in year two, Principal Clemens did not feel like the students who really needed to receive Brainology were getting it. Because students self-enrolled in the class during year two, what Principal Clemens noticed was that the students who could benefit most from the program were choosing other specials. She felt students needed this information earlier than they were receiving it. So, during the third year of implementation, she moved Mr. Creef and the Mindsets class to 6th grade and required every 6th grader at Stuart-Hobson to take Brainology along with study skills. Because the foundation was laid in the 6th grade, the students were able to carry their growth mindsets with them through to 7th grade, 8th grade, and beyond.

RESULTS

As a result of Brainology implementation, Stuart-Hobson has seen a host of positive changes. Principal Clemens stated, “The kids I speak to when I stop by the Brainology classroom feel empowered. When students realize they have control over effort and thus the results they see, they are off and running.” Principal Clemens went on to talk about the need for students to have a ‘no risk’ growth mindset environment. She describes this as an environment where it is not looked down upon to make a mistake; a mistake is just an opportunity to learn. She went on to say, “I have watched students completely change their attitude toward the effort they are willing to put in. The online portion of this program engages students and makes learning exciting for them”.

After Stuart-Hobson’s year one Brainology implementation in all 7th grade science classes, school leaders examined the student SRI scores of students in a reading intervention course. The students in this reading intervention course were reading at least two years below grade level. At the end of that year, 6th grade students

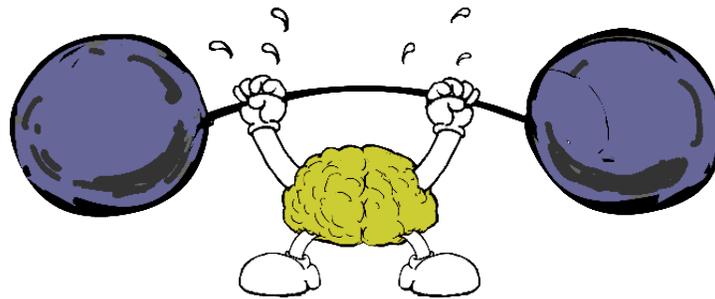
increased 213 lexile points, 8th grade students increased 150 points, and 7th grade students increased 417 points. Though there were various factors that played a role in the gains that year, it is important to note that 7th graders were the only grade level receiving Brainology.



After year two, students had substantial growth in their iReady Math scores.. The average growth for the District was 67% and Stuart-Hobson’s growth was 86%. In regards to SRI score growth, they were the top Middle School in the District. “I do believe there was achievement growth due to this program,” stated Principal Clemens. Although formal statistical conclusions cannot be made regarding the effect of Brainology on Stuart Hobson’s school-level achievement growth, through a combination of a) a principal leading a growth mindset culture shift; b) approximately half the student body participating in the Brainology program; and c) all teachers receiving extensive face to face and online training, there is reason to believe that a connection may exist.

CONCLUSION

Since the onset of the SchoolKit implementation, Stuart-Hobson has seen both motivational growth and academic success in their students. Faculty continue to be lead learners from year to year and aren’t afraid to make mistakes and make changes to the program as necessary to ensure students are receiving what they need to be successful. Principal Clemens continues to provide Mr. Creef and the rest of the Stuart-Hobson teachers with the support they need to successfully implement the program, making needed scheduling tweaks and supporting staff as they too learn and reflect on their practices.



About Mindset Works

Mindset Works was co-founded by one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation, Stanford University professor Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D. and K-12 mindset expert Lisa S. Blackwell, Ph.D. The team translates psychological research into practical products and services to help students and educators increase their motivation and achievement.

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