

Do Your Initial Expectations and Goals in a College Course Relate to Your Final Grades?

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In this research project we were interested in how initial student expectations in a mathematics course at Ithaca College related to their performance in the course. Furthermore, we analyzed how goal setting and perceived ability related to midterm and final grades. In this survey study, over 100 participants across four different Ithaca College mathematics courses were surveyed and their answers were analyzed with their mid-term and final grades. Two main psychological theories were examined in this research; the self-fulfilling prophecy and entity theory. The self-fulfilling prophecy was analyzed by comparing the differences in perceived teacher expectations and student expectations with grades in the math course. More specifically, do students with an entity theorist (fixed) mindset perform worse in their courses? Self-efficacy, the belief that a student had in their ability to do well in the course, was also measured to test how self-efficacy related to academic performance in math courses. Additionally, this study looked at key factors that are known to influence motivation such as quality sleep and eating a healthy breakfast. This correlational research study also examined how having a friend in a math course related to student's performance in the course. Lastly, bi-variate correlations were used to examine the relationship between each item in the survey.