



Infusing Program with Self-Reflection, Positive Affirmation, and Recognition

BROOKLYN COLLEGE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



PRACTITIONER NAMES

Rebekah Severe, Megan Butch, Diamond Gordon

SITE

S.T.A.R Middle School at Erasmus

POPULATION (Youth / Staff and Age / Role)

Middle School Youth

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) FACTOR

Academic Self-Efficacy and Self-Advocacy

OVERVIEW

At the Brooklyn College Community Partnership (BCCP), students work on projects that build their STEAM and social-emotional skills. Teaching artists infuse each program session with **self-reflection**, **positive affirmations**, and **recognition of individual student strengths**. These practices improve Academic Self-Efficacy for young people by **affirming their identity** and **building their confidence** to set and achieve goals. Participants in BCCP’s S.T.A.R Middle School site experienced greater growth in Academic Self-Efficacy and Self-Advocacy compared to youth with similar starting SEL scores at the same school level across the Network.

ABOUT THE PRACTICES

Start sessions with self-reflection. Before diving into lessons, check in with how students are thinking and feeling. This can be done individually through journal prompts (e.g., “When I wake up tomorrow, I will be happiest if...”) or together as a group with an icebreaker (e.g. “Tell me [a rose and a thorn](#) about your day so far.”). Starting with self-reflection helps students get more comfortable expressing and regulating emotions, a key component of self-efficacy.

Give students a platform to practice positive affirmations. BCCP staff recognize that middle school is a difficult time in a young person’s identity development. To build self-esteem, students practice daily positive affirmations (like those shown right): “I am beautiful. I am honest. I am confident.” They also complete activities that reinforce a positive sense of self. In one activity, BCCP staff provide a large picture frame in which each student create and post empowering quotes to live by (e.g., “You are your own limit”). This activity encourages students to reflect on their personal motivations and goals -- a key aspect of self-efficacy.

Recognize the strengths of individual students. For example, if you notice a student who likes working by herself, give her a job as your assistant cleaning up the classroom to build her confidence. BCCP staff also design activities that uncover student strengths. In one activity -- Hip Hop Jeopardy -- students worked together to answer trivia questions. Some students were more knowledgeable about music, others about philanthropy, and by the end of the activity, students felt more





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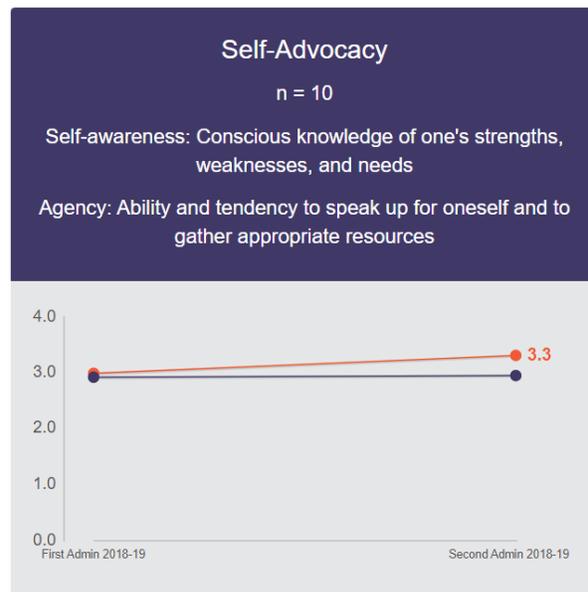
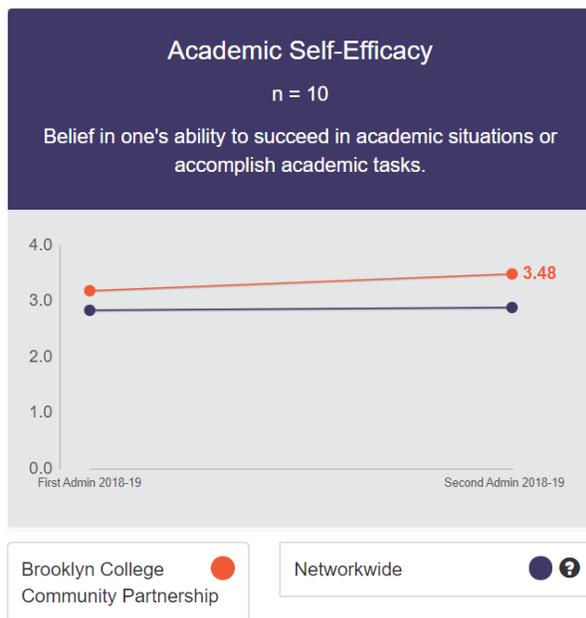


comfortable showing off their expertise to the group.

EVIDENCE

Research Alliance for NYC Schools identified BCCP's S.T.A.R Middle School site as **one of 20 Bright Spot Sites**, meaning that their participants experienced greater growth in Academic Self-Efficacy and Self-Advocacy than young people at the same school level with similar starting SEL scores across the Network. The charts below show the change in youth mean scores on survey questions related to Academic Self-Efficacy and Self-Advocacy over the 2018-19 school year.

Anecdotally, BCCP staff report that students are more comfortable being vulnerable, setting and persisting towards goals, and sharing their expertise after implementing these practices.



TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Practice active listening as staff. Avoid imposing beliefs on students. The more transparent and open you are with students, the more they will reciprocate.
- Try implementing these self-efficacy practices through mini projects that can build to larger projects. Consider ending in a showcase for other students to make goal-setting tangible.
- Have students establish community agreements at the start of program to set norms around learning, reflection, and communication. This will help frame these self-efficacy practices and keep students accountable.

QUESTIONS? Contact Alexandra Lotero at alexandra@ssn-nyc.org



ABOUT PROMISING PRACTICES: Research Alliance for NYC Schools analyzes the Network's social-emotional learning (SEL) survey data to identify Bright Spot sites -- sites where participants experience greater growth in at least one SEL factor compared to similar young people across the Network. Practitioners at Bright Spot sites share *promising practices* that they hypothesize improve their participants' SEL.