

# Research & Evidence Base for Goldi

A foundation built on social capital, behavioral science, and applied learning research

## Overview

Goldi and the Social Capital Curriculum were developed by Climb Together over six years of research and testing with thousands of jobseekers in their 20s and 30s who were earning below a livable wage. The design combines social capital theory, behavioral science, and learning design research to help students practice the skills that build authentic professional relationships and increase economic mobility.

Goldi’s 12 conversational modules are not theoretical—they are grounded in decades of evidence showing that relationships, not just credentials, drive access to opportunity.

## Evidence Areas & Sources

Evidence Area	Foundational Research / Framework	How It’s Embedded in Goldi & Curriculum
<b>Social Capital Theory</b>	Mark Granovetter, <i>The Strength of Weak Ties</i> (1973); Raj Chetty, <i>Economic Connectedness</i> (2022)	Students learn to identify and activate “weak ties,” see why diverse networks predict mobility, and practice outreach through Goldi’s guided conversations.
<b>Behavioral Science of Asking for Help</b>	Walton et al., <i>Voices of Gen Z</i> (Gallup, 2023); Angela Duckworth & Carol Dweck on growth mindset	Modules like <i>The Goldilocks Ask</i> and <i>Broken Wings</i> reframe help-seeking as a strength, build self-efficacy, and normalize outreach anxiety.
<b>Career Development &amp; Self-Efficacy</b>	Lent, Brown & Hackett, <i>Social Cognitive Career Theory</i> (1994); Bandura’s self-efficacy research	Goldi scaffolds small, achievable actions (3 career chats) that build mastery experiences and confidence through repetition and reflection.
<b>Communication &amp; Storytelling</b>	Dan McAdams, <i>Narrative Identity Theory</i> (2015); Professional communication frameworks	Modules such as <i>Tell Your Story</i> and <i>Show Don’t Tell</i> help learners develop narrative coherence and conversational fluency in professional settings.

<b>Psychological Safety &amp; AI Coaching</b>	Studies on AI as non-judgmental practice partners (Harvard CEI, 2023; EdTech Lab pilots)	Goldi's friendly tone and Socratic approach create a safe, low-stakes environment for skill rehearsal, especially for first-gen and introverted learners.
<b>Pilot Data: 2025 Field Results</b>	Merit America, LaGuardia CC, WGU pilots (n ≈ 600 learners)	38 → 81% increase in authentic networking confidence; 98% of learners took real-world outreach actions; 20–25% completed all 12 chats.

## Key Design Principles



**Evidence → Practice → Feedback:** Each concept is taught, practiced with Goldi, and reinforced through reflection prompts.



**Positive Coaching Frame:** Goldi provides affirming, strengths-based feedback to sustain engagement.



**Microlearning Structure:** 10–20 minute modules fit naturally into courses or advising sessions.



**Continuous Learning Loop:** Each campus implementation contributes new data that informs ongoing research and refinement.

## IN ESSENCE:

Goldi translates decades of social-capital and behavioral research into daily practice for students—helping them build confidence, tell their story, and connect authentically with people who can open doors.