What are Student Surveys Good For?
Search Institute Webinar
May 4, 2016

More than 5 million young people surveyed

Discovering what kids need to succeed
Youth: Relationships with Parents

% of teenagers who strongly agree on a 5-point scale
(strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Search Institute surveys during the 2014-2015 school year of 122,269 U.S. youth in grades 6 to 12.

Youth: Relationships with Teachers

% of teenagers who strongly agree on a 5-point scale
(strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Search Institute surveys during the 2014-2015 school year of 122,269 U.S. youth in grades 6 to 12.
What we are trying to measure:

A major synthesis of “what works” found that character strengths such as:

- Perseverance
- Conscientiousness
- Sociability
- Curiosity

“...rival IQ in predicting educational attainment, labor market success, health and criminality.”

-- Heckman and Kautz, 2013

Ways to Measure Character Strengths

1. Youth self-report surveys

2. Adult observations using rubrics

3. Performance tasks

-- Duckworth & Yeager, 2015
The Benefits of Youth Self-Report Surveys

“Questionnaires are cheap, quick, reliable, and in many cases, remarkably predictive of objectively measured outcomes (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Duckworth, Tsukayama, & May, 2010; Hightower et al., 1986; J. Jackson et al., 2015; Lucas & Baird, 2006; B. Roberts, Kuncel, Shiner, Caspi, & Goldberg, 2007). Furthermore, a very large literature in social and cognitive psychology confirms that people are relatively good at using questionnaires to communicate their true opinions—provided that they in fact have answers for the questions asked and feel comfortable reporting accurately on them (see Krosnick, 1999; Krosnick & Fabrigar, in press; Schuman & Presser, 1981). Indeed, self-report questionnaires are arguably better suited than any other measure for assessing internal psychological states, like feelings of belonging.”

-- Duckworth & Yeager, 2015

Self-Report Surveys and School Improvement

“Because students’ affective dispositions are potent predictors of those students’ future conduct, school leaders should seriously consider the possibility of routinely assessing students’ attitudes, interests, and/or values.”

-- W. James Popham, Everything School Leaders Need to Know about Assessment (2010)
The REACH Survey

Beyond Measurement
The REACH Strategies Guidebook

- Concise and clear summaries of relevant research
- Reflection Questions: Prompts for discussion
- Anchor Activities: Organized ways to strengthen motivation
- REACH Techniques: Strategies to reinforce the idea over time

Linking Inputs to Outcomes

Students who experience developmental relationships with teachers are more likely to report these character strengths.

- Mastery Motivation: 0.57
- Perseverance: 0.66
- Emotional Competence: 0.54
- Goal Oriented: 0.56

Correlations above .40 are considered to be strong.

REACH Survey Pilot test with 610 middle and high school students in Northwest US.
Student perception matters, even if it’s not “right”

Perception Matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally Inclusive and Affirming Classroom</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well do each of the following describe your teachers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers talk about the positive things people from my culture or race have done</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers encourage me to share my cultural background in class</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers encourage me to understand my own culture</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REACH Survey Pilot test with 602 students in one Midwestern high school
Hearing the Voice of all Students

REACH Survey
Pilot test with 602 students in one Midwestern high school

Getting Specific

"Not bad fellas. Let's do one more take, with more emphasis on tone, harmony, melody, rhythm, composition, lyrics, musicianship, tempo, and on originality."
**“We want to build good relationships”**

- Belief in Kids
- Expect My Best
- Grow from Failures
- Value
- Respect
- Ours
- Imagine

Connecting Sparks to Learning

REACH Survey Pilot test with 602 students in one Midwestern high school

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**Assessing Change Over Time**

Members showed significant gains in their thriving mindset.

- Purpose
- Positive Character
- Spirit Interdependence
- Self-Awareness
- Resilience to Challenges
- Resilience
- Perseverance

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Selecting a Survey

1. Decide if you want to measure a subset or a broad array of character strengths.
2. Select a survey with good psychometric properties.
3. Select a survey that provides actionable data.
4. Put the data into a dashboard with other measures.
5. Mitigate or take into account social desirability bias.
6. Don’t use the data for accountability or evaluation due to reference bias and other factors.
7. Data on small groups and individual students can be useful but is not valid or reliable.
8. Select a survey that also provides useful contextual information.

Going Broad vs. Going Deep
Psychometric Properties

Validity: Survey measures what it is intended to measure
- Criterion Validity: Degree to which survey measures correlate with a relevant outcome in the present (concurrent validity) or future (predictive validity)
- Convergent Validity: Degree to which survey measures correlate with other measures (such as other surveys) of the same or very similar factors

Reliability: Survey produces similar results when measuring the same phenomenon over time
- Internal Consistency: Questions (items) on the survey that are intended measure the same things produce similar scores
- Test-Retest Reliability: Survey produces similar results when taken multiple times

### Actionable Data:

**Table 47**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spark Development</th>
<th>Not at all like me</th>
<th>Almost like me</th>
<th>Somewhat like me</th>
<th>Mostly like me</th>
<th>Very much like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I try to learn more about my interests and talents</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I try to develop my interests and talents by practicing and working on them</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am good at finding things and people who can help me get better at my interests and talents</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REACH Survey Pilot test with 602 students in one Midwestern high school

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### Actionable Data:

**Table 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecting Sparks to Learning</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Nearly</th>
<th>Very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My teachers try to find out what I am interested in</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My teachers try to connect what we’re learning in class to my interests and talents</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My teachers help me see how my class work relates to my spark(s)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REACH Survey Pilot test with 602 students in one Midwestern high school
Combine the data with other measures

Measuring Motivation

- REACH Survey data
- Survey of teacher perceptions
- Grades – especially course failures
- Assignments completed
- Attendance rates
- Discipline rates
- Growth scores on standardized tests

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6. Don’t use the data for accountability or evaluation due to reference bias and other factors.
7. Data on small groups and individual students can be useful but is not valid or reliable.
8. Select a survey that also provides useful contextual information.
### Contextual Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 59</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interesting and Engaging Instruction</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers make learning interesting</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers explain how the things we learn in class will be useful to us in the future</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I don’t get a good grade or score, my teachers tell me specific things I can do to improve in the future</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The work I am asked to do in this school challenges me in a good way: it is not too easy and not too hard</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I don’t understand something in class, my teachers try to teach it a different way so I understand it</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REACH Survey Pilot test with 562 students in one Midwestern middle school.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 62</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influence of External Factors on Effort</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much do you agree or disagree with the following?</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems I face outside of school make it difficult to focus on my school work</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry that my family’s background might make it harder for me to achieve my goals</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter how hard I work, it is difficult for people like me to get ahead</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreal beliefs about people based on their race, ethnicity, or abilities make it harder for me to achieve my goals</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mistakes I’ve made in my life make it difficult for me to achieve my goals</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REACH Survey Pilot test with 482 students in one Midwestern middle school.