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

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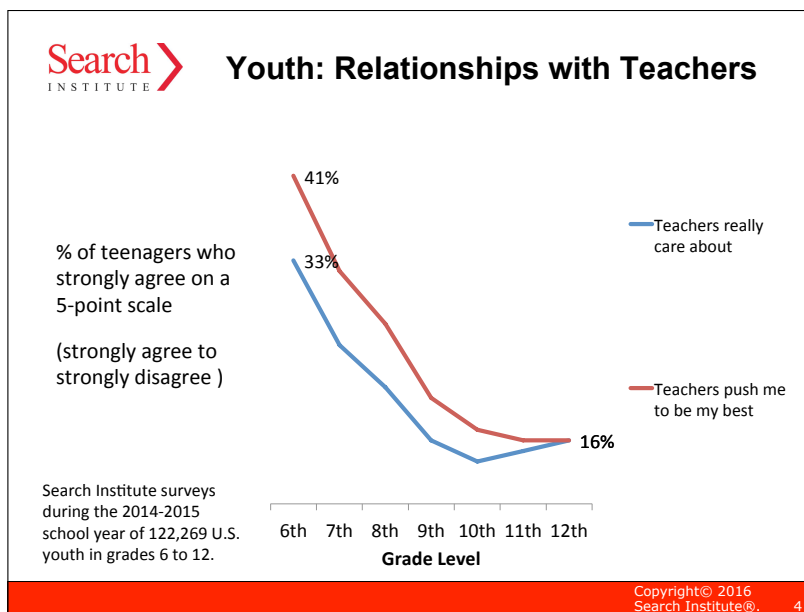
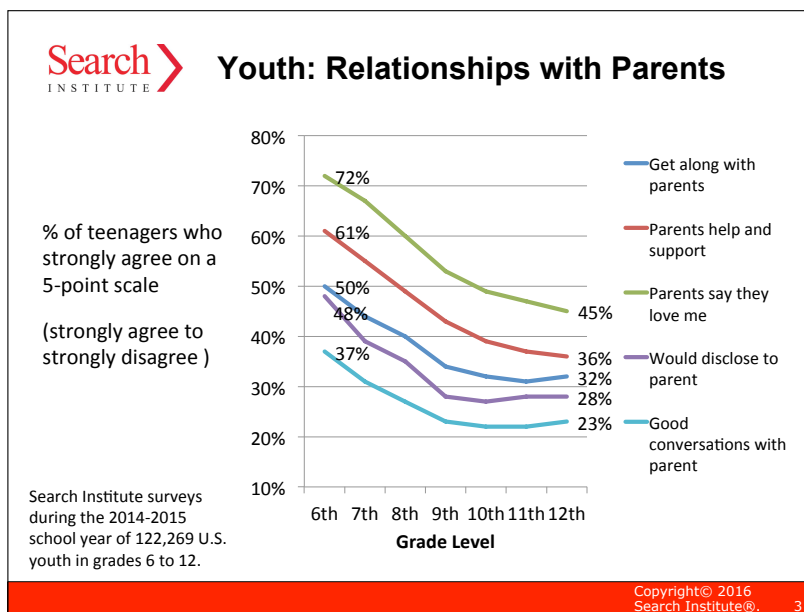
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**More than 5 million young
people surveyed**

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Discovering what kids need to succeed

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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

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Ways to Measure Character Strengths

1. Youth self-report surveys
2. Adult observations using rubrics
3. Performance tasks

-- Duckworth & Yeager, 2015

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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

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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)

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The **REACH** Survey

RELATIONSHIPS 
EFFORT 
ASPIRATIONS 
COGNITION 
HEART 

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Beyond Measurement



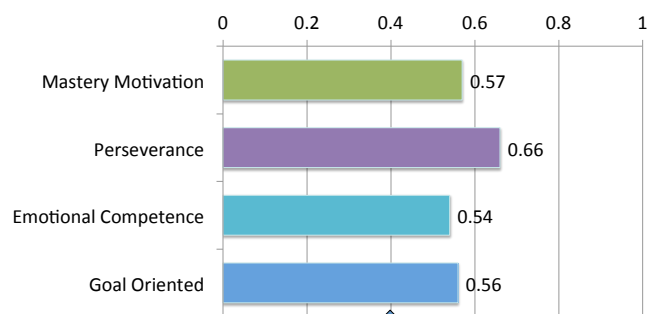
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- Concise and clear summaries of relevant research
- Reflection Questions: Prompts for discussion
- Anchor Activities: Organized ways to strengthen motivation
- **REACH** Techniques: Strategies to reinforce the idea over time

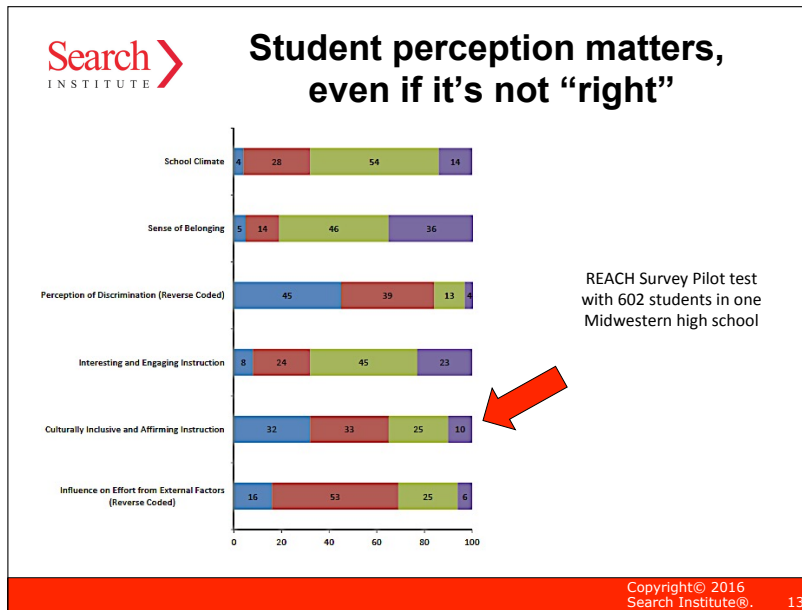
Linking Inputs to Outcomes

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



Correlations above .40 are considered to be strong.

REACH Survey Pilot test with 610 middle and high school students in Northwest US



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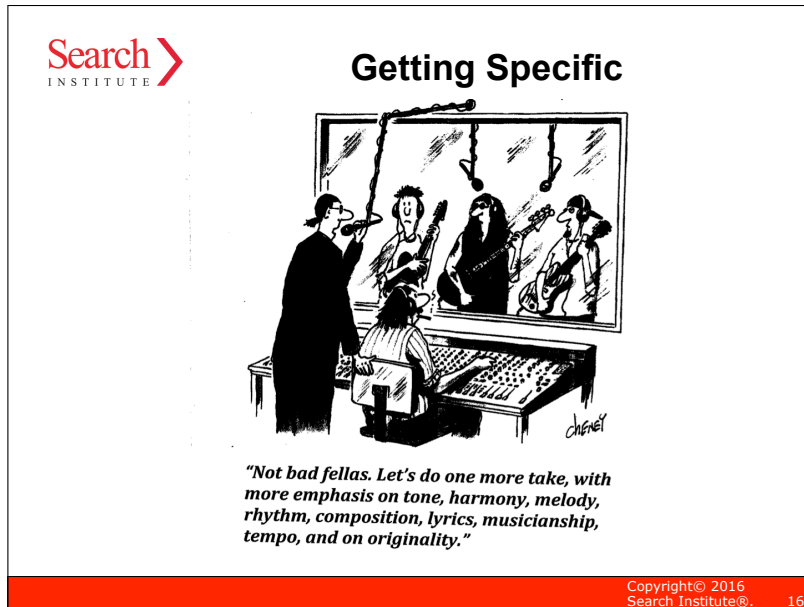
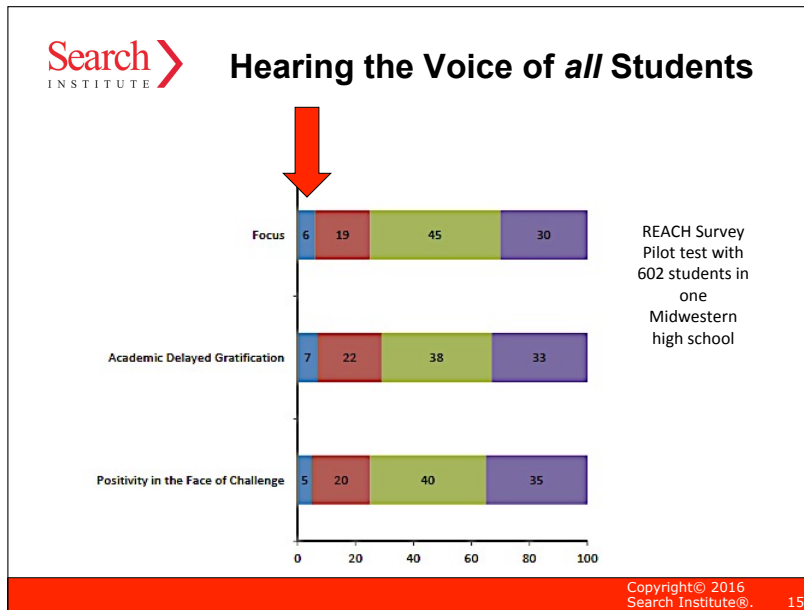
Perception Matters

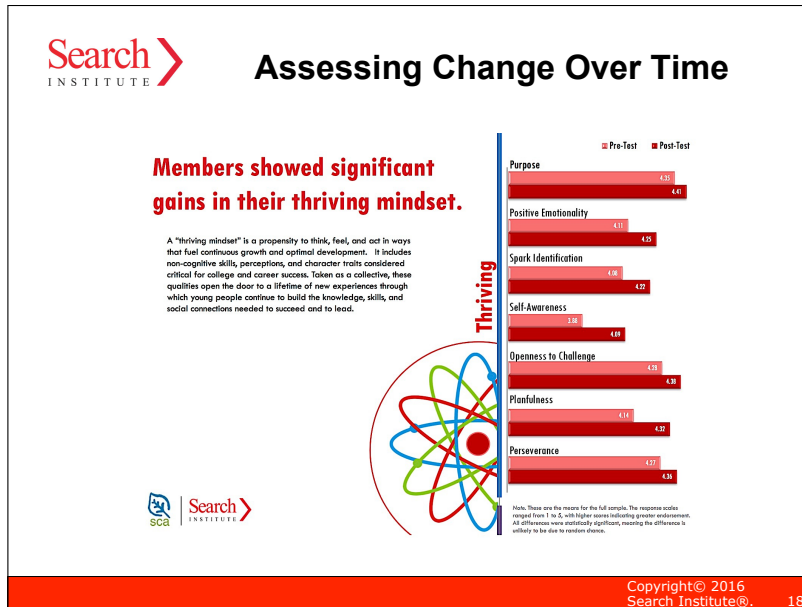
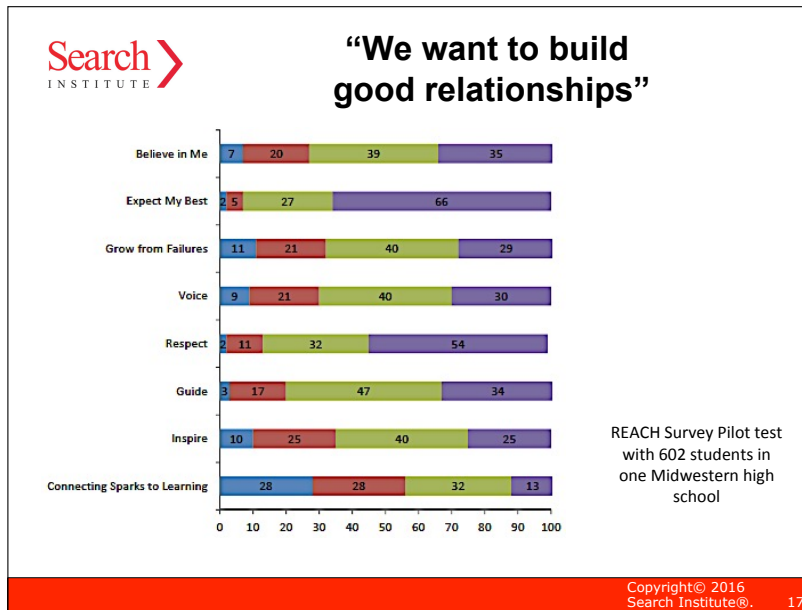
Table 60

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Mostly	Very much
Culturally Inclusive and Affirming Classroom					
How well do each of the following describe your teachers?					
My teachers talk about the positive things people from my culture or race have done	24%	25%	26%	21%	5%
My teachers encourage me to share my cultural background in class	36%	29%	21%	12%	2%
My teachers encourage me to understand my own culture	26%	26%	30%	16%	3%

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

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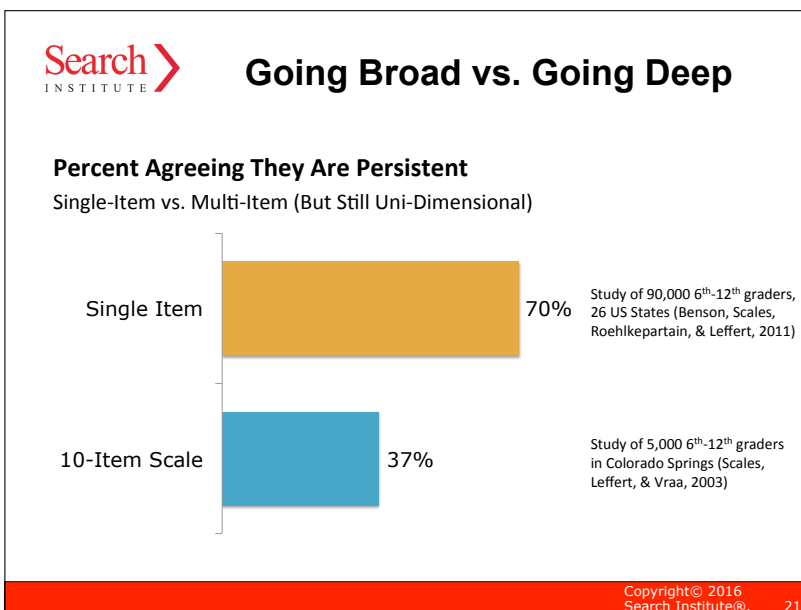


Selecting a Survey

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





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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

For more info, see Haggerty, Elgin & Woolley (2011), *Social-Emotional Learning Assessment Measures for Middle School Youth*, available at <http://www.search-institute.org/sites/default/files/a/DAP-Raikes-Foundation-Review.pdf>

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Actionable Data:

Table 47

	Not at all like me	A little like me	Somewhat like me	Mostly like me	Very much like me
Spark Development					
How much are the following like you?					
I try to learn more about my interests and talents	2%	6%	16%	43%	34%
*I try to develop my interests and talents by practicing and working on them	3%	8%	26%	42%	20%
I am good at finding things and people who can help me get better at my interests and talents	5%	13%	34%	35%	13%

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

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Actionable Data:

Table 20

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Mostly	Very much
Connecting Sparks to Learning					
How well do each of the following describe your teachers?					
*My teachers try to find out what I am interested in	15%	28%	32%	21%	4%
My teachers try to connect what we're learning in class to my interests and talents	24%	26%	29%	18%	3%
My teachers help me see how my class work relates to my spark(s)	26%	27%	27%	17%	3%

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

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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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Contextual Information

Table 59

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree/ Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Interesting and Engaging Instruction					
How much do you agree or disagree with the following?					
My teachers make learning interesting	2%	5%	40%	36%	17%
My teachers explain how the things we learn in class will be useful to us in the future	4%	10%	26%	38%	22%
When I don't get a good grade or score, my teachers tell me specific things I can do to improve in the future	2%	7%	31%	44%	16%
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	1%	5%	29%	45%	20%
If I don't understand something in class, my teachers try to teach it a different way so I understand it	2%	8%	29%	40%	21%
Teachers in this school want us to use our thinking skills, not just memorize things	0%	3%	19%	47%	30%

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

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Contextual Information

Table 62

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree/ Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Influence of External Factors on Effort					
How much do you agree or disagree with the following?					
Problems I face outside of school make it difficult to focus on my school work	10%	28%	31%	22%	9%
I worry that my family's background might make it harder for me to achieve my goals	17%	35%	24%	15%	8%
No matter how hard I work, it is difficult for people like me to get ahead					
Unfair beliefs about people based on their race, ethnicity, or abilities make it harder for me to achieve my goals	20%	33%	29%	14%	5%
The mistakes I've made in my life make it difficult for me to achieve my goals	17%	34%	28%	15%	6%

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

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