Thriving Learning Communities™
A research-based approach to SEL thru the science of character strengths
We are change agents, unleashing the strengths of individuals, teams, and organizations to be at their very best every day. Our team of experts create programs and services for partners around the world that consistently deliver increased engagement, performance, and learning.

Lynn Ochs
Senior Director, Education Programs
Thriving Learning Communities™
Mayerson Academy

Researcher
Dr. Robert McGrath
School of Psychology and Counseling, Fairleigh Dickinson University
Senior Scientist, VIA Institute on Character

27 yrs.
500K
8,000
120+

PK-16 Schools
Organizations
Communities
Questions We’ll Answer Today...

I. Why SEL?
II. What is Thriving Learning Communities™ (TLC)?
III. Why VIA Character Strengths to address SEL?
IV. How does TLC align with WDPI’s SEL Competencies?
V. What impact can be expected?
VI. How can we get started?
VII. Q and A
Wisconsin WMELS and PK-Adult Competencies:

- Emotional Development
- Self-Concept
- Social Competence
What we Know About Positive Emotions

Positive Emotions
Joy, Love, Contentment, Interest, Happiness

BROADEN
Expands Inventory of Thoughts and Action

BUILD
Develops Physical, Mental and Social Resources

TRANSFORM
Advances Personal Growth and Creates More Positive Emotions

Reference: Barbara Fredrickson, Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions
What is Your Perspective?
In the Dark….

42% can’t name their strengths
Negativity Bias
A New Language

TRANSCENDENCE  COURAGE  JUSTICE  HUMANITY  TEMPERANCE  WISDOM

spirit  heart  community  other  self  head
24 Character Strengths

- Universally valued
- Contribute to well-being
- Present in all of us

Applying the science of character strengths to the heart of learning
Research-Based

The AWG's SEL Assessment Guide

VIA Youth Survey

The VIA Youth Survey is a survey of twenty four student SEL competencies, for children in fourth through twelfth grade. The assessment is strength-based, completed by students.

The RAND Assessment Finder’s page for this measure has references to studies of the reliability of the measure and/or its validity for particular purposes. The developer also provided additional information on the measure’s reliability and validity (see Technical Documentation section).

Data from the VIA survey are reported at the individual student level and the measure reports scores for individual domains of SEL competence.
Character Strengths
1: Prudence
Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted.

2: Forgiveness
Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting others' shortcomings; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful.

3: Gratitude
Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.

4: Honesty
Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.

5: Self-Regulation
Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions.

6: Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence
Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience.

Activate Your Superpowers!
Strengths
Outcomes

• Engagement

• Well-Being

• Satisfaction & Meaning

• Achievement
Strengths Outcomes
Research-based, Flexible Curriculum
Thriving Learning Communities

Self Management & Self-Control

SELF-MANAGEMENT

PROBLEM SOLVING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Managing Your Emotions to Solve Problems

8. Have students pair up and list three to five ways that mindfulness can be used to problem solve and/or side-step potential conflict situations. Have each pair share their lists. Answers could include allowing time to think to give more solutions, focusing on the problem or issue, taking time to think about how you really feel, etc.

9. Have students use their Character Strengths Chart to name how love, self-control, and honesty can be utilized when using mindfulness. For example, love can be used to be compassionate to yourself and honesty could be used to own up to your problem and committing to use mindfulness. Ask if any of these are signature strengths for anyone.

10. Introduce the strategies students can use to be more mindful by using this list at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZXkMhLJSmTODQ8sz3JhY6lCCaHJ1yV5K2Gv2TeNd-w/edit and their signature strengths. Have students pick two to three strategies that appeal to them and could be used during a time they need to solve a problem of having a conflict.
Critical Success Factors

- Strong Research Base
- Begin with Adult Learners
- Committed Time for Professional Learning
- Shared Language
- Tools
- Champion Model

Full Reports available at: bit.ly/TLCReports
2015-2016
Grades 5 – 6 in 41 Schools

Students of Bright Spot Teachers
✓ Fewer absences and disciplinary actions
✓ Lower final GPA, but more improvement over the year
✓ Higher life satisfaction and positive emotions
✓ Had higher scores on every SEL and CS item
✓ Had slightly lower ELA scores but higher scores on Math, Science, and Social Studies standardized tests

Students in High Fidelity Schools
✓ Had more absences and disciplinary actions
✓ Had lower final GPA with a slight decline over the year
✓ Lower life satisfaction and positive emotions
✓ Had higher scores on every SEL and CS item
✓ Had slightly lower ELA scores but higher scores on Math, Science, and Social Studies standardized tests
✓ Had lower scores on all standardized tests except Social Studies

Overall
✓ Teachers using the TLC program made a difference
✓ Schools did not have a positive effect except on SEL/CS beliefs

4,852 TOTAL STUDENTS
- 5th Graders 46%
- 6th Graders 47%
- 4th Graders in Montessori 7%

4,852
TOTAL STUDENTS

4th Graders in Montessori 7%
5th Graders 46%
6th Graders 47%

© 2021 Mayerson Academy | All Rights Reserved | www.mayersonacademy.org
2016-2017
Grades 4 – 5 in 41 Schools

4,801 STUDENTS

5th Graders

6th Graders

50-206 students per school, $M = 117.1$ ($SD = 39.9$)

Groups for analysis (identified by TLC staff)
- Bright spot teachers (13 teachers, 267 students) vs others
- High fidelity schools (7 schools, 981 students) vs others

Academic variables
- Trend in number of absences over the year
- Trend in number of disciplinary events over the year
- Trend in GPA for core courses over the year

Mean score on standardized tests (NGA)

Engagement (teacher ratings of students over 4-6 classes)
- Attention
- Positive emotionality
- Offering suggestions
- Use of strengths language

© 2021 Mayerson Academy | All Rights Reserved | www.mayersonacademy.org
Academic Results

- Students of bright spot teachers were better on all but trend in disciplines

- Students in high fidelity schools were better on all except trend in absences
Engagement Results

• Students of bright spot teachers were consistently rated higher on engagement

• School did not have a positive effect
Groups for analysis (identified by TLC staff)
- Bright spot teachers (14 teachers, 210 students) vs others
- High fidelity schools (11 schools, 2,961 students) vs others

Academic variables
- Trend in number of absences over the year
- Trend in number of disciplinary events over the year
- Trend in GPA for core courses over the year

Mean score on standardized tests (NGA)
# Results

- Students of bright spot teachers were better on all but trend in absences.
- Students in high fidelity schools were better on all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences: Lower scores are better</th>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>High Fidelity Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Bright Spot</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline Events: Lower scores are better</th>
<th>Disciplinary Events</th>
<th>High Fidelity Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Bright Spot</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>0.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA: Higher scores are better</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>High Fidelity Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Bright Spot</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Test Score: Higher scores are better</th>
<th>Mean Standardized Score</th>
<th>High Fidelity Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Bright Spot</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>685</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>690</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>695</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2021 Mayerson Academy | All Rights Reserved | www.mayersonacademy.org
“Thriving Learning Community has given Carson’s staff, students, and families a common language in which to recognize and affirm the strengths of everyone in our community.

The PD and ongoing coaching provided by their passionate and culturally relevant staff has enabled us to sustain our cultural improvement efforts.”

- Terrez Thomas, Principal, Carson Elementary

“As students get to know one another better, they become more tolerant and empathetic ... and they look at each other differently and with more appreciation and understanding.”

Alicia Setta, Intervention Specialist, John P. Parker School

“I need to help my friend ________ who is having a hard time standing up for herself. It feels good to use bravery because it makes me think ‘I didn’t think I could do that but I just did!’ and it makes me feel stronger.”

CPS Student Quote

“I learned that when I breathe when I am mad it releases all the stress and takes out all the bad stuff that is in my body.”
We see PERSEVERANCE and CREATIVITY in our 5th grade students everyday as we stay focused and engaged during online learning. Check out this 5th grader learning about decimals in Mrs. Robertson's Math Classroom in space! #CarsonCougarsCARE #CrossingTheLine #FlourishingVirtually #Creativity #Perseverance

Emily Robertson

Stained Oswald

I feel so blessed to be a part of such an amazing school. I would love to give a shout out to Families Forward for donating Kroger gift cards and hygiene products to the Carson families. Thank you so very much, Carson Staff.
Welcome
Kirkhmore Families to Gratitude Night

Thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude. Gratitude is the completion of thankfulness. Thankfulness is the first step of all socialization. Gratitude is the final step of all appreciation.

A display of my Gratitude
Pennsylvania: Senior: Brandee Schuler: Teacher: Teacher: Teacher:

How Character Strengths Help Us: An Introduction

JOIN US FOR A PARENT EVENT WITH PRIZES!

Monday, Nov. 2 – 3:30-4:30 p.m.
Use this link: https://bit.ly/2TYySAu

or by phone using the Zoom app or voice only at
312-626-6799 or 929-205-6099
Meeting ID: 936 2871 4703
Passcode: 194072

Your student’s device is great for connecting with us!
Champions Institute & Beyond

Champions Institute
- 8 Member School Team
- Summer 2021
- 3 Zoom Sessions (2 hrs. each) and Online Modules

Online Platform
- Full Staff - Professional Learning Opportunities
  - Intro to Strengths
  - Curriculum Implementation
  - Strengths Integration
- Digital Curriculum Access

Champion Team Coaching
- Champions meet with MA experts on implementation
- Monthly online learning opportunities
- Connect with peers through TLC Facebook Community
Thriving Product Line

- 24 Products
- PK-12th Grade
- Early Childhood Activity Cards
- Afterschool Programming
- Parent Engagement Resources
- Digital Curriculum Delivery Options
Tier 3: TLC Curriculum Guide 5-6: Scope and Sequence / 5th Grade TLC Week-by-Week: Quarter 1

Before the Lesson

Equity Toolkit Tip

Choose an Option

During the Lesson

Option A: Lesson

TLC Journal

After the Lesson

Character Strengths 101

Welcome to your first week of Thriving Learning Communities. To the right, click 'expand' to see see tips and resources for teaching this week's lesson.

To download the full lesson, click on resources to the left.
Before the Lesson

BEFORE YOU START

- Why biases do you have around the 24 character strengths?
- All 24 character strengths are valuable. Do you tend to value some strengths over others? Why or why not?
- What life experiences have contributed to your opinions and preferences about these strengths?

Considering your responses before starting this learning module is a great way to illuminate your own biases and make sure you are doing your best to introduce the 24 character strengths in ways that allow your students to see the benefits of all 24 strengths.

Equity Toolkit Tip

All people have biases. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What biases do you have around the 24 character strengths?
- All 24 character strengths are valuable. Do you tend to value some strengths over others? Why or why not?
- What life experiences have contributed to your opinions and preferences about these strengths?
During the Lesson

Option A: Introduce character strengths through an engaging video like How to Change the World by Kid President. After the video, have students refer to their Character Strengths Chart and ask them to brainstorm a list of all the strengths they saw or heard “Kid President” use or talk about. Make a list as students name the strengths. Probing questions can be used to deepen students’ thinking:

- What were you thinking as you saw these strengths being used?
- Have you ever seen someone using these strengths?
- Have you ever used these strengths? If so, how did you feel during and after using those strengths?

Option B: Lesson

Introduce character strengths through an engaging video like How to Change the World by Kid President. After the video, have students refer to their Character Strengths Chart and ask them to brainstorm a list of all the strengths they saw or heard “Kid President” use or talk about. Make a list as students name the strengths. Probing questions can be used to deepen students’ thinking:

- What were you thinking as you saw these strengths being used?
- Have you ever seen someone using these strengths?
- Have you ever used these strengths? If so, how did you feel during and after using those strengths?
After the Lesson

Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence: Who is someone you admire and why?

Strengths Discussion

Looking for ways to extend the lesson? Use the character strengths quizlet cards to start an ice breakers.

Display the Quizlet cards in flashcard mode for students to see. Have students pair up to discuss the question shown. Once both students have an opportunity to answer the question, click to the next question and have students find a new partner. Repeat steps as time allows.
Q & A
thriving learning communities

For more information contact: tlc@mayersonacademy.org
AWE, GRATITUDE, HOPE, HUMOR, SENSE OF MEANING, BRAVERY, PERSEVERANCE, HONESTY, ZEST, TEAMWORK, FAIRNESS, LEADERSHIP, LOVE, SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE, KINDNESS, FORGIVENESS, HUMILITY, PRUDENCE, SELF-CONTROL, CREATIVITY, CURIOSITY, JUDGMENT, LOVE OF LEARNING, PERSPECTIVE.