

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

Tools and Techniques for Understanding Youth Skills and Dispositions

Youth Development Executives of King County

Working together to advance the youth development field



Agenda

- Develop a general understanding of measurement strategies for youth skills and beliefs
- Become acquainted with survey design considerations
- Learn about YDEKC's skills framework and available measurement tools



Who We Are

Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC) is a coalition of youth-serving organizations working to advance the youth development field in order to improve outcomes for young people.

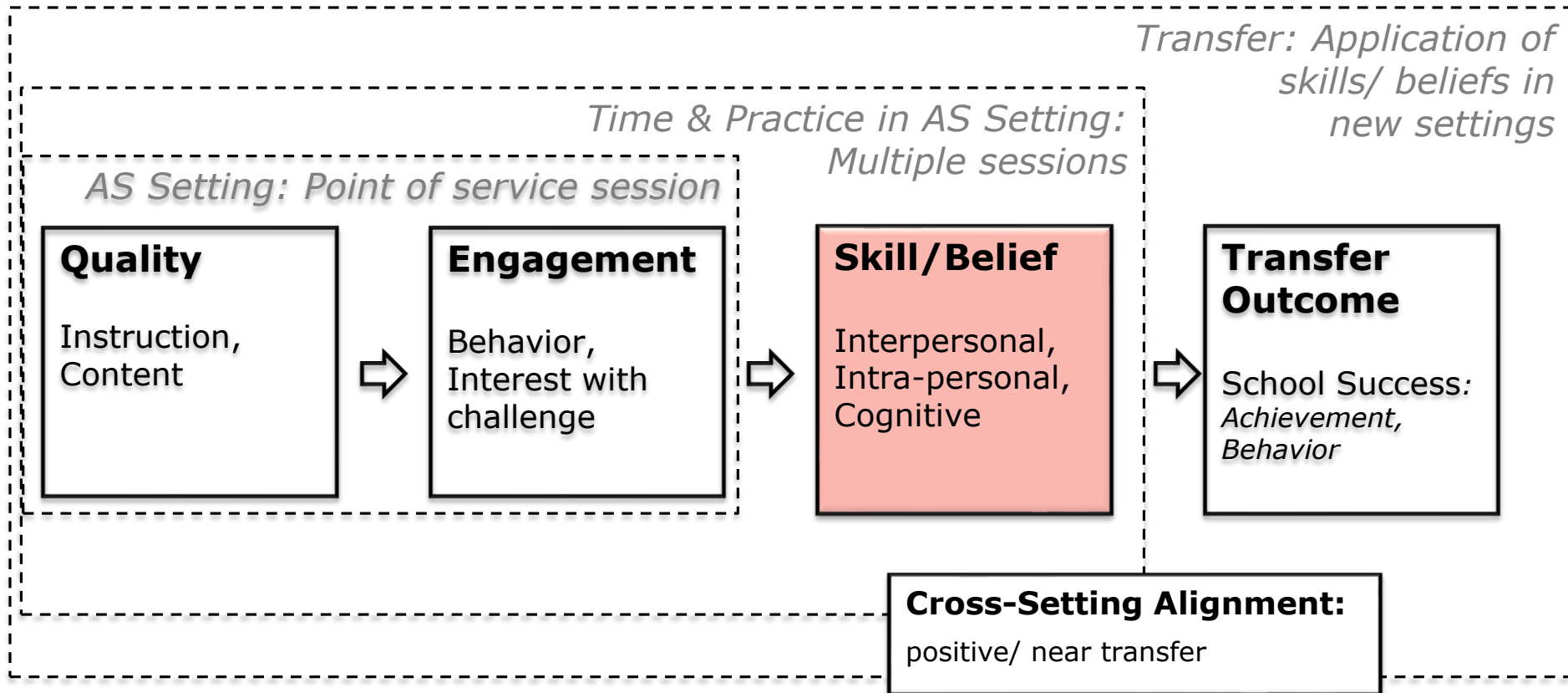
Representing the executive leadership of King County based youth serving organizations, YDEKC is uniquely positioned to **advocate for its members** with the systems (school districts, governments, the public) that they intersect with; to **develop field level knowledge** about best practices in youth development; and to **build leadership strength** in the non-profit youth serving sector.

Plan

Collect

Reflect

Quality to Outcomes Theory of Change



Smith C., Hallman, S., Hillaker, B., Sugar, S., McGovern, G., & Devaney, E. (2012). *Development and early validation evidence for an observational measure of high quality instructional practice for science, technology, engineering and mathematics in out-of-school time settings: The STEM supplement to the Youth Program Quality Assessment*. Forum for Youth Investment. Washington D.C.

Approaches to Measuring Skills and Beliefs

- Summary of methods
- Criteria for selecting among them
- What works when (and what does not)



Methods of Measuring Skills and Beliefs

- Performance tasks
- **Adult report on youth skills**
- Youth self-report
 - Interviews
 - Focus groups
 - **Surveys**
 - **Post- only**
 - **Pre-/Post-**
 - **Retrospective pre-/post-**

**Our main
areas of
focus**



Criteria for Selecting Appropriate Method(s)

- Reliability
- Validity
- Feasibility
 - Cost
 - Burden
- Appropriateness
 - To the population
 - To the question being asked



**See our Tip Sheets on
Bias and
Psychometrics**



Conditions for Valid **Adult Report** on Youth Skills

- The respondent has adequate knowledge to report
- Questions are clear and unambiguous
- “Perverse incentives” are minimized
- Underlying racial and cultural biases are acknowledged and actively countered
- Questions refer to *observable behaviors* rather than *internal states*



Conditions for Valid Self Reports

- The information requested is known to the respondent
- Questions are phrased clearly and unambiguously
- Questions refer to recent activities
- *Respondents think the questions merit a serious and thoughtful response*
- *Answering the questions does not threaten, embarrass, or violate the privacy of the respondent or encourage the respondent to respond in socially desirable ways*

Source: Kuh, G. D. (2001). The national survey of student engagement: Conceptual framework and overview of psychometric properties. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (2001), pp. 3-4.



Evaluation Design and Survey Types

- End of Program Survey or Post- Only Survey
- Pre- and Post- Program Survey
- Post- then Pre-, or Retrospective Pre- Survey



End of Program Surveys

One Group, Post-Test Only

- Least intrusive, least costly, least difficult method
- Measures how a participant is functioning at the end of a program
- Used to determine if participants achieved certain goals that match the program's goals
- Cannot be used to indicate whether the participant has changed during the program



End of Program Surveys

One Group, Post-Test Only

- Best suited to situations where participants' pre-program status can be determined through other means
- Not considered a rigorous design
 - Can't rule out other causes of the impact
 - Can't distinguish different kinds of impact on different kinds of participants
 - Can't assert causality



Pre- then Post- Surveys

- Series of questions asked at beginning of a program (pre-test) and end of a program (post-test)
- Widely used evaluation design in a traditional evaluation
- Strives to measure changes in program participant knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors



Logistical Challenges

Pre-Post Survey Use

- Comfort level at “pre-test” stage
 - Sensitivity of information gathered
- Pre- and Post- sample must be the same
 - Burden on program staff and participant
- Must match the pre- and post- scores on the individual level to measure change
 - Requires names or survey IDs – challenge to confidentiality



Threat to Validity

Pre-Post Survey Use

Response Shift Bias: A change in the participant's metric for answering questions from the pre to the post test due to a new understanding of the concept being taught.



Retrospective Pre-Test

Post- then Pre- Survey

- Implemented once in time (relatively easy)
- Asks about a particular topic “Then” (pre-test) and “Now” (post-test)
- Allows for participant reflection
- Measures participant perceived change due to program attendance
- Addresses response-shift bias



Retrospective Pre Test Example

Thanks, Arts Corps

Use the space below to reflect on how you are now compared to before you took this class. Start on the left to tell us about what is true for you **NOW**, then continue on to the right, thinking back to what was true for you **BEFORE** you took this class. Circle the best answer.

COMPLETE THE ENTIRE ROW BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

| | | true for me NOW | | | | true for me BEFORE this class | | | |
|----|---|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| | | NOT AT ALL, NEVER | SOMEWHAT, SOMETIMES | VERY MUCH, OFTEN | A LOT, ALMOST ALWAYS | NOT AT ALL, NEVER | SOMEWHAT, SOMETIMES | VERY MUCH, OFTEN | A LOT, ALMOST ALWAYS |
| 17 | I am a creative person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18 | I am a hard worker. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19 | I am hopeful about my future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20 | I am good at staying focused on my goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21 | I can do almost all the work in class if I don't give up. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22 | I can resist doing something when I know I shouldn't do it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23 | I can come up with new ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24 | I can calm myself down when I am excited or upset. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25 | I believe I can learn to be a good dancer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26 | I believe how smart I am is something I can change. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Youth Development Executives of King County

Working together to advance the youth development field



Threats to Validity

Retrospective Post then Pre

- Recall
- Social desirability
- Effort justification
- Cognitive dissonance
- Tends to overestimate program effect
- Not as rigorous as matched pre- post-



Common Survey Item Pitfalls

- Ambiguous or unclear questions
- Avoid double negatives
- Double-barreled questions
- Loaded or leading questions
- Sensitive topics



YDEKC'S Skills and Dispositions Framework

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVES
OF KING COUNTY



SKILLS & DISPOSITIONS

THAT SUPPORT YOUTH SUCCESS IN SCHOOL



Youth Development Executives of King County &

The Road Map Project

SKILLS & DISPOSITIONS THAT SUPPORT YOUTH SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

| | OUTCOME DOMAINS | SKILLS & DISPOSITIONS |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Motivation & Engagement | FUTURE ORIENTATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal management: Setting short- and long-term goals and monitoring progress toward their achievement • Hope and optimism: Positive beliefs regarding one's future potential, goals and choices |
| | SELF MANAGEMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional regulation: Assessing and regulating one's feelings and emotions • Self-discipline: Ability to focus on a task in spite of distractions |
| | PERSEVERANCE / GRIT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perseverance: Tendency to persist in spite of obstacles or setbacks • Goal orientation: Commitment to the achievement of goals over time |
| | SELF EFFICACY & MINDSETS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Efficacy: Belief in one's own capabilities and capacity to learn and succeed • Growth mindset: Belief that intelligence and ability can increase through effort • Mastery orientation: Enjoyment of learning and desire to master new skills; willingness to try new things • Relevance: Belief that work done in school is related to personal aspirations |
| | BELONGING & IDENTITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging: Perception of acceptance and support in a learning community • Relationship building: Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with adults and peers in school setting • Personal identity: Understanding and valuing one's own culture and beliefs • Social capital: Recognizing and using family, school, and community resources; asking for help when needed |
| 21st Century Skills | INTERPERSONAL SKILLS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration: Negotiating and compromising when working in groups or pairs • Communication: Communicating effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences • Cultural competence: Ability to work effectively with people from different backgrounds; appreciation of diversity • Conflict resolution: Preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict • Compassion: Taking the perspective of and empathizing with others |
| | CREATIVITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideation: Using a wide range of idea creation techniques • Imagination: Using intellectual inventiveness to generate, discover, and restructure ideas or imagine alternatives • Innovation implementation: Acting on creative ideas to make a new contribution |
| | CRITICAL THINKING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metacognition: Ability to reflect on one's assumptions and thinking for the purposes of deeper understanding and self-evaluation. • Problem solving: Generating and selecting from alternatives based on desired outcomes • Analytical thinking: Separating problems or issues into their component parts |

YDEKC's Skills and Beliefs Surveys

Student Enrollment

V2.0 ENGLISH VERSION

This survey is confidential

Read each of the

I work hard at school

It's important to me that

I concentrate on my school

I feel proud of my school

I am a responsible student

I am treated with as much

I complete my schoolwork

In my school, I feel that

I take responsibility for

Youth Skills and Beliefs Survey Version 2.0

Instructions: The purpose of this survey is to find out more about youth and programs in Washington State. Our goal is to help make out-of-school time programs better for you and other young people. This survey should take about 20 Minutes. Below are questions that ask about you and some of the things you think and feel about yourself and your afterschool program. This is not a test. There are no "wrong" answers. Please choose the answer that is most true or most like you.

This survey is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any of the questions if you don't want to, and you can stop doing this survey at any time. This survey does not have your name on it, so everything you write is confidential and anonymous to the extent permitted by law, which means that no one (not your parents, teachers, school staff or other students) will be allowed to know how you answer these questions.

1. Young people might describe themselves in many ways. We have listed some things youth might say or think about themselves. For each one, pick the answer that is most true for you.

| | <i>Not at all true</i> | <i>A little true</i> | <i>Somewhat True</i> | <i>Mostly true</i> | <i>Completely True</i> |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Doing well in school is an important part of who I am | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Getting a college education is important to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I finish whatever I begin | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have goals in my life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I can discuss a problem with a friend without making it worse | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

