Introduction

Educators have grown increasingly interested in measures of personal qualities other than cognitive ability—including self-control, grit, growth mindset, gratitude, purpose, emotional intelligence, and other beneficial personal qualities—that lead to student success. These social and emotional learning (SEL) qualities range from behaviors (e.g., self-control) and beliefs (e.g., about the nature of intelligence) to skills (e.g., interpersonal communication and conflict resolution). This memo outlines approaches to SEL measurement in order to serve as a baseline for further discussion and research that are needed to understand the distinct advantages, limitations, and appropriate uses of existing and yet-to-be-developed measures.

Common Approaches to Measuring SEL?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can we measure?</th>
<th>Beliefs (Motivational factors)</th>
<th>Skills (Self-regulation factors)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Can I get smarter?</td>
<td>- Cognitive: Handling impulses, sustaining attention</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Do my teachers and peers respect me?</td>
<td>- Emotional: Managing emotions and behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Is there value in what I'm being asked to do?</td>
<td>- Social: Interacting effectively with others</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>How can we measure?</th>
<th>Student Status</th>
<th>School Conditions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-report questionnaires</td>
<td>...on these beliefs and skills</td>
<td>...that foster these beliefs and skills</td>
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<td>- Survey tools completed by students or by adults (e.g. teachers or parents) about students</td>
<td>Performance tasks</td>
<td>Student perception surveys</td>
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<td>Vast majority of current measures</td>
<td>- Controlled situations designed for teachers to observe meaningful differences in certain student behaviors</td>
<td>- School climate surveys assessing safety, student engagement, and other environmental factors</td>
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<tr>
<td>See example below</td>
<td>See example below</td>
<td>- Student and/or teacher designed surveys about their classroom</td>
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Analysis of school resources and other school climate measures |
- Resource ratios (e.g. students per counselor) |
- Access to quality instruction |
- Presence of evidence-based programs and curricula |
- Incidents (e.g., discipline, bullying and harassment)
Examples:

1. Sample Student Self-Report
   Non-Cognitive Questionnaire Items

   **GROWTH MINDSET:** “You have a certain amount of intelligence and you really can't do much to change it.”
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Mostly Agree
   - [ ] Mostly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree

   **GRIT:** “I have achieved a goal that took years of work.”
   - [ ] Very much like me
   - [ ] Mostly like me
   - [ ] Somewhat like me
   - [ ] Not much like me
   - [ ] Not like me at all

   Note: *The extent to which students disagree with fixed mindset statements like this is how researchers measure growth mindset beliefs.

2. Sample Non-Cognitive Performance Task

   The most famous example of a performance task in psychology is Dr. Walter Mischel's “Marshmallow Test”, which assesses delayed gratification. In this task, preschoolers are presented with a smaller pile of treats and a larger pile of treats. The children are then told that they can have the smaller pile now, or they can receive the larger pile if they wait for the experimenter to come back in the room. The amount of time children can wait has been found to predict later life outcomes.

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