How Do We Measure SEL?

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Steps to Evaluating Current Report Card Comments in Your School

STEP #1

Using the CASEL definitions and/or character definitions provided, examine the report card comments currently in use in your school. When comments seem to fit into the CASEL 5 or 7 Character Strengths (see next two pages), list them within the category represented. When comments do not fit, write them down on a separate list. After all are listed, see what general categories these comments may represent, and list them.

Goal

Determine the extent to which SEL and character are represented by current report card comments.

Guiding Questions

Which domains are represented? Which still need to be addressed?

STEP #2

Rank current comments based on their clarity and specificity. Those that receive the highest ranking should be easily interpretable and clear to teachers, parents, and students. Those with the lowest ranking should be ambiguous, unclear, or refer to multiple behaviors or skills within the same comment. Remember, the goal of comments is to provide feedback on specific behaviors so that teachers, parents, and students can be aligned in interpreting, understanding, and promoting behaviors that best support learning and achievement.

Goal

Identify the extent to which comments currently in use are providing clear feedback on specific
behaviors.

Guiding Questions

Which comments are most effective in providing specific feedback? Do these comments address the most essential student behaviors? (Consider both experiences in your school as emphasized in Exercise #3 and the research support ing SEL and character.) Which comments are the least specific and, thus, most likely to need revision?

STEP #3

Rank comments currently being utilized in your school by perceived relevance to the behaviors that students demonstrate most often.

Goal

Identify to what extent comments provide an opportunity to communicate on the behaviors that occur most often in your school.

Guiding Questions

Are the behaviors that occur most often represented? If not, would it be appropriate to include these behaviors in a future comment system? If you also completed Step #1, which of the comments relevant to SEL or character are ranked highest and lowest? How would SEL or character domains and skills not represented rank in terms of relevance to student behaviors?

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Character Strengths & Behavioral Indicators

ZEST

Approaching life with excitement and energy; feeling alive and activated

Example Indicators:
Actively participates; shows enthusiasm; invigorates others

SELF CONTROL

Regulating what one feels and does; being self-disciplined

Example Indicators:
Comes to class prepared; pays attention and resists distractions; remains calm even when criticized or otherwise provoked; keeps temper in check

GRATITUDE

Being aware of and thankful for opportunities that one has and for good things to happen

Example Indicators:
Recognizes what others have done; shows appreciation for others; appreciates and/or shows appreciation for his/her opportunities

CURIOSITY

Taking an interest in experience and learning new things for its own sake; finding things fascinating

Example Indicators:
Is eager to explore new things; asks and answers questions to deepen understanding; actively listens to others; asks appropriate, probing questions

OPTIMISM

Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it

Example Indicators:
Gets over frustrations and setbacks quickly; believes that effort will improve his or her future; can articulate positive future aspirations and connect current actions to those aspirations

GRIT

Finishing what one starts; completing something despite obstacles; a combination of persistence and resilience

Example Indicators:
Finishes whatever he or she begins; tries very hard even after experiencing failure; works independently with focus, despite distractions

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Being aware of motives and feelings of other people and oneself; ability to reason within large and small groups

Example Indicators:
Able to find solutions during conflicts with others; demonstrates respect for feelings of others; knows when and how to include others

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The CASEL 5: Definitions & Skills Examples

Self-Awareness

Accurately assessing one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths

Maintaining a well grounded sense of self confidence

Self-Management

Regulating one's emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in addressing challenges

Expressing emotions appropriately

Setting and monitoring progress toward personal and academic goals

Social Awareness

Being able to take the perspective of and empathize with others

Recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences

Recognizing and making best use of family, school, and community resources

Relationship Skills

Establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation

Resisting inappropriate social pressure

Preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict

Seeking help when needed

Responsible Decision Making

Making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions

Applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations

Contributing to the well-being of one's school and community

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