ALL IT TAKES.

SEL Connections to 5 Muscles

Metrics of Success

Metrics of Success for the 5 muscles: long version

Audience: Educators and Educational Forums which support young people
Goal: To market for more clients, reach, funding, to establish credibility, to be seen as a progressive expert in the field

Method: Provide statistical, anecdotal, logical, and both quantitative and qualitative examples of success and predicted outcomes.

Goals within the goal:
1.To provide evidentiary support for the use of the 5 muscles
2. To predict potentially positive outcomes when muscles are put into standard practices in schools/programs
3. To illustrate how SEL can easily be woven in relevant ways into educational curriculum and should not be seen as a stand-alone
4. To debunk SEL as something contentious in the educational marketplace
5. To provide basic framework and examples of how, when, and where the muscles may be utilized

SEL may be a relatively new and shifting educational. Model, yet its fundamentals are skills which, as a global culture in varying ways, have been instilled in our children throughout history. We want our young people to be healthy and happy and to grow into adults who can manage their lives and their relationships with other people positively and productively.

So how are our 5 muscles supported by and supportive of the SEL framework, and how can they be of service in your school, community, or organization? (Conversational)

We believe that the relationship built and nurtured between teacher and student (or any youth influencer; family member, counselor, coach, etc.) is foundational to academic, social, and emotional growth and is a significant motivator of student engagement and positive development. Our young people's time in isolation and online learning during the pandemic, and the many correlative negative ramifications and outcomes help to illustrate the tremendous value of strong relationship building.

To acknowledge a concern of some, let's address the evidence based nature of tracking SEL practices and their corresponding outcomes. One of the national leaders in the SEL movement is CASEL, Collaboration SEL. Founded in 1994, it currently operates as a powerful network of researchers, educators, practitioners, and youth advocates across the country who are passionately committed to bringing SEL to all students. With their reach, they have compiled the most data of any organization or governing body. If you are an evidence driven person, there are a variety of documented statistics on their page to support their findings.

And…we all know that everything cannot be captured in statistics, especially when it comes to humans dynamics and outcomes. The meta-analyses provided by CASEL and others are relatively new, and although it may take a longer arc of study for more people to buy into the "evidence" demonstrated in outcomes, there are already clear emerging trends. These new developments, many of which are being tracked such as increase in youth anxiety disorders, have corresponding projectories. This is what we call predicted trajectories.

We have done this work collectively for three decades and can say, both anecdotally and with the support of small sample sizes, statistics show that relationship building and these particular 5 muscles have clear and positive outcomes. We want you to believe this just as deeply. Therefore, in addition to providing information and feedback from educational programs, including our own, we will look to two industries who have tracked evidence and research of these practices for far longer and can be compared to our educational system.

Schools are essentially businesses, and our young people are our clients. In the world of business leadership and job performance, as well as in the fields of psychiatry and personal development, there is a tremendous amount of research which supports the adoption of these same practices, our five muscles. Logic can lead you to see that the practices that work best to foster healthy relationships and work environments would apply to learning environments and students too.

Let's lay out the 5 muscles and show how each can support positive development for our young people, just as they have been proven to do for adults. Presumably it can be agreed upon that it is good for students to develop positive social and emotional skills, and that schools play a large role in their development, as a typical U.S. student spends close to 9,000 hours over nine years to complete primary and lower secondary education. That is a lot of time; how can it be used most effectively for our young people to set them up for successful lives?

QTiP ~ Quit Taking It Personal

Both the fields of medicine and neuroscience can clearly show us how taking it personally is bad for our health, besides being emotionally and strategically counterproductive. In the short term, it elevates our heart rate, puts our body into fight or flight mode, and can result in retaliatory behaviors. This generally escalates the situation and can be increasingly emotionally distressing. All of these activate our stress response, and while chronic activation of this survival mechanism significantly impairs health, even small doses can take their toll. Taking things personally can lead to symptoms of anxiety, low mood and depression and is generally counterproductive. It can interfere with how you interact with others and result in social withdrawal, escape, or avoiding people all together. can magnify and prolong negative moods and interfere with problem-solving, impact levels of people's anxiety and depression.

When we take things personally, we are seeing through a lens that does not encompass the other person's experience and is fraught with assumptions. When we are able to move from being reactionary to being logical about how to most effectively navigate interactions with our students, we give both them and ourselves the pause that can instantly defuse any perceived tension. It is also important here to consider transference and countertransference https://www.therapistdevelopmentcenter.com/blog/transference-vs-countertransference-whats-the-big-deal/

In addition to the ways that not taking things personally can help us work most effectively, and maintain an open and positive attitude towards our students, it also models for them to do the same.

In the 1960s Thomas Gordon highlighted the concept of an "I" statement as a tool to replace "you" statements that usually put the blame and attribute the issue to the listener. I-Statements have evidentiary support for their success in many personal and business settings. "Ultimately I-messages help create more opportunities for the resolution of conflict by creating more opportunities for constructive dialogue about the true sources of conflict." ~ Boston University

A psychological principle termed the *norm of reciprocity* describes a basic human tendency to match the behavior and communication style of one's partner during social interaction (Park & Antonioni, 2007). During conflict, a hostile approach typically produces hostility in return from the other person, potentially creating a negative downward spiral (Bowen, Winczewski & Collins, 2016; Park & Antonioni, 2007; Pike & Sillars, 1985; Wiebe & Zhang, 2017)

When you are in conflict, you may have difficulty clearly articulating your situation without escalating the conflict. Using an "I" message (also known as an "assertiveness statement") can help you state your concerns, feelings, and needs in a manner that is easier for the listener to hear and understand

An "I-statement" focuses on your own feelings and experiences. It does not focus on your perspective of what the other person has done or failed to do. It is the difference, for example, between saying, "I feel that I am not being permitted to participate in office projects to the extent that others are" and "You always let Marge work on office projects, but you never ask me if I'm interested."

If you can express your experience in a way that does not attack, criticize, or blame others, you are less likely to provoke defensiveness and hostility which tends to escalate conflicts, or have the other person shut-down or tune you out which tends to stifle communication.

What an "I" Message does

An "I" message can help reduce blaming, accusations, and defensiveness.

An "I" message can help you communicate your concerns, feelings, and needs without blaming others or sounding threatening. It helps you get your point across without causing the listener to shut down.

An "I" message says "this is how it looks from my side of things."

"You are lazy. You expect me to give you a passing grade when you make no effort."
"You are disruptive. You are never paying attention and make it hard for others to do so."
"You don't ask questions, and then perform poorly. How can I help you if I don't know what's wrong?."

Sound familiar?

Arguments about homework, behavior, and attitude are nothing new. In fact, for many educators and their students, they may create frequent points of contention. That's exactly why "I-statements" are so important. Choosing the right words during an argument can be the difference between resolving your issues or making them worse. When you change your words, you change your life, and nowhere is this more true than in relationships, of all kinds.

Even when you have the best of intentions, what you say can escalate an exchange and damage a relationship, consequently reducing or eliminating trust. And one of the most common mistakes often made is the use of "you-statements" instead of using sentences that are framed as "I-feel statements."

WHAT IS A "YOU-STATEMENT"?

"You-statements," such as those listed above, are phrases that begin with the pronoun "you" and imply that the listener is responsible for something. They show no ownership of emotions, but rather blame, accuse and assume the receiver. This type

of statement is more likely to make your partner feel defensive and resentful, and he or she will be less likely to want to make peace.

WHAT IS AN "I-STATEMENT"?

An "I-statement," on the other hand, forces us to take responsibility for what we are thinking and feeling and prevents us from blaming our partners. When using "I-statements," we can still be assertive, but find a less hostile, more compassionate way to communicate. Tone of voice – vocal inflection, volume and pitch – is an important piece of communication puzzle that we often forget about. "I-feel statements" help prevent miscommunication that can happen when one partner takes an accusatory tone of voice.

THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND "YOU-STATEMENTS" AND "I-STATEMENTS"

Studies have shown that "I-statements" reduce hostility and defensiveness and that "you-statements" can provoke anger. Today it's a commonly accepted fact that the use of "I-statements" in relationships and even at work results in better communication. But why?

"You-statements" make your partner feel that you are punishing them. When people feel attacked, they naturally become defensive. It's hard-wired into our DNA. By pointing out what they've done wrong or how they've made you feel upset, sad or angry, you're either trying to make them feel as bad as you feel or you're trying to make them change. Neither is a part of creating a healthy relationship. Rather than inviting a productive response from your partner, you're inviting anger.

An "I-statement," on the other hand, shows personal accountability. It states that even though your partner is not acting or speaking in the way you'd prefer, you are not blaming him or her for how you feel. When using "I-statements," you take responsibility for the part you played in the disagreement and display the openness for deep listening and resolution. https://www.tonyrobbins.com/love-relationships/words-matter-you-vs-i/

When a person feels that they are being blamed—whether rightly or wrongly—it's common that they respond with defensiveness. "I" statements are a simple way of speaking that will help your clients avoid this trap by reducing feelings of blame. A

good "I" statement takes responsibility for one's own feelings, while tactfully describing a problem https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/i-statements

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5961625/#ref-10 ~ all great and packed with statistics and links!

Choosing the right words during an argument can be the difference between resolving your issues or making them worse. Make sure you communicate clearly. Avoid "you" statements. Switch to "we" and neutral language, especially when discussing difficult subjects. Instead of saying "you have a problem," try "what can we do together to improve/resolve, etc." In the spirit of clarity, it's better to explain yourself a little more than to economize. You can also preemptively address the person's possible reactions. "I know this may sound critical, and I am sorry. I value you and what you to contribute…" Start your explanations with "from my perspective" or "the way I understand it…" to avoid sounding accusatory.

If it sounds like you have to think ahead of how to express your thoughts, requests, and desires to someone taking things personally, you are correct. Yes, it is a lot of work! But it is less work than having a full-blown argument or escalate a situation to the point of no return. Consider the challenge a growth opportunity. Take an effective communication class or read up on it and grow your communication skills. It will help you in other situations too. ~ Valentina Petrova

Asking vs. Telling is incredibly effective in relationships of all kinds. We all have experienced the different feelings of being told by a boss, colleague, etc. what to do or being asked to do something. As a culture, we typically frame and reward the models of "Do" and "Tell". We value task accomplishment more than relationship building. Yet anyone who is in relationship with young people knows that they generally follow your guidance more when they have a positive relationship with you, particularly as they grow older. Effective asking can enhance your credibility in terms of relationship building, as you are genuinely curious about young people's behaviors and choices and how to guide them strategically. Effective asking can make the other person feel comfortable and can disarm any defensiveness which might arise if they were ordered to do something instead, even if the same request is being couched in a question. Effective asking can reveal what is important to the young person so that you can see what to leverage most productively. Effective asking can cause a young person to think about what you want them to think about. You can steer the conversation, even when you are not the one doing most of the talking. You control the pace and direction and recalibrate when needed. You ask the questions in ways that leads the exchanges, while still valuing the

input of others, which is what everyone needs to feel more willing to learn, shift, and agree/acquiesce.

Storytelling is one of the most powerful and effective ways to deliver a message. It is one of the first ways we are taught how to listen and learn as a human. Storytelling is used in many aspects of our life from bedtime stories to a grandparent's tale around the dinner table, and of course as messaging tools in elementary school up through college. Storytelling is a creative and effective way for material to reach an audience. And the impact of storytelling can stretch far beyond the original walls in which it was shared.

Why Do We Tell Stories?
Whether in caves or in cities, storytelling remains the most innate and important form of communication. All of us tell stories. The story of your day, the story of your life, workplace gossip, the horrors on the news. Our brains are hard-wired to think and express in terms of a beginning, middle and end. It's how we understand the world.Storytelling is the oldest form of teaching. It bonded the early human communities, giving children the answers to the biggest questions of creation, life, and the afterlife. Stories define us, shape us, control us, and make us. Not every human culture in the world is literate, but every single culture tells stories.

Jerome Bruner, one of the principal architects of the cognitive revolution,

Why do we tell stories to the young people in our lives? And are we maximizing the tool that stories can be, or are we telling them in in a way that creates greater distance between us. They can see what our underlying message is (be more appreciative, work harder, stop doing this or that, etc.) and will often be inclined to disregard any value that you were trying to impart with your story. When a story is being told, it usually has an underlying message or lesson that the speaker is trying to convey to its audience. Storytelling, when used well, can an excellent tool. It helps explain expectations, strengthen character and teach desired behavior within a particular setting. When a speaker turns information into a relatable story with a lesson attached, it's easier for the audience to connect to and learn from it. Stories make people want to listen, by taking an abstract theory and turning it into a story with an emotional plot. From a teaching perspective, sharing important information through a storyline will engage your students. It will also increase your chances of being not only heard but thoroughly understood. whether you fail or succeed, you still walk away from every situation with a story to tell that ends with a lesson you learned. When you inform your young people about something that they can relate to actual events, you are creating a mutual understanding that can deepen the lesson and improve its chances of retention and impact.

What to keep in mind

Once you decide to implement storytelling into your classroom or program, make sure to keep the following things in mind to ensure the highest level of impact for your students:

- The stories you tell should be short and to the point. This helps keep the audience's attention. If your story is too long then there's greater possibility that your audience will lose interest. So make it short, sweet, and to the point.
- The stories you tell should be easy to understand so the speaker's message doesn't get lost. If you use big words, or complicated storylines it will be easy for the listener to get confused and stop listening. So make it an easy and enjoyable listen.
- The stories you tell should spark emotion and be relatable for your audience. If a story is significant to you it will show in your delivery, and will then become significant to your audience as well. So make emotion a priority.
- The stories you tell should have a final lesson at the end that ties in your original message. If your initial thought is clear at the end of your story, then your audience will take away more from the experience. So make sure your message creates good follow through and takeaways.

A story doesn't have to be elaborate for it to be heard and remembered. It takes a good plot, a good lesson, and to be told in a way that its intended audience can hear the message, without defensiveness.

Storytelling is a powerful method of communication. It offers people the opportunity to connect to, relate to, or see the world from someone else's perspective. Stories provoke our emotions. They can make us laugh, cry, feel afraid, get angry, think, and dream. Following a character on a journey of exploration, empathizing with the character's problem, yearning for a solution, and reveling in the outcome helps to shape our mental state.

There are ways to bring storytelling into the classroom at any age level. Here are some suggestions:

#1- Share your own experiences with students: When students are having a hard time grasping a concept or are dealing with something emotional, share a story about your past and experiences as a young student. This allows the students to feel that you understand what they're going through and perhaps find some inspiration and answers to their own problems.

#2- Introduce a new topic through a story: Telling a story is a great icebreaker and a way to introduce a concept. It allows the student to relate better to the content and gets them interested before learning. It could also allow you to activate prior knowledge, which also assists students in learning new content.

Use a story to present a concept: Presenting a story can allow students to retain information in a more creative, memorable way. It can even provoke their interest in learning a new concept.

Walk the talk means simply to perform actions consistent with one's claims. It means putting your words into action—showing that you mean what you say by actively doing it yourself. It is a version of the everyday phrase 'practice what you preach'

Walking the talk--translating beliefs into behaviors--is the very essence of character and integrity for both individuals and organizations. The old adage reminds us that:
*People hear what we say, but see what we do...and seeing is believing.
*We judge ourselves by our intentions, but others judge us by our actions.
*Words are just words...unless you live by them. You have to Walk The Talk. The evidence presented is clear that walk-the-talk managers who provide their employees with more empowerment will increase their performance. To sum it up, today's employees want to see their leaders in action, leading by example. When our actions actively work against the things what we say (whether in direct conversation or through the creation or enforcement of company policies), we're going to be viewed as a problem boss and maybe even a toxic one. Leadership and management thinking and practice have drastically transformed over time.
We're seeing more than ever that, to fully motivate, engage, and bring out the best in people, unconventional bosses that "walk-the-talk" of leadership are instilling more human value at work and developing more human-centered workplacesfor competitive advantage. These innovative management practices that appeal to the hearts and minds of employees whatever generation, are actually common sense, but not common practice. Some of the reasons stated as to why this is important are that it helps show authenticity and it helps build trust in the leader.

when a leader's actions are out of step with what they are saying or demanding it opens opportunities for those below, in the chain of command, to ignore the direction, guidance, or instruction too. Which can result in people either working on different strategies or working against the strategies. People follow actions more than they do words, and if you don't do what you say should be done, then even more

people in the chain of command can undermine the direction, and people see that the directive is optional.

People follow actions much more than they do words.

Leaders are role models, and people model the behaviors of leaders, this means that if you want your teams, your employees to do something, then you need to be doing it too.

If you want young people to be mindful of their tone and its effects on others, then you must maintain a respectful tone too.

If you want young people to be solution-focused then you need to be solution-focused.

If you want young people to extend the benefit of the doubt to others, then you must do the same.

If you display a gap between what you say and what you do, you diminish the message that you are trying to send and in many cases with young people, damage your credibility.

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