Assessing Character Skills
Kate Auger-Campbell, Director of Outreach
At The Enrollment Management Association, we believe that admission practices of the past will not sustain independent schools of the future. Everyday, we serve enrollment leaders increasing their success through the best science, research, and training. Because when great schools enroll great students, everything is possible.
Why is Character at the Forefront of Education?
Measuring Character

Studies show:

• Character is important for success in school, work, and life. ¹

• Clearer linkages between noncognitive constructs and academic performance.²

Recent Headlines

Top 10 skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in 2020</th>
<th>in 2015</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Complex Problem Solving</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
<td>2. Coordinating with Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Creativity</td>
<td>3. People Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. People Management</td>
<td>4. Critical Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Coordinating with Others</td>
<td>5. Negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>6. Quality Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Judgment and Decision Making</td>
<td>7. Service Orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Everybody Loves them
No One Can Define Them
“Research shows that SEL can have a positive impact on school climate and promote a host of academic, social, and emotional benefits for students.”

**SEL Approaches**
- Explicit SEL Skills Instruction
- Integration with Academic Curriculum Areas
- Teacher Instructional Practices

**SEL Skill Acquisition:**
- Five Competence Areas
- Improved Attitudes about Self, Others, and Schools

**Positive Social Behavior**
- Fewer Conduct Problems
- Less Emotional Distress
- Academic Success
Both academic and non-academic factors are extremely important to parents.

- Develop and maintain a love of learning in your child: 97%
- To develop a strong moral character: 92%
- To provide an education that will challenge your child: 97%
- To support emotional and social development: 88%
Mastery Transcript Consortium

Mastery Transcript

Portfolio Evidence

Supported by
Activity
Simulated Interview

• Pair up with a person next to you

• One person should be interviewee and one should be interviewer

• The interviewer should ask the following (in order):
  1. What is your favorite type of cuisine? Why is it your favorite?
  2. If there was only one thing you could tell me about yourself, what would you tell me and why is it important that I know this about you?
  3. Tell me about a time you missed out on a good opportunity. Why did it happen and what did you do when you realized you missed it?
Debrief

**Interviewees:**

1. Which question was the easiest to answer? Most difficult?
2. Which question do you think would do the best job of differentiating you from other people?
3. Which question do you feel provided the most information about who you were as a person? Which provided the least information?
4. What do you think answers to each question suggest about you/your character?
Debrief

Interviewers:

1. Which do you feel provided the most information about who the interviewee was as a person?

2. In what ways would it help to have an assessment of character to supplement the interviewee’s responses? In what ways could it hurt?

3. Based on what you think each question is trying to gauge, which one do you think would be easiest to “answer” via a character tool like Snapshot?
The Snapshot: Research & Background
What is the Snapshot?

• Complement other pieces of the application, including cognitive test scores, interviews, grades, letters of recommendation, and other information

The Snapshot should . . .

• Provide a standardized tool for schools to assess character
• Promote a common language
• Serve NOT as a standalone piece or a one-size-fits-all tool
• Fit into your schools’ process
Our Collaborators

Aspen Country Day School
Assist Inc.
Cannon School
Castilleja School
Cate School
Chaminade College Preparatory School
Chapel Hill Chauncy Hall School
Choate Rosemary Hall
Colorado Rocky Mountain School
Community School
Concord Academy
Concordia International School Shanghai
Crescent School
Derryfield School
Epiphany School
Governors Academy
Greenhills School
Greenwich Country Day School
Groton School
Kamehameha Schools
Lakeside School
Marianapolis Preparatory School
Marist School
Mid-Pacific Institute
Middlesex School
New Canaan Country School
Newark Academy
NJ Seeds
Norfolk Academy
Overlake School
Philips Academy
Phillips Exeter Academy
Renbrook School
Rippowam Cisqua School
Riverdale Country School
Salisbury School
Southridge School
St. Mark’s School
Takaful Schools Programme
The Blue Ridge School
The Ethel Walker School
The Galloway School
The Grauer School
The Hun School
The Lawrenceville School
The Taft School
The Thacher School
The Westminster School (CT)
The Westminster Schools (GA)
The Wheeler School
The Winchendon School
The Woodlands Christian Academy
Trinity Midland School
University of Toronto Schools
Viewpoint School
Woods Academy
Woodward Academy
### How Did We Get to 8 Skills?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Tactfulness</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Gregariousness</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
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<td>Grit</td>
<td>Risk-taking</td>
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<td>Optimism</td>
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<td>Growth mindset</td>
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<td>Self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Locus of control</td>
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**Box Overlay:**
- Initiative
- Intellectual Curiosity
- Open Mindedness
- Resilience
- Responsibility
- Self Control
- Social Awareness
- Teamwork

**Skills:**
- Initiative
- Responsibility
- Intellectual Curiosity
- Self Control
- Open Mindedness
- Social Awareness
- Resilience
- Teamwork

**Other Skills:**
- Communication skills
- Maturity
- Critical thinking
- Teamwork
- Open-mindedness
- Initiative
- Metacognition
- Leadership
- Problem solving
- Introspectiveness
- Positive self-appraisal
- Sense of humor
- Social awareness
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Responsible thinking
- Time management
Global Workforce Preparation

National Research Council

Cognitive skills

Interpersonal skills

Intrapersonal skills
Interpersonal
- Teamwork
- Social Awareness

Intrapersonal
- Self Control
- Responsibility
- Resilience
- Initiative

Intellectual
- Intellectual Curiosity
- Open Mindedness
Rigorous Scientific Approach

Cognitive Labs (N ≈ 50)
• Spring & Fall 2015: At Riverdale Country School (NY), Kamehameha Schools (HI), Mid-Pacific Institute (HI), and The Lawrenceville School (NJ)

User Experience Testing (N ≈ 60)
• Spring 2017-now: Schools, Families, Students

Focus Groups (N ≈ 15)
• Summer 2017: Focus Groups at Andover

Pilot Testing (N ≈ 12,000)
• Spring 2015, Fall 2015, Fall/Winter 2016
Demographics - Snapshot Pilots and SSAT Test Takers

- Hispanic/Latino: 7% (Snapshot Pilots), 6% (SSAT Test Takers 2016-17)
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 31% (Snapshot Pilots), 23% (SSAT Test Takers 2016-17)
- Black: 13% (Snapshot Pilots), 9% (SSAT Test Takers 2016-17)
- Multiracial: 8% (Snapshot Pilots), 7% (SSAT Test Takers 2016-17)
- White: 44% (SSAT Test Takers 2016-17), 32% (Snapshot Pilots)
- Other: 10% (Snapshot Pilots), 6% (SSAT Test Takers 2016-17)
Is the Analysis Model Stable by...

- Participant type
- Grade
- Gender
- Ethnicity

Do there appear to be systematic (i.e., by-group) differences in the interpretation of items that cause students to respond differently?

NO!

Ultimately, does The Snapshot appear to measure the same constructs for every group?

YES!
Overview of the Tool
Character Skills

- Initiative
- Intellectual Curiosity
- Open-Mindedness
- Resilience
- Responsibility
- Self-Control
- Social Awareness
- Teamwork
Administration

• Online in a student’s home or other location of the student’s choice
• Untimed, yet most students took 20-30 minutes
• Completed in one sitting
• Admission offices are not permitted to administer The Snapshot
• Taken 1x per testing year
Are They Answering Honestly?

- Assessment Design
  - Snapshot Item types
  - Honesty statement (McCabe, D.L., & Trevino, L.K., 1993; The International Center for Academic Integrity)
  - Variant responding patterns

- Prior Research
  - Kaminski & Hemingway, 2009; Tippins, et al., 2006; Weiner & Morrison, 2009

- Cross Validation
  - Schools will corroborate results with other pieces of information in the file

- Self-representation
  - How the students see themselves
  - Student skills, not parent skills
Sample Question: Forced Choice

Instructions: Drag and drop the statement that describes you MOST accurately and the statement that describes you LEAST accurately.

I think things through before I act.
I handle stressful situations well.
I would rather work on a challenging assignment than an easy one.

Most like me

Least like me

19 Total Forced-Choice Questions
Sample Question: Situational Judgement

Instructions: Please rate the appropriateness of each possible response from 1 (not appropriate at all) to 4 (very appropriate). You may assign the same rating to more than one response.

Seth is taking an algebra test. As he is working a problem, he spots what he thinks is an error on the test: a negative sign seems to be missing. The teacher is walking around the classroom as the students work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Not Appropriate</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 Very Appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Raise his hand immediately and say, &quot;You made a mistake in this problem.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Walk over to the teacher and quietly ask whether there should be a negative sign in the problem.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Write a note next to the problem commenting that the teacher made a mistake, then work the problem the way it should be done.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Raise his hand, wait until the teacher walks over, and quietly ask whether there should be a negative sign in this problem.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Total Situational Judgement Questions
Reliability and Validity
Snapshot Reliability

• Indication of consistency

• Highest reliability you can achieve = 1.0

• Desired Reliability > .70

• Composite reliability ranged from .80-.91
Does the Snapshot measure what it says it measures?

Is the Snapshot related to a particular outcome?

Does the Snapshot cover all facets of a construct?

Does the Snapshot measure what it says it measures?
Expected Relationships

• Preliminary Analysis
• Relationships between Snapshot constructs and external criteria such as:
  • Degree aspirations
  • Truancy behavior
• In Progress
  • Leadership positions
  • Participation in extra curricular
  • Accomplishments in sports, arts and science
  • Classroom participation
Relationships with SSAT scores

• Expected relationships (e.g., intellectual curiosity) present

• However, none are of medium or large size

• Relationships are not large enough to suggest that academic ability is an indicator of performance on Snapshot
Results, Interpretation, and Use
Results Based on Norm Groups

• Students currently in grades 5-7 applying to grades 6-8
  Total middle level sample: 1,756

• Students currently in grades 8-11 applying to grades 9-12
  Total upper level sample: 3,748
Snapshot Fast Facts as of 4/12/2018

School Opt-Ins

- Total Number of School Opt-Ins: 503
Snapshot Fast Facts

- **Completed Assessments**
  - Number of Complete Snapshot Assessments: **15,496**
  - Middle-level Complete Assessments: **4,789**
  - Upper-level Complete Assessments: **10,701**

- **Results Released**
  - Number of Results Reports Released: **15,476**

- **Diversity of Sample**
  - Students from **86** countries
  - Students from all **50 states & Puerto Rico**
  - Students from **9** Canadian provinces

- **International vs. Domestic Snapshot Takers**
  - 77% are Domestic
  - 23% are International

  *Of the Snapshot Takers that are International:*
  - 57% are from Canada
  - 43% are from other countries
Family Report

The Character Skills Snapshot

Student name
Student, Sample

Family Address
1234 Main Street
Anytown, NJ 0888888 USA

Family phone #
555-555-5555

Family email
samplestudent@ssat.org

Gender
Male

Birth Date
Jan 01 2003

Date taken
Aug 01 2017

Current Grade
8

Sample's Character Skills Snapshot

- Open Mindedness
- Self-Control
- Teamwork
- Resilience
- Responsibility
- Social Awareness
- Initiative
- Intellectual Curiosity

Student’s Results:
Your student’s results are represented in order from emerging to demonstrating.
Results Report Interpretation

The results are based on a sample of 5,564 students who took the Snapshot from September 25 through 11:59 pm on December 10, 2017. To facilitate a fairer interpretation of results, we have divided the sample into middle level grades (students currently enrolled in grades 5-7 applying to grades 6-8) and upper level grades (students currently enrolled in grades 8-11 applying to grades 9-12). Keep this in mind when interpreting Snapshot results. The current comparison sample of middle level grades includes 1,786 students, while the comparison sample of upper level grades includes 3,748 students.

To determine which performance categories align with your child’s results, the categories have been divided into the following ranges:

- **Emerging**
  - The student’s result fell into the lowest 25% (0 to 25th percentile) of scores in the comparison sample.
- **Developing**
  - The student’s result fell into the middle 50% (above 25th to 75th percentile) of scores in the comparison sample.
- **Demonstrating**
  - The student’s results fell in the upper 25% (above 75th percentile) of scores in the comparison sample.

The descriptions below serve as a narrative complement. While they were derived from the literature, they are theoretical and may not apply to the current sample. The Enrollment Management Association is conducting ongoing research to collect empirical data and to better understand the characteristics of each category. EMA will be updating these descriptions over the next two years.

### Emerging

The student is starting to show signs of this skill. Note that emerging does not imply a student does not have any of this skill.

### Developing

The student displays the skill but is continuing to develop it.

### Demonstrating

The student displays a clear understanding and use of this skill. Note that demonstrating a skill does not imply that a student has mastered the skill. There is still room to grow.

This report is valid until July 30, 2018, at which point EMA will update the comparison group data for the next testing year using data accumulated from September 25, 2017 to July 30, 2018.

Prior to downloading results, schools must read and agree to a set of guidelines for the use of the Snapshot. In this document, schools understand the Snapshot is designed to provide additional information about an applicant as part of his/her admission file. The reports are to be used with other pieces of information in the file and not as a standalone tool. Finally, the Snapshot is meant to inform, not to replace, the judgement and experience of enrollment professionals.
Receiving Reports

Parents send The Snapshot results to schools using a process similar to SSAT reporting.

Snapshot reports will appear on a school’s Member Access Portal (MAP), just as SSAT reports do.

Results available 2 weeks following completion*

*Depending on the time of year
Talking to Families

- Opportunity for you to see how your child sees themselves
- Emerging is not a deficit, it is an opportunity
- Results are a snapshot in time, we would expect them to change
- Will not be used as a stand alone piece of the application
- SAO 3.0- parent recommendation
# Parent Portion of SAO 3.0

## Parent Statement

## Student Characteristics

Research shows that everyone has the 8 character skills below, in different amounts, at different times in their lives. Please select the category you think most reflects the level of skill when thinking about your child today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Emerging (Starting to show signs of this skill)</th>
<th>Developing (This skill is present and still developing)</th>
<th>Demonstrating (Clear understanding and use of this skill)</th>
<th>No Basis for Judgement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Curiosity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-Mindedness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Social-Awareness</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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Family Resources

www.ssat.org/snapshot

Live and Recorded Webinars
Registration information
Results release calendar
FAQs
What’s Next?
Research and Development

• Development Activities
  • Item Replenishment

• Research
  • Implementation and Use Studies
  • Predictive Validity Studies
  • Subgroups (International Students, SES, Students with Disabilities)
  • Family Focus Groups

• Continuous Feedback Loop
  • Surveys
  • School Visits
Registation Opens May 22
2018 Annual Conference San Diego - September 12-15

- Pre-Conference Workshops
- Admission Training Institute
- Admission Directors Institute
- Senior Professional Track
- Saturday Symposium:
  - Character Skills Snapshot
Thank You

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