

First Stage Children's Theatre Emotional Intelligence Evaluation



INTRODUCTION

In August of 2010, Northwestern Mutual Foundation sponsored an evaluation of a selected group of seven leading arts education organizations in the Milwaukee communities. These organizations were selected on the basis of their common mission to bring the arts to “at risk” Milwaukee youth.

Precious few quantitative measures have been identified to effectively evaluate the impacts associated with arts education programming. In fact, due in part to this fact, this year saw fatal cuts to arts education programming in Milwaukee’s public schools. This report, and the report of the combined impact of all seven organizations, is intended to help organizations and schools articulate the importance of arts education programming to funders, governmental agencies and other influential decision-makers.

The concept of emotional intelligence has become well known in business, psychological and educational realms in recent years. Fueled by Howard Gardner’s examination of “Multiple Intelligences” (1993) and Daniel Goleman’s groundbreaking book, “Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ” (1995), parents, schools, businesses and policy makers have been working to adapt these concepts in their teachings. Six Seconds¹ has developed and validated methodologies to measure emotional intelligence in children and young adults aged 7-21. Their methodology has been applied in this evaluation by Mary Reinders, Senior Researcher and Certified Six Seconds Evaluator.

This summary has been prepared specifically for First Stage Children’s Theater’s S.C.O.R.E. program. Their sample consists of 173 students ranging from 2nd grade to 6th grade from Milwaukee College Preparatory School. Milwaukee College Prep is a k-8 charter school serving Milwaukee since 1987. It is known as a school that brings alternative and creative approaches to developing the minds and characters of students traditionally considered “at-risk”. First Stage’s S.C.O.R.E. program, which integrates theater arts and literacy, is a perfect fit with the school’s mission and teaching approach. The S.C.O.R.E. program served Milwaukee College Prep students for 30 weeks, spanning from October 1, 2010 to May 16, 2011.

Previous evaluation findings have validated S.C.O.R.E.’s success in creating and reinforcing a classroom community – respectful of differing perspectives. While teaching valuable skills in reading, comprehension, acting, public speaking and technical aspects of language arts² – S.C.O.R.E. appeals to *and* unites traditional academic learners and active learners who are many times excluded from participation. Through the S.C.O.R.E. program, First Stage is also able to transfer its culture of acceptance and group learning to open minds and ignite interest among passive and active learners.

¹ Six Seconds is a global organization serving people, performance, and change in organizations as varied as schools, business, and the NBA. Established 1997, Six Seconds is the most extensive organization of its kind in the world, led by a team of professionals in 10 countries, and supporting practitioners in over 100 countries. Six Seconds offers transformational learning and development programs, scientifically validated assessments, and effective consulting processes all grounded in current neuroscience.

² S.C.O.R.E. evaluation findings revealed significant student advancement in: story comprehension, ability to identify story elements, critical thinking and problem solving skills, language and oratory skills, presentation/public speaking, group/team work, and multicultural perspectives.

METHODOLOGY

For this Emotional Intelligence evaluation, Milwaukee College Prep classroom and First Stage teachers administered the Six Seconds' SEI-YV survey test at the beginning and again at the end of the program. Pre-tests scores alone give First Stage a good sense of baseline emotional intelligence levels. Later, pre and post-test scores are also compared to understand S.C.O.R.E.'s unique impact in improving overall and various elements of emotional intelligence, as depicted in Table 1.

First Stage is no stranger to these methodologies. Previous evaluations of their Academy programs have shown significant growth in all three areas of emotional intelligence, including: **Know Yourself** (self-awareness), **Choose Yourself** (self-management) and **Give Yourself** (self-direction). First Stage has used evaluation findings to reinforce their commitment to growing life skills through stage skills.

This report also highlights S.C.O.R.E.'s ability to influence "Life Barometers." These are metrics created by Six Seconds to evaluate outcomes on: *Health, Relationship Quality, Self Efficacy, Personal Achievements, and Life Satisfaction*, as depicted in Table 2.

THE SIX SECONDS EQ MODEL

Pursuit	Competency	Definition
Know Yourself: Increasing self-awareness, recognizing patterns, and identifying feelings lets you understand what "makes you tick" and is a first step to growth. <i>Notice what you do</i>	EL: Enhance Emotional Literacy	learning to accurately identify and appropriately express feelings.
	RP: Recognize Patterns	consciously identifying our own habitual reactions
Choose Yourself: Intentionality. Building self-management and self-direction allows you to consciously redirect your thoughts, feelings, and actions (vs. reacting unconsciously). <i>Do what you mean</i>	CT: Apply Consequential Thinking	assessing the short and long term costs and benefits of our choices (emotionally as well as tactically)
	NE: Navigate Emotions	managing feelings to access the wisdom and energy they offer
	IM: Engage Intrinsic Motivation	gaining energy from personal values and commitments versus being driven by others
Give Yourself: Purpose. Aligning your daily choices with your values, combined with compassion, allows you to increase your wisdom and achieve your vision. <i>Do it for a reason</i>	EO: Exercise Optimism	taking a perspective of choice and opportunity
	IE: Increase Empathy	recognizing and appropriately responding to others emotions
	NG: Pursue Noble Goals	connecting your daily choices with your deep sense of purpose.

Table 1
Source: Six Seconds

Life Barometers

Categories	Definitions	Applications
Good Health	Eating nutritious foods, being active and feeling fit	Valuing a healthy lifestyle which leads to feeling energized physically and mentally
Relationship Quality	Feeling that you have a mutually supportive network to rely upon at all times	Actively participating in a social network in a variety of ways; being able to foster high self regard through constructive relations with others
Life Satisfaction	Feeling happy overall and finding joy in yourself, others, and life in general	Feeling content and well balanced. Being able to keep events and experiences in perspective, whether challenging or successful
Personal Achievement	Doing well in sports, studies, hobbies and volunteer activities, and completing tasks	Being diligent and conscientious; attaining successes, fulfilling goals; being able to consistently accomplish objectives from start to finish
Self Efficacy	Self confidence; doing things in moderation and feeling in charge of yourself	Delaying gratification, suspending indulgence, channeling personal delight, being able to resist or delay strong feelings, exercising restraint and controlling your temper

Table 2: Six Seconds

PROJECT

First Stage and Milwaukee College Prep pre-tested 173 students prior to the start of the 2010-2011 season. At program completion, 101 of these same students took the identical survey as a post-test. Analyses of these results are included herein.

SAMPLE OVERVIEW

Student Gender

As shown in the Student Gender pie chart [Figure 1], the sample of 173 students is nearly equally divided between male and female participants.

Student Age and Program Experience

During the 2010-2011 program season, students' ages ranged from 7 to 13 years (covering grades 2-6) and had varying degrees of prior experience and exposure to the S.C.O.R.E. program.

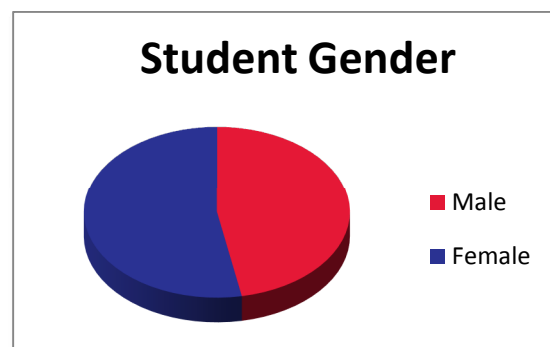


Figure 1

Student Ethnicity

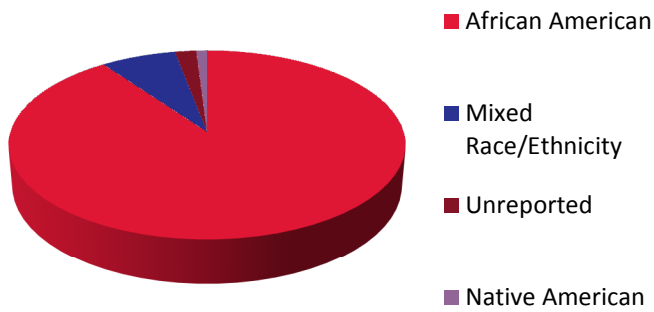


Figure 2

Student Ethnicity

Milwaukee College Prep serves a highly diverse array of students, many of whom come from financially disadvantaged homes. The ethnic spectrum of S.C.O.R.E. participants is illustrated in Figure 2. The majority of this sample is represented by African American youth.

PRE-TEST RESULTS

Results of the first survey reveal clustering around the center of the distribution. Half of the students scored on the low end of “average” or functional range with an average score of 109.

At the same time, a third of the students scored *below average* in the *vulnerable, challenge and emerging* categories [Figure 3]. Research shows that **students within the lower ranges may encounter serious obstacles in life - identifying, managing and acting on their emotions.** This can negatively impact many aspects of their lives, including the ability to cope and navigate through challenging situations and develop healthy relationships with others.

Digging deeper into the sub-categorical EQ scores, data show that all pre-testing students rated **below average in two of the eight areas of emotional intelligence.** Challenges were indicated in: ***Navigating Emotions (learning how to cope and manage strong feelings) and Increasing Empathy (caring about and being gentle with others’ feelings).*** Higher overall competency in the areas of self-knowledge/awareness indicates baseline strengths that can be leveraged to build strengths in lacking areas (e.g., teaching empathy by using stories and exercises and teach children to treat others in ways they like to be treated).

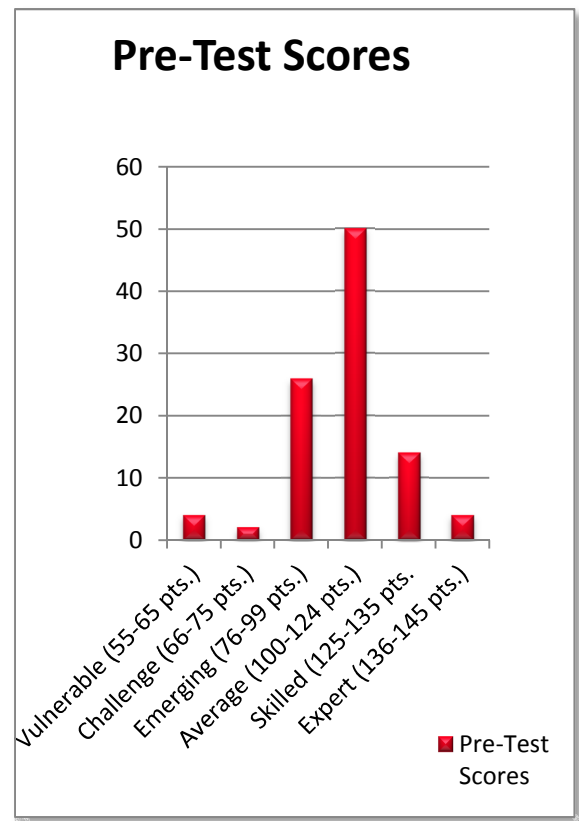


Figure 3

On measures of Life Barometers, **students rated above average on measures of Good Health (eating healthy foods, being active and feeling fit), Relationship Quality (feeling that one has a healthy network of friends and family to rely on), Life Satisfaction (feeling happy overall and finding joy in oneself and others), and Personal Achievement (doing well in sports, hobbies, studies and volunteer activities).** However, Self Efficacy (delaying instant gratification for longer- term reward, doing things in moderation, and thinking before acting) scores, as related to scores in categories above, were also in the below average range.

Overall higher marks in these areas illustrate a level of resiliency that has kept feelings about students' lives, their community, and overall health in the upper ranges. Artist Teachers use these insights to create curriculum that draws upon students' "big picture" strengths to address previously noted "situational" challenges with knowing, choosing, and acting in the best interest of oneself and their community.

Taken together, results indicate that while most students possess the basics to help them manage everyday situations – **they may lack critical day-to-day skills in managing (and channeling) complex emotions and feelings. They may also have low interpersonal awareness and empathy to help them manage issues that may arise at home, school and in life. In fact, results suggest that students who lack the ability to channel and draw wisdom from their own emotions and empathy for others, could easily perceive conflict and react as the "aggressor" in stressful situations. These weaknesses could lead to isolation in social situations and feelings of depression or anxiety for some children.** These data provide information that can help Artist Teachers to create programming that effectively examines and channels complex emotions and identifies "positive choices" in acting and interacting with others.

POST-TEST RESULTS

As previously mentioned, 101 Milwaukee College Prep students took *both* the pre and post-test surveys. This allowed researchers to test program impact on 58 percent of the original sample. This is a statistically valid sample, meaning the group is representative of S.C.O.R.E.'s service population.

Pre and post-test comparisons show that 37 students, more than a third, (37 percent) of the group of 101 made positive change between the start and completion of the S.C.O.R.E. program. Among those who made change, half made significant gains (14 or more points) and half made average gains (13 or fewer points) in their emotional intelligence levels.

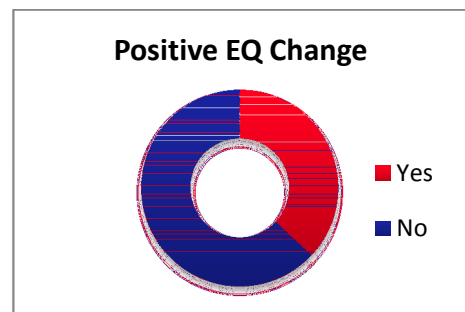


Figure 5 illustrates overall changes in the proportion of students who experienced overall growth, in each rating category between Academy program start (pre-testing) and finish (post-testing).

Students who experienced growth registered an average **11 point jump** in their overall emotional intelligence scores.

Data indicate that the number of students ranging in the “vulnerable,” and “challenge,” and “emerging” levels was dramatically reduced through participation in the program. In fact, even those who started the program with “low average” scores of 99-110 achieved notable point growth – propelling them into the upper ends of “average” and into the “skilled” and “expert” ranges. These point gains are significant, given that increases of 6-7 points are typically considered as such.

Overall gains made by this group point to **improved self-awareness and management, improved reasoning and self-guidance, and better teamwork and cooperation (with increased empathy and pursuit of noble goals).**

This level of growth is an outstanding marker of S.C.O.R.E.’s ability to stimulate growth in students who may “need” the program the most. In class, S.C.O.R.E.’s teachers would readily observe improvements that might include improved focus, a channeling of emotions and energy into positive outlets, fewer melt-downs, higher participation, better teamwork and improved conflict resolution skills.

Segmentation revealed no significant differences in gains based on students’ gender, age or ethnicity.

EQ Change between Pre and Post-Testing

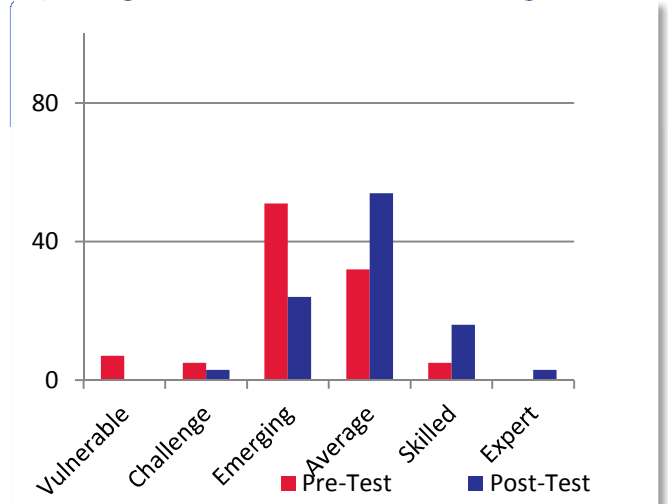


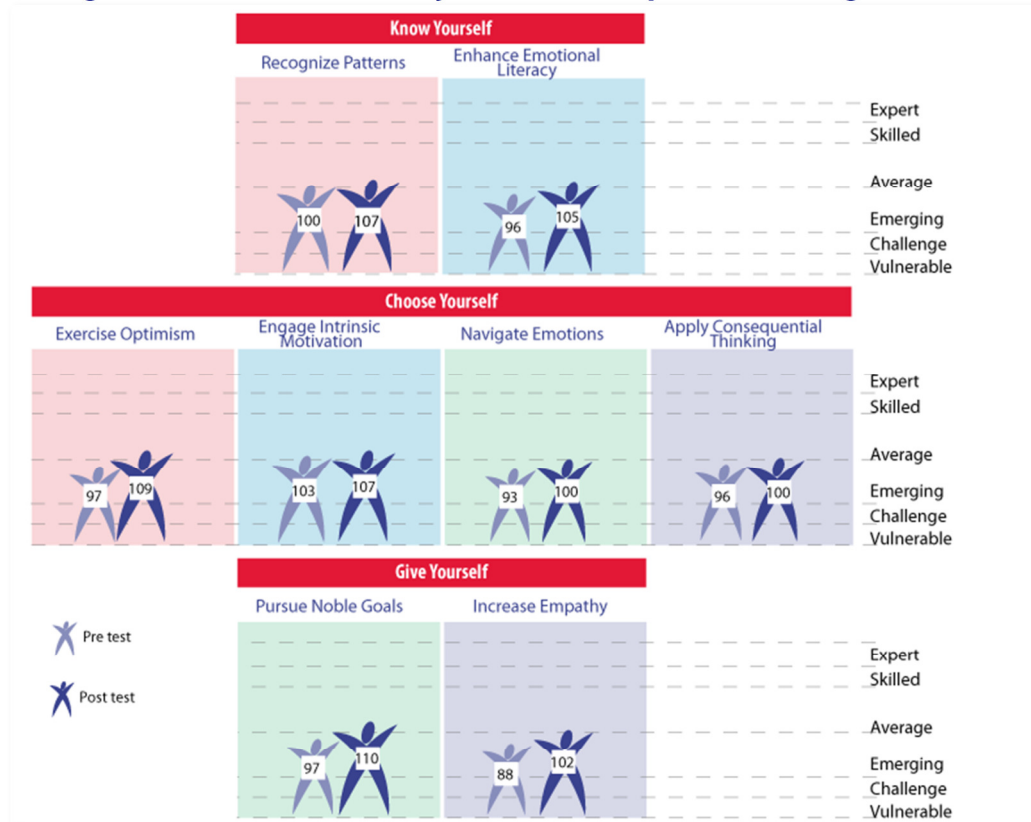
Figure 5

*Data reflect percent of students within each category between pre and post testing

AREAS OF GROWTH

Figure 6 depicts the average growth in emotional intelligence scores among students who experienced any level of positive change between pre and post testing.

Average Pre and Post Test Scores for EYM Who Experienced Change



Note: Samples include 37 students who experienced growth in overall emotional intelligence scores

Figure 6

Students who demonstrated positive growth in overall emotional intelligence levels also made notable gains *in every single category* measured through the emotional intelligence survey. This has been a consistent finding of First Stage programming since the start of emotional intelligence evaluation. Taken together, this is a strong case for bringing S.C.O.R.E. programming to more socio-economically disadvantaged students who already face critical cuts to arts programming in their schools.

Areas of improvement are defined and implications for growth are outlined in the following table:

Categories	Definitions	Applications
Know Yourself	Self Awareness	
Recognize Patterns	Seeing how one usually reacts in the same way, whether it's a habit that works for the individual (or not)	Identifying and appropriately expressing emotion; the ability to recognize and interpret multiple conflicting emotions
Enhance Emotional Literacy	Paying attention to and talking about your feelings	Improved ability to identify and manage emotions
Choose Yourself	Self Management	
Exercise Optimism	Believing that you have choices and feeling hopeful	Seeing opportunity and gaining confidence in affecting positive outcomes
Engage Intrinsic Motivation	Responding to and acting on your own feelings rather than those of others	Building motivation and drive to set and accomplish goals
Apply Consequential Thinking	Understanding how your feelings influence you to do things so that you are careful about your choices	Evaluating costs and benefits of choices before acting
Navigating Emotions	Learning how to handle feelings (especially strong ones)	Becoming skilled at transforming feelings by learning how to channel energy and emotion. Choosing appropriate feeling or moods, based on the context of the situation
Give Yourself	Self-Direction	
Pursue Noble Goals	Using your feelings to extend kindness and service to others	Aligning daily choices with principles and purpose. Looking beyond oneself to offer empathy and selfless acts in the service to others, including: cooperation, sharing, group activities and helping out without the expectation of personal benefit or reward
Increase Empathy	Being gentle with other people's feelings	Responding appropriately to others' feelings; being able to feel concern that comes from imagining the plight of another person.

Shaded areas show areas in the Give Yourself category are areas where S.C.O.R.E. students made significant improvement (13-14 points). Whether it be through story selection or individual activities, S.C.O.R.E. teachers were able to bolster student competency in the areas found lacking at the time of pre-testing. These results help make the case for using the S.C.O.R.E. program to improve teamwork, build empathy and target interpersonal issues in Milwaukee's schools (e.g., decrease bullying).

Six Seconds also measures “Life Barometers” as “big picture” components of emotional intelligence. In that, these competencies are ones that might be applied in everyday life. Figure 9 shows average scores in each of these five categories between pre and post testing.

Life Barometers



Figure 9

Data make clear that students made varying levels of progress across all life barometers. However, the **gains in self-efficacy, relationship quality, and satisfying life are the most notable**. Once again, these are hallmarks of First Stage programming that can be generalized across all of their programs. S.C.O.R.E.’s uniqueness comes from enhancing protective factors for children who may be struggling to fit in and find appropriate creative outlets for their feelings while increasing literacy and interests in reading.