

Connectedness contributes to **developmental assets** and is shaped by school climate, so how can we measure it?

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Measuring Adolescent Connectedness in the Schools:

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- School counselor in Boston (1990-1994); School Counseling Coordinator at UW-Madison & UTSA
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- Co-investigator on a longitudinal study of adolescent connectedness and school climate in a school in Massachusetts



Connectedness reflects the disposition to care for and become involved with others. In the adolescent literature, connectedness has been found to predict risk-taking, psychopathology, and various dimensions of psychological health and development, as well as extracurricular involvement and community service.

Yet, no validated measures of connectedness are available.

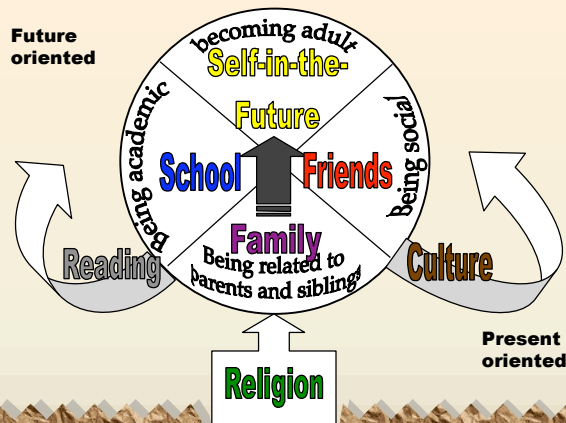
Developmental Assets Predictable from the Connectedness to School scales

| <i>School Connectedness:</i> | <i>Corresponding Asset:</i> | Does not have | Does Have asset |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <i>School:</i> Involved in and feels positively towards school | 24. Bonding to School (5) | 3.2 | 3.7 (72%) |
| <i>Teachers:</i> Cares for, wants the respect of, works to gain trust of | 14. Adult Role Models | 3.5 | 3.7 (83%) |
| <i>Reading:</i> Reads regularly, independently, and for fun | 25. Reading for Pleasure | 2.5 | 3.4 (88%) |
| <i>Peers:</i> Works cooperatively with and likes one's own peers | 15. Pos. Peer Influence | 3.0 | 3.4 (68%) |
| <i>Culturally different peers:</i> Interested in and values diversity | 34. Cultural Competence | 3.2 | 4.3 (85%) |

Why measure connectedness?

- **Connectedness** is one of the 5 "C"s targeted by youth development programs (Lerner, 2000).
- **Connectedness** predicts both developmental competencies and risk-taking behavior.
- **Connectedness** is, we think, the phenomenon underlying many of the SEARCH Institute's developmental assets.
- Today we describe a survey for measure connectedness and report research on the link between school climate, assets and connectedness.

Worlds of connectedness in childhood and adolescence



Conventional Connectedness



- **FAMILY**
 - Parents
 - Siblings
- **SCHOOL**
 - Teachers
 - School
 - FAITH
- **FAITH**
- **FUTURE SELF**
- **OTHER CULTURES**

Unconventional Connectedness

- **SELF (Self-esteem/Identity)**
- **FRIENDS**
- **NEIGHBORHOOD**
- **ROMANTIC PARTNER**



Importance of conventionality

Conventional connectedness predicts social competence, achievement, and involvement in extracurricular & volunteer organizations

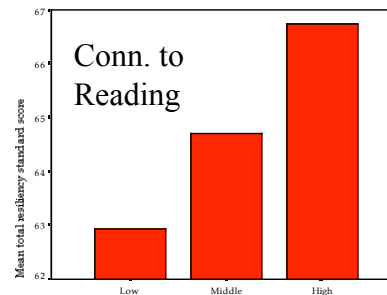
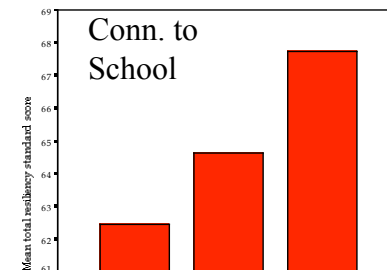
Kids high in **unconventional** connectedness but low in conventional connectedness are more likely to engage in delinquent acts.

Connected kids are resilient kids:

Resilience at low, medium, and high levels of conventional connectedness

(n = 123 Hispanic and Caucasian Delinquents)

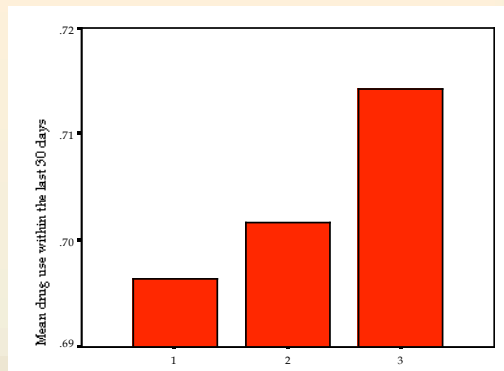
Resilience as (e.g., insight, morality, relationship strength, etc.) is greater for kids reporting more



Hard drug use (red bars) across 3 Levels of Connectedness to Friends (low, med, high)

(n = 123 Hispanic and Caucasian Delinquents)

- The stronger the **connectedness to friends** (among **delinquent youth**) the greater the use of hard drugs in the past 30 days.



Why counselors should be concerned about creating a culture of connectedness at school

- Show how connectedness and **self-developments** (e.g. Erikson's identity) are complimentary and are necessary for academic and later life success
- Discuss links between **attachment**, **social support**, **belonging**, and **connectedness** in adolescence

Connectedness as a source and product of self-developments

Connectedness Developments

Self Developments

High School

Adolescent
Connectedness

Identity

- 1 career exploration
- 2 achievement motivation
- 3 caring/altruism

Middle School

Pre-Adolescent
Connectedness

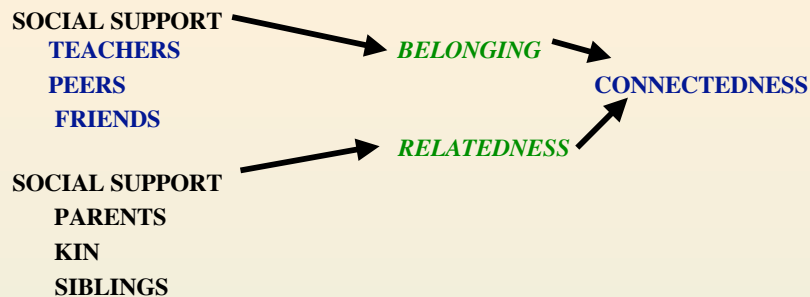
Industry

- 1 social skills
- 2 school achievement
- 3 self-esteem

Elementary School



Connectedness results from social support, which leads to feelings of relatedness and belonging



Belonging Leads to Connectedness

| | Teacher Support | Positive Peer Interactions |
|----------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Teachers | Very High | High |
| Peers | Very High | Very High |
| School | Very High | High |

Correlation: 0.00-0.19 = Low, 0.20-0.34 = Med, 0.35 = High, >.50 = Very High

Teacher activities and connectedness: Immediate and interpersonal vs. ideal and abstract

| | Consistency and Clarity of Rules and Expectations | Disciplinary Harshness (negative relationship!) | Instructional Innovation | Cultural Pluralism |
|----------|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Teachers | High | Med | Med | Low |
| Peers | Med | Low | Med | Low |
| School | Med | High | Med | Low |

Correlation: 0.00-0.19 = Low, 0.20-0.34 = Med, 0.35 = High, >.50 = Very High

The *Hemingway* measure, its application, scoring and use

- Two adolescent scales: 75 item 13 scale version; and a 55 item version without culture, religion, romantic partner, and each specific parent.
- A child/pre-adolescent scale: 10 scales, 40 item
- Administration time: 20 min. for 75 items; 15 min to 20 min. (at 3rd grade reading level) for 55 items
- Scored manually by taking average of items in each subscale (soon we will have an excel file to do this) or a school could use scantron forms and scanner.

USES IN SCHOOLS

- Measure school climate (grade wide surveys assess impact of school changes)
- Use it to identify youth at risk for under-achievement, substance use, violence
- Estimate areas of connectedness to address
- Use as a measure of the impact of school counseling groups or activities

Contact Information

- For new versions of the manual; for papers on the use or validity of the *Hemingway*; for versions in Spanish, Chinese, or French; for assistance in using the measure in counseling or program evaluation, contact:

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