

# VSA Wisconsin Emotional Intelligence Evaluation



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## 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 Seconds<sup>1</sup> has developed and validated methodologies to measure emotional

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<sup>1</sup> Six Seconds is a global organization serving people, performance and change in organizations as varied as schools, business, and the NBA. Established in 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.

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 VSA Wisconsin’s (VSA) artist residence programs, designed to serve individuals with moderate to severe disabilities. Throughout the 2010-2011 school year, VSA programs served nearly 100 students in Milwaukee area schools. Their 8 program hour sessions included: *music, dance, fiber arts and drawing.*

People with disabilities are considered a population at-risk because of the extra challenges they face. Recent Census and National Organization on Disability data indicate that students with disabilities are: *a.) twice as likely to leave high school before graduation; and b.) three times more likely to be affected by poverty than students who finish high school.*

VSA’s evaluation sample consists of 46 students ages 11-20 (in grades 6-12+). VSA’s programs are delivered onsite, at partnering Milwaukee-area schools. This sample includes students from Wauwatosa, Whitnall, Hamilton Sussex, Muskego, and Templeton. VSA’s partnerships are comprehensive, providing professional artist residents)to supplement arts education programs in schools in need of offerings specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students living with all types of cognitive and physical challenges. VSA works to offer students with disabilities an alternate means of self-expression. Their programs are uniquely designed to engage students in art-related activities that help build confidence and instill skills that can be used in the marketplace.

Previous evaluation findings have shown that VSA artist residence programs link with Wisconsin academic standards by:

1. Increasing access to opportunities for **creative expression and artistic growth**;
2. Increasing student **knowledge** and reinforce the **value of arts in education**;
3. Increasing **self-confidence** and **sense of accomplishment in students**;
4. **Strengthening relationships** between students with and without disabilities.

VSA programs also bring value to partnering schools. For example, classroom teachers are given opportunities to grow their skills by learning to use the arts to enhance academic programming and enrich the classroom experience.

SIX SECONDS EQ MODEL		
Pursuit	Competency	Definition
<b>Know Yourself:</b> 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
<b>Choose Yourself:</b> 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
<b>Give Yourself:</b> 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>	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

## Methodology

For this Emotional Intelligence evaluation, VSA administrators, classroom teachers, and Artist Residents worked together to administer the Six Seconds' SEI-YV survey test at the beginning and again at the end of the 2010-2011 season. This was no small task considering that many disabled students needed one-on-one assistance to read, interpret and respond to questions.

Pre-tests scores alone give VSA a good sense of baseline emotional intelligence levels. Later, pre and post test scores are also compared to understand VSA's unique impact in improving overall and various elements of emotional intelligence as depicted in Table 1.

The evaluation studies emotional intelligence in three broad categories (and their eight sub-categories), including: **Know Yourself** (self-awareness), **Choose Yourself** (self-management) and **Give Yourself** (self-direction).

This report also highlights VSA’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.*

### *Life Barometers*

Categories	Definitions	Applications
<b>Good Health</b>	Eating nutritious foods, being active and feeling fit	Valuing a healthy lifestyle which leads to feeling energized physically and mentally
<b>Relationship Quality</b>	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
<b>Life Satisfaction</b>	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
<b>Personal Achievement</b>	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
<b>Self Efficacy</b>	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

VSA pre-tested 46 students prior to the start of the 2010-2011 season. At program completion, 31 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 46 students consists of 60 percent males and 40 percent females. This provides sufficient gender balance for evaluation purposes.

### Student Gender

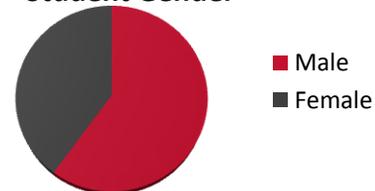


Figure 1

### *Student Age and Program Experience*

During the 2010-2011 program season, students’ ages ranged from 11 to 20 years (covering grades 6-12+). Each of the students had varying degrees of prior exposure to VSA programs in their schools. Most of the students in this sample had exposure to sessions in dance, fiber arts and drawing/painting.

## Student Ethnicity

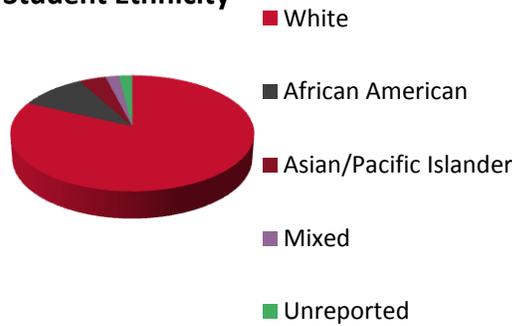


Figure 2

## Pre-Test Results

Results of the first (pre-test) survey reveal clustering around the center of the distribution. Forty percent of VSA's students scored on the lower end of "average" or functional range, with an average score of 110. At the same time, 42 percent of students scored below average, within the "challenge" to "emerging" categories. On the other end of the spectrum, 15 percent rank in the "skilled" and "expert" levels.

Segmentation revealed no differences in pre-test scores on the basis of gender, age/grade, race/ethnicity or school. However, a higher proportion of students from the Muskego school registered "below average" scores on pre-test.

From an evaluation standpoint, data suggest that the group of "challenge" to "emerging" students (along with students on the lower end of "average") stood to experience the most observable benefit to their emotional intelligence levels during the 2010-2011 season.

Digging deeper into the sub-categorical EQ scores, data show that all students scored below average on the category of **applying consequential thinking**. Deficiencies in this area would manifest in student struggles with being

## Student Ethnicity

VSA programs serve students with disabilities of all backgrounds. Figure 2 illustrates this year's sample. The majority of participants are White with representation of other ethnicities, including African American, Asian, and individuals who described themselves as having mixed ethnic heritage.

able to weigh options and distinguish "right from wrong" in their decision-making and actions.

## Pre-Test Scores

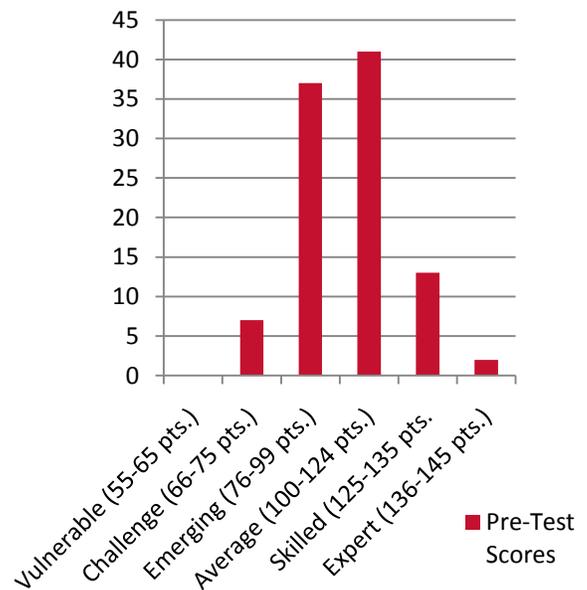


Figure 3

Segmentation of students with below average pre-test scores revealed below average scores

across the entire spectrum of emotional intelligence, including the areas of: **Emotional Literacy, Recognizing Patterns, Consequential Thinking, Navigating Emotions, Intrinsic Motivation, Exercising Optimism, Empathy, and Noble Goals**. Given these challenges, teachers would observe difficulties with self-management, low self confidence, poor decision-making and challenge in understanding the relationship between action and outcomes, and interpersonal issues that might result in conflict – or complete isolation. What’s more, these students may lack coping skills that are critical in facing and overcoming the natural challenges they may face as disabled youth.

Interestingly, though, the very same students scored above average on nearly all life barometer measures, as defined by Six Seconds, including: **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), Personal Achievement (Doing well in sports, hobbies, studies and volunteer activities)**. However, students rated **below average on measures of Self Efficacy (doing things in moderation and thinking before acting) scores**.

Overall high marks in these areas illustrate positive outcomes from a “big picture” perspective. In fact, these strengths can be leveraged to open minds and grow other elements of emotional intelligence (e.g., self-management and empathy). VSA teachers create curriculum that uses strengths to address previously noted “situational” challenges with knowing, choosing and acting in the best interest of oneself and their community.

## Post-Test Results

As previously mentioned, 31 VSA students took *both* the pre and post-test surveys. This allowed researchers to test program impact on two-thirds of the original sample. This is a representative sample of VSA’s service population.

Pre and post-test comparisons show that nearly half of this sample (15 students) of the group of 31 experienced positive growth in overall emotional intelligence levels. This growth can be directly attributed to VSA program exposure.

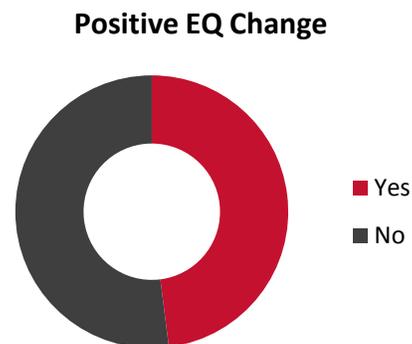


Figure 4

Among those who did experience change, exactly half made significant gains (14 or more points) and the remaining 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 program start (pre-testing) and finish (post-testing).

#### *EQ Change between Pre and Post-Testing*

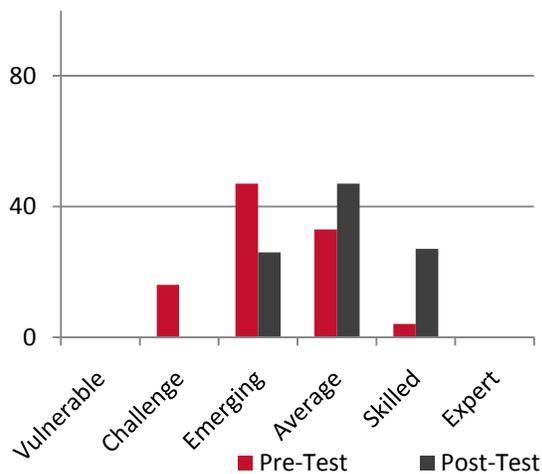


Figure 5

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

Students who experienced growth registered an average **10 point jump** in their overall emotional intelligence scores.

Data indicate that students who *started* the season with below- average emotional intelligence experienced the most significant rates of improvement. Data in Figure 5 illustrate notable reductions in the “challenge” to “emerging” categories with accompanying increases in students within the “average” and even “skilled” categories post program. Change data clearly show that students who benefitted most from VSA programming were the ones who needed it the most.

Even students who started in the “average” range of emotional intelligence experienced growth that propelled them to the upper levels of the same category or into the “skilled” ranges.

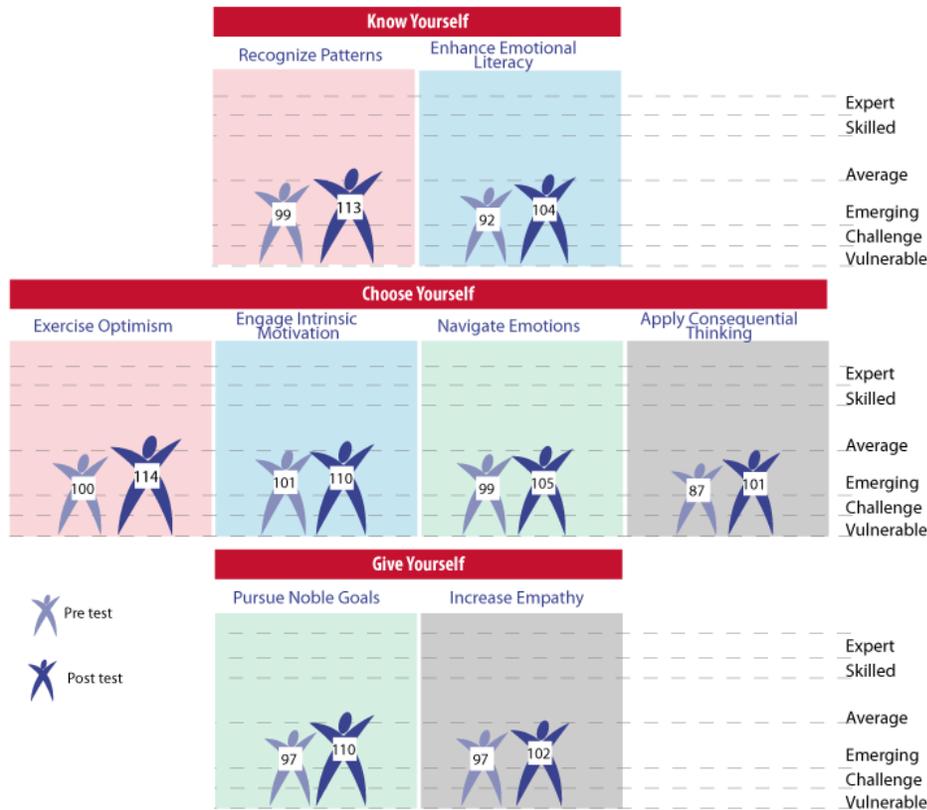
Overall gains made by this group point to observable improvement in *self-awareness and management, improved reasoning and self-guidanc, and better teamwork and cooperation (with increased empathy and pursuit of noble goals).*

**This level of growth is an outstanding marker of VSA’s ability to stimulate growth in: a.) the most challenged students; and b.) students who have been continually advancing by building on existing strengths.** By the end of arts sessions, VSA teachers would readily observe improvements that might include: **improved self-awareness and management, enhanced focus and interest in the arts, increased self-confidence, more optimistic outlooks, a positive channeling of emotions and energy, enhanced teamwork (and interest in working in groups) and higher participation rates.**

## 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 15 Students who experienced growth in overall emotional intelligence scores

Figure 6

Students who experienced positive EQ growth from exposure to VSA programs made significant gains *in every single category* measured through the emotional intelligence survey. Data confirm VSA's previous evaluation findings<sup>2</sup> and establish evidence for additional competencies. Results make a potent case for bringing VSA programs to students with disabilities throughout the state.

<sup>2</sup> Creative expression and artistic growth, knowledge and value of the arts in education, self-confidence and sense of accomplishment, and strengthening relationships between students with and without disabilities.

Specific areas of improvement are defined in greater depth in the table below.

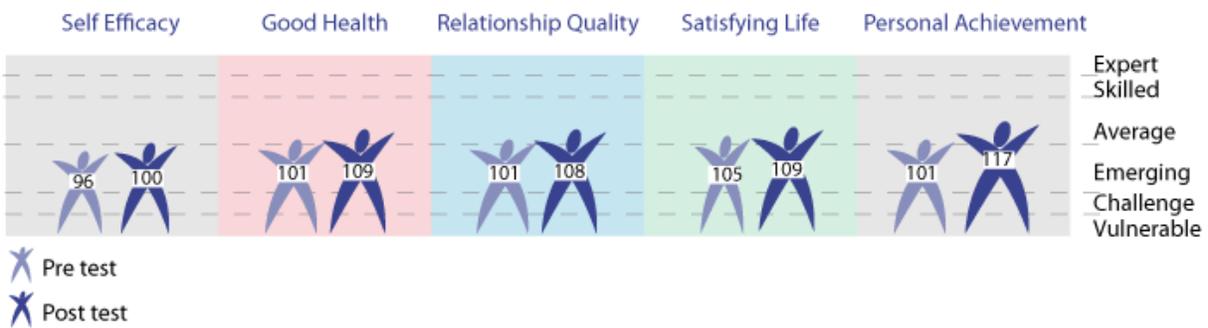
Categories	Definitions	Applications
<b>Know Yourself</b>	<b>Self Awareness</b>	
Recognize Patterns	Seeing how one usually reacts in the same way, whether it's a habit that works for the individual (or not)	Identifying and appropriately expressing emotion; the ability to recognize and interpret multiple conflicting emotions
Enhance Emotional Literacy	Paying attention to and talking about your feelings	Improved ability to identify and manage emotions
<b>Choose Yourself</b>	<b>Self Management</b>	
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
<b>Give Yourself</b>	<b>Self-Direction</b>	
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 illuminate areas where VSA participants made the most significant improvement (**13-14 points**) between program start and finish. Regardless of the focus of the subject matter, VSA artist

teachers both reinforced and transcended VSA’s previous evaluation findings<sup>3</sup>. Current findings illustrate that program participation enhanced student competency in critical areas, including *consequential thinking* – the area found most lacking at the time of pre-testing. Results make the case for expanding school partnerships with VSA to improve: ***self awareness, self-confidence, optimism, consequential (and critical) thinking, and teamwork***. These skills can help disabled students, short term: by empowering them to finish high school; and long term: by building intra and interpersonal as well as physical skills to aid them in the workplace.

The Six Seconds’ survey of emotional intelligence also includes key metrics for “big picture” outcomes. Pre and post test results on Life Barometers are compared in the chart below.

### Life Barometers



Data show that students who experienced EQ growth also made varying levels of progress across all life barometers. However, the gains in *personal achievement (16 points)* are the most significant. In the Six Seconds’ literature these outcomes positively correlate with increased self-confidence, “feeling in charge of oneself,” and a desire to undertake additional challenges – having experienced prior success. Based on their mission and service population focus, this outcome may be viewed as the pinnacle of VSA programming.

<sup>3</sup> Increasing access to opportunities for **creative expression** and **artistic growth**; increasing student **knowledge** and reinforce the **value of arts in education**; and Increasing **self-confidence** and **sense of accomplishment in students**.

**Strengthening relationships** between students with and without disabilities