Core Skills Overview

A Guide to Wayfinder's Six Core
Skills for Academics + Life

PURPOSE

SELF-AWARENESS

ADAPTABILITY

EMPATHY

COLLABORATION

AGENCY

Wayfinder's Six Core Skills
CASEL-ALIGNED

- PURPOSE
  - Meaningful Orientation
  - Beyond-the-Self Orientation
- SELF-AWARENESS
  - Sense of Self
  - Growth Mindset
  - Social-Emotional Intelligence
- ADAPTABILITY
  - Emotional Adjustment
  - Behavioral Adjustment
  - Cognitive Adjustment
- EMPATHY
  - Affective Empathy
  - Cognitive Empathy
  - Compassionate Empathy
- COLLABORATION
  - Communication
  - Cooperation
  - Connection
- AGENCY
  - Autonomy
  - Competence
  - Relatedness

As supported by developmental research, Wayfinder's curriculum provides specific subskills that make up each core skill. **Each subskill has its specific student outcomes all tying back to the Core Skill.** Students engaging with the Wayfinder program are expected to be competent in the specific subskills for overall proficiency in the Core Skills. The following document specifies Wayfinder's Core Skills, corresponding subskills, and outcomes with supporting research.

Self-Awareness

CASEL Alignment: Self-Awareness ⊘

You understand yourself on many levels, from how you function to what nourishes and sustains you.

Subskill 1: Sense of Self

"An individual's sense of self".

Erickson (1963), described identity as a response to the question, *"Who am I?"* *Therefore, identity signifies an integrated and cohesive sense of self that endures and continues as we age.*

Research suggests that the more developed an individual's personal identity is, the more aware they are of their own uniqueness and similarities to others, including their strengths and areas of improvement as they navigate the world. Identity formation is particularly prevalent during the adolescent years. Adolescents undergo a period of exploration, which scholars define as "a period of engagement in choosing what is meaningful to them and committing to it." This process of exploration and commitment generates well-being because of the sense of security and stability that it provides.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Recognize unique strengths in yourself and others

Identify how family, friends, community, and surrounding space foster a sense of belonging

Identify how others influence you

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

I am aware of my unique strengths.

I am aware of the strengths in others.

I can identify when I feel a sense of belonging.

I recognize when I am being influenced by others.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide

Dutton, J., Robers, L., & Bednar, J, (2010) Dutton's Framework for Positive Identity Construction

Subskill 2: Growth Mindset

"Set of beliefs that intelligence or personality are human attributes that can change across the lifespan through effort, practice, and education."

Beliefs play a central role in adolescent development. A growth mindset has been associated with well-being outcomes as compared to a fixed mindset (the belief that abilities cannot be increased through effort or experience over time), which has been associated with helplessness and resistance to confronting challenges. An individual's awareness of their beliefs and thoughts is the first step toward mitigating a fixed mindset and continuing working towards a growth mindset. Research suggests that reflecting on one's fixed mindset can precede the development of a growth mindset as the individual learns about their values and goals and makes the shift.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS	SCALES (INFLUENCED)
Ability to reflect on past mistakes/challenges and identify areas of improvement in yourself Ability to reflect on past success and identify areas of personal growth	I can identify ways I can improve. I often reflect on my successes.	Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. Journal of personality and social psychology, 69(4), 719.

Subskill 3: Social-Emotional Intelligence

"Perceiving, appraising and expressing emotions accurately and adaptively."

The ability to identify and process emotionally charged information is the first step toward gaining competence toward problem-solving and effective behaviors. This is the first branch of emotional intelligence, which is the emotional perception that involves recognizing verbal and nonverbal information from the emotional system. Research suggests that emotional intelligence is impossible without this first branch of identifying and processing emotion-laden information.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS	SCALES (INFLUENCED)
Ability to Identify and name emotions Able to notice how one's brain and body respond to events and ideas	I am aware of how my body responds to different emotions.	Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide

Adaptability

CASEL Alignment: Self-Management ⊘

You are willing to try again when you make mistakes, and you are comfortable navigating uncertain situations with flexibility and openness.

Subskill 1: Emotional Adjustment

"Regulation of feelings and how these feelings are expressed"

Emotional adjustment, the skill of managing and dealing with one's emotions in the face of uncertainty and novel circumstances, is central to adaptability. Adolescents practicing emotional adjustment can manage emotional equilibrium in the presence of internal and external stressors.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Managing one's pleasant and challenging emotions

Having the ability to constructively respond to emotions in others

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

I am in control of my emotions.

I don't let other people's emotions negatively impact me.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Transforming Education. (2016). Measuring MESH. 160406_MeasuringMESH_ForRelease2.pdf (transformingeducation.org)

Subskill 2: Behavioral Adjustment

"Modifications in the nature, level, and degree of behavior to adaptively deal with new and changing situations and conditions"

The ability to change or modify one's behavior is key to adaptive behavior. Researcher Lev Vygotsky pointed out that behavioral adjustment (regulation) is achieved through scaffolding, which is the ability to regulate and modify behavior based on past experiences while being challenged beyond one's current ability. Therefore, adolescents need to learn and apply new behavioral skills to adapt to new and challenging experiences.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Practicing value-aligned skills for personal development

Modifying behavior to adjust to changes in the environment

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

I change the way I do things when something does not work.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Brown, J. M., Miller, W. R., & Lawendowski, L. A. (1999). The self-regulation questionnaire.

Subskill 3: Cognitive Adjustment

"Modification in thinking to deal with new and uncertain demands"

Information processing, self-beliefs, and problem-solving mechanisms are all skills needed to practice adaptive cognitive adjustment. Before showcasing adaptive behavior, adolescents need to collect, store, and process the information they receive from their environments. Once the information is collected, stored, and processed, adolescents can then adaptively respond and problem-solve. Researchers also note that adolescents who can practice cognitive adjustment have higher well-being outcomes such as academic achievement, life satisfaction, enjoyment in school, and a sense of meaning and purpose. Additionally, researchers confirm that cognitive modifications affect self-esteem, satisfaction with life, and meaning and purpose.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Approaching new or unexpected situations as learning opportunities

Ability to problem solve when confronted with an uncertain event

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

Unexpected events are learning opportunities.

There is usually more than one way to solve a problem.

I start looking for possible solutions when I encounter challenges.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Brown, J. M., Miller, W. R., & Lawendowski, L. A. (1999). The self-regulation questionnaire.

Empathy

CASEL Alignment: Social Awareness ⊘

You are in tune with the feelings and needs of others and willing to act for a common good.

Subskill 1: Affective Empathy

"Vicarious experience of emotions consistent with those of the observed including positive empathy as vicariously sharing others' positive emotions and/or empathetic concern, involving feelings of sorrow or concern for another."

Feelings of concern, sorrow, or shared delight are thought to be important motivations to alleviate others' distress and therefore show helping or caring behavior toward others. Affective empathy is thus the first component of empathy as it is the ability to be emotionally in tune with the feelings of others. Research provides empirical support for a positive association between empathetic concern and prosocial behavior up to one year later during early to middle adolescence.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS	SCALES (INFLUENCED)
Ability to experience and share others' positive emotions Showing concern or sorrow for others	I can experience emotions other people are feeling.	Albiero, P., Matricardi, G., Speltri, D., & Toso, D. (2009). The assessment of empathy in adolescence: A contribution to the Italian validation of the "Basic Empathy Scale." Journal of Adolescence, 32(2), 393–408. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2008.01.001

Subskill 2: Cognitive Empathy

"Awareness and understanding of another's emotions"

Scholars corroborate that adolescents with a high tendency to imagine the other's emotional or psychological point of view are more likely to be other-oriented and more aware of the needs of others. The cognitive ability of perspective-taking facilitates adolescents to be better at finding ways to help others than adolescents who are low in perspective-taking. Research suggests that perspective-taking can indirectly affect prosocial behavior through empathetic concern.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Notice verbal and nonverbal communication and social cues

Consider multiple perspectives objectively

Ability to embrace differences

Understanding other's expressions and emotions

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

I can often understand how people are feeling before they tell me.

I can figure out when my friends are happy.

I take my time to understand others' points of view.

When others disagree with me, I am respectful of their views.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Albiero, P., Matricardi, G., Speltri, D., & Toso, D. (2009). The assessment of empathy in adolescence: A contribution to the Italian validation of the "Basic Empathy Scale." Journal of Adolescence, 32(2), 393–408. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2008.01.001

Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide[1]

Panorama Education. (n.d.). Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey. Check-Ins-Question-Bank-2023 (panoramaed.com)

Subskill 3: Compassionate Empathy

"Voluntary behavior intended to benefit others"

Engaging in prosocial behavior gives adolescents an opportunity to show empathic concern for others and to take other's perspectives. Additionally, prosocial behaviors naturally evokes positive feedback from adult and peers which can serve to strengthen adolescent image of themselves as a caring and empathetic person reinforcing their empathetic behavior.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Actively seeking to impact others (focused on prosocial behavior) positively

Being a resource for others

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

I utilize my strengths to make a positive impact on others.

I actively find ways to help others.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Panorama Education. (n.d.). Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey. Check-Ins-Question-Bank-2023 (panoramaed.com)

Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide

Collaboration

CASEL Alignment: Relationship Skills ⊘

You are a relationship-builder who actively partners with others and facilitates belonging efforts across communities.

Subskill 1: Communication

"Capacities used to actively engage with other people socially"

Communication is the foundation of strong, healthy interpersonal relationships. Successful collaboration efforts between adolescents promote greater social competence, empathy, responsiveness, and communication skills. Well-structured collaborative activities also build supportive classroom communities, which, in turn, increase self-esteem and academic performance.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS	SCALES (INFLUENCED)
Active listening	I can easily share my feelings with others	Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide
Ability to constructively communicate thoughts and feelings		
Giving and receiving constructive feedback		
Ability to constructively resolve conflict		

Subskill 2: Cooperation

"Capacities used to collaborate with other people"

The ability for adolescents to problem-solve and cooperate with one another requires them to establish strong interpersonal relationships. Adolescents who have no Interpersonal problem-solving skills show avoidance and have low levels of social self-efficacy. However, adolescents who actively collaborate with others showcase skills such as boldness, participation in a social group or activity, friendly behaviors, and giving and receiving help.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Practicing teamwork by seeking/offering support/help.

Ability to collaboratively problem solve.

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

I work with others to solve problems.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide

Subskill 3: Connection

"Capacities used to maintain positive relationship with others"

Adolescents who are seen to be socially competent experience belonging and positively affect those around them by actively seeking connection and relationships. Collaborative work and teacher-supervised activities in a safe classroom community can increase belonging and connection among students.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Establishing + maintaining positive relationships (focusing on collaboration)

Practice skills that promote positive relationship building and foster belonging

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

Maintaining positive relationships is important to me.

I take time to develop positive relationships with others.

I go out of my way to show others that they matter.

I treat others with respect.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide

Panorama Education. (n.d.). Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey. Check-Ins-Question-Bank-2023 (panoramaed.com)

Agency

CASEL Alignment: Responsible Decision Making ⊘

You understand the value of your voice and seek opportunities to support and advance your communities.

Subskill 1: Autonomy

"*The necessity of experiencing a sense of choice, willingness, and volition as one behaves.*"

Intrinsic motivation is autonomous and involves performing an activity for its own sake and for the pleasure and satisfaction that it provides. For example, students who enjoy reading can be said to be intrinsically motivated by this activity. Students who pursue autonomous goals experience better learning and emotional experiences. Students feel like the initiators of their actions and therefore will align their actions with their interests and values. The ability to choose is key to students being agents of their own actions and understanding the value of their own voices and needs.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS	SCALES (INFLUENCED)
Ability to choose and act upon desired behavior Intrinsically motivated toward a goal	I can choose how I behave in any situation.	Panorama Education. (n.d.). Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey. Check-Ins-Question-Bank-2023 (panoramaed.com)

Subskill 2: Competence

"*The desire to interact effectively with one's environment.*"

The need and desire to interact effectively with one's environment lead students to seek challenges that are beyond their current capacities and practice activities that enhance their aptitudes. As students pursue growth, they seek people or resources that provide them with the tools needed to succeed in their goals. Adolescents who are enabled and encouraged to set and push boundaries while making decisions based on their individual values gain the competence needed for effective interaction with their environment.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Accessing resources as needed.

Identifying sources of support

Planning and setting evolving personal goals

Ability to make value-based decisions

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

I establish healthy boundaries.

I stand up for myself without putting others down.

I can find resources to help me accomplish my goals.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide

Panorama Education. (n.d.). Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey. Check-Ins-Question-Bank-2023 (panoramaed.com)

Subskill 3: Relatedness

"*The necessity* for close and secure emotional bonds with significant others and to feel a part of collective."

Adolescents who are given the opportunity to experience relatedness can develop their overall potential better. This is because youth who act autonomously feel "wholehearted", "together" and like they have ownership of their actions. Students who can identify sources of support from either parents, teachers, or fellow classmates are more likely to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally enabling students to think and act for the benefit of the collective.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Prioritizing ethical responsibility over personal interest in decision making

Identifying positive sources of social support

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

I make decisions based on what I believe is right.

I can identify sources of support around me.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. Journal of personality and social psychology, 69(4), 719.

Purpose

Your decisions and interactions with the world are guided by a deep connection to your values.

Subskill 1: Meaningful Orientation

"The search for and identification of personal significance of one's life."

Meaning in life usually involves having a goal or a sense of unified purpose. It is sometimes referred to as "making sense or order out of one's existence and having a purpose and striving toward a goal or goals." Meaning in life usually is what drives adolescents' choices of activities and goals and how they particularly align with their values. Adolescents may derive meaning from various sources, including relationships, self-transcendence, self-acceptance, and fair treatment. Research also suggests that adolescents who report experiencing meaning in life have a more successful transition into adulthood, due to the fact that they have a clear sense of self and how they fit into the world around them.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Making meaning out of...
- Daily occurrences and interactions.
- Personal actions and the impact on others.

Expressing Gratitude

Identifying personally meaningful values.
- Understanding how values align with decisions to impact goals.

Identify personally meaningful goals

Ability to identify passions

Understanding what is meaningful to you (what you care about)

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

I am aware of the values most important to me.

My actions are aligned with my personal values.

I reflect on what is personally meaningful in my life.

I try to set goals that are personally meaningful.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Bigony, C., Smith, J., & Kaufman, S. B. (2022) The Human Potential Index. In The Positive Product Design Guide

Bronk, K. C., Riches, B. R., & Mangan, S. A. (2018). Claremont Purpose Scale (CPS)

Subskill 2: Beyond-the-Self Orientation

"A desire to make a difference in the broader world."

Purposeful adolescents set goals that are personally meaningful, operate long-term, and have a beyond-the-self component. In other words, the goals that these adolescents set out for themselves inherently benefit others around them. For adolescents to effectively contribute to the world, their values must be deeply integrated into their goals. Educators can encourage students to think beyond the self by engaging them in long-term thinking and helping them link goals to their values and to their effects on the world beyond the self.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Understanding how your values connect to the world beyond the self

Identify actions that will contribute to positive change to the world beyond the self

CORRESPONDING WAYPOINTS

It is important for me to make the world a better place.

My actions contribute to a positive change in the world.

SCALES (INFLUENCED)

Bronk, K. C., Riches, B. R., & Mangan, S. A. (2018). Claremont Purpose Scale (CPS)