

Initial Efficacy Evidence for the ACT Tessaera Teacher Playbook

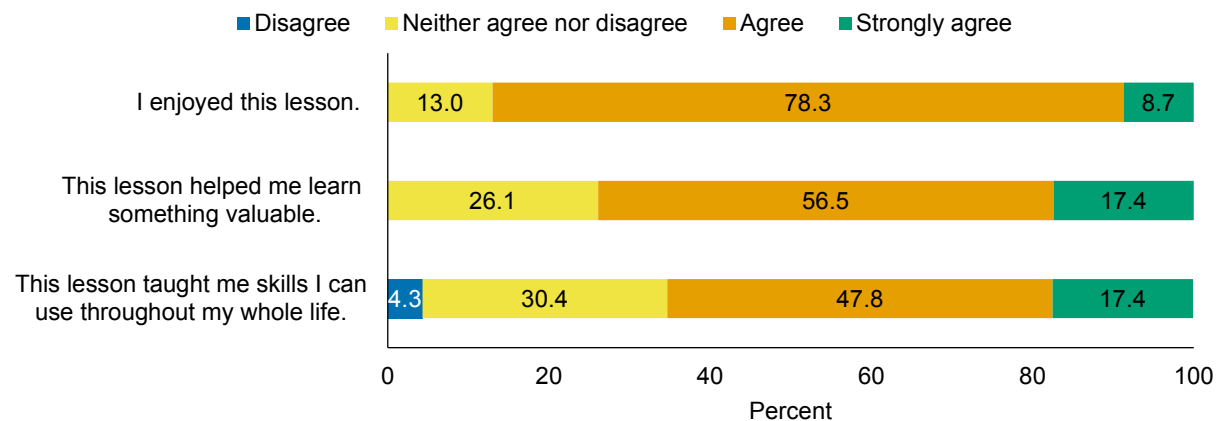
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Social and emotional skills are positively related to student success and can be improved via intervention (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). The ACT® Tessaera® Teacher Playbook is the intervention component of the Tessaera assessment system and contains over 100 evidence-based lessons and activities on Grit, Teamwork, Resilience, Curiosity, and Leadership that teachers can deliver to help middle and high school students develop their social and emotional skills.

Tools intended to improve learner outcomes must be accompanied by efficacy evidence demonstrating how their use relates to intended learner outcomes. Kirkpatrick’s (1976) evaluation model is a framework upon which efficacy arguments can be built (Mattern, in press). The model classifies efficacy outcomes into four levels: 1) the learner’s reaction to and perceived relevance of the learning event; 2) the degree to which learners acquire the intended knowledge delivered by the learning event; 3) the extent to which learners apply what they’ve learned outside of the classroom; and 4) the extent to which the learning event results in positive distal outcomes. We evaluated Kirkpatrick’s first two levels of efficacy evidence using data collected during exploratory trial stages of Playbook evaluation.

Twenty-three 9th-grade students from a single classroom in Tucson, AZ responded to a survey immediately after participating in a Playbook lesson designed to build concept knowledge of Grit, its importance, and what actions individuals high in Grit often demonstrate. Figure 1 shows student responses to survey items measuring student reactions to the lesson. Most students reported that they enjoyed the lesson, perceived the lesson content to be valuable, and believed the skills learned could be relevant throughout life. Additionally, students were asked to compare this lesson to their lessons in other classes. When they did so, 60.8% reported liking the Grit lesson more. Most students also perceived Grit to be a relevant skill to develop; 91.3% of students reported that Grit was important to their success in school. Combined, these outcomes demonstrate Level I efficacy evidence.

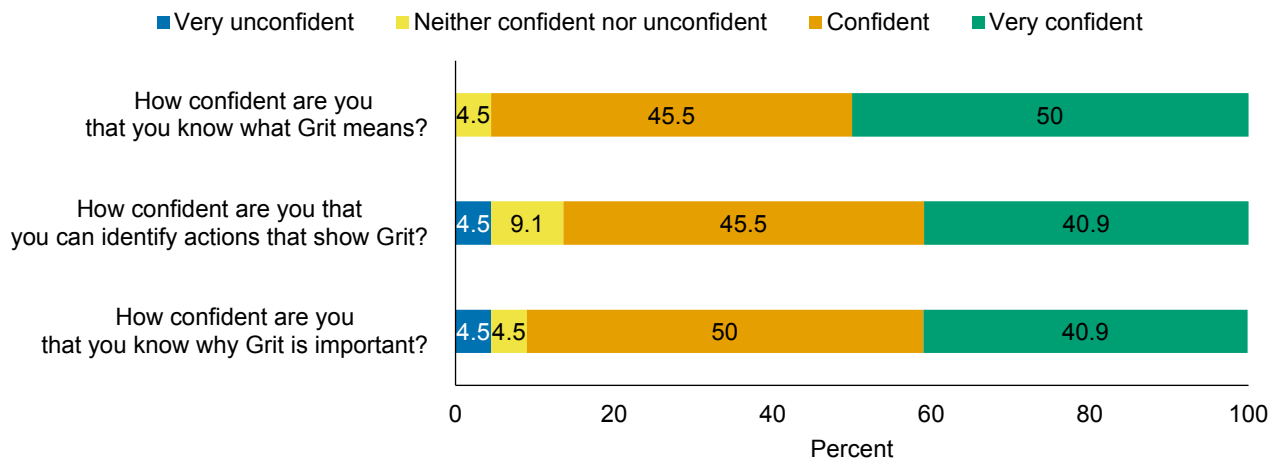
Figure 1. Level I Efficacy Evidence



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Figure 2 shows student responses to survey items measuring content knowledge. After completing the lesson, most students were confident in their ability to define Grit, to identify actions that demonstrate Grit, and to explain why Grit is important to develop. Students were also asked if participating in the lesson helped them build upon prior knowledge of the concept. Though baseline knowledge of Grit was relatively high in this sample (e.g., 81.1% of students reported being able to define Grit prior to the lesson), 56.5% of students reported knowing more after the lesson compared to what they had known previously. Additionally, 54.5% of students reported that they learned more in this lesson compared to lessons in other classes. Combined, these outcomes demonstrate that the lesson contributed to increased student learning, and demonstrate Level II efficacy evidence.

Figure 2. Level II Efficacy Evidence



Overall, these findings suggest that students were engaged, saw value in the lesson, and reported intended learning gains. The findings also demonstrate positive reactions toward social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula from a high school student perspective and provide initial evidence that students prefer social and emotional skill lessons over lessons in other classes and learn just as much, if not more, in these classes. Taken together, these data provide efficacy evidence for Kirkpatrick’s Level I and Level II outcomes and serve as the foundation for an efficacy argument for the ACT Tessera Teacher Playbook.

References

Durlak, J., Weissberg, R., Dymicki, A., Taylor, R., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The impact of enhancing students’ social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development, 82*, 405–432.

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