

MEASURING STUDENTS' SOCIAL CAPITAL: EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Below is a summary of approaches for measuring students' social capital among the programs interviewed. These approaches are categorized within the four dimensions offered in the [Missing Metrics report](#) as a starting point for meaningfully measuring social capital: the **quantity** of relationships in students' networks, the **quality** of relationships in students' networks, the **structure** of students' networks, and students' **ability** to mobilize networks. A fifth category includes examples of measurement **approaches that assess a combination of social capital dimensions**.

Although many programs are partnering with researchers to develop rigorous measurement approaches, not all survey items presented below have been statistically validated at the publication time of this report.

Sample approaches for measuring the **quantity** of relationships in students' networks

Survey item	Respondent	Organization
"What adults do you plan to work with today?"	Student	Big Picture Learning
"Indicate the number of connections you have made on LinkedIn." "Do you have a mentor who encourages your goals?" "I have a mentor who encourages my goals and dreams." "How many Braven Fellows have you stayed in touch with since you completed the Accelerator course."	Student	Braven
"Please estimate the number of close relationships you maintain in your everyday life and indicate the type, such as family, work, faith-based."	Student	CrossPurpose
"How much do you agree? Participating in the X3 program... Provided me with contact information for at least two adults I might reach out to again." "When you think of all the people that you worked with during your internship experience, how many could you tell us about? Please consider including teachers or staff, internship mentors, internship coworkers, X3 or NeXt Coach, and peer interns."	Student	Future Focused Education
"I have more people I can go to help me pursue my education or career goals."	Student	iCouldBe
"How many people are in your professional network?" "I have professional friendships and connections that will help me meet my career goals."	Student	StreetWise Partners

Survey item	Respondent	Organization
"Who are the people in your network who can help you achieve your career goals?"	Student	Basta
<p>"During the past 6 months, how many people have provided advice, information, resources, or help with important matters?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are those people? • Regarding the people you mentioned, what is your relationship with each? Let's start with the first person... (Interviewer: enter names/initials in box next to relationship)" 	Student	Brookings Institution

Sample approaches for measuring the **quality** of relationships in students' networks

Survey item	Respondent	Organization
<p>"I feel supported by...the coaches."</p> <p>"I feel connected to...the coaches."</p> <p>"I feel like the...coaches have created a comfortable and safe environment..."</p> <p>"I am likely to reach out to this network of professionals in the future."</p>	Student	ASU Local
<p>"[How confident are you that your network can] Help me imagine new possibilities for future careers."</p> <p>"[How confident are you that your network can] Connect me with individuals with similar backgrounds or identities as me."</p> <p>"I've developed one or more relationships...that I intend to continue beyond my participation in the program."</p>	Student	Basta
<p>"How comfortable did you feel at your internship today?"</p> <p>"How well connected do you feel to the adults you are working with at your internship right now?"</p>	Student	Big Picture Learning
<p>"I feel a sense of community at Braven."</p> <p>"If you were hiring, would you hire this fellow?"</p>	Student Coach	Braven

Survey item	Respondent	Organization
<p>“How satisfied are you with the following elements of your internship(s)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations with my X3 Coach • Conversations with my mentor(s)” <p>“Please tell us about the first person that you worked with during your internship experience. How true are the following statements: (Almost never true, Rarely true, Often true, Almost always true)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They helped me learn from setbacks • They worked with me to solve problems and reach goals • They inspired me to see possibilities in my future • They introduced me to people who can help me learn and grow” 	Student	Future Focused Education
<p>“I was very satisfied with this program.”</p> <p>“I have access to more useful information for pursuing my education or career goals.”</p> <p>“I am connected with more influential people who are useful for pursuing my education or career goals.”</p>	Student	iCouldBe
<p>“I feel comfortable asking my advisor questions related to my application process.”</p> <p>“Overall, my advising fellow has been helpful to me as an advisor.”</p>	Student	Matriculate
<p>“When I am with other people, I feel included.”</p> <p>“I feel accepted by others.”</p> <p>“I have a sense of belonging.”</p> <p>“I feel connected with others.”</p>	Student	nXu

Survey item	Respondent	Organization
<p>“How helpful has your alumni network been for you? (“very unhelpful,” “unhelpful,” “helpful,” or “very helpful”)”</p> <p>“Connections on my PeopleGrove platform opened doors to help me find employment.”</p> <p>“I would use the platform should I ever want to make a career change.”</p>	Alum	PeopleGrove
<p>“I got advice through the community that directly helped me get a job.”</p> <p>“I got advice through the community that directly helped me get an internship.”</p> <p>“Because of one or more connections on the platform, I was able to obtain a good job or internship.”</p> <p>“Connecting with one or more community members opened doors for me and helped me find employment.”</p>	Student	
<p>“How well connected do you feel to your professional contacts?”</p>	Student	StreetWise Partners
<p>“To what extent do the following apply to you?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a mentor in your area of interest who shares a similar background as you • You have received supportive feedback from faculty or other advisors about your career plans” 	Student	Strada/NSSE
<p>“Who do you turn to for help when making academic or life decisions? (select: parents, coach, teacher, mentor, counselor, faith leader, peers)”</p>	Student	trovit
<p>“What were your emotions tonight at Network Night? (Happy, Shy, Lonely, Inspired, Bored)”</p> <p>“Did you participate in the Marketplace tonight? (Yes—[Made an] Offer, Yes—[Made a] Request, No)”</p>	Student	Union Capital Boston

Sample approaches for measuring the **structure** of students' networks

Survey item	Respondent	Organization
"Did you introduce your young person to someone in your professional network today?"	Mentor	Big Picture Learning
"Have you connected your Fellows with anyone in your network?"	Mentor	Braven
Students are asked to list "all the people that you worked with during your internship" and are then asked "How do you know this person"?	Student	Future Focused Education
<p>"I have people in my network who I am close to that help me pursue my education or career goals."</p> <p>"I have people in my network who I am less close to but who are influential in helping me reach my education or career goals."</p> <p>"I have people in my network who help me when they say they are going to help me."</p>	Student	iCouldBe
"What are the age, gender, race, and ethnicity of the 5 people you discuss matters related to jobs or work with?"	Adult*	Brookings Institution
<p>"To what extent have the following influenced your career plans?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advice from family or friends b. Interactions with a faculty member c. Interactions with advisors, success coaches, and/or career services staff d. Co-curricular activities (student organizations or clubs, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.) e. Internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement f. Work experience (on- or off-campus job or prior employment) g. Career fairs, workshops, or course-based exploration of career options h. Expected job salary and availability i. Fit for your interests and abilities j. Desire to impact or support my community 	Student	Strada/NSSE

* Brookings' How We Rise survey was designed for adults; adaptations should be considered if using similar items with younger populations.

Sample approaches for measuring students' **ability** to mobilize networks

Survey item	Respondent	Organization
<p>"I am confident in work environments."</p> <p>"I believe I have a professional network."</p> <p>"I consider my new connections members of my professional network."</p>	Student	ASU Local
<p>"[When looking for a job, how likely are you to do the following?]</p> <p>Reach out to my network to find information about open job positions.</p> <p>Ask professionals and alums about their careers and how they got to where they are now."</p> <p>"Participating in Basta has increased my confidence in my ability to build and leverage a professional network."</p>	Student	Basta
<p>"I reach out to my Braven community for support."</p> <p>"How frequently do you keep in touch with your Leadership Coach?"</p>	Student	Braven
<p>"I interacted with someone who I know I can ask for help while at my internship site."</p> <p>"What personal or professional skills did you see the student use or build today?"</p>	Student Mentor	Big Picture Learning
<p>"When working towards my education or career goals, I ask for help when I need it."</p> <p>"I go out of my way to meet new people in order to reach my education or career goals."</p> <p>"I form strong relationships with people who are useful for helping me reach my education or career goals."</p> <p>"I build relationships with people in my network who can help advance my education or career."</p>	Student	iCouldBe
<p>"Please tell us about the first person that you worked with during your internship experience. How likely would you be to ask this person for help with your career in the future?"</p>	Student	Future Focused Education

Survey item	Respondent	Organization
<p>“Connecting with one or more community members made me more confident in my ability to be successful in the job market. (based on number of connections made)”</p> <p>“I am confident in my ability to be successful in the job market.”</p> <p>“Connecting with one or more community members made me more confident in my ability to be successful in the job market.”</p>	Student	PeopleGrove
<p>“How much confidence do you have in your ability to do the following?”</p> <p>a. Overcome obstacles in finding and using career-related resources at your institution</p> <p>b. Demonstrate effective work habits (punctuality, working productively with others, time and workload management, etc.)</p> <p>c. Network with alumni or professionals to make potential career connections</p> <p>d. Communicate your knowledge, skills, and experiences to potential employers</p> <p>e. Use career-specific technology (devices, programs, or tools used by those in the field)</p> <p>f. Work effectively with people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)</p> <p>g. Address ethical issues you might face in your career”</p>	Student	Strada/NSSE
<p>“If you hear the term social capital, what do you think it means? Can you give an example?”</p> <p>“How do you connect and stay in touch with people you know directly or indirectly...?”</p>	Student	trovit

Sample approaches of **strategies to measure combined social capital metrics**

Data collection tool or survey item	Respondent	Organization	Dimension
<p>Checklist to identify the extent to which students are growing their on-campus networks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a campus advocate or mentor • Identify three peers who can serve as references • Create at least one study group with high-performing peers 	Coach	Beyond 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Mobilization
<p>“Who are the 5 people you discuss important matters related to jobs with?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Person ----- • 2nd Person ----- • 3rd Person ----- • 4th Person ----- • 5th Person ----- 	Adult*	Brookings Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Quality • Mobilization
<p>“During the past 6 months, how many people have YOU gone to for advice, information, resources, or support about the following...?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs or work ----- • Housing ----- • Healthcare (doctors, specialists, dentists) ----- • Childcare and or adult care ----- • College (education) and or training (work force, professional, vocational) ----- 	Adult	Brookings Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Mobilization

Data collection tool or survey item	Respondent	Organization	Dimension
<p>“During the past 6 months, how many people have provided advice, information, resources, or help with important matters?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are those people? • Regarding the people you mentioned, what is your relationship with each? 	Adult	Brookings Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Structure • Mobilization
<p>Students engage in a series of themed, problem-solving “quests” that prompt students to identify and forge connections based on their academic and career interests. Students add these connections to the iCouldBe app and the platform creates detailed network maps of each students’ relationships.</p>	Student	iCouldBe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Structure • Mobilization
<p>A relationship-mapping tool designed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education to help K-12 schools visualize strong connections between students and staff. Students and faculty are asked to generate lists of strong connections they have with one another. These connections are then evaluated to identify how to increase trusting, stable relationships between students and their educators.</p>	Educator	The Making Caring Common Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Quality
<p>Students build their Learning Network using the “Trends” tool on the trovvit app (user visualization of networks). This relationship-mapping tool helps students identify the resources available within their personal networks and the connections they have with various people and organizations.</p>	Student	trovvit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Structure
<p>Through a series of diagnostics students rate themselves and their relationships on five dimensions: Compassion, Assistance, Reciprocity, Trust, Information (CARTI). The self-assessment is embedded throughout the Social Capital Builders curriculum, allowing students to understand, evaluate, and improve their relationships over time.</p>	Student	Social Capital Builders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity • Structure • Quality • Mobilization

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