

## Project “ENTENDER - ENabling sTudEnts with NeuroDivERsity”

Project number 610302-EPP-1-2019-1-UK-EPPKA2-  
CBHE-JP (2019 / 001 - 001)”

### WP2 Modernisation of resources and training

#### DEV2.3

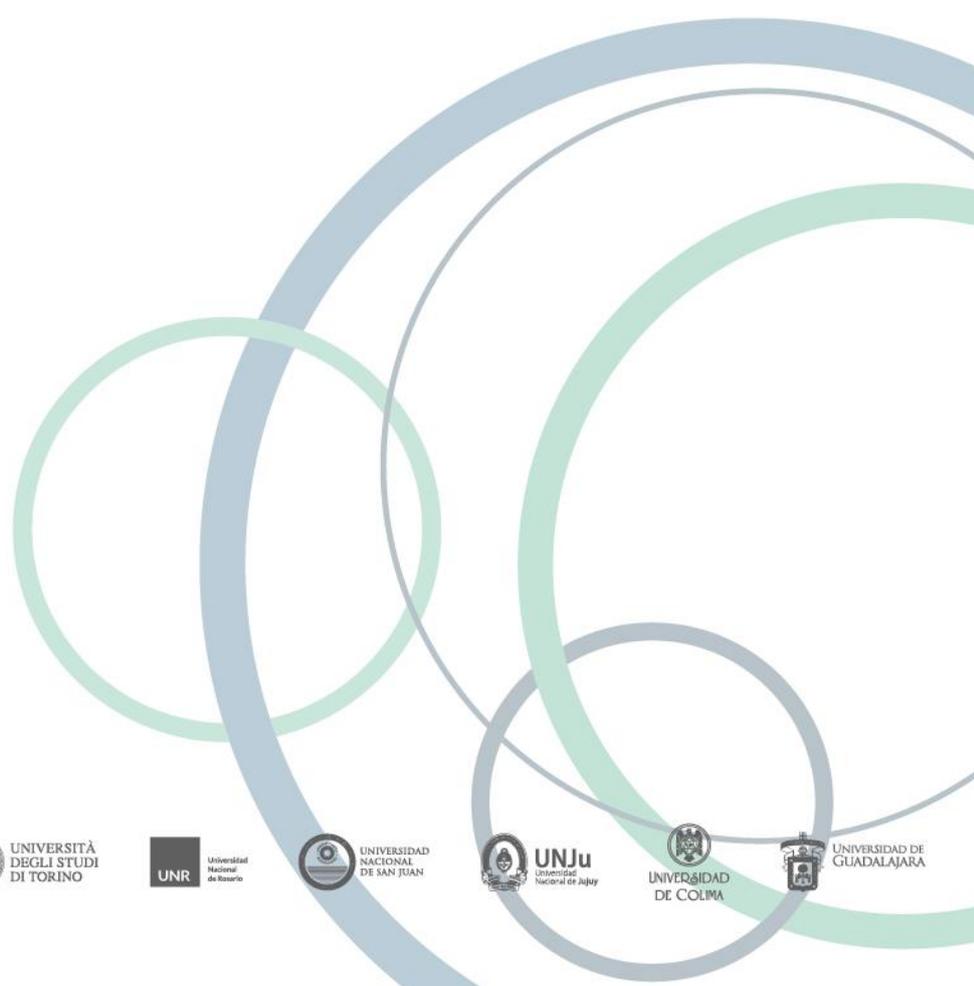
### Design common assessment tool and strengths inventory

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



## CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Instrumentation.....	4
3. Methodology .....	6
4. Support- Intervention from a facilitator.....	7
ANNEX 1.....	8
Active Learner Student Questionnaire II (ALSQ-II).....	8
ANNEX 2.....	10
Personal Strengths Inventory .....	10
Literature.....	11



## 1. Introduction

Aim of this deliverable is to agree upon assessment tool and strengths inventory that will be piloted with existing students in schools as well as Higher Education (HE). Through the assessment tool and the strengths inventory it will be possible to identify (a) students with additional needs and (b) particular strengths that can be developed further.

The past 20 years there is a need in educational sciences to focus on the assessment beyond traditional methods. Thus there has been a shift on identifying strengths and skills of students in all educational levels. In order to achieve this, educational and psychological research is focusing on nonintellectual strengths such as resilience, self-determination, etc. One of the fundamental principles of resilience, self-determination as well as positive psychology is the ability to develop self-awareness and to get to know self-strengths and limitations. By doing so, a person can use that knowledge for their own profit, by setting goals and working on them. In educational performance and achievement, it is important to acknowledge our learning profile by evaluating ourselves in related fields, such as study skills, learning, reading, and writing. Specifically – a person may not always be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and strengths may vary over time. People can develop new strengths through training or experience, and they may have strengths they are unaware of. Therefore, it is useful for the assessor to discuss this with them and to encourage them to ask their friends, tutors and co-workers to help them think about their own strengths.

Underlying and understanding the strengths and limitations or weaknesses will help students in schools and HE in determining outcomes and set up goals based on their strengths. The educators focusing on a profile of strengths can plan their intervention and support on a basis that will reflect the actual educational needs (academic, social, communication etc.) moving away from a classic clinical approach (i.e. IQ test).

## 2. Instrumentation

### a) *Active Learner Student Questionnaire II (ALSQ-II) (Farmer, 2011)*

Active Learner Student Questionnaire II (ALSQ-II) (see Annex 1) is a tool designed to identify students' strengths individually. It consists of 70 items that are connected to four (4) areas: organization, general learning, reading, and writing. These areas have been found to be connected with the difficulties that students usually face. Also, the mentioned fields are considered to be difficult for students with learning difficulties and/ or ADHD. Each student responds to each statement by choosing one of the following:

Y for yes if the statement always applies to them,

S for sometimes if the statement sometimes applies to them, or

N for no if the statement never applies to them.

The results can give an insight on the students' traits in each one of the four areas mentioned above. Self-awareness, self-regulation, and goal setting are some fields that can be wired to the results. The purpose of this questionnaire is to help students to understand their learning strengths and needs so they can work on incorporating those strengths into their daily life to achieve success.

### b) *Personal Strengths Inventory (Liau, Chow, Tan, & Senf, 2011)*

This questionnaire is a self-report inventory for adolescents (see Annex 2) and focuses on using students' strengths to achieve goals. It can be used to evaluate adolescents' personal strengths, by examining five (5) factors that have been found to be associated with healthy adjustment: Social Competence (SC), Emotional Awareness (EA), Goal Setting (GS), Emotional regulation (ER), Empathy (EM). These aspects can be examined separately, or as a whole, to create the final profile of the participants.

The inventory consists of 22 questions in form of statements, which means that is short and easy to use, especially for young people who may find it hard to complete a longer questionnaire.

The individual reads and answers each question at a 5-point scale to establish their truth. There are no wrong and right answers, as each answer leads to a specific profile that is connected to certain results.

This tool can be used to study adolescents' development, in order to examine their personal characteristics. Moreover, focus on personal strengths is applied as a result of the positive psychology movement and the belief that focus should be done on person's positive traits. Also, it is important to mention that life satisfaction seems to be connected to the development of personal strengths.

Mental and education workers that work with youth can use the current inventory to evaluate their clients / students in fields of social–emotional competence. By doing so, they can predict what to expect in externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors, as well as achievement.

All in all, through the usage of this tool we aim to a better understanding of the current state of the individual and, thus, to professionals' ability to create more accurate interventions in the future, in the perspective of the best interest of the adolescent.

The five factors for the PSI scores appear to correspond with prior research on social– emotional competence and theories of positive youth development. EA reflects the ability to pay attention and discriminate among one's range of affect or emotions, whereas ER represents the capacity for adaptive coping amidst distressing emotions by the use of self-regulatory strategies (Saarni, 1997). GS involves organizing and executing courses of action required to attain a designated performance (Snyder et al., 2002). EM represents the ability to understand another's emotional state and feel with that person. Finally, SC is the ability to achieve social tasks that are valued in various contexts, especially in the school setting. Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, and Walberg (2004) proposed five constructs for their model of youth social–emotional competence that include self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management, and relationship management. The PSI subscales did not include items that measure decision making, and the Zins model does not include goal setting. Nevertheless, the other four factors

in the Zins model, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, correspond to the following four subscales of the PSI: Emotional Awareness (EA) (questions 1, 4, 7, 11, 15), Emotional Regulation (ER) (questions 5, 12, 13, 16), Empathy (EM) (questions 19, 21, 22), Goal Setting (GS) (questions 2, 6, 8, 10, 17, 18) and Social Competence (SC) (questions 3, 9, 14, 20), respectively.

Higher score is related with higher personal strengths. More particularly, this questionnaire enhances the opportunity of studying separately every one of the five aspects below, by evaluating specific questions.

### 3. Methodology

The ALSQ-II and the PSI will be given at the beginning of the academic year as an initial assessment and then at the end of the academic year as a final assessment. The results from the initial assessment will help staff identify student's needs and provide related support and at the same time the results can be discussed with the student in order to set goals. The support-intervention is described below. Both instruments are self-report scales, if needed a staff can have the role of the facilitator. The facilitator can introduce the questionnaires as follows: "The purpose of those questionnaires are to help you understand your learning strengths so you can work on incorporating those strengths into your daily life. There are no right or wrong answers. Chose the answer that best reflects you. In case you have some questions or you need clarifications I am here to support you". The students need to be informed that the completion of those questionnaires will be anonymous and their responses would be kept confidential.

The questionnaires can be given to the students online or face to face. If for any reason, i.e. in case of a student with ADHD, the questionnaires can be filled separately, within two weeks, or i.e. in case of a student with dyslexia the facilitator can read the questions and check the answer for the student.

#### 4. Support- Intervention from a facilitator

Each tool needs to be reviewed from the staff (facilitator) that has been assigned for supporting neurodivergent students. The steps that can be used is the *Self-determined learning model of instruction* (Wehmeyer, et al., 2000; Wehmeyer, et al., 2012; Mumbardó-Adam, et al., 2017) that provides the framework for facilitators to enable students to become causal agents in their lives. The model consists of three phases: (a) set a goal, (b) take action and (c) adjust goal or plan. Each phase consists of questions that the students need to work on.

##### *Phase 1: Set a goal*

*Problem for student to solve: What is my goal?*

Question 1: What do I want to learn?

Question 2: What do I know about it now?

Question 3: What must change for me to learn what I don't know?

Question 4: What can I do to make this happen?

##### *Phase 2: Take Action*

*Problem for student to solve: What is my plan?*

Question 5: What can I do to learn what I don't know?

Question 6: What could keep me from taking action?

Question 7: What can I do to remove these barriers?

Question 8: When I will take action?

##### *Phase 3: Adjust goal or plan*

*Problem for the student to solve: What I have learned?*

Question 9: What actions have I taken?

Question 10: What barriers have been removed?

Question 11: What has changed about what I don't know?

Question 12: Do I know what I want to know?

The training material DEV2.2 can be used so that the facilitator can plan the support they need to give. Topics such as self-determination and resilience in education can be very helpful.

## ANNEX 1

### Active Learner Student Questionnaire II (ALSQ-II) (Farmer, 2011)

Read each statement and then write:

**Y** for **yes** if it always applies to you

**S** for **sometimes** if it sometimes applies to you

**N** for **no** if it never applies to you

Check the answer on each statement that best tells you how you act in that situation. There are no right or wrong answers.

#### 1. ORGANIZATION

##### Time Management

- I use a planner or calendar effectively.  
 I keep track of tests and assignments successfully.  
 I attend class regularly.  
 I set appropriate goals for myself.

##### Materials Management

- I keep an organized, separate notebook (physical or digital) for each class.  
 I bring items I need to class.  
 I have items at home I need for studying or for homework.

##### Test Taking

- My nervousness does not affect my ability to perform well on tests.  
 I complete tests on time.  
 I read directions or questions carefully.  
 I typically answer multiple-choice questions correctly.  
 I typically answer true/false questions correctly.  
 I usually perform well on essay tests.  
 During a test, I remember what I studied.

##### Study Skills

- I usually find it easy to start studying.  
 I stay focused regularly when I study.  
 I am not easily distracted by what happens around me when I study.  
 I easily study from my notes.  
 I easily study from books.  
 I know how to organize information from books and notes in a way that helps me to learn.  
 I remember information for tests.

##### Note Taking

- I successfully take notes during a lecture in class.  
 The notes I take are organized and easy to understand.  
 I successfully take notes from a taped lecture.  
 I take notes when I read that help me to learn.  
 I focus on important points when I take notes.

#### 2. GENERAL LEARNING

- I know what aids I need to use to help me learn.  
 I effectively organize information sequentially.  
 I compare and contrast ideas effectively.  
 I understand how information is organized into categories that help me learn.  
 I can determine cause-and-effect relationships.  
 I am able to problem-solve.



\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when the “big picture” is explained first and the small details are explained second.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when the small details are explained first and the “big picture” is explained second.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when I get to work with others.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when I get to work independently.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when I present information to others.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when I discuss new information.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when I participate in hands-on activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn new information successfully through problem-solving activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when new information is presented visually through the use of pictures, figures, charts, or other graphics.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when I am able to see new information through the use of text/print.

\_\_\_\_\_ I learn successfully when new information is presented orally.

### 3. READING

#### Vocabulary

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand difficult words when I read.

\_\_\_\_\_ When I am reading and encounter a difficult or unknown word I know how to figure out its meaning.

\_\_\_\_\_ I remember vocabulary words I learn.

#### Comprehension

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand the overall ideas when I read material for my classes.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand the main idea when I read.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand the details when I read.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand stories that I read.

\_\_\_\_\_ I read quickly.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand what I read from a computer screen.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know what aids I need to use when I read to help me.

### 4. WRITING

#### Mechanics

\_\_\_\_\_ I spell most words correctly.

\_\_\_\_\_ I correctly use capitalization.

\_\_\_\_\_ I correctly use commas.

\_\_\_\_\_ I correctly use colons and semicolons.

\_\_\_\_\_ I write sentences well.

\_\_\_\_\_ I proofread my work for spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure well.

#### Composition

\_\_\_\_\_ I write paragraphs with clear topic sentences and appropriate supporting details.

\_\_\_\_\_ I easily choose words that say what I mean.

\_\_\_\_\_ I organize my ideas when I write stories.

\_\_\_\_\_ I organize my ideas when I write research papers and essays.

\_\_\_\_\_ I brainstorm ideas prior to writing.

\_\_\_\_\_ I write clear introductions and conclusions.

\_\_\_\_\_ I locate the information I need when I write research papers and essays.

\_\_\_\_\_ I keep my writing focused on my topic.

\_\_\_\_\_ I proofread my writing to know if it makes sense.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have someone else read my writing to help me proofread my work.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know what aids I need to use when I write to help me.

## ANNEX 2

### Personal Strengths Inventory (Liau, Chow, Tan, & Senf, 2011)

Read each statement and then check the number that better reflects you:

1 = *very seldom true of me,*

2 = *seldom true of me,*

3 = *sometimes true of me,*

4 = *often true of me,* and

5 = *very often true of me.*

There are no right or wrong answers

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know when I am getting angry					
2. I set goals and plan how to reach those goals					
3. I am able to fit in no matter what the social situation is					
4. I know by my body's reaction what emotions I am experiencing					
5. I calm myself down when I get angry					
6. I have high expectations and standards for success					
7. I can identify when my mood is changing					
8. I find it easy to try again when I fail					
9. I get along well with other people					
10. I feel good about my ability to do things					
11. I know what makes me happy					
12. I can control my anger					
13. I know how to deal with stress					
14. I make friends easily					
15. I'm aware of the way I feel					
16. I know how to handle problems when they occur					
17. I give up when I fail					
18. I learn new strategies from my failures					
19. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I feel sympathy for them					
20. I work well in a group					
21. I feel sorry for people when they are having problems					
22. It makes me sad to see someone left out in a group					

## Literature

- Farmer, J.L. (2011). *The development of the personal strengths intervention to improve self-determination and social-emotional levels in postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/ or ADHD: a multiple baseline study*. Graduate Theses and Dissertations, University of South Florida.
- Liau, A.K., Chow, D., Tan, T.K., & Senf, K. (2011). Development and Validation of the Personal Strengths Inventory Using Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment* 29 (1) 14-26.
- Mumbardó-Adam Cristina, Eva Vicente, Giné Climent, Joan Guardia, Sheida K. Raley & Miguel Ángel Verdugo (2017). Promoviendo la autodeterminación en el aula: el Modelo de Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de la Autodeterminación. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322500185\\_Promoviendo\\_la\\_autodeterminacion\\_en\\_el\\_aula\\_el\\_Modelo\\_de\\_Ensenanza\\_y\\_Aprendizaje\\_de\\_la\\_Autodeterminacion](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322500185_Promoviendo_la_autodeterminacion_en_el_aula_el_Modelo_de_Ensenanza_y_Aprendizaje_de_la_Autodeterminacion) [accessed Aug 12 2021].
- Saarni, C. (1997). Emotional competence and self-regulation in childhood. In P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Implications for educators* (pp. 35-66). New York: Basic Books.
- Snyder, C. R., Shorey, H., Cheavens, J., Pulvers, K. M., Adams, V., III, & Wiklund, C. (2002). Hope and academic success in college. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94, 820-826.
- Wehmeyer, M. L., Palmer, S., Agran, M., Mithaug, D. & Martin, J. (2000). Promoting causal agency: The self-determined learning model of instruction. *Exceptional Children*, 66, 439-453.
- Wehmeyer, M. L., Shogren, K. A., Palmer, S. B., Williams-Diehm, K. L., Little, T. D. & Boulton, A. (2012). The impact of the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction on student self-determination. *Exceptional Children*, 78 (2), 135-153.
- Zins, J. E., Bloodworth, M. R., Weissberg, R. P., & Walberg, H. J. (2004). The scientific base linking social and emotional learning to school success. In J. E. Zins, R. P. Weissberg, M. C. Wang, & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say?* (pp. 3-22). New York: Teachers College Press.