

# CHARACTER STRENGTHS INTERVENTION IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS...

## A WAY TO PROMOTE WELL-BEING ALL TOGETHER ?

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### INTRODUCTION

- ▶ A growing number of research studies have shown several benefits of interventions in which children learned to identify and develop strengths in the school context (e.g., White & Waters, 2015; Shankland & Rosset, 2016).
- ▶ Benefits include individual as well as relationship (or group) positive outcomes, especially in relation to children's well-being, positive affect, school engagement and achievement (e.g., Wagner & Ruch, 2015).
- ▶ However, there is a lack of knowledge about character strengths programs in children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Niemic, Shogren, & Wehmeyer, 2017).

### OBJECTIVES

To address the impact of identifying, developing, and promoting character strengths in children with and without special needs in the ordinary curriculum.



### METHOD AND INTERVENTION

Recruitment of 12 teachers self-selected, trained about strengths-oriented interventions (Linkins et al., 2014).

Nine classes with a total of 147 children in primary schools (8-12 years old,  $m = 9.59$ ) including 3 children with special needs.

Intervention by teachers during school time from November 2018 to February 2019 with the following instructions:

- ▶ at least 5 lessons to be completed between November and February
- ▶ pedagogical guidelines to be respected
- ▶ adaptation and creation of tools by teachers according to the context

Pedagogical guidelines:

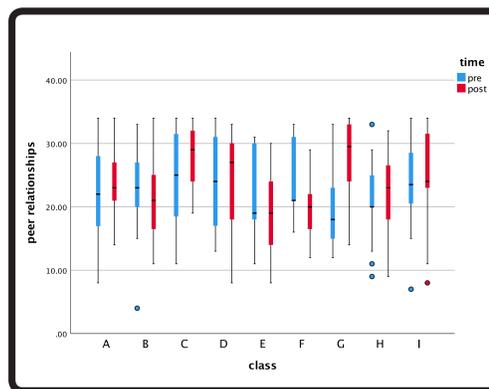
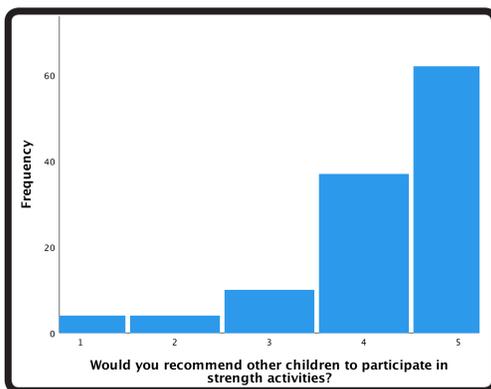
- ▶ discovering the language of strengths
- ▶ identifying my own strengths and those of my classmates
- ▶ recognizing and using strengths in new contexts
- ▶ celebrating the group's strengths

Quantitative measures pre and post intervention:

school performance, peer relationship quality, school well-being.

Qualitative measures post intervention:

appreciation of the intervention (students) and perceived impact on classroom climate (teachers).



### RESULTS

- ▶ High interest from students: more than 90% would recommend the interventions to peers ( $N=117$ ,  $m=4.27$ ,  $sd=.997$ ).
- ▶ High impact perceived by teachers: 100% report that the activities were useful to their students and want to reuse ( $N=12$ ).
- ▶ Controlling peer relationship quality before intervention, a One-way ANCOVA suggested a statistically significant difference between classes on peer relationships quality after intervention ( $F(8,137)=4.53$ ,  $p<.001$ , partial eta squared=.21).
- ▶ First set of results will be confirmed with final analyses that will be carried out in September.

### DISCUSSION AND PERSPECTIVES

Strengths-based intervention was very appreciated by teachers and students.

Differences may be explained by teachers' pedagogy and motivational style during strengths-based intervention:

- ▶ personal involvement (teacher as a model)
- ▶ creation/adaptation of tools which fit the school context
- ▶ time given to allow children to practice
- ▶ teachers' belief in the strengths-oriented interventions

Interviews with teachers will provide a better understanding of the pedagogical variables.

Future studies could:

- ▶ use the results of this first set of exploratory research studies to create a robust intervention program based on teachers' experiences
- ▶ use more direct measures
- ▶ use single case design protocols to better understand the effects of the program with children with special needs.

### REFERENCES

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