Developing Character Strengths in College Students Through Online Interventions

Finding the Good Life: How Positive Psychology Can Help College Students to Discover and Utilize their Personal Strengths and Virtues

Institute for College Student Values

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Overview of this Presentation

What are strengths and how do you develop them?

Why should we use technology to develop strengths?

What is the evidence that technology works?

What technology already exists and is being developed that will aid in this process?

How do you become involved in the development of new technologies?

Strengths Overview

What are strengths and how do you develop them?

Two Basic Premises of the Strengths Philosophy

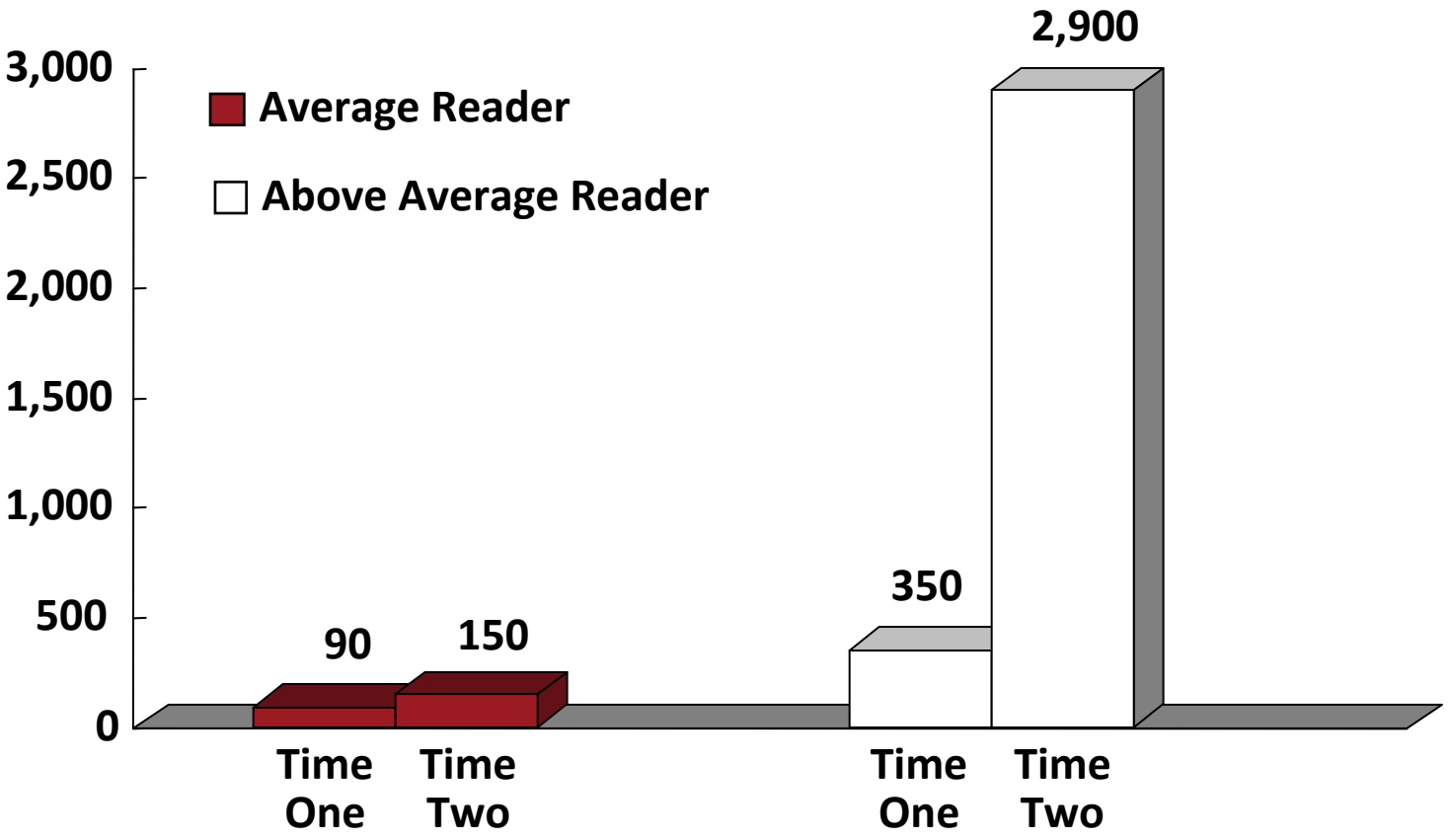
You already have within yourself what you need to succeed!

"Individuals gain more when they build on their talents, than when they make comparable efforts to improve their areas of weakness."

Clifton & Harter, 2003, p. 112

"greatness" comes from building on natural talents

Speed-Reading Course Illustration



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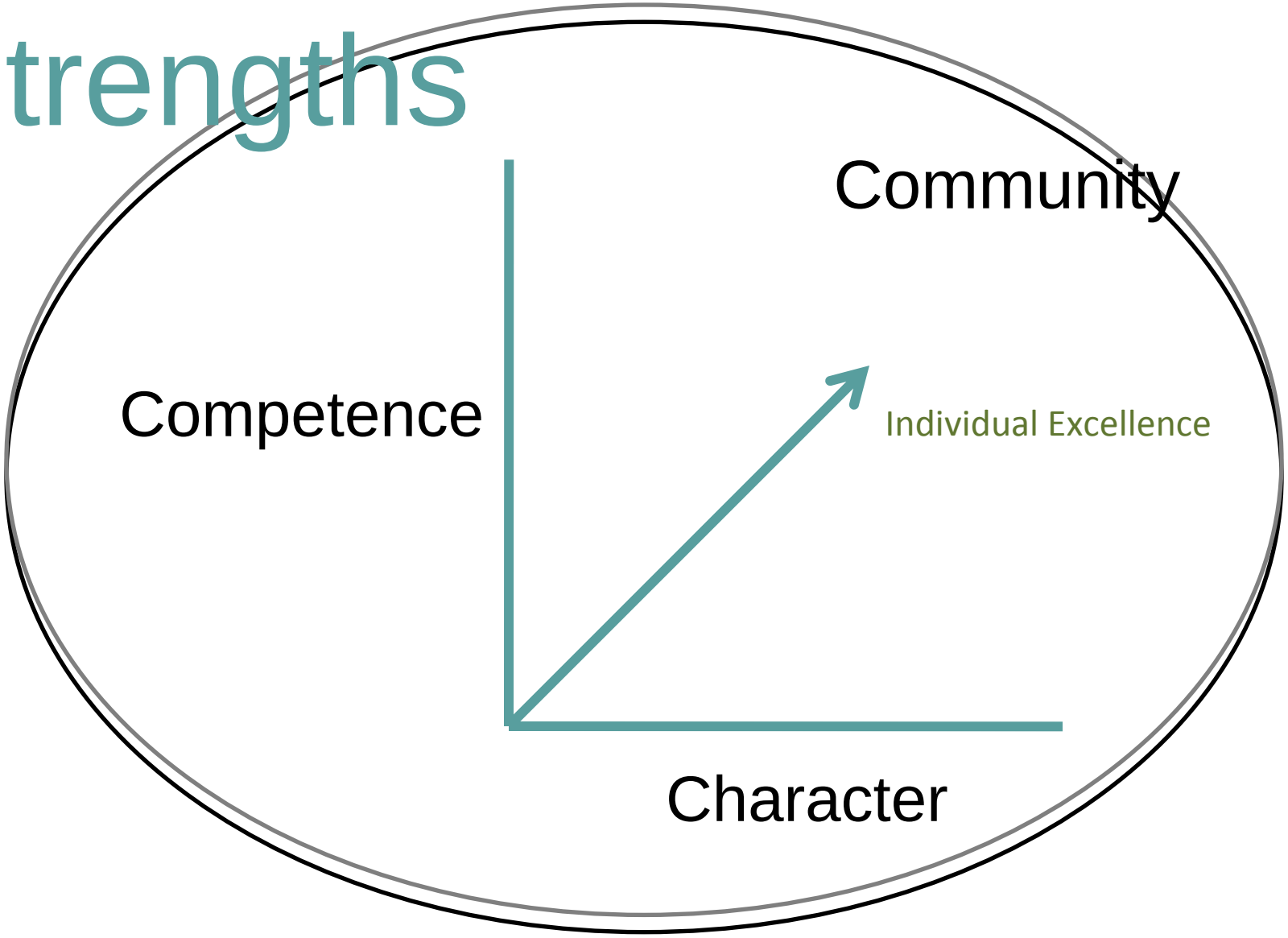
Strengths



So many strengths, so little time!

C [(T + E) x (K + S)] = Thriving Individual

Yikes!

Element One of Developing Strengths

$$C\,[\,(T + E) \times (K + S)]^{T} =$$

Talent + Energy

Element Two of Developing Strengths

$$C\,[\,(T + E) \times (K + S)]^{T} =$$

Knowledge + Skills

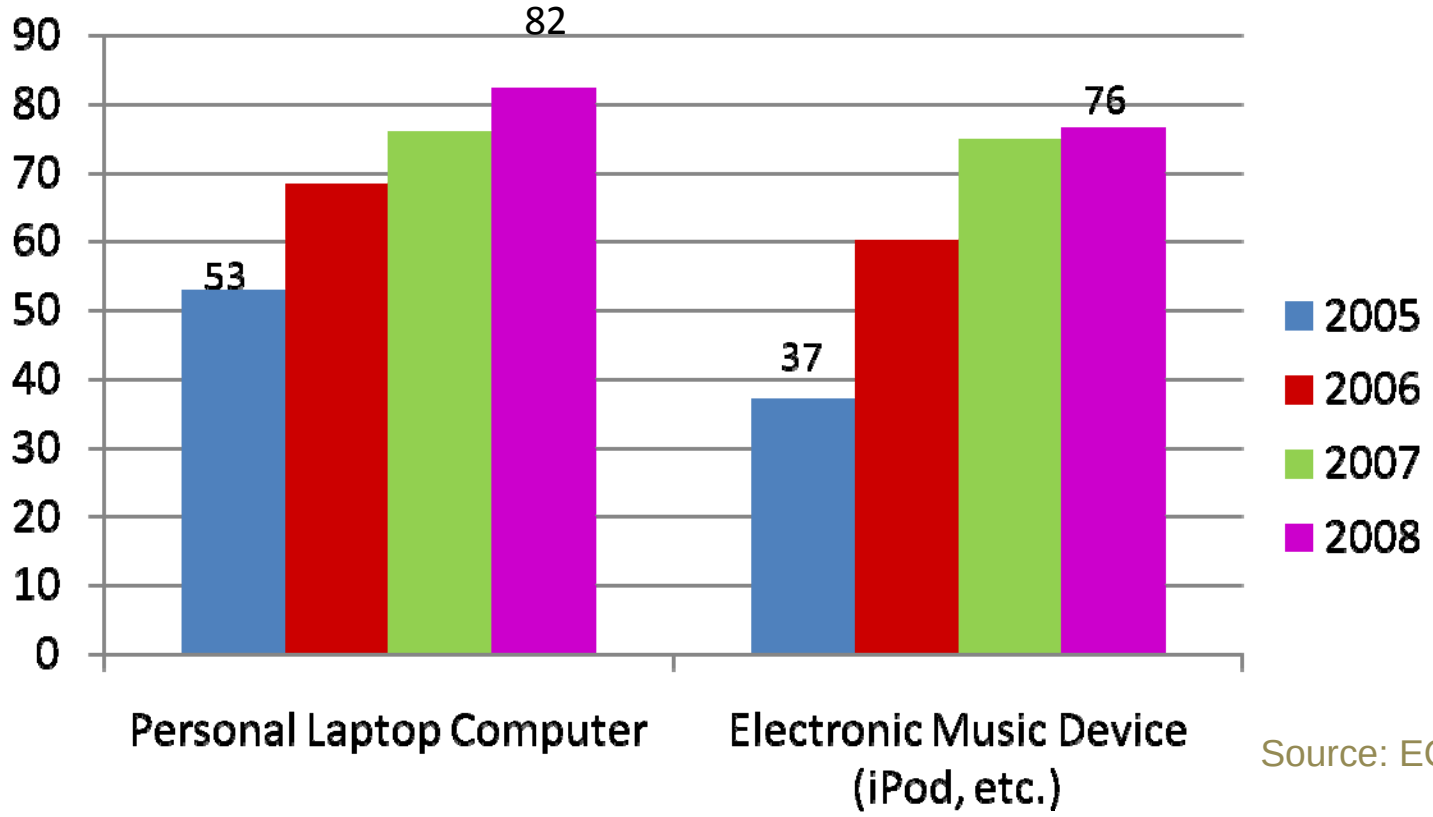
Element Three of Developing Strengths

$$C\,[\,(T + E) \times (K + S)]^{T} =$$

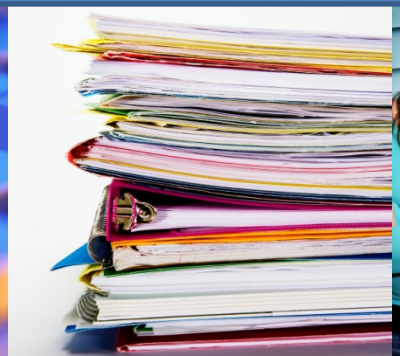
Character

Why should we use technology to develop strengths?

Technology Ownership



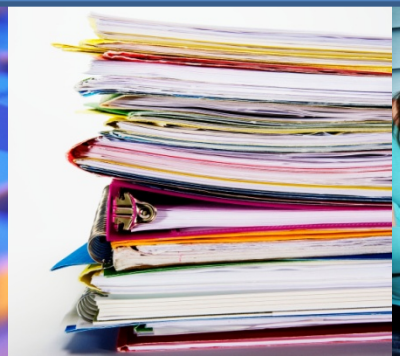
Source: ECAR, 2008



Time Online

Average of **19.6** hours online each week

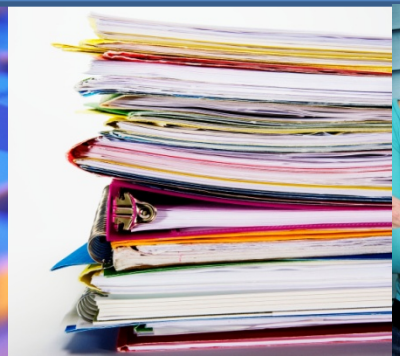
7.4% spend **more than 40 hours** online weekly



Student Internet Activities

Activity	Percent Engaged (*n* = 27,317)	Median Frequency of Use
Access college/university library website	93.4%	Weekly
Social networking site (Facebook, MySpace, etc.)	85.2%	Daily
Course related website or management system	82.3%	Several times/Week

Source: NCAR, 2008

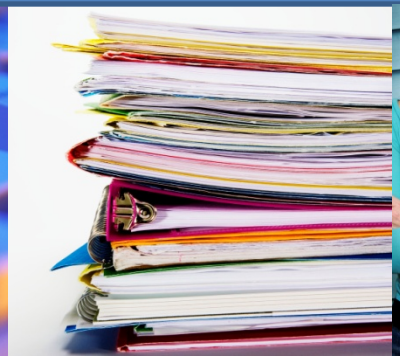


Social Networking Sites

Over 85% use these types of sites

Close to 60% report daily use, up from 32% in 2006

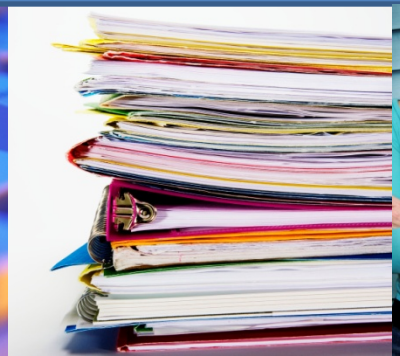
Facebook: 2/3 of users log in at least once a day



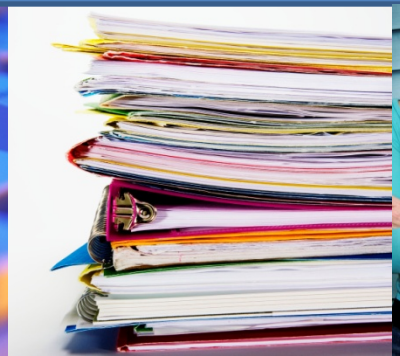
Learning Online

50.8% report a desire/interest in learning through programs they can control or that require user input

Increased comprehension of material in online vs. paper format



What is the evidence that technology works?



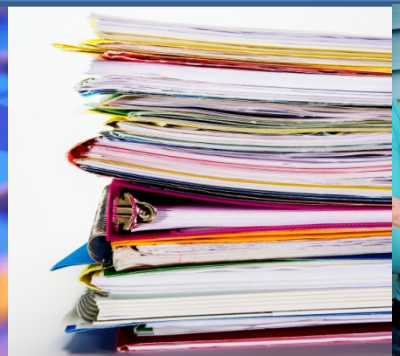
Internet-Based Interventions

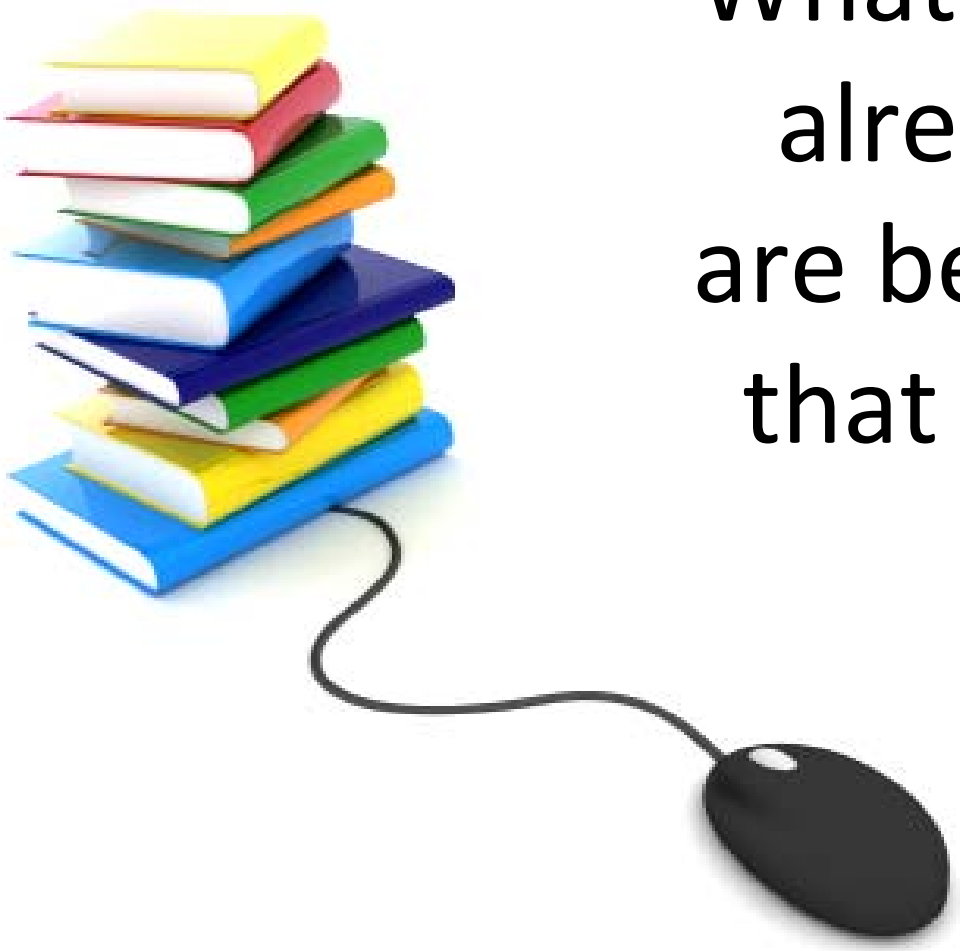
5 happiness exercises & one placebo

Measure happiness and depressive symptoms

Three good things	↑ happiness (6 months)
Using signature strengths in a new way	↕ depression (6 months)
Gratitude visit	↑ happiness (1 month)
Others	immediate, transient effects

Source: Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005





What technologies already exist and are being developed that will aid in this process?

What Technologies Exist to Develop

Talent & Energy?

Talent: StrengthsQuest

- Grounded in Positive Psychology
- More than 400,000 students, staff, and faculty members on 600 campuses have utilized the instrument
- www.strengthsquest.com

Talent: Leadership Insights

http://www.leadingfromyourstrengths.com/leadershipcourse/course.html

Energy: Podcast

Podcast:

Take Control of Your Career and Life

Marcus Buckingham & Oprah

www.oprah.com

What Technologies Exist to Develop

Character?

Character Strengths Inventory

- http://www.viastrengths.org/

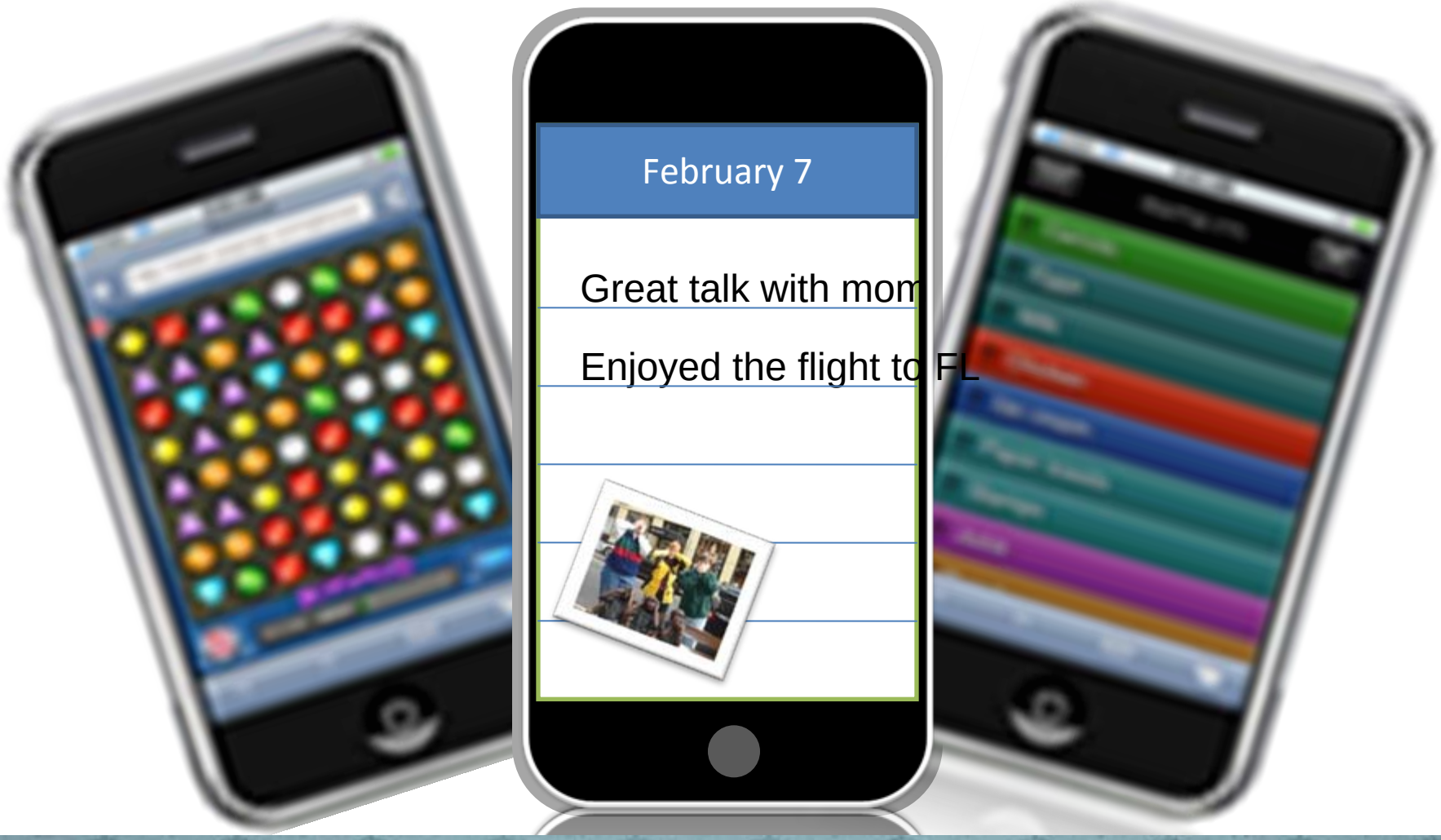
- Practice center, & tools, research, library

Character Strengths of Purpose & Hope

Mission Statement Builder

http://www.franklincovey.com/tc/resources/view/msb

Character Strength of Gratitude



Franklin Covey Self-Scoring 7 Habits Profile

FranklinCovey
we enable greatness

- Because the 7 Habits are based on principles, they bring the maximum long-term beneficial results possible.
- The Self-Scoring 7 Habits Profile can help you evaluate your current level of effectiveness.
- http://www.franklincovey.com/tc/mediaengine/public/files/7_habits_profile.pdf

Character Strengths of Social Intelligence & Emotional Intelligence

INSTITUTE *for* HEALTH *and* HUMAN POTENTIAL

http://www.ihhp.com/testsite.htm

Multiple Character Strengths Inventories

Measures include: optimism, love, perseverance, meaning in life

http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/

Character Stories

Randy Pausch – *Last Lecture*

http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=8577255250907450469

Holocaust Survivor Stories

http://www.ushmm.org/

What Technology Is Being Created to Develop Character?

My Sky Café

Launch to My Sky Adventures

Launch to Strengths Website

Launch to Strengths-Oriented Student Leadership

What is this site all about?

http://www.myskycafe.org

mySKY cafe

WHERE THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Email Address:

Password:

GO

Forgot Password?

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"MySkyCafe is my new favorite interactive experience..."

"Not only was I able to learn in-depth information about how I think, but the online games were really fun and addictive."

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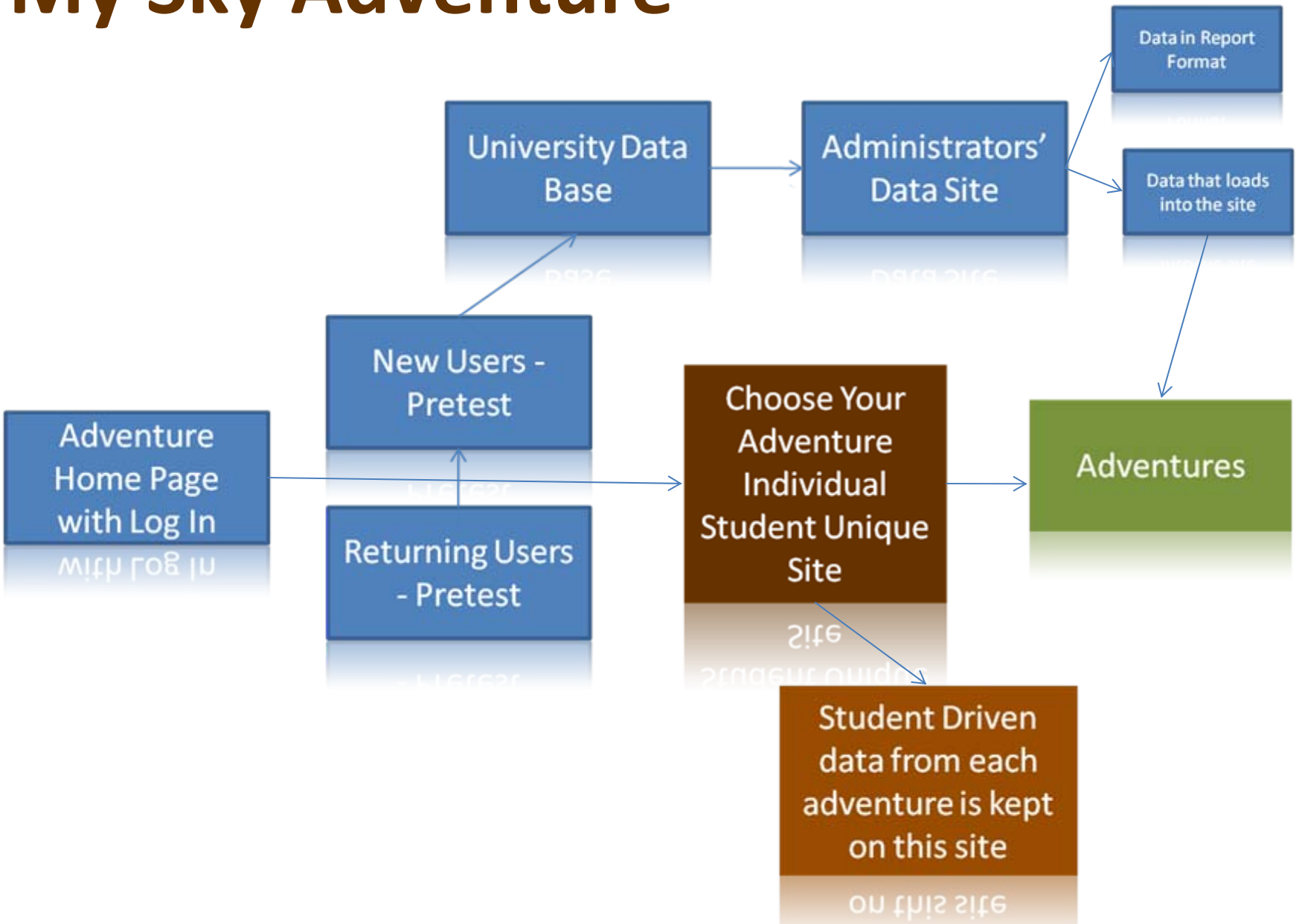
My Sky Adventure



My Sky Adventures

hope
love

Why those outcomes for My Sky?

Correlated highly to life satisfaction

Park, N., Peterson, C. & Seligman, M. (2004)

Individual constructs had a relationship with an outcome important to higher education

Ex: Hope - high hope out performed low-hope on measures of academic success. (Curry et al., 1997; Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991)

How do you become involved in the development of new technologies?

Your Questions?

www.apu.edu/strengthsacademy

Or

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