SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING RESEARCH ABSTRACTS

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ADULT SEL

Developing "Storysight": Collective Resilience through Mindful Storytelling and in Communities of Educators

Authors

Kelley Munger
FuelEd Schools, Atlanta, GA, USA

Sarah Mushlin
FuelEd Schools, Livermore, CA, USA

Jasmine Barnes
FuelEd Schools, Chicago, IL, USA

Nicole Cecchini
FuelEd Schools, Houston, TX, USA

Megan Marcus
FuelEd Schools, San Diego, CA, USA

✉

kelley.munger@fueledschools.org

Abstract

To address the "burnout cascade" in educators, mindfulness training has recently gained attention as a promising intervention. However, the definition of mindfulness training can be expanded far beyond the typical understanding of mindfulness as a solitary practice. While independent mindfulness practice has demonstrated increased self-regulation and compassion in educators (Emerson, Leyland, Hudson, Rowse, Hanley, and Hugh-Jones, 2017), collective and attachment-based mindfulness interventions with a focus on strengthening the practice of self-and-others awareness may also produce a complementary impact: increased emotional resilience, defined as increased empathy, more positive perceptions of others' behavior, and less emotional reactivity.

The research and development team at FuelEd Schools conducted a mixed methods study to explore the impacts of a collective and attachment-based mindfulness intervention on educators. Leadership Institute, a three-day intensive training provided by FuelEd Schools, guides educators to gain awareness about their own developmental stories as well as awareness of the developmental stories of others. The three-day intensive culminates with a "mindful storytelling" circle, in which small groups of participants share their developmental and attachment stories with one another. For this study, the researchers recruited 23 Leadership Institute participants from a school cluster located in a historically underserved area of a large metropolitan area in the South. Each participant completed one to two qualitative interviews exploring their emotional lives as educators, as well as their perceptions of the personal impacts of Leadership Institute. A larger subset of 60 Leadership Institute participants were administered a follow-up survey to explore self-reported impacts of Leadership Institute six months after participation.

Themes related to shifts in theory of mind emerged from both qualitative and quantitative data. Theory of mind, an important social-cognitive skill, involves the capacity to understand that other people's thoughts, emotions, and beliefs may be different from your own, and to consider the factors that may have led to others' mental states. One educator described this shift: "I noticed that I am silently seeing those around me with a new lens." Another described: "Going through my own background and looking at myself objectively has helped me understand myself and be more empathetic with others. I've been nice with myself and gentler with myself. . . and with my own students. Giving them a break. Letting them mess up. Now I feel like I change and react to what the child needs, not what I need." Interestingly, more than one participant made the connection between understanding of self and developing understanding of others, specifically through the lens of imagining or remembering another person's developmental or attachment story. Based on findings, the research team developed the term "storysight," or the capacity to see others through the lens of their own and another's story, to describe the change described by participants.

Mindfulness interventions that develop "storysight" may positively impact the social-emotional development of educators. Based on findings from this small study, further research is needed to explore the impacts of collective mindfulness on the development of "storysight," as well as other secondary impacts related to educator wellness and effectiveness.

Additional Information

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1GpByu5yvdQhyUtNRNnHQYRwXCq9of9DuGkPsNqWWnKk/edit?usp=sharing

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ADULT SEL

Developing the Social-Emotional Competencies of Early Career Teachers in High-Need Urban Schools

Authors

Helen Lee
Department of Comparative Human Development, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

Bridgette Davis
School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago
Chicago, IL, USA

Micere Keels
Department of Comparative Human Development, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA

✉

helenlee@uchicago.edu

Abstract

In the coming years, schools will be confronted with students' psychological trauma from the ongoing public health crisis and growing social unrest. Teachers will be called on to socially and emotionally support students while navigating extreme and chronic stressors associated with the current context themselves. As schools and districts restructure the support system for students, they must also reimagine the support system for teachers, particularly for those who are most vulnerable to developing unhealthy coping responses.

The literature suggests that early-career teachers may be particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of extreme and chronic stress. During the first few years of their career, teachers either engage in a transformational process that helps them become more effective in the classroom or disengage from their work environment and withdraw (Steffy and Wolfe 2012). Teachers who do not develop productive ways of coping—and who are not supported to do so—are more likely to exhibit stress symptoms that compromise their capacity to support students (Dworkin et al., 1990; Figley, 1995), whereas teachers who are well-supported and prepared to overcome work-related challenges tend to become more resilient (Beltman, Mansfield, and Price, 2011; Mansfield et al., 2016). Thus, the support structure for teachers within a school can play an important role in how teachers are able to support students immediately and in the long haul.

Our qualitative interviews with 51 early-career teachers in high-needs schools revealed that teachers encounter a myriad of chronic and extreme stressors that can diminish their capacity to meet the academic and social-emotional demands of students. storBuilding a support network and engaging with positive varied sources of support, however, may not be enough if teachers work in environments that are persistently under-resourced, experiencing organizational churn, and/or led by those who minimize or overlook the importance of well-being. Additionally, those without a network of support or healthy ways to respond to stress may be at greater risk of developing unhealthy coping behaviors that reduce their quality of life and likelihood of seeing teaching as a viable career.

While our paper utilizes qualitative pre-pandemic data, our findings offer timely insights for districts that recognize a crisis like COVID-19 will require a transformation of school-based support systems for both students and teachers. Schools must go beyond encouraging teachers to practice self-care and build a support system that makes teaching a sustainable profession. We recommend that districts and schools ensure that early-career teachers have dedicated mentorship, other structured instructional and social-emotional supports, access to appropriate professional development opportunities, and consistency in their workload. Districts and schools must also recognize the distress and isolation that comes with working with students in persistently under-resourced schools and integrate care and healing practices for both students and educators.

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Examining the Association between Teacher Stress and Classroom Behaviors: Implications for the Promotion of SEL in the Classroom

Authors

Summer S. Braun
School of Education
University of Virginia, VA, USA

Chelsea A. K. Duran
School of Education
University of Virginia, VA, USA

Catherine P. Bradshaw
School of Education
University of Virginia, VA, USA

✉

sbraun@virginia.edu

Abstract

Teachers' stress-related experiences have been linked to the development of students' social and emotional skills (e.g., Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016; Roberts et al., 2016). Research suggests that teachers' experiences of stress are related to their classroom behaviors, yet the few studies that have investigated these links have not employed measures specific enough to indicate which practices are most closely related to teachers' stress (Hamre & Pianta, 2004; McLean & Connor, 2015). The current study investigated the association between teachers' self-reported stress and objective observations of teachers' classroom behaviors. As it is also possible that stress is related to patterns of classroom behavior, this association was explored using both variable- and person-centered approaches.

Data for this study come from 525 secondary school teachers participating in the Double Check project. Teachers reported on their feelings of stress, and observers administered the ASSIST observational measure (Rusby et al., 2011), which included counting instances of specific teacher behaviors ("tallies"), and, immediately post-observation, completion of a set of Likert-type items about teachers' behavior ("globals").

For the variable-centered approach, a series of multilevel, multiple regression models with teacher- and school-level covariates was run. Tallied outcomes required using zero-inflated, negative binomial regression models. Teacher stress was associated with more frequent solicitations for student responses (B = 0.08, SE = 0.02, p < .01; incidence rate ratio: 1.08). Two sequences of latent profile analyses were run: one for the tallies and one for the globals. None of the tally-based models with more than 1 class (up to 4 classes) produced adequate model fit. For the global-based models, model fit comparisons supported a 4-class solution (entropy: 0.89; minimum diagonal classification probabilities above 90%). Classes were rank-ordered consistently across all outcomes, with Class 1 having the lowest pattern of mean scores, and Class 4 having the highest pattern of mean scores across outcomes. In testing the association between stress and class membership, Class 4 (highest frequency practices) had highest reported stress, with significantly higher stress than Class 1 (B = -0.33, OR = 0.72, p < .05) and Class 2 (B = -0.31, OR = 0.71, p < .05). After controlling for covariates, these differences were no longer significant.

Results from both approaches indicate higher levels of teaching practice among more highly stressed teachers. It may be that stress heightens teachers' awareness and responsiveness in the classroom, resulting in higher levels of practices, having encouraging implications for supporting the development of students' SEL skills. Heightened stress and practice may also reflect sensitivity to teaching-related challenges. Such an explanation is consistent with theories suggesting occupational challenges can serve as both stressors and motivators (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010). These results underscore the need to better understand stress and its consequences for teachers' emotional health and student development in what is known to be a highly demanding profession.

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SEL in New Teacher Mentoring

Author

Jaclyn Roster
St. John's University
New York, NY, USA

✉

jaclyn.roster@gmail.com

Abstract

Social and emotional learning is recognized as an integral element of education, yet focus has been limited on the role that SEL can play in teacher education. As we face a paradigm shift in PreK-12 education due to the current pandemic, with remote learning and constant unknowns, teachers' social and emotional needs must be front and center in the conversation.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the extent to which mentorship of new special education teachers working in high-need urban schools incorporated instruction of a teachers' own social and emotional learning competencies and how these teachings impacted new special education teachers' job satisfaction and retention. Using Moustakas' heuristic process in phenomenological analysis, new special educators teaching in high-need schools in New York City and special education mentors were interviewed and observed over the course of a year. The study was based on the incorporation of two theories: the theory of social and emotional learning, as defined by CASEL, and the theory of new teacher development, as defined by Ingersoll & Strong (2011). The link between these two theories is that if mentors help new teachers manage their own social and emotional learning, then the direct result of this support will lead to enhanced teacher behaviors. If greater job satisfaction and retention in the field leads to more effective teaching, then this will contribute to improved student outcomes.

The study found that new special educators who received SEL supports from their mentors within their first year of teaching reported greater job satisfaction and more positive thoughts on staying in the teaching profession as compared to those new teachers who did not receive the same supports. Of the individual SEL competencies, new teachers felt the self-management supports they received from mentors—including stress management and organizational supports—were the most useful to their practice. Mentors recognized the importance of these contributions but also equally valued the social awareness support and the relationship skills support they provided. These findings can guide induction programs, school districts, and schools to refine how to best assist new special education teachers working in high-need, urban schools. It can inform best mentorship practices in SEL and lead to more effective, happier teachers who stay within the special education teaching profession.

The first years of teaching can be challenging, especially in this constantly changing environment. Mentors who provide SEL supports to their new teacher mentees can assist these teachers with enjoying their jobs and staying within the teaching profession.

The researcher's continued work will focus on how schools and districts are providing SEL supports to teachers during remote learning and how these SEL supports impact teachers' job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Ingersoll, R., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/12

Additional Information

www.jaclynroster.com

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Evaluating the Measurement Quality of Social and Emotional Learning Assessments: Raising Awareness and Increasing Accessibility of Professional Testing Standards

Authors

Jeremy Burrus, ACT
Iowa City, IA, USA

Susanne Denham
Department of Psychology, George
Mason University, Fairfax, VA, USA

Steve Elliott
Sanford School of Social and Family
Dynamics, Arizona State University,
Tempe, AZ, USA

Kurt F. Geisinger
Buros Center for Testing, University
of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE, USA

Laura S. Hamilton
RAND Corporation, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

Thomas P. Hogan
Psychology Department,
Scranton University, Scranton, PA

Jessica L. Jonson
Buros Center for Testing, University
of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE, USA

Randy Kamphaus
College of Education,
University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, USA

Michael Rodriguez
Department of Educational
Psychology, University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis, MN, USA

Neal Schmitt
Department of Psychology, Michigan
State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Beverly J. Vandiver
Counselor Education and Counseling
Psychology, Western Michigan
University, Kalamazoo, MI, USA

Frank C. Worrell
Graduate School of Education,
University of California–Berkeley,
Berkeley, CA, USA

✉

jjonson@buros.org

Abstract

Gathering evidence of students' social and emotional learning (SEL) that informs rather than misguides decisions can save educators valuable time, energy, and resources. Since the 1950s, the measurement profession has published a set of quality standards to serve as a guide in the development and use of tests. Although these standards are well known within the measurement profession, they are less well known to those who identify, select, and use tests and assessments. Therefore, the Spencer Foundation funded the Buros Center for Testing and a distinguished group of scholars to undertake a grant project to provide a set of accessible technical guidelines for educators and school-based professionals. The outcome is an SEL Assessment Technical Guidebook made up of three guides for identifying an SEL assessment, evaluating the measurement quality of an SEL assessment, and administering and using an SEL assessment. The resulting product is the translation of professional testing standards into a coherent content and form that is applicable to the purposes, audiences, and settings in which SEL assessment is taking place.

Additional Information

https://buros.org/sel-assessment-technical-guidebook

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Making Effective SEL Possible Online

Authors

Tomohiro Hoshi
Head of School
Stanford Online High School
Redwood City, CA, USA

Ryan Salvador
Director of Academic Advising
Stanford Online High School
Redwood City, CA, USA

Tracy Steele
Director of Student Support
Stanford Online High School
Redwood City, CA, USA

Abstract

As online learning has rapidly expanded and SEL has become a part of a basic focus in education, it has become a more urgent question whether students can develop social-emotional skills in the online environment. Based on a study conducted at Stanford Online High School (OHS) in collaboration with the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), we will demonstrate that students can develop and maintain SEL competencies in an online educational setting. Using interactive virtual classes, we have designed the teaching methods in a flipped classroom format to provide students frequent and regular opportunities for SEL. Our approach is underpinned by the "kernels of learning" approach at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. We believe various teaching methods promote development of SEL competencies as defined by the CASEL framework. To assess the hypotheses associated with the basic tenets of our online pedagogy, OHS participated in a two-year SEL student self-assessment organized by CAIS during 2017-2019. Among the 33 peer institutions participating in the study across the entire state, Stanford OHS was the only online school. In the four SEL areas assessed by the study—growth mindset, grit, learning strategies and self-efficacy—Stanford OHS students scored in the top quartile among all participating schools. In addition, the students' scores remained the same or increased across the measures over the two-year period. These findings dispel the idea that students who attend online schools lack opportunities to develop SEL skills. By infusing the educational design with SEL opportunities, we can effectively implement SEL online.

Additional Information

https://ohs.stanford.edu/

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Recommendations vs. Reality: Exploring the Landscape of Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Screening Assessment in Schools

Authors

Amy M. Briesch
Department of Applied Psychology
Northeastern University
Boston, MA, USA

Sandra M. Chafouleas
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT, USA

✉

a.briesch@northeastern.edu

Abstract

Early identification through screening programs forms a critical component to the success of prevention-based frameworks, and many options for school-based screening assessments have been proposed, developed, and advocated by various stakeholders. However, little is known regarding how, which, and why SEB screening practices are implemented in schools, and if such practices impact key student outcomes. A recently completed project involved a series of studies exploring these issues around the what, why, and how related to SEB screening practices in schools. Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, the project entailed a mixed methods design that included coding documents from state departments of education with follow-up interviews, a multi-stakeholder (administrators, teachers, student support staff, parents) survey involving a nationally representative sample of U.S. public school districts, and analyses of publicly available databases.

Results across the project were summarized into six primary takeaways. The first was that state-level guidance on SEB screening is limited, meaning that school districts are largely left to make decisions on their own. For example, a systematic website review found that over half of state departments of education (53%) did not mention universal SEB screening at all. Second, academic and physical health screening practices are more established than for SEB. School building administrators reported high levels of both universal academic and physical health screening at the elementary (Academic = 94%, Health = 77%) and secondary (Academic = 68%, Health = 63%) levels. In contrast, however, only 1 in 10 administrators reported use of universal SEB screening. Third, assessment approaches used by districts and schools to identify students with SEB risk vary widely. Whereas 55% of respondents indicated they refer students who exhibit SEB problems to an internal support team for assistance, approximately 1 in 10 respondents reported either (a) encouraging teachers to independently develop and implement an intervention plan to address SEB problems, (b) nominating students exhibiting SEB problems for screening by a familiar adult, or (c) referring students exhibiting SEB problems to an outside consultant or agency. Fourth, administrators perceive tensions between current and ideal approaches to identifying students with SEB risk. That is, although only 10% of administrators reported implementing universal SEB screening, slightly more than one-third reported that schools should use this approach. Fifth, knowledge and beliefs have an important role in directions for SEB service. Results of a structural equation model highlighted several malleable factors in predicting student outcomes including whether administrators (a) viewed SEB problems as a concern and priority, (b) understood how to implement the screening approach, (c) were open to changing current practices, and (d) viewed the procedures for identifying and supporting students to be feasible to implement. Finally, all stakeholder groups strongly support a role for schools in SEB screening. In surveying district administrators, building administrators, student support staff, teachers, and parents, we found that all groups agreed that schools should be screening for (a) the presence of internalizing and externalizing problems, (b) the presence of strengths or personal competencies, and (c) indicators of abuse.

Additional Information

https://needs2.education.uconn.edu/

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Stress, Support, and SEL: Measuring Teacher–Related Implementation Factors in Schools

Authors

Leah Hunter
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA, USA

Susan Crandall Hart
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA, USA

Lia Sandilos
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA, USA

James DiPerna
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA, USA

✉

ljh222@psu.edu

Abstract

With the growth of universal SEL programs in schools, teachers often play a key role in program implementation. We propose that three factors are related to teachers' implementation of SEL: (a) sources of stress and supports; (b) beliefs about SEL; and (c) approaches to implementation. Through our work on the PEAK (Positive, Engaged, Achieving Kids) Project, an IES-funded cluster-randomized trial in U.S. elementary schools, our research team has developed and evaluated measures to assess these three constructs. PEAK is evaluating the effectiveness of a universal school-based SEL program (SSIS-SEL Classwide Intervention Program; Elliott & Gresham, 2017) when delivered by first- and second-grade teachers. To date, we have collected data with approximately 1,145 students and 128 teachers in 19 schools in 4 states.

Teachers report high job-related stress, which can be a barrier to SEL implementation fidelity (McGoey et al., 2014). There is a notable lack of practical and empirically validated tools to identify malleable supports for teachers. The Measure of Stressors of Supports for Teachers (MOST) was developed to assess perceptions of work-related psychological and ecological stress and supports. An initial structural validation study revealed nine internally consistent (α = .76-.94) and distinct (r = .07-.52) factors which represent three larger domains: school stakeholders; working conditions; and professional well-being. The MOST is intended to serve as a tool for identifying actionable steps to improve teacher well-being, which is important for high-quality teacher-student interactions that allow teachers to generalize SEL program competencies (Whitaker et al., 2015).

In addition, teacher beliefs can impact SEL implementation (Schonert-Reichl, 2017), but few studies have investigated the role and measurement of teacher beliefs in SEL. We created a new measure, the Assessment of School Social-Emotional Teaching (ASSET) in response to this need. While still in progress, initial exploratory factor analyses of elementary teacher responses yielded three factors reflecting teacher attitudes about teaching SEL: attributional beliefs, instructional beliefs, and impact beliefs. Our research team is currently studying relationships among ASSET scores, teacher demographics (ethnicity, race, and gender), SEL experience/knowledge, and related measures of teachers' SEL beliefs (e.g., Brackett et al., 2012), with the goal of adding to the knowledge base on factors that support SEL implementation.

Finally, implementation quality can moderate SEL outcomes (Humphrey et al., 2018). However, few studies have focused explicitly on teachers' diverse approaches to implementation. Our initial examination of PEAK teacher implementation practices indicated that teachers in both grades showed similar rates of program completion (number of lessons taught) and quality of approach (clarity of explanations, engagement with content). In addition, 73% of teachers reported making some program modifications, and a number reported strategic approaches to implementation, such as intentionally "re-teaching" lessons relevant to students' current needs and or adding or substituting materials. The most frequently cited barriers to implementation were finding the time to teach SSIS-SEL lessons and feeling pressure to prioritize academic subjects.

The cumulative goal of our measurement and evaluation efforts across these three areas is to offer psychometrically sound instruments and measurement approaches that can capture barriers and supports to program implementation in an effort to improve SEL dissemination efforts in schools.

Additional Information

https://thepeakproject.org/

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Leveraging SEL to Support Students' Civic Learning

Authors

Laura S. Hamilton
RAND Corporation
Pittsburgh, PA, USA

Julia H. Kaufman
RAND Corporation
Pittsburgh, PA, USA

Lynn Hu
Pardee RAND Graduate School
Santa Monica, CA, USA

✉

lshamilton@ets.org

Abstract

Research shows that SEL not only contributes to students' college and career readiness, but also prepares youth for civic life. High-quality SEL involves active listening, social awareness, sense of agency, and appreciation for diverse perspectives, all of which are also closely related to students' civic learning. Civic learning includes knowledge of civic-related topics, skills that enable students to engage in democratic processes (e.g., collaboration), and dispositions important in a democracy (e.g., concern for others). Recent protests against systemic racism and concerns about voting have amplified calls for improved education to support SEL and civic learning.

Using RAND's American Teacher Panel, we analyzed data from a survey administered in late 2019 to 820 K-12 public school social studies teachers in the U.S. The data were weighted to produce nationally representative estimates. We examined teachers' beliefs and practices, along with contextual conditions that might affect their instruction. Some key findings (see more at www.rand.org/civic-ed):

• Teachers reported emphasizing numerous civic-learning practices. Those involving SEL and improving school climate were most prevalent.

• Most teachers reported not feeling well-prepared to support students' civic development, and large percentages indicated they had not received any training to do so.

• While most teachers said their district-provided materials were culturally appropriate and effective at promoting civic learning, roughly half or more teachers reported a need for more culturally relevant resources and for materials to support English language learners.

• Most teachers indicated a need for more nonteaching time and community partnerships to provide civic learning. Community partnerships might be especially valuable for creating opportunities to offer engaging activities such as service learning.

• Teachers of color and those serving more English language learners reported emphasizing several civic-learning practices more than their white counterparts, as well as a need for more resources to promote civic learning.

• Pressure to cover other subjects was widely reported as an obstacle to civics, particularly in elementary grades, where accountability systems typically focus on mathematics and language arts testing.

• Teachers reported widespread problematic student behaviors related to media, including making unfounded claims in class based on unreliable media sources, sharing hateful posts on social media, and limited ability to evaluate the credibility of online information.

• Among teachers of adolescents, incidents in which students engaged in derogatory comments and demeaning behaviors toward other students based on political views occurred more frequently than incidents related to other group membership (e.g., racial/ethnic groups, LGBTQ status).

Our findings suggest that teachers across the U.S. are committed to promoting civic learning and would welcome engaging, culturally responsive instructional tools to do this better. Their efforts could benefit from state and local policies that highlight the value of SEL and civics, along with advice on how to develop these skills through existing academic subjects and activities. Teachers will play a critical role in the coming years in helping youth develop the broad range of knowledge, skills, and dispositions they will need to succeed and to make their communities better. Systematic data on teachers' experiences are crucial for informing efforts to support their work.

Additional Information

https://www.rand.org//civic-ed.html   https://www.rand.org/sel

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Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of Creating their Cultural Autobiography and Teaching Diverse Students

Author

Abigail Fuller, Ed.D.
Department of Education
Ave Maria University
Ave Maria, FL, USA

✉

Abigail.Fuller@AveMaria.edu

Abstract

This qualitative case study explored pre-service teachers' perceptions of creating a cultural autobiography and teaching diverse students as well as how creating a cultural autobiography serves as a springboard to culturally responsive teaching. Hammond (2015) states, "Culture is like the air we breathe, permeating all we do. And the hardest culture to examine is often our own, because it shapes our actions in ways that seem invisible and normal" (p. 55). Students in America's schools represent an array of cultural heritages. From students' cultures emerge different ways of constructing knowledge, making sense of experiences, and learning (Gay, 2000). However, unlike their students, the majority of American teachers are white, monocultural females who lack experience with individuals of other cultures (Cho and DeCastro, 2005). As a result, cultural mismatch between students and teachers exists. This difference in cultural backgrounds presents difficulty for teachers, particularly in knowing how to create culturally relevant pedagogy for diverse student populations (Seidl, 2007). Given the growing diversity of the student population served in U.S. schools, pre-service teachers must acquire the knowledge and skills required to successfully educate students of all races, ethnicities, and cultures. Utilizing the background knowledge and experiences students take from their respective cultures, teachers can foster meaningful learning opportunities for students (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2001; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The sample population included students who had created cultural autobiographies as a course assignment at a southeastern private religious university during the 2018-2019 academic year. Eight pre-service teachers participated in an initial survey and three—all white females—were selected for further questioning. From the study emerged three themes: meaning, need, and relevance. All participants agreed that completing the cultural autobiography was meaningful to them as future educators. When asked to what extent they agreed that learning about the diversity of their students is necessary, all participants agreed or strongly agreed. All participants recommended this process to their peers, 87.5% enjoyed sharing their cultural autobiographies with peers, and 87.5% said the process helped them learn about themselves. The data was also analyzed within the context of the main tenets of culturally responsive teaching. Results showed evidence that teachers had awareness and were beginning to practice high expectations and celebrating success, teacher-student relationships, and designing curriculum and instruction for diverse students. Cultural competence and critical consciousness were in very beginning stages.

All pre-service teachers in teacher education programs need access to coursework that includes self-analysis related to their background, meaningful conversations with others about their cultural autobiography, and opportunities to learn and discuss how this experience helps them to become prepared for teaching in diverse schools. Reflecting on working in a diverse setting and completing a cultural autobiography allow for continued discussion and further reflection. As resource for overcoming the cultural mismatch barrier, all pre-service teachers should create their own cultural autobiography, gaining insight into their cultural lens, realizing how these factors influence their decisions, and engaging in continuous discussions on best outcomes for diverse students. The full manuscript is available upon request.

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The Growth of Social-Emotional Competence Among Diverse Subgroups of K-2 Students: Quasi-experimental Evidence of Intervention Effect on Developmental Trajectories

Authors

Juyeon Lee
University of California-Berkeley
Berkeley, CA, USA

Valerie B. Shapiro
University of California-Berkeley
Berkeley, CA, USA

Bo-Kyung Elizabeth Kim
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA, USA

Kelly L. Ziemer
University of California-Berkeley
Berkeley, CA, USA

Nehal Eldeeb
University of California-Berkeley,
Berkeley, CA, USA

✉

juyeon.lee@berkeley.edu

Abstract

Objective: Social and emotional learning (SEL) is often highlighted as a promising approach to ensuring healthy development for all youth and providing equitable access to a well-rounded education. Largely unknown, however, is how the benefits of universal SEL are distributed across sociodemographic subgroups. This study (1) explores the extent to which disparities in social-emotional competence (SEC) exist by student gender, age, race/ethnicity, English language learner (ELL) status, special education (SPED) status, and free/reduced-price lunch (FRL) status, and (2) examines the extent to which an SEL intervention disrupts or maintains any observed disparities. Methods: The TOOLBOX Implementation Research Project, a quasi-experimental study, measured 1,766 K-2 students' SEC three times in 2015-2016. Multigroup growth modeling compared student SEC growth trajectories across sociodemographic subgroups under intervention and comparison conditions. Results: Under both conditions, girls (vs. boys) and older (vs. younger) students had higher baseline SEC; Black (vs. full-sample average) and SPED (vs. non-SPED) students had lower baseline; and Asian students (vs. full-sample average) showed more growth. Only Black students showed a statistically different growth rate between two conditions. In the intervention condition, Black students' growth rate did not differ from the average, whereas Black students in the comparison condition showed less-than-average growth. Conclusions: This study suggests that student SEC growth trajectories can differ by gender, age, race/ethnicity, and SPED status. A universal SEL intervention may prevent disparities from widening for Black youth throughout the school year, with implications that allow some marginalized student groups to grow at the same rate as their classmates.

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The Sources of Strength of Teachers of Color: Suggestions for Teacher Education Programs

Author

Lina Darwich
Teacher Education
Lewis & Clark College
Portland, OR, USA

✉

ldarwich@lclark.edu

Abstract

More than half of the students enrolled in American public schools are students of color, yet most of their teachers are white, with teachers of color (TOC) making up less than 20% of the teaching body. Ingersoll and colleagues (2018) stated that the lower number of TOC is not a problem of failure to recruit them but rather a problem of failure to retain them. The authors emphasized that turnover among new TOC was significantly higher among TOC than among white teachers. Nonetheless, there are many TOCs who thrive in the teaching profession despite facing racial prejudice in their schools. The present study contributed to understanding from TOC who have taught for five or more years what factors contributed to their strength and their thoughts on teacher social and emotional well-being so that teacher education programs can better support pre-service teachers of color. This interview study drew on the experiences of 10 TOCs in different communities. Relational-cultural theory and critical race theory were used to inform the study. According to RCT, experiences of isolation and microaggressions are relational violations and at the core of human pain (Comstock et al., 2008). Healing, in contrast, happens in the context of mutually empathic, growth-fostering relationships (Jordan, 2001). RCT's three core components include: (1) people grow through and toward relationships, (2) mutual empathy and mutual growthare the center of growth-fostering relationships, and (3) people's own growth is an outcome of their participation in the development of growth-fostering relationships (Comstock et al., 2008). Furthermore, because race and racism play a central role in the experiences of TOC, critical race theory (CRT) was also used in framing this study. CRT is guided by five principles: (1) centrality of race and racism, (2) challenge to the dominant narratives, (3) commitment to social justice, (4) valuing experiential knowledge and the stories of people, and (5) being interdisciplinary (Kohli, 2009). TOCs identified different kinds of strength mostly rooted in relationships, including received love from family, received feelings of empowerment from veteran colleagues and mentors of color, and mutual support they experienced in their relationships with other TOCs. They also described the importance of feeling that one's identity is reflected in their relationships and most participants experienced that with other TOCs and their students of color. Additionally, the majority emphasized the importance of self-awareness, reflection, and empathy, and lamented the lack of initiatives supporting the social and emotional well-being of teachers. Some highlighted the resistance toward unpacking the emotions involved in teaching. Almost all participants stressed the important role of teacher education programs that focus on equity and social justice and on having explicit conversations on race. The results suggest that teacher education programs would benefit from integrating SEL with a social justice focus in their programs (rather than mostly focus on methodology courses) to help foster the emotional resilience of teachers of color. It would also be of benefit for teacher educators to develop a more nuanced understanding of the social and emotional needs of pre-service teachers of color.

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Beliefs Plus Behaviors: Two Essential Components for Teaching Students about Growth Mindset

Authors

Chris S. Hulleman
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA, USA

Stephanie V. Wormington
Center for Creative Leadership
Greensboro, NC, USA

David Silverman
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL, USA

Yoi Tibbetts
University of Virginia
Charlottesville VA, USA

Katherine Sublett
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA, USA

Erin Vines
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA, USA

Deborah Howard
Valencia College
Orlando, FL, USA

Jeff Kosovich
Center for Creative Leadership
Greensboro, NC, USA

Maryke Lee
Valencia College
Orlando, FL, USA

Julie Phelps
Valencia College
Orlando, FL, USA

✉

csh3f@virginia.edu

Abstract

While there is strong evidence suggesting that having a growth mindset—the belief that intelligence and skills can be developed through hard work, learning from mistakes, and using effective strategies—positively impacts academic outcomes, studies have also identified the potential for unintended adverse effects of teaching students about growth mindset. It is particularly important to avoid promoting what Carol Dweck calls a "False Mindset," which simply encourages students to try hard as the solution to all their learning challenges. This paper presents findings suggesting that, for a growth mindset intervention to be effective, students must not only endorse growth (beliefs), they must also endorse adaptive strategy use (behaviors) in their essay responses.

We used a randomized field experiment to randomly assign students in community college mathematics classrooms to receive either a growth mindset intervention or a control activity. Randomizing students to the experimental condition allows us to make causal inferences about the effect of the growth mindset intervention—relative to the control condition—on student learning outcomes.

In this study, we examined the effects of a growth mindset intervention on community college students' beliefs about mathematics and introductory mathematics course grades. Over 1,100 students were randomly assigned to receive a growth mindset intervention—where students read information on the malleability of intelligence and responded to open-ended reflection prompts—or a control activity where they read about the neuroplasticity of the brain. The experimental results demonstrated that although students in the intervention condition were more likely to endorse a growth mindset, there were no overall effects of the intervention on achievement. However, we found that students' responses to the open-ended essay prompts—which help students internalize learnings from the intervention—were related to achievement outcomes. Specifically, students who wrote about both growth beliefs and adaptive learning strategies of a growth mindset received significantly higher final course grades than students in the other essay groups. Conversely, students who did not write about growth beliefs or adaptive strategies, or who wrote only about growth, performed no better than students in the control condition.

These findings can inform the way educators talk about and teach growth mindset to students. Traditionally, the focus has been on encouraging students to adopt the belief that intelligence is malleable, and there has been less emphasis on the importance of using adaptive learning strategies. Not only do these findings suggest that educators would do well to explicitly teach both the beliefs and behaviors components of growth mindset, but they should also instruct students in a wide range of learning strategies and ensure that students have access to the resources they need to make use of these strategies.

Additional Information

https://motivatelab.org/valencia   https://motivatelab.org/

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Research Case Study: Higher Education Leading with Social, Emotional, and Academic Development

Authors

Tara Madden-Dent
Nevada Department of Education
Carson City, NV, USA

Debb Oliver
Mindful SEAD
Dayton, Nevada, USA

Kimberly Reed
Sierra Nevada University
Incline Village, NV, USA

Eleanor Strand
Sierra Nevada University
Incline Village, NV, USA

Brooke Stratton
Sierra Nevada University
Incline Village, NV, USA

✉

taramaddendent@gmail.com

Abstract

This research publication establishes a structured case study of how one university collaborated with a state department of education and a social-emotional professional development nonprofit training firm to co-create and implement new SEL options for youth and adults. A historical context of the state's need for more SEAD in higher education is provided which inspired the triangulated approach through a multitiered system of supports. Then, an in-depth examination of two explicit SEL initiatives are provided as replicable examples of effective methods to increase SEL competencies and support individuals across the state. The first initiative was an intensive three-day SEL summit for educational leaders to immerse themselves in SEL professional development and action planning. This initiative was partnered with ongoing coaching and training to support participants in implementing SEL into their work. The second initiative was the creation of four new graduate-level SEL classes designed for educators within the Masters of Teaching program and offered as recertification classes. The authors describe each of the classes and how they simultaneously satisfy a new Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Endorsement for licensure accepted by the state department of education. Detailed information regarding class participants, methods, and class outcomes are described. This paper concludes with a current look at how the higher educational institution has built upon these initiatives to support secondary students' SEL workforce readiness skills. Lastly, the publication will conclude with an Implications for Practice and Recommendations section.

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Social Emotional Learning, Social Cognitive Theory, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Need: A Proactive Approach Fostering Supportive Online Learning Communities

Author

Jamie Cuda, Ed.D.
School of Health Professions
and Education, Utica College
Utica, NY, USA

✉

jamiecuda@gmail.com

Abstract

Community colleges have a mission of affording students open access to higher education. Colleges are adding more online courses to accommodate the growth in online enrollment. However, there is limited research addressing the relationship between course design, instruction, social presence, and student attrition. Student attrition in online courses at community college directly reduces student access to higher education and negatively impacts student success and institutional outcomes (Cuda, 2016).

There is a link between social presence and student satisfaction and success in online courses (Cuda, 2016.). Student and instructor separation creates a challenge to design and instruct courses where students feel connected to the instructor and classmates (Cuda, 2016). Students' perceptions of social presence, collaborative learning, social interaction, and student satisfaction with their learning experience are critical components of student learning and success in a virtual learning environment (Cuda, 2016). This quasi-experimental study examined the impact of an instructional design strategy, team-based learning, on students' perceptions of social presence, collaborative learning, social interaction, and satisfaction with their learning experience in an online medical terminology course at a community college in New York.

An online course instructional design assessment model emerged to assess students' perceptions of social presence, collaborative learning, social interaction, and satisfaction with their learning experience through the intersection of social cognitive theory, social presence theory, and community of inquiry. Students' perceptions of social presence, collaborative learning, social interaction, and satisfaction with their learning experience in an online course increased as a result of the student team-based instructional course design strategy.

Team-based instructional design strategies ensure the quality of instruction and enhance the learning environment. Students' actions and reactions to the instructor and classmates including communication, exchanging information, cooperative learning, and competition, coupled with the students' ability to project themselves socially and effectively in an online course, lead to connectedness to the instructor and classmates (Cuda, 2016). Social relationships, involvement, and interactions between instructor and students lead to students' perceived perception of self-worth, fulfillment gratification, and contentment with the online learning experience (Cuda, 2016). When students work and solve problems through interaction with others with varied upbringing and experiences, individual and group understanding increase, facilitating learning and academic success. Recommendations support preparation of online course designers, instructors, and implementation and evaluation of online courses.

Higher education institutions must focus on student success and program completion. Students are the essence of all educational institutions and must be held at the top of the institution's organizational chart (Cuda, 2016). A circle of responsibility emerged in which student success was contingent on institutional commitment to research and best practices, course designer and instructor professional development, and student orientation and resources.

Increasing higher education access and successful course and program completion is significant as a pathway out of poverty to improve social justice. Recommendations include direct practice application. Fostering supportive online learning communities is critical to student learning and enhances students' self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Additional Information

https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_etd/265/

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SEL Policy in Ontario, Canada: Curriculum Content and Teacher Understanding

Author

Nicole E. Larsen
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Toronto, ON, Canada

Abstract

In 2019, Ontario introduced a new Health and Physical Education curriculum for grades one to eight that included a clear strand focused on social and emotional learning. Unfortunately, this new strand fell under the radar, as the curriculum was released amid controversy surrounding the changes to the sexual health component of the curriculum. The current work aims to examine the overlooked social-emotional learning strand and evaluates the quality of the content based on what we know about best practices in social-emotional learning. Specifically, the social-emotional learning expectations are evaluated based on the five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Analysis of this curriculum shows that while the document does a reasonable job of addressing all five competencies, language in the curriculum limits the teaching, assessment, and evaluation of the SEL expectations to health and physical education contexts. As such, this curriculum strand is not a standalone document, as it suggests this strand should only be addressed in tandem with the other health and physical education strands.

A further barrier to this new content is that the Health and Physical Education curriculum is often relegated to prep delivery teachers. As such, regular classroom teachers rarely consult this curriculum document, meaning these skills are further isolated from regular classroom content. In addition, the new curriculum was also released without training or support for teachers. To explore this issue, interviews with Ontario elementary teachers were conducted to explore their perceptions of the new SEL strand and their perspectives on how this has affected their classrooms. Interviews showed that many classroom teachers were unfamiliar with these new expectations, given that that this document is the responsibility of a prep teacher in their school. Teachers also interpreted the language in the new curriculum as an indication that this content should only be addressed during physical education classes. Additionally, most teachers indicated that they would be uncomfortable with teaching this content in their classrooms if they thought it did pertain to them, due to a lack of training in SEL.

This data reveals that despite the inclusion of SEL standards in the Ontario curriculum, the language in the curriculum restricting the context of these standards has limited its effectiveness in regular classrooms. This is compounded by the absence of training for teachers with regards to this document. In interviews teachers discussed their lack of knowledge of the SEL strand and their concerns regarding their understanding of, and confidence in, how to teach this content. This is important as Ontario continues to update curricular documents—a recent beta release of the new math curriculum shows an SEL strand will be embedded there as well. Data from this project suggests that teachers may struggle with this new inclusion in the absence of training to build their efficacy in this area.

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Systematic Review of Mental Health Prevention & Promotion Programs for Children and Youth in Chinese Societies

Authors

Shih-Ying Cheng
Brown School
Washington University
St. Louis, MO, USA

Patrick J. Fowler
Brown School, Washington University
St. Louis, MO, USA

Yibin Yang
RICI Foundation
Shanghai, China

Abstract

The present review examines the effectiveness of mental health prevention and promotion programs in increasing mental health outcomes among children and adolescents and their caregivers in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Given the growing efforts to utilize preventive and promotive strategies as well as different study design and effectiveness concerning existing programs within the Chinese societies, it is crucial to conduct a metanalysis to yield consistent synthesized results across various evidence-based studies. Included studies were published from 2002 to 2017, and 19 of the 33 provided sufficient information for the metanalysis. Prevention programs examined included universal (66%), selective (18%), and indicated (15%) programs targeting youth or their caregivers. Results of the analysis suggested that youth participating in these prevention programs exhibited fewer externalizing behaviors and higher levels of self-esteem and perceived social support compared to youth in the control or comparison groups. Findings also showed that programs helped caregivers reduce stress and increase perceptions of social support. No statistically significant differences appeared on youth internalizing behaviors, stress and maladaptive coping, or adaptive coping. Analyses suggested that the research design (i.e., randomized controlled trial vs. quasi-experimental design) accounted part of heterogeneity in the pooled results. This study adds to the emerging literature investigating the effectiveness of youth mental health prevention and promotion programs among Chinese youth.

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Translating, Adapting, and Testing a U.S. SEL Intervention in Brazil

Authors

Dana McCoy
Graduate School of Education
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA, USA

Marcela Moura Almeida
Instituto Vila Educação
Sao Paulo, Brazil

Sherri Widen
Committee for Children
Seattle, WA, USA

Abstract

Several meta-analyses have shown that school-based social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions can improve students' social and emotional skills, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as their academic outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). At the same time, the vast majority of research on SEL interventions has been conducted in high-income countries. Indeed, of the 295 studies reviewed by the above-described meta-analyses, 78 percent took place in the United States (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). Particularly little is known about SEL in developing countries, where children face a larger and more diverse set of risk factors (Walker et al., 2007) and where government and agency demand for SEL programming is high (OECD, 2015; UNESCO, 2017; World Bank & IRC, 2013).

To address these limitations, Committee for Children, the makers of the universal SEL classroom intervention, Second Step, and Brazilian NGO Instituto Vila Educação (IVE) partnered to develop Programa Compasso. Programa Compasso is a comprehensive school-based SEL program adapted from Second Step for use in Brazil. Programa Compasso includes 22 weekly, 50-minute lessons delivered by classroom teachers. These lessons use a variety of activities to support children's self-regulation skills, emotion knowledge, empathy, and social problem solving. Based on the results of a pilot study conducted in Sao Paulo in 2015, IVE expanded Programa Compasso to include training sessions for teachers that focus on the importance of SEL, implementation of the Programa Compasso, and opportunities for hands-on practice and feedback. IVE also expanded Programa Compasso to include a student workbook that provides information on SEL for parents, as well as activities that families can do together at home.

In 2017 and 2018, researchers from Brazil and the United States collaborated to evaluate the impacts of Programa Compasso using a sample of 3,018 students in 90 public primary schools in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This randomized control trial revealed little evidence for average impacts of Programa Compasso on children's SEL outcomes during the first year of implementation, but did find positive effects on children's executive function and emotion knowledge in low-violence communities. Importantly, IVE faced numerous challenges with implementation during this first study year, including high levels of turnover in the Department of Education and unprecedented levels of community violence that blocked access to schools. Analyses from the second study year– in which implementation was much stronger – are currently underway. These quantitative results can be complemented by more positive qualitative findings from Boa Vista, where Programa Compasso is being implemented city-wide with strong buy-in from children, families, teachers, administrators, and government officials.

Collectively, this work highlights both the benefits and challenges of implementing SEL programming in developing countries, which face different needs and cultural priorities than the contexts in which such programming has typically been delivered. In particular, our experience in both Rio and Boa Vista emphasizes the importance of engaging government officials, teachers, and parents in the design and implementation of SEL programming, as well as ensuring that programs are explicitly aligned with local needs and cultural priorities.

Additional Information

http://www.programacompasso.com.br/

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Be a Good Sport: A Research-Practitioner Partnership to Develop SEL in Inclusive Sports

Authors

Natalie May
Center for Social Development
and Education
University of Massachusetts Boston
Boston, MA, USA

Holly Jacobs
Center for Social Development
and Education
University of Massachusetts Boston
Boston, MA, USA

Andrea Cahn
Special Olympics North America
Washington, D.C., USA

✉

holly.jacobs@umb.edu

Abstract

This session explores how Special Olympics Unified Sports® supports SEL through a research-practitioner partnership to develop SEL within the existing structure of inclusive high school sports.

Unified Sports are sports teams where students with and without intellectual disability (ID) play and compete together across a variety of sports like basketball, soccer, volleyball, and bowling. For this project, the University of Massachusetts Boston Center for Social Development and Education partnered with four New England high schools to explore and develop five SEL competencies within the teams (using the CASEL SEL framework). This included observing Unified Sports teams during practices and games, creating professional development training to enhance coaches' own SEL understanding and skills, and developing a set of SEL Activity Cards that target SEL skills more intentionally within Unified Sports.

Building on input from participating Unified Sports coaches, researchers constructed and piloted a professional development training that explored the definition of SEL, how coaches model SEL, and how SEL can be fostered within an inclusive sports context. The training aimed to both educate coaches on SEL as a framework for positive youth development in extracurricular activities while drawing upon their expertise to aid researchers in creating flexible, intentional SEL opportunities that can be integrated into the inclusive sports context.

The set of SEL Activity Cards was developed with an advisory board of SEL and disability experts using Robert Havighurst's concept of "teachable moments" (1972) to capitalize on the flexible structure of sports and modified based on feedback coaches provided during the professional development. Many of the activities were adapted from observations of existing practices to more intentionally focus on SEL competencies and were designed to be accessible for students with intellectual disabilities. Ultimately, the SEL activities aimed to capitalize on the skills students already practice through Unified Sports, such as building strong relationships and resolving interpersonal conflicts, and support new areas of growth, such as creating opportunities to practice expressing and regulating emotions.

Responding to the need for high-quality, coordinated SEL programming (Elias et al., 2015) and the importance of reinforcing SEL across contexts (Jones & Bouffard, 2012), this work aims to enhance the naturally positive youth development-rich environment of extracurriculars by exploring the intersection of SEL and inclusion in school sports (Dawes et al., 2017).

Central to this work was leveraging the perspectives of students with and without ID, coaches, experts in the SEL field, and researchers across all three aspects of the project. In doing so, this partnership demonstrates the process of engaging multiple stakeholders in a synergistic relationship to garner a high level of buy-in in educational intervention work. In showcasing an inclusive extracurricular activity (school sports), this session also highlights the importance of developing accessible, inclusive SEL opportunities for students with and without disabilities, an important and often-overlooked goal for the SEL field.

Please visit the links for more information on Unified Sports or to view a 45-minute Zoom recording of a panel discussion among project stakeholders.

Additional Information

https://www.generationunified.org/   https://youtu.be/X_lNJW5rOkQ

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Enhancing Self-Management Skills through OST Ensemble-Based Music Education with Black/Latinx Youth

Authors

Michelle M. Hospital
Department of Biostatistics
Florida International University
Miami, FL, USA

Staci Morris
Community-Based Research Institute
Florida International University
Miami, FL, USA

Ana Maria Rodriguez
Community-Based Research Institute
Florida International University
Miami, FL, USA

✉

michelle.hospital@fiu.edu

Abstract

Black and Latinx youth experience significant disparities across a variety of domains including academics. A well-supported approach to addressing such disparities is building resilience, defined as strengthening positive adaptation despite exposure to adversity and trauma. Enhancement of social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies promotes resilience and other aspects of positive youth development. Unfortunately, SEL curriculum implementation is severely lagging, particularly in schools serving Black and Latinx youth from economically disadvantaged communities. Therefore, providing innovative out-of-school (OST) programming opportunities that can enhance SEL competencies is essential. However, very little is known about whether SEL skills are enhanced in programs that may not be explicitly targeting those skills in their curriculum. A promising approach to enhancing SEL is the El Sistema pedagogical philosophy that uses music education as an instrument for social transformation. In 2017, Hospital et al. reported that participation in this type of OST program enhanced self-awareness and social awareness competencies among youth. The current study's primary aim was to examine the impact of participation in this same program on youth self-management competencies. We assessed music program students (n=60), their parents (n=177), and a comparison group of non-music program students (n=60) at two time points (beginning and end of year). Parents of program students reported a significant reduction in their children's impulsive behavior. We also found that self-reported impulsive behavior increased for the non-music comparison group youth, but not for music students. Preliminary results suggest that involvement in this innovative ensemble-based music program has a powerful impact on youth self-management.

Additional Information

https://cbri.fiu.edu/

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OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME AND COMMUNITY & FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Enhancing Youth SEL Through Quality Out-of-School Time Programs: A Validation Study

Authors

Lisa M. Lindeman, Ph.D.
QTurn LLC
Ypsilanti, MI
(formerly Prime Time Palm Beach
County, Boynton Beach, FL)

Charles Smith, Ph.D.
QTurn LLC
Ypsilanti, MI

Stephen C. Peck, Ph.D.
QTurn LLC
Ypsilanti, MI

Suzette L. Harvey
Prime Time Palm Beach County, Inc.
Boynton Beach, FL

✉

cprovini@primetimepbc.org

Abstract

Afterschool and summer programs, also known as out-of-school time (OST) programs, provide children and youth with a crucial environment in which to learn and develop. When supportive and engaging, OST programs contribute to cognitive, social, and emotional growth, as well as improved academic performance.

During the past decade, research has demonstrated that high quality is critical for OST programs to achieve positive outcomes (Durlak et al., 2010, 2011; McCombs, Whitaker, & Yoo, 2017). Youth experience fewer or no benefits when attending lower-quality programs, but high-quality programs contribute to youth development, well-being, and academic success.

Prime Time Palm Beach County, Inc., a nonprofit intermediary organization, works to improve OST program quality through a comprehensive set of supports that includes a countywide Quality Improvement System (QIS) launched in 2007. Reaching more than 200 OST programs each year, Prime Time's integrated services include program quality assessment, quality coaching, training, career counseling, networking, and expanded learning opportunities (ELOs) for children and youth.

Tools and frameworks created by the HighScope Educational Research Foundation (Smith & Hohman, 2005) and the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (Smith et al., 2012) provide a blueprint for this work.

The validation study, analyzing data over a 10-year period, examined trends in quality improvement as an outcome of Prime Time's services, as well as the impact of quality improvement on child and youth SEL.

Findings indicated that successful quality improvement depends upon achievement of three intermediate goals: (1) engaging programs through relationship- and trust-building, (2) professionalizing the field by delivering an adequate dosage of multiple services and (3) retaining skilled practitioners through financial incentives and supports.

Among OST programs that experienced the above three elements as a result of fully utilizing Prime Time's services, almost all (91%) improved in quality, and more than half improved dramatically (e.g., progressing from moderate to exemplary quality). In contrast, among those programs that participated only in core services (quality coaching), 29% improved, and only 14% improved dramatically. Additionally, staff who received scholarship and wage incentives were more likely to continue working in the program.

Findings also provided evidence that high-quality OST programs helped children build SEL skills. Specifically, improvements in children's self-management, social awareness, decision-making, and personal responsibility skills were more likely at programs that improved in quality. Goal-striving mastery improved more for children in programs that offered greater opportunity for planning, reflecting, and making choices. Further, 71% of children and youth maintained strong SEL skills at high-quality programs, compared to 55% of children and youth at lower-quality programs.

This study has important implications for the OST and youth development fields, establishing key conditions for strengthening child and youth SEL. First, intermediary organizations' efforts to build and maintain OST program quality must incorporate an adequate dosage of multiple supports and services. In addition, effective quality improvement requires simultaneous efforts to build a skilled, stable OST workforce.

Additional Information

https://www.primetimepbc.org/publications-news/publications/

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Implementation of SEL in Rural Out-of-School Time Settings

Authors

Kathryn A. Conrad, Ph.D.
Department of Family and
Consumer Sciences, University
of Tennessee Extension
Knoxville, TN, USA

Heather Sedges, Ph.D., CFLE,
Department of Family and
Consumer Sciences, University
of Tennessee Extension
Knoxville, TN, USA

✉

kconrad4@utk.edu

Abstract

Embedding social and emotional learning (SEL) in out-of-school time (OST) settings is seemingly a natural fit given their aligned goals: foster a supportive learning environment, provide quality adult-child relationships, offer developmentally-appropriate content, and be flexible (Jones et al., 2017). While SEL is evidenced as an effective intervention in K-12 settings for promoting positive school environments and enhancing academic achievement scores (see Taylor et al., 2017), less has been tested regarding the effectiveness of SEL in rural OST settings. The chosen piloted program is an evidence-based SEL approach that systemically integrates the skills of emotional intelligence into all components of the classroom and broader school community (Brackett et al., 2019). Baseline (Fall) and Follow-up (Spring) data were taken in which teachers reported on each OST student's SEL skills using the DESSA-mini (LeBuffe et al., 2009) that evaluates student SEL proficiency in three domains: SEL-strength (above average SEL skillset), SEL-typical (average SEL skillset) and SEL-need (below average SEL skillset). After one year of SEL implementation, a curious finding emerged revealing greater percentages of students (n = 233) ranked as "SEL-need" at the end of the pilot year (19%) compared to baseline reports (12%). In other words, the data reveal that over the year in which OST students participated in an SEL program, they were ranked as being less SEL proficient at the end of the year compared to the beginning of the year. However, we caution readers from misinterpreting this finding as it can be attributed to an important preliminary step to SEL integration in rural settings, which is to assess and develop SEL mindsets of staff. Specifically, as SEL became a more integral part of the OST setting over the pilot year, staff gained a better understanding of the value and utility of SEL. Observationally, we noticed that teachers gained greater appreciation for SEL over the pilot year and became better attuned to identifying SEL variabilities in their students when reporting on student SEL skills during follow-up. Specific to rural OST settings, reluctance to SEL integration may be a potential barrier to overcome as stigmas prevail regarding inclusion of educational content on mental and emotional health (Smith et al., 2016). For those who are planning to integrate SEL into their OST program, we suggest two important implications for practice. First is incorporating readiness-to-implement assessments to gauge SEL mindsets (support by staff and parents) as buy-in impacts program delivery and efficacy. Several evidence-based readiness-to-implement SEL assessments are available for OST settings that assess SEL mindset (e.g., beliefs and acceptance regarding the utility of SEL) and the conditions that make SEL roll-out practical and feasible (American Institutes for Research, 2019). Second is the necessity for rigorous staff development of SEL prior to the implementation of a structured SEL program. Staff should be trained on research regarding the benefits of SEL in not only their students, but to their own lives. Trainings should also provide practical strategies that staff can implement in both their personal and work lives.

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Seeking Growth and Building Successful Youth through Thriving Community Partnerships

Author

Gregory J. Benner
University of Alabama
Tuscaloosa, AL, USA

✉

cprovini@primetimepbc.org

Abstract

Significance: Two lines of research underscore the importance of a communitywide approach to social and emotional learning and behavioral health. First, mental, emotional, behavioral, and health problems are interrelated and stem from a set of common conditions (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2009). To begin, mental health is arrested when coercive processes govern children's interactions with caregivers, including educators. The Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group (CPPRG) suggested the dynamic cascade model of antisocial behavioral development from minor externalizing (i.e., aggressive, defiant, violent, explosive) problems into serious antisocial behavior and violence depends on transactions with the environment across childhood (CPPRG, 1992; Dodge, Greenberg, Malone & CPPRG, 2008; Dishion, & Snyder, 2016). Fitting with the dynamic cascade model of antisocial behavior, the vital environmental factor of past and present coercive interactions with parents and teachers is predictive of current mental health. Coercive interactions impede the child from learning key academic and social and emotional learning competencies that emerge from healthy, positive, engaging interactions with teachers (National Research Council, 2000; Patterson, 1982, 1995). Second, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is the term given to describe common conditions for mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. Researchers have suggested that ACEs are the top basic public health issue of this generation (e.g., Center for Youth Wellness, 2016; Felitti, 2018)

Best practices that informed our work: Our model starts with integration and infusion of social and emotional learning (SEL) across all environments in the community. This approach serves as preventive behavioral health, or vaccine, by employing high-yield evidence-based kernels of behavioral influence across all environments
in a community. SEL is foundational to comprehensive and sustainable change. The lives of youth are transformed when they move through and live in safe, equitable, welcoming, and effective school, home, and community environments. The lives of citzens are transformed when they work and live in these environments.

Key findings: Given the needs highlighted above, we propose a clear vision: Sustainable and transformative whole child change. This future-oriented vision is realized through our blueprint for a sustainable communitywide transformation. To be successful, communitywide sustainable change embraces a common vision, language, and experience to address present conditions that give rise to mental, emotional, behavioral, and health difficulties. Our model encompasses three transformative shifts. These three shifts represent systems that support children in any community: A comprehensive implementation will occur for Schools (shift 1), Community Organizations (shift 2), and Families (shift 3) to foster sustainable change that is nurturing for all of our children.

Overall implications for practice: Our model applies three keys to sustainable change: Leadership team members must first achieve consensus on a vision for sustainable implementation of SEL across the community; then build the necessary infrastructure to establish and sustain SEL practices; and, finally, facilitate and evaluate the implementation of data-informed problem-solving across a multitier service delivery framework. From the district leadership team to grade level teams, we offer a comprehensive approach that will lead to sustainable change.

Additional Information

https://newprairiepress.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2179&context=edconsiderations   https://youtu.be/EgeAzrJkTdc

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OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME AND COMMUNITY & FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

The Critical Impact of Involving Key Stakeholders in the Grade 9 Transition

Author

Kaitlin M. Levesque
Central Connecticut State University
New Britain, CT, USA

✉

kaitlinmarielevesque@gmail.com

Abstract

Multiple variables compound and strain the high school transition (Benner, 2011; Habeeb, 2013; Uvaas & McKevitt, 2013). Students struggle with increased autonomy, social and behavioral expectations, and managing academics (Akos & Galassi, 2004; Benner, 2011; Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Immediate ramifications consist of anxiety and social isolation, with long-term consequences including not graduating on time, lower academic achievement, and dropping out of high school (Alspaugh, 1998; Benner, 2011; Bornsheuer, Polonyi, Andrews, Fore, & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Irvin, 2012; Uvaas & McKevitt, 2013).

Qualitative findings from a larger mixed-methods study, conducted among ninth-grade educators in Connecticut, indicated evidence that stakeholder relationships are critical to mitigating negative outcomes related to the transition. The Survey of Chicago Public Schools: Teacher Edition (Consortium on Chicago School Research [CCSR], 2007) was adapted to add qualitative questions. The quantitative results were analyzed through a series of ANOVA and independent t-tests. However, there were no statistically significant results. On the converse, there were strong indications from the qualitative data that stakeholder relationships were critical to students entering high school.

The qualitative data was coded through a grounded research approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Relationships were the most prevalent code, with 82 percent of participants (n=24) referencing the importance of relationships during the transition to high school. The axial codes that emerged highlighted specific stakeholder relationships, as well as the outcomes of these relationships. When considering specific stakeholder relationships, 20.7 percent of participants (n=6) highlighting the importance of staff relationships. When considering outcomes, 37.9 percent of participants (n=11) referenced connectedness as a result of stakeholder relationships.

Understanding the monumental negative impacts of the transition to high school encourages educators to capitalize on opportunities to thoughtfully engage all stakeholders, mitigating the potential negative outcomes (Benner, 2011; Bornsheuer et al., 2011; Eccles & Roeser, 2011). For example, students have increased engagement and self-perception when school staff prioritize relationships with students (Holas & Huston, 2012). Fostering these relationships allow staff to be responsive to student needs, leading to flexibility in the curriculum and instruction, and a space that allows students to recover from academic struggles or behavioral mishaps (Habeeb, 2012). In addition, involving parents results in improved student attendance (Bryk, 2010) and a decreased involvement in risky behaviors (Eccles & Roeser, 2015). It also fosters trust, creates space for cohesive student support, and leads to shared enforcement of behavioral and academic expectations surrounding learning (Benner, 2011; Ellerbrock & Kiefer, 2010). Finally, peer relationships result in improved academic achievement and feelings of acceptance and connectedness to the academic setting (Eccles & Roeser, 2015; Freeman, 1994). Understanding these variables assists school leaders in designing structures and programs that prioritize opportunities to foster stakeholder relationships, resulting in positive student outcomes.

Additional Information

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1uY9ybBva6eAegAJHVQfQ84BXGj1fUBniZxne0QCklQE/edit?usp=sharing
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZWlpG0ouKFj2cVzCV51nlxy1bg9dApZvEh3B4ZXFLGQ/edit?usp=sharing

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SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS: PRESCHOOL

Feasibility, Acceptability, and Preliminary Effectiveness of the OpenMind (OM) Program for Preschool Children

Authors

Monica Jackman
Little Lotus Therapy
Port St. Lucie, FL

Nirbhay Singh
Department of Psychiatry and
Health Behavior
Medical College of Georgia
Augusta University
Augusta, GA, USA

Laura Nabors
School of Human Services
College of Education
Criminal Justice, and Human Services
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, OH, USA

Jill Quaid
Jefferson Franklin Community
Action Corporation
Hillsboro, MO, USA

Carrie McPherson
McPherson Therapy and Consulting
Greenville, KY, USA

✉

mjackman2317@gmail.com

Abstract

Preschool curricula often include SEL competencies. Emerging programs also include mindfulness-based practices that develop preschool children's awareness of the effects of their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions on their behaviors and ways they can make skillful and prosocial choices. Most social and emotional learning programs use a manualized, scheduled lesson plan approach in a traditional language-rich learning style. The OpenMind (OM) program is unique in that it uses an inclusive, contextualized, occupation-based format, with scaffolding and variation to accommodate differences in learning, attention, self-regulation, culture, and language. Given the disparity, inequity, and inequality prevalent in the educational environment that stem from factors such as poverty, systematic racism, and ableism, many children may miss out the benefits of traditional SEL programs due to differences in language skills, executive function, history of or ongoing trauma, and learning styles.

Objectives: Given the unique integrated format of the OM program, we wanted to assess not only the preliminary effectiveness of the program, but also to determine if the format of embedding SEL into academic occupations and routines was feasible and acceptable to teachers. The objective of this study was to assess the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of the OM program, a mindfulness-based SEL program.

Methods: Preschools in a Head Start program were randomly assigned to either the OM program or a comparison group. A total of 262 children (3 to 5 years old), 27 teachers, and 281 parents completed the study. Teachers in the OM program were provided training in the use of the program with the existing preschool curriculum, and teachers in the comparison group were provided an equivalent amount of training on relationship building and child bonding activities. Teachers in both groups responded to feasibility and acceptability questionnaires. In addition, child, teacher, and parent outcomes were assessed.

Results: The teachers reported the OM program was feasible as an adjunctive program that could be integrated with the existing preschool curriculum. The teachers perceived benefits for the children in terms of improved self-regulation, increased body and emotional awareness, improved self-calming, and increased empathy and awareness of the feelings of others. They rated the OM program as very acceptable. The outcome data indicated positive child outcomes for both groups, with some added advantage for children in the OM program.

Insights: The OM program teaches both planned lessons, daily foundational practices, and specific lessons in response to organic opportunities for learning. Practices include experiential, hands on, multi-sensory, and language-based options to teach skills for self-regulation and prosocial growth that can be modified for all learners. The robust and novel nature of the program required guidance for implementation, and using year 1 data as formative evaluation, changes were made to enhance OM program effectiveness and fidelity. Teacher input provided valuable guidance for OM manual reorganization for easier reference and selection of multimodal practice options that progress in a developmental sequence.

Conclusion: The OM program offers a promising approach to enhancing preschool children's SEL development while providing a variety of options for accessibility to all learners.

Additional Information

https://rdcu.be/bLavA

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SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS: PRESCHOOL

SEL at the Center of Curriculum: The Innovation Journey of Building a Progressive School in Qatar and Its Impact on the Learning Community

Authors

Asmaa Alfadala
World Innovation Summit
for Education, Qatar

Jennifer Groff
World Innovation Summit
for Education, USA

Julia Kirby
World Innovation Summit
for Education, Qatar

Abstract

What does it look like to design a new type of learning environment where well-being is the primary driver and nonnegotiable as we continue to redesign education in light of COVID-19? At Academyati – a transformative future school in Qatar – learner well-being, agency, SEL, and playful learning are the primary drivers for the reorganization of the rest of the modern learning environment. This session will unpack the origin story of Academyati, which was founded under the core belief that by putting SEL and overall well-being front and center in a school's framework, learners would thrive and this success would be dispersed into the surrounding community. The talk will also include early evidence from Qatar Foundation's WISE Innovation Hub research project, which began in February 2020, and through two case studies – one at the Academyati and the other at the Qatar Academy Science and Technology School (QAST) – exploring the nature of an embedded innovation lab model for supporting and enabling dynamic and self-driven transformation processes in a schools that puts the focus of 21st-century learning competencies, including social and emotional learning, at the center of curriculums.

Education has been in the midst of a global transformation effort quite some time. While education reform has been a central focus for decades, in the last five years especially the conversation has shifted from reform to redesign—to transforming our fundamental model of teaching and learning to one that emphasizes competency development and learner-driven personalized learning. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in mass school closures affecting 90% of the world's learners, it has become increasingly clear that the time to transform systems to support learners to not only survive but thrive in the context of uncertainty is now. In a world in which schooling can be disrupted or entirely suspended overnight, agency, problem-solving, and social and emotional well-being will serve students better than the rote memorization of facts. How can we leverage this opportunity to support schools in deep redesign, to prioritize these critical competencies over standardized test scores?

During this session, the WISE Innovation Hub Research Team will present the findings of the first two phases of research at Academyati and QAST, and explore how through an "Innovation Lab structure" schools can begin transforming their environments and practices into a future-ready paradigm. We will look at the motivating factors for establishing Academyati in particular, with its focus on SEL and well-being, and how the school's pedagogical framework was designed and the early impact evidence on student and community outcomes. We will also discuss the 21st-century learning paradigm as a whole–an approach to learning that marries the acquisition of academic skill with the building of behavioral competencies such as agency, collaboration, problem-solving, social and emotional skills, and life-long learning. Finally, we will discuss early impact evidence from the WISE Innovation Hub research project and indicators on how our 'lab schools' are impacting students, educators, and the learning ecosystem as a whole.

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Building School–Research Partnership through Empowering Student Voice: Case of Kazakhstan

Authors

Altynay Abdrakhmanova
Research Center for Applied
Psychology
"SANA," Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Zina Besirevic
San Francisco Human Rights
Commission
San Francisco, CA, USA

Zuhra Teja
Provincial Outreach Program for
Autism and Related Disorders
Richmond, British Columbia, Canada

✉

altynay@sana-ed.com

Abstract

Significance of the Topic: The decline in mental health is a global epidemic striking young people. Suicide rates in Kazakhstan, for example, are reported to be among the highest in the world. Exacerbating problems include domestic violence and social exclusion (UNICEF report, 2019).

The Kazakhstan government has expressed a commitment to providing solutions by establishing State compulsory education standards for the development of social-emotional competencies. The "SANA skills" project aims to develop an evidence-based SEL program that suits the country's particular cultural and educational contexts.

Research and Best Practices Informing Study: A preliminary step was to determine whether: (a) teachers are ready for an SEL program, (b) school climate is a concern, and (c) social skills should be addressed. Overall, 2010 primary school students, 150 secondary school students, 72 primary school teachers, and 300 parents participated in the preliminary work. Teachers expressed interest and readiness to provide an SEL program, and children expressed concerns about school climate. Further investigation of social skills is required using developmentally appropriate tools. While helpful in uncovering key issues and opportunities, we did not acquire sufficient depth of student perspective. The key insight from the first phase was that students want their voices to be heard, as the extent to which they have been asked is limited.

The next step is to plan a mixed-methods study involving teacher and parent surveys, focus groups, and student interviews. To incorporate student voice, the clinical interview method (Piaget, 1932) is being used. Pilot interviews have been conducted with nine children ages 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Social issues addressed in general questions and stories included bullying, as well as discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, social class, and race.

Key Insights: General Assessment: Children denounced bullying and discrimination.

Unilateral respect. Participants referred to the role of adult authority (teacher, parents, principal) in addressing issues. There was a frequent unquestioning deference to their authority, even if this contradicted a participant's view.

Age: Some participants suggested that the right to voice an opinion should depend on the age of the child. Older children should have more voice than younger children because they have more responsibilities and needs.

Communication breakdown: Several participants frequently considered failure of communication (e.g. "parent will not understand") as a consequence of a protagonist's actions, switching the focus from a moral issue (e.g., hurtful or unfair).

Safety: Participants were preoccupied with safety, often prioritizing safety over harm—paradox of agreeing to harm in order to avoid perceived greater harm. This was explicit among responses concerning the COVID-19 virus.

Social reputation: In their justifications about harm, participants were often guided by concerns about social reputation.

Implications/Conclusions: Insights based on the pilot study will inform the major study that will include 80-100 interviews of children of different ages. Our curriculum will be revised based on the developmental trends in social reasoning. Only by understanding the challenges and experiences students face at different ages can educators and policymakers provide support that is meaningful and sustainable.

Additional Information

https://www.apollo.io/people/Altynay/Abdrakhmanova/5f5478eea8f9df0001bc995b

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Cooperative Learning in Physical Education: Students' perspectives of Social and Emotional Learning

Authors

Ben Dyson
Department of Kinesiology
The University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Yanhua Shen
Department of Kinesiology
The University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Michael Hemphill
Department of Kinesiology
The University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Donal Howley
Department of Kinesiology
The University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perspectives of SEL in Elementary Physical Education (PE) using Cooperative Learning (CL) as a pedagogical practice in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ). SEL has formed a substantial body of theory, research, and practice in education (Durlak, et al., 2017). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2020). Students possess unique knowledge and perspectives about their school experiences which are needed so that researchers and teachers reflect on their own pedagogical practices (Maloney et al., 2016). Adopting a case study design (Stake, 2006) to explore students' perspectives over a two-year period, 128 students from four schools were interviewed in focus groups. The qualitative data analysis process worked to establish the trustworthiness of the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Four main themes emerged from the students' interviews: being part of a team; learning how to listen; helping and encouraging others; and making physical education fair. Findings indicate that CL has the potential to be a successful pedagogical model to develop SEL competency and motivation in PE where students work together in structured, small, heterogeneous groups to master subject matter content. Further school-based qualitative research has the capacity to provide in-depth contextually relevant evidence from students' and teachers' lived experiences.

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SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS: ELEMENTARY

Espaço de SER: How an SEL Program Can Impact Public Education

Authors

Joana London
Laboratório Inteligência de Vida
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Caio Lo Bianco
Laboratório Inteligência de Vida
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Ana Carolina de Medeiros
Laboratório Inteligência de Vida
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Rafael Pontes
Laboratório Inteligência de Vida
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

✉

contato@espacodeser.com

Abstract

Scientific evidence shows that social and emotional learning (SEL) can directly impact students' future performance. However, although different SEL initiatives are underway around the world, it has not yet been determined which are the practices that result in the greatest impact on students' life outcome. In this context, the SEL program called "Espaço de Ser" was implemented in 674 public schools in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), including 48,000 second-grade students, most of whom lived in socially vulnerabe situations. The main objective was developing students' emotional intelligence to help them improve the outcome of their lives. At the end of the intervention, a questionnaire applied to the 1,780 teachers involved in the program pointed out that the program had an impact mainly on improving students' academic performance and developing their ability to express their feelings. In addition, 93% of respondents expressed an interest in expanding the program to other series. Therefore, this paper aims to present the practices used in the "Espaço de Ser" program that may have contributed to the success attributed by teachers to the program. The selection of practices was carried out through a qualitative analysis of the didactic material, observations in the classrooms, and questionnaires used with the teachers. The results show that factors such as teacher training, program structure, and students' identification with the mascot may have been preponderant for the program's success, and can be replicated in different contexts.

Additional Information

https://espacodeser.com/

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SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS: ELEMENTARY

Making it Through the Day: Exploring the Challenges of Implementing Restorative Practices in a High-needs Elementary School

Authors

Ben Dyson
Department of Kinesiology
University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Johnette Walser
Moss Street Partnership School
NC, USA

Justin Somers
Moss Street Partnership School
NC, USA

Donal Howley
Department of Kinesiology
University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Yanhua Shen
Department of Kinesiology
University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Seunghyun Baek
Department of Kinesiology
University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Abstract

A significant need exists to examine and improve continued professional development (CPD) for teachers to develop schools' implementation of social and emotional learning (SEL) practices (Durlak, 2016; Elbertson, Brackett, & Weissberg, 2010). The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore teachers' perspectives on participating in CPD to develop SEL, specifically restorative practices (Zehr, 1990). Adopting a case study design (Stake, 2005), data was gathered from 16 teachers and school leaders through field notes (classroom observations), individual interviews, and focus group interviews. Data analysis established the trustworthiness of the data through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Four themes emerged from the data analysis: staff understanding of restorative practices; pulling the parts of teacher CPD together; putting CPD into restorative practices with students; and teacher troubles. Findings reported that teachers had a wide range of knowledge and understandings of restorative practice and SEL, and openly struggled to consistently implement restorative practices with fidelity. Teacher challenges included contextually demanding classroom climates, teacher buy-in, and maintaining teacher morale. Enhancing CPD and a school's ability to develop students' SEL not only requires a sustained nurturing of teachers' pedagogical practice but, in addition, a nurturing of the teachers' own social and emotional well-being. Our research argues for expanding qualitative research to provide more in-depth knowledge and understanding of SEL; address the black-box of research on CPD for SEL; and barriers to teacher implementation.

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SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS: ELEMENTARY

Studying Universal SEL in the Real World: Outcomes & Lessons Learned from the PEAK Project

Authors

Leah Hunter
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA, USA

Susan Crandall Hart
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA, USA

James DiPerna
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA, USA

Puiwa Lei
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA, USA

✉

ljh222@psu.edu

Abstract

School-based SEL programs can improve students' prosocial and academic skills (Durlak et al. 2011); however, the quality of SEL implementation varies across schools and studies (Taylor et al., 2017), and few research trials have rigorously studied "naturally occurring" SEL implementation. Positive, Engaged, Achieving Kids (PEAK) is an IES-funded randomized trial evaluating the effectiveness of a universal SEL program (SSIS-SEL Edition Classwide Intervention Program; Elliott & Gresham, 2017). Unlike typical efficacy research trials, administrators and teachers are making local decisions regarding how the program should be implemented in their primary classrooms. The goal of PEAK is to study school personnel's program implementation decisions and the effectiveness of their chosen approach on student and teacher outcomes.

Although data analysis is still underway, we have initial implementation results from the first cohort of PEAK participants, which includes a diverse set of first- and second-grade classrooms (N = 80) across 13 schools, seven districts, and three states. Teachers were primarily female (100% first grade; 86% second grade), and many were white (86% first grade; 71% second grade); however, a number of participating teachers were Black/African American (9%) and/or Hispanic/Latinx (12%). In addition, 13% of first-grade and 8% of second-grade teachers spoke Spanish as their primary language.

Teachers in both grades showed similar rates of program completion (i.e., number of lessons taught) and quality of approach (i.e., clarity of explanations, engagement with content). Most teachers implemented at least 90% of the "core" program lessons, plus some advanced lessons (grade 1 = 81%; grade 2 = 70%). Based on independent observations, 68% of first-grade and 73% of second-grade teachers delivered the lessons with high quality (i.e., average of 4 out of 5 quality indicators observed). First-grade teachers showed higher rates of fidelity to the lesson scripts, while second-grade teachers were more evenly split between high and low rates of fidelity to the lesson scripts (grade 1 high fidelity = 63%; grade 2 high fidelity = 50%).

In our conversations with teachers and administrators, we are gaining important insights regarding how schools choose to implement SEL programming to meet diverse student and school needs as well as the barriers they encounter while doing so. We expect these conversations to evolve as schools respond to new demands and restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, current perspectives from practitioners and SEL experts suggest that implementation of SEL programs likely will only increase as schools seek resources targeting student mental and relational health due to the pandemic (CASEL, 2020; Walker, 2020). As we continue to evaluate implementation practices, we expect our findings to help inform future effectiveness research within the SEL research community and provide useful insights for school personnel charged with scaling universal SEL programs during a trying time for schools.

Additional Information

https://thepeakproject.org

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Teachers' Perspectives on Restorative Practice in Aotearoa, New Zealand, Elementary Schools

Authors

Ben Dyson
Department of Kinesiology
The University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Yanhua Shen
Department of Kinesiology
The University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Michael Hemphill
Department of Kinesiology
The University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Seunghyun Baek
Department of Kinesiology
The University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

Donal Howley
Department of Kinesiology
The University of North Carolina
Greensboro, NC, USA

✉

y_shen2@uncg.edu

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research was to study teachers' perspectives on restorative practices in Aotearoa New Zealand elementary schools. Restorative practice is rooted in restorative justice work (Zehr, 1990). It is a social science that studies how to build social capital and enhance social and emotional development through participatory learning and decision-making (Wachtel, 2013). Within New Zealand, there is a paucity of research on restorative practice. This reflects a general predominance towards quantitative inquiry in social and emotional learning research (Corcoran et al., 2018). This qualitative project was designed in partnership with teachers and principals to provide new knowledge regarding restorative practice. In this case study design, evidence was collected at three primary schools from 21 teachers' and principals' interviews. The qualitative data analysis process worked to establish the trustworthiness of the data through the strategies of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The following themes using teachers' words were identified from the evidence: showing empathy; making decisions; restoring emotions; building relationships; and empowering students. The findings indicate that restorative practices facilitated teachers in meeting the intentions of the NZ curriculum (MOE, 2007). More specifically, restorative practices are related to the NZ curriculum key competencies of Relating to Others, Managing Self, Participating and Contributing, and Thinking (MOE, 2007). Findings demonstrate that restorative practices can enhance students social and emotional learning in elementary schools. Situational qualitative research has the potential to further inform current and future practices, which develop SEL in a variety of schools.

The Effect of School Climate on Children's Emotion Recognition

Authors

Hillary Anger Elfenbein
Olin School of Business
Washington University
Saint Louis, MO, USA

Ariel Knafo-Noam
Psychology Department
The Hebrew University
Jerusalem, Israel

Rotem Schapira
Early education Department
Levinsky College of Education
and Mofet Institute
Tel-Aviv, Israel

Abstract

Schools are an important environment where children spend a major amount of their time. Much of their social world is at school, where consequently they are exposed to different emotional experiences. The main purpose of the study was to explore the effect of school climate on children's emotion recognition (ER) ability. Children's ER is the ability to understand and recognize others' emotions using nonverbal cues. This ability is crucial for social interaction because it provides information about partners' reactions, intentions, and likely behaviors. As far as we know, this is the first study that directly investigated the association between school climate and children's ER. We examined ER via facial and vocal cues in 378 7-year old (M= 89.59 months; SD= 3.83) twin children. ER was assessed with the child version of the Diagnostic Assessment of Nonverbal Accuracy (DANVA) for happy, angry, sad, and afraid (Nowicki, 2010). Data on twins' schools was obtained from the Israeli Ministry of Education. Three aspects of the school climate were assessed: (1) Child's well-being at school; (2) Positive relationships; (3) Negative relationships. We used multilevel analysis with families as clusters, while the child's sex, schools' achievement levels, and family's SES were used as control variables. For total ER: at the child level, females had greater ER than males. At the family level, there was a significant effect of the family's SES on ER. At the school level, school achievement and school climate showed significant effects on ER. Specifically, school climate related significantly to anger recognition and trended towards significance for fear recognition. Children attending schools with more positive relationships with their teachers and classmates, sense of protection, and less violence had better overall recognition of emotions, and specifically of anger and fear. They will be more available for learning about feelings, social interactions, and academic learning. The findings highlight the importance of the school climate for children's emotional development. The educational implications of the study are that school climate is an important context for children's development and particularly for emotional development.

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SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS: ELEMENTARY

The Nora Project: Fostering Friendships for Students with Disabilities

Author

Alexander E. Parker
La Grange School District 102 and
The Nora Project
La Grange, IL, USA

✉

parkeral@dist102.k12.il.us

Abstract

Given the historical trend of children with disabilities being socially rejected in the school setting, this study set out to explore this notion in greater depth. It has been noted by multiple research studies that students with disabilities are less socially accepted than their peers and, among elementary-aged students, students with disabilities self-reported higher feelings of social rejection. Due to these findings, this study investigated the effectiveness of an intervention program on elementary students' attitudes and sentiments regarding their peers with disabilities. Typically developing and able-bodied students were introduced to the curriculum of The Nora Project, a yearlong classroom-based intervention designed to educate general education students about disabilities and foster friendships between ability groups.

Data was collected from two separate elementary school classes over a two-year period, with pre-intervention and post-intervention findings recorded. One of the statistical takeaways discussed in the research is in regards to general education students' willingness to play with a child with a disability. Prior to the implementation of The Nora Project curriculum, 50% of participating students stated they would always be willing to play with a child with a disability. After a full school year's worth of curriculum, 93% of general education students stated they would always play with a child with a disability.

The overall results, spanning the two years of instruction, display a positive change in general education students' attitudes regarding their peers with disabilities. Much of peer rejection regarding children with disabilities is rooted in two factors: a lack of opportunity for nonacademic social interaction and a paucity of knowledge regarding the disability community. The curriculum of The Nora Project aims to address both of these. The findings here illuminate the effectiveness of a time-intensive disability intervention for typically developing and able-bodied elementary aged students, in an effort to change attitudes regarding children with disabilities.

Additional Information

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nEvDAW72xzzZ74wavpyHCYE4HB79gCmfd6Ov0m1DkPM/edit?usp=sharing

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What Comes First: Social-Emotional or Academic Skills?

Author

Daphne Kopelman-Rubin, SEL.IL
Ivcher School of Psychology
IDC, Herzliya, Israel

✉

Daphnekr@idc.ac.il

Abstract

I Can Succeed for Elementary School (ICS-ES) is the first social and emotional learning (SEL) program based on Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Adolescents (IPT-A). This SEL program aims to enhance student's academic, emotional, and interpersonal functioning. The current study examined what improvements come first: academic versus social-emotional (SE). In the study 419 fourth-graders were assigned to either ICS-ES (n=283) or "treatment as usual" (TAU; n=136). Latent Change Score indicated that among both groups, better SE skills at the onset of the study (T0) were linked with better grade average at that time. Only among the intervention group, better SE skills at the onset of the study were linked with greater improvement in students' grade average over time (i.e., with a constant developmental change over time in grades). In addition, only among the intervention group, improvement in SE skills between T1 and T2 (end of the first year to the beginning of the second year) was associated with greater improvement in students' grade average between T2 and T3 (i.e., during the second year of the study). The opposite association was also present only among the intervention group: an improvement in grade average between T0 and T1 was related to a greater improvement in SE skills between T1 and T2, and additional improvement in grade average between T1 and T2 was related to a greater improvement in SE skills between T2 and T3. Results may indicate that an SEL program is needed in order to enhance a positive reciprocal influence between students' academic and social-emotional functioning.

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An Evaluation Study of a Student Leadership Program Designed to End Social Isolation and Promote SEL in Middle School

Author

Dabney Ingram
Independent Researcher Contracted
by Nonprofit Beyond Differences
San Rafael, CA, USA

✉

dingram@alumni.stanford.edu

Abstract

The nonprofit Beyond Differences (BD) provides middle schools with student-led social and emotional learning (SEL) programming to disrupt social isolation and foster a sense of community among students. BD's mission builds on the education and public health literature that shows the importance of fostering social connectedness, decreasing social isolation, and nurturing social and emotional learning for positive mental, physical, and educational outcomes. Additionally, principles of positive youth development guide BD's student leadership approach.

This study evaluates the efficacy of BD programming in 10 New York City middle schools (diverse in size, ethnic composition, and poverty rates) during the 2018-19 school year. Based on a sample of over 800 students and 320 teachers/administrators, it assesses to what extent BD programming improved key indicators of change in the schools—including measures of SEL (e.g., social awareness and relationship skills), student leadership, youth voice, and social isolation. Several surveys gathered feedback from student leaders and teachers who were deeply engaged in program implementation—as well as from the wider population of seventh-grade students and teachers/administrators who participated in various BD activities and curricular lessons throughout the year—to understand how program implementation impacts the middle school experience.

Findings from the study include:

1. Greater exposure to BD programming yielded greater student-wide impacts in key measures of student leadership, youth voice, SEL, and reduced social isolation.

2. Statistical regressions found no significant differences by ethnicity, gender, or school in program impacts on seventh-grade participants from beginning to end-of-year.

3. The key indicators of change all increased significantly from beginning to end-of-year for students who participated in three or more BD activities.

4. Administrators and teachers reported program impacts that largely correlated with the student findings; 87% of school principals reported that BD contributed "substantially" or "hugely" to empowering youth voice, developing student leadership, and raising awareness about social isolation.

5. Student leaders benefited greatly from their involvement in the program; more than 80% of student leaders attributed 20 or more specific benefits to their involvement with BD, including becoming more of a leader and gaining improved social and emotional skills.

Implications of the study include:

(a) Repeated exposure to BD student-led SEL programming produced a significant increase in student impact, underscoring the effectiveness of ongoing and repeated SEL exposure rather than a "one and done" approach.

(b) Any school context can benefit from BD programming exposure; impact was unrelated to student ethnicity, gender, or school.

(c) Allowing schools to flexibly implement strategies did not affect results; schools customizing their BD programming to unique contexts and needs achieved similar results.

The key findings from this study are relevant to anyone considering a student-led approach to social-emotional learning. Understanding the efficacy of a student leadership program—broadly designed to build a culture of belonging and improve SEL in schools—helps improve both the daily school experiences and educational outcomes of middle school students. Data visuals and more details are available via the link below.

Additional Information

https://www.beyonddifferences.org/media/uploads/beyonddifferences_executivesummary_socialisolation_2019.pdf

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"Connect Yourself: Feeling, Thinking and Acting": An Experience of Implementing SEL in 10th-12th-Grade State High Schools in Recife, Brazil

Authors

Eugênia de Paula Cordeiro
Federal Institute of Education Recife
Pernambuco, Brazil

Adriana Dantas Menezes
Mariano Teixeira Reference
High School
Pernambuco Brazil

Mônica Lins Oliveira
Reference High School Ginásio
Pernambucano
Pernambuco Brazil

Michele Câmara
Olinda Reference High School
Pernambuco Brazil

✉

epaulabenicio@gmail.com

Abstract

Federal and state policies for the development of SEL programs in Brazilian public schools are very incipient, even though statistics show that anxiety, depression, violent behavioral disorders, and drug abuse among teenagers have increased, not to mention teachers with the Burnout Syndrome. This points out the importance of projects such as "Connect Yourself: Feeling, Thinking and Acting," which aims to promote social and emotional skills in 10th-12th-grade state high schools in Pernambuco, Brazil. It all started in 2015, with participatory ongoing training research with a small group of multidisciplinary teachers at a Reference High School in Olinda (EREM Olinda), Pernambuco. Firstly, we shared philosophical underpinnings of an interconnected multidimensional perspective based on the assumption that the human being is not limited to the physical, sensorial, emotional, and mental dimensions. Therefore, the spiritual dimension, encompassed by all ethical values, philosophical knowledge, and sense of purpose in life (which can only be confirmed by intuition), has the mission of guiding the other dimensions. Then we introduced CASEL´s SEL domains of competencies and their skills in rounds of conversations and group dynamics, linking them to life and school experiences, thus enabling creative designing of pedagogical interventions to be conducted in classes. In 2015, we held three-hour meetings every other week for 12 months, with the teachers focused on becoming more familiar with their inner dynamics by observing their own process of feeling, thinking, and acting, and its impact on intra and interpersonal relationships. We emphasized integrating theory into the teachers' practical pedagogical knowledge. In 2016, implementation took place at EREM Olinda, and in 2018, the project expanded to two other Reference High Schools in Recife, Pernambuco. Currently, it is conducted by three female teachers (Biology, English/Portuguese, Chemistry), aged 40-45. Continuous intrapersonal and interpersonal self-observation practices of "feeling, thinking, and acting," both in and out of the classroom, were enhanced after the implementation of the project, which involved approximately 1,000 10th-12th-grade students from 2016 to 2019.

The following aspects have been crucial to the project's success: respecting teachers´ singularities; collaborative planning of pedagogical interventions; feeling free to express creativity; and strengthening self-confidence and supporting each other mutually ("bottom-up" process). At the end of each year, findings from student focus groups showed that having an open talk about feelings and active listening are the soul of the project; nourishing empathy and narrowing distances between students and teachers can help to humanize relationships; respecting different points of view helps the classroom environment to become less aggressive by giving space to more understanding, solidarity, and reliability; students find meaning in managing their emotional impulses and therefore tend to reflect more about the consequences of their behaviors before they act; some students reported that close friends, parents and relatives, saw changes in their behavior. "Connect Yourself" project has resulted in a safe place to "learn to be and to live together," thus providing pedagogical ways to humanize relationships in schools.

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SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS: HIGH SCHOOL

Authenticity in Action: Project-Based Learning with SEL in High School Language Arts Classrooms

Authors

Alison G. Boardman
School of Education, University
of Colorado Boulder
Boulder, CO, USA

Ashley Seidel Potvin
Renee Crown Wellness Institute
University of Colorado Boulder
Boulder, CO, USA

Joseph L. Polman
School of Education
University of Colorado Boulder
Boulder, CO, USA

✉

alison.boardman@colorado.edu

Abstract

How can project-based learning (PBL) and SEL create a beautiful synergy? Project-based learning (PBL) approaches organize curriculum around meaningful questions worth pursuing over a period of time. Projects are purposeful and authentic to students and others, they are integrated into disciplinary learning, and they are undergirded by authentic and supportive teacher-student and student-student interactions (e.g., Baines, et al., 2017; Condliffe, et al., 2017). PBL and SEL are poised to reciprocally drive instruction around the content and standards of high school language arts with positive academic and SEL outcomes.

To ensure research-to-practice alignment and build from collective expertise, teachers and researchers worked together over five years to develop Compose Our World, a year-long course consisting of four core projects organized around the question, "How is our world composed for us and how can we compose our world?" Students develop habits and routines around a set of design principles: authentic making, collaboration, feedback/revision, reflection, and the social and emotional learning components of caring, advocacy, perspective taking, and empathy (Boardman, Garcia, Monroe, & Polman, 2020). We also created a set of educative lesson planning materials, professional learning modules, and supportive structures that can be used in teacher learning communities as teachers plan for enacting PBL in their unique environments.

A study of 44 teachers, half teaching PBL and half continuing with business-as-usual instruction, yielded significant differences in instruction in all SEL and PBL design principles. Students perceived Compose Our World PBL classrooms to have more authentic learning experiences and be more collaboration than comparison classrooms. In addition, students reported that they felt inspired and creative, they were able to share ideas with others, they felt listened to, and they thought about other people's perspectives. One ninth-grade student reflected at the end of the year, "I've never had a class like this…It was an awakening because I didn't know school could be like this … I feel like I got better at working with other people [this year]. I used to be very introverted and now I feel like I can get along with other people in the class better. I feel like I have been able to use my creativity a lot more."

Teachers in our study reported that the projects in Compose Our World promote buy-in and give students opportunities to engage in tasks that are relevant to life beyond high school. Teachers frequently note that they are able to get to know their students better than in the past and that students also get to know one another. One teacher shared, "I believe [the SEL design principles] allowed my students to open up and also to grow together." Additionally, educators have shared the ways that Compose Our World reinvigorates their practice, as highlighted by a teacher after a professional learning session: "I am very, very excited about starting school this year. Maybe this will be the thing that stops me from counting down the years to retirement."

Additional Information

https://sprocket.lucasedresearch.org/ela9

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SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS: TARGETED APPROACHES (E.G., BULLYING, DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION, RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, TIERS 2 AND 3)

A Collaboratory for Inclusion: Serving Student Diversity through Districtwide Social Emotional Learning Implementation

Authors

Lauren Hunter Naples
Child Study Center
Yale School of Medicine
New Haven, CT, USA

Julie Riley
Manchester Essex Regional
School District
Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA, USA

Michael McCarthy
Child Study Center
Yale School of Medicine
New Haven, CT, USA

Gabrielle Rappolt-Schlichtmann
EdTogether, Inc.
Boston, MA, USA

Christina Cipriano
Child Study Center
Yale School of Medicine
New Haven, CT, USA

Abigail Eveleigh
Child Study Center
Yale School of Medicine
New Haven, CT, USA

✉

lauren.naples@yale.edu

Abstract

Evidence-based SEL programming has been lauded in its universal applicability to support student outcomes across the education landscape, but it is yet to be determined how students with diverse learning needs—those perhaps most in need of SEL skills—are accessing and/or benefitting from such initiatives. In 2019, the National Commission of Social, Emotional and Academic Development called for a rethinking of research-practice partnerships to support the evaluation and advancing of SEL in the field. In response, we conducted a case study exploring one district's experience working collaboratively within a research-practice partnership—"collaboratory"—to support SEL implementation for all learners. The driving research questions were: (1) What does districtwide SEL implementation look like in the service of students with diverse learning needs, and (2) How are teacher-leaders using and adapting SEL programming to serve diverse student needs? We used an inquiry-based approach with district partners to take a deep dive into the successes, challenges, and ongoing lessons learned from the experiences of implementing a CASEL SELect program, the RULER Approach (RULER), as a top-down initiative across their four schools (two elementary, one middle, and one high school). RULER is an effective universal SEL approach with strong theoretical grounding in developmental and educational psychology.

Across the 2019-2020 school year, four researchers conducted 20 hours of school-based observations, interviews, and focus groups with a total of 28 teachers and leaders. Data artifacts were compiled from interview and focus group transcripts, presentations and trainings given by the district, classroom-level resources developed by teachers to modify curriculum for learners, and field notes with photographs from school visits and observations. Most notably, researchers found that teacher and administrator buy-in was critical to the success of districtwide SEL implementation. In service to students with diverse learning needs, RULER offered a similar language across grades allowing for consistency, repetition, and the promotion of routines. Key modifications identified for the RULER anchor tools included meta-moment adaptations (modeling each step; adapting the prompts and scenarios to be relevant to students' interests), mood meter adaptations (starting with a word, then connecting it to the visual, or using a rating scale with one axis to scaffold; incorporating photos of real children to promote identification and recognition of differential emotions, including reference to body language), and blueprint adaptations (text revisions required to level the tool appropriately to learners; necessary prompting). Observations, interviews, and focus groups further resulted in the cataloging of numerous success stories of how teachers are helping students label, recognize, and express emotions through the characters they are reading about in literacy instruction, and using the class charters and the blueprint to resolve student-student and teacher-student conflict. Further, RULER was applied in approaching parents and other staff as an access point for conversations that would have otherwise been difficult to broach. Taken together, the rich findings from this participatory inquiry suggest potential for participatory action research to serve as a cornerstone for moving the SEL field forward in building comprehensive tools and methods for systemic implementation and assessment of accessible SEL programming.

Additional Information

https://www.ycei.org/

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Callous-Unemotional Traits in School: A Systematic Review and Future Directions for SEL

Authors

Rebecca S. Levine
University of California-San Diego
Education Studies Department
La Jolla, CA, USA

Nicholas J. Wagner
Boston University Department of Brain
and Psychological Sciences
Boston, MA, USA

✉

relevine@ucsd.edu

Abstract

Callous-unemotional (CU) traits describe a subset of children with a particularly severe and persistent pattern of antisocial behavior (see Frick, 2008, for a review). CU traits are hallmarked by fearlessness, lack of guilt or remorse, lack of empathy, punishment insensitivity, and shallow affect, and indicate risk of adverse outcomes in adulthood. There is limited research on the implications of CU traits in school settings, even though this group of children has behavioral and emotional challenges that differentiate them from other children exhibiting disruptive behavior.

This systematic review consolidates the current literature on CU traits and their implications for school and schooling. Consistent with best practices for a literature review protocol (e.g., PRISMA), we searched peer-reviewed journals in PsycINFO, PubMed, and Education Full-Text with the terms callous-unemotional traits [or] callous-unemotional behaviors [and] schools. Inclusion criteria were the following: (1) results were reported from an empirical study; (2) the study contained at least one measure of CU traits and at least one measure related to school or schooling; (3) participants included school-age children (K-12); and (4) the results reflected a typical school setting in the U.S. (e.g. school was not part of an inpatient, summer camp, or juvenile detention center setting). We excluded treatment studies.

The 38 articles included in the systematic review, taken together, indicate that children with higher levels of CU traits have pervasive academic, behavioral, and relational challenges at school compared to low-CU peers. While there are mixed results on their scholastic competence, children with CU traits tend to have lower academic achievement and are less engaged in school. They have elevated behavioral problems, including bullying, aggression, and rule-breaking, leading to more suspensions than their peers, and they exhibit less prosocial behavior. Finally, compared to low-CU peers, children with CU traits generally have lower quality relationships with classmates and teachers, are less liked by peers, and are less socially competent according to teachers. In some studies, the effects of CU traits remained after controlling for existing conduct problems.

A number of directions for future research are discussed. For example, because of the overlap between CU traits, conduct problems, ADHD, and psychopathy-related behaviors (e.g. narcissism), more research is needed to identify the unique contributions of CU traits and relationships among these interrelated constructs.

Finally, this research is particularly relevant for SEL programming. Based on the literature, in order to support students with CU traits, we recommend: (1) assessing students with pervasive challenges at school for presence of CU traits, which can inform individualized intervention, (2) focusing on relationship-building, (3) exploring the child's interests and developing strategies for increasing engagement, (4) spending extra time teaching and practicing core social and emotional skills, and (5) involving parents and clinicians in building a system of support and developing a comprehensive plan for SEL.

Additional Information

https://rebeccaslevine.com/onewebmedia/Levine_SELexchangePoster2020.pdf

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Comparing Behavioral and Social Emotional Interventions for Struggling Students within A Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Author

Essie Sutton
Branching Minds
New York, NY, USA

✉

essie@branchingminds.com

Abstract

School leaders across the country are increasingly using Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to systematically and strategically address the needs of all students. This framework includes a multilevel prevention system where universal screening and data-based decision-making are used to identify and support struggling students. Most MTSS frameworks focus on students' academic achievement. Less is known about the processes and practices used to explicitly address students' social-emotional and behavioral competencies.

This study investigated the types of intervention programs and approaches used at a midwestern school district serving 6,600 students in the 2019-2020 school year. Data was collected until April due to the COVID-19 school closures.

Across the school year, 489 students received a support plan including a social-emotional or behavior-based intervention. All data were documented and tracked using Branching Minds—a web-based MTSS platform. Most students received a single intervention (N = 416) while the rest received two or more interventions.

Students were categorized into three groups based on which type of intervention(s) they received: (1) social-emotional (e.g., social skills training, Zones of Regulation program; 59%), (2) behavioral (e.g., check-in/check-out, behavior logs; 30%), or (3) both (11%). Intervention type did not differ by student IEP status, χ^2 (3, N = 489) = .54, p = .97, race, χ^2 (8, N = 487) = 12.45, p = .13, or ethnicity, χ^2 (2, N = 489) = .65, p = .72.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate the difference in the number of behavior incidents reported across the three intervention types at the beginning and end of the school year. The number of behavior incidents reported at the beginning of the school year were significantly different across intervention type, F(2, 488) = 22, p < .001. Students receiving both social-emotional and behavioral interventions had the most incidents reported (M = 8.79, SD = 11.23), followed by students only receiving behavioral interventions (M = 5.30, SD = 7.80), and social-emotional interventions (M = 2.42, SD = 5.66). Post-hoc tests revealed that all three groups were significantly different from each other. The same pattern of results was found for behavior incidents reported at the end of the school year, F(2, 488) = 11.49, p < .001, with post-hoc tests showing that those receiving social-emotional support had significantly fewer behavior incidents (M = 2.29, SD = 4.86) than those receiving behavior support (M = 4.10, SD = 6.54), and both types of support (M = 5.75, SD = 6.51). Models examining differences in behavior incidents at the end of the school year by intervention type, while controlling for the number of incidents at the beginning of the school year, were not significant.

The findings identify the prevalence of social-emotional and behavioral-based interventions for students struggling with their behaviors in school. Students who exhibit fewer behavioral problems may be more likely to receive a social-emotional intervention compared to students who display more behavioral problems. More research is needed to understand how different types of supports, implemented with a multitiered system of support, affect students' social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes.

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STUDENT SEL CORRELATES AND OUTCOMES

A Longitudinal Exploration: How Does Growth in Students' SEL Influence their Academic Achievement?

Authors

Katie Buckley
Transforming Education
Boston, Massachusetts

Katerina Shenke
Katalyst Methods
Culver City, California

Johanna Leslie
Transforming Education
Boston, Massachusetts

Abstract

This study utilizes a rich three-year longitudinal dataset, with student-level data collected from innovative schools across the country. Using data from over 2,000 students, we investigate how student perceptions of their social-emotional learning (SEL), perceptions of the school culture-climate (CC), and student academic outcomes relate to each other, with a particular focus on the ways in which changes in students' self-reported SEL and perceptions of the school CC relate to changes in their academic growth. This study further explores whether there are differences in these relationships by race/ethnicity. Utilizing a student fixed effects model, we find that as students' self-reported SEL and school CC perceptions increases, so does their academic achievement. In particular, as student perceptions of academic curiosity, self-efficacy, growth mindset, and learning strategies increase, as well as perceptions of the school's safety and rigorous expectations, academic test results based on NWEA's MAP assessment increase as well. Effects are small but significant and are consistent across grade-levels, gender, and race/ethnicity. These findings have implications for school leaders, suggesting the importance of prioritizing SEL competencies and favorable school climates in order to ensure greater academic growth of their student body in future years. These findings also suggest the importance of actively collecting student voice data to better understand how to equitably address students' needs, capitalize on students' strengths, and build and maintain an inclusive school climate for students of all races and ethnicities.

Additional Information

https://www.transformingeducation.org/

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STUDENT SEL CORRELATES AND OUTCOMES

All of Who I Am: How Young People Understand and Describe their Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning

Authors

Max Margolius
Boston University &
America's Promise Alliance
Boston, MA, USA

Elizabeth Pufall Jones
Boston University &
America's Promise Alliance
Boston, MA, USA

Anna Skubel
Boston University
Boston, MA, USA

✉

maxm@americaspromise.org

Abstract

Across the fields of educational research and practice, there is an increasing consensus about how learning happens. This consensus—rooted in relational developmental systems theory and informed by advances in neuroscience, psychology, and education (Osher, Cantor, Berg, Steyer, & Rose, 2020)—asserts that young people's learning is best realized when "all aspects of the educational environment support all of the dimensions of children's development" (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, & Osher, 2020, pp. 2). Learning, from this perspective, is not the exclusive province of core academic content classes, a particular pedagogy, or the acquisition of discrete literacy and numeracy skills. Rather, learning is an active process that occurs through interdependent social, emotional, cognitive, and relational developmental processes (National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, 2019); within and outside of school (Duffrin, 2020); and when learning is aligned with young people's full lived experience (Hammond, 2014).

However, even as a growing number of parents, researchers, educators, and other youth-serving adults are embracing a whole child approach to teaching and learning, less is known about how young people perceive and experience these approaches. This study represents the findings from focus group interviews with over 100 diverse young people from six sites across the country, which have been recognized as exemplars in applying a whole child approach to teaching and learning.

Overall, six themes emerged from the conversations with young people as critical in creating a youth-centered integrated learning experience: supportive relationships, a sense of belonging, the ability to express agency and voice, meaningful learning experiences, intentionality, and identity development. These themes operated interdependently in young people's experience, framing their learning, and creating a context for positive growth and development, what one young person called a "learning ecosystem." Taken together, these six themes characterize both how young people describe connections among multiple dimensions of learning and the conditions under which that learning occurs. Using young people's stories and experiences, All of Who I Am explores how young people understand the connections among these themes and how they operate collectively to create integrated and supported learning experiences.

Ultimately, All of Who I Am builds on a rapidly growing body of research to create a deeper understanding of how young people are experiencing integrated approaches to social, emotional, and cognitive learning. The findings from the study have deep implications for how schools and educators can foster relationship-rich learning environments, co-construct meaningful learning experiences with students, and foster identity-safe learning settings where young people have power and voice.

Additional Information

https://www.americaspromise.org/report/all-who-i-am   https://youtu.be/VAPIgpqZBPw

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STUDENT SEL CORRELATES AND OUTCOMES

Bridging the Gap: A Research Practice Consortium

Authors

Robert Balfanz
John Hopkins University School
of Education
Baltimore, MD, USA

Catherine Bradshaw
University of Virginia School of
Education and Human Development
Charlottesville, VA, USA

Camille Farrington
University of Chicago Consortium
on School Research
Chicago, IL, USA

Mary Helen Immordino-Yang
Rossier School of Education University
of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA, USA

Jacqueline Jodl
University of Virginia School of
Education and Human Development
Charlottesville, VA, USA

Stephanie Jones
Harvard University Graduate School
of Education
Cambridge, MA, USA

Abstract

The mission of the National Research Institute on the Whole Child is to shift the national paradigm for how we generate, integrate, and apply the science of learning and human development to transform teaching and learning to support the whole child. The Institute will pursue a research agenda that explores how social, emotional, and cognitive competencies grow and change over time in key contexts, and how to design, implement, and evaluate practices and strategies that make a difference. Of particular interest is the critical question of how this emphasis on integration can shed light on the systemic production and potential interruption of inequitable educational outcomes across race, socio-economic class, gender, disability, language learner status, and other social or geographic categories.

The global pandemic provides an opening to transform education, but a new system of education requires a concomitantly transformed research infrastructure. Rather than simply adapt to the new normal of a COVID world, the Institute responds to the pandemic in a forward-looking way, foreseeing the need for a foundational research entity that drives real and sustained change by closing the gap between research and practice.

While there is no doubt that online delivery of instruction should be central to the research agenda, other questions are essential to generating a pipeline of innovative practices that changes the facts on the ground for children and their educators. These questions include: How do we make our school, education, and child-development systems more individually and equitably responsive to the strengths and needs of our students? How do we construct a system that meets ALL children where they are and gives them what they need inside and outside of school to be successful? How do we partner authentically with families to support their children's development? How does a post-COVID context impact social-emotional outcomes for children, adolescents, educators, and caretakers, in particular those who are most marginalized? And can we create a coalition of diverse education researchers that exploits the current disruption to create a research infrastructure that delivers a real and sustained impact in schools and other learning settings, grounded in science, with a combined emphasis on nimbleness and flexibility, together with accountability? These are the questions that need to be asked in a post-COVID context that provide a framework for a research plan that is intended to redesign and generate more equitable systems of education and child development.

In pursuit of an enterprise that answers these questions, the Research Institute dynamically connects the activities of six interconnected hubs of innovation. While each hub covers a core research need identified as a critical gap for the field, all six hubs prioritize the practice of teaching and learning through an emphasis on applied and developmental research, research-practice partnerships, and developing the educator pipeline. There is considerable synergy across the hubs, resulting in the potential to build collaborative, field-inclusive partnerships with other research entities. At its center, the Research Institute's Innovation Center plays a critical role in coordinating work, communication, and collaboration across the innovation hubs.

Additional Information

http://nationathope.org/research-practice-and-policy-agendas/research/

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Connecting SEL, Academic, and On-Track Outcomes: Lessons from a Multi-District Study

Authors

Robert Balfanz
Director, Everyone Graduates Center at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education
Baltimore, MD, USA

Vaughan Byrnes
Everyone Graduates Center at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education
Baltimore, MD, USA

✉

vbyrnes@jhu.edu

Abstract

At a time when the country is grappling with how best to support students in the midst of COVID-19-induced school closures and shifts to online learning, "Connecting Social-Emotional Development, Academic Achievement, and On-Track Outcomes: A Multi-District Study of Grade 3 to 10 Students Supported by City Year AmeriCorps Members" sheds important light on the value of integrating social, emotional, and academic learning and how to do so. Released in May 2020, it is among the first large-scale studies—multi-city and multi-grade— to explore the relationship between social-emotional development and academic and on-track outcomes for students attending systemically under-resourced public schools.

The study found there is a statistically significant, consistent relationship between student social-emotional skills and academic outcomes. In fact, moving up one level in social-emotional skills is like gaining an entire school year of achievement growth in math or English Language Arts for students in grades 3 to 10. Student social-emotional skills account for a substantial amount of the variation in their academic outcomes—an impact comparable to that of student family backgrounds— reinforcing the argument that strengthening social-emotional skills is a viable path to improving academic outcomes among all students.

The research also found that students who received support from City Year AmeriCorps members, who are Student Success Coaches (SSCs) in systemically under-resourced schools and support teachers, add capacity and serve as near-peer tutors and mentors to students, demonstrated improved social, emotional, and academic outcomes. The more hours students spent working with an AmeriCorps member, the more likely students were to improve their social-emotional competencies by the end of the year. Students with stronger social-emotional outcomes had better academic outcomes in terms of course grades and predictive indicators of high school graduation. The more hours students spent receiving support from a City Year AmeriCorps member in either English Language Arts or math, the higher were the student outcomes in that subject area and attendance. Researchers found the greatest impact when social-emotional skills were integrated into math and English Language Arts (ELA) interventions, such as when an AmeriCorps member demonstrates how to persist through challenges to complete a task while teaching a math lesson. This indicates that a key strategy to recovering COVID-19 learning loss could be relationship-based, social-emotional learning interwoven with academic tutoring.

These results intensify the call to action for educators and policymakers to support the expansion and integration of social, emotional, and academic development in schools across the nation, and show the value of additional capacity to support student learning, especially as students face challenges associated with COVID-19. These findings also offer evidence that positive school environments—in which students enjoy strong relationships, feel trust and have a sense of belonging—combined with research-based interventions designed to meet student needs are critical for success. AmeriCorps members, as SSCs, have a critical role to play in helping provide these learning environments and should be accessible to all students.

Additional Information

https://new.every1graduates.org/connectingoutcomes/
https://www.cityyear.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PractionerAndPolicymakerGuide_FY20_05.20.pdf

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STUDENT SEL CORRELATES AND OUTCOMES

Consistent Emotional Support Predicts School Readiness

Authors

Ashlin R. Ondrusek
Yale School of Public Health
Yale University
New Haven, CT, USA

Craig S. Bailey
Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence
Yale University
New Haven, CT, USA

✉

craig.bailey@yale.edu

Abstract

Preschoolers benefit from teachers who are warm, sensitive, and responsive, providing them with an emotionally safe and secure classroom and a caregiver whom they trust and depend on as they explore themselves and the world. Through these interactions, children are thought to develop a secondary secure attachment with their teachers. Comparatively little attention in the empirical literature has been given to the degree to which these interactions are consistent, a key dimension of attachment theory, with most studies treating time as error and only exploring mean levels of warmth, sensitivity, and responsiveness. However, a few studies have shown that preschool teachers' consistency of warm, sensitive, and responsive interactions with children throughout the day may not simply be error but may in fact be more important than average levels across a number of child outcomes. The purpose of this study is to extend this work and to explore how and in what way teachers' consistency of warm, sensitive, and responsive interactions with preschoolers matters for their school adjustment. A sample of 291 preschoolers was rated by teachers and trained research assistants using measures of school adjustment (i.e., Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale, Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation-30, Teaching Rating Scale of School Adjustment, Student-Teacher Relationship Scale) and cognitive and emotion regulation (i.e., Preschool Self-Regulation Assessment [PSRA], PSRA Assessor Report). Classroom teachers also were observed four times throughout the day for their warmth, sensitivity, and responsiveness by way of the Emotional Support domain of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Emotional support consistency was then operationalized by reverse coding the standard deviation across Emotional Support CLASS observation cycles. After controlling for child- and school-level covariates, multivariate multilevel structural equation modeling revealed no main effect for emotion regulation or teachers' consistency of emotional support and children's school adjustment. However, the emotion regulation and school adjustment association depended on teachers' consistency of emotional support. In general, children were more adjusted to school in classrooms with consistent teachers. Results also showed a main effect for cognitive regulation with children being more adjusted to school with higher levels of cognitive regulation. This main effect, too, depended on teachers' consistency of emotional support. In general, the association with school adjustment increased as teachers' consistency of emotional support increased. Children thus tended to be the most adjusted to school when they were both high in their cognitive regulation capacity and in classrooms with teachers consistent in their emotional support. Compared to prior research, we found that the moderating effect of teachers' consistency of emotional support with respect to cognitive and emotion regulation capacities and their adjustment to school appeared stronger and across more aspects of school adjustment than average levels of emotional support. This study emphasizes the dimension of time, especially in the context of forming secondary attachment relationships in preschool classrooms, and calls for consistency as an important--if not the most important--dimension of emotional support that is often overlooked when creating a safe and emotionally supportive preschool classroom.

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STUDENT SEL CORRELATES AND OUTCOMES

Exploring the Causal Link Between Teacher SEL and Student Development : A field Study in India

Author

Subramanian Parameswaran
Learning Curve Foundation
New Delhi, India

✉

subbu@learning-curve.co.in

Abstract

In the rapidly changing, complex, and diverse world today, social and emotional learning has become critical to adulthood outcomes and well-being. SEL provides a much-needed dimension to education, concentrating on improving emotional intelligence, cooperation, empathy, healthy relationships, communication and decision-making, paving the way for lifelong happiness, successful careers, and healthy relationships.

There is sufficient research in the field that implies the need to develop SEL skills in children as these are found to facilitate positive social behaviors, academic performance, and social relationships during school years, and reduces behaviour problems and psychological distress. Studies also reveal that the caring and encouraging environment provided by the schools resulted in better conflict-resolution and decision-making skills. SEL interventions at schools have proved to influence students' adult lives and are effective at reducing the psychological and behavioral problems at the later ages as well. With the complexity and diversity of India's education landscape, there is a need to unpack social and emotional learning for India's schools. This would mean a contextual framework, educator capacity building, transaction methods, school support, and evidence generation. While the-long term outcome of such an effort would be to see a set of sustainable and integrated SEL practices in schools, it is also critical to begin with a curricular and programmed approach.

Learning Curve Foundation's "Ready for the World" is a structured SEL curriculum designed for both teachers and students (8-14 years) from low-income backgrounds and is deployed in low-unaided and under-resourced public schools in India.

The field study was conducted to understand the effectiveness of the curriculum in 2018-19. This curriculum was implemented in 55 schools in two states of India comprising 390 teachers and 11,280 children (ages 8-14).

Results showed a causal link between teacher SEL and student behaviors: 41% of teachers showed one level improvement in teacher SEL competencies (emotional intelligence, engaging the child, shaping attitudes, mentor mindset, learning and adaptability), and 87% teachers reported positive change in their own behavior through self-assessment (attentiveness and patience, taking initiative, managing emotions, communication, helping students, and interaction with parents). In the same period of intervention, 85% of students showed improvement in SEL skills (curiosity, participation, energy level, and collaboration), and 66% of them showed at least one level improvement in key SEL skills (resilience, managing emotions, building relationships, managing conflicts, and overcoming difficulties). 86% of teachers validated this and reported positive changes in student behaviour based on their observations.

The findings from this field-study confirm the potential and reliability of a structured SEL curriculum and the causal links between teacher and student SEL. This also places emphasis on developing a standalone approach for the development of SEL in children. These inputs and transactional modes designed in this curriculum can further be used for developing sustainable SEL programmes. The results imply the necessity of more such interventions to create awareness and develop SEL competencies also among the stakeholders leading to sustainable holistic development for both adults and children.

Additional Information

www.learning-curve-foundation.org

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Infusing Growth Mindset into Online Classrooms

Authors

Yoi Tibbetts
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA, USA

Sasha Miller-Marshall
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA, USA

Alison Lubin
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA, USA

Michelle Francis
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA, USA

David Silverman
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL, USA

Chris S. Hulleman
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA, USA

✉

cyt7d@virginia.edu

Abstract

Growth mindset interventions are growing in popularity, given their positive effects on student outcomes and their implications for addressing inequity in education (Yeager et al., 2019). Growth mindset interventions target students' beliefs about their intelligence and ability to learn. Specifically, these interventions focus on supporting students to reflect upon how intelligence is malleable and how they can take advantage of this knowledge. A commonly used metaphor describes how the brain is like a muscle that grows strong and smarter when exposed to challenging learning experiences. Previous growth mindset interventions have predominantly been classroom-based activities, but less is known about the effects of growth mindset interventions in the online learning environment. Motivate Lab, an education research lab based at the University of Virginia, partnered with the University System of Georgia's online platform, eCore, to implement growth mindset interventions into introductory math classes. In spring of 2019, 945 students took part in a randomized controlled trial testing the effects of implementing growth mindset interventions in online introductory math courses. Students completed pre and post surveys at the beginning and end of the semester. At two other points during the semester, students went through online modules that defined what a growth mindset is and encouraged students to reflect on how they might leverage the tenets of growth mindset theory.

Results indicated that relative to the control condition, students in the growth mindset condition experienced a significant increase in the extent to which they endorsed having a growth mindset. Furthermore, first-generation college students (i.e., students for whom neither parent holds a four-year degree) on average, performed significantly better in the growth mindset condition (final course grade: 78) compared to the control condition (final grade: 70). Similar effects were observed on both quiz and test grades, with particularly strong effects for first-generation college students. Though still early, growth mindset interventions within the online college classroom appear to be a promising way to support the development of students' adaptive beliefs and behaviors about school and their intelligence. Given that higher education is increasingly moving more towards remote and online learning, these effects are particularly timely. If we can continue to create online modules that are not time-consuming to implement but effective at supporting students, that could be one strategy for supporting students and faculty in increasingly more virtual learning contexts.

Additional Information

https://motivatelab.org/ecore   https://motivatelab.org/

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STUDENT SEL CORRELATES AND OUTCOMES

Quality of Parent-Child Relationships Impacts Effectiveness of a Resilience-Based SEL Program in Minority Youth from Low-Income Schools

Authors

Tram Nguyen
Department of Psychology
Catholic University of America
Washington, DC, USA

Brendan A. Rich
Department of Psychology
Catholic University of America
Washington, DC, USA

Abstract

The quality of parent-child relationships affects childrens' later emotional development and social competence. Prior studies suggested that if children perceive warmth, affection, and emotional support in their family context, they are more likely to develop resilience, self-esteem, and social skills. The current study examined the impact of parent-child relationships on treatment outcomes. We predicted that a lower score of baseline relationship with the parent would be related to a reduction in resilience, self-esteem, and social skills after treatment. One hundred fifty-two children ages 7-15 years participated in the Resilience Builder Program, a 12-14-week socioemotional group intervention designed for children with social deficits in school settings. Data were collected before and after treatment. Child perceived relationships with parent were measured using the Behavioral Assessment System for Children-Self Report of Personality (BASC-SRP). Social skills and self-esteem were measured using the Behavioral Assessment System for Children, 2nd edition (BASC-2). Resilience was measured using the Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (RSCA). Results indicated that lower parent-child relationship predicts a reduction in social skills, resilience, and self-esteem in school settings. While social and emotional learning programs (SEL) are beneficial to the students, our findings suggest that the student's home life may play a crucial role in the efficacy of those programs. Educators and practitioners can consider incorporating parent sessions in SEL programs to help parents be more proactive in their child's social and emotional development.

Additional Information

https://tinyurl.com/yxs6glsl

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Relationships Between Social-Emotional Learning Skills and School Outcomes in a Middle School Population

Authors

Amy N. Gorniak
University of Houston-Clear Lake
Houston, TX, USA

G. Thomas Schanding, Jr.
University of Houston-Clear Lake
Houston, TX, USA

✉

amy.nicole.gorniak@gmail.com

Abstract

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2015) produced a framework of five competency areas for the development of social and emotional learning (SEL) skills underlying success across environments: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Dymnicki, et al., 2013; Payton, et al., 2000). These competencies particularly impact academic functioning, predicting classroom behavior, academic performance, responsible decision-making, and peer relationships (Zins, et al., 2004). Stronger SEL competence further predicts reduced likelihood to skip classes, drop out, or engage in risky behavior (e.g. sexual, substance-related), and greater resilience to peer pressure (Elias, et al., 1997; Payton, et al. 2000). The current project assesses the relationship between SEL skills and school outcomes: school absences, number of office discipline referrals, and state testing scores.

Participants were teachers of students in seventh grade at a middle school campus in a moderate-sized independent school district in Colorado. The project was approved by both university and school district review boards. The district provided a direct link to the surveys in Qualtrics with an informational PowerPoint containing a description and directions. Participants chose Spanish or English, then provided consent, and participation was voluntary. They provided demographic information about themselves and the child before completing the SELSI Screener (Schanding, 2017). The SELSI Screener is a 10-item observer-rated form for ages 2-21 describing the frequency of specific SEL-related skills in the last 30 days using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 4 (Almost Always). The measure has good internal reliability (α = .90). The district provided additional demographic, state test score, and absence and discipline referral data for all students in the study.

Data was gathered from general or special education teachers, or teaching assistants, on 396 students. Of the students, 49.9% were female, one student identified as other (0.03%), with a mean age of 11.7 years (SD = 0.63). Data was analyzed using Pearson's r in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Results of the Pearson correlation indicated a significant negative association between Total SEL Score and number of discipline referrals, ($r(369)$ = -.37; p = .01), and absences, ($r(369)$ = -.25; p = .01). The results of the Pearson correlation indicated a significant positive association between the Total SEL Score and state test scores in Language Arts, ($r(317)$ = .395; p = .01), and mathematics, ($r(314)$ = .419; p = .01).

The data demonstrate that SEL skills are associated with important school-related behaviors such that increased SEL skills indicate fewer school-interfering behaviors. In addition, SEL skills have a relationship to state test scores in language arts and mathematics with improved test scores as SEL skills increase. The data indicate potential benefits to school engagement and academic achievement of SEL screening to identify students who may benefit from support in SEL development. Study limitations include a relatively homogeneous sample, which may limit generalizability, and raters filling a variety of educational roles, which may have led to inconsistencies in perspective and level of direct engagement with a child.

Additional Information

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1GXQu_atl7knTBg5vXfJhb1z_P8OXz2fTsTWR113nils/edit?usp=sharing

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Resilient Scholar Program: Strengths Special Needs Students Social Emotional Competencies

Authors

David Adams
The Urban Assembly
New York, NY

G. Lawrence Farmer
Fordham University Graduate School
of Social Services
New York, NY

✉

farmer@fordham.edu

Abstract

Background:
Students with special needs are more likely to exit school without either a high school diploma or alternative certificate than their nonspecial education peers. While full understanding of their elevated risk would require examination of the ecological nature of their progress in the school environment, one important contribution is represented by the challenges these student often face in the development of those social and emotional competencies (i.e., self-management, self-awareness, social awareness) that are known to contribute to students success in school settings.

Purpose:
This study seeks to examine the impact of a social-emotional learning program, the Resilient Scholars Program, on high schoolers receiving special education services.

Study design:
Data from a larger quasi-experimental design was used to explore the growth in classified students' SEL competencies during one academic school year. A total of 335 students with special education classification, along with 1,013 of their non-classified peers, participated in a whole school SEL program being impliemented in middle and high schools. The Devereux Students Strengths Assessment was used to assess their self-awareness, social awareness, and self-management skills.

Analysis:
T-scores were used to categorize the overall level of demonstrated social-emotional competencies of all students who participated in the program into three categories (Need for Instruction, Typical or Strength). Cross-tabulation analysis was used to examine the extent to which students' SEL competencies improved over the assessment period.

Results:
Statistically significant differences between middle and high schools (i.e., middle school higher scores):

Those with IEP had lower scores than their general education placement classmates. This was true for high schooler and middle schoolers. There was an interaction between school level and special education placement. Students with IEPs had positive changes in SEL competences for middle but not high schoolers. Overall all, among classified students, there was consistent evidence that they advanced from demonstrating SEL competencies below the norms of their those in peers to at or above their peer competency level.

Implications:
This study adds to our understanding that the whole school SEL program can benefit both middle and senior high school students with special needs. The interaction between school level (middle vs. senior high school) and special educaton placement warrants future research.

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STUDENT SEL CORRELATES AND OUTCOMES

SEL Strategies as Predictors of Justice Perceptions and Character Strengths

Authors

Kendra Thomas
University of Indianapolis
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Josafa da Cunha
Universidade Federal do Parana
Curitiba, Parana, Brazil

Jonathan Santo
University of Nebraska Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska, USA

✉

thomaskj@uindy.edu

Abstract

Research on students' personal belief in a just world (PBJW) has revealed these perceptions to be powerful predictors of student engagement, personal motivation, and well-being. This is likely because students who expect to be treated fairly tend to work harder and suffer less under the fear of unexpected harm (Dalbert & Sallay, 2004). When students expect their work to be rewarded justly and treatment to be fair, they have positive expectations of leaders and develop a personal contract to behave as a community member (Bartholomaeus & Strelan, 2019; Ellard et al., 2016). Existing research has connected PBJW to perceptions of the school, but work still has to identify specific school climate or teacher behaviors that can assist in developing this adaptive trait. This research presents two studies that reveal the powerful role that socio-emotional techniques play in developing students' adaptive PBJW and character strengths. The first study draws from a comprehensive sample of Brazilian students from third through twelfth grade (n = 18,514) across 122 public schools in southern Brazil in 2018.

Results revealed that school climate and SEL techniques were significant predictors of students' PBJW in elementary (R^2=.12), middle (R^2=.20), and high school (R^2=.16). Additionally, SEL techniques acted as a moderator between school climate and students' BJW, with its strongest effect in schools that had a climate marked by both high support and high disciplinary structure (authoritative climate).

The following year (2019), data on school climate, perceptions of fairness, and character strength assessments were collected from fourth- and fifth-graders at 60 separate schools (n=2,729). Results revealed that, even after controlling for socioeconomic status, students' evaluations of their school's support and structure, and their teacher's use of socio-emotional learning techniques predicted students' perceptions of fairness (R^2=.20). In addition, these also predicted students' self-reported levels of social responsibility (R^2=.18), fairness virtue (R^2=.26), hope virtue (R^2=.17), and bravery virtue (R^2=.16). All told, teachers' SEL practice was the strongest predictor of the perceptions of world fairness and the virtues of hope and bravery.

These studies open the discussion of how the use of SEL techniques can improve students' future expectations of justice and strengthen students' character. Increased emotion regulation helps students better advocate for themselves and be less vulnerable to inevitable frustrations and injustices. Students who report teachers' utilizing SEL techniques self-identify as braver, more hopeful, and more focused on justice than their peers. This may occur because increased emotional regulation helps students advocate for themselves and be less vulnerable to inevitable frustrations and injustices. Such findings lend further support to the need for investing in capacity-building initiatives that enable teachers to effectively incorporate SEL strategies to their daily routine.

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SEL, Academics, and School Climate: Emerging Research from New York City

Authors

Lisa Merrill
The Research Alliance for
New York City Schools
New York, NY

Alexandra Lotero
Student Success Network
New York, NY

✉

lisa.merrill@nyu.edu

Abstract

Does growth in specific SEL competencies contribute to student academic growth? And, if so, how can adults support youth in building these competencies?

These questions have long been debated. Recently, they have taken on new importance as educators, social workers, parents, and others who support youth development confront the challenges of remote teaching and learning. The intuitive response to the first question is "yes, of course....growth in SEL contributes to academic achievement." The Student Success Network (SSN) is grounded in this belief. It is also committed to learn from data as well as from the experiences of practitioners and youth.

To answer these questions, the Student Success Network created a unique partnership with the Research Alliance for NYC Schools that elevates the voices of practitioners and youth. Practitioners, researchers, and youth partner to gain insights from survey responses from thousands of youth social-emotional learning surveys and document promising practices at sites where youth experience exceptional SEL growth.

They have come up with some early answers.

First, which competencies contribute to student academic growth? Preliminary findings show:

For middle school students, improvements in Growth Mindset and Academic Self-Efficacy correlate with improvements in NY State ELA and Math scores.

For high school students, Growth Mindset and Self-Regulation seem to make a difference in academic performance for all students:

• Ninth-grade students who improve in Growth Mindset have a higher ninth-grade GPA, a leading indicator of college access and persistence.

• Growth in Self-Regulation correlates with improvement in GPA.

• Improving Self-Regulation and Growth Mindset may have a stronger effect on GPA for students from disadvantaged neighborhoods than from less disadvantaged neighborhoods.

• Improving Self-Regulation has a larger impact on GPA for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

For college students, Interpersonal Skills and Problem-solving are better predictors of enrollment in a four-year college as compared to no college. Holding constant race and gender:

• Students with higher Interpersonal Skills are more likely to attend a four-year college than not go to college at all.

• Students with higher Problem-solving skills are more likely to attend a four-year college.

Second, how can adults support youth in building these competencies?

Practitioners at sites where youth experience exceptional growth say activities and practices are not enough—adults need to create a supportive environment for activities and practices to take root. The foundations of a supportive environment include encouraging self-expression, creating a culture of care, offering incentives with accountability, providing individualized support, allowing space to grow, and partnering in decision-making.

These findings provide a way for educators and other practitioners to decide which SEL competencies to emphasize in designing and delivering curricula and programming for middle- and/or high-school students. We also offer a reflection tool to help educators and other practitioners create an environment that supports learning whether remote or in person.

Additional Information

https://mailchi.mp/ssn-nyc/research-practice-partnership

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Social-Emotional Development: The Importance of Optimism

Authors

David Adams
The Urban Assembly
New York, NY, USA

Kendra Knowles
Fordham University Graduate School
of Social Service
New York, NY, USA

G. Lawrence Farmer
Fordham University Graduate School
of Social Service
New York, NY, USA

Abstract

Unpacking the relationship among the various social-emotional competencies along identifying potential mediators between those competencies and student achievement is needed. There is also a need to examine how the different social-emotional competencies contribute to academic performance. This study builds on the Denham, Bassett, Zinsser, and Wyatt (2014) study with elementary students. We focused on exploring optimistic thinking as a mechanism connecting foundational SEC (i.e., Self-Management, Social Awareness and Self-Awareness) to applied SEC's (i.e., Goal-Directed Behavior and Decision Making). Additionally, an examination of the role that applied SEC's play in linking foundational SEC's to students' academic performance was also assessed.

Methods: Data source: Administration of a multi-dimensional social and emotional measure (Devereux Student Strength Assessment) gathered as part of the assessment component of the program of supports developed in a large urban district in the northeast in the United States that serves students with special needs was used for this study. The study included two middle schools (Grades 6 to 8; N= 317) and eight high schools (Grades 9 to 12; N=639).

Analysis: Path models were used assess the mediation models.

Variables: Teacher rating versions of the Devereux Students Strengths Assessment were used to assess students' social and emotional competences. High school students' grade point average was used to assess achievement. For Middle schoolers end of the school year, average grades (percentages) in the ELA, Math, and Science classes were used. Social-Emotional Competencies (SEC) were assessed during the fall semester and the spring GPA was used to assessed student's academic performance.

Foundational SEC

Self-Management. These items provide indication of young people's capacity to manage their emotions and behavior, complete tasks, or respond to new or challenging situations.

Self-Awareness. These items indicate the extent to which young people have a realistic understanding of their strengths and opportunities for growth.

Social Awareness. These items indicate the extent of young people's capacity to interact with others in a way that demonstrates respect, cooperation, and tolerance.

Optimistic Thinking. These items focus on young people's expression of confidence, hopefulness, and positive thinking about the future.

Applied Competencies

Goal-Directed Behavior (10 items). These items indicate the extent to which young people demonstrate their ability to initiate skills and persist at tasks.

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The Legs That SEL Stands On: Relationships and Equity

Authors

Kent Pekel
Search Institute
Minneapolis, MN, USA

Amy Syvertsen
Search Institute
Minneapolis, MN, USA

Ashley Boat
Search Institute
Minneapolis, MN, USA

Benjamin Houltberg
Search Institute
Minneapolis, MN, USA

✉

kentp@searchinstitute.org

Abstract

There is growing consensus among researchers and practitioners that implementing structured programs and curricula is only part of a successful strategy for strengthening SEL. That consensus urges that in addition to adopting off-the-shelf programs, educators and out-of-school time (OST) program staff should take a systemic approach to SEL, integrating it into every aspect of the school and program day (Mahoney et al., 2018; National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, 2019). But how, in practice, can a youth-serving organization integrate SEL into everything it does? A recent Search Institute study points to two potential answers:

1. Build developmental relationships with all youth

2. Ensure all youth experience and embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

Our study was based upon a diverse sample of 14,088 youth in grades 4-12. Those young people were surveyed in schools (80%), OST programs (13%), and student support programs (7%). On the survey, developmental relationships were assessed with a 20-item scale capturing the five elements of Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework: express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities (Pekel et al., 2018). Young people's experience of DEI was assessed with a six-item scale focused on embracing diversity, fairness, and reaching across racial and cultural boundaries. SEL competencies were assessed with a 19-item scale capturing the five CASEL categories of relationship skills, responsible decision-making, self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness (CASEL, 2017).

We found that both developmental relationships and commitment to DEI were strongly associated with SEL. Bivariate correlations showed that youth who reported stronger developmental relationships, on average, also reported greater relationship skills, ($r = .39$, $p < .001$), responsible decision-making ($r = .37$, $p < .001$), self-awareness ($r = .35$, $p < .001$), self-management ($r = .39$, $p < .001$), and social awareness ($r = .34$, $p < .001$). Similarly, bivariate correlations showed that youth who experienced greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in their schools and programs, on average, reported greater relationship skills ($r = .33$, $p < .001$), responsible decision-making ($r = .33$, $p < .001$), self-awareness ($r = .26$, $p < .001$), self-management ($r = .29$, $p < .001$), and social awareness ($r = .32$, $p < .001$).

But while both developmental relationships and DEI were in themselves significantly associated with SEL, our study suggests that combining the two approaches could be even more effective. When both developmental relationships ($\beta = .39$, $p < .001$) and commitment to DEI ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$) were included in the same regression model, both were positively associated with young people's overall level of social-emotional learning competencies. A significant interaction effect between developmental relationships and DEI was also found ($\beta = -.12$, $p < .05$), such that youth who experience both strong developmental relationships and a strong commitment to DEI tend to report higher levels of social-emotional competence. Our study does not suggest that youth-serving organizations should discontinue adopting SEL programs and curricula, but that emphasizing developmental relationships and DEI may create the context in which those programs are more likely to succeed.

Additional Information

https://www.search-institute.org/dr-equity-and-sel

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STUDENT SEL CORRELATES AND OUTCOMES

Variance in Office Discipline Referrals Accounted for by SEL Competencies

Authors

Yarden Ran Finder
University of Houston-Clear Lake
Houston, TX, USA

G. Thomas Schanding, Jr.
University of Houston-Clear Lake
Houston, TX, USA

✉

rany9325@uhcl.edu

Abstract

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in better understanding students who receive frequent office discipline referrals. Rather than implementing systems to identify and remediate student weaknesses, needs, and skill deficits, many schools use punitive, reactive disciplinary strategies such as office discipline referrals when students engage in problem behaviors. The literature has demonstrated that office discipline referrals often fail to produce their intended outcomes and frequently lead to negative consequences such as exclusionary discipline, which often unfairly discriminates against students of color and is associated with their entry into the school-to-prison pipeline. Although numerous studies have shown that several demographic factors (race, sex, ethnicity, age, and special education eligibility) can be used to predict office discipline referral frequency, there is very little scientific understanding of whether other variables, such as social-emotional learning skills, can be used to predict office discipline referral frequency. Knowledge of whether and to what extent social and emotional learning skills predict office discipline referral frequency could lead to an improved understanding of prevention and intervention efforts with this population.

This study's primary goal was to explore the relation between social-emotional competencies and office discipline referrals in elementary, middle, and high school students. To this end, three teacher forms of the Social-Emotional Learning Skills Inventory were used to measure participants' social-emotional learning competencies. For each student, teachers filled out the form that corresponded with the student's age (2-5 years, 6-11 years, or 12-21 years). Furthermore, archival data on these students was collected from a school district in the southern United States in order to measure office discipline referral frequency. The sample for the study consisted of 2,185 elementary (n=792), middle (n=503), and high school (n=890) students from five elementary, two middle, and two high schools in a school district in the southern United States.

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted per school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school) in order to evaluate whether social-emotional learning skills predicted office discipline referral frequency over and above demographic variables (i.e., race, sex, ethnicity, age, and special education status). Social-emotional learning skills accounted for a small but significant proportion of variance in office discipline referral frequency after controlling for demographic variables for the elementary school sample, $\Delta R2=.04$, $F(1,783) = 35.47$, $p < .001$; for the middle school sample, $\Delta R2= .05$, $F(1,494) = 29.14$, $p < .001$; and for the high school sample, $\Delta R2=.06$, $F(1,879) = 60.38$, $p < .001$.

The results of the study demonstrate that there may be some utility to using social-emotional learning skills for prediction and intervention efforts with elementary, middle, and high school students who have or who are at high risk for high office discipline referral frequency. However, because a large amount of the variance in office discipline referral frequency remains unexplained, more research is needed to identify additional predictors of office discipline referral frequency in the schools.

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